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## A Feminist and Polygamous Reading of Lola Shoneyin's *the Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*

### Abstract

There are contradictions and hidden power dynamics within patriarchal polygamous households, particularly how women's identities and values are socially constructed around fertility and motherhood, while their actual agency and resistance remain concealed beneath patriarchal authority. On this ground, a feminist study of Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* is presented in this paper, which contends that the book is a profound indictment of patriarchy that goes beyond a straightforward good-versus-evil paradigm. The examination looks at the novel's establishment and subsequent subversion of the patriarchal framework of a polygamous household, in which a woman's fertility determines her worth. The fourth wife, Bolanle, is a university graduate whose infertility serves as a destabilising force, revealing long-kept secrets inside the family. The study explores the intricate relationships between the spouses, emphasising a significant change from fierce competition to a kind of group unity founded on their common oppression and plot to conceal the truth. But the main contention is that Baba Segi's infertility radically reframes the story, highlighting the weakness of male authority and presenting the women as practical players who have always undermined the institution. By portraying motherhood as a social construct and a source of power for women rather than a biological necessity, the paper also challenged the traditional notion of motherhood. It concluded that Shoneyin's book is a celebration of female agency and resilience, providing a sophisticated viewpoint on how women negotiate, oppose, and reclaim their stories in a system that is meant to imprison them.

**Keywords:** Masculinity, Patriarchy, Feminism, Womanhood, Social Construct, Female Agency

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### Introduction

Lola Shoneyin is a publisher, poet, and writer who holds a unique and significant position in the field of modern Nigerian literature. Shoneyin's work is part of a new generation of

African writers who are aggressively pushing the limits of traditional narrative, following in the footsteps of literary giants like Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. Sharp wit, in-depth cultural insight, and unapologetic social

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critique are all distinctively combined in her writing. Despite having strong literary origins in Nigeria, her themes such as gender, power, love, and family have a universal resonance that has captured the attention of readers all around the world. By focussing on the complex and frequently disregarded household lives of common people, especially women, Shoneyin transcends the epic historical narratives of earlier generations in books like *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. In this private realm, she succinctly reveals the intricacies of patriarchal structures and their long-lasting impact on people's lives and interpersonal interactions.

Lola Shoneyin provides much more than a straightforward account of a polygamous home in her outstanding debut novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. The novel is an important feminist study that goes beyond a straightforward good-versus-evil paradigm to analyse the intricate relationships between female agency, polygamy, and power. Shoneyin does not portray polygamy as a single, unchanging evil or its adherents as helpless victims. Rather, she examines the complex ways in which the wives (Iya Segi, Iya Tope, Iya Femi, and the recent addition Bolanle) manoeuvre through, challenge, and occasionally even strengthen the patriarchal systems that control their lives.

This study contends that the novel offers a deep analysis of the tenacity and resourcefulness of women, showing how power is not only possessed by Baba Segi, the patriarch, but is also a fluid and contested currency among the women, influenced by strategic rivalries, solidarity, and secrets. Its plot is surprisingly

straightforward. Baba Segi, a wealthy and contented man with three wives and seven children, is the main focus of the story. Bolanle, a fourth woman with a university degree who, in contrast to her co-wives, is unable to conceive, upsets the balance in the home. Baba Segi is compelled to look for a remedy as a result of her infertility, which causes friction and a nasty rivalry with the other spouses. Nonetheless, the pursuit of a solution serves as a trigger, bringing the family face-to-face with a number of long-held secrets that finally cause their entire existence to fall apart. The primary characters, that is, Iya Segi, the aggressive and controlling first wife; Iya Tope, the reserved and ostensibly subservient second wife; Iya Femi, the crafty and manipulative third wife; and Bolanle, the "modern" woman whose arrival disrupts the status quo are a study in contrasts and similarities. By switching between both points of view, the novel exposes the network of secret grievances, buried secrets, and desperate survival tactics that lurk beneath the surface of marital peace.

The patriarchal basis of Baba Segi's home will be the first topic of this article, which will analyse how conventional roles and expectations for women are created and upheld. After then, it will concentrate on Bolanle's personality as a major disruptor whose failure to follow these rules brings the underlying conflicts to light. The analysis will explore the intricate interactions between the wives' competitiveness and female solidarity, showing how their relationships can both be a source of conflict and a way for the group to become more powerful. A significant portion will then be devoted to the disclosure of the "secret

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lives,” contending that the power dynamics within the family are essentially altered by the disclosure of these concealed realities. The study concludes that *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* is a celebration of female agency and the subtle, remarkable ways women reclaim their lives in the face of systemic oppression, rather than just a critique of a social institution. Finally, it will examine the novel's profound subversion of conventional ideas of motherhood.

### The Patriarchal Foundation of Polygamy

A patriarchal home with male power as the unquestionable cornerstone of all social and economic arrangements is painstakingly established in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. Baba Segi is the self-declared ruler and master at the centre of this planet, and his wealth and social status, in addition to his gender, are the sources of his authority (Nyuykighan, 2025). This dominance is explicitly articulated in his assertion, “I am the head of this house. What I say goes,” which indicates absence of democratic negotiation and reinforces a rigid hierarchy. Similarly, Baba Segi equates masculinity with control and material success when he declares, “A man must show that he is a man. I have done that.” By so doing, he ties his authority to performative displays of power such as polygamy. Furthermore, his statement, “My house is full because I am not a poor man,” further reveals how economic capital underpins his ability to establish and sustain a large polygamous family, positioning wealth as both a symbol and instrument of patriarchal dominance.

What the previous paragraph illustrate is that Baba Segi is the epitome of the traditional Nigerian patriarch, a man whose success is determined by the number of boys he has produced and the size of his family. According to Iya Femi “My husband and I tried everything. He did not let my thighs rest but leapt between them every time dusk descended upon us” (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 215). Baba Segi's exaggerated feeling of self-importance is the focus of the first few pages of the novel, which presents him as an individual who takes every whim as an order and every want as a right. His house serves as a microcosm of a wider social structure. His wives and kids are seen as extensions of his ego, and while taking care of them is a duty, it largely serves as evidence of his strength and masculinity (Kabani, 2018). He provides all resources, makes all final decisions, and upholds the rigid order of the home as seen his boasts: “I took a second wife, a peace offering from a desperate farmer. I took the third because she offered herself with humility. What kind of human being rejects the fullness of a woman? ... But I chose Bolanle, I cannot lie. I set my mind on her, the way a thirsty child sets his eyes on a cup spilling from a spout” (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 201).

The most important patriarchal norm in Baba Segi's household is that a woman's value is determined by her capacity to conceive and have children, particularly male heirs (Baloyi, 2019). This is the main source of the wives' security and status, and it appears frequently throughout the literary piece. According to Baba Segi, a wife's worth is determined by her ability to procreate rather than by her intelligence, morality, or level of attachment. This explains

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why the first three wives were addressed by the names of their first children (Iya Segi, Iya Tope and Iya Femi) while the fourth wife because she could not conceive was addressed as Bolanle. Furthermore, when the co-wives conspired against Bolanle “in a flash, Baba Segi leapt in front of Bolanle and gripped her throat with both hands. He squeezed hard and shook her, pressing his thumbs on her windpipe. Who are you asking questions? Do I look like a fool?” (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 58). Thus the children, especially the sons, are a tangible representation of his success and virility and a type of social capital. Baba Segi's belief is not merely a personal eccentricity; rather, it is a reflection of a deeply ingrained cultural norm that views procreation as a woman's main goal. The psychological strain this puts on the women is revealed; to them, a barren womb is a cause of embarrassment and a danger to their standing in the family. Because Bolanle's infertility turns into a crisis that jeopardises the security of the household, the original storyline is driven by the anxiety of being barren.

The ladies' carefully planned and vehemently guarded hierarchy is strongly influenced by this emphasis on fertility. The seniority order is a structure of privilege and authority that goes beyond simply who was first. The highest status is occupied by Iya Segi, the first wife. Her numerous children and her long-standing relationship with Baba Segi serve to reinforce her dominance. She uses her position of authority brutally, allocating tasks, managing resources, and enforcing rules in the home. Iya Tope and Iya Femi, the second and third wives, hold lesser but nonetheless important duties; their

standing is also based on how many children they have given to the family. As a result, the wives are rivals for Baba Segi's attention and the family's little finances, in addition to being co-spouses. Because it sets the women against one another and hinders true togetherness, the hierarchy is a continual source of conflict. This established order is upset by the entrance of Bolanle, a childless wife, who becomes the object of the other women's animosity and hatred because they perceive her as a challenge to their hard-won status (Shoneyin, 2010).

### **Bolanle as the Disruptor**

Baba Segi's fourth and last wife, Bolanle, is the main source of disruption in the home. Her personality contrasts with those of the three prior spouses, and her presence upsets the fine, if tense, balance that was in place before her arrival. Bolanle is a middle-class woman with a university degree, in contrast to Iya Segi, Iya Tope, and Iya Femi, who were selected due to their perceived fecundity and traditional responsibilities. The “otherness” of Bolanle stems mostly from her social and educational status, which distinguishes her from the other wives right away. In her words, “except me, none of Baba Segi's wives ‘knew which end of a pencil to set to paper’” (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 4).

By “her otherness” this study refers to Bolanle's status as an outsider within the polygamous household. This means she is perceived as different, non-conforming, and even threatening to the established norms of the family. Her contemporary views run counter to the polygamous family's long-standing customs, which place a woman's worth

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on her ability to procreate and her devotion to tradition. Her education is seen by the other women as an arrogance that jeopardises their meticulously established order rather than as a sign of accomplishment, and they regard her with distrust and animosity even as Bolanle herself admits: "So deep-seated is their disdain for my university degree..." p. 24). Bolanle's presence in a traditional values-based home therefore symbolises a clash between the old and the modern, forcing the family to face a world that is changing faster than they can comprehend. This 'otherness' is what makes her the unwitting catalyst for the plot's central revelations.

Bolanle's early views on polygamy are characterised by a deep lack of maturity and an incorrect understanding of the intricate power relationships inside the family. In her solitary period she would say: "I did not know it would matter" and "I thought love would be enough." She has a romanticised and rather detached perspective of her role when she first enters the marriage, thinking that her love for Baba Segi and her superior intelligence will somehow shield her from the emotional intricacies and small-scale rivalry that characterise the lives of the other wives. I use 'romanticise' to mean that Bolanle has an idealized, unrealistic, and overly positive view of what a polygamous marriage will be like for her. At first, she wants to keep her distance, a "special" wife who won't get involved in the arguments at home. Her efforts to keep this barrier, however, are ineffective since the way the home is set up, the wives are always interacting and competing with one another. As she

progressively learns that a polygamous family is a tangle of alliances, betrayals, and unwritten rules (a system she is ill-prepared to navigate) her naivety plays a crucial role in her character development. She becomes the object of the other wives' manipulation because her faith that reason and love can triumph over deeply rooted societal systems turns out to be a perilous delusion.

Bolanle's infertility is a problem that jeopardises the family's entire patriarchal foundation. Although her infertility makes her a social outcast and a target of mockery, it also serves as the impetus for the main mystery of the novel. Baba Segi sets out to discover a remedy for Bolanle's alleged infertility in order to preserve his own reputation and satiate his yearning for more offspring. In the end, this search compels the family to submit to a battery of medical examinations that reveal the household's long-kept secrets. Baba Segi's virility is undermined by the discovery that he is sterile, which also calls into question the foundational idea of the polygamous home. As the doctor says: "as far as he (Baba Segi) is concerned, it is his wife who's got serious problems" (p. 194). The doctor goes ahead to confirm that, "It would have been a different matter if he had a low sperm count, but there's nothing! Not a solitary sperm swimming around" (p. 194).

Baba Segi's sterility calls into question the foundational idea of a polygamous home because his assumed virility and ability to produce children is the very justification for the family's existence. The foundation of the conventional, patriarchal idea of polygamy is the man's authority and

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ability to establish and grow his family. As Whitehouse writes “many double down in their bid to exercise authority over women, particularly their wives” (Whitehouse, 2023, p. 294). According to this perspective, women are a tool for achieving a goal: having offspring to raise the patriarch’s social status and ensure his legacy. This basis is totally undermined when Baba Segi’s sterility is revealed. The wives’ ingenuity and capacity to undermine the system are demonstrated by the children, who were seen to be evidence of his might. Thus the foundational idea that all life in the home originates from Baba Segi, the main, fertile male character, is untrue.

Therefore, the women he claims to govern are silently complicit in maintaining his illusion of authority. Because of his sterility, the patriarchal system is shown to be a front, and the wives have always held the real authority and agency in the home. Bolanle’s infertility, which initially makes her weak, ultimately acts as the means by which she unintentionally exposes the truth, breaking long-kept secrets and upending family traditions. Her position as the foreigner and childless wife causes the patriarchal façade of the family to collapse.

### **Female Solidarity and Rivalry**

Baba Segi’s wives’ relationships are a complicated and dynamic web of rivalry and support. Their relationships are nearly entirely characterised by competitiveness in the beginning of the novel. Every wife sees the other wives as a danger to her social status and her portion of the family’s wealth. The patriarchal structure that sets them against each other for Baba Segi’s love and financial support is the source of

this rivalry. This competition is enforced by Iya Segi, the first wife, who uses her position of seniority to control Iya Tope and Iya Femi. This tension is heightened by Bolanle’s presence, as the elder wives unite in an unholy alliance against the newcomer, whose lack of children and education calls into question their meticulously established hierarchy. They employ psychological torture, strategic manipulation, and rumour to accomplish their common objective of overthrowing Bolanle. As a result of a system that denies them personal authority and makes them compete for slivers of influence, the wives at this early stage view one another as rivals in a zero-sum game.

Bolanle is called names such as “witch”, “barren”, “destroyer of homes” (p. 60) and so on by her co-wives. Iya Femi in support of Iya Segi’s oppressive tendencies towards her quizzes: “If this woman is allowed to sleep in this house, I will sleep outside with my sons. I will hold a night vigil and pray her out” (p. 60). To ensure that Bolanle is traumatized and frustrated in her new home Iya Femi further quizzes: “How lucky you are that Iya Segi did not decapitate you and pound your head in the mortar! You are indeed an evil spirit. Get thee behind us, Satan! Leave our home!” (p. 162).

However, as the novel goes on, there is a significant change from antagonism to a kind of grudging unity. Their mutual submission to Baba Segi binds them, and their common experience of living under his authority forges a deeper bond. Their everyday lives, which are full with hardships, secrets, and struggles in common, serve as the furnace in which this bond is created. They all realise the sacrifices

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and compromises necessary to survive in the home, and they all participate in upholding the appearance of a contented, functional family. Unspoken empathy is produced by this mutual understanding that results from shared oppression. For instance, despite their antagonism, the others can naturally comprehend Iya Tope's quiet fortitude and Iya Femi's deft manoeuvres. The connection is founded on a tacit understanding of their shared predicament rather than affection or friendship. Their mutual wish to keep their own secrets safe, which is far more important than any competition for Baba Segi's favour, is the most moving example of this togetherness.

The revelation of their darkest secrets marks the turning point at which the spouses' unity and collective strength are fully realised. The spouses are compelled to confront one another after Bolanle's infertility crisis reveals that Baba Segi is sterile and that all of his children were fathered by other men. Individual rivalries vanish in the face of a common conspiracy during this crucial period. To protect their status and the future of their children, they have all, in one way or another, undermined the patriarchal structure. The disclosure of their secrets is a show of great strength rather than weakness. The ladies unite for the first time against the man who thought he had all the power in an act of collective resistance. Together, they defend each other's secrets and restore their agency by keeping the truth from Baba Segi. The ladies' secrets become their combined strength, a common tool that unites them and radically alters their dynamic. They are now co-conspirators in a broad scheme that gives them a level of power

that no patriarchal role could ever provide, rather than merely wives vying for a husband's attention.

### Subverting the Narrative: The Secret Lives Revealed

The revealing of the titular "secrets," as well as the significant reorganisation of power dynamics that follows, constitute the pivotal moment in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. Baba Segi thinks he is the "real man" while Bolanle is "an infertile soil" that could not accept and grow his seeds. His curiosity, persistence and will to maintain his masculinity led to the unveiling of the family's secrets. While speaking to Bolanle he says:

Your barrenness brings shame upon me. And I am sure that you, as well, are saddened by it. Every time I have suggested that we consult herbalists and prophets, you have called them conmen and rubbished their powers... I have thought long and hard about it and I think we should go to the hospital to talk to a doctor (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 14).

The revelation that Baba Segi is infertile, which essentially re-contextualises the lives of the women and their children, subverts the novel's plot in a clever way. The patriarchal order, which was predicated on Baba Segi's strong manhood and capacity to raise a sizable brood, is disrupted by this one secret. His portrayal of himself as a strong, masculine father is shown as a charade, upheld by the ladies he purports to lead. Once viewed as the results of his skill and as a sign of their subordination, the wives' children are revealed as evidence of their agency and capacity to function

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within a system that is intended to keep them in subjection. Because of their own calculated decisions and extramarital affairs, the children are no longer his, but rather theirs. This discovery changes the course of events, turning the women from rivals for a man's affection into quiet plotters who have outwitted and betrayed him as a group.

The disclosure of each wife's unique hardships and survival techniques, which had been concealed under the façade of domestic peace, occurs when this fundamental secret is revealed. The secrets are confessions of personal defiance and tenacity, not only who fathered the children. For example, Iya Segi's secret demonstrates her will to protect her legacy and status. In her pronouncement, "Men are nothing. They are fools. The penis between their legs is all they are useful for (p. 97).... My husband only thinks he controls the household and I let him believe he does. I want him to believe he does but I am the one who keeps this household together. Good things happen here because I allow them (p. 104). She was the first and most powerful wife since she was infertile in her first marriage and was able to conceive with a lover. Although a betrayal of Baba Segi, this action was a planned survival tactic in a culture that prioritises women's capacity for reproduction. Confined in a world that threatened her and driven by her fear, anxiety and stigmatization Iya Segi goes out of her way to have children with Taju, Baba Segi's driver. As she declares:

I was childless and restless.  
Every time I saw a mother  
rocking a baby on her back, my  
nipples would itch to be suckled.  
My husband and I tried

everything. Even his mother was hungry for his seed to become fruitful. Then I had an idea. It was a sinful idea but I knew it would bring my sadness to an end. If my husband did not have seed then what harm could it do to seek it elsewhere? So I found seed and planted it in my belly (p. 215).

Iya Tope's secret is a more heart-breaking tale of a woman who suffered abuse ("he beat me like a goat tied to a stake") and briefly found solace in the arms of a good man ("He was kind to me. He spoke gently, as if I mattered"), giving birth to a child who became her joy and her reason for living ("My child became my reason to live"). Iya Femi's secret is arguably the most practical since it reveals her extramarital affairs, which she uses to preserve her prestige and financial stability. In her words, "I did what I had to do..." because "a woman must secure her place in this world" and she "...was not going to suffer when there were men willing to provide." The spouses were never genuinely passive players in the patriarchal game, since each secret offers a glimpse into a secret world of subversive silences. They were active agents, each with a unique strategy to navigate her circumstances and ensure her own survival and that of her children.

In the end, these disclosures highlight the extreme vulnerability of male authority in a patriarchal society. The book makes the case that, despite its seeming absoluteness, male power is frequently a façade upheld by the women's collaboration and silence. Baba Segi's authority was never really his own; rather, it was bestowed to him by

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the women who were prepared to put up a front as shown by the revealed secrets. The women establish strong control over the story and Baba Segi by banding together to keep their secrets and not revealing his sterility to the public. He loses his authority and dignity, becoming a helpless person whose whole identity has been a lie. Contrarily, the wives become the real power brokers in the home, united not by marriage but by a common secret that gives them the ability to shape their own destiny. The novel's central feminist message is this subversion of the story: that women can and do use the very structures meant to restrain them to rebel and assert their power, even in the most constrained situations. To Iya Segi, "Let us keep our secrets from those who may seek to mock us" (p. 242). Seeing that authority had shifted, in his pain and trauma that arose from his discovery, Baba Segi advises his eldest son Akin: "when the time comes for you to marry, take one wife and one wife alone. And when she causes you pain, as all women do, remember your pain should come from one source alone... A man must always be prepared" (p. 238)

### **The Subversion of Motherhood**

Motherhood is expertly deconstructed in Lola Shoneyin's novel, which portrays it as a complicated social and political construct rather than a sacrosanct, purely biological state. From the first pages, the conventional, patriarchal conception of motherhood as a woman's primary responsibility and source of fulfilment is contested. In tandem, Biswas (2022) observes that motherhood has different connotations. He concludes that motherhood is a

social institution categorised into "biological motherhood which is associated with women reproductively and social motherhood which is associated with women role of mothering, rearing, caring and nurturing" (p. 120). In Baba Segi's family, motherhood plays a transactional role, a means of gaining social and financial dominance in a polygamous society. Because having more children, especially sons, equates to better stability, power, and a larger proportion of the family's resources, a woman's status is closely correlated with her reproductive output. Iya Segi, uses her position as the mother of the most children as leverage against the others and as an excuse for her authority. She says "a woman without children is nothing" and then when she gives birth she cries "God has remembered me, I am a woman now." In a society when women are otherwise disempowered, motherhood serves as a currency, a means of survival, and a tool for establishing dominance. The ladies' fierce rivalry stems from their desire for more children not for their own sake, but rather for the pecuniary and social advantages that come with becoming a mother.

The character of Iya Tope in particular who described herself as a "...compensation for the failed crops... tubers of cassava in the basket, maybe something even less, something strange -a tuber with eyes, a nose, arms, two legs" (Shoneyin, 2010 p. 82) highlights the stark contrast between biological motherhood and "chosen" parenting in the novel. "Chosen" parenting here refers to the act of providing care and emotional support to a child, regardless of biological ties. It is a form of

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motherhood based on nurturing and a deep, voluntary bond, rather than on the mere act of giving birth (Turner, 2018 p. 49). In a deeper sense, Iya Tope is a mother to the entire home, even if she is the biological mother of her children with her partner. She frequently settles disputes and is the calm nurturer and peacemaker. The notion that maternal caring transcends biological relationships is demonstrated by her interaction with the children of the other wives. The novel highlights that being a mother involves more than just giving birth; it also entails caring for, protecting, and supporting one another emotionally. The main mystery of the novel that none of the kids are biologically Baba Segi's further emphasises this. The "real" parents must be re-evaluated in light of this discovery. "Real" parents are not simply those who are biologically related to the children, but rather the individuals who fulfil the roles of nurture, care, and responsibility (Collier & Yanagisako, 1987 p. 3). Thus while the biological dads are essentially absent figures, the moms have fulfilled the essential labour of motherhood by caring for and raising these children.

