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Distributive Justice and Its Realization in Nigeria.

Philosophy and Education as a Roadmap to Change for a Multi-
Cultural Society.

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Abstract

There is no gainsaying that we live in a world full of inequalities. For this reason, the issue of justice has taken a central stage and become an interesting point of discussion in every part of the human society. There is no institution today, both political, religious and economic that does not raise its voice in the call for an equal and just treatment amongst all. While many agree on the importance of justice and need for an equal society, the problem remains on the scope and how or what does it mean to treat citizens equal. Consequently, this academic research began with the debate on what exactly constitutes the correct currency of justice and how equality can be actualised in a political society. Through an in-depth study from theories of some prominent political philosophers and practical instances, it arrived the conclusion that justice is inviolable, important, and a value that must be distributed in the society for people's wellbeing. It also discussed that to be treated equal means giving each individual an equal path in order to walk in life with dignity and live a meaningful human life. Irrespective of our races, religions, colours, social, financial and economic backgrounds or where we come from, the platform of dignity gives us humans the right to stand together as equals, and also the justification to rub shoulders with one another.

Unfortunately, the principles of justice enumerated do not function well in many societies as the case may be in Nigeria. It was discovered that there exist in Nigeria manifest injustices and gross inequalities. It probed further to explain the reasons behind her poor run of justice. The findings of this research showed that ethnic bias, religion, corruption, patriarchal cultural background amongst other issues are the major obstacles that have militated against the realisation of justice in the country. These obstacles have enormous consequences on the quality of life among the citizens. As exposed in this dissertation, the state of justice in Nigeria demands a radical approach. After revealing the relevance of education and philosophy, it was established that only a rational, intellectual and mental emancipation would automatically culminate in political risorgimento. It highlighted the need for a recourse to sound education and philosophy which will help the citizens uphold some basic values and principles, accept their diversities, embark on rational dialogue, and develop mutual respect, dignity and deep sense of justice for each other. The conclusion is that sound education and philosophy can serve as a roadmap towards overcoming her numerous challenges and so realise an equal and just society. A society that will only be guided along the lines of objective and positive principles of equality, justice and fairness where the child of a 'nobody' can become somebody and achieve his personal well-being.

Kurzzusammenfassung

Verteilungsgerechtigkeit und ihre Verwirklichung in Nigeria. Philosophie und Bildung als Roadmap zur Änderung für eine Multi-kulturelle Gesellschaft.

Ohne jeden Zweifel wissen wir alle, dass wir in einer Welt voller Ungleichheiten leben. Aus diesem Grund hat die Frage der Gerechtigkeit eine zentrale Rolle eingenommen und ist zu einem interessanten Diskussionspunkt in allen Teilen der menschlichen Gesellschaft geworden. Es gibt heute keine Institution, sowohl politische, religiöse als auch wirtschaftliche, die ihre Stimme nicht in der Forderung nach einer gleichberechtigten und gerechten Behandlung aller erhebt. Während sich viele über die Bedeutung von Gerechtigkeit und die Notwendigkeit einer gleichberechtigten Gesellschaft einig sind, bleibt das Problem in Bezug auf den Umfang und die Frage, wie oder was es bedeutet, die Menschen gleich zu behandeln. Folglich begann diese wissenschaftliche Forschungsarbeit mit der Debatte darüber, was genau die richtige Gebräuchlichkeit der Gerechtigkeit ausmacht und wie Gleichheit in einer politischen Gesellschaft verwirklicht werden kann. Durch eine eingehende Untersuchung aus Theorien einiger prominenter politischer Philosophen und praktischer Instanzen kam diese Arbeit zu dem Schluss, dass Gerechtigkeit unantastbar, wichtig und ein Wert ist, der in der Gesellschaft zum Wohle der Menschen verteilt werden muss. Es wurde auch diskutiert, dass gleich behandelt zu werden bedeutet, jedem Einzelnen eine gleiche Gelegenheit zu geben, das Leben in Würde zu leben und ein sinnvolles menschliches Leben zu führen. Ungeachtet unserer Rassen, Religionen, Farben, sozialen, finanziellen und wirtschaftlichen Hintergründe oder wo wir herkommen, bringt das Podium der Menschenwürde uns Menschen dazu, auf Augenhöhe zusammenzustehen, und gibt uns die Rechtfertigung, enger zusammenzurücken.

Leider funktionieren die aufgezählten Grundsätze der Gerechtigkeit in vielen Gesellschaften nicht gut, wie es auch in Nigeria der Fall ist. Es wurde entdeckt, dass es in Nigeria offensichtliche Ungerechtigkeiten und grobe Ungleichheiten gibt. Es wurde weiter untersucht, um die Gründe für diese Dysfunktionalität zu erklären. Die Ergebnisse dieser Forschung zeigten, dass ethnische Voreingenommenheit, Religion, Korruption sowie patriarchal kultureller Hintergrund unter anderem die Hauptkräfte sind, die gegen die Verwirklichung der Gerechtigkeit im Land gewirkt haben. Diese Hindernisse haben enorme Auswirkungen auf die Lebensqualität der Bürger.

Wie in dieser Dissertation gezeigt wird, verlangt der Rechtsstaat in Nigeria einen radikalen Ansatz. Nachdem die Relevanz von Bildung und Philosophie enthüllt wurde, wurde festgestellt, dass nur eine rationale, intellektuelle und geistige Emanzipation automatisch in politischer Wiederauferstehung gipfeln würde. Sie betonte die Notwendigkeit eines Rückgriffs auf eine solide Bildung und Philosophie, die den Bürgern helfen wird, einige Grundwerte und Grundsätze zu bewahren, ihre Vielfalt zu akzeptieren, einen rationalen Dialog zu beginnen, gegenseitigen Respekt, Würde und tiefes Gerechtigkeitsempfinden füreinander zu entwickeln. Die Schlussfolgerung ist, dass eine solide Bildung und Philosophie als Fahrplan dienen kann, um die zahlreichen Herausforderungen des Landes zu meistern und so eine gleichberechtigte und gerechte Gesellschaft zu verwirklichen. Eine Gesellschaft, die sich nur nach objektiven und positiven Grundsätzen der Gerechtigkeit, Gleichheit und Fairness leiten lässt, in der das Kind jeder Familie ein wertvolles Leben führen kann.

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A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The quest for political action and activity is as old as humanity. From time immemorial, man has always proven himself a social and political being ready to engage with one another and capable of rational discussions to enable him live harmoniously with others in his natural given environment. This political nature of man has been described by many as something inherent and innate. It was for this reason that Aristotle defined him as a ‘Zoon Politikon’ (political animal) and ‘Zoon Logikon’ (rational animal), inherently able to participate in social and political enterprise. More so, man is a being capable of auto-transcendence; a being who can transform and reshape his natural society. Amongst all creatures, man is the only one who can develop his potential and realize his natural end in a social context. Thanks to this special nature, man has surpassed his immediate conditions. He once lived in a primitive, agrarian age but out of his own ingenuity and the urge for a better life transcended his primitive society and transformed it to the age of sophisticated machines and currently in the age of computer and automation. Since the emergence of the political community, humanity has lived and interacted with each other as a community of persons; and constantly seeks ways of bettering his existence. Man also created order and systems from his brutish past. Heidegger in cognisance of this inner-most propensity of man to go beyond his immediate condition of life asserts that while a thing is, man exists. Sartre in his ontology of being affirms this when he designates man (the being-for-itself) as sheer nihilism, negation or nothingness. Implicitly, man is nothing except what he makes of himself, except when he asserts himself in the world of activities. Since man is nothing except what he makes of himself, therefore a community of persons remains a social nihilism or negation when a majority of its citizen wallows in abject poverty, ignorance and disease.¹

Owing to this auto transcendental nature, the early contractual political theorists taught that man entered into a social contract, thereby forming a government for the sole reason of putting order in his society. Consequently, man has severally fashioned different types of societies and forms of governments ranging from ancient systems such as anarchy, aristocracy, bureaucracy, oligarchy, colonialism, feudalism, meritocracy, oligarchy, plutocracy, republicanism, theocracy, totalitarianism, monarchy, communism, socialism, tyranny, military dictatorship, capitalism, to modern day democracy. This craving for a more

¹ Cf. Anthony Chinedu Nwafor Ukaegbu, *A New Nigeria; Current Challenges and Tremendous Opportunities* (Okigwe: Baresi Concept, 2011), 1-2.

organised human society has however evidently increased in recent times as many if not all keep engaging themselves in constant political discussions. Many political philosophers have committed their time and energy towards the pursuit of how society should be structured, how government should be formed and how politics should be carried out. As a result, issues about human society and politics have dominated the contemporary world. Countries and different governments have never shied away from addressing some of these impending difficulties. In all these efforts, these systems have proven to be imperfect and insufficient in one way or the other.

As a way of response, a majority of nations have embraced democracy as the best way of achieving an equal and just society while others are still using other methods to realise this goal. Yet, events in some countries has shown that no system is absolutely perfect, as human life in some of these democratic societies, as well as other systems of governance is characterized by many social problems. This has torn many societies apart and led to civil unrest if not absolute disharmony. Consequently, many societies are either in tumult or at war with one another. Some continents are divided, kingdoms in shambles, regimes at loggerheads, religions making boastful claims and signs of superiority over one another. In some regions where existence is peaceful, the concern and worries of many are much due to the high influx of immigrants. Due to the enormous challenges facing modern man such as terrorism, climate change, insecurity and immigration, every aspect of society is looking up to politics for certain steps and decisions towards achieving a peaceful and harmonious society. Therefore, the growing concern for a just and equal society where people could lead a proper human life have become the demand and yearning of almost everyone today.

The 21st century humanity is currently faced with these issues which need to be solved in order to guarantee mutual existence in the world. This explains why all over the world, we hear about (many) organisations and institutions fighting for humanity and against the reign of inequality, injustice, abuse of fundamental human rights, and the lack of peace. Many political theorists and philosophers are of the same strong opinion that modern society must be committed to the cause of justice in order to bring harmony, continuous progress and claims for an ‘*equalisandum*.’²

² An *equalisandum* is a concept which prescribes what ought to be equalised in a society and in what way people should be treated equal. Cf. G. A Cohen. *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and other Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. Michael Otsuka (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 5.

Since political society has a lot to say in the day to day affairs of the world, political philosophers like Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Michael Walzer and a host of others maintain that justice is a vital and indisputable ingredient towards this project of creating a harmonious and just society. “That means that (e)ach person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override.”³ Justice is vital if we want to achieve our collective goal of having a just and more ordered human society. In all, the effort of these political philosophers is geared towards designing a global ‘order de novo.’⁴

In the midst of all this, the pertinent question that stares at every one is: how far have continents, nations and institutions gone in achieving justice and equality in human political society? Why are there still in most aspects of world human rights abuses, inequality, brutal treatment meted on the populace, violation of international laws and human dignity as well as unfair political systems and institutions. There is no doubt that humanity needs to put more effort into achieving this global concern. The political society must respond to the signs of times and work towards making the world habitual and harmonious to enable citizens live a proper and just human life.

Statement of the problem

Clearly enough, “there is much inequality in the world – inequalities of wealth, political power, health care and life-span. Educational and cultural opportunities, and so on.”⁵ These problems have made the prestige of political philosophy in modern times high. In each quarter and part of society, the discussion has always centred on how the modern world could establish a political order where justice will reign. But the question should be: What does this political order entail? What does justice entail? These questions have dominated the ambience within political philosophy. Moreover, the question of justice enjoys a certain primacy over other questions within political philosophy, because the selection of the best political system or the correct set of rights and liberties, or the best educational system

³ Alec D. Walen, “Justice,” *In Encyclopedia of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1, ed. Gregory Claeys (Los Angeles: CQ Press, an imprint of Sage Publications, Inc., 2013), 463.

Cf. Rawls J, *Theory of justice*, 1971, 3.

⁴ The word ‘de novo’ (literally ‘of new’) is a Latin expression used in English to mean ‘from the beginning’, ‘anew’, starting over, afresh.

⁵ Geoffrey Cupit, “Three Ways to value Equality,” in *Philosophy and its Public Role*, eds. William Aiken and John Haldane (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 122.

presupposes a profound understanding of the concept and the meaning of justice, against which these political questions should be explored.⁶ The striving for the realization of a just and harmonious human society, genuine ways of living and governance has ended in most societies either in some achievements or errors. From one system to another, from one ideology to different opinions, the sole aspiration has been to deliver a more habitable and peaceful co-existence, a society where everyone could feel at home, and live a proper human life free of injustice, inequality, war and tyranny.

Nigeria as the sole focus of this dissertation cannot claim success in the effort for a harmonious and equal society as described above. Her long history is full of pitiful and offensive experiences, such that its environment is always a charged one. Up till now, Nigeria as a country has continued to struggle with the delivery of justice, and inequality has become her international trademark. This has prompted political experts and intellectuals to maintain that Nigeria is far yet to reach the status of a just and equal society.

Boasting an extensive population of over 200 million people, Nigeria remains the most populous country in the entire sub-Saharan Africa region. Going by available population dynamics, there still exist deep inequalities and the human development indices show disproportional standard of living among citizens. These claims can be said to be feasible in her economic, social, religious and political instabilities and bankruptcy of peace in the country. Many are the problems that confront the political system in Nigeria today. “We disagree, fiercely, about almost everything. We disagree about terror and security, social justice, religion in politics.... We are no longer partners in self-government; our politics are rather a form of war.”⁷ This disease of the country cries day-in, day-out begging for medical resuscitation.

Within the context of this discussion, it is necessary to recall that the cry for independence in 1960, came as a result of the utmost desire and yearning for justice and equality from her colonial masters, yet she is still unable to realise this goal after many years. Unfortunately, the state of our economic decay, political anomie and social disequilibrium are so great. One is constantly greeted with a high degree of imbalance between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’, a gulf of imbalance in the allocation and distribution of our collective national resources

⁶ Cf. Eliane Saade', “The Concept of Justice and Equality,” *On the Dispute between John Rawls and Gerald Cohen*, eds. Herlinde Pauer-Studer, Neil Roughley, Peter Schaber, and Ralf Stoecker (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 1-2.

⁷ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1.

where many have been knocked down to the bottom where “conditions are rather rough.”⁸ Deep rooted nepotism, gross abuse and violation of some basic human rights have now become the order of the day. There is inequality in almost every facet of Nigerian life and these inequalities affect the basic structure of the society. To this effect, the principles of social justice are required in order to regulate all the main aspects of the social, political, judicial and economic system.⁹

Nigeria has the capacity to assert itself in the comity of nations but is finding it hard to live up to expectations. It was for this reason that Kenneth Emeka Okafor described Nigeria as the former pride of the black race that has almost lost its dignity today. In the same vein, the so-called giant of Africa is now the dwarf of Africa. Nigeria, a country that is specifically blessed with vast and abundant human and material resources is now grinding to a disastrous halt. A state once ranked among the ‘super’ states is now a hopeless state. The Nigerian state is now a state where anything goes with no leadership direction, with manifest injustices day in day out; laws only exist in theory but no effect in praxis. Everything is topsy-turvy. There is chaos everywhere, things seem to have fallen apart and the centre can no longer hold. What remains? Every facet of life in Nigeria is paralysed. Political life is embattled. The administrative system is seriously diseased. Oh! What a catalogue of woes.¹⁰ Bearing in mind the reckless plunder of the nation’s resources that has been going on in high places for so many years in Nigeria; one is faced with a series of unending questions. For how long will this go on?

At the moment, the greatest concern of many is how to achieve an egalitarian society free from injustice, inequality and tyranny. In this hiatus: we could re-echo the question of Clarissa, “what does justice demand in the context of deep and enduring structural inequality?”¹¹ Amidst the different cultural, religious, ethnic and sociological backgrounds one can rightly ask; is it still possible to create a free social and equal society in a country

⁸ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion. Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 4.

‘Countries at the bottom’ in the book ‘the bottom billion’ refers to the billions of people facing poverty and countries who have remained at the very bottom of global economic system and development. Cf. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, x.

⁹ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 7.

¹⁰ Kenneth Emeka Okafor, *The Nigeria of My Dream* (Owerri: Canun Publishers Ltd., 1999), x.

¹¹ Clarissa Rile Hayward, ‘Political Agency in the Face of Structural Injustice: Is Impure Dissent Enough? The Demand of Justice: Symposium on Tommie Shelby’s *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform* (Harvard University Press, 2016) Quoted in *Political Theory, An International Journal of political Philosophy*, volume 47, number 4, August 2019, (California: Sage Publishing, August 2019), 527.

threatened by opposing religious ideologies and constant intolerance (Islam and Christianity), ethnic crisis, cultural differences, corruption, injustice, flagrant violation of human rights and abuse of liberty, structural and systemic decay? Can Nigeria come up with a system where justice, equity, fair play, and the numerous resources could be distributed equally? How can our country achieve the needs of structural and political equilibrium? How can the government and the governed work collaboratively to lift the country to a better condition? And what do we do in the face of these challenges? Do we leave things to continue the way they are going now? Do we still want to be roasted in this fire? Do we want generations yet unborn to inherit this mess and hold us in disregard? All these issues will form the main crux of this essay.

Purpose and objective of the study

The first aim of this work is to make a survey and scholarly study of the theory and practice of equality. An attempt will be made to represent the reasonable conception of justice which should regulate the basic structure of the society as envisaged by John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen, and Michael Walzer. A practical application of their theories should be made in order to strike a balance between theory and praxis. After a scholarly exposé, my next effort would be to carefully examine how the principles of justice function in Nigeria.

The first discovery from the situation of things and facts available is that Nigeria is in no way near to the principles exposed in the work. However, further thrust into the project showed that a lot of challenges (that is, the core factors that continue to obfuscate the practice of justice) are responsible for this poor record on the path of justice which has left the country in tatters and ruins. The effects are numerous and the situation keeps getting worse. If this is the case, what is the way out?

Therefore, the objective of this study is to see how the country can realise the reign of justice as envisaged by the aforementioned political philosophers. Hence, a great effort will focus on the possible ways of overcoming those obstacles and hindrances that have stifled the practice of justice in Nigeria. At the end, the work will proffer solutions on how best the country could achieve a just society which will promote justice in all spheres of life and equal distribution of the numerous resources among the citizens to enable their individual well-being and success in life. The effort is geared towards the realisation of justice in

Nigeria- that is to find possible ways of securing equal concern in a multi-religious, cultural, and ethnically diverse society.

Scope and structure of the study

Although the concept of justice constitutes a normative cornerstone in the field of political philosophy, yet political philosophers disagree about what counts as justice. In the midst of this disagreement however, they agree that justice counts for much in shaping, maintaining and improving political order. That is to say that, the asymmetry of wide agreement on its importance and deep disagreement on its content, however, creates difficulties with the idea of justice.¹² In order to capture a common conceptual core of justice with its common goal, which is nothing but a just and more harmonious society, the complicated nature and structure of justice must be elucidated. To do this, I will in this dissertation explore the competing ideas of justice as enunciated by many prominent political philosophers and thereby analyse how those concepts of justice could be realised in Nigeria.

The scope of this work will be limited to the concept of justice by Ronald Dworkin as well as ideas from John Rawls, Amartya Sen, and Michael Walzer. While their teachings on justice remain universal in nature, Nigeria will be used as its operational field. The essence is to weigh the political terrain of Nigeria within the prism of these ideas and see how well they function in it. For the sake of clarity, the work will in no way attempt to criticize the ideas of these philosophers rather use their teachings to bring a kind of balance to the various conceptions and show that justice irrespective of its nuances has a single goal- which is the demand that people should be treated equal as human beings and that all schemes of distribution must be just.

For reasons of flow and orderliness, this work has been divided into five chapters with a general scheme at the beginning to direct the reader. The first chapter will present the theoretical views of justice according to John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen and Michael Walzer. As explained in the work, justice for Ronald Dworkin would mean nothing but the sovereign virtue of every political society and the government therefore should try to treat the citizens with equal concern and same level of respect. To achieve this, the state must distribute the resources equally to each and every member of society to enable them

¹² Tatsuo Inoue, "Justice," in *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, volume 5, eds. Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Leonardo Morlino (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), 1388.

decide the kind of life they would like to live and be responsible for their decisions. Rawls saw justice as the basic structure of society only when liberty and equality are respected. Even if there must be reasons for any kind of inequality, it must be to the good of the disadvantaged few. Amartya Sen would conceive justice as the equal capacity which every individual enjoys in society. Be that as it may, the focus should not be to enthrone a pure just society but attempt to reduce manifest injustices in the world. The last philosopher on the list, Michael Walzer subscribed that equality should follow the conventional or dominant view of justice held in each particular political society. Justice for him entails mutual respect for all persons in a political community, and the resistance to dominance by some primary goods.

While the first chapter took care of the theoretical framework about the idea of justice, the second chapter will focus on the practical application of equality in the society. The essence is to show the connection between theory and praxis in political philosophy. Reason being that “theories of distributive justice are highly artificial in a further and different way and are heavily on the furniture of fantasy.”¹³ We cannot understand any abstract political theory except in the context of real and practical political situations. After laying the foundation of justice as the dignity of every individual person, the work will proceed to state the practical examples of justice in the political society of equals.

Chapter three will concentrate on exposing the true state of justice in Nigeria. A thorough survey will show that those principles enumerated by Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, and Michael Walzer are nowhere near reality in Nigeria. The reasons for this poor run in the affairs of justice could be traced to certain challenges like religion, poor education and corruption, opposing cultural values, tribalism as well as chequered and unstable political history. The effects today are numerous ranging from poor governance, inequality, a poor health system, lack of political rights and liberty, underdevelopment, and infrastructural as well as monumental decay.

Having seen the big gap between the common conceptual core of justice and reality in Nigeria, an introspective thinking will be taken to see a possible way of bridging it. Therefore, the indefatigable powers of ideas as well as the role of education and philosophy will be considered in chapter four. The outcome would show that good ideas are capable of

¹³ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 352.

changing any society into something better and that these ideas could come through education and philosophy. While the human mind is always in search of new ideas and ways of doing things for the good of human society, philosophy and education nurture, shape and prepare the mind for this enormous task.

The final section of this work will therefore take care of my contribution towards finding the best possible way of realising justice in a multi-religious, cultural, and ethnic diverse society-Nigeria. On this basis, philosophy and education are identified as the scientific tools required in order to nurture, equip and rebuild the minds of the citizens so as to get society out of the woods and set it on the right path of justice. The relevance of sound education and philosophy understood, an attempt will be made to see how they could serve as tools in reshaping Nigerian society towards the realisation of justice. It will not be enough to point to philosophy and education as the most suitable urgent tools towards overcoming the numerous obstacles and thereby realising the reign of justice, I will also try to show how they could solve the problems experienced in political life, ethnic relationships and the religious sphere, economic development, moral and societal values, and in the area of justice. An evaluation and conclusion as well as a detailed list of the materials and sources used in the course of the work will be given.

Research questions

In the course of this scientific research, the following questions will be raised:

1. Undoubtedly, the concepts of justice and equality have dominated every discussion in our modern political society. But what do these concepts imply? What do we mean by justice and equality? When we use the word justice or equality, what does it really entail in a social-political society?
2. Can the teachings of Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Amartya Sen and Michael Walzer serve as an explanation to a balanced ideal of justice?
3. If we accept their ideas as offering a kind of balanced understanding of justice, how does it fare in Nigeria as a political society?
4. If the findings are bad, if the play of justice is nowhere closer to the ideals presented by our authors, how then could we reconstruct and get the society true to the teachings about justice?

Therefore, the above questions will form the fulcrum of this research. While an attempt will be made to answer these questions gradually, the aim will solely be to add a new knowledge to the body of existing works and offer the best possible way of realising the tenets of justice in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria.

Research outcome

While many believe that the crux of Nigeria's social political problems is as a result of non-negotiated and lack of initial arrangement between the different regions that make up the entity called Nigeria, the outcome of this doctoral research holds that no level of negotiations and agreement will bear fruit unless we first of all nurture and prepare the human minds for such a task of achieving a collective just society. The greatest problems on the path of justice are the lack of an articulate system, insufficient coherent philosophy and effective education which in reality should not only help to maintain rational cooperation, pattern of social relations among the people, motivate self-interest among the citizens but serve the aggregate interests of all Nigerian citizens. Therefore, this research will propose the need for sound education and philosophy at every stage in Nigeria as a way forward towards realising a just and equal society.¹⁴

Elucidation of terms

Justice:

The term justice is etymologically derived from the Latin word 'justitia'. According to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, justice is "the maintenance or administration of what is just esp.; by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishment; the quality of being just, impartial or fair."¹⁵ The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy defines justice as, "each getting what he or she is due". Similarly, the term justice as given by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English language means "the quality of being just; fairness. The principle of moral rightness; equity. The upholding

¹⁴ It is necessary to state that no society can lay claim to perfect equality among her members. So I do not intend to state that my contribution here would lead to a perfect just state but at least to an average level.

¹⁵ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc., Pub., 1990).

of what is just, especially fair treatment and due reward in accordance with honor, standards, or law.”¹⁶

Plato in his Republic described justice as giving to each man what is proper to him. Hence he called justice a virtue and injustice a vice. He therefore referred to justice as the excellence of the soul, and injustice as its defect.¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas “begins his discussion of the content of human iustitia by elucidating its relationship to ius; ius is what is rightly owed to another, either in accordance with the natural law or with positive law.”¹⁸ According to this scholastic philosopher, justice means the firm and constant will to give each one his due. The term justice connotes equality and is based on the fundamental equality of all men. Justice as a virtue regulates man in his relation with his fellow men. It disposes us to respect the rights of others, and to give each person his/her due. Therefore,

Justice is the virtue of acting rightly and properly with regard to others (political justice) and with regard to oneself (moral justice). Justice is also understood as the good, the appropriate, or what is right in a given situation. The claim that justice is to give each his/her own expresses the aspiration for justice as equity.¹⁹

In its fullest and proper sense, justice as a virtue governs only relationships of free and equal citizens within a polis.²⁰ It could also be said that “justice is the central ethical judgement regarding the effects of society on the situation of social entities, with respect to each entity’s valuation of its own situation for its own purposes.”²¹ Also, “justice thus occupies a key position among virtues.”²² It could be defined as the “moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the ‘virtue of religion.’ Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good.”²³ Hence, we can understand better while Aristotle described

¹⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996).

¹⁷ Cf. Plato, *the Republic, Book I*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, 1817-1893 (Boston: A Squid Ink Classic, 2016), 10-32.

¹⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1998), 198.

¹⁹ Roger Berkowitz, “Justice,” in *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought, volume IV*, Gui-Len, editor-in-chief, Michael T. Gibbons, associate editors, Diana Coole, Elisabeth Ellis, and Kennan Ferguson (West Sussex UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2015), 1968.

²⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 121.

²¹ Serge-Christophe Kolm, “Distributive Justice,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 438.

²² Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 106.

²³ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, rev. ed., Chapter One, the Dignity of the Human Person. Part Three, Life in Christ, Section One, Man’s Vocation Life In The Spirit. Article 7, The Virtues (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), nos.1807, 1836.

justice as the first virtue of political life. Consequently, when practical agreement on a definite conception of justice is found wanting in a society, such a society then lacks the basic requirement for political society.²⁴

Nonetheless, the word justice could be used in various ways. First of all, it could mean admissible pattern which makes distribution of benefits (like income), disadvantages (loss), and social structures (laws for instance) morally right. Secondly, justice could sometimes mean legality or legitimate power which forbids an individual from forcefully interfering in another person's life. Thirdly, justice could also be understood as comparative fairness which ensures that each person gets a share of his or due in the society. Fourthly, justice could connote fairness, in the sense that it entails giving each individual what is due. Lastly, justice could mean what we as moral persons owe each other. It enforces that we respect each other's fundamental rights.²⁵ As explained by John Rawls, "many different kinds of things are said to be just and unjust: not only laws, institutions, and social systems, but also particular actions of many kinds, including decisions, judgments, and imputations. We also call the attitudes and dispositions of persons, and persons themselves, just and unjust."²⁶ Justice could be formal or procedural and substantive.

FORMAL/ PROCEDURAL JUSTICE: formal justice ensures that the principles of justice are applied impartially and consistently. It doesn't matter if the principles are just or not. Procedural justice is that which concerns the process that is due people before certain major decisions that will seriously affect them are taken.

SUBSTANTIVE JUSTICE could be understood in the domain of rights. It specifies what members of a community can legitimately demand from the government or one another. This could include for example, promoting equality and safeguarding their liberty).²⁷ Substantive justice focuses on the substantive rights (for instance, right to freedom of speech) and duties that a person has; it could also be the right a 'promisee' has against a 'promisor' that he or she keeps a promise.

²⁴ Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 244.

²⁵ Cf. Peter Vallentyne, "Distributive Justice," in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd ed., eds. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Petit and Thomas Pogge (Malden USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1993, 2007), 548.

²⁶ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. 6.

²⁷ Cf. Robert Audi, general ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

There are four classical types or different kinds of Substantive justice namely: rectificatory (retributive and compensatory), commutative, distributive and political justice. These are the various contexts in which we can talk about justice.

1. JUSTICE-DISTRIBUTIVE; This aspect of justice specifies the appropriate means of distributing goods, duties and services, that is, who gets what (benefits and burdens). In other words, distributive justice lays down those principles which regulate just distribution of social goods or services and burdens. The goal of distributive justice is to make sure all members receive their due.²⁸ A common basis of distributive justice is that persons should be treated equally. Distributive justice “is concerned simply with what we would normally call ‘fair shares’. Distributive justice must not be equated with giving of equal shares.”²⁹ Distributive justice also involves the role of the state in correcting inequality, creating and maintaining a strong balance between a distributive system and the maximizing the well-being of her members.

Distributive justice concerns the distribution of goods that individuals need to lead good lives. The problem of distributive justice can be divided into four major sub questions: what goods should count when asking whether distributive justice has been achieved; what is the proper measure of a just distribution; by what mechanism should the goods be distributed; and what is the relevant community in which to measure the distribution?

2. Rectificatory justice has two subheadings: retributive and compensatory justice.

2.1 JUSTICE RETRIBUTIVE (Justice, Rectificatory). This type of justice seeks to rectify situation where someone has been unfairly or unjustly treated. It also seeks to regain an equality which has been overturned by an act of injustice and the offender rightly punished.³⁰ Retributive justice is a response to criminal wrong doing which is often summarised in the principle of retaliation as ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’. Retributive justice is based on the thought that when a person commits a criminal act, he or she deserves to be punished. Retributive justice is the normal legal sense “in which it is held to be just that an

²⁸ Cf. Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 433.

²⁹ Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy. A Practical Approach* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 135.

³⁰ Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 433.

offender should be punished but is also held that justice demands that the punishment is proportionate to the offence.”³¹

Rectification implies taking from the offender and giving to the injured party. Retribution as a perfect way of regaining justice is not always feasible or practical (example, in the case of death) but however it concentrates to see that justice is served to offence which may ‘cry out’ for punishment. Rectificatory sometimes called corrective justice.³²

2.2 COMPENSATORY JUSTICE is a response to private law wrongs- torts or breaches of contract. Compensatory justice can be conceived under the heading of damages in contract and tort law. The general idea is that the wrongdoer (someone who breaches his or her duty) should make the victim whole. The sole idea of compensatory justice is to compensate a victim in order to make up for the damage done to him.

3. POLITICAL JUSTICE. This area can be divided into contributive justice and justice in ruling. Contributive justice deals with what individuals owe the society in which they live, whereas justice in ruling, deals with what rulers owe the society they govern. There are three major things that the citizens owe the society in which they live- taxes, labour and general obedience to law.³³

4. COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, the term justice-commutative is derived from Aristotle via Aquinas for the restoration of justice by means of exchange or payment. Justice in exchange or commutative requires that agreements and exchanges be fair. For example, in the work context, employers must pay fair wages to employees and treat them with respect in the workplace, and employees must do their work conscientiously.

Although the explication of terms has looked into the various understanding of justice, focus will be more on distributive justice. That is to say, what we morally owe each other and what the government owes its citizens as members of the political community. Our topic, however as John Rawls would explain, is that of social justice which regulates or determines the basic structure of society.³⁴

³¹ Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy. A Practical Approach*, 135.

³² Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 433.

³³ Alec D. Walen “Justice”, in *Encyclopedia of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1, 463-465.

³⁴ J Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, Rev. ed.*, 6.

Equality:

The *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines equality as the "quality or state of being equal."³⁵ The term equality is derived from the Latin word 'aequus' meaning level or even and is regarded by many as one of the most debatable great social ideals. In such a manner, one can say that the use of the term equality is often ambiguous despite its almost unanimous approval and popular usage. However, the question that confronts everyone at the mention of this word equality is: who needs to be equal? How do you measure equality? Equality of aggregate or persons and in what respects are these people equal? And what relation does equality have to justice?³⁶ How can society make the citizens equal as demanded by distributive justice? Can people actually be equal in the human society? The words of Brian Barry could be employed to offer a succinct answer to this confusion: "let me make it clear that 'equal' should not be understood rigidly as 'identical'. It simply means that attainments should be equivalent."³⁷

Equality however in the abstract sense makes sure that people who in all relevant respects share both moral and political similarities should be treated equal and alike. However, the issue depends on what counts as relevant similarity in a society, and also what it means to treat people similar. What then should determine equality in a society? Could a society that guarantees citizens' fundamental, legal and political right be judged equal or could it demand more by making all conditions for living equal? Is a society considered equal enough when her members enjoy the same basic political and legal rights, or should it extend to equal conditions that lead to people's wellbeing? This shows that complete equality among citizens is not possible, but the concern should be to reduce or ameliorate inequality.³⁸

What does philosophy mean?

What really is philosophy or what does philosophy as a discipline entail, is a question that stares everyone in the face whenever the word philosophy is mentioned. Just like the concept of justice, philosophy has enjoyed wide and diverse definitions from people of different epochs, cultures and religions. Philosophy happens not to be a discipline with one or a homogeneously accepted definition but based on how people conceive it. "But there is no

³⁵ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.

³⁶ Michael J. Illuzzi, "Equality," in *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought, volume III*, E-Gua, 1126.

³⁷ Brian Barry: *Why Social Justice Matters* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 2005), 47.

³⁸ Cf. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 248.

universally agreed field, or subject matter or method, in philosophy. The nature and function of philosophy is itself a kind of philosophical problem.”³⁹ Be that as it may, philosophy *ab initio* began as a result of man’s wonder and desire to understand the world in which he lives. The Ionian Philosophers who kick-started the philosophical pendulum were spurred by the intention to explain the existence of the universe and things in it.

The word philosophy comes from two Greek words Φίλος ‘Philos’ meaning ‘loving or love’ or ‘philein’- ‘love of’ and Σοφία Sophia which means ‘wisdom’. Etymologically taken φιλοσοφία (philo-sophia) or philosophy would mean ‘love of wisdom’. In the strict sense of the etymology, philosophy could be said to be an intellectual activity or enquiry which enables the human person to go in search or pursuit of wisdom as its lover, to come up with ideals so as to actualise his potentials and aspirations. It makes the possessor more rational and critical towards his environment, society and everything around it. It sets in man the rational yearning for knowledge and wisdom. Philosophy could be described from this point as a pacesetter and fire that ignites the human mind in search of ultimate truth. As a social science, philosophy could be said to be descriptive, speculative, critical, analytic as well as systematic.

Philosophy is “the study of the nature and meaning of the universe and of human life; a particular set or system of beliefs resulting from the search for knowledge about life and the universe.”⁴⁰ Philosophy is also defined as “the study of the most general and abstract features of the world and categories with which we think: mind, matter, reason, proof, truth, etc. In philosophy, the concepts with which we approach the world themselves become the topic of enquiry.”⁴¹ According to Kwasi Wiredu, Philosophy could be defined as an “analytic and rational investigation aimed at providing one with a fundamental outlook to life.”⁴² Supporting this idea, Glenn Langford, stated that “philosophy is that activity through which the meaning of statements is revealed or determined. By means of philosophy statements are explained, by means of science they are verified.”⁴³ Consequently, we can say that

³⁹ Louis Arnaud Reid, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1962), 3.

⁴⁰ Leonie Hey and Suzanne Holloway, eds., *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2015.

⁴¹ Simon Blackburn, “Philosophy,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 286.

⁴² S. I. Udoidem, *Understanding Philosophy* (Lagos: Africa Heritage Research and Publications, 1992), 6.

⁴³ Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan Education, 1968), 21.

philosophy because of this power of analysis and investigation provides a good foundation for studying any other academic discipline and other professions that deal with the human intellect. Philosophy is also an art of thinking and its sole aim is to cultivate and train one's judgment through analysis. It is on this sense that Philosophy could be defined as “a long and difficult discipline of analytical and perhaps constructive logical thinking.”⁴⁴ Philosophy is an attitude towards life and makes man more intelligible, more meaningful, and purposeful. It does this by helping the human person to clarify, justify and verify issues, concepts, principles and ideas critically.

Meaning of education

Education etymologically, emanates from the Latin terms ‘Educare, Educere and Educatum’. The word ‘Educare’ means to ‘form, mould or to train’, to put in, it could also mean bringing up, leading or to drawing out; or ‘educere’ to lead out while “educatum” stands for the act of teaching. “At its Greek and Latin roots, the word education refers to a ‘bringing forward’ or ‘flowering’. The idea is to reach inside and withdraw the potential for understanding. Thus, education can be defined as the process by which individuals come to understand a topic or condition more fully.”⁴⁵

The German word for education ‘Bildung’ which comes from the verb ‘bilden’ when translated could mean; to form, make, to create, to bring forth, to produce or form something from something, to make someone wiser.⁴⁶ This pushed further implies that education is more than the mere acquisition of knowledge but that which creates, forms, brings forth the best from someone, develops personality or talent and makes one wiser. It does not limit itself only to the development of individual skills, but necessitates the development of the whole person.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Louis Arnaud Reid, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction*, xiii.

⁴⁵ James W. Guthrie, editor in chief, “Preface” in *Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, AACSB-Commerce (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2003), vii.

⁴⁶ Gerhard Wahrig, *dtv-Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1978), 161 -etwas erzeugen, machen, schaffen, hervorbringen.

Susanne Balhar, Frank Mönkemöller, Elke Hippe, Silke Löhle, Martina Lacatena, Lydia Quaas, Ulrich Saßmann, Julia Wießmüller, Bearbeiter, *Pons Großwörterbuch, Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Sprachen, 2004), 197, -etwas aus etwas herstellen oder formen.

Dudenredaktion, *Duden Wörterbuch, Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Deutsch für die Grund- und Mittelstufe* (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut F. A Brockhaus AG, 2003), 174, -formen, klüger machen (translations are mine).

⁴⁷ Cf. Heiner Hastedt, *Was ist Bildung? Eine Textanthologie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2012), 11. (Translation mine).

The Igbo word for education ‘Nkuzi’ with its nuances, ‘to tinker, to shape, to bring into order’-(ikuzi ihe), to ‘educate, nurture or teach’- (ikuziri mmadu ihe) shows that education of any sort has to do with tinkering and ability to maleate a rough object into straight and smooth form. It also implies the ability to teach and impart any form or kind of knowledge or skill to others. Contextually, the word ‘Nkuzi’ which could also be translated as moulding or forming (ikpuzi, ikuzi ma obu ikpu ihe), shows that education does not only impart knowledge, but forms the human person and moulds him to a better responsible being ready to advance the course of his humanity, achieve his aspirations and equips him with the requirements to carter for his social needs. This idea tallies with that of Fagothey who held education “to mean any process of training the physical, mental, and moral powers of a human being to render him fit for the duties of life.”⁴⁸ Education is also:

The aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops ability, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives; the social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment (especially that of school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development; the art of making available to each generation the organised knowledge of the past.⁴⁹

John Dewey defined education as “the process or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values beliefs, and habits. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves.”⁵⁰ This is called self-education.

⁴⁸ A. Fagothey, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice, 2nd ed.* (Missouri: The C.V. Mosby Company, 1959), 433.

⁴⁹ Carter V. Good, ed. *Dictionary of Education, 2nd ed.* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), 191.

⁵⁰ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 2001), 1.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON THE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

1.1 Introduction

The issue of justice has been subject to debate among philosophers. Interestingly, many political philosophers right from the ancient up till the contemporary period have come up with similar or related, differing as well as conflicting viewpoints on the same and single concept of justice. According to Adam Swift, “political philosophers have given equality a hard time. Nearly all agree with the principle that members of a political community should be treated as equals, that the state should treat its citizens with equal concern and respect. What they disagree about is what ‘treatment as an equal’ amounts to.”⁵¹ We must have one thing in mind, and that is: despite their dissenting voices and no matter the conceptual differences and deliberations, the goal of this political enterprise has always remained an attempt or a sincere effort to fashion a society where the citizens could live a normal, just and equal life.

Having given a background idea of the project at the introductory part of this work, I now turn to the theoretical conceptions of justice. The purpose of this chapter is to make a study of some theories and principles of justice by some prominent political philosophers through which a society could be regulated in order to achieve a more just society; and thereafter a critical evaluation of their different contributions to the situation under study. The concept of justice here will be focused mainly on the theoretical ideas of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen and Michael Walzer. Since no three makes an Island, their different contributions will be incorporated in order to complement each other or make up for deficiencies on the same issue of justice.

1.2 John Rawls’s theory of justice and his political liberalism

John (Jack) Bordley Rawls is considered as one who revolutionised the discussion about justice in the contemporary era. John Rawls’s aim was to construct and present a universalistic concept of justice which would carry to a higher level the efforts made by past political philosophers like Locke, Kant and Rousseau. Rawls sees justice as the basic structure and his conception is not in conflict with the traditional notion but only has a

⁵¹ Adam Swift, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners’ Guide for Students and Politicians*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014) 13.

political undertone. He “explicitly sees his project in a theory of justice as attempting to overcome the difficulties that previous forms of SCT (social contract theories) encountered.”⁵² His foundational idea is that Justice must be conceived in its demand of fairness. He situates the equality, freedom and rights of citizens within the framework of fairness and equality of opportunity, hence his famous dictum ‘*justice as fairness*’.

John Rawls, in his book ‘A Theory of Justice’ formulated conditions for the basic structure of society. He asserts: “one practicable aim of justice as fairness is to provide an acceptable philosophical and moral basis for democratic institutions and thus to address the question of how the claims of liberty and equality are to be understood.”⁵³ Further, justice as fairness should be seen as a form of ‘political liberalism’. “Political liberalism assumes that, for political purposes, a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines is the normal result of the exercise of human reason within the framework of the free institutions of a constitutional democratic regime.”⁵⁴ His major task is to formulate principles of justice which should regulate a political society. Hence, he tries to free his theory from all metaphysical, religious and moral disputes which occupied previous theories. He clearly expresses this point thus:

One thing I failed to say in ‘a theory of justice’, or failed to stress sufficiently is that justice as fairness is intended as a political conception of justice. Conception of justice is, of course a moral conception, it is a moral conception worked out for a specific kind of subject, namely for political, social, and economic institutions. In particular justice as fairness is framed to apply to what I have called the ‘basic structure’ of a modern constitutional democracy.⁵⁵

Justice for Rawls remains the first virtue of social institutions - that which is just and fair. No matter how elegant and economical a theory might be, we must reject it if it is untrue. Truth and justice are uncompromising because they are the first virtues of human activities. “Each human person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. Therefore, in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political

⁵² Eric Thomas, Weber, *Dewey, and Constructivism. On the Epistemology of Justice Rawls* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 8-9. (Words in bracket mine).

⁵³ J. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 5.

⁵⁴ J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xvii-xxix.

⁵⁵ J. Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical,” in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol.14 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 224.

bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.”⁵⁶ The implication is that each person has the equal right to achieve their desires and therefore a society should be organized in a way that all its members can, in principle, realize their aims. A just society is not achieved when the greatest number of individuals satisfy their desires, but rather when each person in society has the same chance to realize what they strive for.⁵⁷

The three fundamental ideas of Rawls political construct for an egalitarian society are that citizens should be free, equal and also enjoy a fairness in a democratic society. As Eliane Saade’, would put it; “Rawls belongs to the liberal school thought focusing on the importance of liberty and equal rights. He compiled a contractarian theory of justice whose principles must be accepted by all members of society in order to be applied.”⁵⁸ Thus: “In justice as fairness persons accept in advance a principle of equal liberty and they do this without a knowledge of their more particular ends. They implicitly conform their conceptions of their good to what principles of justice require.”⁵⁹ The practical purpose of justice as fairness is to present a public conception of justice that will be shared by members of a political society under the guidance of reason and mutual agreement.

1.2.1 The original position and reflective equilibrium

Rawls’s first preoccupation is to determine how certain principles of justice would be agreed upon and accepted in a well-defined initial situation. These “principles on the list have to meet five formal criteria: generality, universality, publicity, ordering and finality.”⁶⁰ These principles give basis to the rational choice of persons in this initial situation to ensure the fair terms of social co-operation. As Rawls stated, “this idea is introduced in order to work out which traditional conception of justice, or which variant of one of those conception, specifies the most appropriate principles for realizing liberty and equality once society is viewed as a fair system of cooperation between free and equal citizens.”⁶¹ Rawls therefore

⁵⁶ Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 3-4.

⁵⁷ Cf. Eliane Saade’, ‘The Concept of Justice and Equality,’ In *On the Dispute Between John Rawls and Gerald Cohen*, eds. Herlinde Pauer-Studer, Neil Roughley, Peter Schaber, and Ralf Stoecker (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 29.

⁵⁸ Eliane Saade’, “The concept of justice and Equality,” in *On the Dispute between John Rawls and Gerald Cohen*, 2.

⁵⁹ P. Hayden, *John Rawls Towards a Just World Order* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 32.

⁶⁰ Robert S. Taylor, *Reconstructing Rawls. The Kantian Foundations of Justice as Fairness* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 29.

⁶¹ J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 22.

proposes a thought experiment in which we should imagine the principles of justice being chosen from a fair initial choice situation without bias. Rawls calls this purely hypothetical choice situation the 'original position.'⁶²

In place of the original contract put forward by several contract theories, Rawls delineates the original position as "the initial situation of justice as fairness."⁶³ This original position under a veil of ignorance should serve as a model of representation for all liberal societies.⁶⁴ All the parties in this contract approach are bound and controlled by the agreed principles of justice. By "original position", Rawls means:

The appropriate initial status quo which ensures that the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair. It seems reasonable to suppose that the parties in the original position are equal. That is, all have the same rights in the procedure for choosing principles; each can make proposals, submit reasons for their acceptance, and so on. Obviously the purpose of these conditions is to represent equality between human beings as moral persons, as creatures having a conception of their good and capable of a sense of justice.⁶⁵

The original position as conceived by Rawls represents the state of affairs in which the parties involved are represented as equal free, rational and moral persons. Their decision nonetheless, should not be influenced by their social conditions, individual motives or external forces. He regarded the original position is the most fitting elucidation of the initial status quo from which people enter into an agreement on the principles of social justice. Hence, Rawls's interest was to model the short-comings of the social contract theory which he sees as being too particular.

However, Rawls uses different terms to classify what he meant by the original position in his past and recent works. Sometimes, he calls it 'a moral point of view', 'a status quo'. At other times, he calls it a 'device of representation', 'a framework of deliberation' or as 'a construction'. These terms are not in any way contradictory but give more meaning to the concept. Rawls succinctly explains that "the original position serves as a unifying idea by which our considered convictions at all levels of generality are brought to bear on one another so as to achieve greater mutual agreement and self-understanding."⁶⁶ Nevertheless,

⁶² Cf. Jon Mandle, *Rawls's-A theory of justice. An introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13.

⁶³ J. Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 20.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. Rawls, *The Law of the Peoples with 'the Idea of Public Reason Revisited* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 30.

⁶⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 15-17.

⁶⁶ J. N. Ekennia, *African Modernity Crisis* (Benin: Barloz Publishers, 2000), 82.

moral persons in the original position replete with the sense of justice are to rationally deliberate on issues so as to arrive at a well-ordered society.

Patrick Hayden lending support to Rawls wrote: “The original position is a purely hypothetical state of affairs in which all the members of a particular society are free, rational, equal and concerned to further their own interests. They are to choose once and for all what is to count in their society as just and unjust.”⁶⁷ Simply said, the parties in this original position are described as rational autonomous representatives of their subjects or social groups. This initial status quo accords the parties involved knowledge of general facts about social and political life, but not of the specific position they would be occupying in the political society. The original position accords us the ability to envision our objectives from afar without atom of prejudices and restraint or bias. Humans have identity of interests and full of conflicts, hence there must be circumstance of justice where these interests are harnessed and through principles better social arrangements are designed.

In the original position, parties most times are faced with discrepancies and disconcerting interests. Rawls aware of the conflicts that could arise within the course of this political dialogue developed the idea of ‘reflective equilibrium’. In such a case, Rawls holds that our only choice should be to resort to this ‘reflective equilibrium’ for solution. By this he means a situation where we keep readjusting and modifying our convictions of justice.

We can either modify the account of the initial situation or we can revise our existing judgments, for even the judgments we take provisionally as fixed points are liable to revision. By going back and forth, sometimes altering the conditions of the contractual circumstances, at others withdrawing our judgments and conforming them to principle, I assume that eventually we will find a description of the initial situation that both expresses reasonable conditions and yields principles which match our considered judgments duly pruned and adjusted.⁶⁸

He calls it equilibrium because the different principles and judgement at last coincide. It helps the parties to know what principles their judgements conform to. Reflective equilibrium helps the parties to arrive at accepted and justified conclusions on how the institutionalised society should be regulated. “A situation of reflective equilibrium is one in which the principles which would be chosen in the original position are identical with those that match our considered judgements and thus these principles describe our sense of justice.

⁶⁷ P. Hayden; *John Rawls, Towards a Just World Order*, 19.

⁶⁸ J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 18.

In this matching process one tries to see how a subject could fit its various convictions into one coherent scheme.”⁶⁹

Rawls agreed that this process of mutual readjustment- reflective equilibrium- is never stable as the judgement could be upset by further examination of the conditions in agreement. Timely revision of the judgement is therefore part and parcel of the contract and is usually enshrined in the agreement. This re-examination or revision of judgements could lead to further conflicts but Rawls encourages us not to be worried. Our concentration at each moment or at that moment is to do what we are supposed to do so as to arrive at coherent and justifiable convictions of social justice. “In reflective equilibrium all of one’s beliefs, all levels of generality, cohere perfectly with one another. Though perfect reflective equilibrium is unattainable, we can use the method of reflective equilibrium to get closer to it and so increase the justifiability of our beliefs.”⁷⁰ By following the process of reflective equilibrium, then it is possible for us to arrive at, in Rawls’ opinion, a ‘match’ between our respective ideals, rational principles, sensible conditions, and carefully thought judgements. Even though Rawls acknowledged that our society is pluralistic, his aim was to arrive at a unique and singular perception about justice. Rawls does not say that there is a singularity that the principles we have once achieved would remain so forever. Thus, this makes reflective equilibrium a continuous and indefinite struggle but however, this does not eliminate the possibility of arriving at success.⁷¹ The implication is that no one has the power to alter the outcome of the reflexive equilibrium unless reviewed and reshaped by all. However, arriving at a point of reflexive equilibrium does not necessarily entail that the proceedings are right or just, but that each member has given his position and a reasonable agreement reached.

1.2.2 Veil of ignorance

To achieve fair and just principles of social justice, the parties in the original position are situated in what Rawls described as a ‘veil of ignorance’- a situation where the parties are deprived of certain information. “The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of

⁶⁹ Percy B. Lehning, *John Rawls, An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 35.

⁷⁰J. Rawls in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. First published Tue Mar 25, 2008; Substantive revision, Mon Jan 9, 2017. Accessed 20/01/2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/#TwoPriJusFai>.

⁷¹ Cf. Eric Thomas, *Weber, Rawls, Dewey, and Constructivism. On the Epistemology of Justice*, 102.

principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances.”⁷² This is to avoid any kind of bargaining among them where selfish and personal aggrandizement will reign. “They do not know how the various alternatives will affect their own particular case and they are obliged to evaluate principles solely on the basis of general considerations.”⁷³ The essence of this ‘veil of ignorance’ is to get rid of all kinds of social advantages, intellectual and historical standings as well as to curtail the self-interest of the parties. Since in this situation, no one knows what the principles will be, the parties in the original position are advised to make a thorough rational deliberation before the formulation of any principle.

According to Rawls, it is assumed that the parties under the veil of ignorance are devoid of particular facts. Their social and economic positions, class, intellectual and physical strength, endowments, talents, capabilities and specific environment are hidden from them. Rawls goes further to state that none knows “his conception of the good, the particulars of his rational plan of life, or even the special features of his psychology such as his aversion to risk or liability to optimism or pessimism. I assume that the parties do not know the particular circumstances of their own society.”⁷⁴ Robert S. Taylor explains it this way: “Nothing is revealed to parties in the OP (original position) except general facts and scientific theories about human society as well as knowledge of their own motivation, which is given by the thin theory of the good.”⁷⁵ They are to operate as equal rational persons with no particular interests but the collective good. Hayden describes it as follows:

The veil of ignorance provides part of the sense in which all the parties in the original position are equal, for the veil of ignorance removes from consideration all personal characteristics, which serve to differentiate one person from another and it eliminates knowledge of natural and social factors that set persons at odds. The veil of ignorance also serves to ensure that the choice of principles is impartial or unbiased. Thus, nobody is able to tailor principles to favour the particular circumstances of his or her own case.⁷⁶

⁷² J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 11.

⁷³ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 118.

⁷⁴ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 118. Particular circumstances could include one’s economy (income or wealth, career), culture, political situation, and personal characteristics of one’s parents, religion or generation.

⁷⁵ Robert S. Taylor, *Reconstructing Rawls. The Kantian Foundations of Justice as Fairness*, 32-33.

“The thin theory of goods by Rawls is meant to fill the motivational lacuna for parties in the Original Position and to do so in a way that reflects our autonomy. Thin theory of the good has three tightly intertwined motivational components: the three regulative interests (principal), the social primary goods (derived) and mutual disinterest (interpersonal).” Cf. Robert S. Taylor, *Reconstructing Rawls*, 35.

⁷⁶ P. Hayden, *John Rawls Towards a Just World Order*, 19-20.

Granted that the parties are denied specific information about themselves, nonetheless they are supposed to have enough knowledge to weigh the alternatives set before them. Their objectives should include expanding their opportunities in the society, protecting their liberties, and enlarging the avenues that will promoting their goals. Nevertheless, Rawls maintains further that this lack of information applies also to contingencies which lure men to manipulate circumstances to their selfish interest. Going further, Rawls envisages the case of uncertainties in choosing these principles under the veil of ignorance. To grapple with these uncertainties, he said: “for the most part I will suppose that the parties possess all general information. No general facts are closed to them. I do this mainly to avoid complications. Nevertheless a conception of justice is to be the public basis of the terms of social cooperation.”⁷⁷ Irrespective of the open general basis, the restriction must be such that the principles are always chosen; and once chosen, and the veil of ignorance removed, it cannot be altered. In a more serious sense, the veil of ignorance is an important device of representation, which serves as a model for formulating a universal and un-assumed principle which will be in favour of all.

1.2.3 The principles of justice.

John Rawls understands and sees justice more from the role its principles play. The principles of justice are to assign rights and duties to members and define the most suitable means of distributing social goods. As stated by Rawls, the task of the persons or parties in the original position is to construct through a process of deliberation, the basic structure of society.⁷⁸ In order to arrive at what he called the ‘Archimedean point’ that will regulate the basic structure of society, he went on to formulate two principles of justice for social institutions and for individuals. These principles are to guide the operation of justice in the community.

First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle,

⁷⁷ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 122-123.

⁷⁸ Rawls regards the ‘basic structure of society’ as the primary subject of justice. It constitutes agreed sets of rules which defines the scheme of social activities, which role people should play towards achieving societal goals and the merits attached to such.

and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.⁷⁹

While the first principle about equal basic liberties is concerned with the political institution, the second principle is focused on the economical aspect. The two principles of justice are to regulate basic structure of society, support, as well as distribute certain primary goods which every man is presumed to want. The chief primary or social primary goods include liberties, opportunities, rights, income and wealth. The other primary or natural goods are vigour and health, intelligence and imagination. The two principles should regulate the basic institutions that realize these values. They are to regulate institutions and also specify sorts of social contracts and social cooperation that can be agreed upon. “All social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone’s advantage.”⁸⁰ This regulation should not only be restricted to issues of liberty, social opportunities or wealth distribution but all aspects of equality. “Rawls advises us to regard the two principles of justice as the ‘maximin’ solution to the problem of social justice. The choice of these principles is purely based on rational considerations.”⁸¹ The principles are to eliminate all sorts of social inequalities as Rawls opined.

Further, the two principles are to serve the following purposes:

- a. First of all, they should secure fair value of the political liberties, so that these are not purely formal. A political society ought to secure for the members the social bases of their mutual self-respect, equal basic rights and liberties and finally good of justice.
- b. Fair equality of opportunity (and again not purely formal) and pure procedural justice.⁸² This deals with the role of the principle of fair opportunity in other to ensure that the

⁷⁹ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 266 and 53 (the final version of the principles in page 266 of *A Theory of Justice*). The initial formulation of the two principles in page 53 of ‘A theory of justice’ reads as follows. “First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.” Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 53.

Difference principle is “a strongly egalitarian conception in the sense that unless there is a distribution that makes both persons better off (limiting ourselves to the two-person case for simplicity), an equal distribution is to be preferred.” Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 65-66.

The difference principle permits inequalities provided it is to the advantage of the worst off or the least advantaged.

⁸⁰ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 54.

⁸¹ J. N. Ekennia, *African Modernity Crisis*, 89.

⁸² Pure procedural justice means a set of fair procedures or systems which must be followed duly when there is no independent criterion for determining distribution. However, it does not guarantee that the outcome will be fair or correct but satisfies the parties because the appropriate procedures have been followed to a just level.

system of cooperation is one of pure procedural justice and unless this condition is satisfied, then distributive justice could not be left to take care of itself.

- c. Finally, the so-called democratic equality and difference principle, which holds that social and economic inequalities are to be adjusted no matter how small or big if only, they are to the greatest benefit of the worst off members of the society.⁸³

Rawls also considers these two principles of social justice to be able to make members treat each other not as means but ends in themselves. Miller captures this point when he says that: “The impetus behind Rawls’s contractual theory of justice is recognition that utilitarianism cannot accommodate our firmly held conviction that each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice even the welfare of the society whole override.”⁸⁴ Therefore, once the principles are chosen under the veil of ignorance by parties in the original position, they cannot be changed. However, since individuals are part of the society, Rawls believed that the principles should not only centre on the institution of society, but he went on to give some principles that should guide individuals in the basic structure of society.

1.2.4 A well-ordered society

A well-ordered society as the goal of John Rawls’s theory of justice is a society that would be successfully regulated by a public political conception of justice. It is a society designed to advance the good of its members. By a well ordered society, Rawls meant a society in which every member of the society rationally accepts the same principles of justice; a situation where the basic social institutions of the society satisfy and are also publicly accepted to satisfy the fruits of the dialogue in an original position – that is, the principles of justice.

To say that a society is well-ordered implies three things: First of all, it refers to a society in which every member accepts, and knows that everyone else accepts, the very same idea of justice. Secondly, it shows how society’s basic structure is publicly acknowledged, or with good reason accepted, to satisfy the two principles of justice. And thirdly, implies a society in which the citizens understand and are regulated effectively by the sense of justice. A society that permits her members to understand and apply the public recognised principles of justice with its corresponding duties and obligations.⁸⁵

⁸³ J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 8. (Additions are mine.)

⁸⁴ M. David, *Social Justice* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 46.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 8-9.

A well-ordered society is a society in which the members possess a deep and effective yearning to act according to the principles of justice. Moreover, in such a society, every individual rational understanding of what is good aligns with the collective plan of the larger political community. This means that everyone is to accept and be guided by those designed principles of justice. A vital characteristic of a well-ordered society is that its general conception of justice forms a shared basis for all social cooperation and respective political evaluations.⁸⁶ Each one of them cooperates socially and politically in a just manner. The idea of a well-ordered society is harmonized in the original position through the principles of justice which are to regulate the basic institutions.

1.2.5 Overlapping consensus

In human society, everyone despite the accepted principles has a personal conception of what justice entails. Consequently, there would also be conflict of claims and what living a good life would imply in a pluralistic society like ours. Our desires and goals as a result of the pluralistic nature of the society differ. Interests will always overlap and lead to conflicts. To make sure that a well-ordered society is constantly unified and kept stable, Rawls introduces another basic idea of political liberalism namely: ‘overlapping consensus.’⁸⁷ There would always be areas where our individual interests could overlap, hence there is need for us to form a consensus on the areas of justice and rights in order to achieve stability. The overlapping consensus makes the concept of a well-ordered society not just only more realistic but helps it to adjust to all historical and social conditions required in a pluralistic society. The affirmed rational social doctrines foster social unity and the course of the overlapping consensus gives rooms for members to modify their desires or interests. The stability of a well-ordered society could be achieved when the different doctrines that make up the consensus are endorsed by the members of the society who are politically active and the conditions or demands of justice do not conflict so much with their individual key interest as designed and accepted by their social encouragements.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 49.

⁸⁷ Overlapping Consensus is a consensus in which in a pluralistic society who conflict as a result of their divergent desires come together to endorse comprehensive doctrines of the same political conception justice in order to maintain fairness and political stability. Cf. Derek Matravers and Jon Pike eds., *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (Oxfordshire: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group in association with the Open University, 2003), 169.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. Rawls, *Political Pluralism*, 25-134

He maintains that when we are faced with the real world, we find it difficult to hold onto the general accepted notion of political justice due to the fact of pluralism. Members of a pluralistic society do not always share the same single and all-embracing doctrine of justice and will have need once in a while to rationally renegotiate with one another. So to speak, “we assume the fact of reasonable pluralism to be a permanent feature of a democratic society.”⁸⁹ Consequently, citizens do this to affirm two distinct although closely related views; namely the same political conception of justice they all affirm and the opposing comprehensive doctrines, religious, philosophical and moral, found in society. The aim of overlapping consensus is simply to bring stability in a free society. The idea of overlapping consensus is designed to help divergent communities to arrive at some practical principles that do not contradict and neither imposes some principles on others in a pluralistic society. The public use of reason should help in overcoming challenges of overlapping consensus.

1.3 Ronald Dworkin’s theory of equality

Ronald Dworkin, regarded as a luck egalitarian philosopher and as one of the most influential as well as leading contemporary political and legal philosophers, followed the footpath of John Rawls in probing deeply into the problem of justice in liberal society. He was however disappointed with the lexical order in which Rawls prioritised liberty over justice. Dworkin however believes that the concept of equality is a contested one and this is shown by the variety of answers from political philosophers who have either defended or disparaged equality. He tried to develop a comprehensive liberal theory of justice because he conceived equality as an endangered species of political ideals. Therefore, Dworkin based his “own theory of equality, which draws on the idea of an abstract right to equal concern and respect and is realised through his account of equality of resources.”⁹⁰ The concept of equality for him is essential in understanding the whole theme of justice. Hence, every discussion about justice must begin with equality and the individual’s good life in the society was his concern. Thus he posited, that no political community can turn its back on equality for any reason. Equal concern remains the sovereign virtue of a political community and hence every government he said, must show equal concern for the fate of its citizens and distribute the nation’s wealth equally. Failure to do so is tantamount to tyranny. Implicitly

⁸⁹ J. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 33.

⁹⁰ Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin’s Theory of Equality: Domestic and Global Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3.

a government is illegitimate if it fails to show equal concern for the fate of all those citizens over whom it governs and from whom it demands allegiance.⁹¹

To this issue, Dworkin will introduce two general theories of ‘distributional equality’ which should guide all. First of all, people are said to be treated as equal when a distributional pattern makes sure that all social goods are distributed among members to make them equal in their welfare or well-being (this first theory he called the equality of welfare). And second theory involves a scheme of distribution which treats citizens equal when the resources are distributed to make sure that the amount of resources received by each is equal (this he called equality of resources). As the case may be, such equal concern as envisaged by Dworkin “requires that governments aim to realize, so far as possible, an ideal egalitarian distribution of resources as specified by his theory of equality of resources.”⁹² He then formulated two principles of ethical individualism which he deemed important in the discussion about equality, and also vital to any such comprehensive liberal theory.

1. The first which is the principle of equal importance holds the objective view that human life once started should be successful rather than wasted. This objective view applies to each human life.
2. The second called the principle of special responsibility holds that each person has a special and final responsibility for the success of his life.⁹³

These guiding principles Dworkin believes, place boundaries around acceptable theories of distributive justice and every distribution in the political society must be justified by how much the government respects these two fundamental principles. Government must treat the citizens with equal concern and respect also fully the responsibility and right of each member to decide for himself how to make something valuable of his life.⁹⁴ It shows the second principle of special responsibility which allows a member choose the kind of life one would like to live, also places some responsibility for the consequences of the choices we make out of those convictions or preferences or personality.

⁹¹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue, The Theory and Practise of Equality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1.

Equality represents the main political value for Dworkin. It can be said that Ronald Dworkin’s theory of equality is essential in understanding the whole theme of equality which takes into consideration even the minute details related to an individual’s life that can considerably affect his amount of resource holding in the society and thereby can lead to inequalities in the distribution of resources made.

⁹² Michael Otsuka, ‘Liberty, Equality, Envy, and Abstraction,’ in *Dworkin and his Critics with Replies by Dworkin*, ed. Justine Burley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 70.

⁹³ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 5-6.

⁹⁴ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2.

In order to resolve the challenges that could face the issue of equal concern and what it could entail, Dworkin formulated two principles that must guide every equal society.

1. Firstly, government should enact laws and policies which ensure that its citizens' fate are, so far as government can achieve this, are not sensitive to who they, namely their race, social and economic backgrounds, gender, talents, challenges, ability and incapability.
2. The second principle to solve the issue of equal concern, demands government to work, again in so far as it can achieve this, to make the fates of the citizens sensitive to the respective choices (namely; choice of impersonal and personal resources which are the metric of equality, of opportunity costs for others as the measure of anyone's holding of impersonal resources, and of a hypothetical insurance market as the model for redistributive taxation).⁹⁵

As held by Dworkin, any account of egalitarian concept of justice must consist of equality that will envisage a collective responsibility to equal concern for all citizens, and citizens' personal responsibilities in particular. Commenting on this, Jürgen Habermas stated that "Dworkin's basic norm tallies with Kant's principle of right and Rawls's first principle of justice, according to which each person has a right to equal liberties."⁹⁶ If we insist that government must ensure equality, equality of what will we be referring to? If we might be for equality, to some degree; what would we be for? Will it be equality of welfare or equality of resources?