The novel's central thesis is that parenting is not a biological necessity but rather a complicated social construct. The biological act of giving birth is only the beginning of a lengthy process shaped by relationships, societal duties, and expectations, as revealed in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. Shoneyin destroys the notion of a unique, holy kind of parenting by revealing the spouses' secrets. Instead, she portrays a complex reality in which strategy, necessity, and subdued defiance are the factors that lead to motherhood. The wives become

mothers not only to their offspring but also to a secret that unites them and gives them authority as a group. Because it frees the idea from patriarchal control and re-establishes motherhood as an identity created by female experience, resiliency, and agency, this deep redefining of motherhood is an important feminist intervention. The novel makes the case that women's lives and value are determined by their ability to create and maintain life on their own terms, not by their biological potential to procreate for a man.

### Conclusion

*The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* by Lola Shoneyin is a complex feminist work that vividly challenges the traditional conceptions of gender, power, and family. It is much more than a straightforward story of a polygamous family. By carefully examining the nuanced lives of Baba Segi's wives, Shoneyin questions the straightforward good-versus-evil paradigm that is frequently used in patriarchy discourses. According to the argument made in this study, the novel shows that even in the strictest patriarchal structures, women may negotiate, subvert, and regain power.

Baba Segi's presumed virility and the women's reproductive worth serve as the patriarchal basis of the household, but this is revealed to be a flimsy delusion. Because of his infertility, Bolanle, the educated outsider, unintentionally causes the family's long-kept secrets to come to light. Her character demonstrates how even a person's perceived weakness may be used as power to overthrow a whole dishonest system. One of the most

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interesting aspects of the novel is the complex dance between the wives' competitiveness and female unity. A fierce, group conspiracy based on mutual survival and shared secrets develops from what starts off as a zero-sum struggle for a man's favour.

The novel's inversion of motherhood is perhaps its most important feminist contribution. Shoneyin exposes maternity as a social construct and a means of achieving agency and power by dismantling the biological and emotive ideas surrounding it. These women were active agents all along, employing covert tactics to maintain their position and establish a life on their own terms, as evidenced by their "secret lives" their covert affairs and the real parentage of the children. Baba Segi is rendered helpless at the novel's conclusion, and the wives—who are bound together by their common secrets are the real heirs to the household's authority. An essential work of African feminist fiction, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* honours the resourcefulness and tenacity of women who, in silent and frequently unseen ways, are able to reclaim their lives and their stories in the face of structural oppression.

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## An Interreligious Hermeneutic of Lk 10:25–37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan) in the African Context

### Abstract

This paper examined Luke 10:25–37, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, from an interreligious hermeneutical lens, with particular attention paid to its implications for pluralistic African societies. Africa being a continent shaped by vibrant religious diversity but challenged by interreligious and intercultural tensions presents a fertile ground for interpretive frameworks that encourage inclusive praxis. The study investigated how the Samaritan, depicted as a religious outsider yet a moral exemplar, can model compassion, solidarity, and inclusive community-building across religious divides. Driven by an interreligious exegetical approach that takes a departure point from historical-critical exegesis and African contextual hermeneutics, the study interpreted the parable within both its original first-century context and contemporary African realities. It argued that Luke's use of literary inversion and narrative perspective invites a radical redefinition of neighbourliness that transcends religious and cultural confessional boundaries. Traditional Christian interpretations that limit the parable's reach to internal faith communities are critiqued in favour of readings that emphasize risk-taking compassion, cross-boundary care, and values that are comparatively present in other world religions such as Islam, Bahai, ATR, and Hinduism. It is expected that an interreligious reading of the Good Samaritan parable would inform efforts to counter exclusion, reduce religious and cultural conflict, and inspire cooperation rooted in shared moral commitments among Africa's religious and ethnic communities.

**Keywords:** Luke 10:25–37, Interreligious Hermeneutic, Neighbourliness, African Plurality, Dialogue.

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### Introduction

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) is among the most powerful moral narratives in the New Testament. Its core message is a call to mercy beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and religion and this has made it a central text in Christian ethics. Yet,

in the contemporary African context, marked by plurality, postcolonial memory, and interreligious tension, this parable takes on a renewed significance. Africa's socio-religious landscape, comprising Christianity, Islam, traditional African religions, and emerging charismatic movements,

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demands interpretive frameworks that transcend doctrinal exclusivism and ethnocentric moral boundaries. An interreligious hermeneutic of Luke 10:25–37 as an interpretive strategy becomes useful for fostering inclusive ethical praxis in Africa. Such an approach reinterprets “neighbourliness” not merely as interpersonal charity but as a communal ethic that affirms human dignity across religious and ethnic affiliations. The figure of the Samaritan, which is an outsider and yet the bearer of divine-like compassion, serves as a subversive symbol within the narrative, disrupting expectations and redefining moral community.

Scholarship in Luke’s Gospel increasingly recognizes the parable’s potential for ethical transformation. Keddie (2020) contends that Luke’s narrative critiques ethnocentric identity and models relational openness through the Samaritan figure, portraying him as a “proximate other” who challenges and reshapes moral expectations (p.246). In parallel, Howe and Sweetser (2021) emphasize Luke’s rhetorical techniques, particularly shifts in narrative viewpoint, which guide readers to empathize with the Samaritan and, by extension, religious and cultural outsiders. These literary strategies function as ethical invitations, calling readers to adopt moral perspectives that affirm the outsider. African theological voices have also contributed significantly to this conversation. Nyiawung (2018) emphasizes the parable’s relevance to African socio-political contexts, where risk-taking compassion can challenge systemic injustice and religious division. His work highlights the alignment between the parable’s moral logic and African communal ethics, suggesting

that Luke 10:25–37 can catalyse pan-religious moral engagement. These views lay a groundwork for proposing an interreligious reading of the parable. It is preceded by historical-critical analysis to understand the first-century context of Luke’s Gospel; narrative-rhetorical interpretation to unpack its literary and theological structure; and African contextual hermeneutics to apply the parable meaningfully to interreligious realities on the continent. In doing so, it articulates a vision of “neighbor” that transcends religious and cultural boundaries, rooting it in an ethic of shared vulnerability and mutual care.

### Theoretical Background

#### i. Lukan Parables

Parables in the Gospel of Luke have attracted sustained scholarly attention for their literary depth, theological complexity, and social implications. As a distinct component of Luke’s narrative, parables serve not merely as teaching tools, but as strategic narrative interventions that challenge prevailing norms and extend the reach of Jesus’ message to diverse audiences. A foundational voice in Lukan parable studies is Joachim Jeremias (1963), who argued that the parables of Jesus—including those found in Luke—originate within the socio-cultural and religious milieu of first-century Palestine. Jeremias emphasized the parables’ radical simplicity and capacity to communicate divine truth through familiar human situations. He viewed them as expressions of the inbreaking kingdom of God designed to elicit existential responses from hearers. More recent scholarship has moved beyond Jeremias’s historical focus to examine

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parables through literary and rhetorical frameworks. Culpepper (1995) emphasizes the narrative artistry of the Lukan parables, identifying their use of irony, reversal, and symbolic character construction. Culpepper's work underscores Luke's role as a theologian-storyteller who uses parables to shape the moral and theological vision of the early Christian community. Snodgrass (2008), in his comprehensive volume *Stories with Intent*, argues that the Lukan parables, including the Good Samaritan, must be understood within their narrative context, where they function to subvert expectations and redefine key theological concepts such as neighbour, grace, and inclusion. His work pays close attention to the socio-political edge of many Lukan parables, noting how they engage questions of justice, mercy, and religious authority. Levine (2014) brings a provocative perspective to Lukan parables by interrogating Christian interpretations that domesticate their meaning. She insists that Jesus' parables were meant to "provoke, challenge, and disturb" rather than merely comfort. Her analysis of the Good Samaritan in particular underscores the parable's ethical disorientation and rhetorical brilliance. Other scholars, such as Craig Blomberg (2012) and John Dominic Crossan (2012), explore how parables function as theological micro-narratives with eschatological import. Blomberg categorizes many of Luke's parables as "three-point" stories with moral conclusions, while Crossan views them as acts of resistance literature, a subversive fictions that question institutional religion and promote social reversal. Finally, African biblical scholars such as Ukpong (2000) and

Gerald West (1995) began rereading Lukan parables from a contextual perspective, highlighting their liberative potential for oppressed communities. These readings often emphasize communal ethics, inclusion of the marginalized, and the transformative power of storytelling in African religious life.

The study of Lukan parables reflects a rich interdisciplinary field that spans historical, literary, theological, and contextual methodologies. This literature provides the foundation for a nuanced reading of Luke 10:25–37 and situates it within the broader trajectory of Luke's narrative strategy and ethical vision.

## **ii. Interreligious Hermeneutics**

Interreligious hermeneutics is an interpretive practice that seeks to understand sacred texts through a dialogical engagement with multiple religious perspectives. Rather than confining interpretation within a single theological tradition, it opens scripture to insights from other faiths, thereby fostering mutual understanding and ethical solidarity. This approach is particularly relevant in multi-religious and cultural societies such as Africa, where Christian, Islamic, traditional and several other religious worldviews coexist and intersect. Theologically, interreligious hermeneutics draws from the premise that sacred texts have ethical and spiritual meanings that can resonate across religious boundaries. Cornille (2008) suggests that such hermeneutics "presuppose a willingness to enter into the worldview of the other, not to refute it, but to be transformed by it" (p.32). This process requires humility, empathy, and a shared commitment to truth-seeking. Knitter (2002) advances

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this conversation by arguing that an interreligious approach to interpretation must be grounded in praxis. For Knitter, “doing theology with the other” involves reading one’s scriptures in the presence—symbolically or literally—of the religious other, allowing new meanings to emerge that speak to shared human concerns (p.204). This resonates deeply with African communal values, where knowledge and meaning are often co-constructed through dialogue. Interreligious hermeneutics also involves a critique of exclusivist readings that have historically justified violence and division. While reflecting on African biblical scholarship, West (1995) underscores the importance of “reading the Bible with the margins,” including those of other faiths, to recover liberative meanings often suppressed by dominant interpretations (p.22). This aligns with the ethos of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which elevates the outsider as the ethical subject and thus invites a radical reimagining of religious belonging. In practice, interreligious hermeneutics encourages comparative scriptural study, shared liturgical moments, and dialogical ethics. It is not a call to theological homogenization, but to ethical co-responsibility. In the African context, it has the potential to transform sacred texts into bridges of peace and tools for justice by recognizing the common values inherent in other religions.

An Interreligious reading of any parable, however, takes a departure point from the historical-critical analysis, an approach that interprets texts by examining their historical origins, literary composition, and socio-cultural context. It is grounded in the

assumption that understanding the world behind the text, that is, the time, location, authorial intent, and audience, is essential for interpreting its meaning accurately. It is especially valuable in interpreting parables like the Good Samaritan, which are deeply embedded in the socio-political realities of first-century Judea. The historical-critical method involves several sub-disciplines: textual criticism (recovering the most original text), source criticism (identifying underlying sources), form criticism (analysing literary forms), redaction criticism (studying how authors edited their materials), and socio-historical analysis (reconstructing the world of the text). When applied to Luke 10:25–37, these tools allow scholars to understand how the parable would have functioned within the religious and ethnic tensions between Jews and Samaritans of the time. In the African context, historical-critical exegesis would be helpful in providing tools to deconstruct colonial and missionary interpretations of the Bible that may have reinforced exclusivist theology. African theologians have made great efforts to reclaim the Bible as a source of empowerment and social transformation by reconstructing the original liberative message of biblical texts, and the Good Samaritan is good example. Equally, the narrative-rhetorical exegesis resonates deeply with oral traditions and storytelling cultures. African theologians such as Maluleke (2000) argue that the narrative form of scripture must be reclaimed as a site of communal meaning-making, where moral lessons are embedded in stories that are remembered, retold, and re-enacted. In this light, the Parable of the Good Samaritan becomes not only a

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literary masterpiece but a living narrative that can shape ethical behaviour in interreligious and intercultural encounters.

**i. Interreligious Dynamics in African Societies**

African societies are characterized by profound religious diversity. Christianity, Islam, traditional African religions and multiple spiritual movements coexist across the continent, often within the same communities or even families. While this plurality provides mutual enrichment, it has also been a source of friction, exacerbated by historical injustices, colonial legacies, and contemporary socio-political challenges. Thus, interreligious dynamics in Africa are shaped by both cooperation and conflict. In countries like Nigeria, religious affiliation is deeply intertwined with regional, ethnic, and political identities. The Middle Belt region, for instance, has experienced cycles of violence involving Christian and Muslim communities, driven as much by competition over land and governance as by theological disputes (Paden, 2005). Similarly, in the Central African Republic, religion has been co-opted into broader political struggles, resulting in severe sectarian violence between Christian and Muslim militias (Lombard, 2016). However, these tensions are counterbalanced by extensive histories of peaceful coexistence and interreligious solidarity. In Senegal, where Islam is the majority religion, Christian-Muslim relations have often been characterized by mutual respect and collaboration, particularly in national festivals, education, and political discourse (Sanneh, 1996). Uganda and Tanzania also offer examples where interreligious councils

have played significant roles in peacebuilding and national reconciliation efforts. In Ghana, Christian-Muslim relations are widely considered a model of peaceful coexistence in West Africa. Interfaith harmony is actively promoted through educational policies, shared community development projects, and the Ghana Conference of Religions for Peace. In South Africa, the post-apartheid constitution guarantees religious freedom, allowing a wide range of interfaith collaboration in the public sphere. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, multi-religious coalitions coordinated responses to health and welfare needs across urban and rural communities. Interfaith dialogue in Africa is further supported by pan-African initiatives such as the African Council of Religious Leaders and the Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), which work across the continent to foster understanding, prevent conflict, and promote shared ethical action. These organizations demonstrate that interreligious engagement is not only possible but vital for social cohesion and sustainable peace.

Furthermore, African interreligious dynamics are increasingly being shaped by youth-led movements and digital platforms. Interfaith youth networks in Kenya and Nigeria, for example, use social media to promote peace narratives and counteract extremist propaganda (Udo and Akpan, 2022). These new modalities of engagement reflect a generational shift toward more fluid, dialogical forms of religious identity. In this light, biblical texts like the Parable of the Good Samaritan can become potent tools for reimagining

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interreligious ethics. When interpreted contextually, they affirm that compassion and justice transcend confessional lines, offering African societies a moral vision for co-existence rooted in shared humanity.

### **An Exegetical Analysis of Luke 10:25-37**

#### **a. The Text in Greek**

25 Καὶ ἰδοὺ νομικὸς τις ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων Ἦ αὐτὸν λέγων· Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; 26 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν· Ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται; πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις; 27 ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης Ἦ τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ Ἦ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ Ἦ σου καὶ Ἦ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχυρί Ἦ σου καὶ Ἦ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ Ἦ σου, καὶ τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. 28 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ· Ὅρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης· τοῦτο ποιεῖ καὶ ζήσῃ. 29 Ὁ δὲ θέλων Ἦ δικαιοῦσαι ἑαυτὸν εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν· Καὶ τίς ἐστὶν μου πλησίον; 30 ὑπολαβὼν Ἦ δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· Ἄνθρωπος τις κατέβαινεν ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἰεριχὼ καὶ λησταῖς περιέπεσεν, οἱ καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν καὶ πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες ἀπῆλθον ἀφέντες Ἦ ἡμιθανῆ. 31 κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἱερεὺς τις κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν· 32 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ἦ Λευίτης κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν. 33 Σαμαρίτης δὲ τις ὁδεύων ἦλθεν κατ' αὐτὸν καὶ Ἦ ἰδὼν ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, 34 καὶ προσελθὼν κατέδησεν τὰ τραύματα αὐτοῦ ἐπιχέων ἔλαιον καὶ οἶνον, ἐπιβιάσας δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον κτῆνος ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν εἰς πανδοχεῖον καὶ ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ. 35 καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἦ αὔριον ἐκβαλὼν Ἦ δύο δηνάρια ἔδωκεν Ἦ τῷ πανδοχεῖ καὶ Ἦ

εἶπεν· Ἐπιμελήθητι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅ τι ἂν προσδαπανήσῃς ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ ἐπανέρχεσθαι με ἀποδώσω σοι. 36 Ἦ τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι τοῦ ἐμπεσόντος εἰς τοὺς ληστὰς; 37 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ. εἶπεν Ἦ δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποιεῖ ὁμοίως (<https://sblgnt.com/Luke>).

#### **b. The Text in English Translation**

25] And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" [26] He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" [27] And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." [28] And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." [29] But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" [30] Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [31] Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. [32] So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [33] But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, [34] and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him; and whatever

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more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' [36] Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" [37] He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (*The Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, 1952).

**c. The Text in African-Ibibio Translation**

**Ñke eti awo Sameria - 25**Awo akpeeb ibed keed amaadakka ada adidomo Yisṣ idomo, usen keed. Anye amaabip Yisṣ ate, "Andikpeeb, nso-o ke ami nnie adinam nṣ nnie nsi-nsi uwem?" **26**Yisṣ amaabip anye, "Nso-o ke Ibed atañ? Afo akood anye die?" **27**Anye abṣṣ ate, "'Ma Abṣṣ Abasi mfo ke afid esid mfo ye ke afid ukpṣṣ mfo ye ke afid adudu ye akikere mfo'; nyṣ, 'Ma mbṣṣṣṣ mfo naña afo ama idem mfo.'" **28**Yisṣ amaabo anye ate, "Amebṣṣṣ afṣ. Nam ntodo ndin ayaadu uwem." **29**Ado anye adiyem adiwṣṣ naña imṣ inekke ifṣ, abo Yisṣ, "Anie ado mbṣṣṣṣ mmi?" **30**Yisṣ ndin amaatoṣ ñke ami anṣ anye: "Ete keed aketo abio Yerusedem ayem adika Yeriko, ado ke usṣ, mbon amauke emaemṣ anye etim, ewak anye afṣ, enṣṣṣ anye unan, ndin ekekṣ ke anye akpere ñkpa, edakka ekpṣṣ anye. **31**Aku keed amaadisaña usṣ ado aboiyo, ado anye akekṣ awo ñkpṣṣnam ado, abṣṣ idem ke mben usṣ uko, afrṣ. **32**Ukem-ukem ado ñko, awo keed a-aketooho ubon Difai, adiboiyo, akṣṣ anyen ase anye, anyṣ asaña afrṣ ke mbeñ ikṣ uko. **33**Awo Sameria, a-akekaaha isañ ke usṣ ado, adikṣ anye, ndin udṣ amṣ amṣ anye. **34**Anye akeyet anye mme unan ado, anye amaatoṣṣṣ adan ye mmṣ adṣṣ ke mme anyen unan, abṣṣ mme anyen unan ado, aben anye adot ke enañ amṣ aka akenim

ke itie usṣṣ anyṣ atie ase anye anyen. **35**Edem usen, anye akebiinyṣ, asio akṣ anṣ anie itie usṣṣ ate, 'Kaa iso se anye anyen, ke mmaanyṣ ndi, ñyaadikpe se adodo afo adibiad.' **36** "Ke atu awo ita ami, anie ke akikere mfo akeado mbṣṣṣṣ inṣ awo a-mbon amauke eketimmi mi?" **37**Ata akpeeb ibed ami abṣṣṣ ate, "Awo a-akeanieehe mbṣṣ anṣ anye." Yisṣ ate anye, "Afo nyṣ nyṣ kenam ntodo (<https://www.bible.com/bible/2619/LUK.10.NAAM>)."

**d. Traditional Christian Interpretations and Their Limits**

Throughout Christian history, the Parable of the Good Samaritan has been interpreted primarily through theological and moral lenses that emphasize individual virtue and neighbourly care. Early Church Fathers such as Augustine and Origen allegorized the parable, seeing the Samaritan as a Christ figure who rescues fallen humanity, represented by the wounded man. While spiritually rich, these interpretations often abstracted the parable from its socio-political context and marginalized its potential critique of religious exclusion. During the medieval and early modern periods, Christian theology frequently emphasized in-group moral duty, with neighbourliness understood as applying primarily within the boundaries of the faithful community. As Graves notes, "the conventional reading reinforces a self-contained ethic that privileges doctrinal conformity over radical hospitality" (1997, p.269). In this light, the parable served as an affirmation of internal charity rather than a call to interreligious or intercultural solidarity. However, in recent decades, especially within liberationist, feminist, and

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postcolonial theological circles, there has been a significant reappraisal of the parable's ethical thrust. Scholars now highlight its capacity to disrupt religious boundaries and elevate the ethical significance of marginalized voices. Ryan (2021) critiques the dominant Christian interpretation for its role in perpetuating exclusionary logic, stating that it represents a stumbling block in relations between Christians and Jews. His observation underscores the need for more inclusive and dialogical readings. Despite growing academic awareness, popular ecclesial readings often remain domesticated. The Samaritan is praised for his charity, yet the narrative's challenge to theological gatekeeping is seldom explored. For a transformative reading to take root, it must go beyond individual moralism and engage the parable's radical social implications—especially its subversion of insider-outsider dichotomies.

### **Toward an Interreligious Hermeneutic of the Parable**

Contemporary biblical scholarship has increasingly recognized the interpretive potential of sacred texts for promoting interreligious empathy and ethical praxis. This parable, when viewed through interdisciplinary lenses—especially cognitive linguistics, postcolonial hermeneutics, and African contextual theology—can serve as a critical resource for reshaping interfaith relationships. Howe and Sweetser's cognitive linguistic approach (2021), demonstrates how Luke's narrative employs dynamic viewpoint shifts to cultivate ethical identification with the Samaritan. Through these rhetorical mechanisms, readers are encouraged to move beyond cultural and theological

presuppositions, engaging instead in a transformative moral imagination that views compassion as a universal calling. This embodied reading experience challenges readers to identify not only with the victim but with the outsider who acts with moral courage. Keddie, in his socio-historical analysis, critiques how Luke's narrative, while inclusive in intent, still constructs the Samaritan as a "proximate other" within a broader Jewish-Christian discourse (2020, p.246). This invites a deeper consideration of how even well-meaning texts can perpetuate boundary-making unless reinterpreted through a lens sensitive to contemporary pluralism. Postcolonial readings align with this critique, urging interpreters to resist theological narratives that consolidate power or exclude difference. Ottenheim (2020) furthers this conversation by analysing how the parable's symbolic impact evolves in public memory and sacred geography, particularly through the commemorated site of the "Inn of the Good Samaritan." He argues that sacred texts create "trajectories of explanation" that shape both theology and praxis, underscoring the need for reinterpretation as social contexts change. This insight reinforces the parable's enduring relevance: its meaning is not static but activated through dialogue and ethical engagement. For African contexts, these insights are invaluable. The interreligious hermeneutic proposed here recognizes that ethical readings must be both contextually grounded and dialogically open. In regions where Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions intersect, the parable offers a common narrative through which shared moral values such as compassion,

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justice, and responsibility can be nurtured. As such, Luke 10:25–37 becomes a bridge for collaborative ethics, enabling faith communities to imagine and enact solidarity across religious divides.

**i. Ethical Responsibility in Non-Christian Religions**

The ethical core of this parable which has to do with compassion across social and religious boundaries resonates deeply within multiple world religions. A comparative interpretation reveals striking parallels in African Traditional Religion, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, and Hinduism, all of which uphold principles of hospitality, altruism, and ethical responsibility to others. In African Traditional Religion (ATR), moral responsibility and compassion are deeply embedded in communal values and kinship networks. The principle of *Ubuntu* summarised as "I am because we are" captures the idea that humanity is defined by mutual care and interdependence. Acts of kindness toward strangers, especially the vulnerable, are viewed as a sacred duty (Udo, 2020). As Magesa affirms, "morality in African religion is primarily a matter of communal well-being and justice" (1997, p.76). The Samaritan's behaviour in the parable mirrors the ATR ethic of extended communal responsibility, where help is given not because of shared identity but because of shared humanity. Furthermore, ATR often expresses these values through symbolic rituals, storytelling, and ancestral codes of conduct, which emphasize care for others as a way of maintaining cosmic harmony. In many African communities, assistance to a stranger is not only morally upright but believed to invite

blessings from ancestors and deities. Ethnographic accounts from Yoruba and Akan traditions demonstrate that generosity toward outsiders reflects the ethical expectations of the spirits and ancestors who demand social justice and harmonious coexistence (Mbiti, 1990). In this context, the Samaritan's unreciprocated act of compassion would be seen as morally praiseworthy and spiritually significant.

In Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith emphasize mercy (*rahma*), neighbourliness, and the duty to help others, especially those in distress. Surah An-Nisa (4:36) commands believers to "do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side..." The Prophet Muhammad's teachings frequently highlight helping others as a manifestation of true faith. According to the Hadith: "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbour to his side goes hungry" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6010; see also Qur'an 4:36). The Samaritan's compassion thus aligns closely with Islamic ethics of charity (*sadaqah*) and universal brotherhood (*ummah*). Moreover, Islamic tradition emphasizes the concept of *ihsan* (doing what is beautiful or excellent) which includes going beyond obligatory duties to embody divine attributes such as mercy and generosity. Al-Ghazali (1993) has argued that assisting those in need, even at personal cost, reflects the highest moral character. In Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the duty to assist a person in peril is not just a recommendation but an obligation under certain conditions, illustrating the seriousness with which Islamic law

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treats ethical intervention. The Samaritan's act, seen through this lens, would be considered *fard kifayah* (a communal obligation), a duty that, if unfulfilled by the community, becomes incumbent upon individuals. The Bahá'í Faith, grounded in principles of unity and universal compassion, explicitly teaches the spiritual imperative to aid and uplift all people regardless of religious or social identity. In *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the faith, instructs: "Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity... Be a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim" (1994, p.285). This ethic is not simply idealistic but is institutionalized within Bahá'í practice through structures such as Local Spiritual Assemblies, which are tasked with caring for the vulnerable and promoting justice within communities. Furthermore, the Bahá'í concept of *service to humanity* is seen as worship itself. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a central figure in the Bahá'í Faith, stated: "To be a Bahá'í means to love all the world; to love humanity and to try to serve it." This theological imperative renders the Samaritan's actions emblematic of spiritual maturity, wherein serving the stranger is indistinguishable from honouring the divine. The parable, when interpreted through Bahá'í ethics, becomes a call to eliminate prejudice and practice love without condition. In Hindu ethics, the concept of *dharma*—righteous duty—extends to compassion for all living beings. The *Bhagavad Gita* advocates selfless action (*karma yoga*) performed without attachment, especially in the service of others. The idea of *seva* (service) is central in Hindu spirituality, often expressed in caring for

the poor, the sick, and strangers (2007, p.102). The Samaritan's conduct illustrates this ethos of *seva*: compassionate action undertaken not for recognition but as a duty to the divine present in all beings. In addition, Hindu traditions emphasize the interconnectedness of all life (*advaita*), suggesting that aiding another being is a form of honouring the self within. This metaphysical unity underpins moral obligations to all, not just to kin or caste. Scriptural teachings from texts like the *Manusmriti* and Upanishads promote *ahimsa* (non-harming) and compassion as universal virtues (2004, p.122). In this framework, the Samaritan's behaviour exemplifies the highest form of *dharma*, transcending ego and tribal identity.

This comparative study demonstrates that the Parable of the Good Samaritan articulates a moral impulse that is neither uniquely Christian nor culturally bounded. Rather, its message finds theological and ethical resonance across distinct religious traditions that, while differing in metaphysical beliefs, converge on a shared ethic of compassion, service, and dignity. The concept of radical neighbourliness embodied by the Samaritan, a stranger aiding another outside his community, aligns with the African Traditional emphasis on *Ubuntu*, the Islamic principle of *ihsan*, the Bahá'í commitment to the oneness of humanity, and the Hindu ideal of *seva*. These commonalities suggest that sacred narratives like the Good Samaritan can serve as interreligious resources for moral dialogue, especially in pluralistic societies like those across Africa. More significantly, the parable functions as what Ricoeur might call a "limit expression"—a text that not only

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conveys meaning within one tradition, but invites reinterpretation across boundaries (1995, p.292). It opens space for shared reflection on what it means to be human, ethical, and responsible to others in a fractured world. Thus, rather than functioning solely as a Christian moral tale, the Parable of the Good Samaritan may be viewed as a theological bridge text, a parable whose ethic transcends confessional lines and offers a vocabulary for global solidarity.

**ii. Implications for Interfaith**

**Dialogue and Praxis in Africa**

Given Africa's extensive religious diversity which ranges from Christianity and Islam to traditional African religions and newer religious movements, and the recurring tensions that emerge from theological exclusivism, religious insularity, and sociopolitical conflict, the parable provides an ethical model for cooperation, reconciliation, and sustained solidarity. As earlier indicated, Africa's religious landscape is characterized by both vibrant coexistence and episodic volatility. Nigeria, for example, is almost evenly split between Muslims and Christians, with Islam dominant in the north and Christianity prevalent in the south. This demographic reality, compounded by political competition and resource inequality, has contributed to recurrent sectarian violence. States like Kaduna and Plateau have seen cycles of intercommunal clashes, often fuelled by religious rhetoric and perceived marginalization. There are longstanding tensions between Muslim Séléka rebels and Christian anti-Balaka militias have resulted in mass displacement and communal breakdown in the Central African Republic. In Kenya, while

interfaith relations have been largely peaceful, sporadic episodes such as the 2015 Garissa University attack and the 2013 Westgate Mall siege highlight how theological extremism can be manipulated to incite fear and fragmentation.

Amidst these challenges, the Samaritan's ethic of vulnerability and responsive action offers a powerful counter-narrative. His care for the wounded stranger is not mediated by shared religious or ethnic identity, but by an unconditioned sense of compassion. This disinterested love, or *agape*, is critical for fostering inclusive relationships in contexts where religious identities are often politicized. The parable invites readers to recognize their own ethical resistance and to imagine new forms of relational responsibility. This call to reflexivity is crucial in interfaith settings, where mutual suspicion can undermine cooperation. Practical expressions of this ethic have already emerged in various African contexts. Interfaith platforms such as the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) in Kaduna have played pivotal roles in mediating conflict and promoting peace between Christian and Muslim communities (Udo, 2025). These initiatives draw upon shared scriptural and ethical values, including those reflected in the Good Samaritan narrative, to facilitate dialogue, communal service, and trauma healing.

**Conclusion**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan remains one of the most theologically provocative and ethically resonant narratives in Christian scripture. In the

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context of Africa's religiously plural and often politically charged societies, the parable invites a reimagining of neighbourliness that transcends doctrinal affiliation and ethnic allegiance. This study has shown that through an interreligious hermeneutic, Luke 10:30–37 can be reclaimed as a resource for inclusive ethical praxis—one grounded in compassion, solidarity, and the affirmation of shared humanity. The paper has explored how the Samaritan functions not simply as a figure of moral virtue, but as a symbol of boundary-breaking love and social transformation. His actions critique systems of exclusion and call faith communities to a higher ethical standard—one that prioritizes human need over religious orthodoxy. Concrete examples of "risk-taking compassion" across religious divides in Nigeria, Kenya, and the Central African Republic demonstrate that this ethic is not merely abstract but actionable. These stories of interfaith solidarity embody the spirit of the Samaritan and provide practical models for how religious communities can collaborate to address shared challenges such as violence, poverty, and marginalization. A comparative interfaith analysis further reveals that the moral vision of the Samaritan resonates deeply with core ethical values in African Traditional Religion (*ubuntu*), Islam (*ihsan*), the Bahá'í Faith (service to humanity), and Hinduism (*seva* and *dharma*). This convergence suggests that the parable functions as a theological bridge text, what Paul Ricoeur calls a "limit expression" that invites shared reflection across religious boundaries. As such, it holds enormous potential to foster interfaith cooperation

and inspire community healing in fragmented societies.

### Recommendations

1. Religious institutions and schools should incorporate joint scriptural studies that include the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a core text for interfaith reflection. Such engagement should emphasize empathy, shared values, and ethical responsibility.
2. Governments and faith-based organizations should invest in platforms like NIREC and IMC to facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution. Expanding such initiatives can help prevent violence and build social cohesion.
3. Communities should prioritize interfaith collaboration in responding to public health crises, natural disasters, and poverty reduction. Such efforts not only address material needs but also build trust across religious lines.
4. African theologians should continue to develop frameworks that affirm religious diversity as a site of ethical enrichment rather than threat. The parable provides a scriptural basis for affirming moral agency across religious identities.
5. Educational institutions can also serve as catalysts for interfaith praxis. Integrating the parable into comparative religious curricula can foster shared reflection and ethical learning. Scripture-based interfaith study groups would provide safe spaces for religious communities to grapple with theological differences while building empathetic bonds rooted in common moral teachings.

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6. Finally, humanitarian cooperation rooted in the Samaritan ethic, such as joint responses to disasters, public health crises, and poverty alleviation, can become powerful testimonies of interreligious neighbourliness. When faith communities focus on shared human needs rather than theological divisions, such partnerships model the parable's vision of compassion across boundaries. In this way, Luke 10:25–37 offers more than a theological statement but also a scriptural prompt for real-world transformation., urging faith communities to move beyond confessional silos and embody neighbourliness as an interreligious commitment to dignity, justice, and peace

In all, the Parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to transcend boundaries of beliefs in pursuit of a common ethic of care. In Africa and beyond, this vision offers a timely and urgent invitation to practice interreligious neighbourliness, not as idealism, but as faithful action in a fractured world.

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## Decolonial Philosophy in New Nigerian Poetry and the Aesthetics of Epistemic Resistance

### Abstract

This paper argued that a philosophically coherent strand of contemporary Nigerian poetry constitutes a sustained project of epistemic resistance, one that simultaneously diagnoses the structural violence of colonial knowledge systems and enacts, at the level of aesthetic form itself, alternative modes of knowing rooted in African lifeworlds. Drawing on the decolonial frameworks of Walter D. Mignolo, Sylvia Wynter, Achille Mbembe, and Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the paper read selected work from Niyi Osundare, Romeo Oriogun, and Saddiq Dzukogi as aesthetic sites where the coloniality of knowledge is contested and provisionally dismantled. Through qualitative close reading informed by decolonial critical theory, the paper theorized what it terms "border poetics," an aesthetic disposition that inhabits the fault lines between colonial epistemology and African ways of knowing in order to generate genuinely decolonial imaginaries. It concluded that new Nigerian poetry is not merely a cultural artifact but a philosophically serious intervention in the global politics of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Decoloniality; Epistemic resistance; New Nigerian poetry; Coloniality of knowledge; Border thinking

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### Introduction

In the intellectual tradition that has come to be known as decolonial thought, one of its most tenacious and consequential claims is that the European colonial enterprise was not only a territorial and economic conquest but, just as crucially, an epistemological one, a systematic reorganization of the global hierarchy of knowing such that the forms of knowledge and experience indigenous to colonized peoples were rendered invisible, primitive, or simply

unthinkable within the dominant cognitive frameworks of modernity. Aníbal Quijano's foundational theorization of the "coloniality of power" maps how this hierarchy was racially encoded and institutionally perpetuated even after formal decolonization, establishing a structure of domination that operated through the management of subjectivities and the control of knowledge rather than through the direct coercion of territorial occupation alone (Quijano 533). Walter D. Mignolo's companion concept of the

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"coloniality of knowledge" extends this analysis to the very architecture of intellectual production, tracing what he calls the "geopolitics of knowledge" through which certain sites are designated as the origin of universal theory while others are consigned to the status of raw, unprocessed experience awaiting interpretation from elsewhere (Mignolo, *Local Histories* 17). What remains undertheorized within this otherwise rich body of scholarship, however, is the specific and irreplaceable role that literary aesthetics, and poetry in particular, plays in both registering the violence of this epistemic arrangement and enacting, through its formal procedures and cognitive orientations, something of its undoing.

This paper takes up that theoretical lacuna by examining three bodies of contemporary Nigerian poetry that together constitute what one might term, following Mignolo's conceptual vocabulary, a "border poetics," a mode of poetic practice situated at the "colonial difference," drawing simultaneously on the formal inheritance of the English lyric tradition and on the epistemic resources of Yoruba oral philosophy, Islamic cosmological thought, and other African cognitive frameworks, to produce a practice of "border thinking," a mode of knowing that does not simply invert the colonial hierarchy but dissolves its categorical foundations altogether (Mignolo, *Local Histories* 85). The poets under examination represent three distinct but convergent Nigerian literary formations. Niyi Osundare's career, spanning more than four decades of engagement with Yoruba epistemology and ecological philosophy, marks him

as the preeminent philosophical poet of the second generation of Nigerian writing. Romeo Oriogun, whose collection *Nomad* (2021) won the 2022 Nigeria Prize for Literature, has established himself as the most philosophically restless voice of the new generation. Saddiq Dzukogi, whose *Your Crib, My Qibla* (2021) won the 2022 Derek Walcott Prize for Poetry, and whose most recent collection, *Bakandamiya: An Elegy* (2025), represents one of the most ambitious attempts in contemporary African poetry to recover and theorize a pre-colonial epistemic tradition, completes the constellation of voices this paper addresses.

The central argument is that these three poets engage in a practice of what Sylvia Wynter calls the overturning of the overrepresentation of Man. For Wynter, the colonial project installed a specific, racially marked "genre of the human" at the center of all knowledge production, declaring its perspective to be universally valid while rendering all other forms of being and knowing superfluous or nonexistent (Wynter 260). Contemporary Nigerian poetry is one of the most consequential sites where that overrepresentation is persistently contested, not through discursive refutation alone, but through the making of aesthetic form itself, which carries within its structural, linguistic, and cosmological choices a whole embedded philosophy of what counts as knowledge and who counts as a knowing subject.

### Literature Review

The concept of epistemic violence, introduced into postcolonial critical discourse primarily through Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's reading of the

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British colonial reorganization of the Indian sati tradition, designates the systematic suppression and delegitimization of non-Western knowledge systems through which the colonial subject is constituted not as a knowing subject but as an object of knowledge. What the decolonial scholars building on Quijano and Mignolo have added to this insight is its structural dimension, namely that epistemic violence is not an accident or a side effect of colonialism but its necessary epistemological precondition, the cognitive infrastructure without which territorial conquest and resource extraction could not have been rationalized as a civilizing mission. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, in his landmark study *Epistemic Freedom in Africa*, argues with exemplary clarity that "epistemic freedom is foundational in the broader decolonisation struggle because it enables the emergence of critical decolonial consciousness," and that the suppression of such freedom is the condition that makes continued coloniality possible long after the formal end of colonial rule (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2). The structures of knowledge, what counts as theory, which languages carry philosophical authority, and which cosmologies are treated as metaphysics rather than mythology, continue to encode the original colonial violence even within institutions that understand themselves as postcolonial or liberal.

In the Nigerian literary-historical context, this persistence of epistemic coloniality has a dimension that is crucial to understanding the stakes of the poetry examined here. The first generation of Nigerian writers in English operated, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o would later diagnose in his foundational

polemic *Decolonising the Mind*, within a colonial linguistic dispensation that shaped even their anti-colonial imagination, encoding within the very texture of their prose and poetry the epistemological assumptions of the metropolitan literary traditions from which their craft descended (Ngũgĩ 3). Subsequent generations of Nigerian poets, of whom Osundare is the most philosophically self-conscious representative, pressed the critical maneuver further, introducing into the English text the syntactic structures, oral performance conventions, and cosmological frameworks of indigenous African traditions, making the poem perform according to epistemological logics that are not those of the Western lyric tradition it appears to inhabit.

What makes this project properly philosophical is its engagement with the deepest stratum of what Mignolo calls the "colonial matrix of power," the level at which the very criteria of valid knowledge are determined prior to any particular empirical or theoretical claim (Mignolo, *Local Histories* 17). To write poetry that operates according to a different epistemological dispensation, one in which the earth is addressed as a knowing subject, the qibla of Islamic prayer organizes the speaker's orientation to grief, or a Bori spirit narrates five hundred years of cultural transformation, is to enact what Wynter calls a "new science of the human," one that insists on the epistemic legitimacy of other ways of being in and understanding the world (Wynter 316). Achille Mbembe, in *Out of the Dark Night*, argues that the "will to community" animating the most serious African cultural production is fundamentally a will to construct new forms of knowing

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and being in common (Mbembe 3), and that poetry is one of the primary media through which this will is enacted, because it can simultaneously make a philosophical claim and embody it in sensory, rhythmic, and cosmological form, making the claim felt rather than merely understood.

### Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative methodology situated in decolonial critical theory and close reading. The analytical framework draws on the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program, as elaborated by Mignolo, Quijano, Wynter, and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, to read poetry not as mere cultural expression but as a site of philosophical knowledge production. Close reading is understood not as a formalist exercise detached from history and politics but as a mode of critical attention to the ways in which poetic form, diction, cosmological reference, and linguistic structure carry epistemological arguments. The primary texts are read as theoretical objects in their own right rather than as illustrations of arguments produced elsewhere, a gesture that refuses the assumption that theory belongs only to metropolitan universities. The selection of texts is purposive, focusing on poets whose work most clearly enacts the framework of border poetics.

### Findings

Niyi Osundare's body of work represents one of the most philosophically sustained and historically self-conscious engagements with the project of epistemic decolonization in the African literary tradition. Over more than four decades,

from *Songs from the Marketplace* (1983) through *Village Voices* (1984), *The Eye of the Earth* (1986), and into his most recent collection, *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* (2022), Osundare has developed a poetic philosophy in which the Yoruba worldview functions not as cultural decoration or nostalgic retrieval but as a genuine epistemological resource, a way of knowing the natural and social world that the poetry proposes as philosophically serious, cognitively adequate, and politically necessary on its own terms.

Central to this philosophy is what one might call a "border poetics of ecology," a mode of engaging with the natural world that refuses the Cartesian subject/object binary, insisting instead on the Yoruba understanding of knowledge as emergent from attentive, reciprocal participation in a community of knowing that includes the non-human world on equal terms. In *The Eye of the Earth* in particular, the natural world is spoken to and spoken by; rivers possess memory; the earth is addressed as an elder whose knowledge encompasses and precedes that of the individual human speaker. This is not personification in the decorative literary sense familiar from the Western tradition but an epistemological claim about the distributed character of knowledge and the conditions of its production, a claim that reflects the philosophical assumptions of Yoruba cosmology regarding the continuity of being across the categories that Western thought designates as "human" and "natural," "animate" and "inanimate," "knowing" and "known."

The philosophical weight of this position is made most explicit in *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet*, which a 2023

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study published in the *International Journal of Science and Research Archive* analyzes as a text that "mobilizes the linguistic resources of transitivity, metaphor, and lexical connotation to articulate an urgent ideological critique of environmental destruction, neocolonial exploitation, and epistemic injustice," engaging "Yoruba cosmology and indigenous aesthetics" to "disrupt Western anthropocentrism" in ways that go beyond mere thematic protest to constitute a formal and cognitive challenge to the epistemological assumptions embedded in dominant environmental discourse (Ogunsiji and Ogungbemi). When the earth speaks in the collection, the address is not a rhetorical device but the enactment of a cognitive relationship in which the earth is a speaking, knowing subject whose utterances constitute a claim on the human listener that bypasses any framework that would reduce her to an object of concern. The earth issues its own imperative from within its own epistemic authority.

Osundare's deployment of Yoruba linguistic structures, oral performance conventions, and incantatory rhythms within his predominantly English-language texts constitutes a parallel epistemological intervention at the level of form. The introduction of Yoruba cosmological concepts without translation or explanatory glossing asserts the cognitive adequacy of Yoruba poetics to carry philosophical meaning without conversion into the idioms of the metropolitan tradition. In this respect, Osundare practices precisely what Ndlovu-Gatsheni identifies as the most fundamental requirement of epistemic decolonization, not the negation of

Western epistemology as such, but the affirmation of African epistemologies on their own terms, insisting on their validity as modes of engaging the world rather than as cultural survivals awaiting translation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 14).