1.3.1 Equality of what?

Almost all liberal political philosophers agree on the value of equality but there exist various conceptions and also claims from different quarters on what should be the true definition or meaning of equality. Of course, it is not always clear what those who advocate equality are after. For few people, they would want us to be equal in all respects, as this would be to eliminate the variations and differences between people which make life interesting. Since equality is a purely formal notion, it will be necessary to state in what respect equality is

⁹⁵ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 6-7. Personal resources include one's physical and mental health, his ability like physical fitness and capacities, his economy or wealth-talent, which will include his innate capacity to produce services and manufacture goods that others will pay for to have. On the other way round, impersonal resources consist of those resources that are capable of being reassigned from one individual to another person. These include the wealth and other property that one possesses, or opportunities available. Cf. *Sovereign Virtue*, 6-7.

⁹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms, Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 203.

being spoken of before any meaningful discussion about it can take place.⁹⁷ As a way of response, “Dworkin begins with the different fundamental assumption that every citizen has a highly abstract right to be treated with equal concern. His task is to work out what it means to be treated with equal concern in matters of distributive justice.”⁹⁸ Dworkin explained that there is a difference between treating citizens equally, with respect to one or another commodity or opportunity, and treating people as equals. For anyone who subscribes to the notion that people should be more equal in income believes that a community that achieves equality of income is one that really treats people as equals. But for whoever argues that people should rather be equally happy will consider differently what makes a community treat people as equals.⁹⁹ But if we subscribe to this inevitable value of equality, then what kind of equality should that be?

1.3.2 Equality of welfare

Equality of welfare holds that people must be equal in the well-being or welfare each person enjoys. This effort of making people equal in well-being, welfare or capability however must conform to some conception of what counts as well-being, opportunities or capabilities in a particular society. Should societies aim at equality in the aspect of happiness or pleasure; or aim to make people equally successful in their own lights; or equal in their opportunities for achieving happiness or well-being; or equal in their overall capabilities?. What will equality of welfare mean for such a community? This kind of equality is not easy because, “if a community set out to make people equal in any of these welfare commodities, then it would necessarily be imposing on everyone its collective judgement of what lives are good and how to live well.”¹⁰⁰

He acknowledged that people will always define equality based on what matters to them. Further, a society that considers people to have equal income will understand equality differently from the society that advocates people’s equality in the sphere of happiness. But the most important thing is to ask: which of the many different theories or distributive schemes would be the best form of equal distribution? Let us imagine a man of great wealth

⁹⁷ Cf. Anthony, O’Hear, *Education, Society and Human Nature. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* Volume 148 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 139.

⁹⁸ Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin’s Theory of Equality, Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 28.

⁹⁹ Cf. R. Dworkin, “What is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare,” in *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (summer, 1981):185-246. Accessed Feb 20, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2264894>.

¹⁰⁰ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2011), 355.

with five children say Dworkin- one blind, another a playboy with high tastes, another a prospective politician with expensive ambitions, a poet with humble needs, and finally a sculptor who works in expensive material. If such a man adopts equality of welfare as his goal, then he will take these differences among his children into account, which might imply not giving them equal share of his wealth. Equality of welfare will simply mean taking their differences into consideration. But on the contrary, equality of resources will only require an equal division of his wealth. In any case, the questions he will put to himself will then be very different.¹⁰¹

The equality of welfare could be further challenged with another domestic example. Assuming wealth is to be distributed among citizens of a country or children in the family, for example, where physically or mentally challenged members in all honesty and fairness might need more than other members of the society or family. Reason being that they are handicapped, and for instance the blind needs more resources to achieve equal welfare. Would equality of welfare define equal distribution as one in which the peoples' preferences are satisfied? Arguing against such, Dworkin insisted that, for the reason that people are handicapped or have expensive tastes, should not make them have more resources as this will amount to inequality and unfairness. G. A Cohen explains that according to Dworkin, "people are to be compensated for shortfalls in their powers, that is, their material resources and mental and physical capacities, but not for shortfalls traceable to their tastes and preferences. What they get should reflect differences in what they want and seek, but not in their ability to get things."¹⁰² Hence, it might be challenged that equality of welfare is insufficient enough to allow this unnecessary distinction.

If we play along the path of welfare, this means that the distribution would go on till equality in terms of welfare is reached. This then takes us to the question of what would actually bring true welfare of the people (that is, what could be the 'end' or that would be regarded as an ideal welfare of people in the society)? Lending his voice Brown wrote that the problem with equality of welfare as it stands, is that it "is too ambiguous to serve as a theory of distributive justice but once it is fully specified it loses any appeal it might otherwise have had because no conception of welfare can figure in such a theory without recourse to a prior

¹⁰¹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 12.

¹⁰² G. A Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and other Essays in Political Philosophy*, ed. Michael Otsuka (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 19.

conception of fair distribution.”¹⁰³ Distributive equality of this type is only concerned with welfare and the focus is to see if what has been distributed is on a par with the welfare of others. Here, “morality” comes into play; as sometimes the demand may become a reason for raising inequality in other spheres of society, due to the acquiring of different amounts of resources for the achievement of the same degree of welfare, as the concept of welfare is different for different people.¹⁰⁴

Equality of welfare he insists, “would annihilate personal responsibility even more fundamentally in another way, moreover: it would aim to insure that people were equal in the designated welfare commodity, no matter what choices they had made or risks they had run. Personal responsibility would count for almost nothing.”¹⁰⁵ The problem with equality of welfare is that it will not only remove individual responsibility but imply constant intervention on the part of the society to make sure that no one lags behind and none gains too much. It gives no reward for effort or hard work. Commenting on equality of welfare, R. Stecker says that: “It requires constant intervention by society in people’s lives to make sure that no one gains too big an edge in satisfaction with life and no one falls too far behind. It relieves people of responsibility for their choices and puts no cap on rewarding those who cultivate expensive tastes.”¹⁰⁶

Dworkin tells us that there is an immediate appeal from the advocates of welfare that any society that considers equality as important, must surely make equality of welfare count. The value of resources for the proponents of equality of welfare lies in its ability to produce welfare. They claim that any definition of equality in terms of resources that doesn’t focus on welfare of the citizens is nothing but a mistake and a misplacement of priority. Further, if a society genuinely wants to treat people as equal, then it must strive to make their lives equally desirable or give them the means to do so, and not simply to make the figures in their bank account the same.¹⁰⁷ Summarily “Ronald Dworkin denies that equality of welfare provides the right reading of the egalitarian aim, and I agree with him about that.”¹⁰⁸ Dworkin conceived equality of welfare to be weak and insufficient as it does not satisfy the

¹⁰³ Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin’s theory of Equality, Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 29

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Kirtita Banerjee, “A crux of Ronald Dworkin’s theory of equality,” Accessed April 27, 2016. https://www.academia.edu/3702315/Ronald_Dworkin.

¹⁰⁵ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 355.

¹⁰⁶ R. Stecker, “Review of Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality,” Article 41.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 14.

¹⁰⁸ G. A. Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice*, 13.

two principles of distributional equality. We therefore have reason to consider with some care the alternative ideal of equality of resources.

1.3.3 Equality of resources

Having rejected equality of welfare for the errors it presents in distributive justice, Dworkin advocated equality of resources as the ideal model. Equality of resources maintains that the resources given or dedicated to each person's life be equal. Thus "equality of resources is the view that a distributional scheme treats people as equals when it distribute or transfers resources among them until no further transfer would leave their shares of the total resources more equal."¹⁰⁹ Equality of resources remains a better ideal because, "for Dworkin, it is resources, including material resources, and mental and physical capacities- those features of body or mind or personality that provide means or impediments to a successful life."¹¹⁰ For this single reason, human societies must concentrate on resources, not welfare, and we must distinguish between personal and impersonal resources. Our focus and first priority must be to make members of our political community equal in those material resources. Reasonable people in the society want resources not for their own sake but to make their lives better or to live a better life. For any community that respects personal ethical responsibility, its concentration must be on a fair distribution of means when it fixes its political settlement.¹¹¹

Supporting Dworkin's claim, R. Stecker opined that equality must be measured in resources and opportunities and not in well-being. Equality of resources does not take into considerations our differences in needs, ambitions or preferences.¹¹² The question of resources must not only be economical but must go on to include the question of what powers someone enjoys that could bring changes both in political and economic circles. Explaining what he meant by equality of resources he wrote:

Equality of resources is a matter of equality in whatever resources are owned privately by individuals. From the standpoint of any sophisticated economic theory, an

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Equality: Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 50.

¹¹⁰ Steven Lukes, 'Equality and Liberty: Must they Conflict?' in *Political Theory Today*, ed. David Held, (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 58.

¹¹¹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 355.

Someone's personal resources are his physical and mental capacities; his impersonal resources consist in his wealth, measured as abstractly as possible. Only impersonal resources can be measured without welfare assumptions, and only these can be distributed through economic transactions and redistributed through taxation or other government programs.

¹¹² R. Stecker, "Review of Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality," Article 41.

individual's command over public resources forms part of his private resources. Someone who has power to influence public decisions about the quality of the air he or she breathes, for example, is richer than someone who does not. So an overall theory of equality must find a means of integrating private resources and political power.¹¹³

Without any atom of confusion, Dworkin is of the conviction that there must be an integral relationship between private resources and ownership in any overall theory of equality. "Ronald Dworkin characterises the ideal economic equality as requiring that no citizen has less than an equal share of the community's resources just in order that others may have more of what he lacks."¹¹⁴ Dworkin believes that we should see the idea of an economic market "as a device of setting prices for a vast variety of goods and services, must be at the centre of any attractive theoretical development of resources."¹¹⁵ Equal distribution requires a device and the economic market regulates the value of goods and services.

Dworkin went on to construct his hypothetical scheme of distributive justice called 'Desert Island Test', which is to serve as a model for equal distribution in a liberal society towards achieving equality. He will do this by developing two important mechanisms; the auction of goods and an insurance scheme to make up for shortcomings as well as resolving the issue of brute luck. In his political construct, he imagined a hypothetical situation in which a group of people are shipwrecked on a newly discovered desert Island that is abundantly stocked with abundant resources without anyone claiming ownership of these natural resources and would have to divide the resources equally amongst themselves. This group agrees in antecedence that none of its members is entitled to any particular piece of resources. In order to achieve a fair and equal distribution of the resources adequately, they agree to put behind their personal identity, who they are, their personal tastes and interests as well as preferences and embark on a market auction procedure in which every item is sold off by an unbiased auctioneer and transformed into a bundle of resources and thereafter distributed equally to all members. Each member of the shipwrecked family is given an equal amount of resources (be it clamshells, stock of plovers' eggs and pre-phylloxera claret, money or other divisible resources as Dworkin would say) to immediately get on with their lives, to produce and trade

¹¹³ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 65.

¹¹⁴ Harry Frankfurt, 'Equality as a Moral Idea', in *Equality Selected Readings*, eds. Louis P. Pojman and Robert Westmoreland, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997), 268.

¹¹⁵ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 66.

A free market is not contra equality but source of regulation. Regulation is therefore often needed to perfect the freedom or efficiency of a market: to protect it against distortions of monopoly or externality. Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 356-357.

as they wish. When the auction finally ends, ‘envy test’¹¹⁶ is said to be achieved when all are satisfied with distributive exercise, has used his clamshells most efficiently and no one would in fact envy or prefer anyone else's bundle to his own because by hypothesis everyone had the equal opportunity to buy it. Because the result is an envy-free distribution in that sense, the strategy treats everyone with equal concern. The strategy also respects the personal responsibility of each bidder for his own values. He uses his clamshells to acquire the resources that he deems best suited to his choice of life. His choices are not limited by any collective judgments about what is important in life, but only by the true opportunity costs to others of what he chooses.¹¹⁷

Put in another form, Dworkin’s hypothetical scheme is an “equal consideration in dividing collectively owned resources among equally healthy and able persons means putting an equally valuable bundle of goods at everyone’s disposal and allowing them to consume, invest, or gamble away their holdings as they choose, consonant with respect for the rights of others.”¹¹⁸ This idea “is suggestive of Dworkin's views about equality, the resources are necessary to enable each person to exercise his personal responsibility for his own life, whereas in the cases, the goal is often to enable each person to live comfortably in society with others.”¹¹⁹ While information is left to an independent political level in equality of welfare, the information in equality of resources is brought to the initial level of individual’s choice.

Dworkin explained that the fantasy distribution explained in his hypothetical construct respects both the two principles of distributive justice and gives an attractive conception of both equal concern and full respect. Nevertheless, we know that we are not shipwrecked passengers on a newly discovered and abundantly stocked island. Our concern rather should be to see how far and in what way we can be guided by the fantasy in the very different situation of modern economies.¹²⁰ And the best way to translate this experiment into political practice is explained by Jean Hampton as follows: “Dworkin’s idea is that through a variety

¹¹⁶ ‘The envy test’ requires that, no one “would prefer someone else’s bundle of resources to his own bundle.” Envy test ensures that the distribution of resources (the personal resources) to members of a political society are equal. Cf. Michael Otsuka, ‘Liberty, Equality, Envy, and Abstraction,’ in *Dworkin and his Critics with Replies by Dworkin*, Justine Burley, Editor, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 701.

¹¹⁷ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 66-68.

Cf. Noel Parker and Stuart Sim, eds., *The AZ Guide to Modern Social and Political Theorists* (London: Pretence Hall/ Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997), 73.

¹¹⁸ Eric Rakowski: ‘A Defense of Resource Equality,’ In *Equality Selected Readings*, 278.

¹¹⁹ Erin Daly, “Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well Lived,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 377.

¹²⁰ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 356-357.

of means, including taxation policy, the state can try to arrange the environment (...) so as to duplicate the results of this auction, giving people roughly equal (but not exactly) shares of resources to spend so as to enable them pursue their life plans.”¹²¹ The issues of raw materials, preferences and tastes are not enough reasons or grounds for someone to contest a distribution as unequal.

The desert island model could provide a scheme for developing or testing a more general account of equality of resources in a political society with dynamic economy, investment, labour, and trade. The phantasy auction scheme shows equal concern and responsibility to all members. What each islander has is fixed by his own choices, given the choices others make from an equal base. According to Dworkin, the objectives of the desert island test are tripartite: First the object provides an important test of the coherence and completeness of the idea of equality of resources. Secondly, the desert island auction could provide a standard for a more complex and pluralistic society. Thirdly, the auction experience could be applied to design actual political institutions, and could also serve as the best means of reaching or securing equality of resources in the practical world.¹²²

As explained, once the auction in the desert island has been settled, people immediately get on with their lives; to plant, produce or manufacture, consume and trade as they wish. It is possible to discover that some may be more skilled or talented than others at producing stuffs to trade, some may work harder than others, some may decide not to work or perhaps prefer to work at what will bring them less. While some will remain healthy and others sick, some people may have their crops destroyed. Then the envy test will shortly fail- this situation could possibly put hold to the envy test and destroy the ideal of equality of resources. Presupposing this kind of situation and how such an outcome might be solved, Dworkin rightly gave a way out with the analogy of runners in a fair competition. We have to imagine runners in race where all before the race begins are placed equally, fairly, and on the same starting line. They are *ex ante* equal but after the race has been run, they are no longer placed equally: *ex post* one has beaten the others.¹²³

¹²¹ Jean Hampton, *Political Philosophy* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 156.

¹²² Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 71-72.

¹²³ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 358.

The implication of this analogy is that, due to differences in our ambitions and endowments,¹²⁴ character, talents, and fortunes, the outcome of the auction scheme in distributed resources will not be the same. “Dworkin draws a distinction between choice and circumstance. People’s choices, he says, are linked to their personality which is made up principally of their ambition (broadly understood) and character.”¹²⁵ While some will make much out of it, others might suffer from their choice in life. “In actuality, however, people’s shares would not stay equal for long. One way in which initially equal holdings may cease to be equal is through luck. Fortune smiles on some people’s projects but frowns on others’ gambles.”¹²⁶ Irrespective of all these challenges in distributive justice, people should be held accountable for whatever kind of life they choose to live. Connected with this situation, he went on to distinguish between two types of luck that could influence people’s life in society, namely: ‘option luck and brute luck’. He described option luck as a matter of how deliberate and calculated gambles turn out in life. On the other hand, brute luck is said to be a matter of how risks that are not out of deliberate gambles fall out.¹²⁷ In option luck, the victim is responsible for the gain or loss as he is free to accept or declined but the brute luck gives no room for choice.

In option luck, people are responsible for the outcome as it is a deliberate and calculated gamble. Option luck can be bad or good. When the deliberate gamble turns out positive, it is said to be good but when it is negative, then it becomes bad option luck. A good example of option luck could be buying shares or lottery which might be lost or won at the end. In brute luck, no one is responsible for the outcome because it is not deliberate. For instance, if someone is born or goes lame due to some genetic complications, then his or her situation becomes a situation of bad brute luck. Someone may suffer brute luck and end up worse than other people in the society. The auction as a device establishes initial equality through

¹²⁴ Dworkin made the distinction between ambitions and endowments, which he conceived as important concepts in the issue justice. Ambitions are choices or decisions we make that we are morally and politically responsible for. The aspect of ambition makes one responsible for whatever he chooses to do with his acquired resources. Endowments on its own are what each of us wins in the natural environment. Unlike ambitions where we make choices or decisions, endowments are what we are born into without our considerations. Apart from wealth and resources, endowments could also be natural capacities like intelligence, talents and dexterity.

¹²⁵ Carl Knight, *Luck Egalitarianism Equality, Responsibility, and Justice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 14.

¹²⁶ Eric Rakowski: ‘A Defense of Resource Equality,’ in *Equality Selected Readings*, 279.

¹²⁷ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 73.

He describes the situation this way: assuming I buy a stock on the exchange that rises in the economic market, then my option luck is good. But perhaps I am struck by a rolling big stone which couldn’t have been anticipated, or one is diagnosed with cancer which isn’t his fault, then the bad luck is brute. Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 73-74.

which every member is given an equal amount of resources and people have no right to object the outcome later even if they are frustrated by luck. “Justice requires some sort of initial equality of distribution, but certain inequalities are nevertheless just, some of them being those inequalities that result from option luck, or gambles, against a starting point of equality. Option luck, Dworkin believes, preserves justice, brute luck overturns it.”¹²⁸ To counter the negative possibilities that might proceed from this distributive scheme as a result of luck, Dworkin brought in the idea of insurance. “In the face of differential fortune Dworkin proposes that insurance, and hypothetical insurance, is the appropriate means to achieve equality.”¹²⁹ Insurance in Dworkinian theory of distributive justice should be the only solution to differences among the citizens. Nevertheless, insurance provides a solid and strong link between brute and option luck as the decision to reject catastrophe by taking insurance or refusing to get one is also a gamble. Since people should be held responsible whatever outcomes of option luck, they should also take responsibility for the outcomes of all luck, which could have been prevented had they bought insurance. Therefore, the decision also to buy insurance becomes a good example of such deliberate and calculated gambles. Shedding much light on this, G. A. Cohen said: “In Ronald Dworkin’s different reading of egalitarianism, people are to be compensated for shortfalls in their powers, that is, their material resources and mental and physical capacities, but not for shortfalls traceable to their tastes and preferences.”¹³⁰ Once the envy test has been met, the citizens are bound to accept any outcome of their choice and take responsibility.

1.3.4 The place of liberty

For some philosophers especially Isaiah Berlin, liberty and equality are often seen as two competing political values that should be balance whenever they conflict with each other. Dworkin on his part believes that both equality and liberty are not competing political values but rather complementary because: “Liberty is not an independent value outside of distributive equality. Liberty complements (another aspect of) distributive equality because the liberty implying principle of abstraction complements the envy test by determining the best among the indefinitely many possible envy-free distributions.”¹³¹ Be that as it may,

¹²⁸ G. A. Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, 131.

¹²⁹ Jonathan Wolff, “Symposium on Ronald Dworkin’s Sovereign Virtue,” In *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy*, volume 113, (2002-2003), 6.

¹³⁰ G. A. Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, 19.

¹³¹ Michael Otsuka, ‘Liberty, Equality, Envy, and Abstraction’ in *Dworkin and his Critics, with Replies by Dworkin*, 74.

Dworkin rightly tells us that he is not interested in liberty¹³² generally but the connection between liberty and distributional equality. Thus he says “that if we accept equality of resources as the best conception of distributional equality, liberty becomes an aspect of equality rather than, as it is often thought to be, an independent political ideal potentially in conflict with it.”¹³³ He believes that if other values like freedom of speech, religion, choice and so on could be limited for other goals, such should liberty be when it conflicts with distributional justice. Dworkin only wanted to demonstrate a very defensible normative conception of equality that will be compatible with a recognizably liberal conception of liberty. In order to achieve the compatibility between liberty and justice, Dworkin teaches that an acceptable conception of liberty must absorb or integrate a set of separate liberty rights.¹³⁴ He went further to explain that sometimes the only effective means we could promote equality might require some limitation of liberty because sometimes, the consequences of promoting liberty could be detrimental to equality.¹³⁵

Dworkin went further to assert that liberty is rather necessary to equality; both are not certainly two distinct values but like two faces of a single coin. So liberty is “essential to any process in which equality is defined and secured. That does not make liberty instrumental to distributional equality any more than it makes the latter instrumental to liberty: the two ideas rather merge in a fuller account of when the law governing the distribution and use of resources treats everyone with equal concern.”¹³⁶ Dworkin believes that “the model of conflicting values defended by Isaiah Berlin (and others) is erroneous, since it is possible to reconcile equality and liberty once we understand the true nature of each.”¹³⁷ Also, “equality is therefore inseparable from liberty”¹³⁸ as Stephen Guest would state.

Dworkin “believes that, far from being opposed values, liberty and equality are intimately related to each other. For Dworkin, liberty and equality must be interpreted together. When

¹³² Dworkin cautioned us not to see negative liberty as the only way of conceiving of liberty. Alternatively, liberty is freedom one has to do whatever he likes provided the moral rights of others in the society are respected. Cf. Lorenzo Zucca, “Exit Hercules. Ronald Dworkin and the Crisis of the Age of Rights,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, eds. Salman Khurshid, Lokendra Malik, Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 316.

¹³³ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 121.

¹³⁴ Cf. Colin M. Macleod, *Liberalism, Justice, and Markets: A Critique of Liberal Equality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 158.

¹³⁵ Cf. R. Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 188.

¹³⁶ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 122-123.

¹³⁷ Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Equality: Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 6.

¹³⁸ Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin, Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*, 3rd ed. (California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 144.

that is done, no conflict remains.”¹³⁹ Nonetheless, “liberty and equality cannot conflict, as two fundamental political virtues, because equality cannot even be defined except by assuming liberty in place, and cannot be improved, even in the real world, by policies that compromise the value of liberty.”¹⁴⁰ But even when equality conflict with liberty, the later loses to the former. “For instance, equality and liberty would collide in a troubling fashion if the promotion of distributive equality required the imposition of constraints on political speech.”¹⁴¹ The issue of USA campaign expenditure of 1974 which limited the amount any person could spend to advance the interests of a particular political candidate is good example of how liberty could lose to equality.

The focus is not on the conflict between liberty and equality but how they correlate. Dworkin holds that equality of resources as a political ideal provides an account of distributional equality that is immediately and obviously sensitive to the special character and importance of liberty. Equality of resources can provide a practical guide to the steps that an unequal society might take, by limiting liberty, in the direction of greater equality. This stand portrays the fact that the two concepts are inter-woven. “These great values reinforce rather than undermine one another.”¹⁴² Liberty is not instrumental to distributional equality but an essential part of any processes that leads to equality. Both merge in a process of treating people with equal concern. However, Dworkin teaches that there are many theories about equality as well as different stratagems of liberties. Whether we think liberty and equality conflict as ideals depend on which conceptions of each we adopt. Dworkin believes strongly that political philosophers who worry about conflicts between liberty and equality have the normative and not the flat¹⁴³ sense of ideas in mind. Hence genuine conflicts might arise for some conceptions of equality and not for others. Irrespective of the situation, we must try to reconcile liberty and equality if we care for liberty (since any genuine conflict between liberty and equality is a context that liberty must lose). Therefore, we cannot, in good conscience, press for any right to liberty that conflicts with the demands of equality on our favoured conception.

¹³⁹ Arthur Ripstein ed. “Liberty and Equality,” in *Ronald Dworkin. Contemporary Philosophy in Focus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83-84.

¹⁴⁰ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 128-182.

¹⁴¹ Colin M. Macleod, *Liberalism, Justice, and Markets: A Critique of Liberal Equality* 159.

¹⁴² Ronald Dworkin, ed., ‘From Liberal Values to Democratic Transition,’ in *Essays in Honor of János Kis*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), xii.

¹⁴³ Normative sense’ deals with how people ought to be free from every kind of constraint and how they ought to be equal.

Dworkin explains clearly that his stand does not imply subordinating liberty to equality, but rather to show that though we often distinguish both in political analysis and debate, they are mutually reflecting aspects of a single humanist ideal. According to Dworkinian equality of resources, “the rights to liberty we regard as fundamental are a part or aspect of distributional equality, and so are automatically protected whenever equality is achieved. The priority of liberty is secured, not at the expense of equality, but in its name.”¹⁴⁴ Hence “for liberal equality, any invasion of liberty that is not designed to protect just distributions of resources (...) is an invasion of equality; the two values stand or fall together”¹⁴⁵ “Life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are necessary for the political society. These elements are common and universal to human nature. However, liberty is not the power to do whatever one likes, but the right of being able to do what we ought.”¹⁴⁶ Erin Daly commented that this right “to liberty and equality fuse into the protection of human dignity.”¹⁴⁷ With this in mind, government should attend to liberty in order to achieve equality because a society that fails to protect the liberty of its members cannot treat them with equal concern.

1.3.5 Equality in politics

A society structured on equal concern must also cultivate the principles for distribution of political power. It is also necessary that a large and complex community be governed by the decisions of representative officials rather than by separate decisions of the whole community. But how would a community based on equal concern choose its representatives officials? What powers should they have and what powers should the community retain? How should the officials be elected or should they be chosen from noble or prominent families or by inheritance? Dworkin insisted that a society committed to equal concern, must be democratic in governance and not oligarchical or dictatorial. Political officials must be elected by the people and not chosen through inheritance or selected few.¹⁴⁸ Democratic government must give political power to the people as a whole rather than to any individual or group; it also gives room for free speech and protects the people when they express their minds. The reason for this stems from the believe that a democracy that allows free speech

¹⁴⁴ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 133.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 292.

¹⁴⁶ Prof. Jan Kłós, *Unpublished Lecture Note on Social and Political Ethics*, given on 12.03.2015 at the Pope John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

¹⁴⁷ Erin Daly, “Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well lived,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 375.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 185.

and votes widely held is more likely to distribute materials and other resources in an egalitarian perspective. Further, freedom of speech and widespread suffrage help to make political power equal. Hence, moments of controversies should be resolved by considering decisions that can improve equality of political power. Citizens should have equal role in the resolution of those disputes.

Further, distribution of political power equally is a must for any society that runs an egalitarian political process. But the border line confusion remains what we mean by political equality? How should we measure political equality? And under what circumstances is it equal? Answering these questions, he wrote:

Any adequate theory of political equality must compare political power along two dimensions: not only horizontally, by comparing the power of different private citizens or groups of citizens, but also vertically, by comparing the power of private citizens with individual officials. If democracy is a matter of equal political power, both dimensions must figure in the accounting.¹⁴⁹

Equality in political power requires that voting assignments carry a symbolic declaration of equal standing for all. Hence any deviation from equal vote is not tolerable, as this will amount to denial of symbolic attachment which equal vote confirms. It is also an important part of our political equality that people have the opportunity to express commitment to their convictions and communicate those convictions to others. He sees participation in politics in a community as a matter of responsibility.

1.4 Amartya Sen's idea of justice

Amartya Sen began his political discussion by acknowledging the very importance of justice in our day to day life. He conceived justice as being connected with the way people live their life. However, Sen was bent on introducing something new and very unique towards the issue of justice. He criticised Rawls, Dworkin and other theorists for what he called 'Transcendental institutionalism'; meaning the idea of focusing on identifying just institutional arrangements for a society and the search for perfect just institutions instead of finding criteria for an alternative being 'less unjust' through the act of reason. Sen's idea is that we should focus on how to enhance justice and remove manifest injustice. "First, a theory of justice that can serve as the basis of practical reasoning must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice, rather than aiming only at the

¹⁴⁹ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 190-191.

characterization of perfectly just societies.”¹⁵⁰ He maintained that it is impossible to achieve a purely perfect and just institution; hence our focus should be on reducing manifest injustices in the society.

In as much as the principles of justice should centre on the lives and freedoms of the people, institutions cannot be overlooked, as they also play vital role in the very pursuit of justice.

They can contribute directly to the lives that people are able to lead in accordance with what they have reason to value. Institutions can also be important in facilitating our ability to scrutinize the values and priorities that we can consider, especially through opportunities for public discussion (this will include considerations of freedom of speech and right to information as well as actual facilities for informed discussion).¹⁵¹

He advocated for a theory of justice that will employ the use of reason in order to diagnose carefully and very well the causes of injustice. Sen’s interest was to investigate the realisation based comparisons that would focus on the advancement of justice. These social realisations are not achieved in ideal social arrangements or confined institutions, but in terms of freedom and capabilities that people have.

1.4.1 Equality of what?

Sen believes that the question we must ask ourselves when we talk about equality should be, ‘equality of what’? Owing to this question, many egalitarian philosophers have proposed theories of equality to involve either welfare, resources, liberties, rights or property. The truth remains “that every normative theory of social arrangement that has at all stood the test of time seems to demand equality of something— something that is regarded as particularly important in that theory. The theories involved are diverse and frequently at war with each other, but they still seem to have that common feature.”¹⁵² However, Sen reminds us of our diversity which makes equality defer any single system. Thanks to this diverse human nature, we possess different external characteristics and circumstances. We differ from each other not only in external characteristics (like inherited wealth and liabilities, or the kind of natural and social environments one lives in), but also in our personal characteristics (age, sex, proneness to illness, physical and mental abilities). These factors are important for

¹⁵⁰ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2009), ix.

¹⁵¹ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, xii.

¹⁵² Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1992), 12.

assessing inequality and every approach to equality should reconcile with this issue of human diversity.¹⁵³

Sen insists that our society cannot begin to defend or criticize equality without knowing first what on earth we are talking about, and what exact features the equality should possess.¹⁵⁴ He maintained that we can only understand equality better based on our values and priorities. “The choice of the space in which to assess equality determines what equality we prioritize. We could prioritize equalizing the income of every adult in a country and thus place income equality in the space of evaluation.”¹⁵⁵ This will determine actions and approaches that every member of the society considers as the best towards leading a life that one would value as a rational being. “Equality thus depends on aspects of personal responsibility for actions.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, the issue of justice or equality should not be judged by one’s resources, background position in the society, but should be evaluated by the amount of capabilities at their disposal, that is, what people are able to be and to do.

This capability idea is connected to the notion of freedom and it gives people the ability or freedom to choose what they consider valuable life. “Thus the expansion of human capability involves the freedoms [people] actually enjoy to choose the lives that they have reason to value.”¹⁵⁷ People should have the freedom to choose what will make them live the kind of life that they value.

1.4.2 The capability approach

Sen rejected Rawls’s idea of primary goods and Dworkinian resource-based system of equality for what he called ‘equality of opportunity or capacity or capability’. “Sen pleaded for a metric of well-being which measured something falling between primary goods and utility. He called that something ‘capability’: a person being able to do certain basic things.”¹⁵⁸ According to Sen, “capabilities are opportunities or freedoms to achieve what an individual reflectively considers valuable. Its central tenet is that in evaluations one must

¹⁵³ Cf. Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 1-20.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 12.

¹⁵⁵ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, “The Capability Approach: Its Potential for Work in Education” In *Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.

¹⁵⁶ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, “The Capability Approach:”, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, “The Capability Approach:”, 3.

¹⁵⁸ G. A. Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice*, 41 (framework is the discussion about claims of primary goods and utility as measures of well-being,)

look at each person not as a means to economic growth or social stability but as an end.”¹⁵⁹ The capability approach as a metric of equality evaluates “how well off people are in terms of their capability to achieve the kind of lives they have reason to value. The capability approach focuses directly on the quality of life that individuals are actually able to achieve.”¹⁶⁰ In this way, capability is said to be “a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person’s freedom to lead one type of life or another.”¹⁶¹ The basic capability or the opportunity to do what one wants or things that would achieve a person’s desired goal should be the ultimate ideal in every society.

Sen held that philosophers like Rawls and Dworkin who wanted to measure equality in matters of resources or primary goods were not wrong but aimed at the right thing, which is the personal freedom of individuals. However, Sen believed that these advances stop short of genuine equality of freedom because they ignore the crucial fact that different people have very different levels of ability actually to do what they want. Sen went further to explain that “the capability approach is a general approach, focusing on information on individual advantages, judged in terms of opportunity rather than a specific ‘design’ for how a society should be organized.”¹⁶² The implication is that “the notion of the equality of basic capabilities is a very general one, but any application of it must be rather culture-dependent, especially in the weighting of different capabilities.”¹⁶³ Basic structures according to Sen should not equalize but foster opportunities.¹⁶⁴ That shows that people can achieve different levels of functioning with the same material resources. Therefore, the best way to measure equality should rather be by comparing people’s capability to engage in various functioning or activities and not in the resources available to them. A person is judged by his capability to do things which he or she has reason to value.

The capability approach focuses on human lives, and not just on the resources people have, in the form of owning – or having use of – objects of convenience that a person

¹⁵⁹ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter. *The Capability Approach*:”, 2.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Rodham Wells, *Reasoning about Development: Essays on Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach*. Thesis to obtain the Degree of Doctor from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2013, 12-18.

¹⁶¹ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 39-40.

¹⁶² Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 232.

¹⁶³ Amartya Sen “Equality of What?” in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 481.

Note: “As it is known, Sen has not provided a definite list of valuable capabilities and maintains that such a list should be the result of a democratic process involving debate and participation by those who will be affected by the choice. In this sense, the list would be context-dependent.” Lorella Terzi, “The Capability to Be Educated” in *Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 33.

¹⁶⁴ David Schmidtz, “Nonideal Theory: What it is and what it needs to be” in *Ethics. An International Journal of Social, political, and legal Philosophy*. Volume 121 (2010-2011), 789.

may possess. Income and wealth are often taken to be the main criteria of human success. By proposing a fundamental shift in the focus of attention from the means of living to the actual opportunities a person has, the capability approach aims at a fairly radical change in the standard evaluative approaches widely used in economics and social sciences.¹⁶⁵

People should not be judged by their income or wealth but the capability they enjoy. Our society today seems to weigh and consider people on the aspect of their financial strength. This should not be the case because, a rich person with severe disability cannot be said to have advantage over a poor person without physical disability as the former could be restrained by condition or disability which the able-bodied may not have.

In judging the advantages that the different people have compared with each other, we have to look at the overall capabilities they manage to enjoy. Since the idea of capability is linked with substantive freedom, it gives a central role to a person's actual ability to do the different things that she values doing. The capability approach focuses on human lives, and not just on the resources people have, in the form of owning – or having use of – objects of convenience that a person may possess.¹⁶⁶

The value of life is not measured by wealth or income but the capability within someone's freedom to be enjoyed. Capability approach focuses attention on the opportunities a person has and not the means of living. Explaining this, George Klosko wrote: "Amartya Sen argued that the focus of justice should be the use to which resources are put, equal ability to develop capabilities, for which different people require different resources."¹⁶⁷ The human resources could be means to nourish human lives but opportunities help us to reach the end of our choice. Nonetheless, the capability approach shows a serious movement from concentrating on means of living to the actual opportunities of living.¹⁶⁸ Capability theory is focused on the opportunity of achieving and fulfilling decisions of freedom and to reach the ends instead of the means. Capability is not just what the person actually ends up doing, but also what the person is able to do irrespective of choosing to make use of opportunity or not.

The capability theory is also seen primarily as an attribute of people and not a collection of communities. In that case, attention should not be focused only on the capability of a community to achieve something but on individual capabilities to live the kind of life that he or she values. While critics see his capability theory as a methodological individualism (a situation where the individual is only considered at the expense of the society), Sen would

¹⁶⁵ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 253.

¹⁶⁶ Amartya Sen, *The idea of Justice*, 253.

¹⁶⁷ George Klosko, 'Contemporary Anglo-American Political Philosophy,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 463.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 233.

respond by insisting that: “in valuing a person’s ability to take part in the life of the society, there is an implicit valuation of the life of the society itself, and that is an important enough aspect of the capability perspective.”¹⁶⁹ People belong to different groups and not just one (gender, class, religion, cultural, nationality and so on). Hence, to limit people in terms of one dominant group might be a denial of one’s liberty to decide and choose what he wants and where he belongs. Consequently, the capability theory presupposes and demands a good environment that could provide people with the opportunity to actualise their values. “The value of the environment cannot be just a matter of what there is, but must also consist of the opportunities it offers to people. The impact of the environment on human lives must be among the principal considerations in assessing the value of the environment.”¹⁷⁰ The environment should impact and add meaning to the lives of the people by offering them opportunities. If we must focus on the quality of life as human beings, then there is need for a sustainable environment. When the environment is unbearable and offers no opportunities to people, then their capability to do something becomes a frustrated one.

However, Sen identified people with physical, health or mental disability as the most deprived sets of people in the world. The way they are neglected and their gigantic number is enough reason for the capability approach, where they would be considered based on their capacity or ability. He believes so much that the prevention and alleviation of disability remain a central part in the advancement of justice and removal of manifest injustice. He therefore favoured capability approach over resource idea and sees capability as being more relevant and important to the alleviation of injustice. Reason being that “the capability metric is ‘superior to a resource metric because it focuses on ends rather than on means, can better handle discrimination against the disabled, is properly sensitive to individual variations in functioning that have democratic import....”¹⁷¹ Even though he favoured capability approach over resources, he does not claim to have solved or found a single way of solving the problem of justice in liberal society. With this in mind he wrote:

Capability is, as I have tried to emphasize, only one aspect of freedom, related to substantive opportunities, and it cannot pay adequate attention to fairness and equity involved in procedures that have relevance to the idea of justice. Capabilities are characteristics of individual advantages, and while they may incorporate some features of the processes involved (...), they fall short of telling us enough about the fairness or

¹⁶⁹ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 246.

¹⁷⁰ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 248.

¹⁷¹ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 263.

equity of the processes involved, or about the freedom of citizens to invoke and utilize procedures that are equitable.¹⁷²

Irrespective of the challenges involved with the capability theory, Sen's interest is not to pursue sequential and well-constructed principles for the realisation of a perfect just society but the removal of manifest injustices. To do this, the people should be judged on their capability to use their freedom in doing what they value. He denies the Dworkinian resource approach as the same with his capability theory but only saw it as one way of solving the problem of handicaps in terms of income sharing.

1.4.3 Capabilities and Functionings

Capabilities and functionings as two related but distinct notions are at the core philosophical idea of Sen's theory of equality. He used the term 'capabilities' "to refer to a wide range of capacities and opportunities required for human well-being as a whole."¹⁷³ People according to Sen possess capabilities for them to function and achieve the kind of life they value. Capabilities also help people to function well and achieve their desired goals or values in life. "A person's capability refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (... , the freedom to achieve various lifestyles)."¹⁷⁴ Certain circumstances like one's relationship with others in society, social conditions are also necessary for capacities to be functional.

Functioning on the other hand could refer to the person's state or ability to achieve a meaningful life. The way people function and continue to function in a society determines how meaningful their life could be. This makes capability alone not enough but the ability to function with those capabilities more important. Sen defines functionings as:

A number of 'doings' and 'beings' that a person manages to achieve at a time or accumulates over time. A functioning is an achievement of a person: what he or she manages to do or to be. It reflects, as it were, a part of the 'state' of that person. It has to be distinguished from the commodities which are used to achieve those functionings... It has to be distinguished also from the happiness generated by the functioning¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 296.

¹⁷³ John M. Alexander, *Capabilities and Social Justice: The Political Philosophy of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 56.

¹⁷⁴ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 75.

¹⁷⁵ John M. Alexander, *Capabilities and Social Justice*, 56.

Functionings could be elementary (that is, good health, well-nourished or avoiding untimely death) or some complex and sophisticated achievements (like self-dignity and respect, active participation in communal life or other societal values). The way the different functions are selected and weighed influence the assessment of the capability to achieve various alternative functioning bundles. Therefore, one's capability to achieve functionings that he or she has reason to value as a human being provides a general approach towards assessing social arrangements, and this leads to a particular way of evaluating claims of equality and inequality.¹⁷⁶

A person's well-being greatly depends on the nature of his achieved functionings.¹⁷⁷ By this we refer to the nature of his or her being. "Functionings belong to the constitutive elements of well-being. Capability reflects freedom to pursue these constitutive elements, and may even have—a direct role in wellbeing itself, in so far as deciding and choosing are also parts of living."¹⁷⁸ Sen is of the idea that capability is the best way towards improving functioning prospects. The capability metric according to Sen assesses people's welfare in terms of their functionings and capabilities. While capability serves as an evaluative framework for individual welfare, functionings comprise an individual's activities and states of being. Capability as a derived notion mirrors the various functionings an individual can potentially achieve, and involves his freedom to choose between different ways of living.¹⁷⁹

The idea of capability primarily consists in identifying people's functionings, which represent what the person manages to achieve or to be. These achievements nonetheless may vary according to environment or activities in the society.¹⁸⁰ Human beings should be evaluated by the quality of their well-being in the society. Thus, "living may be seen as consisting of a set of interrelated 'functionings', consisting of beings and doings."¹⁸¹ For this reason, people's well-being and their standing in society should not be evaluated merely in terms of primary goods or resources available to them or the psychological sensations

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 4-5.

¹⁷⁷ By way of example, Sen mentions not only basic functionings like nutrition, life expectancy, health and education, but also complex functionings. These include self-respect, political participation and social recognition which are necessary for accessing our individual well-being. Cf. John M. Alexander, *Capabilities and Social Justice*, 57.

¹⁷⁸ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 42.

¹⁷⁹ Wiebke Kuklys, *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach. Theoretical Insights and Empirical Applications* (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2005), 9-10.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Pedro Flores-Crespo, "Situating Education in the Human Capabilities Approach" In *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 46.

¹⁸¹ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 39.

generated by the utilization of those goods or resources. Instead, the quality of our lives should be judged or evaluated on the basis of their ‘capability to achieve valuable functionings’.¹⁸²

Capability is primarily a reflection of the freedom to achieve valuable functionings. In so far as functionings are constitutive of well-being, capability represents a person’s freedom to achieve well-being. Capability may be relevant even for the level of well-being achieved, and not only for the freedom to achieve well-being.¹⁸³

So the level at which people could function well and continue to function plays a major role towards how well they will fare in society. Invariably, people are supposed to pursue their ends and convert resources into functionings they value.¹⁸⁴ This does not however make functioning the parameter for assessing equality in the human society or determine how equal the citizens will be but rather what he called functioning capability.

1.4.4 Freedom and opportunities

The nature as well as the quality of life in human society meant a lot to Sen and this made him conceive freedom as an important means towards achieving well-being. “According to Sen, the notion of capability relates centrally to freedom- the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of life to lead.”¹⁸⁵ The idea of capability he said offers a wide range of options through which a person could live a life of value. So, “we must evaluate freedoms for people to be able to make decisions they value and work to remove obstacles to those freedoms, that is, expand people’s capabilities.”¹⁸⁶ Thus, in order to evaluate equality, we should not only be interested “in the kind of lives we manage to lead, but also in the freedom that we actually have to choose between different styles and ways of living.”¹⁸⁷ This freedom to choose the nature of life we consider best is important because through it, we are able to broaden our concerns, commitments and also enhance our many objectives. Therefore, personal freedom is very important for a good society. This stand could be explained in two ways, namely: the value of personal freedom and equality of freedom. Personal freedom is

¹⁸² Cf. John M. Alexander, *Capabilities and Social Justice*: 4-56.

¹⁸³ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 49.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Lorella Terzi, Equality, *Capability and Social Justice in Education: Re-Examining Disability and Special Educational Needs*. A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Institute of Education University of London April 2005, 2.

¹⁸⁵ Dreze, Jean and Sen, Amartya, “India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 10. Quoted by Madoka Saito, “Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach to Education: A Critical Exploration”, in *Journal of Education*, vol. 37, No. 1, 2003.

¹⁸⁶ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, “The Capability Approach”, 2.

¹⁸⁷ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 227.

important and should be guaranteed for those who "matter" in a good society; whereas equality of freedom means that everyone matters and the freedom which is guaranteed for one must be guaranteed for all.¹⁸⁸

Freedom remains valuable, because it gives more opportunity to pursue our objectives and leads to the process of choice. More freedom Sen claimed gives us the opportunity to pursue our objectives. It helps us in our ability to live as we would wish or like and also promote the ends that we may want to advance.¹⁸⁹

A person's position in a social arrangement can be judged in two different perspectives, viz. (1) the actual achievement, and (2) the freedom to achieve. Achievement is concerned with what we manage to accomplish, and freedom with the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value. The two need not be congruent.¹⁹⁰

Also, freedom gives room to the process of choice which helps us to avoid coercion or constraint.¹⁹¹ There is always a correlation between freedom, opportunity, choice and the process of carrying it out. People should be allowed to enjoy their freedom in order to create opportunities so as to make choices and carry out the process to reality. Freedom and opportunity are important ingredients in the domain of justice.

Freedom to choose gives us the opportunity to decide what we should do, but with that opportunity comes the responsibility for what we do – to the extent that they are chosen actions. Since a capability is the power to do something, the accountability that emanates from that ability – that power – is a part of the capability perspective, and this can make room for demands of duty – what can be broadly called deontological demands.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 233.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 228.

¹⁹⁰ Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, 31.

¹⁹¹ He illustrated a scenario with the name Kim to buttress his distinction between opportunity, choice and process in the act of freedom. He divided these scenarios into A, B, C. Scenario A': Assuming Kim decides one Sunday that he would prefer to stay at home rather than go out and do anything active. If he manages to do exactly what he wants, we can call it a fulfilment of his freedom, opportunity and choice, (since he is given the opportunity to pursue his freedom and the choice to carry it out.). 'Scenario B' alternatively, some strong-armed thugs arrive to interrupt Kim's life and drag him out and dump him in a large gutter. This terrible, indeed repulsive situation affects his freedom. (Both his opportunities and process aspects are denied since he cannot decide for himself.) 'Scenario C, the thugs restrain Kim by commanding that he must not go out of his house, with the threat of severe punishment if he violates this restriction (his process aspect of his freedom is affected). Apart from scenario A in which Kim has the freedom of opportunity and choice, the other scenarios undermine his freedom, opportunity and worst is the scenario B. Cf. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 229.

¹⁹² Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 19.

This freedom which offers the citizens some opportunities also bestows responsibilities on the people. People possess not only the capacity to do something but also the corresponding sense of duty.

1.5 Michael Walzer and the spheres of justice

Michael Walzer began his discussion about justice by acknowledging that the concept of equality has not been an easy one and that its realization has been marred by those who tend to propagate it. Equality is a fact that is today betrayed by men and women who claim to fight for it. We can dream and think of justice or equality in different kinds of societies – autocratic or oligarchic, capitalist or feudal state, yet it is difficult to be realised in the manner we conceive it. He also criticised other philosophers who reduced justice to a unity of criterion or principle. He presented an account of justice that is however “pluralistic in nature. There are no universal laws of justice.”¹⁹³ His goal was rather to develop an egalitarian model of society that would be free of domination. He saw the spheres of justice as more complicated than egalitarians imagine. Thus he wrote:

Their assumption that equality is the only – or most important – aim (res. principle) of justice is a false monism. There are, according to the prioritarians, other principles of distribution like the principle of merit or desert, the principle of efficiency, or the principle of qualification, and so forth. Nearly every sphere of conduct has special principles of distribution. That equality is only a by-product of the fulfilment of complex standards of justice and not the aim of justice.¹⁹⁴

Opponents of equality see it as a false move to force people who were not on the same world to appear as if they are the same. Walzer therefore set the goal of his approach by raising two fundamental questions; in what respects are members of a political community one another’s equals? And assuming they are, what are the characteristics to be used to measure them as equal in those respects? He went on to explain that we are one another’s equal consequent to “our recognition of one another as human beings, members of the same species, and what we recognize are bodies and minds and feelings and hopes and maybe even souls. We are very different, and we are also manifestly alike.”¹⁹⁵ Despite this recognition, our difference and likeness give room to some kind of complex social arrangements. The goal of political egalitarianism in this context should be to free the society

¹⁹³ David Miller and Michael Walzer, eds., *Pluralism, Justice and Equality* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1995), 2.

¹⁹⁴ John-Stewart Gordon “A Peer Reviewed Academic Resource, Moral Egalitarianism”. *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Accessed 05/02/2018. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/moral-eg/#SH3c>

¹⁹⁵ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), xii.

from domination. Equality does not mean we are to have the same amount of things or be the same. Reasons for or means of domination could be different in our societies. “Walzer argues that actual communities do not consider overall justice but, rather, such ‘spheres of justice’ with the relevant equality within each sphere.”¹⁹⁶

Therefore, our attention should not be to eliminate differences, or repress persons but to mediate the domination in the societies through some set of social goods. Our ability to control the social goods would be the best way of achieving equality. He conceptualised a society where no social good would serve or be used as a means of domination. Nevertheless, his concern is far away from describing how we might create this kind of society or composing some utopic philosophical ideals which could be applicable in every human society like some egalitarians. Rather, a just society lies within our reach, it entails our ability to understand and use social goods properly.

1.5.1 Pluralism in human society

Human society remains according to Walzer a distributive community. It is a society where we also come together to share, divide, exchange and to make these things work out through divisions of labour. These situations show the complexity of human society. We are unique and similar but different in many regards. In human society, there exists different political arrangements for enforcing the divisions, different ideologies to justify things distributed and means of distributions in respective angles. There is a multiplicity of goods in human society and this multiplicity implies multiplicity of distributive measures, criteria and patterns. No full human society has and can avoid this multiplicity, rather we study it in order to know how to distribute the goods in different places and ages.

Our societies have no single point of access to the concept of distributive arrangements and schemes. There has never been a total universal medium of exchange for every social good and will be hard to find one. Though money has proven to be the most common medium, not everything in society for instance justice can be bought. There are some aspects of society- like justice- beyond the purchasing power of money which requires the decision of the people. The market also has appeared to be one of the most important mechanisms

¹⁹⁶ Serge-Christophe Kolm: ‘Distributive Justice’, in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 450.

through which social goods could be distributed, but has never been and would nowhere be a comprehensive system of distribution. In the same vein, there has never been either a single decision point from which all distributions are controlled or a single set of agents making decisions. No state in the world has manifested or been able to create a perfect way of regulating the patterns of sharing, or model of dividing and exchanging on which a society takes place. We realise that many things play a role within the course of distribution and most times it goes off the control of the state. Moreover, there has never been a single criterion, or a single set of interwoven and interrelated criteria for measuring distributions. Culture, family ties, religion, group, political loyalty, paths of friendship, blood and marital relationships and so many other things also contribute in determining the distribution of the goods. History also plays a vital role in the world of distributive justice, because it designs and affects the distributive arrangements and ideologies.¹⁹⁷

Walzer goes on to declare that our human society is full of pluralism, hence there will always exist different arrangements and systems of distributive justice. “Walzer argues both that different cultures have developed different distributive arrangements and that within cultures such arrangements can vary with the good to be distributed.”¹⁹⁸ He criticised the call for unity in the pattern of distributive justice or the idea of formulating a one and only system of distribution. The fact of pluralism does not give room for the creation of a single distributive criterion and therefore, the efforts of political philosophers should be to establish principles. He disagreed with Rawls and others who subscribed to a single ideal criterion or one distributive system of justice “that ideally rational men and women would choose if they were forced to choose impartially, knowing nothing of their own situation, barred from making particularist claims, confronting an abstract set of goods.”¹⁹⁹ A unified system which every rational people would choose without partiality, constraints and no personal interests is not feasible. Georgia Warnke also shares the same view that philosophical attempts to avoid pluralism while focusing on forming unified distributive criteria according to the rules of an unsituated justice-in-itself, will necessarily end in failure. Proponents of unified distributive criteria disregard the different ways in which autonomous communities understand their goods; and in the same way ignore both the internal distributive principles

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Georgia Warnke, *Justice and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 13.

¹⁹⁹ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 5.

this understanding already entails and the internal autonomy of the different 'spheres of justice' it can involve.²⁰⁰

Walzer insists that even if the people end up arriving at a singular conclusion as the philosophers would suggest, the force of such a singular scheme would not be easy to be measured. For him, people in the political community do not reason like philosophers and are not bothered by what rational individuals would choose in a society. They are often interested in the choices made for their common lives. They bother themselves with things peculiar to their environment and what kind of understanding they share. He also doubts the philosophical assumption that justice which is a human construction can be achieved in only one way.

Thus he writes:

The principles of justice are themselves pluralistic in form; that different social goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures, by different agents; and that all these differences derive from different understandings of the social goods themselves – the inevitable product of historical and cultural particularism.²⁰¹

We have to bear in mind that the theory of justice faces some kind of cultural diversity and political choices, hence it is not easy to design a singular principle or set of principles that will be implemented in different societies with their respective historical settings. In formulating theories or principles for distributive justice, we must take into consideration the society, its uniqueness and what value of goods it has.

1.5.2 The theory of goods; dominance and monopoly

The theory of goods is centred on how people distribute goods in the political community. To distribute implies to give, allocate, to exchange, to share and the focus is always on the individuals (recipients and the agents of distribution) who are at the centre of this process. The distributive principles are designed to solve the means and criterion of distributing these goods. But however, the onus lies on the people to conceive, create and distribute goods among themselves. He teaches that we cannot distribute goods to the members of the political society until we understand what the goods mean to the various members, the part that those goods play in their lives, how those goods are first of all created, and how the

²⁰⁰ Cf. Georgia Warnke, *Justice and Interpretation*, 13.

²⁰¹ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 7.

people value those goods. Distribution of social goods are relative to social meanings. *Ceteris paribus*, human nature plays a vital role in this action. The processes of conceiving and creation of goods affects the distribution and also determines what the distributive agents do in the exercise of their functions. Goods for Walzer form a crucial medium of social relationship between humans. Distribution of these goods are followed with how they are conceived and their respective values in the given political community. Therefore, the distributive principles executed by the distributive agents are limited to goods within their reach. He went on to sum up the theory of goods into six categories:

1. Social goods include all the goods which fall under the domain of distributive justice. They are not and they cannot be distinctively or individually valued.
2. Men and women acquire their respective concrete identities based on manner they conceive and create, and then possess and employ social goods.
3. It is impossible to conceive a single set of primary or basic goods across all moral and material worlds. Even we do, they will remain abstract and may not have much usefulness towards distribution in particular aspects.
4. Movement of goods are determined by their meanings. Distributive arrangements and criteria are intrinsic not to the good – in – itself but to the social good.
5. Distribution and social meanings characteristically historical. So both just and unjust distributions change with time.
6. When the meanings of goods are distinct, then the distributive patterns must be autonomous. Every social good or set of goods constitutes, as it were, belong to a certain sphere of distribution within which only certain criteria and arrangements are *ad rem*.²⁰²

In the complex distributive arrangement, a good or set of goods could be dominant or monopolized. In this complexity, some goods are dominant and determine the value of things and these goods go on to be monopolized. While “dominance describes a way of using social goods that isn’t limited by their intrinsic meanings or that shapes those meanings in its own image; monopoly describes a way of owing or controlling social goods in order to exploit their dominance.”²⁰³ Goods are dominant and determinative when they are of great value in all the spheres of distribution. It is dominant if the individuals who possess them because they have them, can still command a wide range of other goods. Goods could be monopolized whenever the possessor or a member of the society or a leader successfully holds it against other members.

Walzer would go on to say that dominance is always incomplete while monopoly is imperfect. Nevertheless, they play a significant role in the distribution of social goods.

²⁰² Cf. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 10.

²⁰³ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 10-11.

Dominance is seen as an elaborate social creation being used by many individuals. Physical, economic or political strength, family reputation, religious or cultural positions, landed wealth, intellectual or technical knowledge are typical examples of age old dominant goods that have been monopolized in many societies by few persons. Through monopolistic control of dominant goods, the ruling class who determines the distributive patterns usurps some privileges. As a result of this situation, the struggle in political society continues and leads to some conflicts.

Societies are characterised in terms of their patterns of establishment. Some principles are formulated to connect possession of monopolized dominant goods through some set of established personal qualities. Be that as it may, the ideology with which these goods are shared may not last or maybe rejected tomorrow by others who find it unjust. Consequently, resentment and resistance set in and intermittent and endemic social conflicts become the nearest outcome. Most principles and criteria created after victory are at some point rejected by other groups. Walzer holds that it is difficult to design a system that would solve this division of goods in societies. Dominance and monopoly would always affect how the system is run and conflicts would always emerge from time to time.

Once a conflict is resolved, the group of people who are victorious or beneficiaries of the societal coalition after the struggle come to enjoy some sort of monopoly or a monopoly of some dominant goods. He teaches that dominant goods in the political societies are easily converted to other sort of things like opportunities, education – talent, powers and reputation. He described the inequality dominance and monopoly of goods could cause as follows:

Some group of men and women...comes to enjoy a monopoly or a near monopoly of some dominant good; or, a coalition of groups comes to enjoy, and so on. This dominant good is more or less systematically converted into all sorts of other things – opportunities, powers, reputations. So wealth is seized by the strong, honor by the wellborn, office by the well-educated.²⁰⁴

Irrespective of this domination, the struggle for monopoly would always lead to further conflict. The criteria with which the ideology has been justified could be rejected by others who consider the beneficiaries as not possessing those qualities for which they control the dominant goods. Of course, counter claims are raised and resentment goes on ad indefinitum.

²⁰⁴ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 12.

1.5.3 Simple equality

Human society is always pluralistic and the systems of distribution are to that effect complex. As a result of this pluralism, philosophers are on the search for some kind of unity and singularity. The advocates of this single or unified system project are against monopoly and the dominance of a particular social good. They challenge monopoly as unjust and maintain that dominant goods should be shared equally in order to remove or curb possible monopoly of other goods. Walzer therefore introduced what he called 'the regime of simple equality' in which everything in society is put up for sale and every member of society gets an equal share of the same thing, perhaps money. This is necessary because "equality is multiplied through the conversion process, until it extends across the full range of social goods."²⁰⁵ By simple equality he meant a simple distributive situation where everyone has the same equal number of the same thing.

The position of Walzer remains that it is not easy to sustain or maintain a regime of simple equality and its operation does not last long. This is so because the further process of conversion and free exchange lead to some kind of inequalities in society. However, breaking monopoly of one social good neutralises its dominance, but such attempt leads to the springing up of other dominant goods which would lead to a new form of inequalities. The new dominant goods could be monopolized by few through the process of conversion and the unlucky ones in society suffer inequality. For him, the best possible solution to prevent such occasion, is by setting limits to the new version of conversion pattern in order to constrain monopoly of the particular goods. This suggestion he likened to the goal of John Rawls's 'difference principle'. This regulation or application of Rawls's 'difference principle'²⁰⁶ can only be carried out by the state. The state should constantly intervene so as to break or curb emerging monopolies and to suppress new forms of dominance in simple equality. In this process, the state itself could be turned to another stage of struggle and competition. Political power could in turn be monopolized by some individuals who could use it to consolidate their control of other social goods. Owing to this, he conceived politics as the easiest way to achieve dominance and for Walzer, political power is not only the most important but the most dangerous good in political society.

²⁰⁵ Michael Walzer, *Sphere of Justice*; 14.

²⁰⁶ The difference principle is understood as a strong egalitarian conception of justice which permits inequality if it is geared towards the advantage of those who are worst off, then an equal distribution is to be preferred. Cf. J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 65-66.

Despite the state playing the wonderful role of constraint, limiting political power is never an easy task. Walzer believes the best way to neutralize political power is to distribute it widely but yet this will lead to emerging monopolies in society. The attempt to share political power which is a social good in democracy leads to being subjected to other goods. But for politics to intervene effectively and well, there is need for the state to be powerful and political power centralised. When this is the case, then a regime of simple equality might be said to have worked out but yet further conflicts would ensue as there will be clashes and crisis. Walzer would believe that the best way is for the state to be mobilized so as to curb and check monopoly; but there is also need to check political power that is mobilized. Irrespective of all this, there will always be problems as political holders would use the slightest opportunity to exploit the people. This will be the negative effect of the concern by some political philosophers to challenge monopoly instead of treating the problem of dominance which remains the central issue in distributive justice.

1.5.4 Complex equality

Complex society with complex goods implies a complex system of equality. Since there are various spheres of justice, we should concentrate on reducing dominance and not to break up monopoly in political society. The critique of dominance will help in reshaping as well as coping with the complex distributive society. Walzer described what he called a complex egalitarian society as one in which different social goods are monopolised but in which no particular social good is generally convertible. He advocated complex equality as against simple equality in order to forestall multiplicity of inequalities. Though he held that complex equality will minimise inequalities, he does not also claim that it would necessarily be more stable than the simple equality ideology. Rather it will give the opportunity for more diffused and particularised forms of social conflict. Succinctly put, complex equality will help the citizens to resist convertibility of social goods within their circles of competence without relying on the state for regulation or constraint. Complex equality begins basically with various social goods, how people understand the various goods and how they relate to one another in society through those social goods. Complex “equality is a complex relation of persons, mediated by the goods we make, share, and divide among ourselves; it is not an identity of possessions. It requires then, a diversity of distributive criteria that mirrors the

diversity of social goods.”²⁰⁷ Just like there are many companies, so there exist different spheres of social goods.

Dominance of goods leads to the domination of the citizens and complex equality makes dominance impossible. It builds a kind of relationship between persons such that domination becomes a difficult task to be achieved. “Complex equality means that no citizen’s standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good.”²⁰⁸ No single sphere should dominate or give advantage over others. “Justice requires that each good be distributed in accordance with its own sphere-specific principles, which are discovered through interpretation of its social meaning.”²⁰⁹ For instance, a political leader chosen or elected may be unequal with a professor in the political sphere (or vice versa), but both will not be unequal generally (none should be superior to the other in general spheres) and the political office should not give advantage over the professor in any other sphere. When such a political office is not seen as a dominant good and not convertible, then other offices or members of the society stand as equal to the one who governs.

People cannot be totally equal and successful in all distributive spheres of justice. The only thing is to avoid converting the advantage of one’s sphere into other spheres of social goods. “The critique of dominance and domination points toward an open-minded distributive principle. No social good X should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good Y merely because they possess Y and without regard to the meaning of X.”²¹⁰ To drive home his teaching on complex equality, he went on to formulate three distributive criteria which would probably match the diversity of social goods in the society. He conceived these three criteria – desert, free exchange, need- as coming to terms with the requirements of open minded principles of distributive justice. All of them have forces over the distributive arrangement and none has special force across the range of distributions.

Free Exchange: In free exchange, it is impossible to predict the exact particular division of social goods. Because it is open-minded, free exchange gives room for a market in which

²⁰⁷ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 18.

²⁰⁸ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 19.

Spheres of social goods could include medical care, access to better roads, good education, entrepreneur opportunities, food, clothing, transportation, commodities of every sort, security and welfare, free speech and all the odd things that human beings collect.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 150.

²¹⁰ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 20.

all the social goods can be converted into all other goods through the single medium of exchange called money. Therefore, it defies and lacks dominant goods as well as monopolies. The further divisions would always reflect the simplicity of goods in the society. In free market, people are aware of the social meaning of the goods and someone's position does not affect what he enjoys without the actual meaning to other members. Free exchange is not only a good criteria for complex equality, but after a careful analysis of things, would help to set the boundaries within which it can operate.

Desert: Desert is also open ended and pluralistic, but its realisation is not an easy one in practice. It requires some kind of close relationship between particular goods and particular person should not be coerced or get a reward simply because he feels he deserves it more than others.²¹¹ We have to accept that a central agent cannot control or solve every challenge found in the desert criteria. Sometimes, it will be left for the citizens or individuals to distribute certain things by and amongst themselves.

Need: the social goods should be distributed according to the needs of the citizens and from each according to his ability. He sees the idea of need as a distributive proposal which does not solve the problem of the society and also appears to be an incomplete criterion. This is so because, some of the goods may not be the things that anyone strictly needs. Need based system would not offer an adequate distributive criterion. Since there exists in society many varieties of goods, need will always operate side by side with other distributive criteria and there would be need for boundaries to be established in order to mark them off from one another.

1.5.5 Political community, membership and justice

The political community is a distributive community²¹² where domination and monopoly of social goods are found. It is also the appropriate setting for distributive arrangement where we come together to share, divide and exchange. Language, culture, history and societal values also play a great role in forming the consciousness of the society. However, politics stands out as a special social good which is often monopolized to cause inequalities in the

²¹¹ Imagine he wrote "a single neutral agency dispensing rewards and punishment, infinitely sensitive to all the forms individual desert. Then the distributive process would indeed be centralised, but the results would still be unpredictable and various. There would be no dominant good. No x would ever be distributed without regard to its social meaning, for without attention to what x is, it is conceptually impossible to say that x is deserved." Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 23.

²¹² Michael Walzer, "Complex equality," *In Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit, 484.

other spheres of society. The community is itself the most important and special good that is distributed amongst the people. To achieve this, the people must be physically and politically admitted into the system of goods. Without forming a political community, no social good can be fairly distributed because its value is mainly a product of an internal decision.

The idea of distributive justice presupposes a bounded world within which distributions take place: a group of people committed to dividing, exchanging, and sharing of social goods, first of all among themselves. When we rethink about distributive justice, we think about independent cities or countries capable of arranging their own patterns of division and exchange, justly or unjustly.²¹³

By this statement, Walzer is against a unity of principle that will fit into every society. The political society requires membership. He conceived membership as a social good enjoyed by some persons in the community and could be distributed to strangers also. Political communities or countries could be seen as membership of neighbourhoods, clubs, families or territorial states. People could also be integrated as members through refugee programmes or process of naturalization. Membership forms an integral part and parcel of the distributive society. “The primary good that we distribute to one another is membership in some human community. And what we do with regard to membership structures all our other distributive choices: it determines with whom we make those choices, from whom we require obedience and collect taxes, to whom we allocate goods and services.”²¹⁴ Membership determines one’s rights in a distributive society.

Members of a political society are entitled to justice and “and the first thing they owe is the communal provision of security and welfare.”²¹⁵ The essence of forming the membership is to communally provide for one another and maintain a fair share of social goods. Also, other social goods like money, commodities, work, office, education, political power, free time are also set of social goods that should be distributed among the members and the conversion of any of these into another social good should be discouraged to avoid monopoly.

Walzer was so much interested in limiting convertibility so as to reduce inequalities in the society. To solve the usual challenges which distributive justice faces both in simple and complex equality, he introduced the idea of ‘blocked exchanges of political spheres’. In as

²¹³ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 31.

²¹⁴ Michael Walzer, “Membership,” in Chapter 2 of *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. Accessed 08.02.2018. <http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/Walzermembership.pdf>

²¹⁵ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 64.

much as the state could serve as a medium of constraint, the idea of blocked exchanges will help to curb the holders of political powers from converting their offices into a monopoly and invading other spheres of social goods. Therefore, a great deal of political and intellectual energy is required in order to limit the convertibility of power, restrain its uses, and to define the blocked exchanges of the political sphere.²¹⁶ The reason for this is to curtail the boundaries of the state as well as all the different spheres through a sovereign body. The political holder could be so powerful, if not curtailed, and Walzer sees this as a threat not only to liberty, but also to equality.

Every discussion about justice must be centred on the account of social goods and spheres of distribution. It is necessary to know how people relate to one another in a political community through the social goods they make and distribute. Social meanings help the society in distributing its social goods justly and reducing inequalities. The theories of justice are subject to differences and boundaries and cannot be reduced to a single principle. Justice has more scope due to a variety of social goods, social meanings, distributive agents, processes and procedures. Establishing an egalitarian society for Walzer would not be the end of the struggle for equality but rather the interest of the community. Our efforts should be to make sure that the people in the political community are equal in the different spheres apart from where they rule.

1.6 Critical evaluation of their philosophical ideas and relevance to the issue of justice in Nigeria

No political ideology is perfect and perhaps no political theory can solve the problems in human society. We have exposed the different theories of justice and one cannot deny that they make a formidable defence of equality in their respective ways. Their theories also reemphasize the relevance of political philosophy in contemporary society. The great ideas of Rawls, Dworkin, Sen and Walzer are employed to complement each other's political ideas. In as much I cannot deny the existence of some controversies surrounding their teachings, as well as objections, loopholes, inadequacy, or flaws in their respective ideas, my focus will be on the pros and how to see how much their principles are practised in Nigeria.

²¹⁶ Cf. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 282.

John Rawls.

Undoubtedly, Rawls stands out as one of the contemporary political philosophers who revolutionised the discussion about justice. John Rawls also understood justice as the primary political virtue in the basic institution or the basic structure of the society. He however unlike Dworkin prioritised liberty over equality. John Rawls's core teaching is centred on the idea of a well ordered society and he believed that this basic structure of the society did not exist from the beginning. This must be constructed by the citizens in a rational discourse or forum. He envisaged the principles of justice being chosen in an imagined hypothetical construct called 'original position' under a veil of ignorance. Their attention should not be on happiness and the good of society but on the basic equality of society which would lead to individual rights and welfare in political society. In a well-ordered society, the equal liberties and equal opportunities form the hallmark of its regulations.

However, Rawls's teaching on the original position seems hard to be practicable in a pluralistic society. His concept of original position should afford individuals' knowledge of general facts about social and political life, but not of the specific position they would be occupying in political society. There is no way individuals can deliberate on such a hypothetical situation without bringing in their selfish interests because they are humans with self-interest. Humanity by nature is selfish, egoistic and can hardly drop off all his natural tendencies. So Rawls foreseeing a situation in which people will forgo their background information, future and personal interest in order to discuss on a neutral basis may be only utopic, difficult if not impossible.

Nonetheless, keeping men behind the veil of ignorance appears to be a tedious task and the notion about 'veil of ignorance' presents a lot of challenges. There is the objection or fear that excluding nearly all particular information from parties involved makes it difficult for one to understand truly what the original position means and entails. Knowing fully well that these difficulties exist, Rawls tries to ameliorate them. This he does by suggesting that information about the basis of social organization should not be totally denied, at least on a general basis. On this Ekennia observes; 'It is to be noted that the parties in the original position are not subjected to a total information "black-out", for they are presumed to have some information about certain general facts.'²¹⁷ One thing we cannot deny is the fact that

²¹⁷ J. N. Ekennia, *African Modernity Crisis*, 85.

adherence to the hypothetical original position under the veil of ignorance will help to ensure that the principles chosen by the parties are impartial or unbiased.

Further, Rawls did acknowledge the differences in our respective choices and interests which could lead to conflicts and problems, but encouraged that the parties should go on until they come to terms with one another in a rational equilibrium. This kind of equilibrium he labelled ‘reflective equilibrium’, that is; a situation where we keep readjusting and modifying our convictions of justice. Also, our society today has become pluralistic such in a sense that interests in the society overlap. We differ in many ways – in politics, religion, culture and speak different languages. He introduced the idea of an overlapping consensus “to make the idea of a well-ordered society more realistic and to adjust it to the historical and social conditions of democratic societies, which include the fact of pluralism.”²¹⁸ This Rawls hopes, would bring stability in the society and help divergent communities arrive at non contradicting principles and prevent any from imposing his or her decisions on the other.

Rawls deserves some commendation for his two principles of justice and for his insistence that society is supposed to stick to these principles. Once more, one is left in wonder and confusion regarding his ‘difference principle’ which gives room for exceptions or injustice only when it is done to the advantage of the less privileged or disadvantaged members of the society. Can this difference principle really serve as a good model for justice in a multicultural society, as it would be difficult for the society to determine who the disadvantaged members are? Another difficulty could be: how would or which yardsticks should be used to measure the disadvantaged members or advantaged least? Also, would such not amount to injustice on the part of hardworking citizens who do everything possible to live a better life? The difference principle allows inequality or robbing some citizens of their rights in order to satisfy the welfare of the few. Could this kind of distributive approach not breed injustice and encourage laziness as well as irresponsibility, since these individuals may continue to depend on the state for sustenance instead of making efforts? How possible would this function in a multicultural society that is divided along many lines like religion, culture and moral values?

No matter the amount of problems that might arise from his theory of equality, we cannot fail to heap some amount of praises on him for revitalizing the interest in the theme of justice and what it actually means and for giving equality a contemporary undertone. Irrespective

²¹⁸ J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 25.

of these loopholes, Rawls's concept of justice would be useful to the Nigerian situation in many ways.

1. He would be appreciated here for giving a good idea of liberal self-understanding and how a pluralistic or multicultural society (like Nigeria) divided along religious, philosophical and moral doctrines could negotiate her existence through a rational deliberation in whatever situation that could be likened to the hypothetical original position. The relevance of his teaching on the necessity of a basic structure being effectively regulated by a political conception of justice, reflective equilibrium and overlapping consensus cannot be overemphasized. The discussion about justice is not open ended; reflexive equilibrium and overlapping consensus show that societies like Nigeria with divergent religious, cultural and tribal differences must keep pushing until things get better and never relent in the fight for a more harmonious and just society.

2. Even though his hypothetical construct might have its own flaws as discussed, his idea of original position could be a way forward for some upcoming liberal societies to go into retrospection, reshaping and renegotiating their existence under the dictate of reason in which the principles of justice for the basic structure of the society would be carefully chosen without bias or selfish interests. Different governments in Nigeria have attempted calling for a national conference where the different tribes and religions are expected to deliberate on better ways of achieving a just and harmonious society. This has always resulted in failures due to our inability to forgo background information about oneself, intelligence, strength, place in society, tribe, religion, class position or social status, specific economic standing and abilities as Rawls forewarned. Placing reason and having the goal of justice in mind in such a discourse above other things will be the way forward.

Ronald Dworkin

Ronald Dworkin developed his comprehensive liberal theory of justice on the concept of equality. He conceived justice as the sovereign virtue of a liberal political community which must be defended at all costs and understood equality as the foundation of every political discussion. Every distributive formula has to be justified on how they respect the principles of equal concern and equal respect for responsibility. Government is illegitimate if it does not subscribe to two reigning principles.²¹⁹ If we agree that equality should be the foundation

²¹⁹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 2.

of every political value and discussion in a liberal political community; then what kind of equality should that be? To this Dworkin favoured equality of resources while rejecting Welfarism. In order to achieve his egalitarian project, he like Rawls came up with his political construct which he called ‘The desert island test’. This simple mechanism would entail auction of goods and an insurance scheme to make up for shortcomings and the issue of brute luck.

Dworkin deserves every amount of respect for his idea of equality resources which could be something of a way forward for our contemporary socio-economic society. However, it might be quite difficult to share resources equally in a society of persons with different ambitions, choices, circumstances and endowments. It may not be out of place to describe his equality of resources as highly abstract and a utopic ideal that may be hard for us to apply as a means of achieving perfect distributive justice. Even his hypothetical ‘desert island’ construct appears controversial and difficult to be realised in a complex society with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds. It is impossible for people to come together to auction or distribute the resources equally and more challenging is the fact that many would want different resources other than what they receive or are given. Even the fact of ambitions, circumstances, choices and endowments will make equal distribution of resources impracticable, if not conflict. Moreover, even if we end up sharing impersonal resources equally as he stated, the idea of personal resources cannot also be shared equally as they are (talents, intelligence, endowment) received from creation (what we are born with without our considerations). Equality of resources without capabilities may not lead to actual equality because different people with the same vision of a good life but the same amount of resources may have different capabilities and fail to achieve the desired life they have value for. “Sen’s central argument is that resources should not be the exclusive focus of concern for a fairness-based theory of justice because it doesn’t focus on actual abilities.”²²⁰

No matter how we conceive the ‘desert island test’ as only a fantasy ideal, Dworkin will remind his critics that we all know that we are not shipwrecked passengers on a newly discovered and abundantly stocked island. The fantasy model should guide us in our distributive actions towards achieving equality and that a free market which regulates modern economies is indispensable to genuine equality.²²¹ He insists that the desert island

²²⁰ Thomas Rodham Wells, *Reasoning about Development: Essays on Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach*. Thesis to obtain the degree of Doctor from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2013, 17.

²²¹ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 356-357.

model could be applied to provide a scheme for developing or testing a more general account of equality of resources in a political community made up of dynamic economy, labour, and so on.

Nonetheless, his explanation about luck also poses the difficulty involved in such a distributive scheme. In option luck, people are responsible for the outcome as it is a deliberate and calculated gamble unlike in brute luck. If people should be held responsible for the choices they make in life with their resources, how can those who are knocked down by brute luck also be blamed for their ordeals? One could see the danger he ran himself into but will not fail to acknowledge his ingenuity in proposing the Insurance scheme as a way out of any misfortune on the part of those who fail to make meaning out of their own resources.

Dworkin also taught that liberty and justice are complementary political ideals and liberty is necessary to equality. Justice does not diminish or threaten our liberty rather, it expands it. There could also be conflict between liberty and law but this conflict disappears when we understand the place of law as a branch of political morality and set of values which includes ethics. Nevertheless, an egalitarian society must cultivate principles for the distribution of political power. His ideas could be useful to the course of justice in Nigeria in the following ways.

1. Dworkin's insistence that the government must treat her citizens with an equal amount of respect and dignity which became the foundation of his teaching on justice is quite commendable and when applied would help the course of justice in Nigeria. He placed equality as priority before liberty in every discussion about justice.
2. Irrespective of the controversies that might be found in his 'desert island test' as a model of distributive justice, his consideration that resources should be shared equally among the citizens of a particular system would also help in resolving the huge gap and imbalance existing in the Nigerian socio-political system where only the political elites and few privilege citizens partake and control the abundant resources at the expense of the masses.
3. As is evident today, many societies experience the violation of their basic liberties and are hardly given opportunities or allowed in political matters. Dworkin's idea that liberty should be a basic part of equality and that the people should be involved in political activities which determine their lives is quite another issue that would help us in a long way.

Amartya Sen

Sen criticised Rawls as well as Dworkin and other political theorists for falling into what he called ‘transcendental institution’. By transcendental institution he meant, an idea which holds that justice is somehow transcendental and operates in the same way in any society. Sen maintained that instead of developing ideal theories that could function everywhere and sets of rules that could fit into every society to make the world perfect, our concern should be to advance the course of justice and curb the many manifest injustices prevalent in our societies. Sen saw ideal principles of justice too difficult to be realised.

Freedom remains an integral part of human life. Freedom is valuable, because it gives opportunity and leads to process of choice. Freedom gives us the opportunity to make choices in life and decide how we are to lead our lives. People in the society should not be denied their freedom and opportunities because the more freedom we have, the more we can have the opportunity to pursue our objectives.

He proposed the capability principle as a general approach for achieving justice. The best way to measure equality should be by comparing people’s capability to engage in various functioning or activities and not in the resources, primary goods, income or wealth available to them. Rather than the aggregate of persons or communities, Sen was more interested in the individual life in a good environment that could provide people with the opportunity to actualise their values.

Despite his wonderful argument, Dworkin sees Sen’s account of equality as theoretical and not practical as he failed to propose any concrete and politically realizable scheme for instituting his conception of equality. People he taught vary in their capabilities for self-respect, happiness, tastes, opinions, and taking part in the life of the community and so on; hence the idea of making people equal in their capacities seems bizarre and barely coherent. This will be so difficult for the egalitarian government to achieve. A careful reading will make one realise that Sen ended up in the same evil he condemned with his proposal of capability theory as a way of solving inequality as if such would work in every society. One begins to wonder if a distributive approach that focuses on people’s capabilities would not lead to inequality at the end as people with higher capabilities might get higher values; or people with lesser capabilities might be less valued or given more considerations than others to enable them meet up, thereby institutionalizing injustice. Thomas Pogge believes that the

capability approach faces challenges in handling or attending to natural inequalities and it also affects the fight against global inequality.

Meanwhile, he failed to specify how society should weigh or find out people's capabilities and which capabilities are intrinsically valuable in the distributive approach. Flaws noted, some people have come to believe that the capability approach can easily be operated in theory or practised as well as subjective because its emphasis is focused on the access to the lives people or individuals have reason to value. It boils down to what the individual believes and conceives instead of the rational conception of a political society.

Sen's approach is also criticised for failing to give some public criterion through which a society that is committed to equality could shape, organise or structure itself. By way of response, "instead of asking which approach is superior, we should ask which approach can deliver the most plausible public criterion of social justice."²²² Capabilities and not resources or primary goods should regulate distribution of justice. "One of the apparent advantages of the capability approach over its rivals is its sensitivity to inequalities of natural endowments ... the capability approach always looks at how well an individual can convert her bundle of resources into functionings."²²³ Sen insists our focus should not be on the transcendental criterion of justice, neither should be the amount of primary goods or resources at one's disposal, but should focus on each individual's actual abilities to convert the goods or resources into valuable outcomes that will lead to the desired life. Perhaps this was why he failed to give a systematic list of capabilities to avoid going against his critique of the transcendental institution on theories of justice.

Amartya Sen on his part would also be useful for writing clearly and starting up a different way of approach other than the usual.

1. His insistence that attention should be on how to study every society in its own context so as to reduce manifest injustice should be the concern of every Nigerian. He rejected many political theorists who created universal and transcendental ideas of justice as if justice operates in the same way in every society. Sen warned that we should stop dreaming about some ideal theories of justice and come up with practical ideas that can be employed to

²²² Pogge, Thomas, "A Critique of the Capability Approach." in *Measuring Justice*, eds. Harry Brighouse and Ingrid Robeyns, (New York: Cambridge University Press. 2010), 18.

²²³ Elaine Unterhalter and Harry Brighouse, "Distribution of What for Social Justice in Education? The Case of Education for All by 2015" in *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 75.

advance the course of justice and curb manifest injustices in the world today. So taking to heart the idea of Sen would help us to apply a contextual research with regard to equality in a given society and come out with way of reducing manifest injustices.

2. His capacity approach if adhered to would also help many citizens achieve the kind of lives they value and thereby enhance their well-being. Sen's capability approach is about a person's ability or being able to do certain basic things. In Nigeria, we also focus on tribes, communities instead of persons. This is why the country runs a quota system in which regions or communities are represented without concentrating on the individuals who have the capacity for specific roles. Thanks to Sen, rather than the aggregate of persons or communities, we should be more interested in the individual life and how to make sure the individuals are treated well and given equal capability, enjoy freedom and opportunity.

Michael Walzer

Walzer also saw justice differently and condemned the abstract typical theories. He also criticised philosophers who reduced justice to single equality by searching for a unity of principle with which things could be fairly distributed in every society. Walzer is against a unity of principle that will fit into every society. Walzer's condemnation of abstract theories and unified principles of justice that could be applied to all society shows his mastery of the modern political society which is indeed pluralistic. Every society is unique and the principles of justice should consider cultural, religious and moral values of a particular people.

Walzer advocated for societies to organise their distributive criteria based on the meanings attached to social goods. While full of admiration for his style of looking at things in a different manner, we cannot fail to pinpoint the problems involved in his theory of social goods. Walzer's teaching that "all distributions are just or unjust relative to the social meaning of the goods at stake"²²⁴ presents some controversy as well as conflicts. The understanding of social good should determine the kind of distributive criterion that is just, appropriate, and where the boundaries of goods are to be set. This approach is problematic as one social good can have different or multiple social meanings, thereby leading to conflict in distributive principles. His distributive criterion based on need, could also lead to unresolvable conflicts in the society. However, "even though widely praised for its

²²⁴ Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 9

historically situated concreteness and its perceptive criticism of varieties of forms of domination, Michael Walzer's theory of justice has been criticized as relativist in the sense that it rests on the conventional or dominant view of justice held in each particular society."²²⁵ People in a particular society will value goods differently and a possibility of arriving at a conventional value of good will be difficult if not impossible. By this, the distributive approach will end up based on an individual's perception of goods. On the other hand, some philosophers have also accused Walzer of advocating conventionalism based on his idea that distribution should be based on 'shared understanding' or 'shared social meanings of goods.' That is to say that principles of distribution for particular goods could be unjust if it does not respect the cultural and conventional values of a particular community. This however, has some negative implications for some philosophers. "In Dworkin's interpretation, Walzer seems to agree that a caste system is just in a society whose culture and convention accept it, and that it would be unjust in such a society to distribute goods and other resources equally."²²⁶ Regardless of these shortcomings, Walzer deserves accolades for teaching us that justice has no 'one-size-fits-all theory' but rather that justice and its operation should be seen from different contexts, cultures and meaning of social goods.

It is necessary to remark that Walzer never committed himself dogmatically to a restrictive view that distributive criteria must be intrinsic to social goods. There are goods which might have multiple social meanings based on needs but there are some which have partially communal value. So for him, as long as those partially-communal-provided goods like medical care and basic education are adequately provided for all members, and distribution in market does not undermine these goods' other distributive criteria, neither does the criteria for that of needs matter.²²⁷ Also, his introduction of the difference between simple and complex equality is quite a landmark. Justice in his own view is connected with equality which he explained in terms of simple and complex equality. Simple equality teaches that some goods which belong to any sphere should be distributed equally and properly to all the members. Complex equality on the other hand maintains that inequalities in the several spheres of society should not encroach or invade another one. This implies that no citizen

²²⁵ Stassen, Glen. "Michael Walzer's Situated Justice." *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 22, no. 2 (1994): 375-99. Accessed December 2, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40015189>.

²²⁶ Wong, Fan. *On Michael Walzer's Theory of Distributive Justice*. A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Philosophy. The Chinese University of Hong Kong July 2000, 66.

²²⁷ Wong, Fan. *On Michael Walzer's Theory of Distributive Justice*, 56-57.

standing in one sphere should use his office as an advantage in other spheres of distributive social goods. He listed the principle of free exchange, desert and need as the three basic criteria to be applied in distributive justice.

The plurality of social goods in society leads to different spheres of justice. Implicitly, there are different spheres of justice and not just one, hence, no single criterion will be adequate to solve the problem of inequalities. Knowing fully well of the challenges that would always arise in complex equality, he came up with the idea of ‘a system of blocked exchanges’ in order to bring stability and to prevent conflicts.

His ideas will be relevant in the following ways.

1. Walzer’s teaching that there exists in every society different spheres of justice and none should be allowed to dominate and monopolize others is a typical wakeup call for Nigeria. While defending pluralism, he recommended we should look into the culture, value system, goods, logic and respective distributive patterns other than the general idea. This I believe would help many upcoming liberal societies especially Nigeria to look into herself and work out a unique way of achieving distributive justice.

2. The truth remains that there cannot be a single system of distributive justice for all countries. Walzer spoke vehemently against dominance and monopoly in a complex equality. One of the major issues stifling the realisation of justice in Nigeria is that the political sphere has dominated every other sphere and through it monopolised almost all the social goods. Applying the teachings of Walzer will help to halt excesses and reduce the dominance of goods in Nigeria which lead to abuses of rights and injustices.

Brief conclusion.

I will remain grateful to their ingenuity and ability to bring in something unique into the very discussion of justice. As no single tree can make a forest, it might be appropriate to say that no single distributive scheme can totally solve the problem of justice in all political communities. Our societies have become so pluralistic and that makes achieving justice a little bit complicated. With this in mind, I have presented the ideas of some philosophers here and also pinpointed in what areas their ideals²²⁸ could be applied in order to achieve

²²⁸ Rather than dwelling deeply on their differences and shortcomings, my concern here is to avoid the impression that political philosophers especially in the theories of justice are, after all, just arguing and

justice in Nigeria or at least ameliorate/reduce manifest injustices. Irrespective of their shortcomings, I believe that their conceptions of justice when applied judiciously will go a long way towards realising equality and people's wellbeing in Nigeria.

It is necessary to state that these philosophers were chosen because I found their ideas suitable to the question of justice in Nigeria and are considered central theories of justice in Anglo-Saxon philosophies of the last decades. Irrespective of the imperfections seen in their political theories, we cannot deny the fact that their theories when followed to a reasonable amount bring changes and foster a society of equals at least to an extent. Their theories could also help nations facing challenges of inequalities to address their problems. Since our societies are culturally, religiously and economically pluralistic, using their principles or theories could help us find ways of resolving and choosing our rival convictions and finally achieving justice.

Their various contributions will be used in the third chapter of this work to weigh the state of affairs in Nigeria in order to see how close or far the country is in the pursuit of justice. Having seen the different theories of justice and how a political community could maintain an equal society, the next chapter (chapter two precisely) of this work will focus mainly on the practical application of justice to different contemporary contexts.

therefore no relevant standards or harmony for critical engagement towards achieving a justice society could be found in their efforts.

CHAPTER TWO

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF EQUALITY

2.0 Introduction

While words might be so sweet, actions are usually difficult. For ages, political philosophers have continued to show concern for a just society and consistently marshalled out heaps of ideas on how best the political society could be structured. Whereas many of them believe their theories when adopted could change society, some insist it is time for humanity to move from ideas to reality. However, some of these theories apparently look far from reality and most times seem to be unrealisable. But why? Undeniably, some theories of justice have been merely borne out of mental and hypothetical constructs. As Dworkin would state, “theories of distributive justice are highly artificial in a further and different way. They rely heavily on the furniture of fantasy.”²²⁹ This section therefore offers a good opportunity to step down those theories about distributive justice into real life situations.

It is not enough to formulate wonderful political theories of equality which might be far from reality or for angelic societies where actual human beings could not even approach, but the need for us to see how these ideas are applied to some heated political issues of equality is paramount. This is so because “practical concerns, no less than theoretical reasoning, seem to demand a fairly radical departure in the analysis of justice.”²³⁰ We should not only keep our discussions on the theoretical level of how to build just institutions but also practicalities on how injustices could be reduced and justice advanced in the day to day life of people.

The theoretical constructs of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen and Michael Walzer’s idea of equality as well as others have numerous empirical implications for practice in many diverse areas of social justice and this will be the focus of this chapter. The task here will be a practical application of those theories to vexing contemporary issues ranging from health care, insurance, politics, human rights, free speech, democracy, and education, moral as well as genetics. In this context, we will see a connection between abstract speculations and praxis- relating theoretical analysis to concrete issues and policies. While

²²⁹ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2011), 352.

²³⁰ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), xii.

the former lays the foundation and gives details of political theoretical ideas, the latter shows its application in conventional ways. Reason being that the theory of equality maybe likened to the laboratory of ideas, whereas the aspect of practice represents the practical field where those ideas are experimented or carried out. Some of our concepts about justice serve as interpretative concepts and must be expressed as well as applied in practical life.

2.1 Dignity as the foundation of democratic values and practical justice

The issue of human dignity has been an interesting ethical and moral topic for decades. Since the aftermath of the Second World War, the concept of human dignity has become not only a prominent feature of political thought, but to some extent that of political practice. In the first sentence of the first Article of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the organisation proclaimed that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," that "they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”²³¹ Flowing from the agony of the Second World War, the ‘Basic Law’ (das Grundgesetz) of the Federal Republic of Germany stated clearly in its first Article that “(1) human dignity is inviolable/untouchable. To respect and protect it will be the duty of all state power. (2) The German people therefore acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every human community, of peace and of justice in the world.”²³² Whereas the value of dignity is widely accepted, the source of its foundation has led to disagreements from different quarters. In as much as the principles of this human dignity might be universally accepted, its interpretation has turned differently in many societies. Christian philosophers and theologians insist man received his dignity as the ‘imago Dei’- a being created in the image and likeness of God with reason and hence the claim that all men are equal ‘in the sight of God’.²³³ Others in the secular circle believe that rationality or just humanity is the only source for the dignity of human person. Dignity

²³¹ Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Origins, Drafting, and Intent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 38.

²³² Konrad Stollreither, Bearbeiter, „Die Grundrechte“, Artikel 1, *Verfassung des Freistaates Bayern: Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: Bayerische Landeszentrale für politische Bildungsarbeit München, 5. November 2015), 104. (Translation mine).

(1) „Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar. Sie zu achten und zu schützen ist Verpflichtung aller staatlichen Gewalt. (2) Das Deutsche Volk bekennt sich darum zu unverletzlichen und unveräußerlichen Menschenrechten als Grundlage jeder menschlichen Gemeinschaft, des Friedens und der Gerechtigkeit in der Welt“. Konrad Stollreither, Bearbeiter, „Die Grundrechte“, 104.

²³³ Cf. Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy. A Practical Approach* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 134.

though ambiguous, it is a signalling term that goes to the very heart of what constitutes the quality of humanness.²³⁴

In the same vein, Kant maintained that human beings occupy a special place in creation. “Unlike animals and other nonrational things, human beings have wills... This gives human beings an inherent dignity and incomparable worth.”²³⁵ This intrinsic worth stems from dignity which makes humans valuable above all price.²³⁶ For Kant, one of the ways to acknowledge the dignity of human person is by treating every human being with respect. This respect is seen as respect to the moral law. It is not the type of respect we give to those in high office or those with a special gift. Kant will say that “the duty to respect others is not (as some suggest) the general requirement to treat persons with dignity as ends-in-themselves, but rather a derivative and more specific duty comparable to the duties of love, gratitude, and friendship.”²³⁷ Based on this, Kant formulated his categorical imperative in which he advised us to “act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.”²³⁸ This categorical imperative should form the fundamental principle of morality.

Without going into the details of the historical development, Dworkin tried to fuse or weave morality into politics by advancing “an interesting conception of dignity close to the Kantian view, where self-respect and authenticity play a key role and he adds the novel element that dignity is an attitude towards ourselves.”²³⁹ His interest was to show how this moral value could help in the practice of politics especially towards countering the deep – ‘shameful’ - injustice in the real world.²⁴⁰ Dignity therefore became his starting point towards achieving political morality and he conceived the concept of human dignity as the basis for the practice of justice.

²³⁴ Cf. Weisstub, David N., “Honor, Dignity, and the Framing of Multiculturalist Values,” in *The Concept of Human Dignity in Human Rights Discourse*, eds. David Kretzmer and Eckart Klein (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002), 269.

²³⁵ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics. The Uses and Limits of Kant’s Practical Philosophy* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication, 2011), 2.

²³⁶ Cf. James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2003), 130.

²³⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 198-208.

²³⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 36.

²³⁹ Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco, “Introduction,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, eds. Salman Khurshid, Lokendra Malik, Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 17.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin. Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*, 3rd ed. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 183.

Indeed, without adumbrating the meaning of dignity at all, Dworkin says that violations of dignity, or equality, are 'special moral crimes, beyond the reach of ordinary utilitarian justification. Dignity must be protected because failing to do so is inconsistent with treating a person as a full member of the human community, because failing to do so is profoundly unjust.'²⁴¹

Dignity could be described as the standpoint for building a reasonable agreement in politics. It is as well the central concept of ethics as far as it is the ground of self-respect. Similarly, it is the basic value of political morality and serves to identify its content. And as a value, dignity is the content of what we owe to each other in the society.²⁴² It is important to note that "the normative concept of human dignity is not gradable. It is impossible for one being to possess more dignity than another. Rather, all beings that possess dignity possess the same dignity and the same fundamental rights. Thus a fundamental normative equality exists between each bearer of dignity."²⁴³ Dignity for Dworkin appears to be a 'super-right' and its importance lies in its inviolability. This dignity also lies at the heart of every human experience and individual relationship in the social realm. In this sense, dignity embodies each person's responsibility to live well and accords each individual an inescapable responsibility to act morally right. We treat others with equal concern when we allow them to pursue their own projects and plans of life. Dignity as the unity of values is preserved when each individual can decide how to live his or her life.²⁴⁴

Human dignity is composed of two ideas namely: equal respect for responsibility which implies respecting the dignity of each individual person to choose the kind of life he would value and equal concern which is all about social policies that will be equal to all members. Every distributive policy, activities and relationships between the citizens and the government must be justified by these two ideas. "The one way in which each human being is equal to every other is in the matter of dignity. It is this dignity that gives meaning to equality-that creates the obligation of equal concern and respect. And conversely, to Dworkin, equality gives meaning to dignity."²⁴⁵ This teaching means that the recognition of

²⁴¹ Erin Daly, "Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well lived," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 362-363.

²⁴² Isabel Trujillo, "Dignity, Rights, and Virtues in the Department of Value," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 249.

²⁴³ K. Steigleder, "Human Dignity and Social Welfare," in *the Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 471.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco, "Introduction," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 25.

²⁴⁵ Erin Daly, "Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well lived," 365. The principle of equality of resources, he says, presumes only that we treat people with equal concern when we allow each to design his own life Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 2011: 363. Because we have

one's own dignity commits you automatically to recognize the dignity of others in society as well.²⁴⁶ He went on to show how we can use this basis of human dignity as a model for handling other issues of justice.

Despite the challenges against the practice of justice in a multicultural society, we must make efforts to create some shared principles that will make national and political debates profitable since the human person is always at the centre of every political discussion and the issue of justice revolves around him. Therefore the deep principles about human dignity will always lay the common ground for further interpretations and just application. They also possess enough substance that could also help in the interpretation and consequences for political institutions and social policies.

2.1.2 Dimensions of human dignity and the implications for a political society

Dworkin gave two dimensions of human dignity which will be vital for the political community that is interested in the practice of justice. The first principle he called 'the principle of intrinsic value'. This principle holds that:

Each human life has a special kind of objective value. It has value as potentiality; once a human life has begun, it matters how it goes. It is good when that life succeeds and its potential is realized and bad when it fails and its potential is wasted. The value of this human life is not merely subjective or a personal affair of the person involved, but always objective in the sense that its success or failure is important for all.²⁴⁷

Human life is not merely subjective but a matter of objectivity in the sense that, the success or failure of this human life is not only important to the person involved but important itself. We all frown on a wasted life as something bad in itself, whether the life in question is ours or another's. Life has an intrinsic value that goes beyond the individual person.²⁴⁸

The second principle which is called the principle of personal responsibility states that:

dignity, we should treat people equally; because we are equal we should each be able to 'design' our own lives. Cf. Erin Daly, 365.

²⁴⁶ Allen W. Wood, "Interpreting Human Dignity," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 175.

²⁴⁷ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principle for a New Political Debate* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9.

²⁴⁸ "While there are differences between contemporary egalitarian arguments, they all accept what Ronald Dworkin calls 'the egalitarian plateau' the 'deepest moral assumption of our time that each person is of equal intrinsic value, of dignity and thus ought to be treated with equal respect and be given equal rights Louis Pojman: "On Equal Human Worth: A Critique of Contemporary Egalitarianism," *In Equality: Selected Readings*, eds. Louis P. Pojman and Robert Westmoreland (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 282.

Each person has a special responsibility for realizing the success of his own life, a responsibility that includes exercising his judgment about what kind of life would be successful for him. He must not accept that anyone else has the right to dictate those personal values to him or impose them on him without his endorsement.²⁴⁹

This gives the human person the opportunity to decide for his life and nonetheless with its accompanying sense of responsibility. He might accept or reject certain values about life based on his own personal judgement. This principle is behind the political value of ideal of liberty. The second principle of dignity gives personal ethical responsibility. This dignity gives the individual the independence from government to make his choice ethically (negative liberty) but not in matters of justice and morality which must be decided collectively by the political community and enforced by the government (positive liberty). The political community through the government has coercive might to enforce the individual issues of justice and morals.

Both of the enumerated principles give the basis and conditions of human dignity its definition which are referred to as the two dimensions of human dignity. Dignity is (in these terms) an acquired condition-status and no human being could entirely lack dignity; also no one could coherently undertake an action or behaviour which totally eschews the self-respect and authenticity of others.²⁵⁰ Ipso facto, we must cherish our dignity at all costs and also explore every dimension of this dignity in political society.²⁵¹

The two dimensions of justice are somewhat formally individualistic in the sense that, they accord value to and enforce some responsibilities on the individual person. In another sense, they are not just individualistic since nobody can achieve the success of his life independent of a successful (political) community which he belongs to. It is also not individualistic because his responsibility to decide for his or her value cannot be successful when he or she rejects the values of his or her community members. Since we live in communities, we share our life not only as an individual but as a member of that community such that our personal success also requires success in society.

Though these principles are universal and general as earlier said, their interpretations and application to political policies might be different. Because of our human differences and desires, the aspect of intrinsic value for human life might also be different. Our individual

²⁴⁹ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?* 11.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Allen W. Wood, "Interpreting Human Dignity," 176.

²⁵¹ Cf. Imer B. Flores, "Taking (Human) Dignity and Rights Seriously," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 112.

tastes, expectations, wants and goals about life are designed and based on how we conceive them. While some might want a simple life, others may go for fame. While some may value happiness, some may pursue long life. While some see the stated principles as having only subjective implications, others maintain that it is objectively important to know how other people live their lives in the political community. Irrespective of the different cultures, everyone accepts the objective importance of leading a good life in this world. This is exactly what the dignity of human life shows and points to as explained in the first principle. This acceptance of first person concern about life stretches to all other human lives. Dworkin would say that this first person concern for human life and that all lives have some political and moral consequences.

The two principles by way of understanding and interpretation, give some basis to what follows in political principles and policies. It dictates how the citizens are to be treated in the political collectiveness. The two principles also must be reflected in the distribution of political powers in a political community; the decisions and structure of the government on its own part must consider the citizens' equal concern and personal responsibility. "The right to equal concern is 'special' ... in the sense that it is only held by members of political communities and only against their own particular governments and fellow members. It is 'indispensable' in the sense that no political community can plausibly claim legitimacy that ignores this right."²⁵² The society irrespective of the ideologies, belief systems and culture must be guided by both principles and elected officials must be committed to ensure this project. However, we must note that it defies any act of subordination to the will of external bodies in making decisions on how people should lead their lives or what they should consider as paths towards achieving success. Also, individuals and citizens must show obedience to the principles of equal respect and concern when relating with others.

In the same manner, we have to note categorically that "the principles of dignity therefore state very abstract political rights: they trump government's collective policies...All political rights are derivative from that fundamental one. We fix and defend particular rights by asking, in much more detail, what equal concern and respect require."²⁵³ Taking human dignity and different types of rights seriously is at the centre of every political and legal philosophy.²⁵⁴ The two principles are not themselves political but they carry striking

²⁵² Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Justice- Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 85.

²⁵³ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?* 330.

²⁵⁴ Imer B. Flores, "Taking (Human) Dignity and Rights Seriously", 101.

political implications – they should be applied in other political controversies of human society. That “people have obligations to one another as moral agents”²⁵⁵ implies that they have the corresponding duty to respect one another’s bodily integrity, and are obliged by it to refrain from committing wrongs and acts of injustices against one another. While dignity might grant the citizens independence from government on ethical matters, it does not extend such independence to political matters; “a political community must make collective decisions about justice and morality, and it must be able to enforce those decisions coercively.”²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the citizens should be equal players and partners in political discourse where their interests could be protected and that of minorities too.

One major way of strengthening and improving the political community is through the freedom of speech. People should enjoy their right to free speech and have the liberty to air their views in political matters. Free speech indisputably enforces citizen sovereignty and protects their equality. Rights such as political, legal and human international rights, emanate from this fact of human dignity. The citizens who form the political community are entitled to some rights as members of that community. A well-ordered society is one beneficial and in keeping with human dignity, and a society where the citizens, guided by justice apply themselves seriously to respecting the rights of one another and discharging their own duties judiciously.²⁵⁷ The essence of these rights is to protect the equality of the members and to enable them enjoy the purpose of forming a political community.

The human person who possesses this dignity cannot function well in a political society without an adequate health care system that is affordable and accessible. Health remains an integral and indispensable part of justice as far as the human society is concerned. Health care system should be designed in such a way that it would be what the people would spend on their own if they would be allowed to choose. This fact of dignity also gives right to education as no society can progress without it. Effort must be made by the political community to balancing the inequality in this important sector of political life.

²⁵⁵ Clarissa Rile Hayward, “Political Agency in the Face of Structural Injustice: Is “Impure Dissent” Enough?” *The Demand of Justice: Symposium on Tommie Shelby’s Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform*, (Harvard: University Press, 2016). Quoted in *Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy*, volume 47, number 4 (August 2019), 531.

²⁵⁶ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?* 379.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris, An Encyclical Letter On Peace on Earth* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1990), No. 35.

The same dimensions of dignity give some moral autonomy and empower the citizens to follow their moral convictions provided this does not hurt others. Then, how should we handle moral issues like gay marriage, assisted suicide, death, abortion, euthanasia and the effects of scientific growth such as genetic engineering in a multi-national society? While there would be dissenting opinions and views, however, a community committed to justice would find ways of solving these problems. The court on its part should not invade in moral issues, should be fair and unbiased in adjudicating its role in political society and should be just in the aspect of constitutional rights.

2.2 The role of human dignity in the development of political, legal and human rights

One can say without fear of contradiction, that human dignity has played a vital role in the development of rights, both in political, legal and international human rights. “It is acknowledged that human rights are based on, or derive from, or are an expression of, human dignity. Thus, the ground for advocacy and defence of human rights resides on what and who the human being is, as a human being, namely on his or her dignity.”²⁵⁸ Further, “Dignity is not only the ground of rights, but also the key to our moral responsibilities. More significantly, dignity holds all rights together. Quoting the enigmatic but stimulating Hannah Arendt's (...) formula, dignity is the right to have rights.”²⁵⁹ Dignity is also the normative basis of human rights²⁶⁰ as well as the justification, or the embodiment of all other rights of man. It has both political, legal and moral significance for society. Aharon Barak claims that human dignity lays solid foundation for all human rights because it forms the core central argument for the existence of human rights; and as a constitutional value, it also provides meaning and justification to the norms of the legal system.²⁶¹ By implication, to take all human rights, or any of them, seriously is to take dignity seriously and to take dignity seriously is to take all other rights seriously as well.²⁶² It has not only united people of different cultures, religions and backgrounds, but has also given the basis for interpreting and applying what rights people should be given.

²⁵⁸ T. Iglesias, *The Dignity of the Individual: Issues of Bioethics and Law* (Dublin: Pleroma Press, 2001), 14.

²⁵⁹ Isabel Trujillo, “Dignity, Rights, and Virtues in the Department of Value”, 248-255.

²⁶⁰ David A. J. Richards, “Dignity and Free Speech,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 278.

²⁶¹ A. K. Sikri, “Afterword” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 473-474.

²⁶² Cf. Erin Daly, “Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well lived,” 363.

Dignity has undoubtedly played a pivotal political role in enabling different cultures with vastly different conceptions of the state, differing views on the basis of human rights, and differing ethical and moral viewpoints to put aside these deep ideological differences and agree instead to focus on the specific practices of human rights abuses that should be prohibited, as Maritain suggested. Dignity has helped to achieve this by enabling all to agree that human rights are founded on dignity.²⁶³

Human beings have rights and obligations precisely because they are persons and these flow directly and simultaneously from their very nature. Nonetheless, these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable such that they cannot in any way be surrendered or suppressed.²⁶⁴ They enjoy these rights as members of a political community and these rights help to protect their dignity too. “These rights are the moral principles that inform our understanding of justice and fairness.”²⁶⁵ For any society to be declared just, these rights must be respected by both the government and the citizens. In the same vein, “the dignity of the human person involves the right to take an active part in public affairs and to contribute one’s part to the common good of the citizens.”²⁶⁶ It is also the basis of all moral interpretations. They offer intrinsic value to all rights and Dworkin understands these rights as ‘trumps’ in a game in which individual citizens should defend their justified claims against every kind of disadvantage that could arise from collective policies.²⁶⁷

One of those rights is called political rights and some of these political rights correspondingly go with collective duties in the community. We cannot deny the fact that the issue of political rights has been understood differently by some people and used in many senses. Although people enjoy the political right to equal concern and respect on the right conception, they nonetheless possess a more fundamental and abstract right. They have a right to be treated as a human being in the society whose dignity fundamentally matters.²⁶⁸ These rights are built on the ideas of self-respect and equal concern for all. They also find their ground in the same principles of human dignity which defines one’s rights and duties to others. A political society owes the citizens equal concern and respect. By equal concern, it means that each person has the right and lives must be treated as equally valuable.

²⁶³ Christopher McCrudden. “Human Dignity and Judicial Interpretation of Human Rights,” In *European Journal of International Law*, Volume 19, Issue 4 (September 2008), 655-724. Accessed 01/03/2018.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chn043>.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Pope John XXIII, *On Peace on Earth – Pacem in Terris*, No. 9.

²⁶⁵ Noel Parker and Stuart Sim, eds. *The AZ Guide to Modern Social and Political Theorists* (London: Prentice Hall/ Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997), 71.

²⁶⁶ Pope John XXIII, *On Peace on Earth – Pacem in Terris*, No. 26.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms, Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Translated by William Rehg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 204.

²⁶⁸ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 335.

Consequently, any government that fails to act on a minimally adequate conception of equal concern, is not merely unjust but tyrannical.²⁶⁹

Political rights deal with what sort of rights people have against the state and against a collective community. Nevertheless, political rights give advantage to justify some political actions. “A political right, we may say, is a trump over the kind of trade-off argument that normally justifies political action.”²⁷⁰ Political rights treat only part of political morality; it ignores the much broader question of what are in general good reasons for a political community to exercise its coercive power in one way rather than another.²⁷¹ There are moments when the state could enact laws for the good of the community but that should not be done in such a manner that would violate the political rights of others. These political rights also go with some duties and sense of responsibility. It is always built on self-respect and equal concern for all. The attention here will focus basically be on what constitutes the political rights of the citizens. However, political rights are not absolute. In as much as these political rights are not absolute, the government however should not deprive individuals of their political rights in order to please the rest of the community or for some communal benefits. The simple argument is that “if the government does not take rights seriously, then it does not take law seriously either.”²⁷² Lists of political rights and their interpretation however differ in different cultures and nations.

Individuals by the virtue of their human dignity are also entitled to legal rights which have the law as their source. Legal rights are enacted by legitimate government legislative bodies which are enforceable on the citizens through the right institutions like the court of law. In the words of Imer B. Flores, “legal rights are political rights, but must be distinguished from other political rights. In that sense, a legal right may be designed to give effect to a pre-existing political right to the extent that certain political rights correspond to legislative rights, whereas legal rights correspond to adjudicative rights.”²⁷³ Legal rights could also be legal means of forestalling violations of political or human rights.

Government creates and enforces legal rights for the good and functioning of the said society. They are usually enacted by the government and enforced through legitimate organs

²⁶⁹ Cf. Alexander Brown, *Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Equality: Domestic and Global Perspectives*, 3.

²⁷⁰ R. Dworkin. *Is Democracy Possible Here?* 31.

²⁷¹ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 329.

²⁷² Ronald Dworkin, “Taking Rights Seriously,” In *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology, Second ed.*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 301.

²⁷³ Imer B. Flores, “Taking (Human) Dignity and Rights Seriously,” 119.

like courts of law. The essence of these legal rights is for the good of the community- to maintain law and order and also protect the political rights of the citizens. Legal rights are different from political rights. They also put some restraints on the government from abridging the constitution at will. In order to keep the government in control, certain legal measures could be taken. The United States could be cited as an example where the law forbids the government to make laws that would violate or deny the freedom of religion. However, no country turns all their political rights into legal or constitutional rights, but the other way round, legal rights are part of political rights. In America and most parts of the world, the right to adequate health care and insurance system and so many others are political rights but not enshrined legally in the (American) Constitution for it to be enforced.

Human dignity gives claim to human rights. Human rights on the other hand give value and worth to the concept of human dignity. Human rights remain an important part of political society and they are considered special to political practice because they are they right that we have simply by the virtue of our human nature. While summarising the political idea of Jan Kis, Dworkin wrote that “he had come to think that the idea of basic human rights, which Marx had dismissed as an epiphenomenon of alienation, was indispensable to any concrete realization of human equality and autonomy.”²⁷⁴ Due to its inevitable value, no government should deny the citizens their fundamental human rights. With respect to its importance, several societies as well as associations and treaties have been established by major organisations to protect human rights. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights enacted by the United Nations in 1948 has listed some of these human rights to include: rights to education, adequate housing, health care, adequate compensation and just remuneration for work, and presumption of innocence in criminal trials. These human rights correspond to the concept of liberty and individual freedom of action and they also fix boundaries within which a citizen is permitted to freely exercise his or her will. Political liberty entails the power of doing whatever does not injure other individuals.²⁷⁵

Further, citizens are also entitled to human rights because these rights protect the dignity of the human person in the community. Human rights are very important to the existence of human beings, hence they are referred to as fundamental rights. Human rights are distinguished from other political rights. We can describe the human rights as the most basic

²⁷⁴ Ronald Dworkin, ed., *From Liberal Values to Democratic Transition: Essays in Honor of János Kis* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), xii.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 82.

and universal of all rights. “They have an urgency and an international dimension that most rights do not have. What they are, and their force, cry out for explanation in the world generally and particularly in this present day.”²⁷⁶ There are some political rights which do not fall under the umbrella of human rights (and not all political rights are human rights). Although many philosophers have tried to suggest that human rights should be based on universally accepted political rights in different countries, cultures and religions, others see human rights as being more important to the people than ordinary political rights. Human rights for this second group should remain universally sacrosanct and special irrespective of what particular societies, cultures and religions believe in. They are not just like any other type of rights, but fundamental. Hence, human rights should not be found on the basis of any particular religion as our societies have become pluralistic in religious beliefs, and such attempt might cause crisis in a society with different religious traditions.

Some of the rights which constitute the major controversies in a political society will be discussed here in details.

2.3 Equal health care services

Human life forms the nucleus of all rights in the world, because without life, discussions about rights would be totally pointless. Without life, we cannot even talk about justice. This explains why human life must to be protected, cared for and nourished. The dignity that man possesses gives him right to bodily care and respect. “And the fair distribution of scarce medical resources begins with the assumption of people’s fundamental dignity and equality.”²⁷⁷ One of the best ways of achieving this is to have a functional, reliable and affordable health care system.

Life and health are ...chief among all good, hence everything else is of lesser importance and must be sacrificed for them. Secondly, he insisted that health care must be distributed solely on the basis and ground of equality that even in a society in which wealth is very unequal and equality is otherwise scorned, no one must be denied the

²⁷⁶ Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin*, 173.

Human rights go beyond the inherent dignity of the human person to provide mechanisms for living a life of dignity. Human rights demands that the inherent worth of human beings must be subjected to abstract philosophical or religious conceptions but rather communicated or manifested in everyday life through those actions that only respect, value, protect and realize human rights. Cf. Jack Donnelly, “Human Dignity and Human Rights,” In *A Research Project on Human Dignity. Swiss Initiative to Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR Protecting Dignity: An Agenda for Human Rights* (University of Denver, Colorado, JUNE 2009), 83-84. <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/e80bda/pdf/>. Accessed on 23.06.2020

²⁷⁷ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 71.

medical care he needs just because he is too poor to afford it. These are understandable, even noble, ideals.²⁷⁸

Health remains an integral part of a nation and therefore, cannot be separated from the discussions bordering on equality and justice. Health simply affects the totality of man's existence, political and all spheres of life. "Out of respect for others' humanity, we have a personal obligation to help people be and remain healthy. Because adequate health care is necessary for a country's political and social stability, the ideal of perpetual peace requires that we support international health initiatives through public funds."²⁷⁹ A healthy life they say is a healthy society and a poor health care system could have some political implication.

Numerous researchers have identified the lack of basic health care as a cause of political instability. Of course, political chaos may be one of the causes of restricted access to health care, but the reverse is also the case: without medical resources to combat infectious diseases and other health problems, social and political instability is much more likely. The lack of proper health care undermines any state, but it threatens a republican state in particular because it weakens the general population and often gives rise to a chaotic struggle for survival.²⁸⁰

Nonetheless, bodily integrity or state of health affects human productivity. Kant also believes that lack of good health affects our personal autonomy. Therefore, "being unable to act because of illness or infirmity is a threat to personhood. To use Herman's terminology, when one's health is compromised, then so is one of the three means of accomplishing one's ends."²⁸¹ As humans, we have the moral duty to care for and help one another. Going by Kant's idea of bodily integrity "it is particularly pressing that people have a minimum level of health and well - being. (Since health care sustains people's functioning as moral agents), we have a moral duty to provide access to medical assistance for people who cannot help themselves."²⁸² Dignity entails that we treat people with respect and support their health. This is why we should make health care accessible to all.

But the pertinent question remains; how much health care should a political society make available for the members? What type of health care services should the citizens enjoy? Whom and what categories of person should be given help? How much or which necessary medical procedures should be adopted? Should the government have a look at the condition

²⁷⁸ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 309.

²⁷⁹ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 72.

²⁸⁰ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 883-4.

²⁸¹ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 75

²⁸² Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 73-74 (words in bracket mine).

and financial power of the citizenry in formulating health care packages? Irrespective of these controversies, the concern should not be to provide medical care that the richest among the people can buy with money, but a type that will be affordable both to the rich and the poorest of the poor. The ultimate is a basic health care that would be guaranteed to almost everyone, irrespective of background, income, race and gender.

Justice in the health care system calls for a less expensive insurance scheme and better balanced medical care services which people would prudently and freely choose if they were to bear the cost of medical care by themselves. It must be a universal health-care system which would make sure, in all justice, that everyone does have it. The government should allocate resources between health and other social needs, and between other patients who need treatment. These considerations should help society to decide what health care it should aim at while providing for everyone on its own, in an imperfect, and unjust society. Private insurance companies if must be allowed, should be controlled to make sure that the cost of health care is lower and accessible to the middle class citizens. More, it should be “a health care scheme constructed to respect the decisions of citizens as prudent insurers is indeed egalitarian.”²⁸³ Government should intervene sometimes when necessary to provide the circumstance in which it is fair to ask the citizens to take responsibility of their lives.

2.4 Equal political participation and free speech in a democratic society

Justice demands that the citizens must be incorporated fully into the scheme of politics, their right to free speech respected and protected, and should play active participation in the political society. “The second principle of dignity supports the traditional liberal rights of free speech and expression, conscience, political activity, and religion that most human rights documents include.”²⁸⁴ Citizens do not only deserve political rights, but their voices should be heard in democratic discourses. Citizens also “have a right to ethical independence that follows from the principle of personal responsibility. They have rights, including rights to free speech, that are required by their more general right to govern themselves, which right also flows from personal responsibility.”²⁸⁵ As far as justice is concerned, citizens should be able to participate in political activities and discourses. It is their fundamental human right and nobody should deprive them of these special right. It implies a situation in

²⁸³ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 319.

²⁸⁴ Imer B. Flores, “Taking (Human) Dignity and Rights Seriously,” 120.

²⁸⁵ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 4.

which the citizens are not just spectators but equal players in political activities. These for instance are found lacking in many societies.

Political participation in no small measures removes discrimination and protects every member of the society to be treated equally irrespective of his social or economic status, race, religion, ethnic background or sex. It should give both the haves and the have-nots in the society unrestrained access to justice and that judiciary, as an arbiter, should be independent and neutral in the interpretation of law and efficient manner.²⁸⁶ Without mincing words, one can say that Political participation is sine qua non to good governance. It empowers citizens to be involved in the decision making process, to contribute to public debate on national issues and voting processes that will affect their lives in the society. It does not only give political processes some legitimacy but gives the citizens the sense of belonging.²⁸⁷ It also leads to wide areas of shared concerned and builds just and equal society.

Political participation also enforces a situation in which the citizens do not only have the right to vote but be voted for. Unfortunately as typical of most societies, citizens are given little or no access to political participation. For instance, “today, however, the voices of American citizens are raised and heard unequally. Citizens with low or moderate incomes speak with a whisper that is lost on the ears of the inattentive government, while the advantaged roar with a clarity and consistency that policy makers readily heed.”²⁸⁸ Rich political sponsors enjoy more control and participation than others. “The more money politicians need to be elected, the more they need rich contributors, and the more influence such contributors then have over their political decisions.”²⁸⁹ Money has become the curse of politics in almost all over the world. The large campaign contributors have unrestricted access to political officials and oftentimes dictate for them, thereby denying the ordinary citizens from exercising their political right. In politics money is the enemy not just of fairness but of real argument and none can deny this reality.²⁹⁰ While the rich sponsors have their wishes fulfilled during governance, the poor ones are marginalised and their

²⁸⁶ Cf. Arowolo, D.E. and Aluko, O.A. “Democracy, political participation and good governance in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, Vol. 1 No. 3, 2012 (In Press), 803. Accessed 16.02.2021. <https://isdsnet.com/ijds-v1n3-13.pdf>

²⁸⁷ Cf. Arowolo, D.E. and Aluko, O.A. “Democracy, political participation and good governance in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 802.

²⁸⁸ Paul Schumaker, ed., *The Political Theory Reader* (Chicester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 314.

²⁸⁹ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 351.

²⁹⁰ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here?* 129.

opinions not considered. For example, “only some Americans fully exercise their rights as citizens, and they usually come from the advantaged segments of society. Those who enjoy higher incomes, more occupational success, and the highest levels of formal education are the ones most likely to participate in politics and make their needs and values known to government officials.”²⁹¹ Therefore, the most effective way of preventing money dominance in politics should be to lessen the need for money by politicians and then limit what they can spend during electioneering seasons.

According to Keith Thompson, “It can be reasonably argued, that equality is the basic notion behind democracy. The slogan ‘one man – one vote’ epitomizes this. Democratic structures presume that all should have a say in those matters which affect all.”²⁹² There is also a near universal agreement that democracy is the only acceptable form of government which could guarantee equality of citizens. “A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic.”²⁹³ However, people have come to question what the best form of democracy could be. Nonetheless, the meaning of democracy in the political sphere has been subject to arguments and numerous interpretations among political scientists and philosophers.

Democracy as we understand it today entails government by the people rather than by some family or class or some tyrant or general. The citizens should be part and parcel of every democratic life. This is explained by the article of the universal declaration on human rights in the following manner: “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through his freely chosen representatives, and everyone has the right to a government which conforms to the will of the people.”²⁹⁴ This simply shows that “only democracy can provide dignity. Government must be of the people, by the people, and for the people. The people must govern themselves. Each citizen must be offered an equal and meaningful role. One person must have one vote and no one more than one vote. No man, Locke said, is born to rule or be ruled.”²⁹⁵ Every democratic society must respect democratic rules. “We don’t confuse democracy with mountains. There are ideas that we understand to

²⁹¹ Paul Schumaker, ed. *The Political Theory Reader*, 316.

²⁹² Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy: A Practical Approach*, 142.

²⁹³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Delhi: Aakar Books, Indian Edition, 2004), 106.

²⁹⁴ Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Origins, Drafting, and Intent*, 59.

²⁹⁵ R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 379.

be thought of as ‘democratic’ ideas, such as free elections, the equality and freedom of people, the rule of law....”²⁹⁶ If the citizens are not allowed equal and active participation, then it does not deserve the name democracy. “Citizens are also, however, participants in the political contest they judge: they are candidates and supporters whose actions help, in different ways, to shape public opinion and to fix how the rest of the citizens vote.”²⁹⁷ They participate and contribute in the government in which citizens are active and equal partners. Democracy demands discourse, citizen equality and popular sovereignty where the citizens rather than the officials are masters. Even the winner-takes-all style of electing parliamentary representatives in each electoral district, common in the United States and Britain destroys this aspect of justice.

Free speech plays an important role in democracy and the right to free speech is regarded a core principle of any democratic discourse; free speech gives a constitutive right and is the individual right par excellence.²⁹⁸ “Democracy has to be judged not just by the institutions that formally exist but by the extent to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can actually be heard.”²⁹⁹ Citizens without government interference, should be given opportunities to inform themselves as fully as possible and to deliberate individually and collectively about their choice. In the words of Guest, “dignity imposes on government the obligation of good faith to respect both its equality and its personal freedom aspects.”³⁰⁰ This implies permitting anyone who wishes to address the public to do so, in whatever way and at whatever length he wishes no matter how unreasonable the government or people judge his message to be.

Freedom of speech enforces citizen sovereignty and protects citizen equality. It is vital as well as essential that citizens of a given political community be free, in principle, to express any relevant opinion they have whether considered, hated or rejected by others. “Democracy cannot provide any genuine form of self-government if citizens are not able to speak to the community in a structure and climate that encourages attention to the merits of what they say.”³⁰¹ However, it is necessary to note that this freedom of speech is not absolute and has its own limit; also it must yield to other values like national or personal security, private

²⁹⁶ Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin, Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*, 74.

²⁹⁷ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 358.

²⁹⁸ Lorenzo Zucca, “Exit Hercules. Ronald Dworkin and the Crisis of the Age of Rights,” in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 317.

²⁹⁹ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 2009, xiii.

³⁰⁰ Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin*, 3rd ed. (Stanford: Stanford Law Books, 2013), 174.

³⁰¹ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 365.

interest in reputation, the fight against racism and equality in society. For instance, the acknowledged right to free speech does not include the absolute right to participate in calumny, nuisance demonstrations that may involve destruction of property or life. Nevertheless, the character and how these limits are justified differ from one country to another. In practice the government will have the last word on what an individual's rights are, because its police as the keeper of law will do what its officials and courts say.³⁰² It is a must as well as a right to permit every citizen who is bound by law equal voice in the process that produces laws even when we rightly detest his convictions. Citizens should be allowed their freedom of speech in a democratic system except when such threatens the national security or undermines a reputation. There should be every honest effort to enhance freedom of speech in a collective, discursive and individual basis. Otherwise, the rich, privileged class as well as some government officials would continue to stifle the voice of the common masses, thereby enforcing inequality in society.

It is necessary to recall, that freedom of speech should not be supposed as having only instrumental value to democracy or nothing but a means to a more important end. The other way round, freedom of speech is in itself a fundamental human right. This is so because freedom of speech and democracy are connected not instrumentally but in a deeper way, because the dignity that freedom of speech protects is an essential component of democracy rightly conceived.³⁰³ Therefore, the media have a big role to play in the enterprise of democracy and defending the right of the people. Nevertheless, we must not fail to acknowledge how difficult it is to do this since the Networks are owned by conglomerates and political stakeholders. Irrespective of the challenges mentioned, the people must be placed at the centre of every consideration and government must strive to maintain citizen equality when it comes to freedom of speech.

2.5 Justice, insurance and luck

A good and affordable insurance scheme is a necessity for every political community. Dworkin insists that a meaningful insurance scheme must be designed to justify the two principles of dignity. It should be an insurance scheme that will both incorporate equal concern (of the people) and respect for personal responsibility to enable citizens decide on

³⁰² Cf. R. Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 184.

³⁰³ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 354.

how to lead their lives. The government must design whatever policies it has about insurance to be fully justified under both. The goal should be to avoid an insurance scheme so porous that it permits extensive abuse and one so stringent that it shuts out people who need and deserve it. This demands a balance in the insurance scheme in political society.

However, certain conditions must be considered in order to achieve a balance in the insurance scheme. The issue of merit is the first consideration. By this we mean that there must be a consideration of who should be entitled to public support. (Should it be for citizens without work, or those who find their work distasteful or unfulfilling? Should it be for only those who cannot find work in the society or those who refused to work because it does not tally with their talents?) Secondly, the issue of level: this centres on what should be the level of support that someone who is entitled to support requires? (Should the support be based on a national minimum wage, poverty line or what the average citizens earn?) Thirdly, administration: granted we have distinguished the properties that qualifies or disqualifies one to some entitlements, how will we define the spending to strike a balance between administrative savings and individual justice? (How can society and those in charge of the administrative section determine those who are truly entitled to this insurance?) Fourthly, and finally, is the aspect of dependency; in many cases, those who claim welfare have people who are dependent on them (like physically challenged, infants and children). Hence, is it just to limit what such a person receives on the grounds that his behaviour disqualified him, when the impact will be severe or catastrophic for his dependants? (The point to be considered here is: should the government limit what people receive knowing that such action will put the lives of the dependants in danger and punish children for no reason of their own?). All these are serious questions that any useful account of social justice must acknowledge and try to address. There is therefore a need for a structure that would provide national public debate so as to find answers that will be accepted by all.

Typical of Dworkin, he believed that his desert island test³⁰⁴ could be applied to design a hypothetical unemployment insurance scheme in a political society. He called for a situation where wealth, opportunities and other resources are equally and fairly distributed as in the hypothetical construct, and people are fully aware of the factors that determine and contribute to their economic security in society. And nonetheless all the citizens are offered the same equal opportunity of getting insurance at the same community rates with the same

³⁰⁴ "Desert island test" refers to Dworkin's hypothetical construct.

premium coverage for everyone; of course designed to provide a stipulated income for those unemployed, or employed at low income rate lesser than the national minimum wage. “Dworkin proposes to set compensation for each disability at the level the average member of society would have bought insurance against that handicap from behind a veil of ignorance.”³⁰⁵ Such a hypothetical unemployment insurance scheme will give everyone the equal opportunity to decide prudently as an individual whether to insure himself against future misfortunes or not.

For justice to be achieved in this sphere of insurance, “the state should introduce distributive programmes that aim to bring people closer to the share of resources they would have had were it not for such differences in fortune.”³⁰⁶ Dworkin hitherto recommended “that the community model a system of tax and welfare provision on the structure of that hypothetical insurance market, so as to give people who have been unlucky the compensation that they very probably would have bargained to receive if they had the opportunity they should have had.”³⁰⁷ Such an insurance approach would also make people responsible for their choices. People are free to choose purchasing insurance against unemployment or otherwise face the consequences of whatever the future brings. With such an imagined scheme, there would be no objection of undeserving people usurping opportunities, as one would benefit only from his choice. For instance, no one would object if an insured woman decides to quit her job due to pregnancy and yet receives the stipulated compensation, since that is what the policy she purchased provided for. No doubt, this kind of insurance can give room for cheating—for instance, even though the policy might oblige the recipients to search for jobs, some may still lie and claim that they have done so but without success. Though people might condemn such behaviour (like that of the pregnant woman), they cannot complain against an institutional arrangement that bestowed such benefits on the recipient as unjust and unfair to others.

With such an imagined insurance scheme, no one would claim institutional unfairness for refusing to purchase insurance when others did and begin to reap the fruits. “Dworkin sees insurance as a theoretic makeup of the market that can bring the contingent factors of luck

³⁰⁵ Carl Knight, *Luck Egalitarianism Equality, Responsibility, and Justice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 28.

³⁰⁶ Noel Parker and Stuart Sim, eds., *The AZ Guide to Modern Social and Political Theorists* (London: Pretence Hall/ Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997), 73.

³⁰⁷ Ronald Dworkin, “Sovereign Virtue Revisited,” in *Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Political and Legal Philosophy*, 108.

or misfortune (brute luck) into the field of predictable decisions ("option luck").³⁰⁸ Such an insurance would be a product of choice and circumstance – that is- people's education, mixture of ambition, employment opportunities, behaviour and success.

No one would recover compensation unless he had made the decision to insure; if he had insured in a way that covered unemployment due to lack of technological skills, for example, no one could justly complain that he ought not to be compensated because his character had contributed to his not acquiring those skills.³⁰⁹

Unfortunately Dworkin acknowledged that such a just insurance model is found almost nowhere in the world because, wealth is not fairly distributed among citizens of various countries (that will enable them purchase such an imagined insurance scheme); and that the antecedent risk of sustained unemployment is vastly greater in some parts of the population than in others. The poor people have no access to adequate health provision, a lot lack adequate housing, some children are born without prospects for the future. These differences in wealth, educational and social opportunities make one part of the society more likely to suffer an uninsured risk. He stressed that the difference between the imagined hypothetical insurance and actual state of insurance in America lies in the differences in people's circumstances.³¹⁰ Circumstance implies the very many opportunities and chance we assumed in the hypothetical situation.

For Dworkin, we can use the imaginary type of insurance scheme to design an insurance policy that people of different tastes and ambitions would prudently purchase and can afford if they had the wealth. The essence of this insurance is not to eliminate the effects of brute bad luck but an effort to lessen its consequences to a point that the normal prudent insurance would. By virtue of such an imagined insurance scheme, people are placed on the same and equal position with risks. People are treated with equal concern when the society allows each

³⁰⁸ Claudia Rahm, „Recht und Demokratie bei Jürgen Habermas und Ronald Dworkin,“ in *Rechtsphilosophischen Schriften*, 54.

„Dworkin sieht in Versicherungen eine theoretische Ergänzung des Marktes, die die Kontingenten Faktoren des Glücks oder Unglücks („brute luck“) in den Bereich berechenbarer Entscheidungen („option luck“) holen können.“

³⁰⁹ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 333.

³¹⁰ Choice reflects someone's personality which involves ambition and character. While their choice reflects their personality which involves ambition and character; circumstances consist of personal and impersonal resources.

Circumstances consists of wealth, education and social opportunities. Someone's circumstance consists of his personal resources (Physical, mental health and ability) and impersonal resources (resources that can be reassigned from one person to another).

individual to insure, on the same terms and at the level of coverage it chooses, even when the bad luck for which they seek insurance has secretly been known.