### Discussion

Where Osundare's epistemic project is anchored in the philosophical resources of Yoruba tradition and articulated through a poetics of ecological address, the work of Romeo Oriogun and Sadiq Dzukogi engages a different but equally consequential dimension of the decolonial problematic, namely the reconstruction of African subjectivity and historical consciousness in the aftermath of layered, compounding violences. The judges of the 2022 Nigeria Prize for Literature, awarding the prize to Oriogun's *Nomad*, noted that its sixty-seven poems "were held together by a travel motif, marshalled in each poem with equal intensity, and linked to the African past, including the Middle Passage, and the African future," and that the collection stood out as "the most technically accomplished, rendering the topical subject of migration in a language laced with lyrical figurations." This judicial commendation is apt but requires philosophical deepening, for the travel motif of *Nomad* is not merely thematic but epistemological, and the formal achievement of the collection is inseparable from its cognitive achievement.

Oriogun's nomadism, as it manifests throughout the collection, is best understood as an epistemological condition rather than a biographical circumstance. Writing as the first openly

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queer Nigerian poet to win the Nigeria Prize for Literature, Oriogun occupies a position of simultaneous disqualification from multiple communities of epistemic authority. This position is precisely what Mignolo theorizes as the locus of subaltern knowledge, the site from which it becomes possible to "think from the colonial difference" rather than within the epistemological categories that the colonial matrix of power has established as universal (Mignolo, *Local Histories* 85). *Nomad's* philosophical achievement lies in its refusal to resolve this position of multiple displacement into a stable identity; instead, it inhabits the condition of permanent dislocation as a source of distinctive epistemic access. The self that moves through Oriogun's poems is not a bounded, rational Cartesian subject but a traveling, relational consciousness whose knowledge is always partial, perspectival, and implicated in the histories of movement, dispossession, and desire that colonial modernity set in motion. This resonates with Wynter's insistence that the acknowledgment of situatedness is the condition of rigorous rather than ideologically mystified thought (Wynter 316).

Saddiq Dzukogi's *Your Crib, My Qibla*, which won the 2022 Derek Walcott Prize for Poetry and was a co-winner of the 2021 Julie Suk Award, operates in a different philosophical register but with comparable epistemic ambition. The collection, which grew from Dzukogi's experience of the near-loss of his daughter Bahra, is organized around the Islamic concept of the qibla, the direction of Mecca toward which Muslims orient themselves in prayer, as the governing metaphor for a father's

orientation of grief toward the transcendent. By making the qibla the architectonic principle of the collection, Dzukogi introduces into the English-language lyric tradition an Islamic cosmological framework that carries its own epistemology of the sacred, its own account of the relationship between the living and the dead, the human and the divine, and the particular and the cosmic. The University of Nebraska Press describes the collection as exploring how "the language of memory functions as a space of mourning, connecting the dead with the world of the living," culminating in "an imagined dialogue between the father and his deceased daughter in the intricate space of the family." What this description gestures toward is the epistemological claim embedded in Dzukogi's formal architecture, namely that the Islamic-African framework of spiritual orientation provides cognitive resources for navigating extreme experiences of loss that are not reducible to the secular or Christian epistemologies that dominate the Western lyric tradition.

Dzukogi's most recent collection, *Bakandamiya: An Elegy* (2025), extends the epistemological project of his earlier work into a still more ambitious register. Described by its publisher as a book-length epic poem that "covers more than five hundred years of cultural transformation" in northern Nigeria, subverting the legend of Bayajidda "from a Bori spirit's point of view" while expanding "the griot tradition of Bakandamiya, a poetic form from northern Nigeria popularized by Mamman Shata," the collection represents one of the most radical attempts in contemporary African poetry to recover a pre-colonial

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epistemic tradition as a resource for thinking about colonialism and African futurity. Kwame Dawes describes it as "a groundbreaking work of beauty and urgency," drawing on "Hausa griot traditions as well as animist thought" in ways that invite comparison with Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*. Like p'Bitek's foundational poem, *Bakandamiya* uses an indigenous oral form as the epistemological container for a critique of colonial and postcolonial violence that Western lyric forms could not sustain. In Mbembe's terms, the collection performs the synthesis of an Africa "in the process of synthesizing itself, in a mode of disjunction and redistribution of differences," constructing from the archive of northern Nigerian epistemic traditions a mode of knowing the region's history that is irreducible to any single tradition while remaining rooted in all of them (Mbembe 5).

The epistemological orientations enacted by all three poets, the relational knowing of the Yoruba ecological tradition, the nomadic knowing of the perpetually displaced subject, and the cosmologically oriented knowing of the Islamic-African poetic tradition, do not merely supplement but challenge the epistemological framework of Western modernity, generating forms of knowledge about grief, dispossession, belonging, and the responsibilities of the powerful to the earth that the dominant epistemology is structurally unable to produce. To insist on the irreducibility of these knowing practices is, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, a claim about cognitive justice, the insistence that "epistemic freedom is the freedom to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop methodologies and write from

where one is located" (14). What the poets examined here demonstrate is that this freedom, enacted aesthetically, is present and available in the poem itself.

### Conclusion

This paper has argued that contemporary Nigerian poetry, as practiced by Osundare, Oriogun, and Dzukogi, constitutes a sustained project of epistemic resistance, contesting the coloniality of knowledge at the level of form, language, cosmology, and cognitive orientation, and proposing in its place alternative epistemologies rooted in Yoruba, Islamic-African, Hausa, and diasporic intellectual traditions. Through decolonial close reading, the paper has shown how these poets inhabit what Mignolo calls the colonial difference and generate from that inhabitation forms of knowing that are philosophically distinctive and epistemologically generative in ways that existing scholarship on Nigerian literature and decolonial thought has not adequately theorized.

The theoretical concept of border poetics developed here suggests that the long tradition of Nigerian and African literary production can be read as a continuous philosophical project, one of constructing and refining forms of knowledge adequate to the African experience in all its historical complexity and philosophical depth. The stakes of engaging this project are ultimately stakes about the human, about what it means to know the world, who is recognized as capable of knowing it, and what forms of understanding are granted the status of philosophy rather than folklore. Contemporary Nigerian poetry constitutes an aesthetically powerful

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and humanly compelling insistence that African epistemic traditions are not peripheral to but constitutive of any genuinely adequate account of human knowing and human freedom. It is, in the fullest and most demanding sense, decolonial praxis, not a representation of decolonization but its enactment.

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## Afropolitan Mobility and the Ethics of Global Belonging in Contemporary Nigerian Fiction

### Abstract

This paper examined the figuration of Afropolitan mobility as an ethical problem in four works of recent Nigerian and Nigerian-inflected fiction, namely Lesley Nneka Arimah's story collection *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017), Ayobami Adebayo's novel *Stay with Me* (2017), Chigozie Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's memoir-essay *Notes on Grief* (2021). Drawing on Achille Mbembe, Simon Gikandi, Sara Ahmed, and Lauren Berlant, the paper argued that these texts collectively enact a post-Afropolitan reckoning with the costs of global mobility, attending to the structural immobilities that cosmopolitan celebration tends to elide. Their ethical arguments are shown to be inseparable from their formal innovations, and the paper proposed a postcolonial cosmopolitics of accountability adequate to the contradictions they illuminate.

**Keywords:** Afropolitan mobility, Ethics, Belonging, Nigerian fiction, Postcolonial cosmopolitanism

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### Introduction

The question of what it means to belong to the world has never been a neutral or abstractly philosophical one for African writers and intellectuals. It has always been posed under specific historical conditions, namely, that of colonial subjection, racial hierarchy, forced dispersal, and, more recently, the radically unequal distribution of mobility that characterises the neoliberal global order. When the concept of the Afropolitan emerged in the early years of the twenty-first century, it appeared to offer a fresh and affirmative answer to this question, that is, a vision of African global subjectivity that was neither burdened by the victimhood narratives of Afropessimism nor

constrained by the territorial imperatives of nationalist thought. The Afropolitan, as Taiye Selasi imagined her in "Bye-Bye, Babar" (2005), was at home everywhere and nowhere, fluent in the cultural codes of multiple continents, and possessed of a freedom of movement that seemed, at last, to place the African subject on equal footing with the cosmopolitan citizens of the global North. It was a compelling vision, and it generated considerable excitement in both literary and critical circles. It was also, as subsequent scholarship has demonstrated with increasing rigour, a vision that concealed as much as it revealed.

This paper argues that the most ethically serious Nigerian fiction of the

past decade has moved beyond celebratory cosmopolitanism toward a searching interrogation of what global mobility costs and what obligations it generates. The four primary texts, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Notes on Grief* (2021), Ayobami Adebayo's *Stay with Me* (2017), Chigozie Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019), and Lesley Nneka Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017), do not constitute a school or a movement in any programmatic sense. They are formally diverse, generically distinct, and preoccupied with different aspects of Nigerian and African experience. What they share, and what justifies their reading in conjunction, is a persistent concern with the underside of the Afropolitan promise and underscores the grief that mobility leaves behind, the gendered and classed structures that make mobility available to some and deny it to others, the colonial histories that continue to shape the terms on which African subjects can aspire to global belonging, and the structural inequalities that the celebration of cosmopolitan freedom tends to aestheticise rather than confront. The paper draws on the critical frameworks of Achille Mbembe, Simon Gikandi, Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Caroline Levine, and Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh to illuminate these concerns, and it proposes, by way of conclusion, the outlines of what it calls a postcolonial cosmopolitics of accountability as a framework adequate to the ethical complexity these texts illuminate.

### Literature Review

When Taiye Selasi published "Bye-Bye, Babar" in *The LIP Magazine* in 2005, she introduced into literary-critical discourse a concept whose fortunes have since been decidedly uneven. The "Afropolitan," describing Africans of the diaspora who navigate smoothly between continents, maintain multiple cultural affiliations, and inhabit global modernity with apparent ease, was initially received as a liberatory corrective to both Afropessimist stereotyping and the nativist demands of certain strands of postcolonial thought. Within a decade, however, the concept had attracted substantial scepticism. What had seemed like an expansion of possibility came to appear, under closer examination, as the ideological self-portrait of a narrow class fraction – the beneficiaries of elite education, metropolitan cultural capital, and the visa regimes that, in a world of sharply unequal mobility, distinguish the privileged migrant from the asylum seeker and the undocumented worker. It is in this critical aftermath, what one might call the post-Afropolitan moment, that the four primary texts examined in this paper take their bearings, and it is their shared capacity to subject the Afropolitan promise to sustained ethical interrogation that makes them, when read in conjunction, among the most searching contributions to contemporary world literary culture.

The theoretical coordinates of this interrogation are provided most forcefully by Achille Mbembe. In *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), Mbembe extends his concept of necropolitics into a comprehensive account of the global distribution of life-chances under racial

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capitalism, arguing that the African subject's encounter with global modernity is not an encounter between equals seeking mutual recognition but a renegotiation of the terms of a structural subordination that colonialism inaugurated and that the neoliberal global economy has perpetuated in new and more insidious forms. The Afropolitan's claim to cosmopolitan belonging must be read against this background. It is a claim advanced within a system that has historically assigned African bodies to disposability, and its success, where achieved, is always partial, conditional, and shadowed by the racial logic it appears to transcend. Simon Gikandi sharpens this critique by identifying in Afropolitan discourse what he calls "nostalgia without memory." It is an affective attachment to Africa sustained by and through the very distance that migration makes possible, one that functions to depoliticise the economic structures producing both the aspiration to leave and the impossibility of easy return for most Africans (Gikandi 12). Lauren Berlant's concept of "cruelly optimistic" attachment, developed in *Cruel Optimism* (2011), provides the affective theory that these structural accounts require. For Berlant, subjects in the contemporary neoliberal world characteristically attach themselves to fantasies of the good life, including prosperity, upward mobility, and stable belonging, that are structurally unavailable to them, and the attachment itself is cruel insofar as it binds the subject to the very conditions that obstruct her flourishing. The aspiration to global belonging celebrated in Afropolitan discourse is, in Berlant's

terms, precisely such a cruel optimism, which is a structurally conditioned attachment to a form of freedom that the system of global inequality simultaneously promises and withholds. What distinguishes the post-Afropolitan texts examined here from earlier iterations of this aspiration is their capacity to name this cruelty, to render visible in literary form the structural conditions that transform the dream of mobility into a compound of aspiration and suffering.

### Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative methodology grounded in postcolonial literary criticism and narrative ethics. The primary method is close reading, that is, an ethically and historically situated practice attentive to the ways formal choices, such as narrative voice, genre, and focalization, enact the ethical arguments that texts advance. The four texts were selected for their contemporaneity, their engagement with the ethics of global mobility, and the diversity of their formal approaches. No empirical data were collected; the study's claims are grounded in close engagement with the literary and critical archive.

### Findings

Across the four primary texts, a consistent pattern emerges, namely, the aspiration to global mobility is persistently shadowed by grief, gendered constraint, colonial historical inheritance, and the structural exploitation of those who remain immobile. Each text stages this shadowing through distinct formal means, and the analysis that follows

traces the specific ways their formal organisations enact the ethical arguments constitutive of the post-Afropolitan literary moment.

## Discussion

### Grief, Distance, and the Ethics of Transnational Loss: Adichie's *Notes on Grief*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Notes on Grief* (2021), written in the immediate aftermath of her father's death in June 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic that prevented her return to Nigeria, is formally anomalous within her oeuvre precisely because of its vulnerability. It is not a novel but an extended personal essay, a mode that strips away the mediations of fiction to confront, with unusual directness, the contradiction at the heart of the Afropolitan condition. Adichie is, by any measure, among the most successful embodiments of the Afropolitan ideal – globally celebrated, institutionally recognised, and possessed of the cultural capital that makes smooth transnational navigation possible. And yet it is precisely this mobility, the life organised around international travel and metropolitan literary circuits, that renders her unable to be at her father's deathbed. The pandemic merely makes explicit what the structure of the Afropolitan life always already contains as a latent possibility that the pursuit of global belonging will exact a local cost that cannot be recovered.

Throughout *Notes on Grief*, Adichie reflects on the inadequacy of the English in which she is compelled to mourn, noting that certain Igbo concepts central to her father's sense of a life

well-lived have no adequate English equivalents, and that to mourn him in English is already to perform a translation that diminishes the object of mourning. This linguistic predicament is not merely personal; it is a symptom of the structural condition of the postcolonial African writer whose medium of global communication is the colonial language and whose most intimate emotional life remains anchored in the vernacular.

The text's most ethically searching passages concern the relationship between Adichie's global success and her father's postcolonial aspirations. James Nwoye Adichie was a statistics professor and university administrator whose intellectual formation was shaped by the nationalist aspiration to build, through education and professional achievement, a modern Nigeria capable of taking its place as an equal in the community of nations. His daughter's global celebrity is the fulfilment of a trajectory he helped to inaugurate; yet it is also, paradoxically, the condition of her distance from him at the moment of his death. *Notes on Grief* implies that the Afropolitan's success is both the realisation and the quiet betrayal of the postcolonial project that produced her. Sara Ahmed's account in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) makes *Notes on Grief* a structural critique of the affective economy the Afropolitan life requires.

### Domestic Immobility and Gendered Belonging: Adebayo's *Stay with Me*

Ayobami Adebayo's *Stay with Me* (2017) operates at a considerable remove from the cosmopolitan settings of Afropolitan fiction, its world confined

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almost entirely to Nigeria across the decades of military rule and structural adjustment. Yet the novel is, in a profound sense, a work about the ethics of mobility and belonging, because it excavates the domestic and patriarchal structures that the Afropolitan aspiration historically fled, making visible the gendered immobility that conditions the mobile subject's freedom. To read *Stay with Me* alongside post-Afropolitan discourse is to encounter the historical conditions out of which that discourse emerged. Noteworthy, the structural adjustment of African economies in the 1980s and 1990s was among the most powerful forces driving the emigration of educated Nigerians to the global North, and it is precisely the world that Adebayo describes, one of constrained resources, patriarchal authority, and deeply gendered immobility, that those emigrants were, in part, attempting to escape.

The novel's narrative is organised around the marriage of Yejide and Akin and the crisis produced by Yejide's apparent infertility. Adebayo's handling of this crisis is distinguished by its refusal to assign guilt or innocence in any simple way, such that both protagonists are simultaneously victims and perpetrators, constrained by social structures that neither has chosen and neither can simply refuse. What the novel insists upon, however, is the asymmetry of those constraints. The social costs of infertility fall almost exclusively on Yejide, who is subjected to public humiliation, communal pressure, and the threat of polygamy, while Akin, whose own infertility is the suppressed cause of the couple's childlessness, is largely insulated from

social censure by the patriarchal structures that render male reproductive failure unspeakable. Adebayo renders Yejide's predicament as a condition in which the desire to love and to be loved adequately is perpetually frustrated by structures that assign to women the obligation of transparency while reserving for men the prerogative of silence, so that Yejide's longing and her suffering are functions not of personal failure but of a systematically organised injustice.

The dual first-person narration enacts the asymmetry it describes. Accordingly, Yejide's chapters are saturated with social exposure and managed hope, while Akin's suppress the knowledge that would relieve her suffering. Caroline Levine's argument in *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015) that formal structures are themselves political organisations of experience is directly pertinent here. Thus, Adebayo's decision to give Akin's perspective equal narrative space to Yejide's is not a gesture of liberal evenhandedness but a formal strategy that makes visible the epistemic asymmetry the novel describes, requiring the reader to inhabit the position of one who knows what is being withheld while reading the account of one who does not. The novel's formal arrangement thus enacts in its structure the very argument it advances in its content, making the asymmetry of gendered knowledge not merely a theme but a lived readerly experience.

### **Colonial Labour, Aspirational Masculinity, and Tragic Mobility: Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities***

Chigozie Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019) narrates the disastrous migration to Cyprus of Chinonso Solomon Olisa, a poultry farmer, recounted by his *chi*, his Igbo guardian spirit, who pleads his case before the council of the supreme deity Chukwu. This conceit situates the individual story of contemporary labour migration within the longue durée of Igbo spiritual and historical experience, producing a work that is simultaneously a realist account of the costs of aspirational mobility and a mythological meditation on the colonial archive that underlies it. Chinonso is not an Afropolitan in any of the usual senses as he has no metropolitan cultural capital, no educational credentials, and no prior experience of international movement. His aspiration to migrate to Cyprus is produced by romantic attachment and by the class hierarchies of educational capital that colonial modernity produced and that postcolonial Nigeria has perpetuated. The migration is, from the outset, a product of social coercion rather than of the free cosmopolitan choice that Afropolitan discourse tends to celebrate.

The *chi's* narration constitutes a formally and ethically radical choice whose implications extend well beyond the cosmological. By insisting that Chinonso's story be evaluated within the moral framework of Igbo thought rather than within the secular, individualist frameworks of Western liberal modernity, Obioma refuses the terms on which cosmopolitan success and failure are typically assessed. The

*chi* situates Chinonso's choices within a web of ancestral obligation and colonial inheritance that individual aspiration excludes. In Cyprus he enacts Mbembe's trajectory from aspiration to disposability in human form. The *chi's* narration insists that this trajectory be understood not as a consequence of individual moral failure but as the outcome of a historical structure that colonial modernity built and that the contemporary global economy maintains. Cajetan Iheka's argument in *African Ecomedia* (2021) on network forms illuminates how Obioma's *chi* narration embeds the individual story in cosmological and colonial connections the secular realist novel cannot accommodate.

### **Speculative Immobility and the Political Economy of Emotional Labour: Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky***

Lesley Nneka Arimah's debut collection *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017) deploys speculative fiction, magic realism, and fable as instruments of ethical analysis. The title story depicts a near-future world in which a mathematical technique neutralises grief for those in the global North while Africa remains excluded. The protagonist Nneoma, a grief-processor for wealthy European clients, discovers on returning to Nigeria that her skills are useless before collective, historically sedimented suffering. Her mobility depends on a service whose value is generated by the very inequalities producing the suffering she processes, namely, the Afropolitan's success, the story implies,

is structurally entangled with the immobility of those who remain.

The collection's earlier stories pursue the same problematic in more domestic registers. "Who Will Greet You at Home" tells the story of a world where women make babies from materials that match their social status. The fable is deliberately transparent in its symbolism, showing a society that measures women's worth through their ability to reproduce and where the quality of that reproduction depends on class position. In this way, Arimah holds up a mirror to the actual conditions of postcolonial African social life. By rendering these conditions through fable, Arimah denaturalises what realism tends to naturalise, exposing the constructedness of the structures that immobilise women within domestic economies while the Afropolitan narrative celebrates the mobility of a select few. The story "Light" addresses the chronic absence of electrical power that structures daily existence across much of Nigeria and the aspirations to modernity and global connectivity that are simultaneously produced and frustrated by infrastructural scarcity. Arimah is clear-eyed about the cost of the improvisation that this scarcity demands and about the structural conditions, specifically the neoliberal state's abandonment of its obligation to provide public goods, that make it necessary. The ethical force of the collection as a whole lies in its refusal to aestheticise deprivation. Where the Afropolitan narrative converts African experience into the raw material of cosmopolitan self-fashioning, Arimah insists on the irreducible weight of the

material and structural conditions she describes.

### **Towards a Postcolonial Cosmopolitics of Accountability**

The four texts converge on a postcolonial cosmopolitics of accountability. Adichie's *Notes on Grief* makes the case from within the experience of loss, using individual mourning to expose the affective economy of Afropolitan mobility and the human costs of the life it requires. Adebayo's *Stay with Me* attends to those immobilised by patriarchal structures. Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* embeds the aspiration to migrate within the spiritual and colonial history that the cosmopolitan framework excludes. And Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* extrapolates present structures of emotional and material inequality to their logical conclusions.

What these texts demand is what Walter Dignolo and Catherine Walsh, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018), describe as decolonial cosmopolitics – a vision of global belonging that takes seriously both the aspiration to cross-cultural solidarity and the historically specific conditions of power and dispossession within which that aspiration must be pursued. The ethics of global belonging, as these novels and stories understand it, is not a matter of being open to the world but of being accountable within it. It is accountable to the histories that have produced the present unequal distribution of mobility and to the human beings whose lives are shaped and constrained by that distribution. This accountability is not a comfortable

position, and none of the four texts offers its reader the consolation of synthetic resolution. What they offer instead is something more valuable and more honest, that is, the formal complexity and affective density necessary to sustain ethical contradiction rather than dissolve it, and the literary imagination to make that contradiction, in all its human weight, genuinely felt. The formal innovations through which these texts pursue their ethical arguments, Adichie's essay mode, Adebayo's epistemic dual narration, Obioma's cosmological narrator, and Arimah's generic plurality, are, as Levine's account of form makes clear, not merely aesthetic choices but ethical ones. They are, indeed, organisations of experience that enact in their structure the very arguments they advance in their content. To read these texts with the seriousness they deserve is to recognise that the post-Afropolitan moment in Nigerian fiction has produced, quietly and without fanfare, some of the most ethically searching literature in the contemporary world.

### Conclusion

The question of what it means to belong globally when belonging is so unevenly distributed does not admit of a comfortable answer. These four texts offer not a solution but an insistence on the full ethical weight of the problem. Adichie's *Notes on Grief* teaches that the Afropolitan life is also an exposure to loss and irreversible distance. Adebayo's *Stay with Me* insists that the domestic world the Afropolitan escapes is a site of structural injustice. Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* embeds that mobility in colonial histories

cosmopolitan discourse cannot perceive. And Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* uses speculative fiction and fable to expose the political economy of emotional labour underlying the surface freedoms of the Afropolitan world.

Together, these texts constitute a significant intervention in the ongoing debate about African cosmopolitanism, global belonging, and the ethics of mobility. They do so not by offering programmatic answers but by performing, in their formal organisation and their affective texture, the kind of ethical attention that the post-Afropolitan moment demands, that is, an attention that refuses the consolations of cosmopolitan celebration without retreating into the equally inadequate consolations of nativist critique, and that insists, above all, on accountability. The ethics of global belonging, as these writers understand it, is not a matter of being open to the world but of being answerable within it, as well as answerable to the histories that have produced the present unequal distribution of mobility, and to the human beings whose lives are shaped and diminished by that distribution. This is the ethical demand that the best contemporary Nigerian fiction places on its readers. It is a demand worth taking with the utmost seriousness.

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## A Feminist Political Philosophy of African Diasporic Literature on Gender, Exile, and Belonging

### Abstract

The global phenomenon of forced migration has generated extensive political philosophical scholarship. However, the gendered dimensions of displacement remain conspicuously undertheorized. From Rawls Walzer, Carens, mainstream migration theory has constructed its account of the migrant as an implicitly universal and male subject, rendering the displaced woman philosophically invisible at the moment of her greatest political vulnerability. This paper intervened in that theoretical lacuna by bringing feminist political philosophy into sustained dialogue with third generation African diasporic literature, arguing that the literary imagination of displaced African women constitutes a form of political philosophical knowledge that theory alone cannot produce. From Hannah Arendt, Seyla Benhabib, Iris Marion Young, and Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí, and reading these against Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* (2019), NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013), and Lesley Nneka Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017), the paper adopted a feminist literary political philosophical methodology which treated literary texts not as illustrations of theoretical positions but as independent sites of political philosophical reflection capable of articulating what conceptual analysis alone leaves unsaid. The paper found that third generation African diasporic literature exposes the gender-blindness of mainstream migration theory, articulates the intersectional political exclusions specific to displaced African women, and imagines alternative politics of belonging that exceed liberal frameworks of citizenship and rights. These findings advance the field by demonstrating that African diasporic literary imagination is not merely a cultural archive but an epistemically generative philosophical resource. The paper recommended the decolonization of feminist political philosophy as a necessary condition for theorizing African women's diasporic experience adequately, concluding that genuine belonging demands not merely inclusion within existing political frameworks but the fundamental reconceptualization of belonging itself.

**Keywords:** Gendered exile, Feminist political philosophy, African diasporic literature, Politics of belonging, Decolonial feminism

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### Introduction

The twenty-first century is witnessing the largest movement of displaced peoples in recorded human history. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, over 110 million people were forcibly displaced globally by the end of 2023. Women and girls constitute more than half of all displaced populations, yet they remain the least visible subjects

of political philosophical inquiry into migration, displacement, and belonging. They cross borders under conditions of acute vulnerability, exposed to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and the compounding indignities of statelessness, arriving into political communities not designed with their specific condition in mind.

The mainstream political philosophy of migration, from Rawls' theory of justice to Walzer's

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communitarian account of membership to Carens' influential case for open borders, has made significant contributions to understanding migration and state obligations toward displaced persons. What it has not done is ask what difference gender makes to the experience of displacement and the politics of belonging. As Freedman (2015) argues, these frameworks are built around a paradigmatically male experience of persecution and flight that systematically marginalizes the gender-specific forms of violence, vulnerability, and epistemic invisibility constituting the displaced woman's distinctive political condition.

This paper proposes that third generation African diasporic literature constitutes a corrective to this philosophical silence, not as a supplement to political theory but as a form of political philosophical knowledge in its own right. The novels and stories of Maaza Mengiste, NoViolet Bulawayo, Taiye Selasi, and Lesley Nneka Arimah do not merely represent the experiences of displaced African women; they theorize those experiences, naming conditions that political philosophy has left unnamed, articulating forms of exclusion that its conceptual vocabulary has proven inadequate to capture, and imagining political possibilities that its liberal frameworks have foreclosed.

The paper's theoretical architecture draws on four feminist political philosophers deployed in sequence namely: Hannah Arendt's (1951) concept of statelessness, Seyla Benhabib's (2004) cosmopolitan feminism, Iris Marion Young's (1990) five faces of oppression, and Oyèrónké

Oyèwùmí's (1997, 2016) decolonial African feminist thought. Each framework names a distinct dimension of the displaced woman's condition, and together they build toward the decolonial argument that genuine belonging requires the fundamental reconceptualization of political philosophy's epistemic foundations.

### Methodology

This paper adopts a feminist literary political philosophical methodology that treats literary texts not as illustrative material appended to theoretical argument but as primary and epistemically independent sites of political philosophical reflection. The methodological premise is that certain forms of political knowledge are produced through narrative, character, voice, and form in ways that conceptual analysis alone cannot replicate, and that the literary imagination of displaced African women generates insights that feminist theory must learn from rather than merely apply to.

The paper draws on four feminist political philosophical frameworks as analytical lenses and they are: Arendt's (1951) theory of statelessness and rightlessness, Benhabib's (2004, 2006) cosmopolitan feminist account of belonging, Young's (1990) structural theory of oppression, and Oyèwùmí's (1997, 2016) decolonial African feminist critique of Western gender categories. These are deployed not as fixed interpretive grids but as frameworks that the literary texts simultaneously illuminate and complicate, each applied to one of four works of third generation African diasporic literature selected for their philosophical seriousness and

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engagement with gendered displacement.

The four primary literary texts are Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* (2019), NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* (2013), and Lesley Nneka Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* (2017). These works are read as philosophical texts in their own right, not as data sources or case studies, in keeping with the paper's methodological commitment to the epistemic equality of literary and philosophical modes of inquiry.

### Theoretical Framework

The political philosophy of migration has, for much of its history, proceeded as though gender were either philosophically irrelevant or adequately addressed by frameworks designed without it in mind. This assumption reflects a structural tendency within liberal political philosophy to posit an abstract, disembodied political subject whose apparent universality conceals a highly particular social location: male, formally educated, economically productive, and culturally legible within the terms of the receiving political community. Correcting this requires subjecting those frameworks to a feminist philosophical interrogation that exposes their gendered assumptions and demands their conceptual reconstruction.

#### *Hannah Arendt and the Right to Have Rights*

Hannah Arendt's account of statelessness in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) remains the most philosophically penetrating analysis of expulsion from the political community

that confers rights, recognition, and the possibility of belonging. Arendt's central insight is that the fundamental deprivation of human rights is not the loss of any specific right but the loss of membership in the community within which rights are meaningful. The stateless person is reduced to bare human existence stripped of the membership through which that existence acquires social legibility and normative protection. Purely humanitarian responses are inadequate because they address biological needs while leaving the political condition of rightlessness structurally intact. Gündoğdu (2015) demonstrates that displaced women face a specifically gendered political invisibility compounding their statelessness with the patriarchal structures of both home and host societies, producing what this paper calls gendered rightlessness, a condition more comprehensive than Arendt's original framework fully theorizes.

#### *Seyla Benhabib and Cosmopolitan Feminist Justice*

Seyla Benhabib's cosmopolitan feminism developed in *The Rights of Others* (2004) and *Another Cosmopolitanism* (2006) advances a philosophically sophisticated account of what justice demands of political communities in their treatment of displaced persons. Against the communitarian argument that political communities have the right to determine their own membership criteria, Benhabib argues that cosmopolitan norms of universal human dignity place genuine constraints on state sovereignty. Her framework exposes the gap between formal legal

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membership and substantive political belonging, experienced with particular acuity by displaced African women whose legal arrival in a receiving community does not protect them from racialized and gendered exclusions. Rao (2020) argues that Benhabib's account does not adequately account for postcolonial conditions in which the very borders cosmopolitan norms seek to make more permeable are themselves products of colonial cartographies never philosophically reckoned with, establishing the limits within which her normative claims apply and beyond which a decolonial supplement becomes necessary.

***Iris Marion Young and the Five Faces of Oppression***

Iris Marion Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) provides the most philosophically comprehensive structural account of political oppression within the feminist tradition. Young argues that oppression is irreducibly social and structural, constituted by institutional practices, cultural norms, and social relations through which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged in ways redistribution alone cannot address. Her taxonomy of oppression's five faces; exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence, provides analytical precision for identifying the multiple forms of political exclusion intersecting in displaced African women's experience. Ticktin (2021) demonstrates that marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism are structurally reproduced by the very humanitarian and legal frameworks nominally designed to protect displaced women, a

paradox that third generation African diasporic literature confronts with particular philosophical directness.

***Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí and the Decolonial Limit***

Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí's decolonial African feminist thought constitutes the paper's most radical theoretical intervention; the point at which the analytical tools deployed thus far are turned back on themselves. Oyěwùmí's foundational argument in *The Invention of Women* (1997) is that gender as deployed in Western feminist theory is not a universal analytical tool but a specifically European conceptual formation that universalizes Western women's experience by projecting it onto non-Western social formations whose organization of social difference does not map onto Western gender categories. *What Gender Is Not* (2016) extends this critique to the diasporic context, arguing that African women in the diaspora occupy a triply marginalized epistemic position: excluded from Western feminist frameworks, from African nationalist frameworks subordinating gender to anti-colonial politics, and from mainstream migration theory rendering gender philosophically invisible. Ndlovu (2021) argues that third generation African diasporic women writers constitute an epistemic community developing conceptual resources for theorizing belonging and political subjectivity that neither Western feminist philosophy nor African nationalist thought has produced.

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**Findings**

The four literary readings below constitute the paper's primary findings. Each applies a feminist political philosophical framework to one literary text, demonstrating how third generation African diasporic fiction theorizes gendered displacement in ways that both instantiate and exceed the philosophical frameworks deployed.

***Rightlessness and Colonial******Displacement: Maaza Mengiste's The Shadow King (2019)***

Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* centers on Ethiopian women who took up arms against Mussolini's fascist invasion of Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941; women whose military participation was systematically erased from official historical memory by both the Italian colonial archive and the Ethiopian nationalist narrative that replaced it. Mengiste stages a philosophical confrontation with the structures of power; colonial, patriarchal, and epistemological, through which human beings are rendered politically invisible even as their bodies remain available for violence, labor, and sacrifice. The Ethiopian women of *The Shadow King* embody Arendtian rightlessness not because they are displaced but because their displacement is accompanied by systematic denial of political recognition; they fight, die, and suffer in a war whose official narratives assign them no political subjectivity. Mengiste's disruption of narrative with photographic captions describing real Ethiopian women whose identities have been lost performs at the level of form the argument she makes at the level of content; that these women's invisibility

was politically produced and its reversal requires a challenge to the epistemic structures through which political visibility is conferred. Thom (2022) argues that *The Shadow King* constitutes a literary theory of gendered colonial rightlessness demanding to be read not merely as historical fiction but as a philosophical intervention resonating directly with the contemporary condition of displaced African women.

***Borders, Belonging, and Cosmopolitan Failure: NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names (2013)***

NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* traces Darling, a young Zimbabwean girl who migrates from the shantytown of Paradise to Detroit, Michigan, discovering that legal arrival in America does not produce the belonging she imagined. Darling acquires the legal status that Benhabib's cosmopolitan feminism identifies as the threshold of political membership, and finds herself more profoundly unbelonging than she was in the poverty of Paradise. Her experience in Detroit stages the precise failure of cosmopolitan norms: she is legally present but politically marginal, formally included but substantively excluded, her Zimbabwean identity simultaneously rendered invisible by American racial categories and hypervisible by cultural imperialism that marks her speech, body, and memories as perpetually foreign. Darling's relationship to English enacts what Benhabib's framework theorizes but cannot fully capture: that belonging is not merely a legal or political condition but a hermeneutical one. Quayson (2021) argues that Bulawayo's linguistic politics demonstrate that the

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universalism underwriting cosmopolitan feminist arguments is itself a cultural imperialism that the displaced African woman experiences not as liberation but as epistemic displacement.

***Intersectional Oppression and Diasporic Identity: Taiye Selasi's Ghana Must Go (2013)***

Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* distributes its narrative across four continents, tracing the dispersal of the Sai family following its patriarch's professional disgrace. The novel's female characters; Fola, the matriarch holding the family together across geographical dispersal, and her daughters Ama and Taiwo navigating distinct forms of diasporic dislocation, embody Young's five faces of oppression with philosophical force: displaced African women's experience is not a single condition of exclusion but a complex of mutually reinforcing oppressions whose cumulative effect exceeds what any single analytical axis can capture. Young's (1990) framework maps onto *Ghana Must Go* with precision; Fola experiences marginalization and powerlessness, Taiwo's experience adds the face of violence whose aftermath she cannot articulate within available cultural frameworks, and Ama's trajectory adds cultural imperialism. What Selasi adds to Young is the insistence that these five faces are not merely simultaneous but mutually constitutive, each intensifying the conditions under which the others operate. Mirzoeff (2023) argues that Selasi's formal architecture constitutes a philosophical argument about the irreducibility of diasporic women's experience to any single framework.

***Decolonizing Belonging: Lesley Nneka Arimah's What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky (2017)***

Lesley Nneka Arimah's *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* constructs alternative social realities organized around African relational ontologies and communal epistemologies, demonstrating at the level of literary form that the liberal political philosophical framework is not the universal condition of political life but one historically contingent arrangement whose claim to universality requires philosophical contestation. Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that gender as deployed in Western feminist theory universalizes specifically European experiences, projecting conceptual categories that distort rather than illuminate African social realities. Arimah's speculative imagination enacts this critique formally; her story *Glory*, in which a woman's body becomes the site of a supernatural political negotiation between competing communal claims, cannot be mapped onto the liberal framework of individual rights versus state sovereignty structuring mainstream migration theory. It requires precisely the relational, communal, and spiritually embedded conception of political belonging that Oyěwùmí theorizes and that African philosophical traditions have long articulated. Arndt (2022) argues that Arimah's collection constitutes a decolonial political imagination adequate to African women's epistemic traditions that purely theoretical work has not yet produced.

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**Discussion**

The four literary readings converge on a conclusion whose implications for feminist political philosophy, postcolonial ethics, and African literary studies are both original and consequential. Together they establish that third generation African diasporic fiction constitutes an independent and authoritative site of moral and political knowledge production, exposing specific philosophical inadequacies in mainstream migration theory and extending the feminist frameworks deployed to analyze them.

The findings reveal three overarching patterns of theoretical significance. First, gendered rightlessness in the postcolonial African context is irreducibly colonial in its genealogy. Mengiste's text demonstrates that the political invisibility of displaced African women is a structural inheritance of colonial and patriarchal power whose postcolonial persistence demands structural rather than humanitarian remedy, extending Arendt's account of statelessness beyond its original framework by grounding rightlessness in a specifically colonial genealogy that Arendt's European-centered analysis did not theorize.

Second, formal legal belonging does not constitute substantive political belonging for displaced African women, and the cosmopolitan feminist promise of inclusion through rights remains structurally deferred by the racialized and gendered conditions of receiving communities. Bulawayo's text demonstrates that the hermeneutical dimensions of belonging, the capacity to

be understood, recognized, and politically legible within a community, exceed what cosmopolitan rights frameworks can deliver, placing a direct demand on Benhabib's cosmopolitan feminism: that genuine belonging requires the transformation of the cultural and epistemic conditions through which political recognition is conferred.

Third, and most philosophically consequential, genuine belonging for displaced African women requires the decolonization of the feminist political philosophical frameworks through which belonging has been theorized. Arimah's text demonstrates through speculative literary form that the liberal and cosmopolitan frameworks of mainstream migration theory are not universal conditions of political life but historically contingent arrangements whose Eurocentric epistemic foundations distort rather than illuminate African women's political experience, compelling feminist political philosophy to reconstruct its conceptual foundations on grounds adequate to the full range of women's political experience across the postcolonial world.

**Conclusion**

This paper has argued that third generation African diasporic literature constitutes a philosophically generative corrective to the gender-blindness of mainstream migration theory, not as supplementary illustration but as an epistemically independent form of political philosophical knowledge. The four literary readings demonstrated this across distinct dimensions of gendered exile and belonging, establishing the mutually constitutive relationship

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between colonial inheritance, state exclusion, intersectional oppression, and the epistemic inadequacy of liberal frameworks in the face of African women's diasporic experience.

The theoretical contribution of this paper is what it designates feminist literary political philosophy; a methodological orientation treating literary texts as primary sites of political philosophical reflection and insisting on the epistemic equality of literary and philosophical modes of inquiry. The political philosophy of migration has been impoverished by its failure to engage with the political knowledge produced by the literary traditions of those whose displacement it purports to theorize. Correcting this requires the philosophical willingness to learn from literary imagination rather than merely recruit it in service of arguments already made.

What genuine belonging demands, this paper concludes, is threefold: the political recognition of displaced women as full political subjects, not merely humanitarian cases requiring compassionate management but bearers of rights and producers of knowledge whose political subjectivity is unconditional; the structural transformation of the border regimes and political community frameworks through which belonging is currently conferred and withheld, going beyond cosmopolitan reform to challenge the colonial and patriarchal foundations on which those frameworks were built; and the decolonization of feminist political philosophy itself, the reconstruction of its conceptual foundations on grounds adequate to the full range of women's political experience across the

postcolonial world. Third generation African diasporic literature has been performing this decolonial philosophical work for two decades. Political philosophy's most urgent task is not to explain that literature but to learn from it.

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## Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature

### Abstract

The aftermath of colonial violence, civil war, ethnic conflict, and systemic gendered oppression has left postcolonial African communities confronting a moral paradox. Healing demands honest remembrance of past injustice, yet that same honesty risks perpetuating grievance and resentment that make genuine peaceful coexistence structurally difficult. Existing Western frameworks of transitional justice and reconciliation have addressed this paradox with considerable normative ambition but limited philosophical adequacy. Through failing to engage the moral traditions, communal obligations, and narrative resources, postcolonial African communities have actually negotiated the relationship between memory, justice, and coexistence. This paper argued that postcolonial African literature constitutes a philosophically distinctive site of moral memory and reconciliatory imagination whose narrative engagements with conflict, remembering, and the possibility of coexistence both instantiate and productively challenge existing philosophical frameworks. Analyzing three works, namely Helon Habila's *Travellers* (2019), Teju Cole's *Tremor* (2023), and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015), the paper developed an original philosophical framework designated as postcolonial reconciliation ethics, grounded in three mutually reinforcing principles which are: obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference. The paper contributed to moral philosophy, postcolonial ethics, memory studies, and the philosophical foundations of Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

**Keywords:** Moral memory, Postcolonial reconciliation, Ubuntu ethics, Peaceful coexistence, African literature

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### Introduction

There is a wound at the center of postcolonial African moral experience that neither time nor political settlement has adequately healed. It is the wound of memory, the accumulated moral weight of colonial dispossession, civil war atrocity, ethnic violence, and the systematic dehumanization of persons

whose suffering has been simultaneously constitutive of African historical experience and persistently marginalized within the philosophical frameworks that claim to address it. Communities that have endured these histories face a moral paradox of considerable philosophical depth: that the honest acknowledgment of what was done, the remembering that

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genuine justice demands, threatens to reproduce the very conditions of grievance, resentment, and moral antagonism that make peaceful coexistence structurally impossible, while the forgetting that coexistence seems to require threatens to betray the moral claims of those whose suffering demands recognition and accountability.

The existing philosophical literature on transitional justice and reconciliation has engaged this paradox with considerable normative ambition. However, as Leebaw (2021) argues, the dominant frameworks of transitional justice, grounded in international law, liberal rights theory, and the procedural mechanisms of truth commissions and criminal tribunals, have consistently failed to engage the specific moral traditions, communal obligations, and narrative resources through which postcolonial African communities have actually negotiated the relationship between memory, justice, and coexistence. The philosophical consequence of this failure is not merely academic; it is practical and morally urgent. Transitional justice frameworks that do not engage the specific philosophical resources of the communities they claim to serve produce institutional processes whose conception of reconciliation reflects the moral assumptions of the Global North while presenting itself as universal, a form of epistemic injustice whose material consequences include the systematic exclusion of communal, gendered, and indigenous moral claims from the architecture of postcolonial reconciliation.

This paper advances a precise philosophical thesis in response to this condition: that postcolonial African literature, specifically Helon Habila's *Travellers* (2019), Teju Cole's *Tremor* (2023), and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015), constitutes a philosophically distinctive site of moral memory and reconciliatory imagination whose narrative engagements with conflict, remembering, and the possibility of coexistence both instantiate and productively challenge existing philosophical frameworks. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur's narrative account of memory and reconciliation, Avishai Margalit's *Ethics of Moral Memory*, African communitarian ethics as developed through Ubuntu philosophy, and the postcolonial moral thought of Fanon (2021), Achebe (2016), and Ngugi (2018), the paper develops what it designates postcolonial reconciliation ethics, an original philosophical framework grounded in three mutually reinforcing principles: obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference. In doing so, the paper contributes to SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. The problem this paper addresses is the philosophical inadequacy of existing transitional justice frameworks in engaging the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and communal obligations of postcolonial African communities, an inadequacy with practical and morally urgent consequences for the architecture of reconciliation in post-conflict societies. The paper pursues three specific objectives: first, to examine how selected

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postcolonial African literary texts philosophically engage the relationship between moral memory, justice, and peaceful coexistence; second, to bring African philosophical traditions, particularly Ubuntu communitarian ethics, into critical and constructive dialogue with Western frameworks of memory and reconciliation; and third, to develop an original philosophical framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, whose principles are grounded in and responsive to the specific moral experience of postcolonial African communities.