The envisaged insurance scheme is a type he believes will “make people equal in their ex ante risk of bad luck, but not in their ex post circumstances once bad luck strikes.”³¹¹ It is also important to note his belief that some people are born into this world with bad luck, while others are born with good luck. Luck implies what might be matters of identity and those accidents that emanate from the fixed identity; it might also include one’s own physical powers, his situations and the properties of one’s parents or relatives.

The hypothetical insurance model will simply be: a situation where people are well-informed, fully aware and equal in their ability to insure and free to make individual decision whether or not to purchase an insurance in an equal society with an efficient insurance premium. If these conditions are met, then the political community can claim to be just no matter how it turns out later. But when we have an ordinary insurance scheme (as in America), where people lack the ability (resources) due to less money or circumstances (for instance those people who are likely to suffer from specific misfortunes that insurance companies can discover and refuse or if the disadvantage for which the insurance might be purchased has already occurred -disability, lack of talents); efforts should be made in a society that is committed to equality to correct such injustices. It should be insurance that low income earners and people with bad luck could afford to buy. Any insurance that fails to show equal concern to the citizens is totally unjust and wrong. Every style of insurance scheme must consider all future events and how they should be balanced. Officials therefore should use at least that coverage level as a guide to design redistributive programs. Thus

We might aim to collect from the community, through taxes, an amount equal to the aggregate premium that would have been paid for universal coverage at that level and then distribute (justly and equally), to those who need it, services, goods, or funds that match what that coverage would have provided them in virtues of their bad luck. We

³¹¹ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 346.

A community has established full ex post equality when the differences in its citizens’ wealth can be fully explained at all times by the choices they have made about whether and how much to work and how much to save or spend, when what they have depends only on those choices and has not been affected by any differences in their talents or in the luck they have had in their investments or health. A government aims at ex ante equality, on the other hand, when it does all it can to put people in an equal position in advance of any turns of fate that might make them unequal—in advance, that is, of the events or circumstances that count as good or bad luck. It can improve ex ante equality, for example, by arranging that all citizens have an opportunity to buy on equal terms the appropriate insurance against low productive talent or bad luck.

would fund employment and low wage insurance, medical care insurance, and social security for people in retirement in that way.³¹²

How do we regulate this kind of insurance in an open market? Every response would take us back to the idea of the desert island test, where the resources are auctioned and shared equally to the individuals. Supposing that the prices have been set and auction executed, and resources shared, the market would still remain open. However, people do not possess the same amount of endowment and capacities and therefore some would succeed more than others. Some would have either physical or mental handicaps while some would be lucky enough to achieve highly valued talents and expand their resources. Whereas those who have encountered bad luck or brute luck would be left behind. Hence, such a situation could lead to crisis and bring greater inequality in society. “Dworkin’s innovative solution to this problem is to have, operating alongside the economic market for transferable goods, a progressive income tax scheme modelled on a hypothetical insurance market, in which people are imagined to have insured against being handicapped or untalented.”³¹³ By this, every atom of inequality or crisis in the open insurance market will be resolved.

2.6 Education and social justice

Social goods according to Walzer and primary goods in Rawlsian language must be distributed equally in a political society. Dworkin also insisted on the need for resources to be shared equally. One of those primary, social goods or resources is education. “Increasing access to higher education is often presented as the best means of achieving social equality within a society. This is because educated persons are better prepared to seek their own fortune and rise above working class wages.”³¹⁴ It could then be said that no meaningful discussion on justice would ignore the sphere of education and its importance in human society. It does not only form the citizens, but also gives them the capability to interpret well the principles of human dignity in order to achieve justice. “As an important good for succeeding in social competition and for individual flourishing, justice points in the direction

³¹² R. Dworkin, *Justice for the Hedgehogs*, 361. (Words in bracket mine).

³¹³ Lesley A. Jacobs, “Justice in Health Care: Can Dworkin Justify Universal Health Access?” in *Dworkin and his Critics with Replies by Dworkin*, ed. Justine Burley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 136.

³¹⁴ Ann E. Cudd “What Is Equality in Higher Education?” in *The Equal Society Essays on Equality in Theory and Practice*, ed. George Hull (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 268.

of equal distribution of education.”³¹⁵ Walzer also believes it is important for society not only to educate its children but also its new and future members.³¹⁶

Educational equality remains a fundamental value of social justice. Educational equality would mean an equal entitlement to education; a situation where there would be a fair distribution of educational opportunities and resources especially to people with different levels of abilities, and children with special educational needs. By this, no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged because of his personal, social and economic condition.³¹⁷ Education opportunities distributed equally for all should bridge the disparities between genders and races. As such, justice demands that everyone in the political society should be entitled to education. The reason is that, “unequal opportunities or access to education and its fundamental enabling conditions would constitute an unacceptable inequality.”³¹⁸ Educational equality should be non-discrimination, which will afford each individual the opportunity to receive education regardless of the person’s individual or social stand. It should also serve the goal of producing democratic equality among persons so that each person receives enough education to gain the respect and dignity which would allow effective political participation.³¹⁹

The more pluralistic the human society becomes thanks to globalisation and immigration, the more the need for education. Sen believes that increased and widely shared educational advancement which forms part of the social opportunity can increase economic productivity as well as a more equal distribution of aggregate national income. It can also help individuals to transform goods into other valuable functionings; and support individual’s intelligent decision-making about the kind of life they want to live.³²⁰ Education here should not only remain at the level of learning or an introduction into principles but should help the recipients practise the principles of justice. It also breeds atmosphere or climate for the learning and

³¹⁵ Ann E. Cudd “What Is Equality in Higher Education? 267.

³¹⁶ Cf. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 197.

³¹⁷ Cf. Lorella Terzi, *Equality, Capability and Social Justice in Education: Re-Examining Disability and Special Educational Needs*. A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Institute of Education University of London April 2005, 6-10.

³¹⁸ Lorella Terzi, “The Capability to Be Educated” In *Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan™, 2007, 41

³¹⁹ Ann E. Cudd “What Is Equality in Higher Education? 269-270.

³²⁰ Thomas Rodham Wells, *Reasoning about Development: Essays on Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach*. Thesis to obtain the degree of Doctor from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2013, 25

practise of human rights. Be that as it may, Sen's capability approach will look towards structuring the educational opportunities according to the child's capacity.³²¹

However, in many countries, there is education inequality either for economic reasons, race, cultural or religion. For instance, Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban in 2012 in Pakistan for campaigning and standing up for girls' education. The UNESCO 2015 survey of which 69% of countries are estimated to have reached gender parity at the primary education level, and 48% in secondary education, shows that there is still a long way for our societies to go for the world to achieve gender equality. Since most modern societies are made up of multiple cultural or racial groups which may dominate the state and social institutions, and may leave little place for minority groups or cultures, including women, to have access to education, many countries have developed different perspectives to redress the structural inequality.³²² Also, there is an "ever increasing global migration of people that calls for different models of assimilation, particularly in schools."³²³ To this effect, many countries committed to the course of justice have come up with pragmatic policies as regards education. In Nigeria for instance, there is a different cut off mark for university admission between those in the southern part and the academically disadvantaged north. The United States of America like most pluralistic societies with different races has also an educational policy called 'Affirmative Action'. The essence, is to balance the issue of inequality or discrimination which has been a serious issue in the United States of America. Affirmative action simply entails different initiatives of the Executive of some State Governments and some institutions like universities³²⁴ in which race, sex, colour, ethnicity or national origin is to be taken into account in admission decisions in the United States of America.

2.7 Genetic engineering and citizens equality

Genetics is the most exciting aspect of science in recent decades. Today, the effect of genetics is evident in the world. There are high technologies that could discover and diagnose genetic predictors of diseases or predisposition to disease. There is also the aspect

³²¹ Cf. Ådne Valen-Sendstad, *Theories of Human Rights in Relation to Understandings of Human Rights Education: the Relevance to Diversity*. A Thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of PhD (14th of April 2010), 10.

³²² Cf. Firdevs Melis Cin, *Gender Justice, Education and Equality Creating Capabilities for Girls' and Women's Development* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2017), 3.

³²³ Jacky Lumby and Marianne Coleman, *Leadership and Diversity: Challenging Theory and Practice in Education* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 18.

³²⁴ Cf. P. S. Krishnan, *Social Exclusion and Justice in India* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 208.

of genetic manipulations about genes, chromosomes that could alter the behaviour or mental capacity of a child. While we enjoy these privileges, we are faced with the difficulties of how far and when these tests should be allowed, required or forbidden, or when some of these interventions are desirable or unwanted. Here we weigh the impact on a particular people to see if the gains outweigh the losses and so forth.³²⁵ The advantages of genetics are much but no doubt, it has some consequences that will present some moral, social and political problems. The borderline lies on what extent and limit should the government decide and to what extent citizens should be given equal access to such genetically based treatment.

Though some are of huge support for genetic research, many people object to large scale programs in genetic research on grounds of moral, and cost. Many think the money would be more usefully spent in other ways. Some of these diseases that will be diagnosed through powerful genetic testing, could be treated or avoided but fears are entertained by some people for the outcome of such a project. There is the fear that the tests might further increase the advantages of the rich over the poor, especially if it could be afforded only by the rich. It is also true that the test results may fall into the hands of others-employers or insurers-to the patient's damage.³²⁶

While genetic tests identify the certainty or likelihood of other diseases like Huntington, or certain breast cancers that cannot be cured or alleviated at the present stage of medical knowledge; we cannot deny the fact that these genetic tests could be harmful in a way that a death sentence handed to a patient could demoralise the victim and also become harmful to his life. Another danger is that it is also possible for employers, insurers and other third party to use the sickness against the victims who might wish to keep the information from them. Despite the good sides and disadvantages, Dworkin will allow adults with full knowledge of the situations, gains and possibility of being used by third parties to have the genetic tests. Adults also could be allowed to gauge for themselves the risk of whatever danger remains. This problem might also be applied to the blanket test testing of children. Despite the possibility of knowing children's abnormalities and getting them prepared for eventualities, it might be unfair for the child to grow in a world where others will know he or she is doomed.

³²⁵ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 428.

³²⁶ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 429.

The next consideration will be the aspect of pregnancy and right of expectant mothers. To what level should these newest technologies be used on them? While some support for unreserved access to medical tests, some call for caution. One of the major reasons of objections towards prenatal testing is the fear of abortion. Obviously, many parents would wish to have a full genetic testing of their unborn baby so as to know its sex and genetic profile as possible, but the fact that it could heighten the cases of abortion remains a great source of worry in some societies. The danger in prenatal testing as some believe is that, it exposes people to child gender selection and could encourage abuses on human life in the form of abortion, and a lot of manipulations in embryonic stem cell selection.

Some also believe that public knowledge through genetic engineering that a citizen will die early or is particularly vulnerable to a particular disease, might make other citizens to treat that individual differently in consequence. People for instance might also regard marriage and even regard friendship with such a person as much less attractive. On another extreme aspect, people may be overly solicitous or attentive, and this behaviour might be equally undesirable. On the part of employers and insurers, such will have some financial and devastating consequences as such persons might be unemployable, at any rate in a preferred occupation, or uninsurable, except perhaps at high cost, discriminating and prohibitive rates, as a result of what other people know about his genes.³²⁷

Aware of the fact that visibly disabled suffer social and emotional harm today in our societies, access to genetic profile of peoples' health or selective information about genetic disposition to some miserable diseases would increase many people's vulnerability to different forms discrimination. Whichever way we look at it, supporters of the genetic testing response is to suggest that the dissemination of genetic information must be under the sole control of its subject. This might look so simple in principle but not in practice.

The discussion on genetics might lead to some pertinent questions for every political society. What about the insurance dilemma it might lead to, in the sense that people who actually pose very different risks to insurers might keep such information thereby plunging insurers into bankruptcy. The submission remains that nations that offer single-payer health insurance to everyone, financed out of taxation, should not discriminate against genetically unfortunate simply because they have the power, through genetic testing to do so.

³²⁷ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 433-434.

2.8 Sex, death, and role of the courts in moral issues

We identified earlier the principles of human dignity as the basis for the practice of justice. It was also stated that the two principles of dignity have been subject to different interpretations. We also saw the value of liberty and how much a political society should strive to respect the liberty of the citizens. However, this poses a lot of issues in moral deliberations. Various societies have interpreted and applied it differently to issues like genetic engineering, life, death, sexual behaviours and what role the government through the courts should play in the moral decisions of the citizens. Contrarily, many suggest that individuals should be left alone to decide on matters of death and sex. Many argue both for and against euthanasia on the premise that a person's dignity is in no small measure connected to his capacity for self-respect represents the ability to decide, to act, to control one's life, to define one's self, to choose to love well.³²⁸ Kant taught that "individuals should be treated as autonomous agents"³²⁹ and this calls for respect. As moral agents with autonomy, individuals should or have the freedom to decide for themselves and their consent must be sought always. Most people use this to lay claim that they should be free to live their lives as they decide or deem best, and question to the present day if the courts should really interfere in moral issues.

Sexuality likewise has become an integral part of modern society and remains central to the lives of people. If that is the case, should adults be free to make their personal decisions about sex as long as such a decision has no effect on the lives of other people? Or should there be restrictions and controls on how people live their sexual lives? If people are to be free with deciding their sexual lives, to what extent should they enjoy this freedom or can individual or corporate bodies show disapproval in their respective areas of control? Or should there be discrimination towards people of different sexual behaviours like homosexuals and lesbians? The conflicts arising from these issues are not easy to be resolved especially when it is obvious that the constitution of many nations and other international laws grant certain rights that the majority cannot invade. In some other places, culture and religion play restraints too.

Homosexuals for instance are discriminated in many countries despite international rights which accords some kind of liberty and equal protection for the citizens. For example, some

³²⁸ Cf. Erin Daly, "Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life Well lived," in *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 367-368.

³²⁹ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 2.

citizens in Africa face discrimination and social disadvantages over this gay issue either for cultural or religious reasons. It took the United States a few years after the death of Dworkin for the Supreme Court to recognize the dignity interests in marriage for both opposite-sex and same-sex couples and the resolve to protect the right to marry the person of one's choice, regardless of gender. The constitutional right of marriage for all, that is, rights of gays and lesbians based on human dignity served as the argument for such a step.³³⁰

Some people believe that constitutional discrimination against homosexuals would violate human dignity which should rather protect and accord equal rights to everyone. The general feeling amongst some people is that states should never enact laws that will discriminate against some groups of persons in any way while granting some privileges to others at the expense of the former. On the contrary, others believe that the state should intervene in moral decisions and that citizens should recourse to 'political process' to seek justice. The objective of this 'political process' remains that groups who fail in pursuing their interests legally should have had at least the fair opportunity of presenting their cases. But in some cases, the fact of political process does not imply fairness. Under the pretext of political process, the legal department should not deprive the citizens or some group of the very political rights required in order to participate in the process of fair terms. Fair Political process could also be abused when the group that loses has been subject to prejudice or some kind of stereotype that limits their opportunity of being heard fairly; for instance the case of limiting the voting and political power of some minorities through economic and professional means in the United States of America in order to keep them at the control of the white supremacists.

The issue of death has also received various interpretations from different walks of life and ages. As society progresses, death continues to acquire a different meaning for modern man. Although almost all accept the sacredness of human life, disagreement has always existed whether people should be allowed or not to take (away) their lives in the face of terminal illness and vegetative state. For those in the Christian circle and pro-life members, they have held that life is a precious gift from God that should be protected and nourished till the end despite the situation; but for others, unpromising life is a burden that should be avoided by terminating the life to ease pains and perpetual suffering. While some see it that ending life prematurely degrades the value of human life, others see it as degrading not to die in a

³³⁰ Cf. Erin Daly, "Dworkinian Dignity. Rights and Responsibilities of a Life well lived," 374-375.

dignifying manner even when life becomes an unbearable burden. For them, what matters is the consent of the patient involved. But:

Consent on its own is only a necessary condition for autonomous self - determination. Free choices must also be rational, manifesting a commitment to right principles. When Kant says that a choice must be free, he means that it must be made based on reasons that are justifiable to others, not based on inclinations that a particular person happens to have.³³¹

The begging question following this assumption remains; should individuals be allowed to take decisions on their own or should the decision be made collectively and enforced on the citizens? Are the citizens free enough to choose when to die or not? While many have upheld the right of the dying to terminate their life, others protest against and maintain that there should not be a legal force compelling doctors to do this. For Dworkin, the view that the life of a fetus or a terminally ill patient who wishes to die is of intrinsic value and therefore may not be taken asserts the view that life is sacred. Dworkin insists that as a matter of political morality and a matter of constitutional law, individuals are entitled to decide for themselves what exactly it is that makes the human life sacred. Any bans on abortion and physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia which rests its justifications on the state's taking a position on what makes life sacred, violates ones right to decide for himself what makes life sacred.³³²

Any assisted-suicide statute that could be enacted in the United States would demand full information for and informed consent by patients who seek such assistance. It would also require hospitals to satisfy supervising authorities that all options for treatment and palliation had been explained and offered to them.³³³

The summary of it all remains that the courts should not invade in moral issues without giving the people some fair hearing. Both in matters of sex and death, all the various groups should be given the equal opportunity to present their views in a formal way. The courts are not to suppress the dignity of the citizens but to bring order and protect their rights.

³³¹ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics. The Uses and Limits of Kant's Practical Philosophy*, (. Wiley-Blackwell. A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication, 2011 © 2011), 3.

³³² Arthur Ripstein ed. "Liberty and Equality," In *Ronald Dworkin: Contemporary Philosophy in Focus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 110.

³³³ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 473.

Conclusion

The crux of this chapter was the consideration on the practice of equality since no abstract political theory can be understood except in the context of real and practical political situations. Ideas according to Sen have to be translated into viable practices for injustice to be eliminated. Effort was made to show the application of the general and fantastic theories of justice to some important issues of modern society. In as much as we might theorise and seek a kind of solid ground for solving social challenges based on those ideas, however empirical or pragmatic perspectives matter a lot in proffering pragmatic solutions to those social phenomena.

However, some of the issues discussed in this section present some complexities. Kant has been criticised as abstract and inapplicable moral theories that only states what good action is without telling us what we should do right. For instance, Kantian idea of dignity which demands respect for each other might be considered only as yardstick for measuring morality and not the issue of justice. Treating each other with respect may seem different from treating each other as equals. Kant could give justification for moral principles of justice. But even though Immanuel Kant's ethical theory is so often accused of formalism, of being too abstract to be relevant for real yet we appeal to for life decisions, and in almost every important debate in applied ethics of which political issues are not excluded.³³⁴ The concept of justice is solely determined as Rawls stated by the content of human person and moral behaviour.

Some critics are of the opinion that treating each other as end nonetheless does not command any direct political response. This somehow reduces the categorical imperative within the ambience of morality only. But the truth remains that we can't separate politics from ethics. "Although the categorical imperative is not equivalent to the golden rule, they share the insight that when one acts, one must put oneself in the place of those who are being affected."³³⁵ He saw the categorical imperative as a principle through which we could measure moral values. We should follow moral rules critically and these principles which control our conducts (maybe not only on moral issues but political affairs as moral beings) must be justified.

³³⁴ Cf. Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 1.

³³⁵ Matthew C. Altman, *Kant and Applied Ethics*, 4.

Dworkin deserves some praises for weaving morality into political philosophy but his idea about dignity as resting of the two principles of self-respect and authenticity are somewhat individualistic. Self-respect as a component of dignity may be conceived as what each individual owes to himself but not to others. Superficially stated, it does not command reciprocity from others. We know that there are individuals who don't care about how they live or whether they achieve anything in life. There are persons who neither give themselves self-respect nor take responsibility for their actions or themselves. So one may be tempted to ask if such individuals deserve to be treated with dignity by others or not? The plausible response going by Kant's principle and Dworkin's explanation is that dignity is inviolate and we should treat all our fellow human beings as possessor of dignity even to the thoughtless and irresponsible fellow. Self-respect and authenticity are real and objective norms that must be respected irrespective of how individuals take it subjectively.³³⁶ The complexities of his views irrespective, we cannot deny that Dworkin presented dignity as a big value that could united and be used to evaluate all other plural values in the society. It is a key concept that adds something to other values.³³⁷ Dworkin's interest was to show how this moral value could help in the practice of politics especially towards countering the deep - 'shameful' - injustice in the real world.³³⁸

Sen's idea of educational equality though appealing, is insistence of capability presents some complications and ambiguity due to his "lack of specificity regarding individual capability attributions—that is, a lack of clarity regarding when it is, and when it is not, correct to claim that an individual has a particular capability."³³⁹ How would the capabilities be measured? What are going to be yardsticks and who measures it? Would capability not lead to inequality as more endowed children might be given greater opportunities or those with lesser capabilities given undue preference to enable them measure up? This lack of specificity nonetheless, capability might help to restore balance between citizens and also reduce wastage of resources as students will be challenged to where they will be productive.

Be that as it may, and irrespective of our subjective understanding of the concept dignity, we cannot deny that the base rock for every discussion on equality lies on human dignity.

³³⁶ Cf. Allen W. Wood, "Interpreting Human Dignity," 175-178.

³³⁷ Cf. Khurshid, Salman, Lokendra Malik, and Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco, eds. *Dignity in the Legal and Political Philosophy of Ronald Dworkin*, 22-24.

³³⁸ Cf. Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin. Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*, 3rd ed. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 183.

³³⁹ Bekka Williams, "Capability Luck Egalitarianism", in *The Equal Society Essays on Equality in Theory and Practice*, ed. George Hull (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 114.

Dignity is the hinge on which equality or justice, be it political, religious, and cultural or otherwise rests. As such, inequality and injustice would imply an abuse as well as the denial of this sacred principle. Dignity is that which makes us equal entities and members of the political society. It is thanks to human dignity that we all deserve to be treated equally and justly. It is also based on this axiom that each citizen deserves human, political and legal rights. Dignity also accords each human the right to equal and good health care, affordable insurance, equal participation in political activities and discourse, freedom of speech, democracy, right to education, right to moral decisions and sense of responsibility.

It may be concluded that not just only theories of equality but also their applications to practical contemporary issues are necessary for every political society committed to having an equal and just society or according to Sen reducing manifest injustice and as Walzer would put it, reducing monopoly of dominant goods. The next question then would be, how do these theoretical and practical assumptions of justice function in Nigeria? How close is Nigeria to the various issues raised in the theoretical expose and practical application of equality. These questions will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

CHALLENGES TO THE REALISATION OF JUSTICE IN NIGERIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

3.1. Introduction: a historical excursus of Nigerian polity

Nigeria which is located in the western part of Africa, is regarded as the most populated country in the continent with a population of about 200 million³⁴⁰ people “made up of more than two hundred and fifty different ethno-linguistic groups, each with its own history, culture, traditions, language and identity.”³⁴¹ “Nigeria’s economy is highly dependent on oil, which makes up over 90% of her exports and 70% of government revenues. As of 2016, it was the 15th largest oil producer in the world, boasts of the world’s 11th largest oil reserves and 9th largest natural gas reserves”³⁴² and other natural resources.

The history of what is today known as Nigeria can be traced to the year 1914 when the Northern and southern protectorates were forcefully amalgamated by Lord Fredrick Lugard. On October 1, 1960, Nigeria was granted full independence under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary government and to an extent some kind of self-government for the three main regions of the country namely: eastern part referred to as Igbos, northern part as Hausas and Western region as Yoruba.

Independence was welcomed with many positive expectations. To nourish and control the nascent Independence then, some Nigerian elites came together and formed political parties which were unfortunately almost based on ethnic and tribal interest. Unfortunately, they had no unifying effect on the people against the British. It was this struggle for tribal interest that precipitated a plethora of coups and counter coups, culminating in a civil war. It only took a matter of months for the new country to show many signs of hopelessness.

No sooner had the euphoria of independence celebration died down than re- emerged intense power and bickering and the consequent apart of the various people of Nigeria. This unwholesome and centrifugal trend went on unabated, to the extent that the federal parliament was reduced to an inter-tribal theatre of war. Sporadic physical

³⁴⁰ There are a lot of disparities with the exact population of Nigeria. There is a statistics problem since the last national census was conducted only in March, 2006 by the ‘Population and Housing Census’. To date, the country lacks any accurate data bank or comprehensive way of updating the real number of her citizens. Therefore, with the high level of population growth especially in the northern part and many Nigerians living abroad, many have the belief that Nigeria is by far above 200 million citizens.

³⁴¹ Diane Lemieux, *The Essential Guide To Customs And Culture Of Nigeria*, Third Printing (London: Kuperad, 2017), 14.

³⁴² Cf. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous. The Story Behind the Headlines*, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), xvii.

violence erupted intermittently to further acceleration, the rapid drift towards disintegration.³⁴³

Consequent to this regional interest, tragedy struck barely six years after self-governance. In January 15, 1966, came a military coup which saw Sir Aguiyi Ironsi take over the reign of leadership as a military head of state. This coup, which was alleged to have been masterminded by the southern military members led to the death of some top northern politicians and leaders. A second (counter) coup followed in July 1966 which also led to Sir Gowon succeeding. The aftermath was the pogrom of all the Igbo people in the North and the killing of military personnel of Igbo extraction. Describing this ugly situation Chinua Achebe wrote “It was a most ominous beginning. And not surprisingly we did not stand too long in brotherhood. Within six years we were standing or sprawling on a soil soaked in fratricidal blood.”³⁴⁴ The brotherhood and independence fought together could not be sustained for a long time. Thus, the time bomb that had been planted began exploding.

On April 19, 1967, the deep sense of alienation among 'Ndi-Igbo' during Gowon's regime, forced them to wage a freedom battle in the civil war, under the leadership of the legendary Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. On this Fredrick Forsyth declares: “So far as I am concerned, the disintegration of the federation of Nigeria is not an accident of history but an inevitable consequence of it.”³⁴⁵ This first ever and only Nigerian civil war ended in 1970 not without millions of deaths recorded especially from the separatist group called Igbo, estimated to be about 3.5 million deaths (mostly from starving children). In 1975 there was another bloodless coup which led to the overthrow of Gowon and entrusted power to Muritala Mohammed as the head of state. However in the year 1976 another unsuccessful coup was carried out by Dimka but nevertheless ushered in Obasanjo as the new military head of state. On October 1, 1979, General Olusegun Obasanjo organised a democratic election which returned Nigeria to democratic rule.

However, the new republic never lasted as expected. Four years later, the military struck again in the year 1983 which saw General Mohammed Buhari cease power. In the year 1985 came another set of military interventions which saw General Babangida become the new head of state. General Babangida in June 1993 after so many protests and outcries, gave in to pressure and organised a democratic election which was adjourned as the most fair and

³⁴³ Martin C. Okonkwo, *Tribalism Exposed* (Ikot Ekpene: Iwo and Sons Ent. 2004), 45.

³⁴⁴ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1983), 7.

³⁴⁵ Fredrick Forsyth, *The Biafran Story* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), 9.

transparent election in the history of Nigeria. However, due to selfish interest and the corrupt system of the said government, this election which produced Chief Moshood Abiola as the winner was annulled. He would nonetheless be jailed in 1994 and later died in prison in the year 1998. Due to lots of protests as a result of the Abiola saga, Babangida handed over to Chief Ernest Shonekan as an interim president. In November 1993, General Abacha through another round of bloodless coups took over the reins of power. In the year 1998, death mysteriously solved the puzzle of such a despot like Abacha and saw General Abdusalami Abubakar take over and conduct an election which returned Nigeria to a democratic country in 1999 with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the democratic elected president.

Candidly, one can see that the history of Nigeria since independence does not make bedside reading. Since then, the political history has always been dominated by stories of incompetent, sub-standard half-baked politicians and illiterate military men, who have no good intentions for their motherland. From 1960 to date, Nigeria has never had a stable viable reassuring, reliable and resourceful government. The same situation is being maintained till the present day. Conclusively, from the short history, there is an indication and evidence that politics in Nigeria has been in the wrong and bad track, with no serious improvement. Inequality keeps on increasing on a daily basis and there seems to be no solution in view. The causes of these inequalities in almost every sphere could be traced to the perennial problems which have bedevilled the country right from inception.

3.2 Obstacles to justice and equality in Nigeria

In the previous chapters of this work, I was able to expose the theoretical conceptions of justice according to Ronald Dworkin Rawls, Sen and Walzer as well as the practical applications of justice to contemporary issues. We saw that society cannot but be committed to the course of justice as it forms the centre of every political consideration. However, that is not the case in Nigeria. History and realities on the ground point clearly to the fact that the country has wobbled and failed in the area of social justice. This sub-section is nothing but paying heed to the advice of Amartya Sen who encouraged us first to diagnose the causes of injustice in every particular society and through the instrument of reason find out the right approach to be employed in order to reduce or curb the manifest injustices. Therefore, in this sub-section, I will attempt to present some of the peculiar challenges militating against the realisation of justice in Nigeria as taught by Dworkin, Rawls, Sen and Walzer. Some of these

peculiar problems range from ethnic and tribal sentiments, religious intolerance, corruption and systemic decay, poor education, unconducive political atmosphere, culture, post-colonial reactions and the lack of a proper social contract among the people.

3.2.1 Ethnic and tribal sentiments as a huge barrier to the realisation of justice in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and cultural society with over 250 ethnic groups. A quick look at these ethnic groups, one finds a strong bond of affinity which is hard to be invaded or broken at the time being. Ethnicity in Nigeria also shapes the traditional way of life, manners and arts, craft, food and dressing. One could say to a sense of absolute correctness that most of the ethnic groups in Nigeria have no common relationship and could hence be described as distinct tribes with divergent interests, distinct cultural, ideological, religious and moral values. The differences between these ethnic groups are so significant that one can easily without any struggle identify where the other comes from. As could be seen on the map below, there are basically three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and a host of other minor ones.

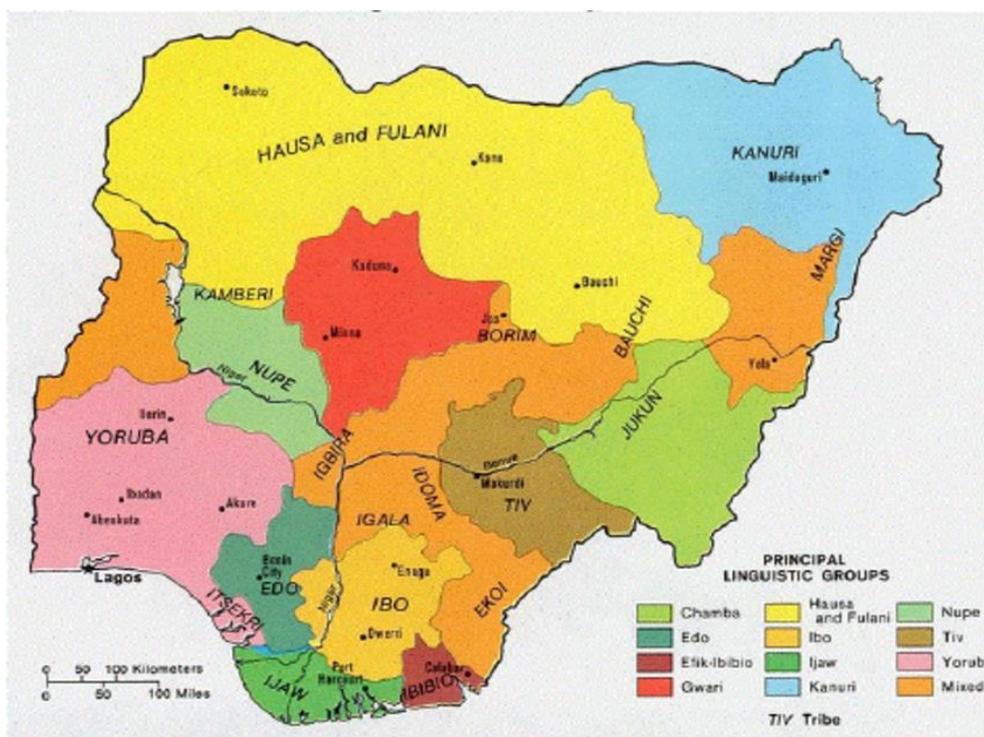


Figure 1.0 Showing map of Nigeria with the major and other ethnic groups.

Source: <https://www.google.de/search?q=map+of+nigeria+with+the+ethnic+groups&source>

The major ethnic groups are Igbo³⁴⁶, Hausa/Fulani³⁴⁷ and Yoruba³⁴⁸. The other minor ethnic groups in Nigeria are Tiv, Ibibio, Ijaw, Kanuri, Edo, Urhobo, Nupe, Efik, Igala, Itsekiri, Idoma, Jukun, Ogoni, Ogoja, Gwari, Chamba and many other smaller ones too numerous to be mentioned. While one cannot deny the influence and contributions of all the ethnic groups in the Nigerian struggle, our attention here will be focused on the three domineering ethnic groups (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba) on which every political game hinges.

Many have accused the amalgamation of the different ethnic groups into one country by the Colonial masters as the reason for unending ethnic tension. Right from time immemorial, the ethnic mind-set has really played an interesting but ugly role in the political struggle of Nigeria. The process of justice has not been an easy project thanks to ethnic diversities. Ethnic pluralism has contributed more negatively than positively in the realisation of justice. Every attempt to build a coherent and harmonious society obedient to the principles of justice has continuously hit a brick wall due to ethnic rivalry. Prejudices and sentiments existing among different ethnic groups have not also helped matters. What we have had in the past and today are nothing but ethnic champions who are more committed to ethnic goals than a just Nigeria.

³⁴⁶ IGBO: The Igbos predominantly Christians with a few other minor religions are located in the South Eastern part of Nigeria and are also the number one ethnic group among the ethnic groups living within the region. They are the third biggest ethnic group in Nigeria with about 18% of the Nigerian population and are basically found in Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Imo and large parts of Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Benue and Cross River States. Igbos are known to be industrious, traders, economists and live in every corner of the country if not the world. Unlike the other two major ethnic groups, Igbos are not hierarchical and lack a strong monarchical structure. Igbos fought the first and only civil war in Nigeria against the then federal government led troops referred to date as the ‘Nigeria-Biafra War’ as a result of the perceived marginalisation and massacre of Igbo people in the military and northern parts of Nigeria. The Igbo people or sometimes misspelt as Ibo speak Igbo language with different indigenous dialects.

³⁴⁷ HAUSA – FULANI: Adjourned as the biggest ethnic group with about 25% of the Nigerian population is located in the Northern part of Nigeria. The Hausa/ Fulani are found predominantly in Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Borno, Yobe, Zamfara, and Bauchi States, and in large concentrations in some parts of Plateau, Niger, Abuja, Adamawa and Taraba States. They are predominantly Muslims and with only a handful of Christians living within them. They have their distinct language, culture, religion, peculiar ideology and arts; its regions are controlled by the Sharia law simultaneously with the Nigerian constitution. It is very hierarchical in political structure and bears an emirate and caliphate system to date which is controlled by the Emir of Sokoto who is the head of the caliphate. Hausas and Fulanis are always known for their nomadic lifestyle and famous for raising cattle and other livestock, trading especially within the Sahara areas and raising of crops too.

³⁴⁸ YORUBA: The Yoruba as an ethnic group is basically found in the western part of Nigeria boasting about 20% population of Nigeria. It is believed to be the only tribe with a balanced mixture of Christians and Muslims who have for a longer time lived peacefully and harmoniously. The Yorubas are found in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Kogi and Ondo States, and parts of Edo and Kwara States as well as in the neighbouring Benin Republic and Togo. Unlike the Igbos, the Yorubas have a strong hierarchical societal structure with the Oba as the supreme leader of the Yoruba race. This means that the reins of power are vested in one man called the Oba who is believed to be chosen by the gods of the land and ordained to rule. The Yoruba race enjoys a unique cultural tradition, music, various arts and festivals. And their language remains Yoruba.

Political parties are also formed along ethnic ideologies and elections are cast under tribal lines. From inception, “ethnic groups (which) became the basis of the formation of the country have been at the core of scramble for power and resources in pre and post-colonial Nigeria.”³⁴⁹ As John Campbell and Matthew T. Page pointed out, “instead of forging a national identity, the country’s pioneer politicians primarily sought to advance the interests of themselves, their families, and their particular ethnic groups.”³⁵⁰ This lack of cohesion amongst the different ethnic groups has led to political turbulence in Nigeria. No other problem has polarised the country as ethnic differences and incompatible tribal ideologies. The ethnic relationship in Nigeria is frequently characterised by aggression, division, hatred, rancour and violence and an uncountable number of deaths. “Communal conflict has become one of Nigeria’s most deadly and destabilizing security challenges because its causes are so varied, complex, and localized. According to one study, sixty-five separate incidents of communal violence occurred in Nigeria in 2016 alone.”³⁵¹ The cities remain largely divided along ethno-religious lines, such that an ethnic clash in one region can lead to national chaos and chains of reprisal attacks nationwide. This could account for the wanton destruction of lives and property in Nigeria on a daily basis. The question that confronts one in such a situation is: how can justice thrive and be realised in such a system?

One may not understand the great damage ethnicism has caused our polity. Repeatedly, Nigeria has witnessed a lot of ethnic crises and recorded the bloodshed of millions from it. Nigeria is a country where the leaders and most people are not interested in the true practice of justice but politics of tribal, regional and ethnic interest. Ekiyor Welson, quoting Alapiki captured the situation in the following way: “competing actors as individuals, groups, or classes find the ethnic resource expedient. And in this process, ethnicity constitutes a serious obstacle to political integration, because it leads to the substitution of ethnic interests for the national interest.”³⁵² The reason for this ethnic battle has been power control, resource management and the selfish interests of the elites. The series of coups and counter coups were based on this same ethnic sentiment. It was these same ethnic crises that culminated in the unforgettable Nigerian-Biafran war that lasted from 1967-1970.

³⁴⁹ Ekiyor Welson, “*John Rawls’ Political Liberalism: Implications for Nigeria’s Democracy.*” Thesis Submitted to the University of Exeter for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology in May 2011, 61. (word in bracket mine)

³⁵⁰ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 94.

³⁵¹ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 131-132.

³⁵² Ekiyor Welson, “John Rawls’ Political Liberalism: Implications for Nigeria’s Democracy”, 62.

While the three major ethnic groups have dominated the scene of political activities in Nigeria, the other minor ones have not been left out totally from the struggle and ipso facto conflicts. There is constantly perceived marginalisation, evidence of the political imbalance, systematic injustice, political domination, economic cum social exploitation and subjugation of some ethnic groups by another. Where, and which ethnic group one belongs to, and the tribe from where one emanates determines almost every facet of the Nigerian life. This necessitated the invention of what is called the principle 'Federal Character'³⁵³ to ameliorate extreme ethnic attachment and overcome imbalance in every sector of the society.

Justice is constantly sacrificed at the altar of tribalism day in day out and the ethnic mind-set has only but institutionalised injustice. Currently, there are agitations coming from different regions calling for separation due to this unresolvable monster. Each day over the media, one hears about the killing of Biafran agitators by the federal government, suppression of minorities, massacring of people from other regions by the Fulani's herdsman, militancy, ethnic attack against each other and destruction of oil pipelines by Niger Delta agitators. Such a situation of perennial injustice has given birth to many pressure groups which in one way or the other claim to fight for the good of their tribes. From the situation of things at hand, Nigeria will never know peace and she will continue to regress into oblivion as long as those ethnic differences linger; consequently democracy becomes really impracticable and justice an unrealistic dream.

The field of law is nevertheless not left out in this mass burial of justice. Judicial personnel are appointed not on competency but on ethnic background and so also the discharge of justice at the courts of law. The law enforcement agencies have been reduced to a ridiculous state of ineptitude thanks to this same problem. Equality and justice are no longer defined in accord with the international accepted principles but on the altar of ethnic benefits. Justice could be said to be whatever favours a particular region in power, and equality is measured by the number of juicy privileges received by the members of that same ethnic group.

Tribe determines almost everything in Nigeria. Capabilities are neither considered nor are opportunities given based on merit. National resources are hardly evenly distributed but shared amongst some members of the ruling ethnic group. Tribe is needed for employment,

³⁵³ Federal Character is Nigeria's distributive scheme which ensures that all regions, ethnic groups and religions are represented in governance and social life with the aim of promoting national unity. Even though, the goal of federal character is to prevent tribal domination, it is only limited to major administrative appointments.

for sports, for a student seeking admission into federal colleges and higher institutions of learning, for military and police recruitments, one's tribe is required for the award of contracts, tribe is necessary for federal government civil service jobs. In fact tribe is almost considered in everything and has consistently led to constant prejudice and bigotry. We are now enemies of ourselves in the same country and no one is interested in justice but ethnic benefits. People are being denied opportunities they merit just because of tribal origin. Such kind of injustice does not only harm the individual involved but the entire community who should benefit from his or her services. Ethnic divides and tribalism not only expose the citizens to unfair treatment but also the worst acts of injustice.

Justice as envisaged by Rawls requires the use of public reason in order to think about the good of the society and arrive at principles of fair distribution. Sadly enough, the path of justice has been constantly blocked by an ethnic mind-set in Nigeria and equality slaughtered at the table of ethnic chauvinism. Tribalism has prevented the country from coming up with homogeneous set of principles that will help in determining the distribution of resources. People are no longer motivated by national interest or the realisation of just acts but fight more out of ethnic interests. Objectivity has been swallowed by this same ethnic mentality such that people no longer assess governments from its responsibility of dispensing justice but on ethnic affiliations. Unfortunately, this dilemma has neither given room for the trial of the two hypothetical theses of 'original position' proposed by Rawls nor the 'desert island test' envisaged by Dworkin to see how certain principles of justice could be realised and practised. An ethnic mind-set has also denied us any sort of reflex equilibrium in the existence of the entity called Nigeria and we lack any kind of political consensus.

The strong tribal sentiment has stifled every kind of rational discourse between the federating units of the country. It is as difficult as one can imagine for the nation to embark on any discussion without it ending in failure, thanks to the tribal mind-set which almost everyone bears. One cannot deny the fact that Nigeria needs to go back to the drawing board or what Rawls would call 'a status quo'³⁵⁴ or 'framework of deliberation' in order to move on better. An attempt to listen to the suggestion of Rawls towards having a rational discourse where the people could come together has led to a series of and various Sovereign National

³⁵⁴ Cf. J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 11, 104.

Conferences³⁵⁵ in the past. Yet all has been in vain and unfruitful simply because Nigeria lacks social cooperation³⁵⁶ to enable it come together in agreeing the principles of justice. We have failed to find some kind of consensus within our overlapping regional or tribal based interests. For instance, in the last conference held in 2014, the same tribal differences were seen from the interest of the various groups and hence nothing much meaningful could be achieved. Despite all failures, there is need for more efforts so as to arrive at a 'reflective equilibrium'³⁵⁷ to pave way for success. No doubt, our ethnic sentiments and attachments have made our interest to overlap and we have to keep finding means of reaching a consensus in order to realise justice.

3.2.2 High level of religious intolerance

Just like ethnicism, religion is another major problem that has destroyed the very existence of Nigeria and every single effort towards the realisation of justice. I must admit the fact that it is a bit difficult to draw the difference between the effects of religion and tribalism as both cross paths. The two dominant religious groups found in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. The negative effects of religion are as ugly and disastrous as that of tribalism. The religious circumstance between these two religions controls both the social, economic and political life in Nigeria.

Right from independence, there has been constant conflict between the two opposing religious groups. This has claimed a lot of human lives in millions and continues to do so till today.

Conflicts between Christians and Muslims receive widespread media attention, even though they may begin as ethnic rivalries or disputes over land and water use, or by politicians seeking to advance their own agendas. The resulting conflicts often acquire religious labels and even coloration. When conflicts are reported in the Nigerian and international media, religion often stands in as a proxy for more complex causes of conflict.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Sovereign National Conference is the gathering of all the different tribes, groups and regions at a roundtable to discuss critical national issues, Nigeria's future and as a panacea for resolving enormous problems.

³⁵⁶ Social Cooperation is a situation in which people come together, in one joint act, to choose the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits to all. Cf. John Rawls, 10.

³⁵⁷ Reflective Equilibrium means a situation where we keep readjusting and modifying our convictions of justice. We use it to either modify the account of the initial situation or we can revise our existing judgments, for even the judgments we take provisionally as fixed points are liable to revision. It helps the parties to know what principles their judgements conform to. Reflective equilibrium helps the parties to arrive at accepted and justified conclusions on how the institutionalised society should be regulated. Cf. J. Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 18.

³⁵⁸ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 69-70.

Politicians and some citizens resort to the use of religious sentiments to remain in power, to achieve their selfish interests and manipulate the course of justice. I would say without fear of error, that religion is used on a daily basis to manipulate the masses to the advantage of the political elites. While Karl Max declared religion as the opium of the people thanks to his European experiences, I could say that religion in my own country has become a tool used by the political class to remote and rape the ordinary citizens, and keep them perpetually in control while enriching themselves. Religious sentiment has unimaginably beclouded every point of rational discourse and blocked every sense of justice. Justice is constantly and erroneously served through the lens of religion. Religion has profusely led to antagonism, nepotism, injustices and denied the country of genuine development that goes with good governance.

One could see the chaotic hands of religion in the various riots, series of bloodshed and crises that have happened in the country before and after independence. Each day, one hears over the television or reads on the pages of the newspaper one or two losses of human lives due to religious issues. The Boko Haram³⁵⁹ which is a by-product of this religious sentiment in Nigeria has today become a global phenomenon. The level of religious intolerance is alarming and disturbing.

Religion and politics are heavily linked in Nigeria so much so that religion plays a major role in political decisions. The incessant religious intolerance has been carried over into politics too. Nigeria is commonly listed among countries in which the chances of a religious war are quite high. The political future of Nigeria depends very much on the way nagging religious problems are resolved.³⁶⁰ The manipulation of religious sentiments to score cheap political points has done much harm to the nation and continues to do so. Islam seems to be in constant conflict with modern democratic principles and the practise of justice due to the

³⁵⁹ Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Muhammad Yusuf. The official name of this group is *Ja,aiatu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad* meaning "people Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad". However the media holds that "the name, which is Hausa for "Western education is sinful" reflected the sect's rejection of what is believed to be un-Islamic western values, but was never adopted by group members themselves. "Boko Haram does not in any way mean Western education is a sin. In this case, we are talking of western ways of life which include: constitutional provision as it relates to, for instance, the rights and privileges of women, the idea of homo-sexualism, lesbianism, sanctions in cases of terrible crimes like drug trafficking, molestation of infants, multi-party democracy in an overwhelmingly Islamic country like Nigeria, blue films, prostitution, drinking beer and alcohol and many others that are opposed to Islamic civilisation."

Cf. Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram, Nigeria's Islamic Insurgency* (London: Hurst and Co. Publishers, 2015), 50.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Chief Arthur Nzeribe, *A Manifesto for the Third Republic* (London: Kilimanjaro Publishing Company, 1988), 48-49.

teachings of the Koran. The heinous and unimaginable activities of Boko Haram members are there to lay support to this stand. Their constant claim is that they are against western education and democracy yet they wage their wars and carry out their atrocities with western facilities.

One continues to express surprise whether it is possible to achieve justice in its commonest sense in a country divided so strongly along religious lines. The Executive is all about religion, the law makers are more obedient to their religious beliefs than the constitution of the country. Every decision must go through the eyes of religion so to say and not reason. For instance, the intention of the Senate to establish a bill against female genital mutilation which is becoming a pressing global right was rebuffed by the Sultan of Sokoto a few years ago because he conceived it as an anti-Islamic teaching. To this effect and going by the enormity of power controlled by this religious figure and for the fact that most of the law makers are Muslims, the bill was thrown out and buried. There are a series of other instances. Although Nigeria is a liberal society with a distinct Constitution, most of the northern states still practise Sharia law hand in hand with the Constitution of the federal republic and in some case is given preference to the secular laws. For instance, a non-Muslim is considered under the Sharia law as unfit and hence forbidden to rule over a Muslim. This kind of situation sets inequality and injustice to non-Muslims living in such states. Gender equality has not been an easy area of penetration and child marriage remains a norm in most places due to religion. Islam seems to be in conflict with some ideas of justice which they see as a western ideology and an offshoot of Christianity. Consequent to this, no single year passes without three to four incidences of inter-religious conflicts over some ideological or religious misunderstandings. Sometimes these conflicts are so intense and in most cases lead to crisis in all the parts of the country.

Almost everything is weighed under the balance of religion and discussed through the lens of religious values. Muslims are at war with Christians while Christians are suspicious of every move made by Muslims. Trust is gone in a country of multi-religions. Just like the ethnic mind-set, justice is also dispensed under the direction of religion. Elections are determined by religion, political appointments, judicial, force, security, national discourses and education are always talked about under this aspect of religion too. Morality and a good life which are universal concepts are subjected daily to the religious microscope. Human dignity on its own has not escaped the shackles of the religious mind-set. Everything in Nigeria is all about religion and religious beliefs. Employment is never excluded, admission

and public services look more into one's religion than capability. The national team must bow to this pressure too. Medical infrastructures must be considered under the light of religion. Religion has denied Nigeria the use of public reason as advocated by Rawls. People are no longer interested in dialogue and come to principles that will usher in equality in the contemporary society. Any kind of discussion must bow to faith and religious denomination instead of reason. We have refused to understand one another. The way things have got to in Nigeria, one cannot deny the need for a public consensus where the people would re-design their roadmap towards equality. We have to look at what unites us as a nation than what/which religion one professes.

Just as I initially stated, religion accounts for most of the bloodsheds, killings and riots in Nigeria. Permit me to give a brief overview of the various cases that were caused by religious differences in Nigeria.

Table 1: Some cases of religious violence in Nigeria, 1999–2012

1	1966	North/East	Nigerian Civil War aka "Biafra War"	Religious cum political reasons which left thousands dead
2	Late 1970's- Early 1980's	Kano, Gombe, Kaduna, Yola,	Religious misunderstanding	Subsequent armed clashes led to the deaths of around 5,000 people and more than 30,000 were left homeless.
3	1980's	Kaduna	Between Christians and Muslims. The genesis of the violence could only be traced to the sour relations between adherents of the two religions.	The activities of some of these sects has in recent times led to the loss of lives. Christians suffered substantial setbacks as many properties belonging to them were destroyed
4	May 1987	Kaduna, Katsina, Kafanchan, Funtua and other northern parts	Misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians	There were clashes between Muslims and Christians. The burning of Mosques by Christian Kajes and retaliatory attacks by Muslims had far reaching effects; neighbouring towns like Katsina, Funtua, Zaria, Gusau were engulfed by a wave of religious riots. Many lives were lost, as had become the
5	Dec 1991	Kano	Conflict between Muslims and Christians as a result of the crusade organised by A German tele Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke.	causing of a religious riot leading to the deaths of about a dozen people Some lives were lost and houses destroyed
6	May 1986	Ibadan	Clash between Muslims and Christian on ground of the first established ivory tower, University of Ibadan.	Few lives were lost and people lost their property too

	Date	State(s)	Nature	Remarks
7	1Jul. 1999	Ogun	Violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ondo state.	The crisis originated from the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
8	22 Jul. 1999	Kano	Reprisal to the above Sagamu crisis. Still on the same religious ground	The casualty figures were not reported.
9	20 Dec. 1999	Kwara	Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin.	Properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed and an unspecified casualty reported.
10	21–22 Feb. 2000	Kaduna	Riots over the introduction of Sharia.	An estimated 3 000 people died.
11	28 Feb. 2000	Abia	Religious riots in Aba, and minor disturbances in Umuahia.	Over 450 persons killed in Aba, Abia state, as reprisal for the Kaduna crisis.
12	8 Sept. 2000	Gombe	The Kaltungo religious crisis.	The crisis erupted over the implementation of Sharia in the state.
13	12 Oct. 2001	Kano	Religious riot in Kano.	In protest to the US invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 persons were killed.
14	7-17 Sept. 2001	Jos	A religious riot between Muslims and Christians in Jos. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged or torched. The clashes started on September 7 and lasted nearly two weeks, ending on September 17.	The riot broke out when the Islamic Brigade attacked a Christian woman who attempted to cross a public high-way barricaded by Muslim worshippers on Friday. Over 300 people were killed.
15	16 Nov. 2002	Kaduna	The <i>Miss World</i> crisis in which Muslims attacked Christians and churches.	The crisis was triggered by an article authored by Isioma Daniel in <i>This Day</i> newspaper, alleging that Prophet Mohammed would have loved to have the girls. Over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed.
16	8 Jun. 2004	Adamawa	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Numan town.	Caused by the location of the town's Central Mosque close to Bachama paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.
17	18 Feb. 2006	Borno	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri.	The riot was caused by the Danish cartoon on Prophet Mohammed, in <i>Jyllands-Posten</i> newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed; over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalised.
18	22 Mar. 2007	Gombe	Muslim pupils killed their Christian teacher, Mrs Oluwatoyin Olusesan.	The pupils claimed that their teacher desecrated the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall.
19	28 Nov. 2008	Plateau	Religious violence between Muslims and Christians in the city of Jos.	The crisis which was triggered by the controversial results of a local election later turned religious. Over 700 people killed and thousands internally displaced.
20	21 Feb. 2009	Bauchi	Ethno-religious conflict at the Makama New Extension.	Over 11 people were killed, more than 400 houses burnt, and over 1600 families displaced.
21	26– 30 Jul. 2009	Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Yobe	Religious violence unleashed by the radical <i>Boko Haram</i> sect on Christians.	Over 700 persons killed, 3500 persons internally displaced, 1264 children orphaned, over 392 women widowed, and several properties destroyed.

22	29 Dec. 2009	Bauchi	Religious violence unleashed by the <i>Kala-Kato</i> sect on Christians.	Over 38 persons killed; about 20 suspected members of the sect arrested; and over 1000 people internally displaced.
23	17–20 Jan. 2009	Plateau	Resurgence of religious crisis in Jos.	Police announced at least 320 killed, but aid workers and local leaders place death toll at over 550. Over 40 000 persons displaced.
24	7 Mar. 2010	Plateau	Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christian-dominated villages of Dogo Nahawa, Shen and Fan in Jos.	Over 500 people – mainly women and children – were killed.
25	17 Mar. 2010	Plateau	Suspected Fulani militia men attacked residents of Biye and Batem in Jos.	13 persons killed.
26	11 Apr. 2010	Plateau	Attack on a Christian village of Berom stock, some 30 kilometres south of Jos, by suspected Fulani herdsmen.	The attackers targeted the homes of some officials in Kura Jenta, in reprisal to the killing of about 150 Fulani Muslims, who were allegedly killed and dumped in wells on 19 January 2010. No life was lost but 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched. This violence was ethno-religious.
27	22 May 2010	Plateau	Murder of three (Muslim) Fulani herdsmen at Tusung Village in Barkin Ladi Local Government, Plateau state.	The attackers were alleged to be Berom Christian youths. It was ethno-religious.
28	22 May 2010	Plateau	Attack on some Christians, who were returning from their place of worship along Bauchi road in Jos.	Reprisal attack by Muslims over the killing of 3 Fulani Muslims. At least 1 person died while many were injured.
29	17 Jul. 2010	Plateau	Muslim Fulani herdsmen launched an overnight attack on a Christian village, Mazah, north of the city of Jos.	About eight people were reportedly killed, including the wife, two children and a grandson of a Pastor. Seven houses and a church were also burned during the attack.
30	29 Aug. 2011	Plateau	Clashes between Muslims and Christians at Rukuba road and Farin Gada in Jos during the Ramadan prayers.	No less than 20 persons were killed, 50 injured, over 50 motor vehicles and 100 motor cycles were torched.
31	16 Jun. 2011	Police Headquarters, Abuja	Suicide bomb attack at the Police Headquarters, Abuja by suspected Boko Haram Islamists whose ideology is framed around religion (<i>Wahabism</i>).	Authorities said 6 persons were killed and 73 vehicles destroyed.
32	26 Aug. 2011	UN House, Abuja	Suicide bombing at the UN House, Abuja by suspected <i>Boko Haram</i> Islamists.	23 persons (11 UN personnel and 12 non-UN personnel) were killed.
33	5 Nov. 2011	Potiskum, Damaturu and Maiduguri	Coordinated attacks on churches and police stations by suspected <i>Boko Haram</i> Islamists.	More than 90 persons were reportedly killed, several churches and police stations torched.
34	25 Dec. 2011	Madala, Niger state, near the FCT	The bombs were alleged to have been planted at the Church's parking lot.	At the last count, 45 persons were killed. Some died instantly, others from injuries sustained from the explosion. Over 80 others were receiving treatment for various degrees of injuries.
35	5–6 Jan. 2012	Gombe, Gombe state	Gunmen stormed a Deeper life church in Gombe, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The <i>Boko</i>	6 persons were reportedly killed while many others were injured.

			<i>Haram</i> Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting.	
36	5–6 Jan. 2012	Mubi, Adamawa state	Suspected Boko Haram militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically.	22 persons were reportedly dead killed

Table 1. <http://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/%EF%BF%BCreligious-violence-in-nigeria/> 23/3/2018.
<http://www.bangladeshsociology.org/Religion%20and%20Violence%20BEJS%2010.2%20Final-3.pdf> 23/3/2018.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_violence_in_Nigeria. 23/3/2018.

3.2.3 Corruption, bribery and systemic decay

According to Transparency International, corruption could softly be understood as the abuse of office or power for personal gain, private use or benefit.³⁶¹ It could also be rightly said that corruption is not a new problem in the world, as every nation has faced it at one time, in one way or the other in the course of its existence. It is indeed a global phenomenon that has become one of the symbols of popular discontent in modern society, not just only in Nigeria, but across the entire globe.³⁶² However, Daniel Jordan Smith captured the situation when he wrote that, “Nigeria is rife with corruption, and no one is more aware of it than ordinary Nigerians. When Nigerians talk about corruption, they refer not only to the abuse of state offices for some kind of private gain but also to a whole range of social behaviors.”³⁶³ So it could include bribery and graft, fraudulent activities, rigging of elections, medical quackery, and extortion of students by teachers as well as cheating.

Be that as it may, the level of corruption in Nigeria alarming. According to the latest Corruption Perceptions Index released by Transparency International, Nigeria ranks 149 amongst the 180 most corrupt countries and the second most corrupt in West Africa. Not everyone would imagine, let alone understand the amount of destruction, corruption or systemic decay has caused Nigeria as a nation. “Like underground water, corruption had permeated through the different strata of the national life.”³⁶⁴ Describing the ugly situation, Emeka wrote; “Everybody seeks a position that does not belong to them. Everybody now clamours for what is beyond their ability and capacity. Consequently, the whole system is

³⁶¹ Cf. Heiner Hastedt, *Macht der Korruption: Eine Philosophische Spurensuche* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2020), 9. (Translation mine).

³⁶² Cf. Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 25.

³⁶³ Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption*, xiii-5.

³⁶⁴ Anthony Ukaegbu, *A New Nigeria: Current Challenges and Tremendous Opportunities* (Okigwe: Baresi Concepts, 2011), 152.

polluted and grinding to a halt. Confusion and chaos are now the order of the day. Nigerians have accepted and sanctified corruption as a means of living.”³⁶⁵ Nigeria is now one with corruption and all are buried deep down it. It is a deadly cankerworm that has eaten deep into every fabric of Nigerian society to a point of collapse and one the foremost renowned Nigerian Authors, Chinua Achebe explained as follows: “my frank and honest opinion is that anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country. Corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming and entered the fatal stage; and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed.”³⁶⁶ This shows that the level of corruption in Nigeria has grown incomprehensibly enormous in grade and magnitude.

Corruption has in no small measure been a major brick wall or huge obstacle towards the realization of distributive justice and fair sharing of resources in Nigeria. “Yes, there is widespread corruption in Nigeria...Corruption takes many forms, from patronage and nepotism to bribery, fraud, and the gross misappropriation of funds. Everyone in Nigeria agrees that corruption is a major problem for the development of the country.”³⁶⁷ It militates against every account of justice and sets injustices in the highest places.

Official corruption is more than conventional in Nigeria; it is endemic. It drains billions of dollars a year from the economy, stymies development, and weakens the social contract between the government and the people. Nigerians themselves view their country as one of the world’s most corrupt, such that it perennially ranks in the bottom quartile of Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index.³⁶⁸

Corruption has not only stood in the way of justice but also has become a national stigma. It could be for this same reason that the former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron described Nigeria in 2016 as a ‘fantastically corrupt country’. As a result of this, “a country that was once truly the giant of Africa in all respects ... suddenly became a pariah among the comity of nations... Today in Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear.”³⁶⁹ No doubt, corruption has become an important source of nourishment for most Nigerians and the system under which her citizens live has institutionalised corruption and makes it easy as well as profitable. “Nigeria has a reputation as a country of graft. The sum of £220 billion, the equivalent of

³⁶⁵ Kenneth Emeka Okonkwo, *The Nigeria of My Dream*, 13-14.

³⁶⁶ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1983), 46-48.

³⁶⁷ Diane Lemieux, *The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture of Nigeria*, 58.

³⁶⁸ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 101.

³⁶⁹ John Okwoeze Odey, *The Anti-Corruption Crusade: the Saga of a Crippled Giant* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2001), 42.

six Marwill Plans has been estimated as the amount stolen since 1966 from public funds.”³⁷⁰ This has not only truncated justice in Nigeria but has damaged the Nigerian identity before the international world. Nigerians are often harassed, controlled and suspected wherever they find ourselves and subjected to heavy scrutiny at airports and foreign countries on a daily basis.

The worst brand of corruption is perpetuated massively and unscrupulously among the circle of the Nigerian elites and political class at all levels. It has produced wealthy generals and filthy rich politicians. Political leaders embezzle funds without giving a blink of an eye on the majority whose lives are being destroyed by their actions. The ugly situation is such that money meant to provide social amenities or basic infrastructures like good roads, portable water, shelter, food, hospitals, schools, et cetera to the masses end up in the pockets of a few private accounts of some leaders. For instance, “In 2005 British prosecutors charged former Bayelsa State governor D. S. P. Alamiyeseigha for using British shell companies and bank accounts to launder \$3.4 million—a princely sum given his salary was just \$32,000 a year. Police later found \$1.9 million in cash stashed in a London penthouse he owned. Skipping bail, Alamiyeseigha absconded back to Nigeria, reportedly disguised as a woman.”³⁷¹ The country’s collective wealth has become the wealth of a few privileged people who have continuously held the citizens captive by their wickedness and misrule. Past and present leaders have looted the country dry and keep their proceeds in foreign countries who benefit from these corrupt monies and use it to improve their various economies. To this effect, curbing corruption in Nigeria has been a herculean task because the dominant leadership style in Nigeria and their cronies are gaining from it.³⁷²

In as much as the cause of corruption could be located in the careless hands of the powerful and political class, the ordinary masses are neither innocent nor helping matters. One turns every single opportunity that comes his way to exploit others.

The public service is not left with this corruption as Scams beset not only big projects but also the day-to-day expenses and payments of the Nigerian government. As at 31 December 2014 till 2015, the implementation of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel

³⁷⁰ Sarah Bracking, ed., *Corruption and Development the Anti-Corruption Campaigns* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 103.

³⁷¹ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 102.

³⁷² Cf. Chukwuemeka Emma, “Curbing Corruption in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Good Leadership,” in *African Research Review: an International Multidisciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia Vol. 6 (3), Serial No. 26, July, 2012. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrev.v6i3.25>, 350.

Information System had led to the elimination of about 65,000 ghost workers, thus saving the government about \$1.1 billion in fraudulent payroll costs.³⁷³

On the pages of daily newspapers, social media, television sets, we hear about different corrupt practices such as, vote buying, promise of offices or special favours from politicians, public servants, judicial personnel, individuals and religious leaders. More than 70%³⁷⁴ of the country's resources are lost to corrupt practices. Contracts are awarded not to experts with the competence but political contractors who know nothing about the said job and will always end up not executing it or doing it haphazardly. Justice has also been paralysed in the judiciary where many judges accept money to thwart the course of justice and deliver unjust judgements. Some medical practitioners care not so much about saving lives but on how to enrich themselves. Those who rise through criminal records to the position of affluence are embraced, worshipped and crowned kings in the society while merit and integrity are hardly recognized. Honest people are punished for swimming against the tide. It is either: one plays along or falls aside. Nobody is ready to grant your genuine request or demand unless except you rub his palm. Funny enough, you put your life at risk, if you stand in their way. And per adventure you die in the process, there is little or no fair justice system in praxis to seek redress. Narrating his experience to show the level of the mess, Paul Collier described his experience with the head of the Nigerian tax authority:

... Over dinner he told me why he could not take any more (reason for resigning). For two years he had been trying to get a small piece of tax legislation through the legislature: it was not contentious, just a technical clean-up operation. Its passage depended upon the chair of the relevant committee—who had said to him, “How much?” That is, the chair of the committee had expected to be bribed by the tax authority. No bribe, no law. Why? Because that was normal; that was how it was done.³⁷⁵

This systematic decay finds its ugly head also in the area of employment. Public offices, employment opportunities and vacancies are kept for certain individuals from certain regions. People are no longer judged by merit but on how much they can pay or how many people they know in the ranks and files of the polity. Admissions into schools are also part and parcel of this corrupt tendency, such that brighter students are denied admission due to their inability to offer bribe whereas the less intelligent ones are admitted into courses like medicine, engineering and other important disciplines provided they can pay for it. People

³⁷³ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*, 95.

³⁷⁴ There are no statistical facts for my claim here but in honesty, the situation might even be higher than the 70% stated. The truth is that corruption indices in Nigeria are too high.

³⁷⁵ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46. (Words in brackets mine).

offer bribes to get at what they want and to be considered before others. Teachers and professors exploit their students financially and most times the female ones are harassed sexually. Students can pass their examinations with good grades as long as they give bribes to the teachers while the poor but intelligent ones unable to play along are left to suffer and are brutalised academically. The military, police and other security agents are much committed to this corruption saga and ready to play along in defending thieves, maltreating innocent citizens, killing and maiming once their hands are greased. Money meant for fighting insurgency is pocketed by the few leaving the military exposed at the hands of the cruel Boko Haram terrorists with little or no ammunition. The private sector is not any better, as bribes are also constantly accepted for some considerations and favours. Further, fraudulent and various dubious means are utilized by the citizens to enrich themselves. Corruption and systemic decay have developed into concepts like ‘419’, ‘Yahoo-Yahoo’³⁷⁶, advanced fee fraud and internet scam.³⁷⁷ Impersonation, Identitik³⁷⁸ and forgery is no longer new in the country. Each day millions of scam e-mail messages are sent out. Emails, bank accounts, calls and people’s data are hacked on a daily basis for this particular purpose.