### Literature Review

This section reviews the principal philosophical frameworks and scholarly traditions that inform the paper's analytical approach. It draws on four interrelated bodies of literature: Ricoeur's narrative phenomenology of memory, Margalit's ethics of moral memory, Ubuntu communitarian ethics as developed by Ramose and Metz, and the postcolonial moral thought of Fanon, Achebe, and Ngugi. Together, these traditions constitute the theoretical ground from which the paper's constructive framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, is developed.

### Moral Memory, Narrative, and the Ethics of Remembering: Ricoeur and Margalit

Memory is not merely a psychological phenomenon. At its most philosophically serious, it is a moral one, the medium through which individuals and communities construct their identities, account for their histories, and determine the obligations that the past places on the present. Paul

Ricoeur's philosophical engagement with memory, history, and forgetting constitutes one of the most rigorous accounts of the moral dimensions of remembrance in contemporary philosophy. Ricoeur (2004) argues that memory is not a passive repository of past experience but an active moral practice, one through which communities construct the narrative identities that give their present lives meaning and their future aspirations direction. For postcolonial African communities whose colonial and postcolonial histories have been systematically distorted, suppressed, and misrepresented by the dominant narratives of imperial power, the recovery of accurate moral memory is not merely a historical project but a philosophical imperative, the foundational condition of the moral self-understanding that genuine reconciliation and peaceful coexistence require.

Ricoeur's (2004) concept of the duty of memory, the moral obligation of communities to remember past injustice honestly and completely, refusing the consolations of selective forgetting or politically convenient amnesia, establishes the normative standard against which the reconciliation processes of postcolonial African societies must be philosophically evaluated. Applied to the specific contexts of postcolonial Africa, this duty of memory demands that the moral claims of those whose suffering has been most systematically marginalized, namely the victims of colonial dispossession, civil war atrocity, and gendered violence, be placed at the

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center of any philosophically adequate account of reconciliation.

Avishai Margalit's *Ethics of Memory* provides a philosophically complementary but distinctively different framework. Margalit (2002) distinguishes between thick moral relations, grounded in shared memory, communal bonds, and the particular obligations that intimate communities owe to their members, and thin moral relations, grounded in the universal obligations that all human beings owe to one another as rational moral agents. This distinction captures precisely the moral tension at the heart of postcolonial African reconciliation: the tension between the particular communal obligations of memory that thick moral relations generate and the universal demands of justice and human dignity that thin moral relations impose. Margalit's (2002) further argument that communities bear a moral obligation not to be complicit in the erasure of the memories of those who have suffered, what he designates the duty against moral forgetting, provides a direct philosophical foundation for the paper's engagement with Gqola's feminist critique of post-apartheid reconciliation.

### **Ubuntu, Moral Repair, and African Philosophical Foundations of Reconciliation**

The Western philosophical frameworks elaborated above share a structural limitation of considerable consequence for any philosophically adequate account of postcolonial African reconciliation: both frameworks conceptualize reconciliation primarily as a relationship between individuals or

between individual citizens and the state, a conception that systematically undervalues the communal, relational, and cosmological dimensions of moral injury and moral repair that African philosophical traditions place at the very center of their accounts of what reconciliation demands and what coexistence requires.

Ubuntu's foundational philosophical insight that personhood is constitutively relational rather than atomistically individual, that the human being is who they are through their relationships with others rather than despite them, carries implications for the ethics of reconciliation that go considerably beyond what Ricoeur's narrative identity or Margalit's moral community of memory can fully theorize. When moral injury is understood not merely as a violation of individual rights but as a wound to the relational web of communal existence through which persons sustain their humanity, reconciliation cannot be adequately theorized as a procedural arrangement between discrete moral agents. It must be understood as the restoration of the relational bonds of mutual recognition, communal care, and shared moral responsibility whose disruption by historical violence constitutes the deepest dimension of the moral wrong that reconciliation is obligated to address. Ramose (2015) argues that Ubuntu's relational ontology generates precisely this communitarian account of moral repair, one whose philosophical adequacy for postcolonial African reconciliation derives from its grounding in the specific moral traditions of the communities whose wounds it addresses. Metz (2017)

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develops Ubuntu's reconciliation ethics into a systematic philosophical argument, demonstrating that the African relational moral framework generates obligations of communal accountability and moral repair that extend beyond the procedural requirements of transitional justice toward a substantive philosophical commitment to the restoration of the conditions of genuine communal flourishing.

The postcolonial philosophical contributions of Fanon, Achebe, and Ngugi ground these Ubuntu insights in the specific historical conditions of colonial and postcolonial African experience. Fanon (2021) establishes the philosophical conditions under which postcolonial African reconciliation operates, demonstrating that colonial violence is not merely physical but ontological, a systematic assault on the moral subjectivity, cultural integrity, and self-understanding of colonized peoples whose consequences persist long after formal decolonization. Achebe (2016) translates this insight into a direct account of African literature's philosophical vocation, arguing that the narrative reclamation of moral dignity, cultural authority, and historical self-understanding constitutes the foundational act of postcolonial moral repair. Ngugi (2018) extends this argument by demonstrating that the decolonization of memory is inseparable from the decolonization of moral and political life, that communities whose historical memories have been systematically distorted by colonial narrative cannot achieve genuine reconciliation without first recovering the philosophical authority to tell their

own stories, on their own moral terms, with the full weight of their own cultural and ethical traditions behind them.

### Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology situated at the intersection of philosophical analysis and literary criticism. The methodological approach is threefold. First, it employs philosophical close reading as its primary analytical tool, examining selected postcolonial African literary texts not merely as cultural artifacts but as sites of moral and philosophical reasoning whose narrative structures, ethical tensions, and representational strategies constitute genuine contributions to the philosophy of memory and reconciliation. Second, the paper engages in systematic cross-theoretical synthesis, bringing four distinct philosophical traditions into structured dialogue: Ricoeur's narrative phenomenology, Margalit's ethics of memory, Ubuntu communitarian ethics, and postcolonial moral thought. Third, it employs constructive philosophical argument to develop an original framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, whose three foundational principles are derived directly from the literary analyses and theoretical syntheses preceding them.

The three primary texts were selected on principled grounds of philosophical representativeness and thematic scope. Habila's *Travellers* (2019) addresses diasporic moral memory and the ethics of displacement; Cole's *Tremor* (2023) engages transatlantic racial memory and the obligations of historical debt; and

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Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015) confronts gendered moral memory and the limits of formal reconciliation. Together, these texts represent three distinct but philosophically interconnected dimensions of postcolonial African moral experience, and their combined engagement with memory, violence, and coexistence provides the evidential and argumentative foundation for the paper's constructive philosophical claims.

## Findings

### **Diasporic Memory and the Moral Weight of Displacement: Helon Habila's *Travellers***

Helon Habila's *Travellers* is a philosophically restless and morally serious novel whose engagement with African migration across Europe constitutes one of the most sustained contemporary fictional explorations of the relationship between displacement, moral memory, and the possibility of belonging in conditions of radical historical dispossession. Structured as a series of interconnected narratives whose protagonists, Nigerian, Congolese, Cameroonian, and Ugandan migrants navigating the moral and political landscapes of Berlin, Rome, and unnamed European cities, carry the accumulated weight of colonial and postcolonial histories whose consequences European host societies consistently refuse to acknowledge, the novel deploys the formal resources of multiply voiced narrative to construct a philosophically precise account of what diasporic moral memory demands and what its systematic denial costs.

The philosophical significance of *Travellers* begins with Habila's (2019) account of memory as an inescapable moral condition rather than a voluntary psychological act. His characters do not choose to remember the colonial histories, civil war devastations, and postcolonial governance failures that produced their displacement; they are constituted by those memories in ways that shape every moral choice, relational bond, and aspiration toward belonging that their diasporic lives make possible or foreclose. This account of memory as moral constitution instantiates Ricoeur's (2004) argument that narrative memory is the medium of moral identity, demonstrating through the specific lives of specific displaced persons that the duty of memory is not an externally imposed moral obligation but an internal philosophical condition of the moral selfhood that these characters' lives both enact and interrogate.

Margalit's distinction between thick and thin moral relations illuminates the specific form of moral injury that displacement inflicts on Habila's travellers. The colonial and postcolonial histories that produced their displacement systematically severed the thick moral relations, the communal bonds of shared memory, mutual recognition, and particular obligation through which their moral identities were constituted and sustained. Habila's (2019) narrative demonstrates, with quiet philosophical force, that thin moral recognition without thick moral engagement constitutes a form of moral impoverishment that no amount of legal protection or humanitarian assistance can adequately address. What these characters most urgently need is not the

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procedural satisfaction of legal rights but the restoration of the relational conditions of communal belonging through which their full humanity can once again be recognized, sustained, and morally productive, a finding that directly corroborates Ubuntu's communitarian account of moral repair.

**Racial Memory, Historical Debt, and the Obligations of Reconciliation: Teju Cole's *Tremor***

Teju Cole's *Tremor* is the most philosophically meditative and intellectually demanding of the three texts examined. Its essayistic narrative form, transatlantic moral landscape, and sustained engagement with the philosophical obligations that accumulated histories of racial and colonial violence place on the present constitute one of the most rigorous fictional explorations of memory and reconciliation in contemporary African literature. Cole's protagonist Tunde, a Nigerian-born photographer and academic living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, whose consciousness moves fluidly between personal reflection, art historical meditation, and unflinching moral reckoning with the specific histories of racial capitalism, colonial dispossession, and cultural extraction, embodies precisely the philosophical condition that the paper's central argument designates as postcolonial reconciliation's most demanding moral challenge: the condition of the person who did not personally perpetrate historical injustice but whose present life is constituted by its benefits and whose moral integrity therefore demands a philosophical

accounting that neither innocence nor good intention can discharge.

The philosophical significance of *Tremor* for the paper's reconciliation argument is most immediately visible in Cole's (2023) account of the tremor of historical knowledge, the destabilizing moral recognition that the cultural objects, institutional privileges, and aesthetic pleasures that constitute educated contemporary life are inseparable from histories of violence, extraction, and dispossession whose moral claims on the present cannot be acknowledged without fundamentally unsettling the conditions of one's own existence. This tremor is not merely psychological discomfort but a genuine philosophical crisis, a confrontation with the moral reality that Margalit's (2002) *Ethics of Memory* identifies as the duty against complicit forgetting: the recognition that the comfortable amnesia through which educated beneficiaries of historical injustice typically manage their moral lives constitutes a form of moral evasion whose philosophical inadequacy the novel refuses to allow its narrator or its reader to sustain.

Ricoeur's (2004) concept of difficult forgiveness illuminates the specific moral challenge that *Tremor* poses: that genuine forgiveness is neither the easy absolution of amnesia nor the impossible demand of unconditional moral clarity, but a philosophically arduous process of honest reckoning whose completion requires the acknowledgment of specific wrongs, the recognition of specific victims, and the moral courage to sustain the discomfort of historical accountability. Tunde's moral recovery, partial, provisional, and

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philosophically honest in its incompleteness, is achieved not through solitary moral reckoning but through the relational bonds of artistic community, intellectual friendship, and cross-cultural recognition whose cultivation constitutes the novel's most philosophically affirmative moral gesture.

### **Gendered Memory, Violence, and the Moral Limits of Reconciliation: Pumla Dineo Gqola**

Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* occupies a philosophically distinctive position among the three texts this paper examines. It is neither a novel in the conventional sense nor a work of purely academic scholarship; it is a work of feminist cultural philosophy that deploys narrative analysis, theoretical argument, and unflinching moral testimony simultaneously to expose what Gqola designates the spectacular nature of rape culture in post-apartheid South Africa, the systematic normalization of sexual violence as a mechanism of social control whose persistence within and beyond the formal reconciliation process constitutes one of the most philosophically devastating indictments of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's moral adequacy available in contemporary South African intellectual life.

Gqola's (2015) central philosophical argument is direct and morally consequential: that post-apartheid South Africa's celebrated reconciliation process achieved its political settlements and moral narratives by systematically rendering the specific suffering of women philosophically invisible within

the architecture of national healing. Margalit's (2002) duty against moral forgetting provides the most philosophically precise normative framework for evaluating Gqola's indictment; the systematic exclusion of gendered violence from the moral memory of post-apartheid reconciliation constitutes precisely the form of morally impermissible forgetting that Margalit identifies, a community's complicity in the erasure of its most vulnerable members' suffering from the collective moral record that reconciliation is supposed to construct and sustain.

Gqola (2015) further argues that genuine peaceful coexistence in post-apartheid South Africa is philosophically impossible as long as the bodies and moral claims of women remain structurally excluded from the relational web of communal recognition and mutual accountability that Ubuntu's philosophy of moral repair demands. This is a philosophically precise and politically courageous extension of the Ubuntu reconciliation framework, one that insists with moral urgency that neither comfortable communitarian philosophy nor procedural transitional justice can evade, that genuine relational moral repair requires the active inclusion of gendered moral claims within the community of reconciliation rather than their deferral to a subsequent political moment that post-apartheid governance has shown no philosophical commitment to honor.

### **Discussion**

The three literary philosophical analyses elaborated in the preceding section converge on a conclusion of

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considerable philosophical significance. Habila's diasporic moral memory, Cole's transatlantic historical reckoning, and Gqola's feminist indictment of reconciliation's gendered blind spots together demonstrate that postcolonial African literature does not merely illustrate existing philosophical frameworks of memory and reconciliation but actively exposes their structural limitations and demands their philosophical transformation. The framework this paper designates postcolonial reconciliation ethics is the constructive philosophical response to that demand, grounded in three principles whose derivation from the preceding analyses is direct and argumentatively precise.

The first principle is obligatory memory, the philosophical claim, grounded in Ricoeur's duty of memory and Margalit's ethics of thick moral relations and instantiated across all three texts, that communities emerging from histories of collective violence bear unconditional moral obligations to remember honestly, completely, and with specific attention to those whose suffering dominant narratives of reconciliation have most systematically marginalized. Obligatory memory goes beyond the procedural requirements of truth commission testimony to demand what Ngugi (2018) designates the decolonization of memory itself, the recovery of the philosophical authority to remember on one's own moral terms rather than within the epistemological frameworks of the dominant political culture. This principle is most vividly instantiated in Habila's *Travellers*, where the moral identities of displaced African migrants are constituted by colonial and

postcolonial memories that European host societies persistently refuse to acknowledge, and whose moral integrity requires the honest acknowledgment of those memories rather than their displacement into the convenient amnesia of humanitarian abstraction.

The second principle is relational moral repair, the philosophical claim, grounded in Ubuntu's communitarian ontology and Metz's African moral theory, that genuine reconciliation demands the active restoration of the relational bonds of mutual recognition, communal care, and shared moral responsibility whose disruption by historical violence constitutes the deepest dimension of the moral injury that reconciliation is obligated to address. Relational moral repair insists that the work of reconciliation is complete not when legal processes have been satisfied but when the relational conditions of genuine communal flourishing have been substantively restored across the full range of the community's membership. Cole's *Tremor* demonstrates this principle with particular philosophical force, showing that Tunde's moral recovery is achieved not through solitary intellectual reckoning but through the cultivation of relational bonds of artistic community and cross-cultural recognition that instantiate Ubuntu's communitarian account of what genuine moral repair requires.

The third principle is coexistence across difference, the philosophical claim, grounded in Gqola's feminist Ubuntu critique and Fanon's account of the ontological dimensions of colonial

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violence, that genuine peaceful coexistence demands the active philosophical inclusion of all moral claims, including those of women, the displaced, and the historically silenced, within the architecture of postcolonial reconciliation. Coexistence across difference is the most politically demanding of the three principles precisely because it insists that no reconciliation is philosophically genuine that purchases communal harmony at the cost of the moral invisibility of its most vulnerable members. Gqola's text provides the most philosophically rigorous demonstration of this principle, showing that post-apartheid South Africa's celebrated reconciliation process produced precisely this morally impermissible outcome when it systematically excluded gendered violence from the moral architecture of national healing.

These three principles constitute a philosophically coherent and politically rigorous framework for postcolonial reconciliation whose contribution to the existing literature on transitional justice and memory ethics is both constructive and critical. Constructively, postcolonial reconciliation ethics provides a systematic philosophical framework that integrates the normative resources of Western memory philosophy with the moral traditions of African communitarian ethics and the political urgency of postcolonial moral thought. Critically, it exposes the structural limitations of existing frameworks that conceptualize reconciliation as a procedural arrangement between discrete moral agents while systematically undervaluing the communal, relational, and gendered

dimensions of moral injury and moral repair that the three literary texts examined in this paper place at the philosophical center of their moral arguments.

The implications of this framework for Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions are direct and demanding. The institutional frameworks through which postcolonial societies pursue peace and justice must be philosophically grounded in the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and communal obligations of the communities they claim to serve. The framework also resonates with SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, insisting that genuinely transformative global partnerships must engage the epistemological and moral resources of postcolonial communities rather than presenting Global North frameworks as universally applicable solutions. Postcolonial reconciliation ethics insists that the epistemic justice required for sustainable peace demands not merely institutional inclusion but the fundamental reorganization of the philosophical premises on which reconciliation processes are built.

### Conclusion

Postcolonial African literature is not a peripheral contribution to the global philosophical conversation about memory, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence. It is one of its most philosophically necessary and morally urgent voices, one whose engagement with the specific moral realities of colonial violence, diasporic displacement, racial historical debt, and gendered oppression produces forms of

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ethical knowledge that neither Western transitional justice frameworks nor abstract philosophical argument can generate with equivalent depth, cultural specificity, and moral honesty. This paper has argued that Helon Habila's *Travellers*, Teju Cole's *Tremor*, and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* together constitute a philosophically distinctive moral laboratory for memory and reconciliation, one whose narrative engagements with the most urgent moral questions of the postcolonial African present both instantiate and productively challenge the philosophical frameworks of Ricoeur, Margalit, Ubuntu communitarian ethics, and postcolonial moral thought through which the paper has read them.

Postcolonial reconciliation ethics, as this paper has developed it, is not a regional philosophical project. Its three foundational principles, obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference, address moral challenges whose philosophical significance extends well beyond the African postcolonial context to encompass every society whose present is constituted by histories of collective violence it has not yet found the philosophical courage or institutional commitment to honestly acknowledge and adequately repair. Its implications for SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals are direct and demanding: that the institutional frameworks and global partnerships through which postcolonial societies pursue peace and justice must be philosophically grounded in the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and

communal obligations of the communities they claim to serve, not in the epistemological assumptions of the Global North whose philosophical adequacy the postcolonial African literary tradition has, across decades of morally serious and intellectually rigorous narrative production, persistently and persuasively questioned.

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## An Examination of Consensus Democracy in African Traditional Thought for Nigeria's Political Development

### Abstract

The persistent struggle for stable governance in Nigeria often stems from the friction between imported Western majoritarian models and the indigenous socio-political values of its people. This study explored the potential of "Consensus Democracy," rooted in African traditional thought, as a viable alternative for Nigeria's political development. The aim was to evaluate how traditional decision-making processes, which focus on harmony and collective agreement over winner-takes-all competition, can be adapted to the modern Nigerian body polity. A central question, therefore, was: to what extent can the principles of traditional African consensus-building mitigate the ethnic polarization and political exclusion inherent in Nigeria's current democratic practice? The problem lies in the systemic failure of the current adversarial system to foster national integration, leading instead to chronic instability and marginalization. Theoretically, this study was premised in *Communitarianism*, which posits that individual identity and political agency are inextricably linked to community well-being. A qualitative methodology which centered on the rigorous analysis of secondary data sources such as philosophical texts, historical records, and contemporary political writings were examined. A major finding revealed that while modern Nigerian politics is defined by numbers, traditional consensus systems relied on deliberative inclusion, where even minority voices held veto-like influence until a common ground was reached. The study concluded that Nigeria's political development is stalled not by a lack of democratic desire, but by a lack of cultural significance in its institutions. It is recommended that Nigeria undergo a constitutional restructuring to incorporate a consensus space that will see to cross-ethnic agreement on national issues while moving beyond mere periodic voting toward genuine collective ownership of the state.

**Keywords:** Consensus Democracy, African Traditional Thought, Nigeria's Political Development, Communitarianism, Deliberative Inclusion.

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### Introduction

Nigeria's search for a stable and people-centred democratic order remains

unsettled because electoral competition has not fully solved the deeper problems of exclusion, distrust, and elite

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domination. Recent scholarship on Nigeria's political condition shows why this concern remains urgent. Jatula (2024 p.80) argues that Nigeria's democracy is not based on "a level playing field" and adds that the country's democratic culture remains "topsy-turvy, regressive and dysfunctional". This assessment is important because it shifts attention away from the routine celebration of elections toward the actual quality of political life. If democratic practice continues to reproduce inequality, money politics, and weak institutions, then it becomes necessary to ask whether other political ideas, especially those rooted in African thought, can help rethink the direction of governance in Nigeria.

It is within this context that consensus democracy has become an important subject of inquiry. The attraction of consensus democracy lies in its promise to reduce adversarial politics and give more room to dialogue, accommodation, and collective responsibility. In a recent intervention, Ibanga (2024 p.157) states that "Africa needs a democratic model that takes its rigid multi-ethnic character into account". This point speaks directly to Nigeria, where ethnic plurality, religious difference, and regional competition continue to shape political behaviour. The argument is not simply that African societies must reject all modern democratic ideas, but that democratic practice in Africa should be examined in relation to African historical realities and social values. Ibanga (2024 p.157) further notes that "indigenous knowledge can be the starting point for democratic practice in Africa", and this gives strong relevance to a study that returns to African

traditional thought in order to examine whether consensus can offer useful principles for Nigeria's political development.