The issue of corruption has become like that of the proverbial lost knife that no one is willing to admit being its last user. Each government claims to be waging war against the ugly spectacle but only a hoax (meant to deceive the masses). “Nigeria is one of the difficult and complex countries where corrupt people often adopt the language of reform to confuse decision makers, donors, development experts, and observers.”³⁷⁹ When a country suffers such a horrible state of corruption and systemic decay, the realisation of justice becomes an obnoxious task if not an impossibility. Instances of uncountable corrupt cases abound and may be too difficult for one to comprehend.

Corruption cases in Nigeria

No.	Period	subject	Amount stolen
1	After the regime of General Yakubu Gowon, deposed in 1975	A Commission of Inquiry found 10 of the 12 state governors guilty of corruption and the misuse of funds	totalling over 16 million naira

³⁷⁶ Internet scam of different sorts where innocent and unsuspecting victims are swindled out of their money through fraud and other illegal means.

³⁷⁷ 419 is another name for advanced fee fraud which was named after article 419 of the Nigerian Criminal Code deals with obtaining property by false promises, which is exactly what the advance-fee fraud is all about.

Yahoo-Yahoo is another terminology for fraud in Nigerian mostly used via Internet and other possible means in which the victim is swindled of his money with an unfulfilled promises and crooked lies.

³⁷⁸ Identitik is a technical intelligence term which involves the perfect cloning of a person’s identity for the purpose of carrying out a fraudulent act.

³⁷⁹ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*, 97.

2	General Sani Abacha, President 1993 and 1998	Accused of the systematic looting of Nigeria's Treasury	Estimated at least \$5 billion
3	Typical of the Abacha period	Fake public contracts for phantom projects, like steel mill at Ajaokuta, which was under construction for over 17 years but which never produced steel, and an aluminium plant in Alcon	cost of \$7 billion for Ajaokuta steel, and cost \$3 billion for Alcon Aluminium plant
4	Abacha's regime	Oil revenue earned by Nigeria over a period of twenty years was lost through fraud, waste and mismanagement.	Over two-thirds (\$200 billion) of the \$300 billion; a further sum of \$50 billion was stolen by various officials
5	After the return to civilian rule in 1999	Effort to recover the internationalised funds stolen by erstwhile President Sani Abacha	Staggering N65.96 billion returned
6	After 1999	Transparency International reported top officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), while the head of the NNPC chose to live in a five star hotel instead of living in his private house	embezzlement of up to N140 billion; hotel at a cost of N240 million per year
7	In year 2003	EFCC investigated the former Chief of Police, Mr Tafa Balogun, following reports in The News was indicted for improperly enriching himself	To the tune of N13 billion or \$128 million in 2005
8	2005 Obasanjo regime	The Minister of Education was dismissed, as was the President of the Senate, for agreeing to bribe the latter in return for the Senate voting for an increase in the Ministry's budget	up to N55m or \$417,000,
9	Obasanjo regime	Several public officials were individually involved in a number of cases: the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence was dismissed in 2004.	alleged embezzlement of N420m;
11	1993-2003	Between 1993 and 2003 top officials of the Educational Tax Fund (ETF) were accused of embezzlement.	N40 billion from the ETF
12	Democracy from 1999	The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory alleged two senators demanded a bribe of as a condition of approving his ministerial appointment.	N54 million
13	Misappropriation by ministry, 2000-2001 fiscal year	Ministry Amount misappropriated	Total 23,860.7 million naira
14	Between 1999 and 2005	ICPC investigated the Governor of Bayelsa state, Chief DSP Diepreye Alameyeseigha, for embezzlement	Accused of embezzling N1.7 billion
15	Revenues of the Gulf War of 1991-92	Dr Okigbo's Report, an investigation of the Central Bank of Nigeria following the loss of the windfall revenues of the Gulf War of 1991-2 revealed how only General Ibrahim Babaginda, the then President, and the Governor of the Bank, the late Mr Ahmed embezzled money was spent on a wide variety of personal items, certainly not public goods,	A controlled Dedicated Account into which \$12.4 billion was paid, but at the time of the inquiry only \$206 million was left. Between \$3 billion of the \$5 billion windfalls could not be accounted for at all, according to Keeling, a reporter from the London Financial Times, who was deported for his effort.

Table 2. Cf. Sarah Bracking, Editor, *Corruption and Development: the Anti-Corruption Campaigns*, (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 104-109.

1	April 2012	An Ad-Hoc committee set by the House of Representative to probe corruption in Fuel Subsidy and activities of the NNPC from 2009-2011 found that there was indeed fraud and mismanagement in the oil-subsidy regime	the sum of ₦1.067 trillion (\$6.8 billion) deemed to have been misappropriated as subsidy payments
2	2012	A Nigerian billionaire businessman, Mr. Femi Otedola, accused Hon. Farouk Lawan, the chair of the Ad-Hoc committee, of demanding a bribe of \$3 million from him to facilitate the committee's removal of the names of his two companies, Zenon Oil and Gas Ltd. and Synopsis Enterprises Ltd., from the list of oil marketing companies to be sanctioned for receiving millions of dollars in foreign exchange for oil imports that were not made.	A video showed that the Hon. Farouk Lawan indeed did collect \$620,000 of the \$3 million bribe from Mr Otedola
3	June and July 2012	A presidential committee found out fraudulent activities from the 107 oil marketing companies.	₦382 billion (\$2.5 billion) lost to fraud
4	1978	Muhammadu Buhari was Minister of Petroleum Resources in the Administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo, there was an allegation of a missing fund.	\$3.5 billion not remitted by NNPC to the Treasury
5	In the 1990s,	Under the Ibrahim Babangida administration.	\$12 billion unaccounted for by NNPC
6	January 2012 – July 2013 in	Revenues from oil sector from were unaccounted for.	\$10.8 to \$12 billion was unaccounted for
7	From 1993 to 1998	General Sani Abacha, his family and his associates looted public assets and transferred much if this money abroad.	estimated to have looted \$3 billion to \$5 billion
8	May 2007	General Abubakar and President Olesugen Obasanjo recovered part of the stolen money by Abacha	Recovered loots \$1.8 billion, ₦10.90 billion, and £111.95.
9	February 1, 2012	Jersey (in the Channel Islands) repatriated to the Bank for International settlements account	Sum of £22,559,560 from this loot.
10	December 23, 3013 and June 25, 2014.	Lichtenstein transferred the looted money back to Nigeria	\$10,120,510 and £226,393,567
11	September 2014	Citibank London transferred to Nigeria from Abacha's loot.	Equivalent of £22,741,966 in three different currencies
12	From July 14, 2014 to December 4, 2017,	Nigeria concluded a repatriation agreement in cooperation with the Attorney's General of Luxembourg and Geneva; later Switzerland signed an agreement to repatriate to Nigeria under the oversight of the World Bank.	\$321 million
13	administration of President Jonathan,	Jersey indicated interest in repatriating funds looted by Abacha in their institutions. Finally on August 6, 2014 a forfeiture from US District Court	\$313 million from Jersey and \$480 million forfeiture from US District Court for the District of Columbia
14	March 23, 2005,	President Olusegun Obasanjo fired Education Minister Fabian Osuji for bribing the Senate President then Senator Adolphus Wabara who was impeached to this effect.	With the sum of \$417,000 (₦55 million)
15	in 2013	A series of probe by the National Assembly, revealed a serious level of corruption in the Defined Benefits Pension Scheme	At least ₦32 billion (\$200 million) fraudulently diverted and stolen

16	In January 2013,	John Jakubu Yusuf (a former Assistant Director of the police pension Department) was found guilty on two counts convicted and sentenced to two years in prison accounts to personal use.	Admitted diverting ₦2 billion (about \$12.5 million) from police pension bank

Table 2. Cf. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*. 36-96. Okonjo-Iweala former World Bank as a Managing Director, also served twice as Nigeria’s Finance Minister and also as Minister of Foreign Affairs and one time Coordinating minister for the economy.

3.2.4 Lack of quality and inadequate education

Education remains an important part as well as the strength of every society. There is no gainsaying that quality education is a sine qua non for any genuine and authentic just society because the principles of justice require rational minds, nourished and soundly educated people for its application. Little wonder Francis Bacon declared knowledge as power.

Unfortunately, the standard of education in Nigeria which showed great signs of progress before and shortly after independence has become an aberration difficult to be described. “Just as Nigeria’s public health system has fallen victim to corruption and mismanagement, so too have the country’s once-proud schools and universities.”³⁸⁰ The situation and quality of education in Nigeria begs for pity. The education system seems to be in abysmal decay and uncontrollable deterioration. Speaking about the reasons for poor education in Nigeria, Diane Lemieux stated that the “problems include poor funding, shortage of qualified teachers, and a curriculum that does not reflect the needs of the economy.”³⁸¹ It has without doubt degenerated and seriously nose diving without any hope. Teachers and students are no longer interested.³⁸²

I could say that poor education is part of the major problem to justice in Nigeria. The wrong knowledge and values are being recycled among the small percentage of the literate. “The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 40 percent of Nigerian children age six to eleven do not attend school. While this statistic reflects a shortage of educational facilities, family poverty also drives child labor and absence from school.”³⁸³ The semi-literate accounting for the majority of those who can read and write compound the matter

³⁸⁰ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 12.

³⁸¹ Diane Lemieux, *The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture of Nigeria*, 102.

³⁸² I had a funny discussion with someone which could be regarded as disturbing. A young and enthusiastic friend of mine once said, that she was told as a little child that education is the key to success but it seems as if the political class has changed the key with something else as education no longer takes one anywhere near success in Nigeria.

³⁸³ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 154.

with half knowledge and ignorance. Nigeria certainly lags in adult literacy and school enrolment rates and half of Nigerian adults aged 15–49 are illiterate, many of them women.³⁸⁴ The illiterates simply bandwagon on anything due to the lack of an independent mind. That is why the thinking and problem solving skills are warped everywhere you look.

Our standard of education is making justice only an unfulfilled dream as the decayed system turns out people who more-or-less know nothing about the meaning let alone principles of justice. The majority of Nigerians neither know their rights nor what they should demand from the harbingers of justice. Also due to the poor level of education in Nigeria, the people hardly know or have total ignorance of their rights and duties in society. They are nevertheless left at the discretion and mercy of illiterate political leaders. Often, one sees this in the laughable manner in which the citizens worship and praise the political leaders for minor projects such as pipe born water, electric poles and fixing of roads as if they are not entitled to those basic amenities.

Nonetheless, there is a sense in which one could boldly say that the system of education in Nigeria is very cosmetic and not designed towards the mental development of the recipients. A critical look at our institutions of learning from nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary shows nothing but imbalance and deficiency. In most cases, children and pupils begin their intellectual sojourn with borrowed foreign systems, concepts and learning that offer no meaning or reality to their world. Our current national system of education has failed to address the development of human personality; it is found wanting when it comes to promoting wisdom, just judgements, morals, tolerance and friendship among different ethnic and religious groups. Our education lacks short of inculcating the deep sense of fundamental human rights, tenets of justice, and respect for human dignity. The education system produces more of educated illiterates who are formed to think in ways no better than their masters. There seems to be a lack of intellectual ingenuity in the education system. Our system of education teaches people only to remember and not to think. Students are streamlined only to receive and most times walk out of the University empty handed but with good grades (for reasons like corruption, religious and ethnic affinity). Some Institutions run their curricula without the facilities for practical experience. I have been privileged to study in two western countries where the curriculum gives room for practical experience and the

³⁸⁴ Cf. Sarosh Sattar, Souleymane Coulibaly, and Hiroshi Tsubota, Co-leaders, *Moving Toward a Middle-Class Society. Nigeria on the Move: A Journey to Inclusive Growth* (World Bank Group, Nigeria Systematic Country Diagnostic June 2019), 12.

active participation of the students than simply receiving everything from the teachers. This does not imply that there are no exceptional institutions in Nigeria with international standards but the percentage of such quality schools which offer better education are few in number and often very expensive and unaffordable for the ordinary masses.

Facts on the ground show that the public education sector is moribund and fast eroding. Private schools today with or without good teachers have overpowered the public schools. Most of the proprietors are more interested in economic gains than the intellectual development and welfare of the students. We find out that these people turn out to become part and parcel of Nigerian society where they cannot decipher their left from their right; most times some of them end up in political or judicial offices and thereby truncate the reign of justice for selfish purposes. Consequently, one could unequivocally trace our unbearable run of injustice to a lack of vision and knowledge by many ill-prepared citizens. Permit me to re-echo the words of Wole Soyinka who opined that education is lacking in most of those who pontificate.³⁸⁵ Certainly, no nation can rise above the standard of its education, if it is weak or dysfunctional, the society also follows suit.

The dilapidated nature of our various institutions of learning speak massively of this claim. A short visit to most public institutions shows nothing but an inadequate environment for intellectual activities and the development of minds. Also our leaders have demotivated the youths with their ‘end justifies the means’ attitude where people with less educational background go into politics and amass unlimited wealth while the elites or educated people find it difficult to enjoy three square meals a day. To this effect, most youths now are more interested in an easy way of life and success than embarking on an intellectual journey which they consider a waste of time. This shows why many Nigerians dump education for politics and the entertainment industries. “When political elements unfortunately gained entry into the education sector, they side-tracked objectivity and enthroned corruption. Education contracts are awarded to cronies who would hardly carry out the work. Even when executed, it is executed haphazardly.”³⁸⁶ Morals have been lost, a sense of justice overshadowed by the quest for an easy life and quick wealth. And this lack of good education has diminished moral

³⁸⁵ It is no hidden truth that the northern part of Nigeria (predominantly Muslims) which is less educated with the highest number of illiterates in Nigeria has dominated political affairs more than any other region since independence.

³⁸⁶ Anthony Chinedu Nwafor Ukaegbu, *A New Nigeria: Current Challenges and Tremendous Opportunities* (Okigwe: Baresi Concept, 2011), 70.

principles which should help the Nigerian citizens distinguish right from wrong, justice from injustice.

The welfare of teachers at various levels could be said to be another issue. They hardly receive attention let alone incentives and are owed salaries for months. The condition could be so depressive that most of them are inhibited from giving their best and approach their profession with a *laissez-faire* attitude. While we blame the government for its lackadaisical attitude and *laissez-faire* spirit regarding the welfare of teachers and the deplorable state of education in Nigeria, teachers on their own side play some role in this mess through their lack of commitment and corrupt behaviour. Most teachers instead of teaching their pupils or students, exploit and extort money from them. Students are brutalised and forced to play along or face the damning consequences of failure. Examination malpractice has become a norm and encouraged by some teachers and most parents too. Violence and cultism have crept their ugly heads in most institutions of learning such that most schools are uncondusive for learning. The problems are uncountable.

Just as I said before, the quality of education reflects on the level of development and lives of the citizens. One cannot give what he has not- ‘*nemo dat quod non habet*’. One wonders how possible is it to realise justice in a country where the ‘first eleven’ are kept in the reserve team whereas the less educated run the affairs of the country.³⁸⁷ This issue of poor education shows itself in the way things are going on in Nigeria. The activities of the many half-baked or poorly educated citizens have no doubt created a huge lacuna between justice and life in the society. The present condition of education in Nigeria has become a dangerous and disastrous tool for the destruction of the political community. In such a terrible situation, the younger generation lacks the foundation to organise and restructure society under the guidance of reason in order to the realise justice.

3.2.5 Perennial uncondusive political atmosphere

In the early part of this chapter, I gave a historical excursus of the Nigerian polity. Right from time immemorial (pre and post-independence era), Nigeria is a country that has been plagued by a catalogue of political woes ranging from colonial subjugation, enslavement,

³⁸⁷ For instance, in 1979 Alex Ekwueme well learned and had a Ph.D. in Architecture was a deputy president to President Shehu Shagari who only had a Teachers Training education. In 2015, Prof Yemi Osibanjo, a legal expert and academic was elected as deputy president to President Muhammadu Buhari whose education to ordinary Secondary school level is questionable to date.

military dictatorship to unfriendly democratic governments. It is a history too sour and bitter to be told. No wonder the federal government at present removed the study of history from its curriculum to hide the agony of the country's rough past from the present generation. It is a history wrapped in failure, packed with negativity and decorated with disorderliness. It is a story orchestrated with impunities, injustices, inequality and the rape of human dignity. It is a story adorned with orgies and bad memories scripted and acted upon ethnic bias, religious differences and an unjust system. The Nigerian political atmosphere is replete with ups and downs.

Many have described the forceful amalgamation of the different parts of Nigeria into one nation by the colonial masters without negotiation as the root of Nigeria's problems. This experiment has continuously failed and one can say that there is nothing good about the country before and today that is worth continuing. "The creation of Nigeria has so far proved catastrophic and all efforts to build a solid and cohesive Nigerian nation has consistently hit the rocks."³⁸⁸ Few years after independence, the military as we saw in the history struck and took over power which led to a chains of coups d'état and forceful seizure of power by the military which helped no one. Each military government claimed to be for the people but ended up leaving the society in tatters and a lot of unjust human practices. It was a time that served little or no lack of human freedom, abuse of fundamental human rights, inequality, no free speech, no political power and say, no freedom of press and repressive as well as oppressive regimes. The military were masters of their own and ran the country as if it was their personal empire. It was no better in the North, nor in the East or West. It was neither good during the military time nor is it better today since the return to civilian rule in 1999- the so-called Fourth Republic. From the facts stated, one can bear witness that Nigeria has never enjoyed a smooth political atmosphere for the realisation of justice. The past political outcome laid the foundation to a disgruntled and inharmonious society. The country today is so polarised that the citizens cannot freely come together in any political discourse so as to achieve justice.

The 1967-1970 civil war also worsened the situation of Nigeria; the pains of this war have remained to the present. The same problems that people experienced within those early years are very much in play today. This condition stifles trust, makes true political discourse impossible and makes the country retrogressive.

³⁸⁸ Kenneth Emeka Okonkwo, *The Nigeria of my Dream*, (Owerri: Canun Publishers, 1999), 8.

It is really difficult to realise at least a moderately just society when there is such a long crisis. We cannot quickly forget the number of abuses, injustices and difficult life many Germans and other European countries experienced thanks to the First and Second World Wars. The unimaginable number of injustices and human rights abuses in Sierra Leone due to her long decades of war becomes another example of the topic at hand. The current unrest and various inter-regional wars as well as resurgences today in the Middle-East could drive home my point. A good look at the situations in Afghanistan, in which many Afghans thanks to long decades of conflicts since 1938 to date are displaced, chronic instability with over 70% of the people malnourished, numerous unjust actions in the society and lack of some basic amenities give credence to my claim.

Nevertheless, the more than two decades of conflicts has left Somalia in tatters and ruins and defiled any possibility of rebuilding the country. Syria is paying its own price for the ongoing civil war and conflicts that have lasted for a couple of years. The restlessness and conflict between the Syrian government and rebels since 2011 has done more harm than good. The ruins and destruction in Aleppo will take years to rebuild and has had a devastating impact on the lives of many ordinary people in the city as well as stifling the run of justice. The war in Iraq which began in 2003³⁸⁹ has also shown the ravaging effects of conflicts on society. The Crimea and a few other countries show the harm war or terrorism can have on the attainment of justice. The long guerrilla war and the Ethiopian – Eritrean border conflict have left the two countries in shambles. Eritrea which lost in the war and ridden with conflicts till today and suffering from an oppressive regime, extrajudicial killings and other inhuman actions have seen many of her citizens flee the country as asylum seekers in many parts of the world. Also the old age crisis in Sudan has made both the Sudan and Southern Sudan countries ungovernable to date. The unprecedented and unimaginable scar caused by homicide between the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda around 1994 in which over half a million people died and over one million citizens became displaced has not cleared from the country.

In all these countries mentioned, justice is barely served and people are hardly treated equal. Minors are sexually abused, women raped, children tortured, and men killed in such conflicts and by these terrorists. There exist cases of human rights abuses, a devastated economy, the total breakdown of public institutions, starvation, economic difficulties as well as poverty,

³⁸⁹ Due to the intervention of US led allied forces against the oppressive Iraqi regime and fears of possessing weapons of mass destruction (chemical, nuclear, biological or radiological weapons).

total or serious collapse of health-care, depreciation of education systems, destroyed basic infrastructure and unbearable unjust actions. Citizens hardly benefit from the country's resources.

Coming down to Nigeria, one reads about the series of killings perpetuated daily by the ferocious Fulani Herdsmen against other Nigerians. More to the problem are the menaces of terrorism and thuggery. There are memories of the inhuman activities and bloodbaths committed on a daily basis by the Boko Haram sect and how ungovernable they have made the nation. The kidnapping of about 300 pupils in Chibok in 2014, the kidnapping of over 100 students in Dapchi, and thousands of school children in Northern Nigeria between December 2020 and early 2021, not to mention several other ones. A visit to the Northern part of Nigeria will melt the eyes and send goose pimples down the whole body. The level of man's inhumanity and destruction done on such territories are irredeemable and unimaginable. Going by World Bank's report on Worldwide Governance Indicators and the global peace index, Nigeria falls in the bottom 10 percent of all countries susceptible to political instability, violence and terrorism. Internal conflicts create violence in no measures, insecurity, and fragile situations and the impacts are felt throughout the country. The conflict in the North East for instance has affected nearly 15 million people and set back an already lagging region by disrupting public services, economic activity and infrastructure damage quantified at US\$9.2 billion, with accumulated output losses put at US\$8.3 billion as stated by the World Bank in 2017. Conflict also causes significant damages and loss of human capital due to crisis could exert negative effects on the society with long-term consequences like affecting access by youth and children to education, skills training, and health care.³⁹⁰ In such situations, the military and terrorists do not respect the principles of justice. Different kinds of abuses are perpetuated, thereby making life unbearable. The atrocities of these terrorists are so hurtful, inhuman and dreadful that dignity and rights of the people in most of Northern Nigeria are called into question.

Nigeria's economy is dependent on oil which comes (mostly) from the Niger delta region and the reliance is so high that Nigeria cannot function without it. There is also incessant oil spillages and the pollution of water, animals and farmlands for people within the Niger delta region. But we have seen in the past and in recent times the level of damage done by some agitators from this region who claim they are been impoverished without benefits from the

³⁹⁰ Cf. Sarosh Sattar, Souleymane Coulibaly, and Hiroshi Tsubota, Co-leaders, *Moving Toward a Middle-Class Society*, 11.

oil. We have experienced groups like the Niger Delta Avenger, Niger Delta Force, and other Niger Delta pressure groups destroying the pipelines and vandalising the oil facilities as a response to the level of injustice meted on them. Such situations make life both for entire masses as well as national co-existence very difficult. In the eastern part of Nigeria, one finds the Biafran agitators like Massob, Ipob, who unceasingly clamour for a separatist country. Most times their protests stifle economic activities, some of them are killed while carrying out peaceful demonstrations. Sometimes they are unjustly arrested and detained without giving judicial opportunities or trials. There have been a lot of human right abuses and violent activities of the military against these groups. In some cases, the women are raped, and children are denied parental upbringing. Schools are shut down, markets are closed, and churches are not left out. One experiences also some kind of political neo feudalism and recycling of old political gladiators who in one way or the other stifle justice in Nigeria and mean no good towards equality. Most of them have remained in power since the time of independence. They jump from one political party to another and change from one system of government to another.

All the mentioned challenges ranging from ethnicity, corruption, poor education and religion have all in great measure contributed to this topsy-turvy and political earthquake which have hampered the realisation of justice for years. The political atmosphere has been a charged one, that there has not been a meaningful and genuine national discourse to know the possible ways of solving the problems bedeviling the country. The realisation of justice let alone equal distribution of resources among citizens remains a herculean task. A society that is unstable and devoid of uncommitted leaders, with inadequate political atmosphere due to interruptions from military dictators thanks to coups d'état can hardly achieve justice and equality so easily. Justice so to speak, cannot be achieved in the state of disorder. Order and conducive atmosphere are required for its realization. Until we let down our grievances and anger for a rational dialogue, things might not get better. In most post-conflict countries, the cooperation of her citizens is required and the leaders must re-establish their legitimacy by working for equality with all the ramifications.

3.2.6 Post Colonial and cultural effect

Most African countries suffered the experience of colonialism and Nigeria is never an exemption. Colonialist's claim was:

To be bringing “progress” and “civilization” to otherwise backward African societies by developing the economy, eradicating slavery in all its forms, weeding out the corruption they believed existed in traditional political institutions, promoting a work ethic they believed traditional societies lacked, and educating populations on European conceptions of health, hygiene, and cleanliness, among other things.³⁹¹

Colonialism for whatever good or bad reasons it had, saw the black race differently. Be that as it may, the nineteenth century ushered in “the abolition of the slave trade and the geneses of legitimate commerce and the new imperialism. Leaders of the movement were closely associated with the new ideas of ‘freedom and equality,’ which had gained increasing popularity throughout the United States and Western Europe during the Industrial Revolution.”³⁹² Colonial era in this sense brought both social changes, political and economic orientation.

The amalgamation of different groups of people who did not claim the same origin and who did not share the same language, much less the same religion, never helped matters.³⁹³ This has continually led to violence, subjugation and hostility among Nigerians, thereby thwarting the opportunity for a just political society. There was also attempt by colonialists to assimilate the blacks into full humanity through education. “If Blacks were beings apart, it was because they had things of their own, customs that should not be abolished or destroyed but rather modified.”³⁹⁴ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton posit that “the purpose of colonial rule was, theoretically, to alter only those customs, traditions, and institutions that the British deemed harmful to Nigerian progress, leaving existing political and social institutions intact to the greatest degree possible”³⁹⁵ Education was to help them overcome their naturalness and then attain the ability to reason and act like ideal human. “Education would be the condition under which they could be perceived and recognized as

³⁹¹ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 112.

³⁹² John N. Oriji, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age. A History of the Igbo People* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 139.

³⁹³ Cf. Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, Translated by Laurent Dubois (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2017), 56.

³⁹⁴ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 86.

³⁹⁵ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 110.

fellow human beings. Once the condition was met, the assimilated became full individuals, no longer subject to custom.”³⁹⁶ This plan produced some European-educated Nigerians.

The colonial era left behind sore wounds and scares. “Not only did the servile condition plunge the Black subject into humiliation, abjection, and nameless suffering. It also incited a process of ‘social death’ characterized by the denial of dignity, dispersion, and the torment of exile.”³⁹⁷ Furthermore, “While the colonial system brought some material benefits to a few European-educated intellectuals, by and large it alienated and frustrated most Nigerians, who believed that colonial rule eroded traditional cultures and institutions.”³⁹⁸ As Achille described it, these post colonialists saw their future controlled by the colonial master and therefore tried to emancipate themselves. “In the wake of the negative work of destruction, the Black Man had to become someone else, to construct himself as a subject capable of projecting himself into the future and investing in a desire.”³⁹⁹ This led to a political adjustment that championed the call for self-determinations and recognition. It was a struggle for liberation from oppressors that took shape in many ways ranging from emancipatory violence, resistance, recourse to cultural values, customs and beliefs.”⁴⁰⁰ These experiences in which some Nigerians were treated unjustly, without dignity and oppressed led to a revolt and the fight for self-determination as well as distrust on anything coming from the white man.

Hitherto, the early nationalists resisted and to some level rejected some western ideologies due to already built fears, suspicion and also culture. It was an effort to lay a kind of foundation for a unique society other than the one the colonialists established. “At the core of all responses to colonial rule was a sense that Nigerians themselves knew how best to structure their societies and did not need to be told how to do things by an alien regime”⁴⁰¹ It was an attempt to reclaim and rethink their societies with a mixture of western legal laws and cultures. In some places, religion was never left out in retaining its strength in rejecting certain western ideas about the political society. Their “project was to locate Africanness in a collection of specific cultural traits that ethnographic research would furnish.”⁴⁰² There were injustices and inequality melted on Nigerians by their colonial masters. The “colonial

³⁹⁶ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 87.

³⁹⁷ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 78.

³⁹⁸ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 136.

³⁹⁹ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 154.

⁴⁰⁰ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 172.

⁴⁰¹ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 111.

⁴⁰² Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 91.

model of comparing humans to animals, and color prejudice inherited from the slave trade and translated through institutions of segregation”⁴⁰³ raised a kind of aversion by the post-colonialists and could have made western theories or idea of justice unwelcoming.

They became pan Africanists and “As a result, everything that was not Black had no place and consequently could not claim any sort of Africanity.”⁴⁰⁴ Anyone or anything external was seen with distrust. While there was indirect rule in Northern Nigeria, some parts of the Southern Provinces never wanted a break up of native institutions by contact with European ideas.⁴⁰⁵ The desire for autonomy and sovereignty had their own repercussions such that the post colonialist held to memories of slavery, degradation and misery suffered in the hands of the colonialists instead of concentrating on working on the self. This led to victimization and resentment against anything or ideology that wasn’t black. There was great recourse to tradition and culture.

Other modalities of difference translate into either rejection or the fetishization of the foreign, and in some cases even the retranslation of everything new into old terms - which serves only to deny or neutralize. In other cases, negative difference takes form as the abandonment of responsibility, the culpabilization of everyone but oneself, or the permanent imputation that initial servitude was the result of external forces, which means throwing away one’s own power.⁴⁰⁶

Most post colonialists saw themselves as intermediates between the western life and indigenous cultural heritage. “Just as European-educated Nigerians promoted the benefits of the “civilizing mission” to other Nigerians, they also promoted the values of indigenous Nigerian societies among themselves and to the British colonial administration, in an effort to illustrate both pride in their heritage and the capacity of Nigerians to advance on their own terms.⁴⁰⁷ The statement from Sir Ahmadu Bello, a foremost nationalist and first premier of Nigeria could buttress this feeling. “I have been accused of conservatism because I believe in retaining all that is good in our old traditions and customs and refusing to copy all aspects of other alien civilisation.”⁴⁰⁸ Some were also sectional heroes who were more interested in the well-being, culture and traditions of their people than applying the western ideologies

⁴⁰³ Cf. Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 21.

⁴⁰⁴ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 91.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Peter J. Yearwood *Nigeria and the Death of Liberal England Palm Nuts and Prime Ministers, 1914-1916* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90566-2>.

⁴⁰⁶ Mbembe Achille, *Critique of Black Reason*, 94.

⁴⁰⁷ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 129-130.

⁴⁰⁸ Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, *My Life* (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1962) viii. https://books.google.de/books/about/My_life.html?id=nk84AAAIAAJ&redir_esc=y&hl=de (Accessed 02.03.2021)

that could benefit all and lead to a harmonious equal society. It was a fight to serve regional, cultural and tribal goals and Bello's expressed this concern when he defended himself by saying that his effort was only "the attempt of a Northern Nigerian to do his duty by his people and the principles of his religion."⁴⁰⁹ It was a reaction that included the place of the emirs in the new western idea of government and administration, the place of women and the kind of education to be given to the people to avoid being swallowed by western values.

The Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature and its culture has a lot of implications on rights of women and minors. "The 2003 CWIQ data suggest that, as is the case in many other African countries, Nigeria is still a male-dominated society."⁴¹⁰ Often times, women are treated like second class citizens and are not given equal opportunities in the family as well as circular parlance. Unlike few areas that are matrilineal, "the Western Igbo and Niger Igbo are patrilineal, and therefore, belong to the Umunna Kinship Belt and also have different political systems."⁴¹¹ This means that men are considered greater than women and the female child is often treated as inferior person who has little or no rights on some cultures. During the colonial and post-colonial eras, whereas the men dominated the political and important offices, positions, "women were left out of the new political dispensation."⁴¹² Nigeria till today runs along the legal system, customary and religious laws which must not be overlooked in while dealing with such territories. Thanks to influence of colonialism, "African legal systems are the product of a mix of legal traditions. These systems built on colonial common law traditions (e.g., in former British colonies) and civil law traditions (...). Both legal traditions have co-existed at different levels of comfort with customary law."⁴¹³ The customary laws are so strong that they always conflict with legal laws.

Women face multiple constraints in accessing justice in the customary legal system, too. Even though customary law may be physically and culturally more (15) accessible to them, their experience in customary institutions can differ greatly from that of men. Most customary courts are adjudicated by men and tend to favor men in their decision making. Women may be unable to voice their grievances directly, having to rely

⁴⁰⁹ Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, *My Life*, ix.

⁴¹⁰ Jorge Saba Arbache, Alexandre Kolev, and Ewa Filipiak, eds. *Gender Disparities in Africa's Labor Market*. A Copublication of the Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank (Washington DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank 2010), 384

⁴¹¹ John N. Oriji, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age*, 12.

⁴¹² John N. Oriji, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age*, 171.

⁴¹³ Aili Mari Tripp, "Conflicting Agendas? Women's Rights and Customary Law in African Constitutional Reform" in *Constituting Equality gender equality and comparative constitutional law*, ed. Susan H. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 182.

instead on the male head of the family to even bring a grievance to the attention of the community's elders.⁴¹⁴

In some parts of Nigeria, women due to customary laws and practices are denied right of inheritance to property, whereas land ownership by female daughters in most parts of the country remains a troubling issue because of culture⁴¹⁵ despite the legal backing as enshrined in the constitution which gives both genders equal inheritance rights in the country. "Challenges to customary law have been particularly difficult because there can be strong feelings of ownership of the family and clan institutions that govern them. Therefore, it has been much harder to pass legislation affecting these institutions, such as laws ensuring women's rights to property and land through inheritance."⁴¹⁶ Also, the attempt to touch the African crucial institution of polygamous "marriage by introducing theirs as if Africans did not how to marry or get married"⁴¹⁷ was not easily welcomed. While monogamous marriage was well tolerated by Christians of that era as part of their new found faith, many saw it as an attack on their traditional institution and structure of marriage which was polygamous.

Another aspect of the culture which opposed western idea of right was female circumcision, child marriage and educational equality for all genders. While there is considerable progress due to constant education and awareness, some persons still indulge in Female Genital Cutting (circumcision) due to cultural practices.

They have been concerned with issues having to do with female genital cutting, the education of girls, age of marriage, and consensual marriage. In Nigeria, for example, there are tensions between advocates for child rights, who want to raise the age of marriage under the Child Rights Act of 2003, and the Supreme Council for Shar'ia in Nigeria that appeals to Islamic law for its authority. The Supreme Council claims that if the state assemblies pass the act it will destroy the very basis and essence of the Shar'ia and Islamic culture.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ Hallward-Driemeier, Mary, and Tazeen Hasan, *Empowering Women: Legal Rights and Economic Opportunities in Africa. Africa Development Forum series*. A copublication of the Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development /The World Bank, 2012), 15-16. Accessed 3.03.2021. Doi: 10.1596/978-0-8213-9533-2.

⁴¹⁵ "Since the 1990s, women's organizations in Africa have been advocating for constitutional reforms and legislative changes to protect their rights and increasingly, they have been successful in these efforts. Most notably, there has been the increasing introduction of clauses, which allow the constitutional guarantees of equality to prevail in the event that there is a clash between women's rights and customary laws and practices that violate women's rights, discriminate against women, or infringe on bill of rights provisions regarding gender equality." Cf. Aili Mari Tripp, "Conflicting Agendas? 173.

⁴¹⁶ Aili Mari Tripp, "Conflicting Agendas? 184.

⁴¹⁷ Nkwazi Nkuzi Mhango, *How Africa Developed Europe Deconstructing the His-story of Africa, Excavating Untold Truth and What Ought to Be Done and Known* (Bamenda: Langa Research & Publishing CIG, 2018), 16.

⁴¹⁸ Aili Mari Tripp, "Conflicting Agendas? 190.

There have been growing efforts to increase the age of marriage for a variety of reasons. Complicating the enactment of the Child Rights Act is the fact that the legal system in Nigeria recognizes three forms of law:

In as much as the experience of colonialism wasn't a tasteful one, one could see how the distrust, suspicion and quest for self-determination led to post colonialists opposing directly or indirectly the western idea of the modern society which advocated for equality of genders, monogamy as expression of dignity and other social changes. Such attitudes in no little way drove the country perhaps into the wrong direction and laid a shaky foundation which has continued to affect social equality till date.

3.0 The effects of these challenges on the Nigerian society with regard to the theory and practice of equality.

As stated previously, justice is important in order to keep the society on the right track of life and proper as well as equal human development. Any sincere reader would never deny the fact that the problems discussed above are so weighty and disastrous towards the attainment of equality in any political society. History and facts on the ground have not been fair to the common man or the citizens who are at the centre of every debate over equality. These obstacles have reduced Nigeria to what Paul Collier would describe as nothing but a country at the bottom which coexists with the twenty-first century, but in reality is as if in the fourteenth century: civil war, plague, ignorance.⁴¹⁹

Having identified the obstacles to the realisation of justice in Nigeria, an attempt will now be made to examine the negative effects on the Nigerian socio-political system. Such could range from the nation's economy to resource management and distribution, from leadership profile to liberty and equality in politics, education to human development, health care system, then human rights and social issues. No doubt, the sounds of these themes of justice and equality mentioned are long dead. The task set out here to achieve is simply an assessment of the status quo with a focus on the enumerated thoughts, to see where and how Nigeria fares in the issue of justice.

3.3.1 Inequality in the distribution of resources

Justice entails equal distribution of both material and immaterial resources among the citizens of a particular nation, society or group. This is very important because equality of resources focuses on the economic means to well-being as Dworkin stated. Equality of

English common law, Islamic Shar'ia law, and customary law, all of which have claims to authority. Federal laws that are passed at the national level by federal law makers are also required to be passed within the State Houses of Assembly Cf. Aili Mari Tripp, *Conflicting Agendas*, 190.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 3.

resources so understood is not trying to make people equal in terms of wellbeing but an attempt to make equal the resources and opportunities at their command. But sadly, the level of distribution of resources in Nigeria is something that calls for a rethink. It is disheartening that a country blessed with many natural resources has her citizens wandering in abject poverty, with neglect on the part of the government, and her resources scarcely distributed. And when attempts are made to distribute the resources, they end up on religious or ethnic lines. According to the Canadian-Dutch Journalist and writer Diane Lemieux, “there are extreme variations in income distribution. Approximately 20 percent of the population own more than 65 percent of national assets, while well over 60 percent of Nigerians receive an income of less than US\$1.25 a day (the World Bank’s measure for extreme poverty).”⁴²⁰ For instance, “the idle federal legislators in Nigeria get N45 million every quarter in the guise of constituency projects which are never executed, in addition to a monthly salary of about ten million Naira. A senator earns N240 million (\$1.7 million) in salaries and allowances while a member of the House of Representatives earns N204 million (\$1.45 million) per annum”⁴²¹ whereas the minimum wage for a civil servant is about \$78 in the same country. The words of Pope Francis in his recent Encyclical letter, ‘Laudato Si’ could be re-echoed to buttress the situation of many Nigerians when he said that “the impact of present imbalance is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor, in conflicts sparked by the shortage of resources, and in any number of other problems which are insufficiently represented on global agendas.”⁴²² It is a situation where only few - the elites, rich class and privileged ones - enjoy the bulk of the nation’s resources while the citizens die off.

It is a country where neither equality of welfare nor equality of resources is near to reality. Common good has become a word only found in the dictionary. The nation’s resources which have been termed ‘national cake’ are usually distributed among certain group of persons. There is need to realise that the common good is a horizon of co-operative search for authentic human values. It is a task to be achieved and accomplished, and not a piece of cake to be devoured; what a misnomer.⁴²³ In the Nigerian situation, the most prominent source of inequality of access is inequality of wealth; a big gap between the haves and have-

⁴²⁰ Diane Lemieux, *The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture of Nigeria*, 34-35.

⁴²¹ Terry Andrews Odisu, *Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria. A Comparative Analysis of Civilian and Military Regimes* (Norderstedt: GRIN Verlag, Open Publishing GmbH, 2015), 4.

⁴²² Pope Francis, *Laudato Si, Encyclical Letter on Care for our Common Home*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), no. 48.

⁴²³ Cf. Francis O.C Njoku, *Philosophy in Politics, Law and Democracy* (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy Nekede, in collaboration with Claretian Communications Nekede, 2002), 41.

nots. If resources were more equally distributed, leverage would automatically be improved by a large number of citizens.⁴²⁴

Nigeria is one of the most endowed nations on earth yet she is today numbered among the poorest nations on the globe because her numerous resources⁴²⁵ are not equally distributed amongst the citizens. Against the expectation of Rawls, Nigeria lacks to date any comprehensive or defined principles of justice so as to determine the appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens of ‘social cooperation’.⁴²⁶ It may not be inappropriate to say that Nigeria as a society lacks also the basic structure for distribution. There seem to be no plans for the common man, and society is run like a banana republic. Without the aid of a magnifying lens, one sees the reckless plunder of the nation’s resources that has been going on in high places for so many years. “The country’s resources have ended up in the hands of few people who have used it to their own advantage. The country Nigeria is rich in land, people, oil and natural gas resources, but the people could hardly eat, drink or clothe themselves, not to talk of being largely unhealthy and uneducated. Because paradoxically Nigeria’s enormous riches have only produced squalor-at least for the masses.”⁴²⁷ This is painfully the true state of affairs in what is considered the most populous nation in Africa.

For some people, especially our leaders, Nigeria is and has always been a personal vineyard that should be exploited unscrupulously by siphoning the national wealth into personal accounts... In fact, years of accumulated betrayals have turned Nigeria to a failed state. The reality of our country can be likened to the man who lives by the riverside and yet washes his hands with spittle. The cause of all these, is as a result of unjust governance and lack of proper distribution of social and economic advantages.⁴²⁸

The essence of governance is to actualise the distribution of resources equally such that the people might develop their wellbeing from it. And when these national resources are very unequally distributed in Nigeria, as the wealth of even very prosperous nations now is, then its equal concern is suspect.⁴²⁹ What we have had in the past and seen today is unfulfilled

⁴²⁴ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 202.

⁴²⁵ There are many types of resources some of which are time, finance, natural resources, human resources, and technological resources etc.

Cf. Ben U. Ujoatuonu, *Success Secrets of the Rich now Exposed* (Lagos: Ben Max International Company, 2015), 144.

⁴²⁶ Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed., 4.

⁴²⁷ Efeturi Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee*, 11-12.

⁴²⁸ Nwachukwu Donatus, “John Rawls Political Liberalism and the Nigerian Polity,” *An Essay presented at the end of a four year course in partial fulfilment for B.A. to Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri*, 2007, 45-47.

⁴²⁹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 1.

programmes promising to handle the inequality in peoples' welfare. In most cases, national resources are siphoned and wasted on the pretext of servicing the welfare of the people. As we know, someone's resources are not only economical but political; as Dworkin would say "an overall theory of equality must find a means of integrating private resources and a political power."⁴³⁰ Hence, equality so to speak must be measured in resources and opportunities at the person's disposal.

We must take cognisance of the fact that "man is at the heart of economic development, and only a political system that allows him the full development of his potential, can lead to the attainment of that objective."⁴³¹ Equality of resources presupposes that the citizens should be both players in economic and political games. But the ordinary Nigerian citizens are not given opportunities in economic decisions let alone political matters. It is an honourable task of the government to make sure that the resources are equally distributed among the citizens to enable them to improve their wellbeing, lead their lives and take responsibility for their choices. "The state should introduce distributive programmes that aim to bring people closer to the share of resources they would have had were it not for such differences in fortune."⁴³² Good enough, Nigeria as a country runs the 'Federal Character Principle' and 'Quota System'⁴³³ which is geared towards striking a balance among the different regions of the nation. However, the federal character principle and national quota system focus more on the regions instead of on the individuals to enable them lead their lives and choose the best way to actualise their wellbeing.

This unhealthy hoarding of the country's numerous resources by a few has stifled harmonious existence, peace, equality and justice in Nigeria. The obstacles discussed also rear their ugly heads whenever efforts are made too to distribute resources. In some scenarios, there are dissenting wants, needs and yearning from the different regions. What the people in the North prefer might be different from that of those in the southern part. In most cases, everything ends in loggerheads. It is necessary to note that preferences and tastes are not sufficient reasons or grounds for someone to contest a distribution as unequal.

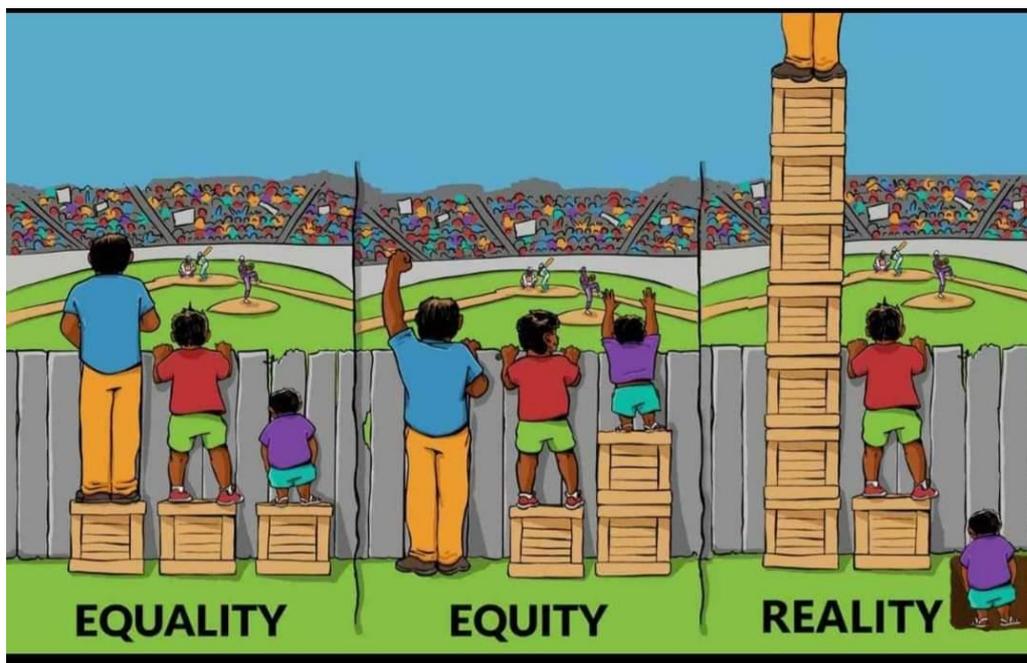
⁴³⁰ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 65.

⁴³¹ Fr. M. H. Kukah, ed., *Nigeria: Towards a Just and Democratic Society*. In Proceedings of a National forum organised by the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria June 18th- 19th, 1998 (Lagos: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 1999), 113.

⁴³² Noel Parker and Stuart Sim, eds., *The AZ Guide to Modern and Political Theorists* (London: Pretence Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997), 73.

⁴³³ Quota System: is a system designed to facilitate equal representation of all the various ethnic groups in every sector of public service.

Stealing or cheating affects the realization of equality of resources as what is meant for all is diverted by a few.



A Graphical Representation of Distributive Equality in Nigeria

3.3.2 Ineffective governance, poor leadership and bad followership

Leadership and governance are important areas that cannot be given cold consideration when the issue of justice is being deliberated upon. This is so because, a society that suffers from leadership and governance deficiencies will find it difficult to bring into realisation the principles of justice. As Dworkin stated; “every government he claims must show equal concern for the fate of her citizens, or else such a government becomes tyranny.”⁴³⁴ Clear enough, equal concern for the fate of the citizens ought to be the prerogative of the government. Corroborating this idea, Innocent Asouzu leaves us with the following words about leaders “they are entrusted with the collection and distribution of wealth and resources. Their key positions impact directly, concretely and across the board on the lives of the average citizens.”⁴³⁵ However, for over 61 years now since independence, Nigeria as a country has not been able to claim its space in leadership and worst of all, shows no positive signs of achieving such. The reason for this is that the country has always produced

⁴³⁴ Cf. Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtues*, 1.

⁴³⁵ Innocent I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest: The Nigerian Paradox in a Complementary Perspective* (Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2003), 42.

incompetent, ineffective and visionless leaders who rose to power either through ethnic origin, religious attachment, corruption or military coup.

Nigeria has a leadership problem so much so that precepts of equality only exist in concepts and not in reality. What we have had in the past, and continue to parade themselves as leaders today in Nigeria, are men of selfishness and self-centredness: dictators and democratic leaders who have ripped the soul of the country out and destroyed her entire cardiovascular system: a bunch of ‘legis-looters and political representa-thieves’⁴³⁶ who make laws to perpetuate themselves in office and protect their ill-gotten wealth. This has made most citizens of Nigeria suspects before the comity of nations.

Many years after independence, Nigeria is still being controlled by people who have no interest in the welfare of the country. Nigeria could be said to have witnessed and continues to have leaders who have perhaps minimal philosophical foundation which is indispensable for the true operation of justice. 61 years on, Nigeria remains a nation in fear, pain, hopelessness and despair: a country where youths have no jobs, where the youths console themselves from the juicy life of entertainment industries, where many have taken to armed robbery, kidnapping, religious exploitations from church men, swindling of money from innocent citizens through fraudulent means, political thuggery and militancy-all due to bad leadership. Our leaders have reduced Nigeria to a country that sits happily on the very bottom of development. Describing the governments of the countries at the bottom Paul Collier opined:

The prevailing conditions bring out extremes. Leaders are sometimes psychopaths who have shot their way to power, sometimes crooks who have bought it, and sometimes brave people who, against the odds, are trying to build a better future. Even the appearance of modern government in these states is sometimes a façade, as if the leaders are reading from a script. They sit at the international negotiating tables, such as the World Trade Organization, but they have nothing to negotiate.⁴³⁷

We see a country that is and continues to be to be manipulated by a duplicitous, mediocre cabal in the name of leadership. Chinua Achebe, the great writer, was right when he said that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership.”⁴³⁸ Supporting this view Efeturi Ojakaminor once wrote: “the bane of Nigeria’s existence is bad leadership which is the most serious hindrance to achieving progress. One can only see in Nigeria, a

⁴³⁶ ‘Legis-looter’ is a derogatory coinage meant to portray the activities of Nigerian legislators, while ‘representa-thief’ refers to the members of the House of Representatives who make up the legislative arm of government.

⁴³⁷ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 4.

⁴³⁸ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publication, 1983), 1.

leadership that has been characterized by nothing but full of ego and greed. All other problems are incidental to that of leadership.”⁴³⁹

Our leaders are not committed to the realization of equality in all spheres of life. “We have displayed a consistent inclination since we assumed management of our own affairs to opt for mediocrity and compromise, to pick a third and fourth eleven to play for us. And the result: we have always failed and will always fail to make it to the world league. Until that is, we put merit back on the national agenda.”⁴⁴⁰ The leaders at every level are not ready to change the situation; it is as if “we wish to continue with our old habits simply because ‘everyone is doing the same’. We get offended at anyone who tries to call our attention to the need to change and we ask why we are singled out for correction.”⁴⁴¹ Most of our leaders, rather than help in actualizing equality in the society exploit the people and deny them their fair share of resources. Instead of equality, they promote inequality, instead of distributive justice only amass the national resources into personal pockets; and instead of common good, go only after their personal good. Based on the teaching of Ronald Dworkin, when a leader fails in effecting fair distribution of resources to enable the people choose and work for their well-being, live their lives and take responsibility, then such a government is a total failure.

Many Nigerians see leadership as a way of enriching themselves and are constantly motivated by self-interest. It is not out of place to say that “the notion of leadership in Nigeria has been misconstrued. In fact, our leadership system can be likened to Hobbesian ‘state of nature’. Leadership is not a personal property. It is not a golden opportunity of enriching one’s locality or family. “A leader acts according to the principle of equality.”⁴⁴² Our leaders believe in the philosophy of the Igbo proverb which states “ogbu opi na ehicha imi’, that is to say ‘he who plays the flute is entitled to wipe his nose’. “Here our interest has lost its focus and is now opposed to the common good.”⁴⁴³ Nowadays, it is very difficult to get a

⁴³⁹ Efeturi Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee*, 126.

⁴⁴⁰ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 22.

⁴⁴¹ Fortunatus Nwachukwu, *The Courage to Change: Take off your Shoe* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009), 14.

⁴⁴² Donatus Nwachukwu, “John Rawls’ Political Liberalism and the Nigerian Polity”, 37.

⁴⁴³ Innocent I. Asouzu, *Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest*, 21.

In this issue, you can trust a typical Nigerian who is wont to wiping his nose very properly and thoroughly at any given opportunity. Self-interest goes beyond legitimate wiping of the nose; that is to say, it goes beyond a flute player expecting to be rewarded when he has played to the delight of the audience. Self-interest goes beyond taking what is one’s due in all fairness and justice. Whenever we are interested in our selfish interests, then we are bound to stifle justice and fairness. A leader should live above self-interest in order to achieve justice and equality in the society. Leadership should not be about self-interest.

leader with genuine authentic leadership motivations to foster equality with all the ramifications.

Permit me to state that the problem of governance should not be left to the leaders alone. Adding my voice to that of Chinua Achebe, the major problem with Nigeria is not only bad leadership but bad followership as well. The majority of the followers in Nigeria are either corrupt or seek at all cost to support their own religious or tribal fellows. Those led also ought to resist bad leadership, contribute and play roles in the organisation of the society. “On a different level, it is also the moral duty of citizens to insist on good governance; to resist bad laws; and to defend the dignity and rights of fellow citizens against the misuse of power from above. It is not enough to sit down quietly and allow injustice to reign. Very often, such silence, amounts to being accomplices of the evil.”⁴⁴⁴ Unfortunately this is the opposite among the followers.

Poor followership contributes in sustaining the Nigerian predicament. While most of our enlightened citizens and most of the academia maintain sealed lips with uprooted eyes to the events in the polity (perhaps for fear of their lives); our bad leaders are always supported by an army of never-do-wells and ignorant fellows recruited from the pool of the very poor for selfish gains, party, religious or ethnic affiliations. Their sole concern is to receive favour or install their tribal men into power. During elections, they wear uniforms marked with party logos and trek thousands of miles to sing the praises of the very leaders who have held them in bondage. Involved in this problem are religious men and women, captains of industries, directors of public institutions, old men and women with backups from some ignoble traditional rulers who have sold their integrity for a pot of porridge just like Esau in the Bible. They mortgage their destiny and the future of their unborn babies by accepting monetary inducement from political contestants who are ready to buy votes at every cost. Most Nigerians celebrate and canonise the same leaders who have inflicted terrible wounds on the polity, elect men and women with disreputable records into offices, while the good ones are vilified and attacked without restraint- perhaps for having no corrupt money to throw about during campaigns. Until the masses realise their roles in the course of governance, until our peoples’ ideological perspective and thinking are re-oriented and become united in resilience against the hawks and avengers militating against our growth, our sorrows and woes would even widen up like the Mississippi river.

⁴⁴⁴ Fr. M. H. Kukah, ed., *Nigeria: Towards a Just and Democratic Society*, 25.

3.3.3 Lack of liberty and equality in society

Liberty as we saw is an important issue in political discussions about equality and also necessary for it. For equality to be actualised, the liberty of the people must be respected. Liberty is so important in political society that John Rawls gave it a place of priority in the lexical order of his political ideas. “Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.”⁴⁴⁵ Without liberty, there cannot be justice.

The early Nigerian nationalists saw the essence of freedom and liberty that when they formulated the Nigerian National Anthem, they ended it with the following words: ‘one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity’. This claim could only be found on the lips of every Nigerian and recited on a daily basis but barely implemented in reality. But as the case might be, the denial of peoples’ liberty is one of the worst perpetuated evils in Nigerian society. Liberty of the people is always truncated by the leaders and powerful to the detriment of the poor and weak.

One can better understand why Walzer in his political wisdom insisted that no single sphere should dominate or give advantage over others. Also no citizen’s standing in one particular sphere of social good can be subverted by his standing in some other spheres, with regard to some other good.⁴⁴⁶ On the contrary, the common man in Nigeria is undercut by those enjoying other dominant goods such as wealth and political power. One can easily see, that the political power has dominated the other goods in Nigeria in such a way that they are finally monopolised and those who enjoy political goods oppress and enjoy superior privileges over the rest. People hardly have their rights and liberty protected; they are flagrantly abused and denied continuously in every corner of the country’s life. It would not be wrong to say that might is right in Nigeria. There is a sense in which those who occupy political power feel it is them against the rest of Nigerian citizens. The gap between the rich or powerful and the poor or weak is unimaginable.

Both liberty and equality combine to bring the realization of distributive justice. We cannot talk of people being equal when members of a political society cannot exercise their liberties.

⁴⁴⁵ J. Rawls; *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 3-4.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 18-20.

Complex equality begins basically with various social goods, how people understand the various goods and how they relate to one another in society through those social goods.

There should be “basic equality between all men and it must be given ever greater recognition.”⁴⁴⁷ Liberty provides an account of distributional equality as Dworkin stated. When the citizens are accorded their liberty, then there is the possibility of coordinated decisions, sense of belongingness, participation and people could take responsibility for their choices and ambitions in life as well as plan how to use the fair share of resources available to them. But in Nigeria, liberty is neither attained in the public sphere nor in political decisions. We see a country where the people who participate in elections have their liberties choked up by those they have elected. “During elections, people go around campaigning and asking to be allowed to serve the nation. Unfortunately, this service does not go beyond the lips. They occupy the best houses; they terrorize people with sirens as they move from one place to the other; and they make it clear that they command all the time and they do not have to obey anybody.”⁴⁴⁸ The privileged citizens use every opportunity to ride on the liberty of their fellow citizens. A situation which as Fela described as, ‘rich man dey mess, poor man dey cry.’⁴⁴⁹

Moreover, the military and armed forces personnel are always right over the civilians. Neither is it better in the medical field, as the weak hardly receive attention nor their liberties respected when sick. In education, the liberties of the students are far-fetched as teachers exploit the students financially and take advantage of the female ones in order to pass them in examinations. The importance of the judiciary cannot be neglected in the struggle for the respect of people’s liberty. One would expect the servants in the temple of justice to come to the rescue of the common man. But the reverse is the case, in the sense that the liberty of the people is mostly denied in our law courts as money and power determine a lot in dispensing justice. Unlike in most countries, the judicial system in Nigeria is usually controlled by the executive⁴⁵⁰ which should not be the case. When once people are denied

⁴⁴⁷ Austin Flanery O. P, ed., “Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*,” in *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1975), no. 29.

⁴⁴⁸ Nigeria: *Towards a Just and Democratic Society*, 23-24.

⁴⁴⁹ Rich man they mess, poor man dey cry is a colloquial Nigerian English always referred as ‘Pidgin or Pigeon English’ which means ‘a situation in which the rich farts and the poor suffers or cries for its foul odour’

⁴⁵⁰ Though in principle, it could be said that the judiciary is autonomous and has no problem, but in practice, it has a lot of shortcomings.

During one of my discussions with a friend in Nigeria about the situation of things, she expressed the frustration of the masses with the following words ‘*Odiegwu!* (It’s worrisome), there is nothing we-the commoners- can do about it since those at the helm of authority aren’t considerate’.

of their basic liberties, it becomes terribly difficult to talk of equality in politics let alone other spheres of life.

In line with the importance of liberty, Ghandi advocated a political society where “the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest.”⁴⁵¹ This is so because one who has influence in political decisions enjoys his equality of resources politically. “Someone who has power to influence public decisions about the quality of the air he or she breathes, for example, is richer than someone who does not. So an overall theory of equality must find a means of integrating private resources and political power.”⁴⁵² This simply means that people should have equal opportunity in political matters so as to air their views and design their society in the best possible way to enhance justice. Unfortunately, leaders and the powerful in Nigeria enjoy their liberty, receive a huge share of the resources, impose their political decisions on the masses while the weak are trampled upon and have no say in politics nor can hardly hope to get their fair resources. According to the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World- ‘Gaudium et Spes’, “excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace.”⁴⁵³ This statement demands that people should be given opportunity in political decisions and their opinions should be heard as far as governance is concerned. “When they (citizens) become part and parcel of the political machinery that makes decisions, they are involved in politics. As long as we are part and parcel of our larger societies, subject to the laws and the ordinances that govern them, we cannot escape from all that will accrue to that membership.”⁴⁵⁴ Whatever is good for the goose is also good for the gander. The powerful as well as the weak should be treated equally in the sphere of liberty.

Liberty is fundamental and “a part or aspect of distributional equality, and so are automatically protected whenever equality is achieved. The priority of liberty is secured, not at the expense of equality, but in its name.”⁴⁵⁵ When liberty is a scarce commodity, then justice becomes nothing but a mirage. However, liberty, does not imply that people should

⁴⁵¹ Krishna Kripalani, ed., *Mahatma Ghandi, All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 126.

⁴⁵² R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 65.

⁴⁵³ Austin Flanery O. P, ed., “Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes”, In *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council*, no. 29.

⁴⁵⁴ John O. Odey, *The Anti - Corruption Crusade- The Saga of a Crippled Giant* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2001), 15-16.

⁴⁵⁵ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 133.

do whatever they want. Though people are entitled to their liberties in a democratic society, it should be given up in moments of conflict with the societal good. Leaning on Dworkin, if other liberties like freedom of speech, religion, choice and so on could be limited for other goals, so should liberty be when it conflicts with distributional justice. The “claim is that if these two values were to conflict liberty would always lose out to equality, because a political decision that fails to treat citizens with equal concern can never be justified.”⁴⁵⁶ Liberty should be for all and not for some.

3.3.4 Free speech, democracy, and politics

One of the best ways of protecting liberty as well as realising equality is by giving citizens the freedom to express themselves in the political society. Properly understood, the distributional justice of resources is not limited to the economical or material but also extends to politics which will make all citizens equal players with basic liberties and freedom of speech. Free speech, expression and so forth should be protected in a democracy.⁴⁵⁷ But it is totally absurd and unbelievable what we call democracy in Nigeria, and the things people do in the name of politics. Our politics has become a do or die affair, enmeshed in financial recklessness, imposition in the name of election, stifling of opposition, efforts by government officials to clamp down the right to freedom speech and daily suppression of the media. “I must note with sadness, that many African nations still labour under an authoritarian and oppressive regimes which deny their subjects personal freedom and fundamental human rights, especially the freedom of association and political expression as well as the right to choose their governments by free and honest elections.”⁴⁵⁸ It is a condition where people are free to air their views but their security thereafter is not guaranteed. One of our renowned comic actors Mr Ibu described it as follows, “we dey for democracy if you talk you die, Nigeria de chop am kernel.”⁴⁵⁹ It is no longer politics for all, but for the rich and the wealthy. The voice of the common man who has no money to throw about is no longer considered. Our politicians not only spend huge amounts of money during

⁴⁵⁶ R. Stecker, “Review of Sovereign Virtue: *The Theory and Practice of Equality*,” Article 41.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 185.

⁴⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, “Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation”, given at Yaoundé, in Cameroon, on 14 September, 1995, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1995), article 112.

⁴⁵⁹ A. Ofokpara, *Why Nigeria is the Way it is* (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2009), xiii.

This is really a special language called Pidgin English. It is a kind of corrupt English peculiar to Nigeria and some other West African countries. The statement means that ‘we are in democracy but when one talks about the ills of the government, the person goes in for it. Really Nigerians are finding it hard’.

an election cycle but empty the national and state coffers to sponsor their political ambitions to the detriment of the citizens.

Citizen equality is destroyed when only the rich are players in the political contest, and no one could mistake our huckster politics for democratic deliberation. But self-government means more than equal suffrage and frequent elections. It means partnership of equals, reasoning together about the common good. But when politics are drenched in money, as our politics now are, then we risk not simply imperfection but hypocrisy.⁴⁶⁰

There is no limit or censure to what an individual or party can spend in Nigeria during election time. Money has become the centre of our political life such that one who has the highest amount of money can buy victory at election. Nathaniel Ndiokwere captured the scene better with the following words “If you have eye on any political post, even the presidency, you do not need to worry about your qualifications, just get enough money and highjack the desired post. With enough money distributed to the electoral officers-from top to bottom, including voters-begin celebrations for victory, even before results are announced.”⁴⁶¹ This anomaly has affected not only the type of people going into leadership positions but the electioneering umpires, as well as the voters who find it difficult to resist the amount of money usually thrown at their feet. Another ugly effect of this is that the rich who sponsor these elections have their wishes usually serviced while the citizens are constantly abandoned. This has disastrously shattered governance and also our democracy as our leaders remain unproductive year in year out.

If we claim to be a democracy, then it must respect the principles of justice. “We don’t confuse democracy with mountains. There are ideas that we understand to be thought of as ‘democratic’ ideas, such as free elections, the equality and freedom of people, the rule of law....”⁴⁶² It should be nothing but partnership democracy or as captured by the Igbo coinage ‘Oha-cracy’⁴⁶³, where the rich and poor alike will have their contributions towards the realization of equality and fair distribution of resources. “A political community that exercises dominion over its own citizens, and demands from them allegiance and obedience to its laws, must take up an impartial, objective attitude toward them all, and each of its citizens must vote, and its officials must enact laws and form governmental policies, with

⁴⁶⁰ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 385.

⁴⁶¹ Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, *Only in Nigeria* (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2006), 21.

⁴⁶² Stephen Guest, *Ronald Dworkin, Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*, 74.

⁴⁶³ *Oha-cracy* means, *Oha-* people, *Cracy* originates from the Greek word *-kratia*, meaning ‘power, rule’ influence and the combining form of *Oha-cracy* denotes a particular form of government for the people and by the people where each person has a say or represented by some chosen members.

that responsibility in mind.”⁴⁶⁴ The people should not only be called upon during voting times and to be pushed aside when the leaders are elected. Everyone should be equal partners in collective enterprise of democracy, playing important roles in shaping and forming the principles of an egalitarian system of government.

Free speech also plays an important role in democratic governance and shapes politics in general. People’s liberty should be part and parcel of equality where they can freely express themselves and deliberate individually and collectively about their choice. “My notion of democracy is that under it, the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest.”⁴⁶⁵ Since freedom of speech enforces citizen sovereignty and protects citizen equality, then it is essential that citizens be free, in principle, to express any relevant opinion they have whether considered, hated or rejected by others. However, it is also important to note that this freedom of speech is not absolute and hence could yield to other values like security, and a private interest in reputation.

3.3.5 High rate of unemployment and lack of equal opportunities

No society can boast of obeying the principles of justice when it does not give equal concern to all citizens and opportunities for those who possess the capabilities to be employed. That is to say that “...when a nation’s wealth is very unequally distributed, as the wealth of even very prosperous nations now is, then its equal concern is suspect”.⁴⁶⁶ Implicitly, when employment and opportunities become scarce commodities in society, then there is reason for worries.

According to Amartya Sen, the value of justice should be based on equal opportunity and capability or capacity for all. “The value of the environment cannot be just a matter of what there is, but must also consist of the opportunities it offers to people.”⁴⁶⁷ Thus, a society becomes unjust when the people lack equal capability or less capability and less opportunity to achieve those things that they would want to in life for their own well-being. It is only when one is given the freedom and equal opportunity that he “transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense,

⁴⁶⁴ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 6.

⁴⁶⁵ John O. Odey, *The Anti-Corruption Crusade- The Saga of a Crippled Giant*, 19.

⁴⁶⁶ R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 1.

⁴⁶⁷ Amartya Sen, *The idea of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 248.

becomes "more a human being."⁴⁶⁸ One of the possible ways citizens can get an equal share of their resources is through employment- when they are given equal opportunity in the society to work, to choose, develop or define their future. The reason being that, "work is a fundamental right and a good for mankind, a useful good, worthy of man...."⁴⁶⁹ Thus, there is dignity in labour and work enhances man's dignity.

Since the early 80's, the level of unemployment keeps rising massively and uncontrollably. Nigerian citizens are hardly given equal opportunities while one's capabilities do not seem to matter in this society. There is exist in Nigeria high unemployment as well as underdevelopment. Many youths are out of job with escalating poverty levels in the country. As it stands, the current national poverty level is estimated at 61% of the population based on poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day by World Bank with over 70.2% of the people earning less than \$1.25 a day and could be described as 'ghetto poor.'⁴⁷⁰ Many of her teeming youths roam about the streets unemployed, while our universities turn out thousands of graduates year in year out without hope and future. The plans for physically challenged persons. Many of her talented youth have their entrepreneurship ideas, skills and potentials always neglected or rejected. On many occasions, they are pushed out of survival due to lack of equal opportunity or resources. Unemployment in all cases is "an evil, and which, when it reaches a certain level, can become a real social disaster."⁴⁷¹ The effect of unemployment has cost the country a lot whereby our bright and promising citizens run out of the country to western worlds for greener pastures.

Employment for the citizens is a very important aspect of equality. Work enables citizens to be gainfully employed so as to take care of their well-being and decide their lives as they want it economically. "Work is a good belonging to all people and must be made available to all who are capable of engaging in it. Full employment therefore remains a mandatory objective for every economic system oriented towards justice and common good."⁴⁷² Unfortunately, it's not only the problem of unemployment but also unjust wages and lack of

⁴⁶⁸ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens, An Encyclical Letter on Human Work, given at Castel Gandolfo, on 14 September, 1981*, (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1981), no. 9.

⁴⁶⁹ *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Nairobi Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004), no. 287, 159.

⁴⁷⁰ A word used by Tommie Shelby in his book 'Dark Ghettos' to describe the afflicted population, denizens of American neighbourhoods that haven been subjected to systematic disinvestment under conditions of structural racism.

⁴⁷¹ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 18.

⁴⁷² *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*, no. 288, 159.

other social benefits. There are no veritable structures or cogent plans and worst of all, citizens are not judged by their capability to do things they have reason to value.⁴⁷³

Employment problems challenge the responsibility of the state, whose duty it is to promote active employment policies, that is, policies that will encourage the creation of employment opportunities within the national territory, providing the production sector with incentives to this end.⁴⁷⁴

As Paul Collier has stated, recruitment into the public sector must be based on merit and not on political or rent seeking considerations.⁴⁷⁵ But in Nigeria, employment is not about capability, merit or what you know, but rather who you know. One finds gross inequality where the children of the leaders, political elites, highly placed men and women have greater chances of placing their wards wherever they wish. As Achebe wrote, “the real explosive potential of social injustice in Nigeria does not reside in the narrow jostling among the elite but in the gargantuan disparity of privilege they have created between their tiny class and the vast multitudes of ordinary Nigerians.”⁴⁷⁶ If we accept that man is a “no mere creature of circumstances, conditioned and engulfed by his social milieu”⁴⁷⁷, then he should be given opportunities to fashion a social life worth living.

3.3.6 Health care services

Rawls in his idea of justice would list health as one of the primary goods⁴⁷⁸ and he sees these goods as the essence of a well-ordered society. Health remains the chief of all virtues, everything else is of lesser importance and must be sacrificed for it. Without health which guarantees good life, nobody in the society can lay claim for justice. Because ‘health’ they say is ‘wealth’, no society can talk about justice when the citizens have no access to an equal good health care system. Just as fuel is required for the aeroplane to fly, so also does society require people of good health for a functional political community. Therefore, care must be taken to make sure that medical care is distributed solely on the basis and grounds of equality. No citizen must be denied the medical care he needs just because of his economic or social

⁴⁷³ Cf. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, 231

⁴⁷⁴ *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*, no. 291, 160.

⁴⁷⁵ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*; 3- 4

⁴⁷⁶ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 26.

⁴⁷⁷ Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, Trans. by Andrzej Potocki (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969), xxi.

⁴⁷⁸ “Chief primary goods at the disposition of society are rights, liberties, and opportunities, and income and wealth. These are the social primary goods. Other primary goods such as health and vigour, intelligence and imagination, are natural goods; although their possession is influenced by the basic structure, they are not so directly under its control.” Cf. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 54.

standing. These are simple but understandable, even worthy, moral ideals that are founded on the indispensability of life and health to every other thing else.⁴⁷⁹

Some of the questions that beg consideration with respect to Nigerian conditions could include the following; do we really have what could be described as health care services in the true sense of the word? What is the state of our health system and disposition of health care personnel? Is the government committed to the issue of health care? What type of health care services should the citizens enjoy? Should health care services be only for the few who can afford it or for all-rich and poor alike? The immediate response would be to say that the health care system in Nigeria is in a state of quagmire and maybe only a figment of the mind, and perhaps in its purgatorial stage. The government does not show maximum priority to the health of her citizens. To say that our health care services have gone totally comatose is a mere understatement. “Even at (61) Nigeria cannot boast of a functional health care delivery system. Report on health indices from international bodies point to the fact that at (61), Nigeria is still far from achieving the minimum require health standard.”⁴⁸⁰ The kind of health care services prevalent in Nigeria is shameful and unimaginable. “Nigeria’s 2016 health indicators ranked among the lowest in the world. It ranks near the bottom in infant mortality, slightly better than lawless Somalia but worse than war-torn South Sudan.”⁴⁸¹ That is to say that the country in average has 21 doctors approximately per 100,000 citizens; with high infant mortality rate of about 112 per 1000 live births; and over 980 per 100,000 live births of maternal mortality, and according to the latest United Nations Human Development Indicators (2019), life expectancy is estimated 54.3 years. “Health indicators are poor given Nigeria’s level of wealth. The stunting rate, infant and under-5 mortality rates, and maternal mortality ratio are among the highest in the world, while life expectancy is among the lowest. One Nigerian under-5-year-old in three is chronically malnourished, according to the 2018 Nigerian Nutrition and Health Survey.”⁴⁸² It is very difficult if not impossible to give the statistics for citizens in Nigeria who have medical or health insurance. The inequality as well as injustice is so high that the majority of her citizens hardly get medical attention or have

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue*, 309.

⁴⁸⁰ Anthony C. N. Ukaegbu, *A New Nigeria: Current Challenges and Tremendous Opportunities*, 72. Words in Bracket mine. It is mindful to note that this report was given in the year 2011. Today Nigeria is no longer 50 years since her Independence but 61. The difference in the report is only a matter of years and not that an improvement (if any at all) has been recorded in this health sector since then. So one could be absolutely correct, to make use of such a report as things have remained business as usual.

⁴⁸¹ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 12.

⁴⁸² Sarosh Sattar, Souleymane Coulibaly, and Hiroshi Tsubota, Co-leaders, *Moving Toward a Middle-Class Society*, 12.

access to good hospitals; and when they do, it is so expensive that the common man cannot afford it.

It has become a tradition that the leaders who should be committed to equal concern of her citizens have neglected our health sector where they and their households fly abroad with the country's resources for medical check-ups and treatment when they are sick; thereby creating a high sense of inequality where the poor ones cannot afford such and languish in devastating poor health conditions. Huge number of deaths are recorded on a daily basis while the government turns her eyes the other way. The percentage of new-born deaths is so high as a result of this same ugly situation while the political elites fly their pregnant wives to the western nations to deliver their children safely.

This lack of commitment to the health sector on the part of the government accounts for the lack of modern facilities in many public hospitals across the country. Though successive governments have come up with some health policies which could have helped a lot in redeeming the situation, it has always been lofty policies without the political will to execute them. There is an urgent need to reform the health services- by providing medical care that will be affordable both to the rich and the poorest of the poor. Citizens should be offered a less expensive insurance scheme and better balanced medical care services which can be prudently chosen – a universal health-care system which everyone in all justice, can access.

While the lack of concern on the part of the government is obvious, the insincerity and lack of commitment on our health personnel and already existing health care system present some ill feelings. The level of greed amongst our medical personnel is alarming. They prize money more than the lives they swore under the Hippocratic Oath to protect. Most of them are more committed to their personal good than the health of their patients. All manners of impunity are perpetuated by those who should safeguard human life. This has turned our medical centres into death centres instead of healing centres. A visit to our national and federal hospitals will leave one in shock. Both our doctors, nurses, and all who should help in managing the little health opportunities are so heartless and self-centred to the point that they seize on every opportunity to exploit the people.

The state of Nigerian hospitals nowadays is something unimaginable. There are not adequate and appropriate equipment to run the various hospitals. Equally of note is the corruption in our medical industry. Our medical experts now see the hospitals mainly

as an avenue of making money instead of saving life. Hence, the increasing cost of medical treatment and drugs.⁴⁸³

Most of our health personnel pay lip service to the issue of life. The rich are given first class attention when they are sick and the poor ones neglected. Most of them have their private hospitals or health facilities where they give people proper attention not without high cost. This is barely affordable by the poor people thereby making the rich citizens beneficiaries of what should be the gain of all. This continues to happen because the government has left the issue of health care to individuals and private insurance companies without control. Most employers expose their employees to risks and harsh working conditions without insurance to cover such individuals in case of casualties. Many employees who are exposed to some of these horrible working conditions are allowed to cater for themselves without any support from the employers.⁴⁸⁴

3.3.7 Human rights, social vices, economic crisis, and underdevelopment

The political philosophy of Dworkin, Rawls and Sen gave much consideration to the liberty and rights of the citizens as well as the opportunity to enhance an economic and harmonious human society. Therefore, a life which has started should be helped to develop fully and people should be given the opportunity to be responsible for their lives. Also Rawls's idea that "each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others"⁴⁸⁵ shows his concern for human rights.

Social justice accords inalienable rights and demands a proportionate share and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation amongst all. Nobody has the right to tamper with anybody's rights. Every human being has the power to preserve his rights and so should society. This has not been the case in Nigeria. The magnitude at which human rights and life in general are abused, is alarming and on the increase. Life is the first value of man such that without it, human existence is thwarted and man's aspirations, divine and human will always

⁴⁸³ Kenneth Emeka Okafor, *The Nigeria of My Dream* (Owerri: Canun Press, 1999), 31.

⁴⁸⁴ I could recount my personal encounter with a worker at one private construction company. This company in question was into construction of overhead tanks, roofing of houses with iron, welding activities like the assembling of gates and so many other things. One of the engineers who worked for this company once fell off the edge of a three storey building and broke many bones. He was abandoned by his employer to carry the burden of his brute luck alone. This young man who now is partially paralysed depends on the generosity of good willed people while the employer is left to go on with his company and personality untouched.

⁴⁸⁵ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 53.

remain a dream. There exists an incessant and flagrant abuse of fundamental rights to life, a lack of respect for the sacred rule of law, disenfranchisement, child marriage in some places, and suppression of freedom of religion, just to mention but a few. The brutal activities of the police abound, political assassination is the order of the day. The assassination of Dele Giwa, Kudirat abiola, Chief Uche Ogbe, “Bola Ige, then Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Harry Marshal, Chief Dikibo deputy national chairman, PDP south-south, the Igwes husband and wife, who were members of the NBA in Anambra State were brutally murdered by unknown assassins, just to mention but a few.”⁴⁸⁶ Also the arrest of opposition members, judicial personnel, the incarceration of El Zarkazy (leader of Shiite Muslims-Islamic movement of Nigeria), the killing of peaceful protesters, the unlawful arrest of activists and few of their cronies, the killing of unarmed Biafran agitators on several occasions could explain it all. In most cases, court injunctions were ignored. “If the government does not take rights seriously, then it does not take law seriously either.”⁴⁸⁷ An ideal society with a fair system of co-operation and minimal citizen’s participation must protect the fundamental rights of her citizens.

Nevertheless, another aspect where great abuse is perpetuated is with the right to property. As Rawls taught, the essence of man living in a contemporary and utilitarian society to enter the original position under the veil of ignorance is for his own good. Unfortunately we see a situation where the citizens have their properties or heritage taken forcefully by the government or the privileged elites without due process or compensation. Market and public facilities are destroyed by those in power without alternative plans. We have in this case a complete vitiation of people's rights which is a violation of political justice.

Further, there is also social injustice in all spheres of the economy. In our country today, the economy rests in the hands of a few individuals and the majority of citizens wallow in abject poverty. “On the UN’s Human Development Index, which measures life expectancy, education, and living standards, Nigeria ranks (158) out of 188 countries”⁴⁸⁸ with a (value) 0.534 Human Development Index (HDI) according to 2019 United Nations Report. This absence of social justice makes the rich get richer and the poor poorer. There has been no proportionate and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation; among the different

⁴⁸⁶ Terry Andrews Odisu, *Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria*, 2-3.

⁴⁸⁷ Ronald Dworkin, “Taking Rights Seriously,” In *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, Second ed., eds. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Petit (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 301.

⁴⁸⁸ John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 55. (Words in bracket mine). The latest Ranking puts Nigeria at 158 in 2020.

groups and regions of our country. This sad situation ensures that a section of the citizenry is enriched at the expense of others. Nigeria is rich in oil and other mineral resources, yet her people suffer, and a great number of the people can hardly eat, drink or clothe themselves; many are largely unhealthy and uneducated. The exploitation from the west apart, we have shown that we are quite incapable of helping and developing ourselves. We continue to experience nothing but kleptocracy from the military bravado and political rogues whose sole aim is to siphon off national resources. This has left the country with retrogressive developmental strides because very few individuals are in control of the country's wealth.

According to Okonjo-Iweala, a former Managing Director at the World Bank, twice Nigeria's Finance Minister and also former Minister of Foreign Affairs;

The country Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, with an estimated 2017 gross domestic (GDP) of \$400 billion. Nigeria constitutes 71 percent of West Africa's GDP and 27 percent of the continent's GDP. GDP per capita is \$2,123, compared to \$5,558 in South Africa, so although Nigeria is classified a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank, poverty remains a problem, as it does for many nations in this category. An estimated 36.1 percent of the population live below the absolute poverty line of \$1.90 per day.⁴⁸⁹

Nonetheless, "with a rapidly growing population that the UN estimates as having recently topped two-hundred million and a Purchasing Power Parity per capita GDP of only about \$6,100 per year, Nigeria has enough poor people."⁴⁹⁰ We must admit that Nigeria, through its corrupt and depraved leaders, has not succeeded in living up to its own reputation and to the world's expectation. Ours is a failed country. Up till now, we have been placed under the third world in development. Injustice has dragged the development of the country into the mud. The society lacks common basic infrastructures and amenities. "Nigeria still faces human capital challenges. In Nigeria, only one-third of the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution (the bottom 40) have access to improved water, and only half have access to improved sanitation. Access to energy is low. Approximately 80 million people lack access to electricity."⁴⁹¹ The roads are decorated with potholes, the epileptic power supply is indescribable, no good transport system, and health services are in a shambles, the majority of our public schools dilapidated, government edifices and public structures abandoned.

⁴⁸⁹ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous*, xvi-xvii.

⁴⁹⁰ Ayo Obe, 'Aspirations and Realities in Africa. Nigeria's Emerging Two-Party System?' in *Journal of Democracy*, volume 30, number 3 (July 2019), 110.

⁴⁹¹ Sarosh Sattar, Souleymane Coulibaly, and Hiroshi Tsubota, Co-leaders, *Moving Toward a Middle-Class Society. Nigeria on the Move: A Journey to Inclusive Growth*, 12-14.

No one would doubt that such a difficult economic moment could breed all sorts of social vices in the bid for survival for those who are not morally disciplined. Senator Ben Bruce captured it well when he stated that poverty breeds anger and hunger, hunger and anger breed violence. This harsh economic as well as perpetual underdevelopment has led to the eruptive and inflammatory collapse of morals too. The instinct for survival at all costs has led some citizens into all manner of social vices. The youth engage in horrendous activities either to console themselves or to eke out a living. Consequently, the security situation in Nigeria leaves much to be desired as many continue to live in fear. John Campbell and Matthew T. Page believe that “these security challenges have something in common: all are a product of Nigerian state weakness, especially corruption, poor governance, widespread policing failures, and elite sponsorship of violence entrepreneurs.”⁴⁹² People are being killed and maimed every day. The lives and properties of the citizenry are constantly in serious danger while kidnapping has become the order of the day. Between December 2020 and March 2021 alone, over 1000 school children have been kidnapped in northern Nigeria alone and millions of Naira paid as ransom to have them released. The issue of robbery is always on the increase. Diane Lemieux opines that since 70 percent of the Nigerian population lives below the international poverty line, it is inevitable and a natural tendency that some individuals will turn to crime for a living and survival.⁴⁹³ The level of crime is such that one walks along most of the streets with one’s hands on the chest due to the high level of social vices, while moving out late at night becomes a danger for anyone who values himself. The security agencies are used to bullying the masses, to silencing dissenting voices and intimidating those who fight against the wicked regimes.

Conclusion

It has been established in the previous chapters that justice is an irreplaceable virtue and a ‘conditio sine qua non’ for any society committed to the good and well-being of its citizens. Having laid the foundation and studied the meaning of justice according to some philosophers, the focus in this chapter has been on the reason why it has not augured well in Nigeria and its concomitant effects. I began by making a historical study of the Nigerian polity to enable the reader come to clear terms with the country under study. Just as anyone would observe, it has been a history replete with inconsistencies and many challenges.

⁴⁹² John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs To Know*, 122.

⁴⁹³ Cf. Diane Lemieux, *The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture of Nigeria*, third printing, 134.

Be that as it may, certain issues were identified as obstacles towards the realisation of justice in Nigeria. Findings show that it is a country divided on different fronts raging from religion to tribe and ravaged by many problems which I may not have exhausted here. However the story goes, the fact remains that the country lacks the discipline and rationally accepted principles of justice which should regulate the basic structure of society.⁴⁹⁴ The society also hangs on to a divisive foundation (social positions, ethnic, tribal, political party affiliations, religion, corruption and systemic decay) which impedes the course of justice.

Having agreed on how dangerous these obstacles are to the course of justice, I also made a sincere effort to enumerate the negative resultant effects of these problems on the nation. The national life in all spheres is brutally affected. The distribution of resources has been lopsided and controlled by the few political elites. Ineffective governance, poor leadership and bad followership have cost the country much and set her back on the unfortunate side of injustice. The outcome is massive underdevelopment and unemployment, unequal opportunities, social vices, poor medical services, insecurity, and abuse of fundamental human rights, inadequate level of liberty and equality in politics, machination of the proletariats and hoi polloi by the elites and bourgeoisie, inadequate freedom of free speech, undemocratic rules, and politics. It is necessary to state here how difficult it is to actually present more drastic instances of injustices and inequality in Nigeria due to the unavailability of documentation, which is a major problem. Often, they are only mentioned in passing or in the national daily newspapers. Moreover, the overabundance of incidents makes it cumbersome as there are fresh cases on a daily basis.

⁴⁹⁴ Noel Parker and Stuart Sim, eds., *The A- Z Guide to Modern Social and Political Theorists* (London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997), 306. (Word in Bracket mine).

CHAPTER FOUR

DELIBERATION ON THE ROLES OF IDEAS, EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE SOCIETY

4.0 An introduction

In the previous chapters I exposed the principles of justice and the many challenges militating against the practice of justice as well as the effects in Nigeria. The consideration in this current chapter will be: what should be the next action for such a society enmeshed in inequality? How can a society with such numerous obstacles come to the realisation of the very principles of justice as enumerated? These questions as simple as they might appear, call for introspective action in the search for solutions. No society or institution survives or improves by repeating constantly the same things that have produced no results. If this is true for a country that has perpetually recorded failures in the area of justice, then what next should be done to remedy the situation?

The general and unanimous feeling is that Nigeria needs a new approach in order to rescue her political society from the many cases of injustice and inequality. The problem however remains: what kind of method or which approach should be appropriate for such a rescue. Many different opinions and recommendations exist yet they address the outcome of the problems instead of seeking a holistic and total healing from the roots. Whichever approach is taken, this must be from within and must focus on remoulding as well as reforming the citizens for a better, just and equal society. The situation begs for effective ideas and policies ad rem and peculiar to the Nigerian society to enable it set aside those obstacles obfuscating the running of justice. The reason for this stems from the fact that ideas are so powerful and could bring an unimaginable change to every institution, society or epoch. To achieve this, things must not be done as usual and there is need for the citizens to stand behind a good politico-philosophical order so as to overcome the problems of injustice.

However, ideas nonetheless require certain mediums for its formation, quality, efficacy and efficiency. It is on this stance that philosophy and education will be identified as the bedrock and foundation of ideas. But before looking up to philosophy and education as the possible way forward, it will be of vital importance to enunciate their roles, values and relevance in human society and see if they could actually serve or fit into the desired plan. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the two basic ingredients which not only shape the human person, but also influence, improve and lead to the creation of powerful ideas in human society.

4.1 The meaning and power of ideas

The word ‘idea’ could lead to so many questions regarding its definition, meaning and relevance. Regardless of its nuances, ideas are and form part and parcel of human society. From time immemorial, ideas have played a major role in shaping what we have today as a modern human society. It may not be wrong to opine that ideas shape the world we live in and influence our perception of it. No society has existed without aligning itself to a particular idea or attuning itself to the thinking and ideas of some people. In some times, ideas brought the world indescribable progress, but at other times it turned out catastrophic. The negative aspect notwithstanding, ideas have led to massive human development, determination and practice of justice as well human rights, technological advancement, and a deeper value for human life.

Ideas could be said to be “casual beliefs. First, as beliefs, ideas are products of cognition. They are produced in our minds and are connected to the material world only via our interpretations of our surroundings. Second, as casual beliefs, ideas posit connections between things and between people in the world. Finally, casual beliefs, or ideas, provide guides for action. Ideas help us to think about ways to address problems and challenges that we face and therefore are the cause of our actions.”⁴⁹⁵ Also, “‘ideas’ are defined as normative or causal beliefs held by individuals or adopted by institutions that influence their attitudes and actions. Normative ideas are broad, general beliefs about what the world should look like; causal ideas are more operational motives about what strategy will have a desired result or what tactics will achieve a particular strategy.”⁴⁹⁶ Ideas shape how we understand human society and the things around us.

Ideas can be descriptive or normative. By descriptive ideas, we mean ideas that focus on the single effort of answering questions like ‘why and what is’. Ideas are nevertheless normative when they deal with ideals and values in society by attempting to answer questions like ‘what is best and what should be or not be’. “Ideas are independent and prior to experience. Even though someone does not experience love, hate, happiness, equality and so on, he at least has ideas. The ideas are the manifestation of moral laws.”⁴⁹⁷ One could also say that

⁴⁹⁵ Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, eds., “Introduction: Ideas and Politics,” in *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-4.

⁴⁹⁶ Emerij Louis, Richard Jolly, and Thomas G. Weiss, ‘Economic and Social Thinking at the UN in Historical Perspective,’ in *Development and Change*, Vol. 36, issue 2 (2005), 214.

⁴⁹⁷ Prof Alfred M. Wierzbicki, *Unpublished Lecture Note on the History and Problems of Ethics*, given on 04.12.2014 at the Pope John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

ideas serve both instrumental and aspirational purposes. By inspirational, ideas help in achieving a desired end or in advancing a cause. On the other hand, aspirational ideas deal with ultimate goals to which people aspire in society.⁴⁹⁸

Amongst all living creatures, mankind is gifted with higher faculties. This thinking faculty in man makes him superior to other animals and places him on a pedestal where he can easily come up with innovative ideas. “Take away ideas and what follows from them, and man seems no better than the beasts of the field.”⁴⁹⁹ As beings capable of thinking with the mental faculty of imagination, it implies that we have the capability to originate ideas and imagine things beyond our natural environment. Through ideas, we create and recreate our environment as well as human society. This is why people of ideas are very much respected and well paid in society. The thinking faculty does not only imagine things but conceives ideas that can be translated into reality for the good of mankind. In this sense, we can certainly hold that ideas function as tools with which we search for material to solve problems in society as well as the positive new arrangements of things that we see in our society together with the level of transformation in existence. Ideas then are always in search of inventions, remove contradictions, analyse and open avenues to discourses, solve irregularities and incompatibilities. They help us to deliberate on propositions and “by analysing the truth of propositions and the relations that unite them, one can define a field of logical non-contradiction: one will then discover a systematicity; one will rise from the visible body of sentences to that pure, ideal architecture that the ambiguities of grammar and the overloading of words with meanings have probably concealed as much as expressed.”⁵⁰⁰ Ideas so to speak are the most marvellous, incomprehensible and inconceivable ingredients of human society. Referring to Plato on the meaning of ideas, David Melling wrote “they are eternal, unchangeable, immaterial, intelligible (reality); they are the true objects of knowledge, the ultimate source of reality, attributes, and value of all sensible things.”⁵⁰¹ Ideas have creative and unadulterated powers, they are functional as well as re-creative. They have powers to set mankind and the universe on a high pedigree. Similarly, “by giving definition to our values and preferences, ideas provide us with interpretive frameworks that

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Stephen L. Schechter, Thomas S. Vontz, *Exploring Political Ideas: Concepts that Shape our World*, with contributions by Margaret Stimmann Branson, (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2010), 5-6.

⁴⁹⁹ John Dewey: *Dictionary of Education*, ed., Ralph B. Winn (Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1959), 59.

⁵⁰⁰ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 167.

⁵⁰¹ David Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 114. (Words in bracket mine).

make us see some facts as important and others as less so.”⁵⁰² Without ideas, societies remain stagnant and fail to progress.

Ideas are the abstractions that help people make sense of the world around them. When people use ideas to think and make sense of the world, they conceptualise their experiences and thoughts. Just as people use ideas to organise their thinking about the physical world, people use political ideas to make sense of their political world. Ideas not only help to describe and explain the world; they also contain norms or values that help people to form judgements. In this way, ideas serve as a guide to help people distinguish what is good or bad.⁵⁰³

Ideas change a lot of things in the world and everyone has got this power of ideas innate in him or her. However, “ideas are not genuine ideas unless they are tools with which to search for material to solve a problem.”⁵⁰⁴ Ideas deal with the invisible part of our personalities. By keeping our ideas alive and through the proper use of our ideas, society becomes so phenomenal and reflects the age of the ideas or people living in it. “Ideas, like the air we breathe, are omnipresent. And they are to the mind what light is to the eyes. Great ideas inspire, instruct, guide, and lead us. They are treasures that enrich our lives. They provide different viewpoints, a basis of comparison, and clarity of vision.”⁵⁰⁵ It is for this reason that many people have maintained that ideas rule the world. “There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come.”⁵⁰⁶ In the same vein, the existence and succession of the world has been based on ideas of different epochs.

Just as Democritus in his own time declared that everything was in a state of flux, one can say without fear of contradiction that ideas are constantly in a state of flux; flux in the sense that new ideas spring up with new innovations while the old ones are deliberated upon, subjected to scrutiny with the status quo and sometimes obliterated when found untrue. Thus, the world in which we live and everything around us can be seen as products, expressions and collections of ideas. According to Bob Proctor, everything around us is an expression of an idea, it was all nothing but an idea in a person’s mind at one time. The many technological advancements of today, the many materials and human developments,

⁵⁰² Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, “Introduction: Ideas and Politics,” 3.

⁵⁰³ Stephen L. Schechter, Thomas S. Vontz, *Exploring Political Ideas*. 5.

⁵⁰⁴ John Dewey, *Dictionary of Education*, ed., Ralph B Winn, 59.

⁵⁰⁵ Chuck Gallozzi, “The Power of Ideas,” Accessed on 15/01/2019. <https://trans4mind.com/counterpoint/index-creativity-career/gallozzi12.shtml>.

⁵⁰⁶ Antony Jay, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 13.

the sophisticated equipment, ultra-scientific incursions, and supersonic machines, all that we have today was at some point in time nothing but an idea in a person's mind.⁵⁰⁷

Further, ideas can inspire people into leading good lives, shape religious, social as well as the political behaviour of people. They also provide quality avenues for explaining political and ethical concepts. They also help to direct scientific research and discussions in contemporary society and how to care for the future. Based on this, one can say that ideas lay foundations for various human institutions. Through ideas we can define policies, shape public philosophies and proffer solutions to problems; it helps us to move from why to how. It also dictates the pace of development in society. It may not be so untrue to say that the level of development is synonymous and proportional to the level of ideas in a particular society.

Ideas are not just only powerful but also organise our thinking. It was for this reason that the German Poet Heinrich Heine warned the French never to underestimate the viable power of ideas as philosophical concepts conceived and developed in the quietness of a professor's study could destroy a built civilization.⁵⁰⁸ The ideas of people like Socrates whom the Athenians took for granted, the political sagacity of Plato who was neglected by the Greek Oligarchs of his time, the ethical and moral ingenuity of Aristotle, the socialistic actions of Karl Max and Engels/Lenin, the scientific equipoise of Galileo, Copernicus and Newton as against the dogmatic Christian faith of their century, the intellectual gathering of the members of the Frankfurter Schüler, the impact of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and so many other epochal ideas could explain this point better. Summarily put, take ideas away and human society would remain primitive, development stagnant and the world would reverse into a chaotic shambles. Ideas are so powerful that any age without ideas lives to show nothing different.

4.1.1 History of the power of ideas

The history of ideas precedes man himself. Society and things around it did not emerge from nowhere. It has gone through different epochs and historical times. Therefore, our society

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Proctor Gallagher Institute, 'The Power of An Idea', Published on Jun 9, 2016. Accessed 12.2.2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1ySUDiS5GA>.

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy, (London: Pimlico2001), 15-20.

cannot but continue to appreciate those philosophical thoughts and scientific ideas that shaped the world greatly.

The history of ideas, then, is the discipline of beginnings and ends, the description of obscure continuities and returns, the reconstitution of developments in the linear form of history. Genesis, continuity, totalization: these are the great themes of the history of ideas, and that by which it is attached to a certain, now traditional, form of historical analysis.⁵⁰⁹

The history of ideas reminds us of the past, the present and cuts across all disciplines and involves a whole interplay of exchanges and intermediaries. By way of its versatility, it shows how scientific knowledge is diffused, gives rise to some philosophical concepts, and gives literary work its form.⁵¹⁰

The ancient Greek thinkers ushered humanity into a period of rational thinking through their vibrant ideas born out of wonder and curiosity. They initiated the ultimate question about the world which has not been completely answered to date. The consideration, ‘why are there things rather than nothing’ occupied their minds. Their efforts to explain the universe and all in it led to the study of astronomy and other related studies about the universe. They initiated the yearning for man to know his immediate environment and all that the world is made up of. This idea has continued to inspire the modern astronomers and scientists as they continue to study planets in and outside of the solar system. Their ideas also inspired man to think about cognitive behaviour; cognitive behaviour therapy for social anxiety, depression and traumatic experiences and how to overcome them. Their ideas encouraged cognitive therapists and psychologists who use rational dialogue to diagnose and learn how to control the prison cell as well as how humans can react to things.

Socrates the father of ancient thinkers taught humanity not just to accept the dictates of our inner voices but to know how to engage it in a rational dialogue by asking ourselves questions. Man should continuously engage in rational dialogue, and get to think about unexamined beliefs, values and (philosophical) life. He and many other ancient Greek thinkers wrote beautifully and answered those questions about what a good and moral life could mean or be or is. Even though they differed in their individual answers, they instituted a helpful discourse about the meaning of life. Through their ideas, society developed serious principles about ethics and moral behaviour, where people were only motivated by the

⁵⁰⁹ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 154.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 154.

pursuit of the good life, acquiring virtues, harmonious living and above all, giving justice a major position in their time.

We could point to the thinkers of the enlightenment period who through their ideas left an immense impact on the world. It was a period when a new spirit began to stir within the ambience of culture. Their ideas led to renaissance, reformation and the fast rise of modern science. Theirs were ideas that questioned the beliefs of the medieval era and led to a radical rethinking of the existing religious institutions and authorities. Their ideas also helped to sweep away the past and proceed to rebuild the edifice of human knowledge on a new and solid foundation. The French Revolution was a fruit of the enlightenment thought patterns. “Enlightenment ideas, coupled with the struggle and success of the English colonists in North America to obtain their independence from Great Britain, helped accelerate the French Revolution.”⁵¹¹ This led to a massive change in France.

That the French Revolution was caused by ‘philosophy’ was affirmed by Lichtenberg and by many other German, Italian, Dutch, and French commentators in 1789 and during the 1790s. The new revolutionary consciousness generated a powerful revulsion against ‘aristocracy’, traditional ideas, and ecclesiastical authority and also ‘enlightened despotism’ and forms of absolutism.⁵¹²

Not limited only to the practical and empirical problems, this era embarked on a hectic task of responding and answering philosophical questions which defy well-attested, general accepted methods of arriving at a solution. This really explains why Michel Foucault stated that the history of ideas intersects all frontiers of existing fields of learning, in order to attend to them from the outside, so as to reinterpret them correctly. Instead of a marginal domain, it subjects issues to analyses and clearer perspectives. It extends in no small measure into the historical fields of science, literature, and philosophy and describes every kind of knowledge that has contributed to empirical, unreflective basis for successive formalizations. It also follows concepts or beliefs to their genesis and gives birth to systems and œuvres.⁵¹³

The philosophers of the enlightenment tried to treat philosophical questions as being on the same level with other questions and hitherto similar methods or techniques employed in

⁵¹¹ Core Knowledge Foundation, *The Enlightenment, The French Revolution and Romanticism* (2018), 95.

⁵¹² Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 938.

⁵¹³ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 153. Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 938.

answering them. Their ideas gave birth to the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries which changed the way humanity looked at the world. We can feel the effects of Nicholas Copernicus's heliocentric theory⁵¹⁴ which not only shattered contemporary scientific thought and traditional teachings that were held true for hundreds of years but influenced the field of science tremendously. "The scientific revolution was largely an outcropping of the Renaissance and can be credited to humanist scholars who diverted their focus from theology to the human condition and the world at large."⁵¹⁵ It was at this time that people of great ideas like Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler revolutionised the study of astronomy.

The century's unwavering mathematical mind-set and physics transformed the human world with its material components as well as the nature of human knowledge. This century produced renowned people like Sir Isaac Newton, John Harrison, James Watt and a few others in which their achievements proved to be the beginning of a new system and how ideas could change society. This era made a shift from 'why' to 'how' and 'what'; questions were not only asked but efforts were made to give answers to certain questions about the material world which led to the evolution of science. It was a period of new science, and the attempt to give genuine answers to genuine philosophical questions gave birth to natural science.

In its most general form, it can be said that it continually describes – and in all the directions in which it operates – the transition from non-philosophy to philosophy, from non-scientificity to science, from non-literature to the œuvre itself. It is the analysis of silent births, or distant correspondences, of permanences that persist beneath apparent changes, of slow formations that profit from innumerable blind complicities, of those total figures that gradually come together and suddenly condense into the fine point of the work.⁵¹⁶

This eighteenth century ushered mankind into unprecedented and significant progress in science, commerce, and trade; and fuelled the American and French Revolutions. It led to a great deal of success and cancelled some old age beliefs. The ideas of the 18th century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau could be seen as the forerunner to the practice of totalitarianism in the 20th century. His advocacy of a single general will to guide the people could be seen as the starting point of a philosophical thought that led to totalitarianism and for emerging totalitarian systems like Stalinism Russia and Nazism Germany. He may not

⁵¹⁴ Copernicus lived around 1473–1543 and suggested that the sun and not the earth was the centre of the universe.

⁵¹⁵ Core Knowledge Foundation, *The Enlightenment, The French Revolution and Romanticism*, 5.

⁵¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 154.

have proposed the modern totalitarian government but his idea led to the political foundation on which these people built their ideologies.

The men of this epoch dwarfed and turned the efforts of their predecessors into a state of irrelevance and unimportance. Describing this scenario, Isaiah Berlin maintained that “the application of mathematical techniques- and language- to the measurable properties of what the senses revealed became the sole true method of discovery and of exposition.”⁵¹⁷ This also influenced the intellectual thoughts of people like Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz and so many others who constructed their reasoning in purely mathematical ways and held that things should be explained in quasi mathematical terms. Most of them like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu and others gave the political world a new outlook and most of their ideas which advocated the rights of the individual led modern democracy and influenced the constitutions of most countries today.

A detailed study of the abolitionist movement falls outside the scope of this book, although it is necessary to mention that the leaders of the movement were closely associated with the new ideas of “freedom and equality,” which had gained increasing popularity throughout the United States and Western Europe during the Industrial Revolution. The abolitionists waged a relentless campaign against the slave trade and its adverse moral and economic impact on the heathens of the “Dark Continent.”⁵¹⁸

The 19th century brought a new flare of approach to the history of ideas. It was no longer based on natural science and observations, nor rationalism and empiricism but a breakaway from the status quo into something new. With proponents like Kant and a few others, intellectual activities were not to be limited to seek answers to empirical questions and had no single method of solution by empirical investigation, nor deductive reasoning or a priori axioms from the sphere of rationalism but should rather analyse concepts and categories. Kant for instance opined that philosophical inquiries defied one single method. There was an attempt to distinctly explain that the success of science in the materialistic society could not be applied to the science of the mind in order to be successful.

To them, the very foundation of Western modernity is the result of all that is good in the thought of those seemingly desperate thinkers who emerged from the medieval shadows and sought to train the light of human reason on the world. Never, say the friends of Enlightenment, has a body of thought done more to ameliorate the pain,

⁵¹⁷ Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 39.

⁵¹⁸ John N. Oriji, *Political Organization in Nigeria since the Late Stone Age. A History of the Igbo People*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 139.

insecurity, inconvenience, and suffering of so many at every level of society over such a long period.⁵¹⁹

Despite its flaws, one cannot deny the fact that the ideas of this age led society into an unprecedented change in many facets of life - positive and negative. Worthy of mention is the fact that the idea of this period helped inspire American leaders to declare independence and also the Enlightenment ideas reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.⁵²⁰ Gary L. McDowell and Johnathan O'Neill, are of the view that irrespective of whatever kind of criticism or alternatives one might put up with regard to the development of the American Republic, "the fact is that American greatness-indeed its exceptionalism-among the nations of the world from the time of the founding to our own day stems from, and is guided by, those principles that shine still from the dawn of modernity. Such is the power of those ideas that we think of simply as 'the Enlightenment'."⁵²¹ The intellectual cum scientific revolution that started from ancient Greek down to the enlightenment era till late 19th century has blossomed into full technological advancement and sophisticated machines.

The 20th and 21st centuries which could be regarded as the age of technology, age of analysis and age of information cannot be left out in the history of ideas. The ideas (scientific in outlook) established between 17-19th centuries took a significant turn in the subsequent and following periods to date. Science and technology as products of people's ideas have come to determine the way we lead our lives. The ideas which turned the scientific knowledge into modern electronics and gadgets have ended up turning the world into a global village. On a daily basis, scientists and entrepreneurs are in search of new ideas alone and how to translate the ideas into economic power.

In no little way, the history of ideas shows how problems, notions, and themes that emanated from the philosophical field were transformed to dominate scientific or political discourses. Its scope extends to institutions, behavioural or social customs, styles, techniques, and unrecorded needs and practices of any society. Nonetheless, it strives as much as possible to renew the most elaborate forms of discussions in all disciplines and parts of the societal life, in the midst of the growth and development that witnessed their birth.⁵²² These invaluable ideas help a lot and show that people should never neglect intellectual historical matters as

⁵¹⁹ Gary L. McDowell and Johnathan O'Neill, eds., "Introduction", in *America and Enlightenment Constitutionalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 1.

⁵²⁰ Core Knowledge Foundation, *The Enlightenment, The French Revolution and Romanticism*, 55.

⁵²¹ Gary L. McDowell and Johnathan O'Neil, "Introduction," 8.

⁵²² Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 154.

they help to keep us on our feet. It is necessary to note that the history of ideas does not subject all fields to the same analysis. Rather it unfolds the history of inventions, social changes, scientific transformations, and also portrays how truth freed itself from error, how consciousness freed itself from its successive slumbers, how new forms rose up in turn to produce the visible features that we know today; as well as the continuous line of an evolution the world has experienced.⁵²³ The history of ideas also remind us of our heroes past who never settled for the standard of their times but went ahead to chisel out the best via their thoughts. Through the history of ideas, we venture, extract and explore the world of ideas of wise men and women over the periods of times to see their importance and relevance to our society.

4.1.2 Ideas and Karl Marx's Material Dialectics

The uncountable influences and effects of ideas have been already discussed. However, some individuals have for certain reasons or rational differences rejected its enormous importance or conceived it differently. One of those who turned down the primacy given to ideas was the famous German philosopher Karl Marx. Karl Marx disregarded or watered down the power of ideas in human society. He was more interested in material dialectics than the rigorous and critical steps of ideas. However, "Marx's anti-idealism, or materialism, was not intended to deny the existence and /or casual efficacy of ideas (...), but the autonomy and/or explanatory primacy attributed to them."⁵²⁴ Supporting this claim, G. A Cohen also reminded us that Marx and Lenin were not themselves against the theory of ideas but only warned against a certain misuse of theory.⁵²⁵

Karl Marx was not so much interested in Philosophy as a specific field of study rather in formulating and establishing laws that would govern men and their behaviour in order to transform their lives as well as bring some economic balance in modern society. Explaining this further, Isaiah Berlin wrote

One of the principal reasons for Marx's lack of interest in Philosophy as a specific field of study was doubtless his belief ... that ideas could not be profitably studied in isolation, since they were an inseparable part of the activity of individuals and groups, and were literally unintelligible unless seen as an aspect of the total activity of men.

⁵²³ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 157.

⁵²⁴ Roy Bhaskar, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 218.

⁵²⁵ G. A Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, expanded ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), ix.

Theory must not be viewed as something distinct from practice. Such a tendency to ‘abstraction’ is itself a symptom of a particular delusion, socially and historically conditioned, which Marx undertook to explain and dispel.⁵²⁶

Although Karl Marx in his intellectual project conceived philosophy as an element of his general theory of man, and refused to accept the notion that ideas are so powerful in the human society as envisaged. Instead he believed that ideas are nothing but theories and can only be felt in actions or practice. Marx believed that man’s being is not determined by his consciousness but that the social being of man determines his consciousness. Implicitly, actions and theories should not be seen as separate or distinct but correlated. It is only in men’s actions, activities, beliefs and in the unreflective behaviour of men that opinions and concepts which form ideas can be better understood. “Marx views his own social thought as involving some definite ideas about the nature of ultimate reality, the source of human knowledge and other matters which philosophers would place under the rubric of ‘metaphysics and epistemology.’”⁵²⁷ Marx in this sense regarded his thought as a vehicle of the proletarian movement, and believed that a distinctively ‘materialist’ world outlook harmonized with the historical practice of the proletariat would make their emancipation possible.⁵²⁸

Owing to the above view, Karl Marx rather gave materialism a major place of priority in changing human society other than ideas. His interest in dialectical materialism - ‘Weltanschauung’-was inspired by his collaborator Engels.⁵²⁹ In his materialism or material dialectics, Karl Marx treated the material world as the ultimate source of reality while kicking against idealism and mysticism. “For Marx, the opposite (of Hegel’s idealism) is the case in that the notion of the idea is nothing but the material world reflected in the minds of the people and translated into forms of thought. Marx again shows how Hegel’s idealism leads him to posit incorrectly the process of thinking as the creator of the real world.”⁵³⁰

⁵²⁶ Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 115-116.

⁵²⁷ Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 165.

⁵²⁸ Cf. Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx*, , 2nd ed, 165.

⁵²⁹ Though Marx’s Weltanschauung is widely called materialistic, Marx himself never dealt with materialism systematically. “Much of what is known as Marxist materialism was written not by Marx but Engels, in most cases after Marx’s own death. Students sometimes forget that Marx himself never used the terms ‘historical materialism’ or ‘dialectical materialism’ for his systemic approach.” Cf. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Work of Karl Marx* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968, Reprinted 1970), 65.

⁵³⁰ Ian Fraser and Lawrence Wilde, *Marx Dictionary* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 117. (Words in bracket mine).

Marx was influenced by Hegel’s Idealism and believed this led him into error, which made him see the process of thinking as the true creator of the real world. Idealism however is the philosophical doctrine that conceives ideas and perception as the ultimate source of reality. In Marx’s critique of Hegel’s Philosophy, he lampooned him for beginning his philosophical inquiries with ideas instead of subjects. He criticised him for

My dialectical method which is based on that of Hegel is not only different, but its direct opposite. For Hegel, the thought-process, which he even uses under the name of Idea in an independent subject, is the Demiurge of its realisation, which only represents the external appearance. For me, it is vice versa because the ideal is nothing more than the material that has been implemented and translated in the human head. Marx takes the position of a materialist by reversing the foundation of the relationship between idea and reality.⁵³¹

For Marx, our concern should be to relate theory and practice; and then see human beings not as beings created and shaped by ideas but as active participants in the creation and development of the material world. Ideas do not create the world but humans do through their material desire and the quest to actualise their yearnings inspire them into creating ideas. An idea is nothing but the handmaid of man's quest to satisfy his materialistic desires. He therefore described ideas as some sort of an enterprise below the powerful status of materialism. He rather strongly extolled the influence of having strong material institutions in human society than the isolated concept of ideas. Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox believe the reason for this beleaguered status of ideas as something lower than material interest (as motives for political and social action) and the denigration of the study of ideas in favour of these material interests or institution could be traced to two important trends in the field of social sciences. The first reason was the rise of behaviourism, which ridiculed the interpretative methods of inquiry for being empirically less rigorous than deductive reasoning. The second reason was the reawakening of neo-Marxist modes of inquiry that, though more receptive to interpretive methods, but sharply dismissed any nonmaterialist explanations given to human action.⁵³²

Marx conceived the lack of economic or material balance as the consequence of class difference between the capitalists and common people. Accordingly, conflicts exist as a result of strife thanks to the means of production and the existence of classes in human society necessitates the existence of societal conflicts. This class distinction between the

positing ideas as the driving force behind everything in human society instead of human persons living in the society creating these ideas to satisfy their desires and material aspirations. Hegel's dialectics was on in Idealism and mysticism, and for Marx nothing but the material conditions of human existence and her desire.

⁵³¹ Johannes Rohbeck, *Grundwissen Philosophie Marx* (Leipzig: Reclam Verlag, 2006), 109. (Original words of Karl Marx, translation mine).

„Meine dialektische Methode ist der Grundlage nach von der Hegelschen nicht nur verschieden, sondern ihr direktes Gegenteil. Für Hegel ist der Denkproceß, den er sogar unter dem Namen Idee in ein selbständiges Subjekt verwandelt, der Demiurg des Wirklichen, das nur seine äußere Erscheinung bildet. Bei mir ist umgekehrt das Ideelle nichts anderes als das im Menschenkopf umgesetzte und übersetzte Materielle. Marx nimmt die Position eines Materialisten ein, indem er das Fundierungsverhältnis von Idee und Wirklichkeit umkehrt.“

⁵³² Cf. Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, "Introduction: Ideas and Politics," in *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, 6.

Bourgeois or capitalists (those who own the means of production) and worker or Hoi poloi-proletariats- (those who do not have or sell their labour), relate in such a way that there must exist necessarily conflict; a relationship that must result in an inherent conflict between them. “The capitalist exploits the worker through his ownership of the means of production but does not extend his domination to the process of production. By virtue of his ownership of capital, the capitalist can appropriate part of what the worker has produced. Capital is now more than a claim on surplus; it has become a tangible force that drains the worker of all energy and cripples his talent.”⁵³³ So the best possible means of emancipation left for the working class is to revolt against the capitalist who control the means of production. “Marx declared that it was the working class, or the proletariat, who in the course of winning their own emancipation would free all humanity by abolishing private property, the basis of all class oppression.”⁵³⁴

For the purpose of his mission, Marx conceived man as not possessing any immaterial substance or soul. Rather, man is more of an object in nature comprising three dimensional characteristics of flesh, blood and bone. Man as a different being from other objects in nature has the capacity to create and provide for his basic needs in the society. The intellectual and moral capacity of man are responsible for his technological advancement in the world. The ability to create new tools aimed at fulfilling basic needs of man placed him in a higher position than other objects. Hence, it is in the activities of men to advance materially that ideas are created.

Men’s ideas were not born in isolation from the rest of their activities: ideas were -and could not but be- weapons in the pursuit of the goals of men or social groups, exactly like other tools, or inventions or ways of behaviour,...Man-made technology determines ideas and forms of life, and not the other way about: needs determine ideas, not ideas needs.⁵³⁵

Be as it may, this quest to satisfy man’s need is unending and the desire for new needs initiated by the already existing progress leads to further discoveries and technological advancement. To that effect, people are made different in society by the level of work they do to satisfy these arrays of needs and not any fixed inner principles of their natures. What determines the understanding of social life is not isolated ideas but the forms of actions taken in the struggle to satisfy the basic wants and needs of the human society. He denied that

⁵³³ Jon Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 55.

⁵³⁴ Ian Fraser and Lawrence Wilde, *Marx Dictionary*, 5.

⁵³⁵ Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 117.

certain individuals or societies possess eternal ideas which could be unravelled by any member at any moment or circumstance. As Russel stated it:

The stages in the evolution of ideas have had almost the quality of Hegelian dialectic: doctrines have developed, by steps that each seem natural, into their opposites. But the developments have not been due solely to the inherent movement of ideas; they have been governed, throughout, by external circumstances and the reflection of these circumstances in human emotions.⁵³⁶

Instead, men are propelled intellectually and morally by their ultimate desire to meet up with their challenging needs. Therefore, historical developments are as a result of those challenges initiated by the material needs of man and the quest to satisfy these needs through technological inventions. “As I am sure Marx did, that the fundamental process in history is the material one of the growth of human productive power. Man is an essentially creative being, most at home with himself when he is developing and exercising his talents and powers.”⁵³⁷ This development nevertheless takes place in society and not the mental mind of man. Therefore, Marx rejected any kind of eternal truth which the capitalists claimed to have and saw the mention of timeless truth as mere absurdity. Instead, he concluded that “Ideas are weapons which the master class generate and uses in the course of its struggle for power. The function of such ideas, in virtue of their very origin, must always begin by militating in favour of the dominant class. Simply said, Karl Marx and other materialists dismissed ideas ‘as a mere smokescreen’ that powerful actors use to mask their interests.”⁵³⁸ Explaining further, Isaiah Berlin went on to say that for Marx, the proletariat who accept those ideas of the master class and the very institutions in which they are embodied uncritically accept something which works against their own interests and in favour of that of the Bourgeois. Unfortunately and unaware of this plan by the master class, the proletariat accept the so called ideas as if they are timeless truths that remain eternally valid. This misunderstanding would make them welcome the products of changing human interests which are the only response to the ever changing human needs, the quest for political power, technological innovations and human skills as ordained or eternal truths valid for men of all times, places and epochs. Rejecting the concept of eternal ideas as formulated by the master

⁵³⁶ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 618.

⁵³⁷ G. A Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A Defence*, 342-345.

Historical materialism, Cf. G. A Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, 364 -368.

⁵³⁸ Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, “Introduction: Ideas and Politics,” 23.

class, Marx held that everything is valid only in its own place and time, and intelligible only in terms of the social structure which requires it.⁵³⁹

Irrespective of criticisms against Karl Marx's material dialectics,⁵⁴⁰ one cannot but appreciate his intellectual ingenuity. His analysis could have been much needed then because the economic resources in his time were scarce, unequally distributed, and therefore the competition among the members always bred conflict. Marx so to speak was attacking the contextual problem of his time and in the process dethroned the power of ideas which he saw as the object of subjugation in the hands of the ruling class. Fortunately, Marx himself never realised that he was instead leaving behind a powerful idea that would influence and turn a lot of things in many parts of the world. He never realised that he was only making a statement on how powerful ideas could be as his own idea inspired many political leaders or societies into socialism or communism. Confirming this stand, Ian Fraser and Lawrence Wilde opined that his 'Communist Manifesto' of 1848, an "incendiary text, a summary of the modern class struggle and a guide to the revolutionary creation of a class society, coincided with the outbreak of democratic revolutions, first in France and then in other European states."⁵⁴¹ His was an idea that never came from the quest for material desire but to change the world of his time. "I have criticized Marx's ideal both for being too materialist and for requiring an impossibly total development of the individual. But I do think, even if I cannot show, that the materialism encourages the wish to draw forth everything in the individual."⁵⁴² Similarly, material dialectics failed to realise that what gives meaning to life is not materially explainable.⁵⁴³

Both his dialectical materialism and the power of the idea have the potential for changing the world at its centre. Despite his claim, one can say that material dialectics of Marx nevertheless requires theory or idea as a basis for its forecast and execution in human society. Despite his critique against ideas, Marx accepted the fact that the desires, historical developments and material needs of men needed ideas or intellectual concept to actualise them. Ideas are like the nucleus of a living organism (world) which contains the genetic

⁵³⁹ Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 121.

⁵⁴⁰ "Dialectical materialism has been widely thought of as the philosophy of Marxism, in contrast and relation to Marxist science, distinguished as historical materialism. The term was probably first used by Plekhanov in 1891." Cf. Tom Bottomore, ed., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 120.

⁵⁴¹ Ian Fraser and Lawrence Wilde, *Marx Dictionary*, 7.

⁵⁴² G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, 352.

⁵⁴³ Cf. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, 355.

material that sustains, energises and gives it life and around which its activities revolve. Ideas are but the central and most important part of the universe or the world, forming the basis for its activity and growth. What he was trying to negate he ended up supporting with his Marxist ideology which became almost a way of life. The end point is that while material dialectics could initiate actions for social change, ideas are definitely required to shape and realise it. Heiner Hastedt has explained the whole issue better by stating that ideas are roughly embedded in real history and might be able to lead to progress as well as steer development.

4.2 Ideas and the relationship with philosophy

Over the years, many people consider philosophy as an abstract inquiry that has nothing relevant to offer in the sphere of practical life. “A number of strange ideas about philosophy float around our culture. Many people think of philosophy as an optional enterprise-just a detached, erudite hobby for the intellectually elite or the socially disabled. For example, someone once defined the philosopher as a person who describes the impossible and proves the obvious.”⁵⁴⁴ For most people, philosophy is simply an intellectualistic theory whereby philosophers are seen as people who sit with their heads supported by their hands pondering over unrealistic issues and also engaging in utopic or abstract speculations. For others, philosophers are thought of as people meditating alone upon a mountain top.⁵⁴⁵ While for others philosophy is synonymous with mysticism, occultism and spiritualism- in the sense that the mention of the word ‘philosophy’ creates some kind of fear in the mind of the ordinary man. Often, philosophers or their adherents are also considered as atheists and people who lead not just a secluded style of life, but aloof and confused members of human society. Philosophy for some others is nothing but a play of verbosity and coinage of meaningless words which has nothing to do with scientific reality or contribution to the body of knowledge. Therefore, these people see it as having no role to play, not only in practical life, but also in cultural, social and societal dealings, let alone providing useful ideas. On some occasions, philosophers are considered dreamers and people who wonder in imaginative and unrealistic worlds, always building unintelligible skyscrapers in the air. For some, philosophy is an unprofitable course, a very difficult, abstract and impracticable subject and project. Consequently, philosophy has no cash value in a materialistic world in

⁵⁴⁴ William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (Belmont USA: Wadsworth Group, 2002), xxii.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. W. H. Burston, *James Mill on Philosophy and Education* (London: Athlone Press, 1973), 97.

which one is weighed by the size of his pocket or level of affluence. Hence philosophy for them is nothing but a discipline far removed from the affairs of everyday life and the usual interests of the common man.

Irrespective of these erroneous speculations, philosophy has come to take a central stage in our society - educational pursuits and political discussions. From the foregoing, we could see that most of the periods or individuals mentioned in the history of ideas (which began with the patriotic and unassuming Ionians and centuries after them) were able to come up with ideas that influenced the world positively thanks to philosophical backgrounds or thoughts. Hitherto, one could make the bold claim that nothing but “philosophy provides ideas for people to chew on – ideas that don’t get used up because they are perennially contestable.”⁵⁴⁶ While philosophy provides ideas for the people to chew on, ideas on the other hand keeps philosophical culture and activities active and alive. It engages the philosophical community and provides topics for deliberations and philosophizing.

Simply said, doing philosophy is an engagement with the ideas. If ideas are so important and are needed to move society forward, then the tool of philosophy is inevitably required to usher in those ideas. Philosophy could be said to be a laboratory of ideas- a laboratory where ideas are conceived, hatched, considered, refined and doled out for consumption by human society. Philosophy provides the background for ideas. It spurs people into new ways of thinking and coming up with ideas at different stages of life. Philosophy does not give room for complacency or dormancy, neither does it confine adherents to the normalcy of parochialism nor stick to the materialistic view about life as Karl Marx believed, rather philosophy initiates the hunger and desire for man to know, to discover and harness his environment. Philosophy helps to produce ideas with which people recreate and reshape human society. Whoever is interested in how current ideas change the world, must give philosophy an attention.

4.3 The value of philosophy

Philosophy as a discipline, has both intrinsic and as well as extrinsic values. By intrinsic values, we mean those values that deals with the human person as a rational and mental entity. The extrinsic values are those values that are not intrinsic. The intrinsic function of

⁵⁴⁶ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy* (Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises, 1995), 122.

philosophy helps in the philosophical understanding and enlightenment for the recipients in order to develop responsible, appropriate and discipline methods of philosophical inquiries. It has much to do with judgements about moral justice and at the same time sharpens the human mind to imbibe in a different mode of thinking: not only asking ‘why’ but concerning itself with the ‘how’ of a given issue. Since the object of philosophy is reason and the subject centres on the human person, philosophy as a discipline enriches and gives depth to the person’s being.

Yearly, UNESCO⁵⁴⁷ celebrates world philosophy day. The essence of the exercise is to remind humanity of the very many advantages as well as inevitable unique central role of philosophy as a uniquely human enterprise. It shows that philosophy is not only indispensable in human society but the master of all disciplines, properly said, *magistra scientiarum*. In fact, “Philosophy is a unique discipline in that its theories have more enduring value than those of any other field. There is still much to be learned from positions that are centuries old.”⁵⁴⁸

History tells us that philosophical theories in areas like socio-political, economics, ethics, and various disciplines of life have also promoted individual moral behaviour; facilitated better systems of governments that have defended the discussions on justice, freedom and human rights, peace and security, economic advancement and people’s wellbeing. In no small measures has philosophy helped in putting forward theories and practical guidelines that have contributed in organizing human society in the best possible way that can aid its members to realise their potentials. One may boldly say that save philosophers and their theories which offer practical guidance, human society would have remained stagnant and the human condition unbearable.⁵⁴⁹

Having defined philosophy and shown its indisputable value in the contemporary human and political society, the focus will be on the very many functions of philosophy. Philosophy could function as a tool for social change and practical life; for the formation and nurturing of the human mind, intellect as well as a balance to religious pluralism/differences; as an

⁵⁴⁷ UNESCO means the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

⁵⁴⁸ William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: a Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, 569.

⁵⁴⁹ Emmanuel Kelechi Iwuagwu, “The Need for a Contemporary Nigerian Philosophy to be taught at Every Level of Nigeria’s Educational Programme,” In *European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 12 (September 2016), 251.

important background basis to development, as an agent of moral development and tool for a just political society.

4.4 The role of philosophy in political society

4.4.1 As a tool for social change and practical life

This relevance of philosophy is very valuable in today's political issues. As Michael Walzer pointed out, "the prestige of political philosophy is very high these days. And it claims the attention of political leaders, bureaucrats, and judges, most especially judges, with a new and radical forcefulness."⁵⁵⁰ Philosophers do creative works, find meanings and answers to political problems. Joseph Omoregbe, opined that philosophy was one of the forces behind western civilization and that also shaped the structures of Western society.

Philosophy and philosophers set ideas and objectives in human society. They also explain what justice, democracy and social change should entail. Just like the seeds to be planted in the garden are nurtured in the nursery stage, the human mind is also nurtured by philosophy for social changes and practical lives in human society. Just as the Christian (Catholic Church in particular) idea of baptism opens the way for the reception of other sacraments, philosophy opens and prepares the mind for other disciplines and societal discourses. It nurtures and tinkers with the human person. It sets him on the path for a true cordial societal relationship, equal opportunities and rights. It enables the agents to see and approach each one as a rational entity that is capable of reasoning, reflecting and assessing the society or things around him critically and logically. It leads to respect for the members of the society and philosophical reflection can indeed provide moral and political guidance. The philosophical makes an imprint on people and human society. According to Bertrand Russell, in order to understand an age or a people or a nation, we must understand its philosophy because philosophy of a people influences and determines the circumstances of their lives.⁵⁵¹

Philosophy influences the attitude of men to life and brings about changes in the human societies. The philosophy of Socrates was certainly not pure abstraction that had nothing to do with the social and practical lives of men. On the contrary, his philosophy had such a

⁵⁵⁰ Michael Walzer, "Philosophy and Democracy, Reviewed work(s)," in *Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1981), 379. Accessed 24.08.2020. <https://www.pdfdrive.com/michael-walzer-philosophy-and-democracy-e22240542.html>.

⁵⁵¹ Cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 14.

practical effect on the lives of the Athenian youths that the authorities noticed it, accused the philosopher of having corrupted their youths, and had him put to death.⁵⁵² It will then be inconsiderate to dismiss philosophy as a pure abstract speculation with nothing to offer us in the social and practical realm. “Philosophy like science offers mankind the prospect of unmistakable progress in the solution of certain well-defined problems and such a progress leads to possibility of professional advancement.”⁵⁵³

Right from ancient times, philosophy has never failed to show its relevance. The philosophy of Socrates for instance brought a lot of changes in the lives of the Athenians such that the powers that be (then) accused him of spoiling and corrupting the youth. If philosophy has no effect as claimed, the question remains, why were the authorities afraid and condemned Socrates to death? Plato’s philosophical ingenuity was nevertheless not ineffective in his own time and ours today. His philosophy “influenced the lifestyle of people for several generations. His philosophy gave generations of men a definite worldview and a certain attitude towards life which resulted in the renunciation of material possessions and practice of asceticism.”⁵⁵⁴ Plato spoke so much about the real and unreal world, he distinguished between the world of forms and the ideal world so much so that the generation of his time longed for the attainment of this true world. Their reaction towards his teaching was a renunciation and rejection of material things as well as lifestyles which were shadows of the real world. “Whether or not philosophy is able to provide an account of the reality which lies behind the appearances of things, it may still have a role to play in offering an account of how things appear to us.”⁵⁵⁵ The material things of this world were seen in a different perspective and only as a pointer to the eternal real world.

The philosophies of such great men like Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Locke influenced their societies and that of modern man. Most western democracies are either shadows of or were modelled after the thoughts of these great men. Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s assertion that man (who) is born free but everywhere in chains and therefore requires freedom laid the foundation for the French revolution. It is also said by Russell that Locke’s philosophical theories are sternly embedded in the American constitution, and used to settle

⁵⁵² Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy: A General Introduction* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers, 1990), 192-193.

⁵⁵³ John Haldane, “American Philosophy and its Public Role”, in *Philosophy and its Public Role*, eds. William Aiken and John Haldane (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 13.

⁵⁵⁴ Joseph Omoregbe, *Ethics*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1993), 10.

⁵⁵⁵ Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An introduction*, 31.

disputes between President and Congress in America whenever one arises: “the country where Locke’s principle of division of powers has found its fullest application is the United States, where the President and Congress are wholly independent of each other, and the Supreme Court is independent of both.”⁵⁵⁶

The medieval philosophers also were not left out in these chains of influences. Most of them revolutionised theological modes of thinking through their philosophies. For instance, the Stoics and Manicheans who demonised and painted sex as an impure act influenced Christendom; and perhaps the existing theology of priestly celibacy (in the Catholic Church) could be traced to their teachings. The thoughts of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine of Hippo also exerted a lot of influences on the religious men and women of their time. Most of their philosophies inspired people to seek things beyond this world by living a more moral and virtuous life.

Karl Marx and Engels were also influential during their own time with their philosophies. Karl Marx attacked the social structure of his time and called for a destruction of class difference in society. Through it, he influenced the people of his time into fighting every form of social structure and also rewriting the modern spirit of the cordial relationship and respect for workers by their employers. Immanuel Kant had also an effect on his generation with his teaching on human dignity and moral behaviour. His philosophy which spoke vehemently against seeing man as a means to an end but rather as an end in itself could be said to be the basis of very many declarations by world organisations against the abuses on human persons. The philosopher and church man from Poland -Karol Wojtyła- also changed the mentality of his people towards rejecting the utopic promises of Communism for modern democracy. He also influenced society with his insistence on personalism⁵⁵⁷ which contributed to the re-appraisal of human dignity. The human person as he philosophized is an ‘Imago Dei’ and a rational person who performs an act, as such, he should be treated with every amount of dignity and also should be responsible for his moral actions. He revived the consciousness of responsibility in morality and ethics.

Apart from cultivating the intellect and enlightenment of the human mind, philosophy also plays a therapeutic role. “The philosopher’s task is therapeutic; not solving problems, but

⁵⁵⁶ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, 616.

⁵⁵⁷ Personalism has to do with the consideration and study about the human person with regard to his worth and value. It holds that the human person unlike animals has its own autonomy, irreducible values, and reality.

showing that what have been taken as problems are not problems after all.”⁵⁵⁸ This therapeutic role forms the extrinsic function of philosophy. The world is faced with difficulties on every facet of life. The area of philosophy is not left in this world of difficulties. Therefore, any individual person or a society “with serious philosophical difficulties in their or its fundamental assumptions or views suffers from an illness that limits their efforts to understand their world.”⁵⁵⁹ Philosophy does not only identify and expose these difficulties but clears them up from the human mind.