Olanipekun (2020 p.1) notes however that Wiredu's proposal does not automatically make consensus "a workable means of decision-making in present African society" (p. 1). This point is useful because it keeps the study balanced. It suggests that the real task is not to present consensus democracy as a perfect alternative, but to examine its strengths, limits, and practical value for Nigeria. In the same vein, Jatula (2024 p.89) observes that "suggested alternatives to Western democracy are varied and imaginative". This study therefore enters an ongoing debate about how democracy in Africa can become more inclusive, more legitimate, and more responsive to social realities.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the meaning and main features of consensus democracy in African traditional thought.
- ii. Assess the nature of decision-making and political participation in selected African traditional societies.
- iii. Analyse the weaknesses of majoritarian democracy in relation to Nigeria's political development.
- iv. Determine the relevance of consensus-based political principles to the management of ethnic diversity, inclusion, and national cohesion in Nigeria.

## Research Questions

- i. What is consensus democracy, and how is it understood within African traditional thought?
- ii. How did selected African traditional societies organise political participation and decision-making through consensus?
- iii. In what ways has majoritarian democracy contributed to political exclusion and weak development outcomes in Nigeria?
- iv. How can the principles of consensus democracy help to address the problems of ethnic division, marginalisation, and instability in Nigeria?

## Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's democratic experience has remained deeply troubled in spite of the regular conduct of elections and the continued presence of formal democratic institutions. The central problem is not simply the existence of democracy in procedural terms, but the failure of that democracy to produce inclusion, trust, accountability, and a stable sense of shared political belonging. In Nigeria, electoral politics has often encouraged elite domination, sectional mobilisation, and zero-sum competition rather than broad-based participation and collective commitment to national development. Jatula (2024) observes that the country's democratic process has been weakened by recurring problems such as electoral manipulation, weak institutional credibility, money politics, and the inability of political actors to sustain a democratic culture. This shows that the crisis of Nigerian

democracy is not only institutional but also structural and normative.

However, the place of consensus democracy in contemporary Nigerian political development remains insufficiently examined. Where it is discussed, it is often treated either as an idealised traditional practice or as an impractical alternative to modern state democracy. Olanipekun (2024) notes that although consensus is valuable in African political thought, its application in present democratic settings raises questions about scale, representation, and the protection of minority interests. This creates a serious intellectual gap. On one hand, there is dissatisfaction with the divisive outcomes of majoritarian politics in Nigeria. On the other hand, there is no sufficient agreement on how consensus-based principles can be critically adapted to present institutions without ignoring the realities of a modern constitutional state.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

The literature on consensus democracy in African traditional thought is built around the argument that political legitimacy in many African societies did not rest mainly on numerical majority, but on inclusion, deliberation, and communal acceptance. Recent studies show that this idea has remained relevant because of the continued dissatisfaction with adversarial politics in many African states. The central conceptual issue in the literature is whether African consensus should be treated as a moral ideal, a political

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method, or an institutional model for contemporary governance.

Agunbiade (2025) explains that the debate around Wiredu's consensual democracy has moved beyond simple advocacy for unanimity. He argues that the value of consensus democracy lies in its moral concern for inclusion and its rejection of the winner-takes-all structure that often characterises liberal majoritarian politics. His reconstruction is important because it presents consensus not as a rigid precolonial formula but as an adaptable democratic resource. For this study, the work is useful in showing that consensus can be understood as a principle of broad-based accommodation rather than the impossible demand that everybody must agree completely.

This position is strengthened by Etieyibo (2020), whose edited volume brings together reflections on consensual democracy in Africa from different perspectives. The volume shows that the concept of consensus is not one-dimensional. In some accounts, it refers to unanimity after extended dialogue. In others, it refers to a process of compromise in which dissent is reduced to an acceptable level without necessarily disappearing. This distinction is important for the present study because it helps avoid a narrow understanding of consensus. In the Nigerian context, where social diversity is wide and political tensions are deep, consensus is more realistic when understood as negotiated inclusion than as total agreement.

Egunlusi (2022) adds another conceptual layer by criticising secular

readings of Wiredu's theory. He argues that African traditional systems of consensus cannot be fully explained apart from the metaphysical and moral beliefs that shaped communal life. In many traditional settings, social order was sustained not only through argument and persuasion, but also through shared beliefs about sacred obligations, moral sanctions, and the spiritual seriousness of public decisions. This insight is important because it reminds scholars that consensus in African thought was not simply a technical procedure. It was rooted in an ethical and social worldview that gave communal life a binding force.

Ayika (2020) also contributes to the conceptual discussion by showing that traditional Igbo society was grounded in values of communality, egalitarianism, and mutual belonging. Though her work is not framed directly as democratic theory, it helps explain the ethical environment in which consensus could function meaningfully. Consensus requires more than procedures. It depends on a culture that values dialogue, responsibility, and social interdependence. This conceptual point supports the theoretical framework of the present study, which is anchored in communitarian thought.

### Empirical Review

Empirical contributions to the literature are important because they show how consensus operated in actual African communities rather than only in philosophical argument. These studies help couched the discussion in observable practices and make it easier to assess whether indigenous political

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systems offer useful insights for Nigeria's contemporary democratic condition.

Muo's (2012) study on *Ohazurume* among the Ndigbo is one of the most directly relevant empirical works for this research. He shows that decision-making among the Igbo traditionally involved open assembly, broad participation, and efforts to reach outcomes that could command communal legitimacy. The significance of this study lies in its demonstration that consensus was not merely a theoretical idea imposed later by scholars. It was part of everyday political practice in a Nigerian society with a strong culture of consultation and public debate. This gives the present study a concrete Nigerian basis for discussing consensus democracy.

Onyeakazi (2020) examines *Igwebuiké's* philosophy and its role in peace and conflict resolution among the Igbo of South East Nigeria. His work shows that indigenous thought places strong value on togetherness, complementarity, and the refusal of social fragmentation. Although the focus is peacebuilding, the implications for democratic practice are clear. A political order shaped by the logic of *Igwebuiké* would likely favour accommodation over hostility and collective responsibility over narrow partisan victory. This is relevant to Nigeria, where democratic competition often deepens ethnic and political divisions instead of managing them.

Egara (2025) broadens the discussion by connecting *Igwebuiké's* socio-political philosophy to national integration and sustainable peace in Nigeria. This work

is important because it directly addresses the national scale, moving beyond village or ethnic level analysis. It argues that indigenous ideas of unity and relatedness can support efforts at inclusion in a fractured society. For the present study, this is especially useful because it helps bridge the gap between local traditional values and national political development.

Akpan (2020), though writing in the form of a review, also reflects the empirical concerns in current scholarship by showing that consensus democracy is now being judged by its practical applicability. Questions of how consensus would function in large-scale, complex societies are central to the debate. This shows that the literature is no longer satisfied with merely celebrating African traditions. There is now greater attention to whether and how those traditions can inform actual democratic institutions.

What emerges from these empirical studies is that African traditional thought contains genuine practices of inclusive consultation and communally validated decision-making. At the same time, the literature also makes clear that these practices developed in smaller and more morally integrated communities. This means that any effort to apply them to modern Nigeria must be careful, critical, and adaptive.

The reviewed literature makes three points clear. First, consensus democracy is widely seen as an important feature of African traditional political thought. Second, many scholars agree that its strength lies in inclusion, dialogue, and communal legitimacy rather than in

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simple numerical victory. Third, there is increasing agreement that the modern relevance of consensus depends on reinterpretation and institutional adaptation.

However, many of the existing studies focus either on philosophical defence and critique or on specific cultural practices without fully linking them to the wider question of Nigeria's political development. Some works discuss consensus as a moral idea. Others describe indigenous decision-making in particular communities. But fewer studies bring these strands together to ask how consensus democracy in African traditional thought can speak directly to Nigeria's democratic crisis, especially in relation to exclusion, elite domination, weak legitimacy, and national fragmentation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Communitarian Theory since the subject of consensus democracy in African traditional thought cannot be properly examined outside the moral idea of community. Consensus democracy is not only about a method of decision making. It is rooted in a wider understanding of the person, society, obligation, and public authority. In African traditional thought, the individual is usually seen as existing within a network of social relations, and this makes communal wellbeing more central than isolated personal preference. For this reason, communitarian theory provides the most suitable lens for explaining how consensus emerged as a valued political principle in many African societies.

Communitarian theory opposes the extreme individualism often found in liberal political thought. It holds that human beings are socially formed and morally sustained within communities. This means that rights, duties, identity, and justice are not understood only from the viewpoint of the separate individual, but also from the standpoint of the common good. In practical terms, communitarianism places emphasis on solidarity, mutual responsibility, belonging, and shared moral purpose. These features make it useful for this study because consensus democracy also depends on dialogue, accommodation, and the search for decisions that preserve social harmony.

Within African political thought, communitarianism has special relevance because many traditional societies were organised around collective life, kinship ties, age grades, councils of elders, and public assemblies. Political action was not meant to produce sharp division between winners and losers. Rather, it aimed at restoring balance and maintaining the unity of the community. This does not mean that there were no disagreements. Disagreements existed, but they were often handled through discussion, mediation, and gradual reconciliation. The value placed on consensus was therefore connected to the belief that the community must remain morally intact even after political decisions are made. The framework helps this study in three important ways. First, it explains the moral basis of consensus democracy. Second, communitarian theory helps in assessing the weakness of imported adversarial democracy in Nigeria. Third, the theory offers a basis for considering

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how indigenous ideas of dialogue, shared responsibility, and inclusion may contribute to political development in the present.

## Methodology

This study goes with a qualitative research method based on the nature of the subject under investigation. The study is concerned with ideas, values, political practices, and philosophical assumptions that shape consensus democracy in African traditional thought and its relevance to Nigeria's political development. Since these issues cannot be measured adequately through numerical data, a qualitative approach is more suitable. It allows for close examination, interpretation, and critical reflection on meanings, arguments, and social realities.

The study relies solely on secondary sources of data. These include books, peer reviewed journal articles, academic essays, and other scholarly materials that deal with African traditional political systems, consensus democracy, communitarian thought, and Nigeria's democratic experience. The use of secondary data is appropriate because the study is not designed to gather field responses or statistical evidence. Its purpose is to examine existing knowledge, compare scholarly positions, and draw reasoned conclusions from already available materials.

The method of analysis used in this study is textual and interpretive analysis. Relevant texts are carefully read and examined in order to identify key themes, recurring arguments, and points of agreement or disagreement

among scholars. Through this process, the study analyses how consensus democracy has been explained in African traditional thought, how it has been criticised, and how it may relate to the challenges of political development in Nigeria. The interpretive nature of the study makes it possible to go beyond surface description and engage the deeper assumptions behind both traditional and modern democratic models.

In carrying out this analysis, the study also adopts a philosophical approach. This is important because the subject of consensus democracy is not only historical or descriptive. It also involves normative questions about legitimacy, inclusion, justice, participation, and the common good. A philosophical approach helps the study to examine whether consensus democracy offers a meaningful alternative or complement to the majoritarian model that dominates Nigeria's present political structure. It also helps in assessing the moral claims that underlie African communitarian political thought.

## Findings and Analysis

### i. Consensus, Inclusion, and Political Legitimacy

Decision making in many African traditional settings was tied to the moral demand that public action should not leave parts of the community feeling conquered. That point matters for this study because the value of consensus was not simply procedural. It was connected to legitimacy, social balance, and the expectation that authority should emerge from deliberation that

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allowed broad acceptance. Recent scholarship helps to clarify this. Obi (2024) argues that Wiredu's alternative to majoritarian democracy grew out of the damage caused by adversarial politics in Africa and the need for a political order that reflects African social realities rather than inherited colonial forms. This line of thought supports the finding that consensus democracy was rooted in a search for inclusion rather than numerical victory alone.

The real strength of this model lies in the fact that it tries to reduce political exclusion before it hardens into conflict. In a setting like Nigeria, where electoral competition easily takes ethnic and regional form, a democratic method that pays attention to accommodation has clear relevance. Ibanga (2024 p.8) makes this concern very clear when she observes that "the goal is not the defeat of an opponent but the inclusion of all in a decision that can be lived with". That insight helps explain why consensus in African traditional thought should not be dismissed as a vague ideal. It shows that the process was directed at preserving communal legitimacy after disagreement, not merely ending debate.

This finding also aligns with the communitarian framework of the study. Consensus was possible because the community was treated as morally prior to partisan triumph. In that setting, political judgment was expected to keep relationships intact. This is why the study finds that consensus democracy cannot be understood apart from the communal ethic that sustained it.

## **ii. Limits of Majoritarian Politics in Nigeria**

Nigeria's democratic experience has made the weakness of adversarial politics more visible. Elections often produce rulers, but not always legitimacy. Institutions exist, but public trust remains thin. The issue is not only electoral misconduct. It is also the structure of politics itself, which often turns public office into a contest of domination. Jatula (2024 p.74) captures this problem clearly in his study of the 2023 presidential election when he states that Nigeria's democratic culture is shaped by "ethnicised politics, class, institutionalised loyalty and money politics". That formulation is important because it shows that democratic crisis in Nigeria is not just technical. It is cultural and structural.

From this point, the study infers that the attraction of consensus democracy lies in its challenge to the winner takes all logic that defines much of Nigerian politics. If democratic participation repeatedly ends in exclusion, then the process itself begins to lose moral force. This helps explain why consensus oriented values remain relevant. They offer a corrective to a political system in which formal competition often deepens distrust instead of producing shared commitment to public decisions.

At the same time, the study does not treat consensus democracy as an automatic replacement for liberal democracy. Olanipekun ideas (2020 p.9) are useful here because he warns against a romantic reading of traditional consensus. He argues that "democracy and consensus are not mutually

exclusive". That point is valuable because it prevents a false opposition between African traditional thought and modern democratic practice. The implication is that Nigeria may not need to abandon electoral democracy completely. What it needs is to rethink it through values of wider consultation, accommodation, and substantive inclusion.

## ii. Traditional Insight and Modern Difficulty

The findings also show that consensus democracy has practical limits when moved from relatively small traditional communities to a large and complex state like Nigeria. Traditional systems often worked within more bounded social settings, with stronger shared norms and more direct forms of accountability. Modern Nigeria is different. It is deeply plural, heavily bureaucratic, and politically centralised. This difference creates a serious problem for any direct transfer of precolonial methods into present institutions.

That problem has been noted in recent scholarship. Olanipekun (2020 p.1) argues that Wiredu's proposal does not automatically become "a workable means of decision making in present African society". This criticism is important, and the study takes it seriously. Consensus democracy cannot simply be imported from traditional life into a modern constitutional state without adaptation. The scale, diversity, and intensity of political competition in Nigeria make that impossible.

## Discussion

The findings of this study show that the relevance of consensus democracy to Nigeria's political development lies first in its response to exclusion. That issue has remained central across the earlier sections of this work. The abstract identified the failure of majoritarian politics to reflect indigenous socio political realities. The statement of the problem further established that electoral democracy in Nigeria has not sufficiently reduced distrust, elite domination, or the alienation of many groups from the state. What emerges in this discussion, therefore, is that consensus democracy becomes important not because it promises a perfect political order, but because it raises a serious alternative to the adversarial culture that has shaped Nigeria's democracy.

The Nigerian state continues to struggle with the problem of legitimacy in spite of repeated elections and constitutional procedures. This is not only because of fraud or institutional weakness. It is also because political competition often appears as a struggle for access to state resources rather than a shared search for public good. In this context, the findings support Obi's (2024) position that Wiredu's proposal should be read as an effort to rethink democracy from African social experience rather than from inherited Western political assumptions. That point deepens the meaning of the findings suggesting that the democratic question in Nigeria is not simply whether elections hold, but whether the method of democratic choice itself can generate belonging,

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recognition, and moral acceptance across social divisions.

This is where the communitarian framework of the study becomes useful. The theory does not deny individuality, but it insists that political life must be judged in relation to the wellbeing of the community. Consensus democracy reflects this orientation because it treats public decision making as a process that should preserve social relationships while resolving disagreement. The importance of this to Nigeria is clear. Where politics is heavily ethnicised and polarised, procedures that merely produce winners may fail to produce legitimacy. Ibanga (2024 p.8) captures this well when she explains that traditional African democratic practice sought an outcome in which "all can be lived with". Though brief, that expression is important because it shifts attention from victory to coexistence. The implication for Nigeria is that a stable democratic system must do more than count preferences. It must also manage difference in ways that reduce long term resentment.

The findings also show that consensus democracy should not be interpreted as a call for a complete return to precolonial political structures. That would be historically and institutionally unrealistic. Nigeria is far removed from the relatively small scale communities in which many traditional decision making processes operated. The state now functions through constitutional law, bureaucratic administration, political parties, national elections, and complex struggles over representation. These realities make direct transfer impossible. The study also contributes to the

broader debate on whether majoritarian democracy can adequately serve deeply plural African societies. Nigeria offers strong evidence that numerical victory often does not settle political disagreement. Instead, elections sometimes deepen hostility by making state power appear monopolistic. The findings therefore support the argument that majoritarian democracy, while formally democratic, may still produce practical exclusion in divided contexts.

Another important implication of the findings is that traditional consensus cannot be praised without attention to internal inequalities. The literature and the findings both show that voice within traditional settings was not always evenly distributed. Age, status, gender, and social location often influenced who spoke and whose views carried more weight. This means that the democratic value of consensus should not be located in a false claim of perfect equality. It should be located in its effort to prevent rigid exclusion and hostile political closure.

This point matters for the present study because it helps refine the meaning of inclusion. Inclusion is not merely the absence of voting. It is the presence of meaningful participation. Where certain groups are present in form but weak in influence, the democratic process remains incomplete. The study therefore interprets consensus democracy critically, not romantically. Its historical forms may have been limited, but its underlying concern with accommodation and social legitimacy remains valuable.

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This also speaks directly to Nigeria's present condition as the modern state cannot draw from African traditional thought responsibly if it ignores questions of gender, minority protection, youth voice, and class power. A contemporary adaptation of consensus must be more self-conscious than some of its historical precedents. It must protect participation in a more explicit and institutional way. Without that, the appeal to tradition may become a cover for reproducing older exclusions under new language.

What follows from the discussion, then, is not a rejection of consensus democracy, but a more careful account of its promise. Its promise lies in reminding Nigeria that democracy should not be reduced to electoral arithmetic. It should also be judged by its ability to produce belonging, reduce hostility, and carry citizens along in the making of public decisions. That idea remains strongly connected to the objectives and research questions of this study. The findings and the discussion together show that African traditional thought still contains democratic resources that can enrich Nigeria's search for a more legitimate and culturally grounded political order.

## Conclusion

The central issue examined in this study is not whether democracy is desirable in Nigeria, but whether the present form through which it operates has been able to respond to the country's deep social plurality, recurring exclusion, and weak sense of shared political belonging. The earlier sections of this work showed that the crisis of Nigerian democracy is tied

not only to electoral malpractice or institutional fragility, but also to the dominance of a political culture that rewards numerical victory more than deliberative inclusion. From that standpoint, the study set out to examine whether African traditional thought, especially its consensual orientation, offers a meaningful resource for Nigeria's political development.

What the study has shown is that consensus democracy remains important because it directs attention to a neglected democratic value, namely the need to carry people along in the making of binding public decisions. This concern runs through a number of recent reflections on African political thought. That point is significant for this study because it brings the argument away from nostalgia and into the problem of institutional relevance. The question is no longer whether traditional African societies valued consensus. The more pressing question is how the moral and political insight behind that value can help a state like Nigeria where democratic contest is often experienced as zero sum struggle.

The findings and discussion have already shown that consensus democracy should not be treated as a perfect system. It had its own limitations, especially where hierarchy shaped participation and where historical social conditions differ sharply from those of the present Nigerian state. Even so, the argument of this work remains that indigenous democratic thought should not be dismissed because it is historically distant. This is why the study concludes that consensus democracy is best understood as a

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corrective resource for Nigerian democracy, not as a total replacement for electoral politics. Its importance lies in the principles around it, especially deliberation, accommodation, representation beyond formal voting, and the reduction of permanent winners and permanent losers. These are principles that fit the communitarian framework adopted in the study and respond directly to the research question on whether African traditional thought can contribute to a more legitimate and culturally grounded political order in Nigeria.

### Recommendations

The first recommendation of this study is that Nigeria should pursue constitutional and institutional reforms that reduce the winner takes all character of political competition. One practical implication is the creation of stronger power sharing arrangements in executive and legislative processes so that political defeat does not translate into complete exclusion.

The second recommendation is that public decision making at local, state, and national levels should include structured deliberative forums that bring communities, civic bodies, and interest groups into policy discussion before major decisions are finalised. This is important because one of the strengths of traditional consensus was the moral expectation that those affected by decisions should have a meaningful opportunity to speak. Such a recommendation is especially relevant to Nigeria where distrust often grows when policy appears distant from the people.

The final recommendation is that civic education in Nigeria should be expanded beyond electoral participation to include indigenous democratic values such as mutual recognition, dialogue, restraint in competition, and responsibility to the wider community. The current democratic culture often trains citizens to think of politics mainly as partisan struggle. A more grounded democratic orientation would help reframe politics as a shared civic practice. This recommendation follows naturally from the communitarian assumptions of the study, since democratic stability in plural societies depends not only on formal institutions but also on the values citizens bring into public life. Again, traditional institutions should not be ignored in democratic development, but they should also not be carried along and given roles that will see to aggregate cohesion of good governance.

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## Bridging the Gap between Informal Apprenticeship and Formal Technical Education for Curriculum Integration in Nigeria

### Abstract

*Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria faces persistent gaps between formal curriculum frameworks and the skills acquired through informal apprenticeship systems. Informal apprenticeship remains a major source of practical skill development in trades such as mechanics, welding, electrical installation, and carpentry, yet it operates largely outside formal TVET structures, limiting certification opportunities and labour mobility. This study examined pedagogical practices in informal apprenticeship, while mapping competencies against formal TVET curriculum standards, through developing a Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework suitable for Nigeria. A mixed-method explanatory design was employed, with data collected from 60 master craftsmen, 120 apprentices, 30 TVET instructors, and 10 NBTE curriculum officials across three purposively selected states. Data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews, structured questionnaires, document analysis, and competency mapping matrices. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, while quantitative data were summarized using descriptive statistics and competency alignment indices. Findings revealed substantial overlap in practical competencies such as tool handling, safety procedures, and task execution, but significant divergence in theoretical knowledge, assessment practices, and documentation standards. Key barriers to integration included limited policy support, inadequate recognition of informal skills, and weak collaboration between TVET institutions and master craftsmen. Based on these findings, a Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework was proposed incorporating Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), modular competency alignment, co-certification mechanisms, and structured industry engagement. The framework provides a practical pathway for harmonizing informal and formal skill acquisition systems, improving employability outcomes, and strengthening policy coherence within Nigeria's TVET sector.*

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### Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a critical role in

developing the technical skills required for national economic growth and sustainable development. In Nigeria,

strengthening the technical workforce has become important as the country seeks to expand industrial capacity, improve employment opportunities, and enhance productivity across key sectors of the economy. Formal TVET institutions regulated by the National Board for Technical Education are designed to produce competent technicians through structured curricula that combine theoretical instruction with practical training (NBTE, 2018). Despite these objectives, significant gaps persist between the competencies delivered in formal TVET institutions and the practical skills demanded in the labour market. A substantial proportion of technical skill development in Nigeria occurs outside formal educational institutions through informal apprenticeship systems. Within this system, master craftsmen train apprentices in practical trades such as mechanics, welding, electrical installation, carpentry, and metal fabrication in real workplace environments. Unlike formal TVET programmes, informal apprenticeship training typically operates without standardized curricula, formal assessment procedures, or nationally recognized certification mechanisms. Nevertheless, these systems remain widespread due to their cultural relevance, accessibility, relatively low training costs, and employers' preference for workers with practical hands-on experience (International Labour Organization, 2020; Zite & Deebom, 2021).