Philosophy, in its work to expose and clear such difficulties, is concerned with wisdom: philosophical wisdom, not moral wisdom or other common varieties that provide guidance for solving our ordinary daily problems, but wisdom about human powers and the structure of the world that guide us in our efforts to know and to cope with reality and to live the life that’s good.⁵⁶⁰

From all this, it is clear that we cannot dispel the influence of philosophy as a tool for social change and practical life. However “we must renounce the hope that philosophy can promise satisfaction to our mundane desires. What it can do, when it is purified of all practical taint, is to help us to understand the general aspects of the world and the local analysis of familiar but complex things”⁵⁶¹ It may not be too boastful to say that philosophy shapes the total structure of society, guides policies and practice, the moral behaviour of individuals as well as influences public life.

4.4.2 Formation and nurturing of the intellect and the human mind

One of the aims of philosophy irrespective of the system is to help in clarifying ideas and making concepts more intelligible, meaningful and clearer. It helps the individual to embark on a clearer way of thinking with a mind ready to probe and question things until truth is achieved and clarity attained. It also helps the human person to understand issues and topics better as well as critically discern and reflect on them. It is through this act of reflection thanks to philosophy, that the human mind is developed, trained and schooled to get at reality and see beyond the artificial or superficial world. By so doing, the human mind is able to transcend beyond the realm of superficiality and mundane appearances into the world of reality and ideas. “It is an arranging of the world and attuning it to the most human of man’s

⁵⁵⁸ Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction*, 24.

⁵⁵⁹ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 186.

⁵⁶⁰ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 186.

⁵⁶¹ Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction*, 16.

faculties- intelligence. Rendering the world intelligible- that is the greatest use of philosophy.”⁵⁶² It trains the human mind to seek and speak nothing but truth.

A second reason to do philosophy is to enhance our intellectual autonomy (independence). The critical thinking skills we develop by doing philosophy make us better reasoners on every issue, not just philosophical questions. By being better reasoners, we liberate ourselves in two ways. First, critical thinking enables us to think things through for ourselves rather than rely on other persons to think for us. Secondly, we increase our autonomy over ourselves when we learn to think logically and impartially about abstract and heartfelt questions.⁵⁶³

It might be necessary to recall that philosophy began out of wonder and through wonder, man initiates questions and these questions make him curious, of which the goal is simply to know. “It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too.”⁵⁶⁴ This shows how philosophy trains the human person to reflect on and think systematically about basic questions such as the origin and source of the world, the why and the how of things, the source of moral and evil deeds and so on. Philosophy as a discipline develops the intellectual capabilities of an adherent and makes him or her more critical and awakens nonetheless one’s rational consciousness. Commenting on the importance of philosophy, Sir Isaiah Berlin wrote “One of the intellectual phenomena which made the greatest impact on me was the universal search by philosophers for absolute certainty, for answers which could not be doubted, for total intellectual security.”⁵⁶⁵ Supporting this claim that philosophy is very valuable in nurturing the human mind and rational atmosphere of the human person, Theophilus Okere wrote:

Philosophy- here can be said to stand for the human effort to recapture, to imitate the truth and structure and beauty of nature and reality. Philosophy is an effort to rearrange the world more geometrico as Spinoza would teach, that is, logically and aesthetically to recreate the world, to impose a pattern on the chaos and tohuvoobu of life, of reality in the raw. It means humanizing our world, i.e. rendering it reasonable, chasing away impending chaos and tyranny of ignorance and of the absurd, the unreasonable, and the unthinkable.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶² Theophilus Okere, “Introduction Unesco World Philosophy Day,” In *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa, Unesco 2006 World Philosophy Day*, at Unizik, vol. 2 (Awka: Fab Educational Book, 2007), 2.

⁵⁶³ Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

⁵⁶⁴ Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1.119, Loeb Classical Library, quoted in “Introduction Unesco World Philosophy Day,” 4.

⁵⁶⁵ Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 4.

⁵⁶⁶ Theophilus Okere “Introduction Unesco World Philosophy Day,” 2.

Further, philosophy helps man to be at his specific best, that is, by behaving and thinking properly as a rational human being distinct from other animals. From time immemorial, mankind has always philosophized. This act of philosophizing does not only shape and form people, but makes men ‘men’ – full of wisdom and knowledge. ‘Men’ in the sense that they do not dwell or focus their time on frivolities, meaningless events or engage in mundane and unnecessary discussions but ideas. It develops the entire human person and makes him a more rational animal and brings out the best in him. “Philosophy liberates us from the trap of deciding what to believe on the basis of emotions, thus strengthening ourselves against our natural tendency to believe things simply because we want them to be true. Critical thinking in general and philosophy in particular liberate us from others and from ourselves.”⁵⁶⁷ Supporting this claim, Edmund Jacoby stated that “Philosophy serves the purpose of changing the society, so that it has not become superfluous. Its function is to open the eyes to the fact that the previous thinking is necessarily wrong, because it does not take the materialistic point of view of humanity. Their function, therefore, as Marx and Engels call it in the German ideology, is ‘ideology critique.’”⁵⁶⁸ By so doing, the human person which is not only composed of matter but also the immaterial is developed to think critically and come up with ideas.

The mind is the engine of the human being. The state of mind affects the entire body and mode of thinking. The quality or value of the human person is not based on size, height, appearance but on the ability of the mind to reason and reflect. This quality is what philosophy brings to the table of humanity. “The business of philosophy, as I conceive it, is essentially that of logical analysis, followed by logical synthesis... The most important part (philosophy), consists in criticizing and clarifying notions which are apt to be regarded as fundamental and accepted uncritically.”⁵⁶⁹ It simply sets the human mind on the right path of mental activities.

⁵⁶⁷ Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy*, 10.

⁵⁶⁸ Edmund Jacoby, *50 klassiker Philosophen. Denker von der Antike bis heute dargestellt* (Hildesheim, Gerstenberg Verlag, 2001), 227. (Translation mine).

„Philosophie hat der Veränderung der Gesellschaft zu dienen, damit ist sie aber nicht überflüssig geworden. Ihre Funktion ist es, die Augen dafür zu öffnen, dass das bisherige Denken notwendig falsch ist, weil es den materialistischen Menschheitsstandpunkt nicht einnimmt. Ihre Funktion ist also, wie Marx und Engels es in der Deutschen Ideologie nennen, Ideologiekritik.“

⁵⁶⁹ Bertrand Russell, *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901-1950*, ed. Robert C. Marsh (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), 34. Quoted in Ronald Jager, *The Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), 41-42.

4.4.3 Background basis to development

When the word development is mentioned, we tend to gorge our eyes out towards only the aspect of structural and economic developments. This is so because the world has become so materialistic such that everything is weighed in the lens of material advancement. Just as philosophy offers not only intrinsic but also extrinsic benefits, one could also say that development entails some kind of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. By the extrinsic part of development, we refer to those areas that are concerned with human and physical society; that includes the aspects of natural resources, economy, security, and infrastructures like good roads, hospitals, water, and other societal advancement. By intrinsic, we mean those areas of the human society that are not tangible but dictate and shape the scope of the extrinsic.

Development here refers primarily to the intellectual and social development of people which leads to effective economic-structural developments.

The human person is an absolute value, he is supreme in the universe and he should never be used simply as a means to an end. In view of the prime importance of the human person, authentic development in any nation can only mean primarily the development of the human person, and this consists mainly in the development of his mind and will. The training of the mind to see things critically and to seek the meaning and intelligibility of things is an important aspect of the development of the human person.⁵⁷⁰

And unless a great amount of priority is placed on this interior aspect of development, every other effort and process would be ineffective if not absurd. Europe and most of the western world are what they are today through the sophistication and prioritization of this focal aspect of human development. Civilization began with the mental revolution and thinking out better ways of doing things. Richard Rorty explained it better by describing philosophy as a ladder up which western political thinking climbed and contributed immensely in clearing the way for the establishment of democratic institutions in the west. Philosophers achieved this by secularizing political thinking and challenging the people to focus on political purposes instead of articles of divine revelation. Philosophers motivated humanity to make a fresh start. This encouraged human beings as rational autonomous entities to shape their own laws and design various institutions to suit their needs.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁷⁰ Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy: A General Introduction*, 197

⁵⁷¹ Cf. Richard Rorty, "Democracy and philosophy," in *Eurozine*, 11 June 2007. Accessed 27, Feb. 2019. <https://www.eurozine.com/democracy-and-philosophy/>. Lecture given by Richard Rorty in April 2004

Although development entails material and human development, however, every system of development must take into account equipping first of all the human personality; establishing useful and societal values on which the pillars of physical development would rest upon. While material development would centre on tangible and secondary objects in the world, the human person which is in no way tangible would form the primary component of development. The analogy of Plato's distinction between form and matter could be used to drive home this point. The material development would make up the matter while the human person would fall into the category of form.

The human person remains an object of philosophical inquiry. In the throes of carrying out this inquiry, philosophy sharpens and develops the human person. Philosophy does not only focus on studying the nature of the material things of this world but also the human person which drives and controls the physical world. It is in this self-study that man realises himself and discovers his charisma, capabilities and potentialities. "Philosophy is a persistent attempt to think things through. Philosophy is primarily a theoretical discipline but it may and, it is to be hoped, sometimes does have direct practical bearing in that its purpose is to increase our understanding of ourselves and the world."⁵⁷² Through this self-study, the human person understands himself, as a marvellous and complex entity which is not limited within the confines of other material things. Perhaps for this reason the great philosopher admonished man to know himself in order not to discover only the amount of treasure embedded in humanity but as a process of developing himself. It is by this very study that man unravels the beauty of the human person, moderates what is crude, fosters what is good and then develops himself.

Philosophy exposes to mankind the absolute value of the human person. Through this critical study of the human person, humanity is able to carve out the right sense of value for himself and the right attitude for doing things in the world. This value for the 'self' reawakens the ultimate value of human life. It does not only talk about the life of the human person but how his life could be bettered and improved. It reveals the meaningfulness of the human entity as well as that of the physical world. Joseph Omoregbe could have captured this scenario better when he analysed the human society in comparison to an organism. Man is a component of organs and each of the organs play a vital role in the sustenance of the human person. An

at the Centre for Cultural Studies in Tehran. The lecture was presented in the series of lectures by Western intellectuals in Tehran, organized by Ramin Jahanbegloo.

⁵⁷² Lewis White Beck and Robert L. Holmes, *Philosophic Enquiry: An Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), vii-1.

organism according to him is made of many parts, each with its respective role and distinct function. For the human person to continue in existence, all the parts must develop and grow simultaneously as anything short of this could lead to chaos or deficiency in the total organism. Quoting him in *Grosso Modo* he wrote “a nation is a living organism with many parts, each with a distinct function and a distinct contribution to make towards the well-being of the whole. Each part needs to be developed, hence national development is the development of all the parts of the living organism which a nation is.”⁵⁷³ It is not enough to talk about physical development without talking about the agents of this development which is the human dimension. It is this human dimension of development that philosophy as a discipline empowers and energises to enable the physical to be realised. Going by this emphasis, one could say that the development of this human dimension as a person is an inevitable aspect of the national development. It plays the primary function in the society as that of the heart in the human body.

What philosophy does is nothing but develop this aspect of development which is intrinsically the human dimension. The human person does not dwell only on the ‘why’ but moves to the ‘how’ of getting things done or problems solved. He acquires deeper knowledge about his environment, his world and himself too. It is through this development of the human person that the physical structures and aspects are propelled, fashioned, designed and achieved. Through philosophical and scientific ideas, the human person has not only modernised his environment but taken it to another level. That is to say, when the human person through the instrumentality of philosophy is developed, every other part of the human society receives its own positive share. Through this, he is able to turn his knowledge and wisdom into tangible things and empirical findings. From this knowledge man builds, manufactures tools, works and recreates as well as develop his society. Man is a creative creature and this is made possible by the power of reason. Philosophy develops the human person which makes him embark on deeper thinking on steps and ways to understand his yesterday, order his today and better his tomorrow.

⁵⁷³ Joseph Omeregbe, *Knowing Philosophy: A General Introduction*, 194. This idea of philosophy as basis for development was influenced heavily by Omeregbe.

If we accept the subtle distinction between the roles of the different parts of the body and its relationship to the nation, we would also be objective enough to accept that the roles of the human parts are not of equal ratio. While some are indispensable, that is having primary functions; others of course are needed for some secondary functions.

4.4.4 Philosophy as an agent of moral development

There is a sense in which one could say that the development of morals is a *conditio sine qua non* and indispensable component of human society. Philosophy develops society and the human person morally because it “is a discipline which has to do with a critical and unbiased investigation into the basic issues about man and the universe in which he is. It is a discipline that only equips man with a high intellectual ability but also has the ability to enrich his moral capacity. As a discipline, philosophy has its major branches as logic, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and metaphysics. With a good training in these areas of study, an individual is well equipped with the intellectual and moral capacity which the task of leadership demands.”⁵⁷⁴ The Greeks generally saw the aim of philosophy as the pursuit of good life (*eudaimonia*), in all three modern senses of the word ‘good’ that is intellectual, emotional and moral goodness.⁵⁷⁵

Ethics as an important aspect and branch of philosophy is centred on the moral development of the human person. As a field of philosophy, ethics does not only prescribe what is right or wrong but focuses on the entire fundamentals of morals and behaviour. It strives to describe the way things ought to be. It shapes in no small way the attitude of human beings. “Indeed, moral development is the most important aspect of national development, for there can be no development of a country if its citizens are morally undeveloped...Neither science nor technology can develop a country if its citizens are not morally developed.”⁵⁷⁶ Unambiguously, one could state that philosophy possesses the capacity to develop the operators and potential operators of morality, justice and governance in any human society. This implies that the moral development of the human person in the society plays an important role in having a better world. Without having men and women of sound moral discipline, the society and development are left in chaos, a cataclysm and in a topsy-turvy atmosphere.

Ethics helps us to study also the norms of human behaviour as well and the morality of human actions. It goes a long way in helping man to ensure that our actions conform to the norms of human behaviour. It leads people to ask: “what is it to live a human life well or badly? ...but perhaps the point of doing philosophy is to enable people lead, so far as it is

⁵⁷⁴ Arinze Agbanusi, “Philosophy, Democracy and African Development”, in *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 135.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education. An Aristotelian Perspective* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 12.

⁵⁷⁶ Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy, A General Introduction*, 197.

within their powers, philosophical lives.”⁵⁷⁷ By knowing these principles of morality, we are better equipped to live a better life and conform to good principles and conduct ourselves in ways proper to our state as rational beings. Philosophy also raises men and women of integrity and reputable character. Consequently, the human person is able to separate wrongs from rights, learn moral discipline which helps people live with one another and relate as moral beings. It moulds men and women who put moral actions before material gains. It creates a society where selfishness and self-centredness are not extolled. It forms human beings who have much value for the sense of duty, moral responsibility and the right attitude to work. It creates people of moral conscience, men and women committed to laws, the good of others, culture of excellence and efficiency.

Thus the foundation of morality is man’s own very nature as a social and rational being. Morality and society therefore have the same basis, the same foundation, and are consequently inseparable. Neither can exist without the other, for there can be no society without morality, nor can we talk of morality without society. The relationship between morality and society can be expressed by saying that morality is the soul of the society.⁵⁷⁸

What differentiates man from other animals is this moral discipline that philosophy inculcates. With this moral development, man is able to create moral norms and adapt to these norms. When this moral periscope of philosophy is lacked, people tend not to behave differently from other animals, as there would be dissatisfaction, selfishness, conflict of actions and discordant voices, underdevelopment and possibly play out of man’s natural egoistic and brutal tendency.

4.4.5 A tool for a just political society

Some people have consistently argued that philosophy has nothing to do with politics. Most of these people quickly forget that the theories of democracy and modern political discussions are simply outcomes of some philosophies which were developed on the argument that man as a rational being should have a different kind of society where everyone would be valued and respected. For instance, the liberal democracy of today could be traced to the teachings of Aristotle who opined that government by the people is the most appropriate way to achieve happiness and justice. This has come to form the main objectives

⁵⁷⁷ Alasdair Macintyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy. Selected Essays, volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 125-132.

⁵⁷⁸ Joseph Omoregbe, *Knowing Philosophy: A General Introduction*, 198

of every liberal government. Plato in his Republic also pointed out the importance of philosophy in the political society which made him opine that only philosopher kings should rule: “Unless communities have philosophers as kings, I said, or the people who are currently called kings and rulers practise philosophy with enough integrity- in other words, unless political power and philosophy coincide...there can be no end to political troubles, ... or even to human troubles in general.”⁵⁷⁹ Plato by this statement firmly believed that philosophy could provide a serious moral guide for justice and democracy. Hence, those who take part in political offices should not be men of little knowledge and ignorance nor class of people controlled by selfishness, but men who understand the rhythms of justice as enunciated by philosophers.

Modern political society which has become a global village cannot do without philosophical reflections which will enable people of different cultures, backgrounds and religions to put on their thinking cap and renegotiate rationally a new society where nothing but the reign of justice would be the priority of every member. It will also foster deeper understanding between citizens of diverse cultures.

Hence I was forced to say in praise of the correct philosophy that it affords a vantage point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals, and that accordingly the human race will not see better days until the stock of those who rightly and genuinely follow philosophy acquire political authority, or else the class who have political control be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers.⁵⁸⁰

Governance or politics involves the combination of political power and philosophical intelligence. Any attempt to separate power from philosophical intelligence spells doom for human society. We can quickly agree that it was the philosophical reflections of great minds like Aristotle, Plato, Karl Marx, Machiavelli, and a few others that not only revolutionised what we regard today as the western world but also gave her a foundation to build on. Any society that wants to succeed must combine political power with philosophical intelligence. Just as Socrates described his role to the Athenians, philosophical intelligence should be a guide and gadfly for political activities in order to bring out the best. Our societies require philosophies and philosophers for some direction.

⁵⁷⁹ Simon Blackburn, *Plato's Republic: A Biography* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 86.

⁵⁸⁰ Moses Aderibigbe and Marcel Onyibor, “Philosophy, Democracy and the Rule of Law in Nigeria: An Evaluative Analysis,” in *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 21-22.

Cf. Plato, *the Republic*, Book V, Translated by Benjamin Jowett, 1817-1893 (Boston: A Squid Ink Classic, 2016), 134.

In as much as philosophers or philosophy cannot boast of solving all political crises, they nevertheless help to interpret the world in various ways. They rigorously reflect on good ideas and how they can be applied to modern political society. Through their works and contributions, they are engaged in real political matters. Philosophy and philosophers think systematically about society, they design and develop structures and concepts as well as pictures of how political activities should be carried out. Philosophy could be useful in the public sphere to help us discuss matters of common interest with the view of making or changing policies.⁵⁸¹ Philosophy engages in debates regarding some contemporary problems ravaging human society such as the abuse of human rights, social and gender inequality, political and power structures, terrorism, racism and nuclear weapons. Philosophers write in ways that address these contemporary political problems and labour to proffer solutions on how political society should be transformed and how best to reduce manifest injustice in the world.

4.5 How does philosophy relate to education?

Philosophy is synonymous with knowledge which is the aim of education whereas man remains the subject of both. The essence of philosophy is to know or to acquire new knowledge. Philosophy for its own part stands at the centre of every act of knowledge and knowing. If “philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately conducted practice”⁵⁸² as stated, then, philosophy has education as its unending focus.⁵⁸³ Philosophy has always acted as the model of and measure for human knowledge. It is for this reason that the highest university degree conferred irrespective of the discipline is called PhD - meaning Doctor of Philosophy. This act of philosophizing could only be inculcated and developed as well as deepened through the medium of education. Philosophy could be sustained and her rich cultural values handed over from generation to generation through the tool of education; whether informal or formal.

Philosophy shapes education and uses education as a means. “Philosophy can help to provide a clearer understanding of what they are doing on the part of those actively engaged in

⁵⁸¹ Cf. William Aiken and John Haldane, eds. *Philosophy and its Public Role* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 7.

⁵⁸² John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1915), xvi.

⁵⁸³ “Dewey believes that philosophy should focus on education, and if his philosophy was for many years most fully expounded in a book the title of which pairs democracy with education, Dewey is patently affirming a close relation between the two.” Cf. Sister Joseph Mary Raby, “John Dewey and Progressive Education”, In *John Dewey, His thought and Influence*, ed. John Blewett, S.J., The Orestes Brownson series on contemporary thought and affairs, No.2, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1960), 93.

education.”⁵⁸⁴ It directs the method of education and indicates the best way knowledge can be imparted, but also requires education for its activities and processes. Regarding this point, “Dewey says that philosophy cannot realize its purposes, cannot have any success in its tasks without educational equivalents as to what to do and what not to do. Education he goes on to say, is the laboratory in which the philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested. And again, philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately conducted practice.”⁵⁸⁵ It is through education, that the philosophical nature of man is nurtured, improved, developed and blossomed. For instance, we know of the great philosophers like Plato who had a peripatetic school where his pupils were tutored. Through education new ideas are formed and the philosophy weighs the newly formed ideas critically and brings those ideas to scrutiny. Both are inseparably united and complementary in nature.

The philosopher is also a human person not only in search of knowledge but a learning animal. It is through education that he acquires, cultivates and adopts the act of philosophising in a more rational and appropriate manner. The philosophised mind similarly weighs on the system of education and recommends ideas or theories that could bring efficiency into it. On this basis, one could succinctly say that education is the classical base of every act of scientific philosophising. Theophilus Okere conceives education as the locus classicus for philosophy to enable man and society bring forth the best potential and fully reach the level of perfection that finitude allows on earth. Also in education we could seek our own lever of Archimedes to move the world. He believes that more important than our government is our school, more important than our army are our libraries, more important than our democracy is the cultivation and sustenance of knowledge, the total, the comprehensive and intensive education and manpower development that our development demands. Implicitly, no society can compete with other modern societies unless it truly endeavours to surpass others in human development via education.⁵⁸⁶ This statement implies that education is not only the classical base of philosophy but also in it can we discover or find out ways or ideas of improving human society with all the ramifications.

It also goes on to say that philosophical ideas have relevance for education. Philosophy and education in *pari passu* are interwoven and make use of each other to bring about a better society. Both are deeply intertwined, interrelated, interdependent, and profusely inseparable

⁵⁸⁴ Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An introduction*, 15.

⁵⁸⁵ Sister Joseph Mary Raby, “John Dewey and Progressive Education”, *In John Dewey*, 94.

⁵⁸⁶ Theophilus Okere, “Introduction Unesco World Philosophy Day,” *In Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 5.

from each other. They are interrelated in the sense that philosophy is the mother of education and education itself gives birth to philosophy. Philosophy as a discipline provides the goal of life as well as the aim of education. Education on the other hand serves as the vehicle for bringing that philosophic aim into praxis- a means towards achieving those goals. Their interdependence lies in the fact that all great philosophers at one point were great educators- Socrates tutored the youth in Greece, John Dewey is regarded as a philosopher and the most influential thinker on education. Gandhi's influence is notable in India till today. These reflected their philosophical views in their educational schemes. It will not be out of place to state categorically that both complement each other in the sense that without philosophy, education would be nothing but a blind effort and without education philosophy would be no better than a crippled exercise. Any attempt to separate education from philosophy may render education an aimless enterprise, a hopeless waste of time and energy. Their inseparability stems from the fact that philosophy exercises tremendous influence on education in all its aspects. It also specifies the aims and content of educational activities.⁵⁸⁷

This process of communicating education and philosophy does not only impart knowledge but makes the person wiser. Philosophy makes use of education and in turn suggests the best ways of doing education and teaching. This explains why the philosophy of education has come to take an important place in our modern society and learning processes. The philosophy of education shows how, when, where, who and what is to be taught. Therefore, philosophy requires education for it to be imparted and transmitted while education requires philosophy for its policies and formation of systems. It stipulates to which areas attention should be given and it lays the content for the educational system. Both education and philosophy equip man's capacity to think more rationally, critically and reflectively.

Suffice it to say that education and philosophy broaden the human mind by enabling it to discover different and many ways of looking at things and addressing the needs of the human society. Through education we come in contact with how certain philosophers of various times, generations and epochs approached the problems of their time. Their methods and approaches which are transmitted through education help man to understand different ways of perceiving reality and truth. Philosophy offers productive approaches to education and

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. Satish Kumar, Sonia Gulati, Sajjad Ahmad, "An Introduction to Philosophical, Psychological and Sociological Bases of Education", Lesson 2, 2007-2008 Academic Session, *Unpublished Lecture Notes*, at School of Open Learning, University of Delhi, India, 17-18. Accessed 15.04.2019.
<https://sol.du.ac.in/solsite/Courses/UG/StudyMaterial/16/Part1/ED/English/SM-1.pdf>.

solving educational problems through thought and action. Philosophy and education when combined well, lead to the birth of innovative and good ideas which influence society. I thereby end by saying that without philosophy, education might be aimless, and without education, philosophical principles stand the chance of becoming extinct.

4.6 Relevance of education

In several quarters however, there have been disagreements over the actual relevance of education and its value in human society. While some see it to be personal and something subject to the individual involved, many conceive it as only serving economic needs, that is, where students acquire disciplines to secure their economic goals and survival. The most important question remains, what purpose does education serve? In the light of this situation, the words of Ozmon and Craver, Jeffrey and Stuart A Karabenick could be helpful: “Philosophers have long argued that education should serve both individual and collective purposes, such as preserving cultural knowledge, creating an ideal state, informing the future citizenry, producing human capital for industry, and promoting social and emotional development.”⁵⁸⁸ At least five characteristics come to mind when we talk of education, namely: self-education, forming and development of the whole person, anthropological need and growth, increasing individuality while at the same time being more than individual and overcoming alienation.⁵⁸⁹

4.6.1 Education for the promotion of human, social and emotional development

A thorough assessment of the different schools of thoughts, one cannot but agree that one of the major aims of education is that it is a catalyst for every kind of development. By development, we mean both the emotional, mental development of the human person and the physical as well as social. As Heiner Hastedt would put it, “education is above all self-education and the most harmonious development of the whole person.”⁵⁹⁰ Education is the chief means of growth. It fosters growth in the human person both physically and mentally. “Growth is here wedded closely to the biological development of the human organism, the psychological (habitual) development of the human organism, as well as the social

⁵⁸⁸ Jeffrey R. Albrecht and Stuart A. Karabenick, “Relevance for Learning and Motivation in Education,” in *Journal of Experimental Education: Advancing Psychological and Methodological Understandings*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (2018), 1.

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. Heiner Hastedt, *Was ist Bildung? Eine Textanthologie*, 9. (Translation mine).

⁵⁹⁰ Heiner Hastedt, *Was ist Bildung? 7*. (Translation mine).

Bildung ist vor allem Selbstbildung und die möglichst harmonische Entwicklung der ganzen Person.

development: a point and purpose of education is to foster the growth of all these sides of the human being.”⁵⁹¹ Education as many believe it, is not just an end in itself but an integral part and veritable means to development. In line with this, McCowan and Unterhalter conceived both education and development as two intimately connected and also interdependent themes.⁵⁹² One could say that development is not only illusive but could be a mirage when a society lacks sound and qualitative education. Explaining this developmental role of education, Raphael Mose wrote:

Put differently, development as a product of education, cannot survive without it. That is to say, for any development to remain relevant and continue to serve the interest of humankind, it requires a corresponding progressive system of education that is sustainable. In other words, a society is a reflection of the kind of education it gives/receives. Progressive education engenders progress and development while retrogressive education produces its kind.⁵⁹³

Education forms the bedrock or sets the foundation for development in society, such that the quality of a society’s education dictates its level of development and growth. Enunciated further, education can be seen as a light that drives away darkness initiated by ignorance and equips the human person to find his ways along the path of civilization and development. “Education is of course indispensable to development, for any country that neglects the education of its citizens refuses ipso facto to develop. Until a country has the right man for the right job among its own citizens, it remains dependent and undeveloped.”⁵⁹⁴ It brings about a new way of looking at things, it orientates and enhances the mind, the life of the people, their mental ability to recreate their society, gives knowledge required to achieve and sustain national developments. Hence, no society has ever risen above the standard of her education, as it is the resource or ingredient that spices developmental strides. Therefore, education produces a healthy society with positive developments to show for it. It does this by offering knowledge and skills that are aimed at enlightening the individuals in the society.

According to Keith Thompson, “it may be claimed that the aim of education is to develop the potential of all individuals or to educate the whole man”⁵⁹⁵ in order to reach their goals

⁵⁹¹ James Scott Johnston, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 110.

⁵⁹² Cf. Firdevs Melis Cin, *Gender Justice, Education and Equality Creating Capabilities for Girls’ and Women’s Development* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 3.

⁵⁹³ Raphael Mose, “Education in Nigeria: Much Schooling, Little Development. Where lies the missing link?” in *The Sign Magazine, Education for National Development*, Vol. 17, 41st edition, ed. Gerald Ogbulike (Ikot Ekpene,: A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, St. Joseph Major Seminary, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 2018), 3.

⁵⁹⁴ Joseph Omeregbe, *Knowing Philosophy: A General Introduction*, 198-199.

⁵⁹⁵ Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy: A Practical Approach*, 78.

in life. Education in this manner improves the lives of the people in the society, opens and creates many opportunities for innovation, capacity building, alleviation of poverty, reduction of fanaticism, syncretism, as well as enhancement of the human society. It is also very important for the functioning, prosperity and survival of any individual, society or individual person. It is so to say, a system and this system called education helps the individual and society to flourish. In his magnum opus ‘Democracy and Education’, John Dewey maintained that “the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming.”⁵⁹⁶ In the same vein, Gerald Ogbulikpe believes that “a good and effective education system develops the minds of citizens and orientates them towards progress, nationalism and social development. Thus, quality education, which is a fundamental human right of every child, equips young citizens to think, evaluate, deliberate and come up with their own conclusions on matters of national interest.”⁵⁹⁷

Of course, education inculcates a high level of moral discipline which is also part of human development. Through education, man is not just limited or confined to his natural environment but strives to overcome his challenges and recreates his society. Man through the virtue of knowledge acquired thanks to education betters and upgrades his immediate environment. The high level of technological success and supersonic scientific advancement is nothing but the fruit of sound education. The civilization we have today is thanks to education and no civilization would remain progressive without education as its oil of forward movement. A historical survey has always shown that all advanced nations owe their developmental strides to quality education.

Through education, the human person living in a political society is developed socially. To be educated is to be successful in learning to become a person; adding that the most important part of learning to be a person is acquiring a conception of reality. Then for one to become a person, he or she has to acquire not just only a conception of the immediate physical world, but also of the social world.⁵⁹⁸ Further, education whether formal or informal, aims at producing civilised individuals who will be responsible members of human society.⁵⁹⁹ By so doing, an educated person is said to be grounded and round for life in human society. To be

⁵⁹⁶ John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow*, xvi.

⁵⁹⁷ Gerald Ogbulikpe, ed, “Editorial Suite,” in *The Sign Magazine, Education for National Development*, Vol. 17, 41st ed., 2.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An introduction*, 33-62.

⁵⁹⁹ Therefore, every society requires education and intensity should not be channelled to make examinations more tedious, hiring more teachers or building more schools but focusing on the very purpose of education with well-planned policies to achieve it.

educated sets the person above standard both intellectually, morally and otherwise and prepares people for the challenges of the future. Apart from its role of emancipatory and liberating values, as well as advancing knowledge, “education allows individuals to become authors of their own life stories.”⁶⁰⁰

Education inculcates knowledge; it instils knowledge and no modern society can function without it. It enlightens the human person or individual who is at the root of the society and upon whom the ultimate good of justice seeks to satisfy. For this reason Francis Bacon declared that “knowledge is power.”⁶⁰¹ It means that knowledge received through education empowers the individual to conquer and overcome his society as well as challenges. For Plato, knowledge is function, meaning that knowledge makes the individual or society to function. For Socrates, knowledge is virtue, it gives the individual the moral propensity to live a good life and make progress in all things. Therefore, one may not be afraid to declare that education makes the society or individual to function, to overcome his natural challenges and live a true human life. By all implications, education is a holistic and integral tool for human formation. It not only remodels but widens the horizon of the human person who lives in the civil society. “Dewey sees the educational system as the means by which society changes or redirects itself. However, in order for changes to occur, in order to shift its direction, the members of that society not only must desire the changes, they must also see the meaning behind them.”⁶⁰² This can only come through a process of sound education.

Education could be viewed as the process that involves an all-round development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective abilities of the human person in order to promote the development of the human person, the society and world. This proves the fact that the quality of education in a country is one of its major keys to national development. Education aims at enabling the citizens of a given society especially the younger members to mature into well-developed members of the society. This development of the individual person involved must be holistic, that is, emotionally and physically, intellectually, vocationally, culturally, politically, economically as well as spiritually. Without fear of exaggeration, one can say that education is vital to the well-being of any society and fundamentally necessary for the

⁶⁰⁰ Oli Belas, “Education, Knowledge, and Symbolic Form,” In *Oxford Review of Education, Volume 44, number 3* (June 2018), 300.

⁶⁰¹ William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, 217.

⁶⁰² John P. Portelli & Ronald F Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy and Democracy*, 201.

subsistence and advancement of development. There can be no future developments without well-educated citizens. Education empowers the entire/whole human person.

4.6.2 Education fosters peace, dialogue and healthy relationships in society

Nothing can stand in the way of harmonious existence and the path of peace other than ignorance. Education contrary to ignorance creates in no little way the civilization for peace. “Education by its nature should clearly be an education for peace.”⁶⁰³ Education is a veritable instrument for peace, intercultural or interpersonal dialogue. It helps to avert violence by improving the people’s capacity to analyse issues critically. It also helps people to act and take part in order to resolve conflicts non-violently. Nonetheless, it fosters harmonious and collaborative relationship among individuals and communities. Education should also liberate the human spirit from all encumbrances, stereotypes and propaganda. It accords each individual the opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he or she was born into. Nonetheless it offers each the opportunity to come into living contact with a broader environment.⁶⁰⁴ The knowledge and ideas we have about mankind and the world help us to create a peaceful, just society and a high value for human life.

The level of harmony and brotherhood among the committee of nations today in a globalized world (although few countries are at loggerheads with others), is what we owe to education. Through education, we come in contact with others and are able to reason, understand and possibly tolerate one another. Education or school also creates a kind of new and broader environment where people of different races, religions, customs, cultures and languages could intermingle. “Common subject matter accustoms all to a unity of outlook upon a broader horizon than is visible to the members of any group while it is isolated. The assimilative force of the American public school is eloquent testimony to the efficacy of the common and balanced appeal.”⁶⁰⁵ This has to an extent reduced the level of anarchism, bickering and fundamentalism that existed many years ago between different continents and countries. Through education, we are able to conduct a dialogue with one another.

The family, society, religion and culture could influence the individual into acquiring different standard of moral judgment and vision about life in general. Against such tendency,

⁶⁰³ Brian Patrick Hendley, *Dewey, Russell, Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 121.

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Delhi: Aakar Books, Indian Edition, 2004), 22.

⁶⁰⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 23-24.

the school serves as a unifying, integrating and steadying apparatus where people irrespective of their background could find some harmony of purpose, moral judgement, emotions and values. It coordinates and heals the different influences acquired in various social environments. Through education, citizens come to have an enlarged and robust experience as well as changed attitudes which can help them understand themselves and one another, and the world in which they live. It prepares the citizens to develop and nurture a sense of social spirit and tolerance in their environment. Buttressing more on the role of education, Isaiah Berlin stressed that:

Education even if it cannot by itself knock down the barriers by which human beings are divided, should at any rate not add to them...; consequently, it should do everything possible to make it easier for those engaged in one discipline to understand the methods, achievements, hopes ambitions, frustrations, the intellectual and emotional processes, of those working in other fields.⁶⁰⁶

Although it might be an over-assumption to suppose that all knowledge always makes the possessor happier, and morally sound, or sets one free from the shackles of his stereotype or held belief. However, even when it does lead to these, it cannot be denied that the best way to remove any negative influence acquired in the course of one's educational journey is by gaining more knowledge. The more knowledge one has, the more one makes improvements and efforts to avoid mistakes and abandon unhealthy belief systems. We may not cultivate the spirit of tolerance and peace if we don't make effort to understand each other's history, and the differences in our respective lifestyles. To do this, "we must therefore construct a liberal education that is not only Socratic, emphasizing critical thought and respectful argument, but also pluralistic, imparting an understanding of the histories and contributions of groups with whom we interact, both within our nation and in the increasingly international sphere of business and politics."⁶⁰⁷ Education in this sense helps to set aside those technicalities and misunderstandings that polarise people or communities and obscure human relationships with one another.

When the mind is well educated, then it is empowered to assess and access possibilities for change in what does not bring peace, thereby working towards change. "Education encourages disarmament, fights against illicit traffic in arms, promotes the adoption of measures of confidence building and negotiation to transform conflicts peacefully. It

⁶⁰⁶ Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 214.

⁶⁰⁷ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 295.

enhances the surrendering of ammunitions in order to give way for dialogue.”⁶⁰⁸ Simply said, the relevance of education lies in its ability to enhance cooperation, the resolution of conflicts, the reduction of violence, the value for human rights, a strong sign of solidarity amongst peoples and nations, and promote social justice and improve democracy. The words of Nelson Mandela could be employed to lay weight to the discussion; Education he said “is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation.”⁶⁰⁹ The value of education is so great that it imparts and bestows knowledge on the people and drives out ignorance. When ignorance and mediocrity are expelled or reduced, individuals or countries are able to embrace and relate with one another without fears or bias. Through good education, individuals are capable to prevent conflicts, crisis and go on to build up as well as improve their cultural, religious and ethnic cooperation for a harmonious co-existence.

4.6.3 Acquisition of new knowledge

The aim of education is always new knowledge. Education could be said to be a process which facilitates the learning and acquisition of new knowledge, social and moral norms, tenets of culture, beliefs and ideologies, as well as skills, values and attitudes. It could be said that education as an activity aims at practical result and its concern is to educate people.⁶¹⁰ As opined by Andrew Stables: “the civilized human being is the literate human being, and education’s role is to produce literate adults.”⁶¹¹ Through education, literacy is promoted and ignorance removed. Through the tool of education, we realise our potentials and this comes via learning. Through education, we get exact knowledge not only of ourselves but our environments, things in the world and how to cope with all them.

T. W. Moore also teaches that the aim of education is to produce an educated man, who meets the various criteria of intellectual, moral and aesthetic development; possesses certain sorts of knowledge and skill, intellectual abilities and can appreciate the nature and force of mathematical and scientific thinking. An educated man is one who is capable of viewing the

⁶⁰⁸ Joseph Chibuzor Okakpu, “A Synergic Model: Education for Peaceful Co-existence,” In *The Sign Magazine, Education for National Development*, 14.

⁶⁰⁹ Valerie Strauss, “Nelson Mandela on the Power of Education,” December 5, 2013. Accessed 14.04. 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/12/05/nelson-mandelas-famous-quote-on-education/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7e28118d183a.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An introduction*, 7.

⁶¹¹ Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education*, 49.

world along historical and geographical perspectives as well as have regard for the importance of truth, precision, and refined in thinking.⁶¹² Through education, man learns, brings forth the best in him, acquires morals, gets trained, develops his mental ability and his entire personality, fulfils his ambitions and goals as well as develops his natural environment. It also prepares the citizens for some responsible life, fortifies and equips political leaders and other office holders with the ‘knowhow’ so as to function effectively. According to Plato, “education is the positive means by which the ruler can shape human nature in the right direction to produce a harmonious state.”⁶¹³ Consequently and if this statement is taken to be true, then education is paramount to the foundation of societal development and good governance.

Education informs and heals one of intellectual and psychological deformities as well as mediocrity, emotional, moral and spiritual abnormalities. This relevance stems from the fact that it drives away ignorance and makes the people knowledgeable.

Formally a general theory of education can be said to have one aim only: to produce a certain type of person, an educated man. A further requirement is that the educated man is one whose knowledge and understanding is all of a piece, integrated, and not merely a mass of acquired information, piecemeal and unrelated.⁶¹⁴

In that sense, education becomes a means through which the innate knowledge in man is harnessed, cultivated, nurtured and accomplished. Therefore education delivers and brings to the limelight the knowledge that is hidden in the human person from birth. It makes the human person intelligible and develops his rationality.

4.6.4 Preservation of culture, customs and societal goals

Education is a wonderful avenue through which history, culture, customs, and traditions are not only learnt but preserved, refined, understood, promoted and transmitted to generations. Every society continues its existence by communication and transmission of values, aims, purposes and goals. Members communicate with each other for societal growth. “Without such formal education, it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society.”⁶¹⁵ Beliefs and aspirations are communicated in a society through education. Through education, members of a given society come to have a good grasp of

⁶¹² Cf. T. W. Moore, *Philosophy of Education. An Introduction, Volume 14* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 11-12.

⁶¹³ Kenneth Okafor, *The Nigeria of my Dream*, 21.

⁶¹⁴ T. W. Moore, *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction, Volume 14*, 11-13.

⁶¹⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 8-9.

their own history and how to better their environment. It also purifies, enriches, modifies, and gives order and values to cultural practices.

This transmission can be done formally or informally, written or orally too. In so doing, the culture of the people is retained through historical learning and good values are by so doing maintained. The study of history is not only retrospective as well as forward looking, but it also encourages and sustains the culture of a given society. Johann Gottfried Herder described education as a necessary part of culture, so that the deficient human being can find his way around the world. Implicitly, without education, people remain at risk; but with education the human person has a chance to survive.⁶¹⁶ Educational system is not a neutral process as John P. Portelli & Ronald F Reed made us to understand.

It either functions as an agent of conformity: the means by which the younger members of the society not only are ‘nurtured and cultured’ into the traditions and customs of the society but are also indoctrinated into the thinking of that society; or it acts as an agent of change: the means by which individuals learn how to deal ‘critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.’⁶¹⁷

Education protects and safeguards culture, customs, traditions and values. While culture, traditions or customs can be orally transmitted, education becomes the best way of securing it from manipulations and adulteration. Reason being that stories are told according to the person involved and hence, can be thwarted or passed on sentimentally or wrongly. But with education, people are not only informed but develop the capacity to document and thereby scrutinize whatever is being transmitted. Education does not only help in the preservation of cultural knowledge but also keeps the goals and dreams of a society or people alive. “As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible not to transmit and conserve the whole of its existing achievements, but only such a make for a better future society.”⁶¹⁸ So to speak, “education signifies the sum total of processes by which a community or social group, whether small or large, transmits its acquired power and aims with a view to securing its own continued existence and growth.”⁶¹⁹ Through it, generation after generation comes to understand and discover the goals and aspirations of their society

⁶¹⁶ Cf. Heiner Hastedt, *Was ist Bildung?* 11. (translation mine). „Besonders für Herder ist Bildung als Teil der Kultur notwendig, damit sich das Mängelwesen Mensch der der ganzen Welt zurechtfindet. Ohne Bildung bleibt der Menschen gefährdet; mit Ausbildung hat er eine Chance auf überleben.“

⁶¹⁷ John P. Portelli & Ronald F Reed, eds. *Children, Philosophy and Democracy*, 202.

⁶¹⁸ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 22.

⁶¹⁹ Ralph B Winn, ed. *John Dewey: Dictionary of Education* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1959), 32.

as well as those before them. It makes a people not forget their past while thinking about their future.

4.6.5 Intellectual and mental efficiency

Education as a process deals mainly with the human intellect and in the process makes the mind literate. Education trains the human mind and the intellect to think and solve the problems of the present time and proffer solutions. For Aristotle, Education produces good, rational citizens though according to their capacities. For Locke, education also produces rational citizens who are genuinely diverse, autonomous persons, who can think for themselves but not necessarily arriving at the same conclusions.⁶²⁰ Since education concerns itself only with the cognitive, it then leads to proper understanding, knowledge, the training of the mind, and the development of thought processes as well as the powers of reason.⁶²¹ It controls the human person. “This control function of education is not just extrinsic but intrinsic, it does not focus on the external but the mental or internal part of the individual.”⁶²² The human person full of potentials at the moment of birth is tinkered and brought into a better shape for efficiency. That is to say that education moulds an integrated individual and makes the person capable of dealing with life as a whole and everything concerning his existence. In that sense, it equips the individual not only to be confined to the happenings of the present society but allows a serious look into the future with its challenges and how to overcome them. It also affects the human health positively as the saying holds that a heathy mind is a healthy body. Sound education enables the people to know the importance of health and proper ways of sustaining their lives.

Education cultivates the mind and the human person is usually the reflection of his mental state. It nonetheless makes the possessor more rational and critical.

It is its (education’s) business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions; to develop a lively, sincere, and open- minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded, and to ingrain into the individual’s working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education*, 60.

⁶²¹ Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy: A Practical Approach*, 81.

⁶²² John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 44.

⁶²³ John Dewey, “How we think,” In *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, Vol.6, 1910, 177-356, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978). Quoted by James Scott Johnston, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and the Quest for Democracy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 111.

It reconstructs of our knowledge for better results. “Things as they enter into action furnish the educative conditions of daily life and direct the formation of mental and moral disposition.”⁶²⁴ People can only practise what they know and understand. Such areas like political education inform the citizens of their rights, duties, roles and obligations in society. It brings to their knowledge how justice operates and what the people ought to do and expect while living in a human society. It is through formal or informal education that the process and meaning of justice is inculcated into the lives of the citizens and passed to generations. Education by so doing makes the human society functional and keeps the people in a more harmonious and just society.

4.6.6 Formation of character

There is a popular statement or belief that the ultimate purpose of education is character formation. Aristotle also conceived education as a means of developing right action, character and moral inclinations.⁶²⁵ In all levels and manner of education, the moral purpose of the individual remains universal and sacrosanct. Education instils ‘moral ideas’⁶²⁶ in an individual as well as in a whole society. Both in the formal and informal parlance, the intellectual power gained through education and mastery of respective subjects gear towards making behaviour more enlightened, consistent and vigorous than what nature has bestowed innately on man. The business of education at every stage or type (formal or informal) motivates and guides moral conduct. In the same vein, the psychological side of education sums itself up, in a consideration of character. That is to say that the development of character (individually and collectively) is the end of all school work.⁶²⁷

Education offers a great amount of ethical responsibility- it offers moral training and attainment of the principles of moral conduct. "We now pass to one of the special forms which the general function of education assumes: namely, that of direction, control, or guidance."⁶²⁸ Education is a means of instruction and discipline. It also forms the mind. The child at birth is believed to have all the (innate faculties) faculties but in an untrained form. As one receives education, it helps to refine, develop and perfect them to full maturity.

⁶²⁴ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 42.

⁶²⁵ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education*, 12.

⁶²⁶ “Moral ideas are ideas of any sort whatsoever which take effect in conduct and improve it, make it better than it would otherwise be.” Cf. John Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1959), 1.

⁶²⁷ Cf. John Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education*, 2-49.

⁶²⁸ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 26.

“Education when it is properly conducted with sensitivity to the child’s level of development, will produce citizens who have the capacities to conduct themselves well in the society and, most important, set morally permissible ends for themselves.”⁶²⁹ It in no small measure helps individuals to value themselves, to be responsible citizens, balanced, moderate and excel in human character.⁶³⁰ It unfolds the latent faculties and inculcates experiences, knowledge and ideas which form the individual from without. By virtue of education, we are able to overcome our individual’s natural egoistic tendency, and align to the common goal and plan instead of one’s own ways which may be *contra bonos mores*⁶³¹ to the society. It also controls and directs the natural tendencies into the ends and means of social action as well as societal continuity or continuity of social institutions.

Nevertheless, education shapes the individual’s powers, forms his habits, and trains his habits as well as nurturing his feelings and sense of emotions. As John Dewey rightly stated, “the function of education is to help the growing of a helpless young animal into a happy, moral and efficient human being.”⁶³² Through the act of ‘Nkuzi’ or ‘bilden’ as stated in the introductory section, the human person is malleated, informed, knows his rights and wrongs, holds to virtues, acquires some level of morality and could make the pursuit of just action a priority while shunning all manner of injustices. He is also able to separate good from evil, to differentiate truth from falsehood, to eschew ignorance and revere wisdom. Through education, people are capable of overcoming their natural inclinations and are able to substitute in its place habits and morals acquired under pressure from external sources. At the end, educational scheme on its own part should function to promote an ideal society.

4.6.7 Vocation and economic purpose

Through education whether informal or formal, individuals acquire skills and knowledge which make them capable to take up employment and take up certain functions in human society so as to satisfy their needs. It enhances vocation. By vocation we mean those areas of labour, economic or commercial aspects and services to the society “The educative process is its own end, and that the only sufficient preparation for later responsibilities comes by making the most of immediately present life, applies in full force to the vocational phases

⁶²⁹ Mika La Vaque-Manty, “Kant on Education,” In *Kant’s Political Theory: Interpretations and Applications*, ed. Elisabeth Ellis (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 222.

⁶³⁰ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education*, 34-39.

⁶³¹ *Contra bonos mores* - contrary, harmful or against the good customs, moral welfare or way of life.

⁶³² Ralph B Winn, Editor, *John Dewey: Dictionary of Education*, 32.

of education.”⁶³³ Further, by instilling skills, capacities and talents, education improves ones choice of occupation and increases his level of both political and social participation in the society. It is a means to valuable goods like career opportunities, life prospects, and position in the society as well as participation in civic life. For instance, learning biology may lead one into choosing to be become a medical Doctor, care for his body as well as increase his participation in societal life.⁶³⁴ Due to the demands of economic and industrialization, vocational education also “acquaint workers with the scientific and social bases and bearings of their pursuits”⁶³⁵ to enable them come to terms with the modern tools and machines.

Above all, education gives dignity and societal honour. Since education is connected with knowledge, the new knowledge may open up new possibilities.⁶³⁶ “For Herbert Spencer, living in an age and society very different from Plato’s, the educated man was one who had acquired knowledge and intellectual development sufficient to enable him to support himself in an industrial and commercial society, to raise and support a family.”⁶³⁷ Education as a process helps the individual in question to develop his potentials and maximum activation of his right reason so as to achieve progress, happiness and self-fulfilment in life. “Education can therefore also be understood today - as the ability to develop techniques of exercise and discipline. In order to carry out all the demanding activities in a modern world, enormous skills are required. Education thus becomes the practice of developing one's own strengths and an attempt to overcome weaknesses.”⁶³⁸ Education when properly used leads to supersonic innovations, techniques and skills towards the solution of the social, environmental and political problems with the view of achieving an economic, social and cultural transformation. Although education serves economic needs, we should recognize the value of education beyond just serving economic needs. It helps the individual to master

⁶³³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 334.

⁶³⁴ Cf. Lorella Terzi, “The Capability to Be Educated”, In *Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*. Edited by Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter. New York: Palgrave Macmillan™, 2007, 31.

⁶³⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 338.

⁶³⁶ Cf. Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An introduction*, 8.

⁶³⁷ T. W. Moore, *Philosophy of Education. An Introduction, Volume 14*, 12.

⁶³⁸ Heiner Hastedt, *Was ist Bildung?* 19. (Translation mine).

„Bildung lässt sich deshalb heute verstanden auch - als die Fähigkeit zur Entwicklung von Techniken der Übung und Disziplin verstehen. Um all die anspruchsvollen Aktivitäten in einer modernen Welt auszuführen zu können, sind enorme Fähigkeiten erforderlich. Bildung wird so zur übenden Entwicklung der eigenen Stärken und zum Versuch der Überwindung von Schwächen.“

his social milieu and his environment. Through education, nature and human resources could be harnessed and transformed into beneficial human goods.⁶³⁹

Education paves the way for economic success. “In a modern knowledge economy, education promotes values such as employability and adaptability; personal competencies, fulfilment and health; social inclusion; and active citizenship – even democracy, social justice and peace.”⁶⁴⁰ Seymour Fox opines that education concerns itself primarily with developing the ego of the individual so that he could gain greater mastery over his physical and social environment. It achieves this aim by helping the individual in question to master those facts (information) and skills that would help him to be brave, tackle challenges, minimize anxiety and avoid dangers when they rear their ugly heads. Nonetheless, it importantly trains the child for a work responsibility (vocational training) which he can use as an adult in order to enable him discover his competencies and also equip him with a socially recognized role for these competencies. Therefore, the school should be a place to prepare the ‘gifted’ children for a life in different spheres of life- be it leadership roles, innovations, the arts, and politics.⁶⁴¹ Plato “asserted that it was the business of education to discover what each person is good for, and to train him to mastery of that mode of excellence, because such development would also secure the fulfilment of social needs in the most harmonious way”⁶⁴² It nurtures the mind of the individual to harness and find out what kind of world he lives in and how best he could make out of it. It makes the possessor ripe for societal and economic activities. “Education must help the child to earn his livelihood. Education, therefore, must prepare the child for some future profession or vocation or trade.”⁶⁴³ The sum of it all is that education helps society to produce human capital for industry.

⁶³⁹ Cf. Jeffrey R. Albrecht and Stuart A. Karabenick, “Relevance for Learning and Motivation in Education,” *The Journal of Experimental Education. Advancing Psychological and Methodological Understandings*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (2018), 2.

⁶⁴⁰ Anne Craven, “Social justice and higher education,” *In Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, Volume 16, Number 1, 2012. Accessed on 02.11.2018. Doi: 10.1080/13603108.2011.611831. Published online: 16 Nov 2011.

⁶⁴¹ Cf. Seymour Fox, *Freud and Education* (Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1975), 160-161.

⁶⁴² John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 333.

⁶⁴³ Satish Kumar and Sajjad Ahmad, “Meaning, Aims and Process of Education”, *Lesson 1, Unpublished Lecture Notes 9*.

4.6.8 Enables equal society and social function

Education is an equalizer in the sense that quality education for all breeds or leads to greater amount of equality whereas unequal education pulls the citizens further apart from each other in a particular society. It closes the wide gap between the poor and the rich in the society. It can as well bring citizens together and foster unity. “Education can be a powerful tool for individual opportunity. It can help equip men and women, rich and poor with equal voice and power; it can drive social mobility, build more cohesive societies and, ultimately, build greater equality.”⁶⁴⁴ In clearer words, we can dissipates gender inequality too.

Good education has considerable power to increase equality between women and men. Education can help tackle gender disparities in wages, poverty, reproductive autonomy and political power. It can dramatically improve the health outcomes for women and their children. The more educated mothers are, the healthier they and their children are.⁶⁴⁵

Although there is no evidence that education equalizes, there is a belief “in a liberal democratic society, education is understood as the means of providing equal opportunity for all groups.”⁶⁴⁶ By so doing, it dismisses economic inequality among citizens “Access to good quality education for individual children offers a pathway to liberation from poverty and illness, towards the fulfilment of basic rights.”⁶⁴⁷ No doubt, well-educated persons are better placed and have greater opportunity of going after their own fortune and rising above normal working class salaries in the society.⁶⁴⁸

Education is not only a democratic right but plays a social function. Education can inevitably be seen as a form of socialization into an open system in political society because the environment plays a greater role in the life and activities of the individuals.⁶⁴⁹ Hence, it becomes a special means of social reconstruction for human society. The social environment affects the mental and emotional behaviour of each person in a given society. We could say that the school is a social environment which affects or moulds every mental fibre and behavioural character of the citizen. “But schools remain, of course, the typical instance of

⁶⁴⁴ Jo Walker, Caroline Pearce, Kira Boe and Max Lawson., “The Power of Education to Fight Inequality. How increasing educational equality and quality is crucial to fighting economic and gender inequality” In *Oxfam Briefing Paper* (Oxford: Oxfam International September 2019), 14 Doi: 10.21201/2019.4931.

⁶⁴⁵ Jo Walker, and co., “The Power of Education to Fight Inequality”, 6.

⁶⁴⁶ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 206.

⁶⁴⁷ Jo Walker and co., “The Power of Education to Fight Inequality”, 9.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Ann E. Cudd “What Is Equality in Higher Education?” in *The Equal Society Essays on Equality in Theory and Practice*, ed. George Hull (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 268.

⁶⁴⁹ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education*, 183.

environments framed with express reference to influencing the mental and moral disposition of their members.”⁶⁵⁰ It helps individuals to have active participation in the society to which he belongs and education will vary from one place to another based on the quality of life. This role of education can be retrospective or prospective. Education, argues Sen:

Fulfills an instrumental social role in that critical literacy, for example, fosters public debate and dialogue about social and political arrangements. It has an instrumental process role by expanding the people one comes into contact with, broadening our horizons. Finally, it has an empowering and distributive role in facilitating the ability of the disadvantaged, marginalized, and excluded to organize politically. It has redistributive effects between social groups, households, and within families.⁶⁵¹

Sen went further to assert that “education is an unqualified good for human capability expansion and human freedom.”⁶⁵² Finally, education has an interpersonal effects on people as its benefits contribute to both personal and social change.

4.6.9 Growth and value to life

Education creates conditions for growth. It helps the society to bring her immature members to its own social standard. By growth here, we do not mean biological or physical but growth in the behaviours and actions of the individual who receives the education. “Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself. The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact.”⁶⁵³ Growth entails the ability to acquire new habits and also improve or develop some natural dispositions. In this sense, we could say that education is development since it leads to growth and formation of habits. The acquired habits lead to changes and help individuals to adjust to their environment. In the same way, “an education is truly fitted for freedom only if it is such as to produce free citizens, citizens who are free not because of wealth or birth, but because they can call their minds their own.”⁶⁵⁴ It eschews immaturity, brings mental and moral growth, which is the ability to develop oneself.

⁶⁵⁰ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 21.

⁶⁵¹ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, eds. “The Capability Approach: Its Potential for Work in Education” in *Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan™, 2007), 8.

⁶⁵² Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, eds. “The Capability Approach”, 8.

⁶⁵³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 57.

⁶⁵⁴ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 293.

Nonetheless, the business of education gives life its quality because it supplies the very conditions which enable growth, value for life and opportunities. To this effect, Sen considers education firstly as a social opportunity, secondly as valuable outcome (like reading and writing), and thirdly causality of freedom in the sense that it helps to improve our ethical ways and also enrich our lives.⁶⁵⁵

Educated persons are more likely to innovate and make discoveries that change the world in ways that make individual human lives longer and more comfortable, and to create works of art and literature that communicate meaning and cultural nuance. Education is also a positional good between societies.⁶⁵⁶

Empirical research and scientific studies show that education helps life to flourish and gives life quality. Statistics from numerous scientific studies show remarkable connections between education and changes in various aspects of people's lives. The outcome shows that better educated people live longer, healthier lives and transmit more material as cultural benefits to their offspring. Going by the recent qualitative study in the UK on the wider benefits of learning, result shows that education has an impact on people's psychological and physical well-being, the way people live and interact in the family. It also enhanced communication between generations, as well as people's ability and motivation to take part in public and social life.⁶⁵⁷

Education promotes wellbeing, helps to reduce mortality rate of children and increases child survival. Education helps mothers to accord serious welfare to the health of their children and uses their knowledge to pursue their convictions in matters of health. "For example, in a comparative study of nearly three hundred districts within India, it emerges that women's education and women's employment are the two most important influences in reducing fertility rates."⁶⁵⁸ Such knowledge empowers women not just to participate in family decisions but take active role in family planning as well as childbearing.

Education beyond the art of learning and writing has some intrinsic values. "From Socratic times until our day, an array of voices has lucidly explained how knowledge helps us to clear our minds, awaken our consciousness, inform our actions, and enrich our lives."⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁵ Cf. Pedro Flores-Crespo, "Situating Education in the Human Capabilities Approach" in *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, eds. Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan™, 2007), 49.

⁶⁵⁶ Ann E. Cudd "What Is Equality in Higher Education?" 267.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf. Lorella Terzi, "The Capability to Be Educated", 32.

⁶⁵⁸ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 195.

⁶⁵⁹ Pedro Flores-Crespo, "Situating Education in the Human Capabilities Approach" 46.

Education also forms and nourishes the thought process. “The educated man can connect what he knows in such a way that his overall outlook on life is transformed and improved. Finally, given that education leads to a general improvement and transformation of the educated man, by initiating him into subjects and activities which are valuable in themselves.”⁶⁶⁰ It recreates the human nature, forms, also shapes and modifies his pattern of social life and gives life a standard.

4.6.10 Education as self-realisation and development of capabilities

Education develops the individual and leads to self-realisation. The stoics also “defend the view that higher education is an essential part of every human being's self-realization.”⁶⁶¹ It should help a member of a given society to realise himself as well as his potentials. It gives the individual to the opportunity to examine himself and find ways of actualising himself, discover goals in life and make good choices. Education provides:

Learners with the opportunity to change their mind-sets because knowledge and experience acquired through education for self-realization enable learners to examine and re-examine their feelings, thoughts, beliefs, customs and suppositions. Education enables them to discover and understand the self so that they can make meaning from their understanding of the self and the socially constructed world. This is because self-realization promotes interdependence, cooperation and sense of belonging through active participation.⁶⁶²

Education does not only help one to discover himself or herself but develops and trains an individual's personal capacities. “In his analysis of development and poverty, Sen highlights the contribution of education to the quality of life and the formation and expansion of human capabilities.”⁶⁶³ Man at birth possesses innate capacities. So education gives opportunity for these potentials to be nurtured and developed. It was for this reason that Plato's stated that “an education could be given which would sift individuals, discovering what they were good for, and supplying a method of assigning each to the work in life for which his nature fits him.”⁶⁶⁴ It is in this sense vital to human dignity and self-worth. Also, it is a basic capacity

⁶⁶⁰ Anthony O'Hear, *Education, Society and Human Nature. An Introduction to the philosophy of education, Volume 148* (London, New York: Routledge, 2012), 37.

⁶⁶¹ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 30.

⁶⁶² Paul Jackson Irejefoju “Constructing Education for Self-realization on the basis of Plato's Human Psychology: The Nigerian Experience” *In International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* Vol. 48, (Switzerland: SciPress Ltd, 2015), 196. Doi:10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.48.

⁶⁶³ Lorella Terzi, “The Capability to Be Educated”, 25.

⁶⁶⁴ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 96.

because it lays foundation and helps one to improve other capabilities for the well-being of the individual.

Education does not only lead to good life in the society but also “portends a dignifying importance towards people’s wellbeing. Hence, the “absence or lack of education would essentially harm and disadvantage the individual and, in some cases, impossible to compensate in later life.”⁶⁶⁵ By implication, “having the opportunity for education and the development of an education capability expands human freedoms. Not having education harms human development and choosing and having a full life.”⁶⁶⁶ Going by this function of education, Nussbaum held that “literacy expands human capabilities and proves to be crucial in progress being made in all areas of people’s lives... Furthermore, numerous studies attest to the higher level of well-being enjoyed by literate societies when compared to nonliterate ones.”⁶⁶⁷ A study by Flores-Crespo 2002 in Mexico by using an evaluative framework explains the relationship between education and development. The research outcome manifested that most graduates in various fields of life reached valuable personal and professional achievements thanks to the education provided by the selected universities.⁶⁶⁸ To this effect, Sen and Nussbaum insist that children should be enjoy compulsory education until they have their capabilities fully developed and nurtured. Such development will influence them in the life’s choices, values and wellbeing.

Conclusion

This section began by considering if philosophy and sound education could set the wheels of justice in the right direction with regard to Nigeria. These tools when engaged could give birth to new ideas which could be employed to solve problems. It was stated categorically that ideas as far as the human society is concerned remains a powerful asset towards change and development. The argument went further to describe how powerful ideas could be. No society can exist without men of ideas and whatever we have today is nothing but a manifestation of this assertion. Everything in our contemporary society is nothing but a product of one’s idea.

⁶⁶⁵ Lorella Terzi, *The Capability to Be Educated*, 30.

⁶⁶⁶ Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, eds. “The Capability Approach”, 8.

⁶⁶⁷ Lorella Terzi, “The Capability to Be Educated”, 38.

⁶⁶⁸ Pedro Flores-Crespo, “Situating Education in the Human Capabilities Approach”, 50.

Taking a somewhat historical excursus, mention was made of the great epochs and individuals who influenced the world positively with their ideas and by so doing changed the course of knowledge. These people and their achievement show that the world owe a lot to men of ideas. While ancient society kick-started this wave of ideas with their philosophical enquiries, the men of later periods- enlightenment and modern times as well as contemporary period revolutionized their contributions and took them to greater heights.

Nevertheless, not everyone shares this conviction about ideas. One of those who rejected the power of ideas was Karl Marx. Instead of ideas, he traced the ideal to man's quest for materialism and the hunger to satisfy human needs. Material needs and the desire to fulfil these needs lead man to new ideas. Despite presenting a powerful argument, Karl Marx however did not know that his material dialectics would come to be studied as one of those ideas that influenced the society of his time. If I could make up for his lapses, I would say that ideas are the forces which bring to reality the goal of mankind and meaning to the material yearnings. That which makes a thing what it is, higher and more important, in that without it, the thing loses its value.

I went on to trace the relationship between ideas, philosophy and education. Their relevance was not left out in this scientific work. Philosophy provides the background for the formation and development of ideas. It provides ideas for people to chew on and ideas keep philosophical culture active. If philosophy provides the raw material (ideas) for people, then education is the classical foundation of philosophy in the sense that philosophy uses education as a tool or means and receives from education too. Both philosophy and education make the human mind fit for political life and feed human society with innovative and powerful ideas. They also help to define, describe, analyse, moderate, critically view, and refine them for the good of human society.

CHAPTER FIVE

A ROADMAP TO THE REALIZATION OF JUSTICE IN NIGERIA

5.0 An Introduction

The bone of contention of this dissertation as indicated right from the opening page, has been on the subject of 'justice' and how its principles can be realised in Nigeria. Contrary to the teachings about justice, one finds in Nigeria nothing but a situation of institutionalized social injustice sustained through an unjust social structure perpetuated and supported by the political elites as well as few privileged persons who benefit from it. There is no gainsaying that the situation necessitates a new spirit in order to reduce inequalities in the society and enhance the course of justice. This clarion call for change has lasted for years, yet with no improvement let alone a permanent solution. Many in the light of these circumstances, have either proposed a forceful revolution or disintegration of the different entities into many countries. While I share this idea of disintegration as well as non-violent revolution perhaps, I still have the belief that we need to understand ourselves first before embarking on any kind of division, otherwise, the same problems will persist since the division will still have the same quality and kind of citizens.

If neither disintegration nor revolution is the solution, what and how then can we get the society to live true to the principles of justice? This is the question that stares every Nigerian in the face and proposing a solution constitutes a priority in this work. Hence, my personal reaction is that Nigeria needs first to overcome the many obstacles militating against the practice of justice in Nigeria and it is only when these obstacles are removed that the country can come together to collectively fight for the universal course of justice- sit together rationally at the table of discourse, distribute resources equally, reduce manifest injustice and avoid the monopoly of some goods without fear of favours or interests. Nigeria needs to rationalise over events with improved mind-sets in order not only to construct but get the principles of justice to function. Every hand must be on deck.

5.1 What is to be done

The current Nigerian situation demands an urgent and articulate roadmap that can redirect the nation on the right path of justice. Having seen in chapter four the value of philosophy and education and how ideas could change a society, I thereby posit that Nigeria needs the

tool of philosophy and sound education in order to surmount her numerous challenges so as to give the reign of justice a chance. Without rational, cultivated political minds and sound education, leaders as well as the led will always formulate obnoxious and unfair systems, a false, unhealthy application and the abuse of justice. As Andre M. would opine: “the trouble lies in the minds of men and it is in enlightening the minds of men that the cure must be sought.”⁶⁶⁹ If we want to change our political journey and work towards the realisation of justice, if our concern is to fix the problem of injustice and overcome the very many obstacles militating against its practice, then we must restructure the educational system, and then make philosophy a gigantic project.

Perhaps, one can understand my submission and its importance when we realise that philosophy (at least an introductory aspect of it) has been introduced many years ago in Nigeria as a compulsory one semester course in the first year of all tertiary institutions irrespective of the discipline. It could be said that a person in the high institution of learning is already acquiring knowledge but introducing philosophy as a compulsory general study (GST) course shows that the policy makers also share the idea and saw the need for the minds of the students to be sharpened and critical in order make them ready for the task ahead in their various areas of study. But unfortunately and disappointingly, it is taken as a jamboree exercise where neither students pay attention to this important course nor take such a discipline seriously. It lacks the required attention and one finds a big vacuum at the base due to the haphazard approach this special course is accorded in the education system. A majority of the students who pass through this process lack the least atom of a philosophical sense of direction because it is only done to fulfil all righteousness, and they do not know as much about the philosophy that underlies the social and civic way of life.

Therefore, I strongly recommend a dosage of philosophy in all levels of education, be it informal or formal. The American philosopher and writer William James shares also the necessity for our modern society to give special attention to the place of philosophy in education in the utmost hope that it will re-establish the character and importance of the discipline in the minds of the generally educated citizens.⁶⁷⁰ Attention must be paid from the early stages of learning (primary and secondary) and should therefore be introduced just like other subjects- Mathematics, Religion, and English are done till tertiary level and not just a

⁶⁶⁹ Andre M., *The Art of Leadership in the Art of Living* (London: Cox and Wyman, 1960), 153.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. John Haldane, “American Philosophy and its Public Role,” in *Philosophy and its Public Role*, eds. William Aiken and John Haldane (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 23.

general course studied for one semester. “The study of philosophy is simply too important to remain the province of a chosen few. Every person who wishes to think and act intelligently needs to understand the methods and accomplishments of philosophy.”⁶⁷¹ Sharing this same belief, Louis Arnaud Reid insists that “philosophy ought not to be simply the prerogative of a few professionals; it is needed as a guide for the ordinary man in his everyday life. Purpose and integration ought to be provided by the philosopher.”⁶⁷² This will help to inculcate rational, moral values and high sense of patriotism which will help address the numerous injustices, unjust socio-political and economic structures that have bedevilled the Nigerian society. Citizens should be stuffed rationally and intellectually to face the challenges of modern democracy and its demand for justice.

Education itself is a child of philosophy, for in search of wisdom-sophos, we begin to learn and get educated. When we imbibe the critical attitude of philosophy, it enables us to open up to learn more, to be educated in the right way and discover new ways of doing things as well as thinking. By this means, we can learn the good and unlearn the wrong. My conviction stems from the fact that “there are prima facie grounds for supposing that a person who has received a broad education is likely to be more open to change, to be more flexible.”⁶⁷³ It is for this reason that I insist that philosophy must go hand in hand with sound education. It should not employ the services of education for its propagation but education must itself be prioritized as a project for the development, reconstruction, and reorientation of minds and acquisition of knowledge: “for if we do not rescue education, we cannot rescue anything, not the economy, not leadership, not democracy, not development, not our values.”⁶⁷⁴ The Nigerian education system deserves right now a Copernican attention; “shifting of the centre of gravity...a change, a revolution, not unlike that introduced by Copernicus.”⁶⁷⁵ This envisaged education system must also give attention to political education at least in the areas of political rights and duties of citizens, obligations, functions and limits of the government. “We should contemplate, among others, three important kinds of change: in

⁶⁷¹ Steven M. Cahn, *A New Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 3.

⁶⁷² Louis Arnaud Reid, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1962), 4.

⁶⁷³ Keith Thompson, *Education and Philosophy: A Practical Approach* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 83.

⁶⁷⁴ Ekpu Ray, “Evaluation and Leadership,” in *Newswatch Magazine* (Lagos: Newswatch Communications Limited, May 24, 2004), 10.

⁶⁷⁵ Dewey J, *The Child and the Curriculum and the School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 34, quoted John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy and Democracy*, 160.

education, in the way we run our elections, and in the way we interpret our constitution.”⁶⁷⁶ It is undoubtedly necessary to educate the people of what justice is and demands, as well as teach them that each time they elect a politician, that they have invariably submitted their life unto the hands of the politician and hence deserves the best of representation from him. “People need to be enlightened on what is involved when they make a political choice. We must bear in mind that the quality of the laws and policies of the people are reflected in the quality of the mind and discipline of their politicians.”⁶⁷⁷

Supporting the clarion call for a total change through education, Augustine Oburota suggested also the introduction of education in civics at all levels of education be it primary, secondary and tertiary. “A policy be made whereby each Nigerian adult attends a compulsory ten-hour course in Civics and the Nigerian constitution at a designated place in his or her local government area. The course should include contents like: Responsible citizenship; Rule of law; what is justice? What is freedom? Why should I be law-abiding? Saying no to corruption; saying no to crime and violence; And my contribution to making Nigeria a better place.”⁶⁷⁸ The citizens must also be trained at homes, schools, and communities, at private and public levels to understand, know and claim their rights, to shun sycophancy and challenge the status quo of injustice.⁶⁷⁹

In other to achieve a moderate just society and reduce manifest injustices, there should also be considerable questions of what to be taught, whom to be taught, when and the appropriate time to teach. What to be taught must take into consideration Nigerian society and its impeding challenges. What to be taught must have local contents aimed at solving her numerous problems. As for whom to be taught, every citizen irrespective of age should be offered some level of education although the best time to teach remains the early stage of life. Education is the right of every child as well as citizens. In as much as the normal (formal) classroom educational system may not fit into the lives of already grown-ups, however, the media, religious, cultural and other means should be used for awakening and enlightenment of the mind at least for the essentials. The government should make plans and

⁶⁷⁶R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 148.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. Francis O.C Njoku, *Philosophy in Politics, Law and Democracy* (Owerri, Claretian Institute of Philosophy Nekede, in collaboration with Claretian Communications Nekede, 2002), 8.

⁶⁷⁸ Augustine Oburota, “The Philosophy of Conflict and the Problem of Democracy in Africa,” *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa, Unesco 2006 World Philosophy Day @ Unizik*, vol.2, (Awka: Fab Educational Book, 2007), 215.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Agbai Ina Obasi, *Nigeria: A Decade of Sycophancy, Waste, and Looting of Public Funds (1999-2009)*, (Florida: Xulon Press, 2017), 77.

increase the budget for education so as to offer every eligible child an education appropriate to his/her situation.

However, the project of making philosophy a priority and remodelling our educational system should not only be left to the mercy of politicians or stakeholders, rather experts, philosophers, parents, guardians and organisations must be involved. Rightly said, “the education of those who are to govern and guard the state is too important to be left, as in Plato’s Athens, to private initiative and personal decision; a state system is to be established.”⁶⁸⁰ It is a project that requires collective efforts. Attention should not only be on theoretical knowledge as our present educational system does, rather, it should also be practice oriented. The curriculum must be revisited and the many challenges facing the country considered in its formulation. The conducive atmosphere for proper learning must be restored. Again, there should be proper planning and implementation of a modern educational systems geared towards forming, developing, educating the human person and also solving societal problems. Nevertheless, the intellectual capacities of the students or pupils should be put into consideration. The German Secondary system could be an example; there exists Hauptschule, Realschule, Gymnasium and Gesamtschule where students are placed according to their capabilities and interests in life.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁸⁰ David Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 85.

An explanation of the German education system:

⁶⁸¹ **Hauptschule:** In the majority of the federal states, students spend five years at the *Hauptschule*. The main objective of the *Hauptschule* is to prepare students for their entry into the world of work. Once students have obtained their *Hauptschulabschluss* (leaving certificate) at the age of 15-16, they can go into vocational training, start entry-level work in the public sector, or attend a *Berufsfachschule* (full-time vocational school). **Realschule:** Students attend the *Realschule* for 6 years of vocationally-oriented education. Realschule gives a broader general education and expects students to show greater independence. At the end of *Klasse 10* (class 10) they obtain the *Realschulabschluss* (leaving certificate), which gives them different options: in-company vocational training, work in the public sector at entry and executive level, or further school-level education at secondary level II or at a *Fachhochschule*. **Gymnasium:** Students attend the *Gymnasium* for eight or nine years before they take their final examination (*Abitur* or *Hochschulreife*). The *Gymnasium* is designed to provide students with an education which will enable them, once they have passed their *Abitur*, to study at a German university or equivalent. Students at secondary level II (the last two or three years at the *Gymnasium*) select two or three *Leistungskurse* (specialist subjects). Their *Abitur* mark is based on the assessment of these *Leistungskurse* and two other subjects. **Gesamtschule:** The *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school) combines elements from the *Hauptschule*, the *Real-schule* and the *Gymnasium*. Students usually spend six years at the *Gesamtschule* and either obtain a *Hauptschule* or a *Realschule* leaving certificate. Pupils wishing to sit the *Abitur* attend the school for another three years. There are also other schools which combine two or three school types in various ways; the way in which this is done varies between the federal states, as do the names used. Children with special educational needs mostly attend special schools (*Sonderschulen*), although there is currently a move towards an inclusive education model”. <http://www.ukgermanconnection.org/german-school-system>. Accessed 21/01.2019

5.2 My idea of philosophy and type of education

The question that stares every reader of this work is: but what kind of philosophy and what does the advocacy for sound education imply or does it mean that the country lacks proper education? No! Nigeria has made efforts in the recent past to reform its standard of education but more needs to be done and the approach towards education needs to be remodelled. In the introductory part and chapter four of my work, I attempted to give a general understanding as well as the functions of philosophy and education. The definitions stated there will remain relevant and hence will continue to serve the very purpose of my thesis. However, I would precisely clarify my kind of philosophy as:

A persistent attempt by man to understand himself, his fellow man, and the world around him. Such an attempt can be both critical and comprehensive. The philosopher is critical of arguments, seeks clarity in concepts, and wants to make presuppositions more explicit. He also tries to spell out in a general way how he sees things, to incorporate the data from more specialized disciplines into an overview. All the while, the philosopher displays a loyalty to reason in thought and practice.⁶⁸²

By this, I do not only refer to the classical or traditional philosophy, but acquiring the skills of critical philosophy with a focus on the context and locality of the society involved; a philosophical system that would study the numerous problems militating against the Nigerian society. A philosophy that will be comprehensive, that is, a philosophy that will enable one to inquire imperiously about all basic beliefs in all areas of learning- be it science, common sense, religion and philosophy itself. No area of belief is given preferential treatment.⁶⁸³

The philosophy must be a type that would make citizens apply critical thinking to the events of their society. As Kant would teach, “what we learn is not philosophy itself, but how to philosophize by exercising our talent to reason on certain actually existing philosophical attempts. Accordingly, for Kant philosophy is an activity of reason rather than a static body of knowledge.”⁶⁸⁴ It is not enough to acquire some kind of arm chair or academic philosophy⁶⁸⁵ but a philosophy that would be lived, practised and applied to national issues.

⁶⁸² Brian Patrick Hendley, *Dewey, Russell, Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 108. Word in bracket mine.

The alphabet ‘T’ was added as a kind of correction or addition to the presumed typographical error with the hope that the author meant ‘thought’ and not ‘though’ as seen in his book. I remain responsible for the addition and should be held accountable for it.

⁶⁸³ Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3.

⁶⁸⁴ Cf. Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, a John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 520.

⁶⁸⁵ We have to make the relationship between academic or theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. Metaphysics as a branch of theoretical philosophy for instance concerns itself with the question

A philosophy that will lead to a “combination of intellectual curiosity and personal accomplishment and enhance our intellectual autonomy (independence). Philosophy that will help us develop a kind of critical thinking skills to enable us be better reasoners on every issue, and not just philosophical problems. A system of philosophical thinking that will liberate us from others, from ourselves and from stereotypes.”⁶⁸⁶

It should be more of practical philosophy, where citizens can learn not just only techniques for changing ourselves, but how to ask questions about our society and embark on a collective movement that will lead to the realization of social justice. A philosophy that will lead to the pursuit of wisdom, help us to arrive at what is just and meaningful as well as valuable. A philosophy that will help us to pursue what life is all about and virtues to help us avoid social injustice. A practical philosophy that will give us a common sense of life and unity. And if we share a common sense of life, we can do things together, coexist and tolerate one another and collectively work towards a just society, where justice would not be dispensed through the prism of tribe, religion, ethnic group, class or political affiliation but on what is due for every member of the political society- that is the political ideal.

It may be said that Nigeria has gone far in giving attention to education but only lip service and not in every part of the country.⁶⁸⁷ There are many areas where the citizens have little or no access to sound education. Nevertheless, a careful look at our system, one cannot deny the fact that our educational system is still planned on a pre-colonial style, or better said wearing the lenses of the post-colonial era. At the colonial moment, the attention and focus was to produce citizens who could remember, read and write in order to fill in the gaps created by the coming as well as departure of the colonial masters. It was a style of education meant for the individual to get a white collar job and hence, people pursued it as a sign of new social status and honour.⁶⁸⁸ The authentic development and intellectual improvement of the individual person was not a concern. Painful enough as it might be, this syndrome or mentality is till today yet to leave Nigerian society. Most of our teeming youths enrol in

about reality- what is the nature of our society and so on. Epistemology on its part initiates the power of knowledge, what should I know. Ethics proceeds to provide the code or guide to action. So when we know the reality on ground (justice), we acquire new knowledge and ethics sets in with the answer on what should be done to get results.

⁶⁸⁶ Cf. Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy*, 10.

⁶⁸⁷ We could say in principle that the ministry of education has interesting policies just like the free Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and good curricula for primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, but these policies are nothing but a charade of fruitless ventures.

⁶⁸⁸ For instance, most of our parents received education only to help the whites extend their colonial programme and teach the people the new white man’s language. The intention was not to solve societal problems but for the persons to acquire a certificate for jobs and opportunities.

institutions of higher learning as well as secondary schools for securing a ticket to greener pasture-jobs. Hardly do people go to school for the mere purpose of acquiring knowledge so as to bring solutions and innovations to our peculiar society. This could explain why there are few or no links between our education and modern development.

Therefore, sound education in this work would entail a holistic system of education that will affect the life of the citizens, sharpen and re-orientate their minds. It would imply an improved system of education that will focus on authentic development and intellectual improvement of the individual person. An all-round system of education that will not focus only on acquiring degrees but centre more on mental, human development, character formation and morals. A system where the students will not only pass through the four walls of institutions of learning but allow the institutions to pass through them, reshape and remould them. An education that will consider the interior and exterior parts of the human person.

An education that will not just be theoretical but practice focused too- translated into the lives of the citizens; a type that should not only focus on the present but also on the future- that is- problems solving oriented and a means of finding out new ways of handling our peculiar society especially that of justice. For some clarity, the attempt here is not a kind of philosophy of education⁶⁸⁹ but a project that will combine the rudiments of philosophy and an enriching impact of sound education.

5.3 Nigerian society in dire need of dialogue with philosophy and sound education

The great ancient moral philosopher Socrates did not mince words when he challenged mankind to know himself. This admonition is vital since an unexamined life is not worth living. The philosopher did not only call mankind out to this self-knowing project but implied that man could only examine and understand himself through the veritable instrument of philosophy and by acquiring true knowledge about life. This challenge becomes not only meaningful to the old Athenians but also to Nigerian society which has been plagued by its pluralism and conflicting diversities. Having discussed the numerous challenges threatening the value of justice in Nigeria, one cannot but accept that there is a need for a rethink. It is urgent and necessary, that the country articulates and stands behind

⁶⁸⁹ Philosophy of Education: is a branch of philosophy that deals with philosophical issues in education. Cf. Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, 522.

a solid, coherent, plausible and practical philosophy that offers ideas on how to solve her numerous challenges. Simply said, we need a philosophical and an intellectual climate conducive to revolutionary political activity and social justice.

Nigeria at this time of her political stage is in dire need of a guiding philosophy and proper education that would guide her to the attainment of a just and equal society. It is necessary that there exists a partnership as much as dialogue between political power, philosophical authority and education. The era of haphazard political leadership and injustice has overstayed and should make efforts to construct and propose ways of getting her democracy and justice to function. It also needs sound education to nurture the minds and make them ready for political activities. There is an urgent need for the citizens to pause, examine and critically evaluate their lives and the state of political society. This exercise will help the people to understand their divergent belief systems, ethnic and cultural diversities, conflicting religious backgrounds and show the citizens how these things affect what they do and how they live. Dworkin also spoke of the need for philosophy in political discourse when he stated that despite our divergent political cultures about human rights, religion, taxes, and so on, we can still construct an argument on common ground if we begin to fall back, at a distinctly philosophical level, in twin principles of human dignity that we almost all accept. But the issue is, do we have the kind of political system that might accommodate a genuine debate for such a project?⁶⁹⁰ This same question stares every Nigerian in the face and calls for an active response.

Philosophy and sound education thereby remain the veritable tools that will help the people to understand that diversity enriches instead of causing harm and crises. The human person is never a single sided or one minded being, therefore, he would always continue to access and analyse things from different perspectives. The idea of looking at reality in a multidimensional way and from different perspectives in a multicultural society would help society to seek truth and understand their environment from diverse points of view. Such a system of understanding and accepting diversity leads to healthy development, peace and a harmonious way of treating the issues of justice. It also unites the people in the midst of their diversity. It will also lead to the very respect demanded by the principles of justice.

One is that human life becomes much more interesting, stimulating and even exciting when there are many varied ways of thinking, feeling, expressing, acting and viewing the world. Secondly and perhaps more importantly, given the range in kinds and complexity of human needs and wants, the more alternative problems-solving

⁶⁹⁰ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here*, 127.

approaches there are the more likely we are to find solutions which may enable us to live our lives in an increasingly effective way.⁶⁹¹

The more we continue to neglect these important tools, the more our woes will continue to deepen. In his time, Socrates also warned his fellow Athenians that any nation that does not value trained intelligence and philosophical attitude or skills, wisdom as well as prudence and the other important virtues which could only be acquired through learning and doing philosophy is heading into nothing but doom. His pupil Plato followed suit in this clarion call for the need for philosophy. “For him, a man without some tint of philosophy is, without doubt, dangerous, in fact doubly dangerous. First to himself, because he gropes in the dark and may never find his way, and secondly, to the society, because he could be likened to a ship without rudder or compass.”⁶⁹² He preached that philosophy could help not only in building human society but in the sustenance of a stable political society.

To buttress this fact, history teaches us that most people who contributed to the changing of the world and issues of justice are philosophers or had strong philosophical backgrounds. Mention could be made of the likes of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Martin Luther King Jnr, Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela. The list could be endless. Europe and America are what they are today, thanks to the influence of notable philosophers like John Locke, also Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, Karl Marx, Kant, Dewey, Thomas Jefferson, Alexis de Tocqueville and hosts of others. Just like the other societies mentioned, a recourse to the philosophical discipline and sound education would help Nigeria overcome most of her societal challenges, set the standard and pace for achieving at least a moderate just society.

In addition, there is need to reconstruct our syllabuses to include environmental studies and philosophy, and to reduce the study of ancient history of other parts of the world. By so doing, the Nigerian child would not be ignorant of what goes on in his own society but be encouraged to have a deep knowledge of his culture as well as appreciate the nature of changes taking place in the world.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹¹ Pai Young, “A Conversation About Multicultural Education: Three Troublesome Notions,” In *Creating A Multicultural Education Conversation (1-12)*, *Proceeding of South Atlantic Philosophy of Educations Society*, ed. Joseph Cogleton, (North Carolina: South Atlantic Philosophy of Education Society, 1992), 4.

⁶⁹² Emmanuel M. Ome, “Philosophy, Democracy and African Development: The Relevance of Nyerere’s Political Philosophy,” In *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 140.

⁶⁹³ Egaga Patrick Akwaji, “Educational and National Development in Nigeria: A Philosophical Outlook,” in *The Sign Magazine, Education for National Development*, ed. Gerald Ogbulikpe (Ikot Ekpene: Published by St. Joseph’s Major Seminary, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, vol.17, 41st edition, 2018), 16.

Until the education system in Nigeria grows from memorizing notes to critical thinking, our educated citizens may not be able to start asking questions regarding human dignity, justice and human rights, legality of actions and reactions and the limitations of individuals' whims and caprices.

5.4 The focus of the philosophic-educational project: catch them early

This section brings up once more the question, who should be educated and taught philosophy? I did state initially that every citizen deserves the minimal level of education and philosophy. This means that both little children as well as adults should be educated and the rudiments of philosophy imparted to them. While this is unreservedly true, however, one would not deny the fact that the best time to teach is in the early stage of life.⁶⁹⁴ In order to raise a more responsible and workable Nigeria, attention must be focused on catching the citizens early enough when they are still open to learning and malleable. The child is seen as a rational agent and education as a process liberates one from ignorance and servility.⁶⁹⁵ John Dewey is of the strong view that "education should focus on the whole child and emphasize the child's adaptation to the environment. He especially thought that children should learn how to be reflective problem solvers. Third, we owe to Dewey the belief that all children deserve to have a competent education."⁶⁹⁶ Children are like a garden that receive wholly what is planted in it, hence, every attempt should be made at the incipient stage to cultivate them duly in order to enable them to exercise their rational ability in many areas of life, to think for themselves to an extent and also improve their mental capacity. "Experimental research in the U.S and in many of the countries ... has demonstrated that children exposed to philosophy by well-prepared teachers gain significantly in reasoning, reading comprehension, and mathematical performance."⁶⁹⁷ This evidence is enough to motivate all towards taking philosophy seriously.

In as much as the philosophy envisaged here should not be totally classical philosophy, however, some kind of moral and practical philosophy could be of huge benefit to the children. Attention should be focused on awakening or stimulating their moral imaginations

⁶⁹⁴ The UNICEF charter on the rights of the Child 20 November 1989 is "the right to education". And its 28th article says "the child has the right to education"

⁶⁹⁵ Cf. Andrew Stables, *Childhood and the Philosophy of Education: An Aristotelian Perspective* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 3.

⁶⁹⁶ John W. Santrock, *Educational Psychology. Classroom Update: Preparing for Praxis™ and Practice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 5. (Word in bracket mine).

⁶⁹⁷ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy* (Arbeta: Detselig Enterprise, 1995), x. Philosophy for Children is sometimes abbreviated as P4C.

and values, help them realise their moral duties, obligations and rights in the society. This could be only easier at the early stages of their academic sojourn. Once the seed of moral discernment is sown in them, children would be able to overcome indoctrination and unhealthy belief systems that can polarise society. Children should also be introduced to the rubrics of philosophy to enable them to analyse certain key concepts of some philosophical cum moral principles. Such a programme should also be geared towards instilling some sense of responsibility and ability to reason critically towards certain societal norms and assumptions.⁶⁹⁸

When it comes to education, the areas of civics and critical thinking should be emphasised. Good enough, the Nigerian educational system has room for a subject called civic education. But unfortunately, the curriculum for this subject is more to do with personal hygiene, sociology and geography - where the students are taught about their personal hygiene, some facts about their environment and often about the geography of western societies⁶⁹⁹ (issues like winter and summer, different time zones, longer days and shorter nights) without introducing them to their responsibilities, duties, obligations, rights as well topics patterning to their immediate political society. In as much as no knowledge is a waste, however, children could be launched into a thorough understanding of some basic philosophical skills, and how to be critical in moral issues. My academic journey in Germany and Poland made me understand that children at the earliest stages of learning are exposed to their constitutions, rights and duties and some basic laws of the land. They are as well exposed to critical skills and are often ready to ask pertinent questions about certain things of life. Why, what, and explanations for almost everything around them or new things they come into contact with are always on their lips.

⁶⁹⁸ In the course of my research work, I visited a high school in Germany where I discovered that students at this level are given opportunities to express their minds over certain philosophical concepts and religious assumptions unlike in Nigeria where the students are fed only the mind of the teachers with the expectation of reproducing them during examination time to earn marks.

We still seem to be in the era of post colonialism, where our educational curriculum is still modelled after that of the colonial masters without considering if such system has really worked well or functioned in our peculiar society. These post-colonial methods of education could have worked in the past, when the need was to qualify for jobs during the colonial and post-colonial eras, to take up managerial and leadership positions. But the situation at hand “calls for a system of schooling which is restructured rather than just intensified. The old system of education- the system of age-graded classrooms, early tracking, narrowly conceived standardized tests, and inherent pedagogical conservatism and uniformity- is a social and intellectual product of the industrial society and economy of the late 19th century, and will simply not produce individuals able to cope with the new challenges.” Cf. John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 159.

Our schools should be converted into “communities of inquiries, in which students can generate and exchange ideas, clarify concepts, develop hypotheses, weigh possible consequences, and in general deliberate reasonably together while learning to enjoy their intellectual interdependence.”⁷⁰⁰ It should also be an education that fosters “the togetherness of children representing wide variations in cultural background, race, gender, class, and geography.”⁷⁰¹ This is to say that students can acquire significant practice in mediating with one another and in arriving at settlements only if they are first confronted with direct and unsettling problems that speak to them in their immediate social environment. It is here that the discipline of philosophy, suitably reconstructed so as to be accessible to even the youngest school children, can be of enormous service.

Each society is autonomous and unique. This is in line with the idea of Michael Walzer who saw every society as being unique and should be judged or treated the same. Hence, there is a need for a restructured model of education that will be specific to our multi-cultural society. Supporting this stand, Isaiah Berlin stated that: “educational needs spring from the pattern formed by the permanent- or, at any rate, relatively widespread- needs of human beings, modified by the predicament of the particular society in which they live. To understand his needs, a man must know something of the times he lives in....”⁷⁰² As society changes and evolves, the system of education should also follow the sign of the times.

5.5.0 How philosophy and sound education can help Nigerian society to realise justice

5.5.1 Solving religious crisis

In Nigeria, the various fundamental religious beliefs influence the course of justice and dictate the day to day life, activities and citizens’ relationship with one another. As is always the case, religion determines the run of distributive justice and many people often receive some opportunities or share of resources by virtue of their religious affiliations. Religious intolerance has eaten deep into many Nigerians, destroyed peace and one can easily agree with Heiner Hastedt who stated that “when tolerance is completely lacking, civil war looms.”⁷⁰³ It is observable that one of the major causes to this is ignorance and the inability

⁷⁰⁰ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 121.

⁷⁰¹ James Scott Johnston, *Inquiry and Education: John Dewey and The Quest For Democracy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 193.

⁷⁰² Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Pimlico, 2001), 216.

⁷⁰³ Heiner Hastedt, *Toleranz* (Stuttgart: Philip Reclam, 2012), 7. (Translation mine). „Wenn Toleranz ganz fehlt, droht der Bürgerkrieg.“

to take a personal rational attitude towards faith beliefs. As one of the greatest challenges to the realisation of justice in Nigeria, a dose of philosophical training and sound education will help the citizens to change or overcome some fundamental beliefs and free themselves from religious dogmatism. To brake this barrier, philosophy and sound education must be employed to enable people see beyond the tenets of religion and apply reason in everyday religious activities. A philosophical attitude will enable the citizen to change some unhealthy fundamental beliefs by questioning those incongruent beliefs that are not in agreement with the human reason. Consequently, any religious, cultural, political belief that is found wanting or guilty before the ‘infallible court of reason’ is bound to be re-examined or totally discarded. Education will equip the minds and help them to see things beyond the prism of religion.

Philosophy will help the citizens understand that we all derive our existence or being from a necessary being which different religions call Almighty, God or Allah, Chukwu Okike, Olodumare, Ubangiji.⁷⁰⁴ If philosophical knowledge is made available and inculcated into the citizens, it will make them realise that both Christians and Muslims are only approaching this same ‘One Supreme Being’ differently. This approach will help the people to realise that Christians, Muslims and Traditional worshippers as well as other minor religions are seeking the same Supreme being but through different ways and under different nomenclatures.

Philosophical knowledge will also help the citizens of Nigeria to appreciate the uniqueness of each religion and then respect boundaries. With philosophy and sound education, citizens will be able to see the uniqueness of every religion and respect each other’s religious views, thereby reducing or abating the incessant religious violence prevalent in Nigeria. By this, the youth will no longer be pushed or induced irrationally into violence and mayhem in the name of faith belief or religion. Both will equip the youths with the stamina to contemplate first, question certain commands or orders of the so-called religious leaders that are not in consonance with human rationality. Aptly said, philosophy and sound education will help the people not only to question some religious beliefs but to find out reason for accepting anything.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁴ Chukwu Igbo name for God Almighty. Ubangiji Hausa name for God meaning the Supreme Being, Olodumare is Yoruba name for God meaning the Supreme God

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. J. O. Ejikemeuwa Ndubisi, “The Role of Philosophy in Contemporary Society: The Nigerian Experience,” in *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal*, 10 (1): 40-46, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University Anambra State, Nigeria (Anambra: IDOSI Publications, 2015), 44.

The acquisition of philosophical wisdom and sound knowledge will dispose Nigerians to accept differences and appreciate the good aspects of each religious confession, thereby deepening tolerance towards each and reducing hatred. In this regard, adherents of Christianity, Traditional Religion and Islam are to see themselves as collaborators and not enemies. When people are properly educated and possess the charisma of philosophy to reason well, then, the citizens irrespective of religion and ethnic heritage can fight for the course of justice as a united entity. It will inspire the citizens to “continue to ask question, achieve common goal/good, peace, tolerance between people of different religions and improve the course of justice, the citizens have to think as a philosopher does by engaging in philosophical dialogue.”⁷⁰⁶ It would help them to know that injustice to one is injustice to all and the community at large since we all share one humanity and possess equal dignity. Justice speaks no defined language but a universal one, justice has no religion, justice cannot be confounded to any particular tribe and justice is apolitical. The citizens must be taught that the principles of justice should not be weighed under the lenses of religion or faith belief but with reason. That means, not just religious beliefs but reasoning or critical thinking must also be a sufficient basis for moral and political deliberation as far as attainment of justice remains a goal.

Further, Philosophy and sound education would provide in Nigeria moral and political guidance which are necessary for the virtue of justice. Habermas “believes that philosophical reflection can indeed provide moral and political guidance, for it can disclose principles that have what he calls “universal validity.”⁷⁰⁷ Such philosophical habits when combined with sound education would help the citizens to be able to sieve out tested religious beliefs from mere assertions, individual religious opinions and be open-minded when dealing with each other, so as not to endanger the practice of justice.

5.5.2 Resolving unhealthy ethnic squabbles

In Nigeria there exists old age stereotypes, inherited tribal bitterness and all sorts of inflammatory histories. As stated, ethnicity plays a decisive role in the dispensation of justice in Nigeria. This factor has in no small measure increased the level of injustices and led to a

⁷⁰⁶ Alasdair Macintyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 140.

⁷⁰⁷ Richard Rorty, “*Democracy and Philosophy*,” in “Eurozine”, 11 June 2007. A public lecture given by Richard Rorty in April 2004 at the Centre for Cultural Studies in Tehran organized by Ramin Jahanbegloo. Accessed 27, Feb. 2019. <https://www.eurozine.com/democracy-and-philosophy/>.

high rate of inequality as it is almost the centre of every distributive venture. There cannot be justice, equality or any meaningful rational discourse among the citizens unless this menace of tribalism is set aside. Philosophy and sound education will therefore help the citizens to reason critically and correctly, prudently and wisely in order to be able to dispel the long held tribal prejudices, bias, acrimony and differences. By combining both tools, it will not be enough for someone or a tribe to say that something is the case without verifiable proofs and evidence. It will help the citizens to demand justification for every single claim made and with facts. The project recommended will help people not to accept things that fail to pass through rational justification. It will in no smaller measure remind us that though we differ in tongues, cultures, and tribes yet we all belong to one category of humanity, pursuing the same human values in one united society.

Philosophy and sound education will in great measures help Nigerians to free themselves from the shackles of prejudices developed from cultural and habitual beliefs, propaganda, common sense, environmental inclinations and also erroneous convictions that stifle the course of justice. The possessor of proper knowledge, wisdom and a critical thinking stands out in the midst of the crowd. A more rational and informed mind will avail citizens the opportunity and mental disposition to reason correctly, to welcome only good practices while rejecting harmful, uncivil and irrational behaviour or practices in the glorious name of culture, tradition and religion.

Sound education and the study of philosophy will expose the citizens to the truth that they all share one and the same humanity. The study of substance and accidents in metaphysics reveals that humans share and are greatly made up of the same essence and essential properties.⁷⁰⁸ All things being equal, the humanness of the person from Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, or those smaller ethnic groups with its corresponding dignity is not lesser or higher than that of the other. The fact that one hails from or belongs to a particular tribe is simply accidental to the being of the individual person. In this regard therefore, the study of philosophy will certainly play a vital role to unite Nigerians and encourage them to realize the existential fact that there is no essential difference among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. This understanding will not only bring about good relationships among the various ethnic groups but them to live a life devoid of tribal sentiments and unbiased assessment of justice. Such

⁷⁰⁸ Which is the humanity of the human person.

an effort will sustain the general fight against inequality irrespective of one's ethnic affiliation.⁷⁰⁹

Both would do much to liberate a citizen from the narrow and feeble confines in which at present (ethnic sentiment) he seems to exist. It would usher the citizens to certain vistas to leave the shackles and shadows of ethnic as well as tribal differences, to create a country where everyone would be treated justly and equally; to restart a society where people would not be judged by the content of their ethnic affiliations, states, skin colour or tribal marks, nor the local government of origin but as a true citizen of Nigeria. It would help to overcome the harm, hostility, barbarism and acrimony initiated by ethnic crisis and religious intolerance as well as overcome the liability of chronic misunderstanding among the citizens.

If people want to control their lives, they must first of all have knowledge of what they are dealing with. Therefore, the citizens especially the younger generation should be furnished in particular with weapons -reason, sound intellect and knowledge- against such a state of helplessness introduced by long ethnic and tribal misunderstandings. The citizens should have sufficient knowledge of the genesis of the crisis and the different possible ways it could manifest itself. It is only in knowing the cause of a problem that one professes or comes up with solutions. This tallies with the saying that a problem discovered is half solved.

5.5.3 Innovation of new ideas and policies that will enhance the practice of justice and reduce inequalities

Today, there is a unanimous belief that ideas rule the world and give birth to good policies. One needs first to be trained so as to lead others for "nemo dat quod non habet" (no one gives what he or she does not have). Modern political societies are looking up to people of ideas for productive policies and ideologies. The crop of leaders and citizens a society has can influence or mar its pursuit of justice. Obedience to the tenets of democracy and justice require some amount of intellectual discipline and rational ability. Perhaps this could have been the reason Plato suggested that people with no or little education should have nothing to do with politics. In as much philosophers (as opined by Plato) must not rule today going by the sophisticated and divergent outlook of the 21st century politico-socio-economic society, however, the very need of philosophy and proper education is required to sharpen the minds of her citizens and leaders so as to achieve fair distribution of resources, human

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. J. O. Ejikemeuwa Ndubisi, "The Role of Philosophy in Contemporary Society: The Nigerian Experience," In *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal* 10 (1), 43.

and economic development. It only requires and takes a rational, and reflective mind who knows and understands the principles of justice to push for its realisation to the letter.

One cannot deny the fact that philosophy and education furnish a human person with the strong foundation for critical thought and knowledge. Both initiate intellectual, critical and reflective activities where the individual is able to generate new ideas, policies and practicable means of actualising them. Therefore, “the philosopher must take enough time to make changes by the use of ideas. Philosophy is all about ideas and change. Here, the philosopher must ginger her people to think responsibly and accountably. It is this way of thinking that has brought positive changes in different parts of the world.”⁷¹⁰ Relying on this, Nigeria no doubt needs people of ideas who will create systems and come up with ways of reshaping the society towards the realisation of justice since previous efforts have failed. The country cries for men of intuitive ideas, who will develop sophisticated principles of justice and political structures that will nib the chronic challenges of ethnicism, religion, tribal, corrupt, unjust and as well as unfair society to the mud. Without new policies and ideas for solutions⁷¹¹, injustice and inequality will remain as ticks on the skin of a dog.

Many societies like Nigeria today grope in darkness simply because they lack true leaders with visionary qualities and ideas necessary for development and the attainment of justice. Implicitly, an effective leadership that thinks outside the box with innovative purposes, effective changes and transformation towards the virtue of justice, harmony and development cannot but be a priority. Not only will philosophy and sound education change the thought processes of the citizens but will also raise creative minds hungry for social change. It will offer citizens the capacity for self-thinking and planning. It will enable the citizens to question unhealthy ideas, wrong policies as well as the rational stamina to speak and fight for their rights.

One of the characteristics that pushed the western world to where they are today is that their citizens do not think of today alone but are consumed by the challenges of tomorrow and the future. Ideas also help these nations to plan in advance on how best to improve their environment. In this vein, Nigeria needs indigenous ideas ad rem to our local environment.

⁷¹⁰ Terfa K. Anjov, “Democracy and Conflicts in Africa: The Role of Philosophy in the 21st Century,” in *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa, Unesco 2006 World Philosophy Day @ Unizik*, vol. 2 (Awka: Fab Educational Book, 2007), 239.

⁷¹¹ Nigeria’s foremost nationalist leader, who was the most detribalized of all Nigerian leaders ever, Zik was also a most versatile scholar who won the nationalist battle in the field, not of arms, but of ideas and argument.

We seem to copy every political idea from other countries even when such ideas are either hostile to our environment or not working well. Our system of democracy, law as well as other constitutional matters that should sustain the practice of justice were copied from many developed countries without considering the uniqueness of our own society. As Amartya Sen criticised proponents of a traditional system of justice, and Michael Walzer taught that each society is unique, philosophy and sound education will inspire citizens to think out ideas that would be appropriate for Nigerian society, its peculiar challenges and how best to achieve a just society.

Permit me to fall back on the analogy of the great philosopher Socrates who described the activities of three sets of people in an Olympic Games Arena in order to buttress my stand. While the first group of people go there to buy and make profits, the second group take part in order to compete and win trophies. The third as he said, are those who go as spectators not for economic games, not for trophies but to analyse and reflect upon the events taking place. The essence of this analysis and reflection is to see how to develop and make the competition better. Intellectual wisdom and sound knowledge would help the citizens as well as leaders (in all spheres of life) in Nigeria to constantly analyse and seek ways of realising justice. It will help the people not to look at things only from the materialistic perspective as Karl Marx would insist nor from material glories as the participants in the Olympic games would do, but to analyse and reflect upon the situations of things in the society in order to come up with good ideas that could improve the practice of justice. Such a reflective and analytic spirit would help the citizens to be liberated from dormant or normal daily life and its infections in the course of continuous pursuit for an equal-just society. Interpretatively, a country that continuously analyses and reflects upon her challenges and the causes of inequalities amongst the citizens is a country that is on the path of justice, for one must first reflect upon, analyse in order to find appropriate solutions and ways of realising a purpose. Philosophy and sound education are required to put our society on a rational journey.

Philosophical wisdom consists in the desire constantly to seek the truth while education broadens the mind of the individual and prepares him for philosophical enterprise. Philosophy and education which instil wisdom and knowledge would make the citizens irrespective of tribe, religion and cultural differences to go in pursuit and search of the truth about justice. "In the aggregate, an educated citizenry is also a good thing in itself and for its instrumental benefits. Knowledgeable, competent citizens enhance civic participation and

democratic governance.”⁷¹² Philosophy and education would harness the goals and objectives needed for successful policy formulations and principles of justice. Both tools would therefore help the citizens to set a united goal- that is, the goal to realise together a just and equal society where the citizens would be treated as equals with all the ramifications. While education could unite the Nigerians, and make them realise the inseparable bond that binds everyone living in Nigeria and dispel the darkness of ignorance, philosophy would initiate and engage the citizens into various levels of thoughts and ideas for a greater country.

5.5.4 Unlocking cultural barriers and promoting inter-cultural relationship

The impact of culture in a multicultural society towards having an equal and just society cannot be overemphasized. Culture forms and shapes the behavioural pattern as well as often times the actions of its members. Crises in culture reflect also in human society and such crises could stifle progress and stand in the way of justice. Cultural intolerance in multicultural communities like Nigeria has continued to hunt the pursuit of equality as some cultures consider themselves above others. Most times, such cultural acrimonies translate into our rational exercises and halt any possibility of rational discourse as suggested by Rawls.

Unless Philosophy and sound education are made the fulcrum of our national co-existence and relationship with one another, injustice and inequality as a result of some assumed cultural superiority would continue to persist. Philosophy and sound education would help citizens to understand the cultural experiences of others in order to promote cultural exchange, thereby eschewing bickering and strife. It could be said that understanding the cultural experiences of others is nothing but the hallmark of maturity, implicitly, what it means to be an educated person.⁷¹³ This approach will bring radical inner development and rational direction of the persons as well as various cultures, institutions, and tribes in society – an effort that would lead to a kind of understanding and critical judgement of their divergent views as well as harmony in a multicultural society.

Philosophy will help the unjustly treated Nigerians “to abstract themselves from the flow of normal life and ask some essential questions about his life, environment and society. About

⁷¹² Ann E. Cudd “What Is Equality in Higher Education? In *The Equal Society Essays on Equality in Theory and Practice*, Edited by George Hull (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 267.

⁷¹³ Cf. John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 180.

what is essential...”⁷¹⁴ Nonetheless, being educated makes us better reasoners, critical thinkers and helps us to liberate ourselves in two ways. First of all, critical thinking enables us to think things through for ourselves instead of relying on the rational power of other persons. Secondly, it enhances our individual autonomy such that we can think logically and impartially about abstract and profound questions. Above all, it liberates us from the trap of deciding what to believe on the basis of emotions, thus strengthening ourselves against our natural tendency to believe things simply because we want them to be true. Critical thinking generally speaking and philosophy in particular liberate us from others and from ourselves too.⁷¹⁵

Philosophy and sound education will sharpen the citizens’ rational capacity in order to properly analyse the cultural views so as to retain things that are right and ignore the obnoxious and irreconcilable values. This will usher in an intrinsic appraisal of individual, communal or societal reorientation and lead to total reorganisation from within. For its own part, philosophy will enable citizens to understand their conflicting cultures and where possible to discover the problems and sources of the discord, so as to analyse, examine, appraise or individually criticise, deconstruct, constructing in others to reconstruct their mentality in such a multicultural community.

If we then agree that philosophy and education have some therapeutic roles, then we cannot deny that this role is more evident in the area of culture. This function could be termed cultural therapy.

Without philosophical understanding of the culture within which we operate and a critically philosophical view of the world as knowable through it, we are enslaved by our culture and our uncritical assumptions about it and the word. And it is to that extent that we are provincial in mind and spirit. Such philosophical self-criticism and the enlightenment and the understanding thereby obtained are essential for a true liberal education.⁷¹⁶

Philosophy could give citizens wisdom to understand, tolerate and cope with different cultures in Nigeria. It will also help them to disperse difficulties from divergent culture that leads to problems in understanding their world correctly. It will remove prejudices and lifts spells casted by propaganda and uproots trees sown by the seeds of cultural discords. Through this cultural therapeutic role, citizens would be able to evaluate and also access

⁷¹⁴ Alasdair Macintyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

⁷¹⁶ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy and Democracy*, 186.

their various cultural beliefs and assumptions in order to set aside unwanted elements and chart the path to harmonious and cultural interplay which would lead to peace and understanding.

Philosophy and sound education could also help in the building and formation of self-esteem among different cultures of Nigeria so as to overcome an inferiority or superiority complex. The act of philosophizing would help to understand, value the self and accord some inevitable values to the human person irrespective of cultural background. Sound education on its part will boost self-confidence and make citizens see themselves as equals that deserve a fair share in society's resources and equal opportunities.

5.5.5 Path to dialogue and peaceful co-existence

In order to build a more harmonious and just society, John Rawls spoke of the necessity for rational discourse. The essence of this rational discourse is to deliberate on the existing system of justice and through the tool of reason, come to terms with principles that will be fair to each member of society. With this, society is capable of living harmoniously with one another. This rational deliberation leads to healthy dialogue and understanding. Peaceful coexistence is a fruit of this rational dialogue as well as a 'conditio sine qua non' for the realisation of justice. But "It seems unquestionable that flawed reasoning is inhibiting public dialogue in our time and place."⁷¹⁷ If this is the case, then philosophy and sound education can give the Nigerian citizens the rational capacity to dialogue and deliberate with one another, change their lives and give room for the exchange of ideas. It will help them to acquire some habits and examine their political systems, reassess their society and bring themselves to a psychological and rational dialogue. The approach would lead to a system where every discussion would not be propelled by ethnic interests, religion, political affiliation or cultural background but by the veritable object of reason. The argument I make would help to set aside the aforementioned obstacles which stand on the path of justice, remove unhealthy situations such as indolence, ignorance, dogmatism, obscurantism, active dislike of the intellect and rational argument, hatred of novelty, and especially jealous fear of other tribes or religions.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁷ Barbara S. Stengel "From the Editor: Stuck in the Middle with you," in *Educational Theory, Volume 68, Number 2* (2018), 135-137.

⁷¹⁸ Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy, (London: Pimlico, 2001), 216.

By its nature, dialogue is a great instrument of peace. The dialogue is an appeal to reason, man to man... to that rationality by which man stands out as a class apart in all creation...it is pre-eminently designed to unite minds, cure ignorance and misunderstanding and discord and restore peace and harmony among men and people. What the dialogue does for men it can do for nations who are in any crisis with each other especially if mediated by philosophy.⁷¹⁹

Also, a critical philosophical attitude and sound knowledge will help Nigerians realise that they are complex beings by nature and should make efforts to understand one another. Complexity should not lead to chaos or diversity but should help us to work towards tolerance and acceptance, knowing that we are all different persons but with a united goal of having a just and equal society. This also will reduce the reoccurrence of violence and lack of peace in society. To do this, citizens should be exposed to the meaning of concepts like dialogue, peace, what constitutes violence, what freedom entails, the implications of democracy and what equality or equity would demand from members of a political community. "It is not enough to cultivate immediate emotional responses, or to reiterate how good peace is and how bad violence is. Instead, we have to help children both understand and practise what is involved in violence-reduction and peace-development. They have to learn to think for themselves about these matters, not just provide knee-jerk responses when we present the proper stimuli."⁷²⁰ This exercise will help them eschew long existing stereotypes, prejudices, embark on conflict resolutions activities and harmonious coexistence.

Dialogue and deliberation take time together. Explaining further Barbara S. Stengel says that "dialogue is unavoidably political...; it is concrete encounters with others in the world. Therefore, learning dialogue means to listen, but it also means learning to reason. Nonetheless, dialogue involves, even demands, dissensus. Rather than consensus as always the common assumption of many from dialogue, dialogue is possible to produce consensus with respect to next steps.... Living well together...is (good) work. Taking up that work together is dialogue. And it is dialogue that makes deliberation rather than reaction possible."⁷²¹ Attempts have been made in the past on such a national dialogue but all in vain. Within her years of political struggle, Nigeria has embarked on some national conferences

⁷¹⁹ Mbaegbu Celestine Chukwuemeka, "Philosophy in the Dialogue of Democracy and Other Political Ideologies in the North African Revolutions," in *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 4, (2014), 541-551. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2014.44056>.

⁷²⁰ John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., *Children, Philosophy & Democracy*, 121.

⁷²¹ Barbara S. Stengel "From the Editor: Stuck in the Middle with you," in *Educational Theory, Volume 68, Number 2*, 135-137.

to enable the different parts of the country deliberate on how to resolve the cog in the wheel of national development and just polity as imagined in Dworkin's 'desert island test' theory and Rawls' 'original position'. Due to a lack of understanding and the numerous obstacles mentioned, these conferences have either ended in chaos or turned out to be a futile venture that would never be applied. It has always been every region or religion for its own benefit and not for the national interest. The last National Conference conducted in March 2014 also went the way of previous ones.

The words of Tocqueville could portray the present Nigerian situation with regard to dialogue: "no sooner do you set foot on ..., than you find yourself in a sort of tumult, a confused clamour rises on every side, and a thousand voices are heard at once, each expressing some social requirements."⁷²² In Nigeria today, there seem to be many discordant as well as asymmetric voices coming out at the same time. Religion, ethnicism, corruption, party affiliation, culture and illiteracy play their respective roles towards this disorder. Critical thinking and sound education would help the people understand each other and play along as a team. It would also inaugurate a conducive atmosphere where people speak with one unified voice, fight together against the ugly effects of diversity and inequalities. Sound education and rudiments of philosophical reasoning would help us to strive and create room for peace; it will also assist people, individuals, ethnic groups and religious sects as well as communities to eschew and prevent conflicts, to strengthen inter-cultural, ethnic and religious cooperation and to ensure peaceful co-existence in a united Nigeria.

Since education enlightens the individual who is at the root of the political society, it could go a long way to reunite and bring people together. Joseph Chibuzor could have shared the same view by saying that we can use education as a means of improving our condition. Education he believes "enhances transformation of individuals and consequently nations...the education of the members of a given society will not only succeed in enhancing toleration of one another, but it will further enliven their inter-connectedness and appreciation of one another, thus, strengthening unity in diversity. The synergy between education and peaceful co-existence becomes paramount especially in ameliorating the tension/conflict laden Nigeria."⁷²³ There is therefore an urgent need for reorientation of the

⁷²² Tocqueville A., *Democracy in America*, 2 Vols. ed. Philips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1945), 249. Quoted by John P. Portelli & Ronald F. Reed, eds., in *Children Philosophy and Democracy*, 179.

⁷²³ Joseph Chibuzor Okakpu, "A Synergy model: Education for Peaceful Co-existence," in *The Sign Magazine, Education for National Development*, 13.

minds and note that philosophical reasoning, education and peace are inseparable aspects of a just society.

5.5.6 Quality leadership committed to equality, societal and moral development

Having talked so much about the principles of justice, one cannot immediately fail to agree that a medium (quality leadership) is required for its realisation. Leadership should be for the good and well-being of the citizens, every government should be committed to the course of justice and making the citizens equal members in the society. Equal concern to all members is the sovereign virtue of political community as Ronald Dworkin would say.⁷²⁴ Ipso facto, Nigerian citizens do not only deserve equal distribution of resources but government must also control dominant goods from monopolizing other spheres of societal life as Michael Walzer would teach, to avoid interference, chaos, confusion, crisis and inequality.

The unanimous agreement holds that bad leadership, corruption and unpatriotic behaviour of everyone who finds himself in a position of authority are part of the major obstacles to the realisation of justice in Nigeria. In such a scenario, moral philosophy and sound education are required for a total re-designing of the social values among citizens, integral human development, ethical and moral revolution. This will also encourage the spirit of self-respect, self-sacrifice and dedication to one's duty. This will in turn produce only quality and effective leaders. "The superficial explanation is that a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated."⁷²⁵ As Plato would state in his *Laws*, the acquisition of sound education will turn up a keen desire to become a responsible and moral citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled as justice demands.

Our human society is ever developing and evolving. It is never static and adapts to the changes of time. The changing and dynamic society remains what is made of it by the human person.

A society marked off into classes need be especially attentive only to the education of its ruling elements. A society which is mobile, which is full of channels of the distribution of a change occurring anywhere, must see to it that its members are

⁷²⁴ Cf. R. Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practise of Equality* (London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1.

⁷²⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Delhi: Aakar Books, Indian Edition, 2004), 93.

educated to personal initiative and adaptability. Otherwise, they will be overwhelmed by the changes in which they are caught and whose significance or connections they do not perceive. The result will be a confusion in which a few will appropriate to themselves the results of the blind and externally directed activities of others.⁷²⁶

If this is true, then philosophical intelligence and sound knowledge will help to set minds in the right frame. It will enable those in political power to act justly, formulate policies that will enhance the state of justice, institute only measures that will improve the equality of citizens and always uphold the dignity of human nature. If we accept that the state is only a product of man-made action and not something naturally fixed, it also implies the constant working of just formula and rational processes to get the best out of it. “In a polis of free citizens the good citizen must have both the knowledge and the ability both to rule and to be ruled”.⁷²⁷ As long as we abandon the pursuit of justice to people who are academic dwarfs and not interested in philosophical intelligence, the system will continue to breed systemic inequality and injustice.

The services of philosophy and sound academic approach no doubt would help us to reconcile our respective differences, biases, intolerance in order to build a solid political and just edifice. To enable society to treat one another as moral equals, Laura Anne Winter believes that “education as well as educators should work towards communicating empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence.”⁷²⁸ This will free the citizens from interpreting things in terms of the ‘self’ but rather on how things affect the entire members of the society, on how others should be treated justly and equally as human beings. It will help set aside egoism which hinders the course of justice, where people would not only be interested in the ‘I’ without caring about how their actions and activities that affect the ‘We’.

5.6 Evaluation and conclusion

This doctoral work has focused on the global meaning of justice as taught by some political philosophers, the challenges to its realisation in Nigeria and how the situation could be remedied through philosophy and sound education. In the process, I exposed the concept of justice according to some notable philosophers like John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen and Michael Walzer. Rawls defended individual liberty and believes all members of the

⁷²⁶ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 94.

⁷²⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1998), 103.

⁷²⁸ Laura Anne Winter, “Relational Equality in Education: What, How and Why?” in *Oxford Review of Education*, Volume 44, Number 3 (June 2018), 338.

society should be offered adequate economic opportunities to pursue their plans in life. Dworkin conceived the equal distribution of resources to every member of the political society as the core centre of every discussion on justice. For Sen, it should be nothing but equal ability among the citizens to develop their capabilities. On the path of Michael Walzer, a society is just only when it is free of dominant goods and the social goods are distributed to each citizen without monopolies. For each of them, irrespective of somehow divergent opinions on the concept of justice, the sole aim has always focused on overcoming injustice - how to achieve a better society where equality, freedom as well as human liberty, equal political participation, health care, an affordable insurance scheme, education and other primary and essential aspects of the society would be available to all. From their teachings, we come to a universal understanding and conclusion that without justice (which guarantees law and order), human society becomes nothing but a slaughter bench where the rights, privileges and fulfilment of the human purpose are sacrificed for selfish interests.

However, the research showed that the situation of things in Nigeria is different. It was stated with bold conviction and instances to show that justice is still alien to the Nigerian political society. After a chronological history of the entity called Nigeria, I identified the many obstacles militating against the process of justice to include ethnicism, religion, poor education, corruption, unstable political history and bad leadership. These obstacles have consequently led to a disorganised, unequal and unjust society. The existence of outrageous inequalities abound, the gap between the rich and the poor widens on a daily basis rather than narrowing. Political elites and privileged few enjoy all dominant goods and monopolize them at the expense of the suffering masses. Nigeria was presented as a country so divided across different fronts. In fact, the depth and severity of our division can hardly be hidden from any objective observer. Our multi ethnic backgrounds and lack of religious understanding have not helped matters. Our respective ideologies and cultural values are so wide that we can hardly understand each other. The gap between the haves and the have-nots is great. The majority of the citizens have become so materialistic and selfish, swayed by the buzzles and hustles of the ephemeral and superficial, artificial appearances.

The work went on to say that this society cannot be allowed to go on as it is. In order to achieve at least minimal justice and reduce inequality, a new approach is urgently needed. An approach that will dismantle the status quo and usher in a just and equal political community. This fight for a just and equal society will involve a process of mental and integral deconstruction, reconstruction and construction of the human person who is at the

centre of the discussion. The education is not only poor, but many Nigerians lack access to educational opportunities. Therefore, I posited philosophy and sound education as the indefatigable tools that would bring this desired social change and finally enthrone the reign of justice. With the help of philosophy and sound education, the human mind would be more developed and equipped with the rational prowess to overcome the obstacles responsible for inequalities, rebuild a society that will only be totally committed to the pursuit of justice. “The people must be provided with necessary condition that will allow them think freely, act wisely and responsibly and be able to make decisions that will contribute positively to their growth and development especially that of justice.”⁷²⁹ The people must unitedly deal with the challenges of injustices.

Philosophical wisdom and sound knowledge will provide guidance out of the disturbing and unbearable chronic inequality going on in Nigeria. It is also my belief that philosophy and sound education would enlighten the citizens, offer the cohesive gum and establish a solid foundation through which the people can achieve the principles of justice. The principles of justice require a lot of discipline and knowledge which are *ceteri paribus* the identity and hallmark of a rational and an educated being. Only with the help of philosophy and a sound intellectual approach to life can we understand each other and enhance our common goal of having a just society. Only a thorough philosophical approach and properly educated minds would break these barriers and foster a more harmonious and just society. Having a just and equal society would pacify the clarion call for a separate country by Biafran indigenes, calm the nerves of Niger Delta fighters, mellow the anger of OPC, soothe and hinder the perpetrators of crimes under the guise of religion, reduce terrorism (Boko Haram) and de-radicalise the marauding Fulani Herdsmen as well as re-orientate the minds of the citizens.⁷³⁰

Philosophical wisdom and sound education would help those in political authority as well as the citizens (not necessarily becoming professional philosophers but) apply critical reasoning to every action, the principles of justice would always be practicable in Nigeria. This is because, “the business of philosophy is not only theoretical, it relates to the problem of practical life. Thus philosophical activity would help to illuminate for us most of the

⁷²⁹ Cf. Terfa K. Anjov, “Democracy and Conflicts in Africa: The Role of Philosophy in the 21st Century” in *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 241.

⁷³⁰ **Biafra** is made up of indigenous people from the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. **OPC** an acronym for Oodua People’s Congress (OPC), a Yoruba pressure group. **Niger Delta Fighters**, this will include all the militant groups in Oil Riverine areas who fight "total control" of the Niger Delta's oil wealth. **Fulani herdsmen** are nomadic pastoralists. **Boko Haram** is a popular known terrorist group in the Northern part of Nigeria

practical problems arising from our social life, religious faith, politics and governance, and even scientific worldviews, thereby enriching our perception of the meaning of life and the human values that sustain the society.”⁷³¹

When we talk of justice, we refer to the human being, who remains the sole beneficiary and proponent of justice. Unfortunately, the majority of Nigerians do not really understand what kind of dignity the human person should enjoy or possesses. Suffice it to say that most of our people, if not the majority, do not understand what it really means to live a proper human life. Due to this lack of understanding, many do not know their rights and place in the political society. Most people do not even comprehend what it means to have a just society. Therefore, philosophy and sound education must strive to erase ignorance and overcome mediocrity. Philosophers and seasoned educationists should be at the forefront of education policies and educating other minds. They should take to heart the task of shaping minds and forming a society of radical and critical thinkers. Knowing and understanding the society is also important for this task. It was the knowledge about their respective societies of their time that helped Socrates, Aristotle and Plato to make positive changes. Philosophical ideas and sound knowledge will help us to critically analyse our own society, and so find a way and solutions to the enthronement of a just society.

Philosophy and sound education should be complementary in the sense that philosophy requires education for its propagation. Education for its part should not only serve as a medium for transmitting philosophical discipline but also develop the minds of the citizens for proper critical activities. John White felt that “the question of the development of overall aims of education is too important to remain untouched by philosophical thinking.”⁷³² Philosophical insights should be continuously applied to concrete educational situations. In as much as philosophers may differ in their views about education, however, their opinions should not be discarded easily.

Our philosophy must be down looking (analytical and practical) and not only upward (speculative). The education must incorporate local contents and be solution oriented. Both tools would encourage the people to have a positive thinking towards life. I am very much convinced that a good dose of philosophy and sound education will help the masses focus

⁷³¹ Moses Aderibigbe and Marcel Onyibor, *Philosophy, “Democracy and the rule of Law in Nigeria: An Evaluative Analysis,” Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa, 22.*

⁷³² Brian Patrick Hendley, *Dewey, Russell, Whitehead: Philosophers as Educators* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 110.

on setting outside things that divide us more than aggravating them. It will motivate people to appreciate and tolerate one another, appreciate our diversity and multiculturalism and find possible ways of harnessing them for a better future. Philosophical attitude and sound education will go a long way to free the people of ethnic chauvinism, corruption traits, bribery and systemic decay religious bigotry, nepotism and sectionalism and introduce a system where the people would be committed to the course of justice. The reorientation should ignite a fire in the heart of everyone to seek redress for all manner of injustices. It will set a standard where people would not be judged based on their ethnic or local government of origin but as equal citizens; where admissions into institutions of learning would not be based on regional or political backgrounds but merit; where opportunities would not be judged from the lenses of religious affiliation but equality; where resources would not be shared or distributed based on tribal marks, family's fame, popularity or how influential people are in society but justly; where the law would not be a respecter of persons but protector of all and where justice would be nothing but the virtue of every socio-political activity in the country.

Philosophy and sound education would widen and enlarge the horizons of most Nigerians and lead to enthronement of a 'just social order'⁷³³ where justice will reign to a high level and injustice reduced to a minimum. Immanuel Kant in his book *Zum ewigen Frieden*, could be said to have hoped and spoken of eternal peace not won by armies or battalions of soldiers or fire power rather on a more subtle republican constitution built on the principles of people's freedom and equality as human beings. This is exactly how I believe that philosophy and education as tools for this realisation of justice would redesign a just and harmonious society where the liberty, equality and dignity of the citizens would be the supreme goal. It is necessary to note that the education I mean in this work tallies with the definition of 'bilden' and 'nkuzi' as given in the introductory section. Education here involves the formal as well as the informal which will affect the entire human person. It transcends the ordinary classroom teaching.

There might be the tendency to ask: where has my submission in this thesis worked before? I did however in the course of my work point to many instances where philosophy and education shaped human society and brought new order. My immediate response will be to

⁷³³ A just social order is one in which order and harmony are maintained in society by each class of citizens carrying out the tasks to which they are suited and not interfering with the work of others.

Cf. David Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 84.

point to Western Europe and America which were shaped by the philosophical attitudes of the enlightenment period. Asian Tigers especially South Korea whose economic rise and development could be traced to dedication and to sound education, commitment to hard work and other steps. The spectacular growth and transformation catapulted Korea to the status of an industrial powerhouse. That growth came from among other things, a dedicated, well-educated labour force.⁷³⁴ Studies done by J.-I. Kim and Lau in 1996 showed that investment in education became a key factor for rapid rates of economic growth in East Asia.⁷³⁵ If education and philosophy could usher in such huge amount of changes, I have the belief that it will certainly help Nigeria too in her present condition. Having made an in depth scientific study, with the help of an oral survey, personal experience and having critically examined its homogeneity, the different ethnic groups and their behavioural patterns, history, its political and cultural landscape, I am of the conviction that sound education and philosophy will surely be the roadmap⁷³⁶ to a new Nigeria and help her to reduce manifest injustices as well as inequalities and advance the reign of the enumerated principles of justice.

5.7 Final Word

As exposed in this dissertation, the practice of justice in Nigeria demands a radical approach. Nigeria must make philosophy and sound education the fulcrum of her national life. However, having made this strong stand in favour of philosophy and sound education, I do not claim⁷³⁷ that the approach would totally obliterate injustice in Nigeria or enthrone a perfect just and equal society; rather I remain very much optimistic that it will break barriers militating against the reign of justice, lead to understanding of one another and a fair distribution of resources as championed by Dworkin; reduce manifest injustices in Nigeria as Amartya Sen would insist and also bring a more harmonious just society in the words of

⁷³⁴ Myung Oak Kim Sam Jaffe, *The New Korea: An Inside Look at South Korea's Economic Rise* (New York: AMACOM- American Management Association, 2010), 2-3.

⁷³⁵ Cf. Eun Kyung *Higher Education Expansion and Economic Growth in Japan And South Korea*. Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of School of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. University of Pittsburgh 2012, 35-36.

⁷³⁶ Education and philosophy as experience has shown could form a one-point movement that could lead citizens to their political dreams.

⁷³⁷ I do not claim that my contribution is the utmost and only way to solve the problem of justice in Nigeria. However, the fact is that my proposed roadmap will improve the economy by producing skilled, efficient, employable and innovative citizens. Civic or political education is included in this package and should improve the society politically. It will also improve the legal system, bring more development and an improved health system and human resources. Any effort in other sectors without transforming or reforming the mind-set of citizens may end in futility as the facts in Nigeria show.

John Rawls. This approach I propose should however, go hand in hand with other factors such as economics, politics and social conditions.

Though I do not claim that philosophy provides answers to all human problems, but even when it does not solve the problems and challenges of injustice, it guides man on the best approach to adopt in order to reduce it. This belief stems from the fact that philosophy “posits pragmatic suggestions on the principles that can guide us in our moral, social and political life. Moreover philosophical thinking guides our political class in critical evaluation of what we live by, what we think we are and what really is. In fact, philosophy helps us to restore in our lives the question of meaning and purpose in human existence and the universe.”⁷³⁸

It is my firm conviction that philosophy and sound education will help the citizens to reason properly and choose truth against bias and prejudice, good policy making, remain on the track of justice, equality and dignity of the human person. Borrowing some words from Dworkin, I end this work; “Is it possible to bring genuine *justice in Nigeria*...? I’ve offered many reasons for supposing not, and you may think that the great political improbability of many of the changes I’ve suggested only reinforces my apparent pessimism. But I should tell you as I close that I myself retain a perhaps perverse optimism because there is so much good and wise in our country.”⁷³⁹ Though we may have failed woefully, I still remain optimistic and believe that with the number of good and wise citizens, we will get over the waters threatening to swallow us. Philosophy and sound education if taken seriously, will bring about the socio-political atmosphere that will lead to the realisation of justice.

⁷³⁸ Moses Aderibigbe and Marcel Onyibor, *Philosophy, “Democracy and the Rule of Law in Nigeria: An Evaluative Analysis”*, In *Philosophy, Democracy and Conflicts in Africa*, 22.

⁷³⁹ R. Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here*, 163. (Words in italics mine).

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