The coexistence of formal TVET institutions and informal apprenticeship

systems has created a fragmented skills development landscape in Nigeria. While formal TVET emphasizes structured theoretical instruction and standardized certification, informal apprenticeship prioritizes experiential learning through demonstration, mentorship, and repetitive practice. This separation limits opportunities for recognizing competencies acquired informally and restricts the mobility of skilled artisans within the national qualifications framework. Consequently, many apprentices who acquire substantial technical skills lack formal certification, thereby reducing their opportunities for further education, employment advancement, and participation in the formal economy (Cedefop, 2020). Scholars have increasingly highlighted the need to bridge the divide between formal and informal skill acquisition systems in Nigeria. Studies indicate that although formal TVET programmes aim to produce technically competent graduates, they often face challenges related to outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and weak industry collaboration (Auta, 2022; Njoku et al., 2015). These limitations contribute to persistent skills mismatches between TVET graduates and labour market requirements.

At the same time, informal apprenticeship systems have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in producing practically skilled artisans through workplace-based learning and sustained mentorship (Zite & Deebom, 2021). Research indicates that apprentices trained in informal settings

frequently demonstrate strong competencies in areas such as equipment handling, troubleshooting, and occupational safety. However, the absence of structured curricula, documentation, and standardized assessment mechanisms prevents these competencies from being formally recognized within the national TVET framework (Osuyi & Ogbebor, 2024). Recent scholarship suggests that significant overlaps exist between competencies developed through informal apprenticeship and those outlined in formal TVET curricula. Comparative studies reveal strong alignment in practical skill areas such as tool usage, task execution, and workplace safety, although gaps remain in theoretical knowledge, documentation practices, and formal assessment procedures (Osuyi & Ogbebor, 2024; Zite & Deebom, 2021). Ajibade and Amodu (2025) further argue that effective TVET curricula should integrate experiential learning approaches with theoretical instruction to ensure that graduates possess both conceptual understanding and workplace readiness.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has emerged internationally as an important mechanism for validating skills acquired outside formal education systems. Through RPL, competencies gained through informal training and workplace experience can be assessed and recognized within formal qualifications frameworks (Cedefop, 2020). However, within the Nigerian TVET system, RPL remains underdeveloped and rarely

implemented, limiting the ability of informally trained artisans to obtain formal certification or transition into advanced training opportunities. Beyond the informal-formal divide, existing literature also highlights broader challenges related to industry engagement in TVET curriculum development. Employers frequently report that TVET graduates lack sufficient exposure to real workplace technologies and practices (Njoku et al., 2015; Auta, 2022). These concerns underscore the need for stronger collaboration between educational institutions, industry actors, and informal training networks to ensure that curricula reflect contemporary labour market realities. Despite growing recognition of the importance of informal apprenticeship within Nigeria's skills ecosystem, there remains a significant gap in empirical research that systematically examines how informal apprenticeship practices can be integrated into formal TVET curriculum frameworks. While previous studies have explored the effectiveness of informal apprenticeship training and the challenges facing formal TVET institutions, limited research has proposed structured models for curriculum integration capable of harmonizing both systems.

This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by examining the pedagogical practices of informal apprenticeship systems, assessing the alignment of competencies between informal and formal training pathways, identifying barriers to integration, and proposing a hybrid curriculum

framework capable of bridging informal and formal skill acquisition systems within Nigeria's TVET sector.

### Statement of the Problem

Although informal apprenticeship remains a dominant mode of skill acquisition in Nigeria, it operates largely independent from formal TVET institutions. This separation creates structural inefficiencies, limits nationally recognized certification opportunities for informally trained artisans, and weakens policy coherence within Nigeria's skills development architecture. Existing curriculum frameworks do not adequately incorporate indigenous apprenticeship methodologies, nor do they systematically recognize prior informal learning experiences. Without effective integration, Nigeria's workforce development system remains fragmented, thereby undermining national objectives for industrialization, employment generation, and sustainable economic growth. This study therefore addresses this gap by proposing a structured integration model linking informal apprenticeship systems to formal TVET curriculum frameworks.

### Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the relationship between informal apprenticeship systems and formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria with the aim of developing a

curriculum model that bridges informal and formal skill acquisition systems.

Specifically, the study will:

1. Identify and analyze the pedagogical practices that characterize informal apprenticeship systems in Nigeria.
2. Assess the extent to which competencies acquired through informal apprenticeship align with the standards of formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum
3. Examine the structural and policy barriers that hinder the integration of informal apprenticeship systems with formal TVET institutions.
4. Develop a curriculum model that can effectively bridge informal apprenticeship training and formal Technical and Vocational Education Training systems.

### Research Questions

- i. What pedagogical practices characterize informal apprenticeship systems in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do competencies acquired informally align with formal TVET curriculum standards?
- iii. What structural and policy barriers hinder integration of informal apprenticeship systems with formal TVET institutions.
- iv. What curriculum model can effectively bridge informal and formal skill acquisition systems?

## Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-method explanatory design to investigate the integration of informal apprenticeship practices into the formal TVET curriculum in Nigeria. The population comprised 60 master craftsmen, 120 apprentices, 30 TVET instructors, and 10 NBTE curriculum officials across three purposively selected states. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with master craftsmen and curriculum officers, structured questionnaires administered to apprentices and TVET instructors, and document analysis of formal curriculum guidelines alongside apprenticeship practice notes. Competency mapping matrices were employed to identify overlaps and gaps between informal apprenticeship skills and formal curriculum competencies. This study is exploratory and descriptive, focusing on mapping competencies, identifying gaps, and developing a framework rather than testing causal relationships. Therefore, formal hypotheses were not formulated. Instead, the study is guided by research questions, allowing systematic investigation of pedagogical practices, competency overlaps, barriers to integration, and framework components. This approach aligns with accepted methods for exploratory studies in TVET research (Osuyi & Ogbebor, 2024; Ajibade & Amodu, 2025). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to extract patterns in instructional practices, while quantitative data were summarized using descriptive statistics and competency alignment indices, providing a comprehensive foundation

for developing a Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework.

## Results

**Research Question1: What pedagogical practices characterize informal apprenticeship systems in Nigeria?**

**Table 1: Frequency and percentages of Pedagogical Practices of Informal Apprenticeship**

Pedagogical Practice	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Hands-on demonstration	58	97
Repetitive task practice	55	92
Mentorship by master craftsmen	60	100
Peer learning	40	67
Problem-solving on real projects	52	87
Limited theoretical instruction	24	40

### Interpretation:

Table one above shows that informal apprenticeship emphasizes practical, hands-on training guided by mentorship, with minimal theoretical instruction. This confirms the experiential nature of skill acquisition in informal settings.

**Research Question 2: To what extent do competencies acquired informally align with formal TVT curriculum standards?**

**Table 2: Percentages of Competency Mapping Between Informal Apprenticeship and Formal TVET**

Competency Area	Informal Apprenticeship (%)	Formal TVET Curriculum (%)	Overlap (%)
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**Citation:** Chiazor, Patience O. "Bridging the Gap between Informal Apprenticeship and Formal Technical Education for Curriculum Integration in Nigeria". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026; pp76-84.

Competency Area	Informal Apprenticeship (%)	Formal TVET Curriculum (%)	Overlap (%)
Tool Handling & Equipment Use	95	90	90
Safety Procedures	88	85	83
Task Execution	92	87	80
Theoretical Knowledge	40	85	35
Assessment & Documentation	20	90	18

**Interpretation:**

Table two above indicate that Practical competencies such as tool handling and task execution show high overlap, while theoretical knowledge and documentation have low alignment, indicating areas for integration in formal curricula.

**Research Question 3: What structural and policy barriers hinder integration of informal apprenticeship systems with formal TVET institutions**

**Table 3: Structural and Policy Barriers**

Barrier	Source of Report	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Limited recognition of informal skills	Apprentices, Master Craftsmen	110	92
Lack of formal assessment standards	TVET Instructors	28	93
Weak collaboration between institutions & masters	NBTE officials, Instructors	32	91
Limited policy support for integration	NBTE officials	10	100
Insufficient funding & infrastructure	TVET Institutions	25	83

**Interpretation:**

Table three above shows that barriers hindering integration are primarily policy and structural, including limited

recognition, inadequate assessment, and poor collaboration, which impede integration of informal apprenticeship into formal TVET.

**Research Question 4: What curriculum model can effectively bridge informal and formal skill acquisition systems?**

**Table 4: Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework Components**

Component	Description	Expected Benefit
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Formal validation of skills acquired informally	Certification and mobility
Modular Competency Alignment	Mapping informal skills to formal curriculum modules	Harmonization of learning outcomes
Co-certification Mechanisms	Joint assessment by master craftsmen and TVET instructors	Legitimacy and credibility of skills
Structured Industry Engagement	Workplace attachments and mentor collaborations	Practical exposure and employability
Documentation & Assessment Standardization	Standard templates for task performance and progress tracking	Quality assurance and policy compliance

**Interpretation:**

The framework addresses gaps in theory, assessment, and certification while preserving practical skill acquisition. Implementing these components can harmonize informal and formal skill systems.

**Discussion**

The interpretation of Table 1 shows that informal apprenticeship relies heavily on hands-on demonstration, repetitive practice, and mentorship.

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Minimal theoretical instruction confirms the experiential, practice-based nature of informal skill acquisition (Osuyi & Ogbebor, 2024; Zite & Deebom, 2021). These findings suggest that formal TVET curricula can benefit from embedding practical modules informed by apprenticeship practices, while maintaining structured theory to ensure conceptual understanding. Integrating mentorship and peer learning approaches into classroom settings can further enhance competency acquisition.

Table 2 interpretation indicates high alignment in practical skills (80–90%), including tool handling, task execution, and safety procedures, while theoretical knowledge and documentation remain weakly aligned. This confirms the need for modular integration of informal competencies into formal curricula. By formalizing assessment and embedding theoretical components alongside practical exercises, TVET institutions can achieve balanced learning outcomes that reflect both real-world skills and conceptual understanding (Ajibade & Amodu, 2025).

The interpretation of Table 3 highlights policy and structural barriers such as limited recognition of informal skills, weak institutional collaboration, and inadequate assessment frameworks. These barriers are consistent with previous research (Njoku et al., 2015) which indicate that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), co-certification mechanisms, and policy support are critical for successful integration. Addressing these barriers can legitimize informal apprenticeship skills within

formal TVET, enhance mobility, and improve workforce readiness.

Table 4 interpretation shows that the proposed Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework addresses gaps in assessment, documentation, and theoretical grounding while preserving the strengths of experiential learning. Components such as RPL, modular competency alignment, co-certification, and structured industry engagement offer a practical pathway to harmonize informal and formal skill systems. Implementing this framework can enhance employability, certification legitimacy, and alignment with labour market demands (Cedefop, 2020).

## Conclusion

This study examined the integration of informal apprenticeship practices into the formal TVET curriculum in Nigeria. Findings revealed that informal apprenticeship provides highly practical, hands-on skills, including tool handling, task execution, and safety procedures, which **are** largely aligned with formal TVET competencies. However, gaps exist in theoretical knowledge, standardized assessment, and documentation, creating barriers to formal recognition and mobility for apprentices. Structural and policy limitations, such as limited collaboration between institutions and master craftsmen, weak policy support, and lack of formal recognition mechanisms, further hinder integration. The proposed Hybrid Curriculum Integration Framework, incorporating Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL),

modular competency alignment, co-certification, and structured industry engagement, offers a practical pathway to harmonize informal and formal skill acquisition systems. Implementing this framework can improve employability, legitimize informal skills, and enhance the relevance of TVET in Nigeria.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Relevant regulatory bodies, particularly the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), should establish formal Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms to validate competencies acquired through informal apprenticeship systems. This will enable skilled apprentices to obtain nationally recognized certification, thereby improving labour mobility, employability, and progression within the formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) framework.
- ii. TVET curriculum developers should incorporate practical competencies derived from informal apprenticeship systems into formal curriculum through modular competency-based units. Such integration will ensure better alignment between hands-on occupational skills and theoretical instruction within Nigeria's TVET programmes.
- iii. A joint assessment framework involving both TVET instructors and master craftsmen should be developed to support competency verification and co-certification. This collaborative approach will enhance the credibility, transparency, and industry relevance of skills assessment processes.
- iv. Stronger partnerships should be established between formal TVET institutions and informal apprenticeship training centers. These partnerships should facilitate structured workplace learning, mentorship programmes, and experiential training opportunities, thereby bridging the gap between institutional learning and industry practice.
- v. Government agencies responsible for skills development should formulate and implement supportive policies that promote the integration of informal and formal training systems. Such policies should include funding provisions for infrastructure development, incentives for collaboration between training stakeholders, and frameworks that recognize informal training institutions within the national skills ecosystem.
- vi. Standardized templates and procedures should be developed for documenting, monitoring, and assessing practical competencies acquired through informal apprenticeship. This will improve quality assurance,

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accountability, and traceability of skill acquisition within integrated training pathways.

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## Technological and Financial Sovereignty as Catalysts for the Industrialisation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry

### Abstract

Nigeria's oil and gas industry remains largely extractive despite decades of production, with limited industrial development. This comes with persistent reliance on foreign technologies and external financing. This study examined how technological and financial sovereignty can serve as catalysts for transforming the sector into a value-driven industrial base. It aimed to explore the extent to which local control over technology and capital can enable sustainable industrialisation. The study addressed the problem of structural dependency, which constrains domestic capacity and weakens economic autonomy. Employing the Dependency Theory and the Resource Curse Thesis, the study adopted a qualitative approach based entirely on secondary data, including policy documents, industry reports, and scholarly works, analysed thematically. Findings indicated that continued reliance on foreign expertise and capital limits industrial growth, although recent local content initiatives show emerging progress. The study concluded that genuine industrialisation requires deliberate investment in indigenous technology and domestic financing systems. The study recommended the development of a coordinated national framework that will integrate local technological innovation with stratified indigenous financial institutions to drive long-term sectoral transformation.

**Keywords:** Technical Education, Vocational Education, Formal and Informal Apprenticeship, Curriculum Integration, Hybrid Curriculum Framework

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### Introduction

Nigeria's oil and gas industry contributes significantly to national revenue, but it has not translated into sustained industrial growth. Crude oil

export still dominates the sector, while refined petroleum products, technical expertise, and critical infrastructure are largely imported. This contradiction reflects a deeper structural condition as the country participates actively in extraction but remains marginal in value

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creation. Data from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries show that Nigeria consistently ranks among the leading crude exporters, without domestic refining and value addition remain limited (OPEC, 2023).

This condition is not simply technical but tied to limited control over the technologies that drive production and the financial systems that sustain it. Technological sovereignty, in this sense, goes beyond the use of imported tools involving the ability to design, adapt, and own critical production technologies. Financial sovereignty has to do with the capacity to mobilise and retain capital within the domestic economy. In Nigeria, the upstream operations are still largely dependent on multinational firms with proprietary technologies, while major investments are often financed externally, determining both ownership structures and profit flows (UNCTAD 2022).

This study shifts attention from output to control, from production to capacity. The concern is not whether Nigeria produces oil, but whether it possesses the means to industrialise around it. Examining technological and financial sovereignty, the study argues that industrialisation is not an automatic outcome of resource extraction, but a deliberate process designed by who controls knowledge, tools, and capital within the sector.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Examine the extent of technological dependence in Nigeria's oil and gas industry and its implications for industrial development.
- ii. Analyse the structure of financial control within the sector and how it shapes capital retention and reinvestment.
- iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing local content policies in promoting technological and financial sovereignty.

### 3. Research Questions

- i. To what extent does technological dependence affect industrialisation in Nigeria's oil and gas industry?
- ii. How does the structure of financial control influence capital mobilisation and retention within the sector?
- iii. How effective are existing local content policies in advancing technological and financial sovereignty?

### Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's oil and gas sector undoubtedly generates substantial revenue, while its contribution to industrial development remains limited. The issue is not simply that crude oil is exported while refined products are imported. It is that the country does not sufficiently control the systems that transform crude into industrial value. Production exists, but control over the technologies, capital structures, and knowledge systems that

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define industrial capacity remains largely external. This creates a situation where economic activity is present without corresponding industrial depth.

The problem, therefore, lies in the disconnect between resource extraction and industrial transformation. Nigeria produces oil, but does not sufficiently control the technologies that process it or the financial systems that sustain its development. This dual dependence on external technology and capital limits the country's ability to internalise value chains and build a self-sustaining industrial base. With this kind of structure, industrialisation within the oil and gas sector will remain limited, regardless of output levels or policy declarations.

### Literature Review

Most literature does not treat Nigeria's oil and gas problem as a simple matter of output. It treats it as a problem of transformation. Across the field, one broad line of argument holds that extractive sectors can support industrialisation only when they generate domestic linkages, with technological learning, and local supplier development. Hilson and Ovadia (2020) push this argument beyond narrow procurement targets by calling for a more holistic understanding of local content, one that links employment and contracting to wider industrial strategy. Lebdioui (2020), comparative work shows that local content delivers stronger outcomes when it is embedded in deliberate

industrial policy and supported by institutions that promote learning and supplier upgrading, not just market access. Nwankwo and Iyeke (2022) provide evidence that Nigeria's oil and gas local content laws have had measurable positive effects on engineering development and GDP, which suggests that policy intervention can matter in concrete terms. However, their contribution also reveals a limitation in part of the Nigerian literature.

Wilhelm (2023), writing on Guinea, shows that local content policy is shaped by political negotiation, contestation, and institutional interests, not merely by developmental logic. Even though the empirical setting is different, the conceptual point matters for Nigeria. It suggests that local content frameworks may be designed and implemented in ways that satisfy political demands for inclusion without necessarily restructuring production. Ba *et al.* (2022) and Arias Loyala, and Lufin (2020) in their study of West Africa's mining sector, similarly show that local content outcomes depend heavily on institutional capacity and policy coherence. These works complicate optimistic readings of local content by showing that its developmental effects are conditional and uneven. They are especially useful because they expose the gap between legislative ambition and actual industrial upgrading.

Tsani, Chitou, and Overland (2024) in their systematic review shows that the field is increasingly moving away from narrow legal and operational questions

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toward sustainability, policy design, and long-term transformation. Their review makes clear that the central debate is no longer whether local content should exist, but what kind of local content can genuinely counter the resource curse and support structural change. Itaman and Awopegba (2021) address this omission by arguing that finance and oil rents in Nigeria have often reinforced premature deindustrialisation rather than supported manufacturing expansion. Their contribution is important because it shows that industrial weakness is not only a problem of technological dependence but also of capital allocation.

### Theoretical Framework

The problem this study addresses cannot be understood at the level of policy description alone. It requires a framework that explains why resource-rich economies like Nigeria still struggles to convert extraction into industrial capacity. Dependency Theory and the Resource Curse Thesis both provide a way of interpreting technological and financial dependence as structural conditions that shape the limits of industrialisation. Dependency Theory argues that global economic relations are middle-income countries in ways that position some countries as producers of raw materials and others as controllers of technology, capital, and industrial production (Prebisch, 1950). Morris, Kaplinsky, and Kaplan (2012) show that integration into global value chains does not automatically lead to upgrading. Instead, firms in resource-

dependent economies often remain locked into low-value segments unless deliberate efforts are made to build domestic capabilities.

While Dependency Theory emphasises external structures, the resource curse thesis focuses more on internal dynamics within resource-rich economies. It argues that reliance on natural resource rents can distort economic incentives, weaken institutions, and crowd out industrial development (Sachs & Warner, 2001). Mehlum, Moene, and Torvik (2006) demonstrate that outcomes depend on institutional quality, particularly whether economic systems encourage productive activity or rent seeking.

### Methodology

#### *Research Design*

The nature of the problem under investigation requires an approach that goes beyond measurement and engages structure, policy, and institutional dynamics. This study adopts a qualitative research design because the core issues which are technological dependence, financial control, and industrial capacity are embedded in systems that are better interpreted than quantified. The aim is not to test variables in isolation, but to understand how patterns of dependence and limited sovereignty influence industrial outcomes within Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

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*Technological and Financial Sovereignty as Catalysts for the Industrialisation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry**Data Sources and Collection*

The study relies entirely on documentary sources, including government policy documents, industry reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature. Key materials include national policy frameworks such as the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act, reports from regulatory and industry bodies, and international datasets and analyses on extractive industries and development. These sources are selected because they provide insight into both the formal structure of the sector and the underlying patterns that shape its operation. Bowen (2009 p.27) explains that, document analysis is particularly useful for studies that seek to understand policy, institutional behaviour, and historical patterns, since documents “contain text that can be interpreted to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic”. The method of data collection follows a systematic document review process. Sources are identified based on relevance to three core themes which are technological capacity, financial structures, and industrialisation within the oil and gas sector. Priority is given to recent materials from 2020 to 2025 to reflect current developments, while earlier foundational works are included where necessary to provide conceptual footing. To maintain rigour, documents are cross-checked across multiple sources to reduce bias and ensure consistency in interpretation.

*Method of Data Analysis*

Data analysis is conducted using thematic analysis. This method allows the study to identify, organise, and interpret recurring patterns across the selected materials. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a flexible approach that enables the researcher to move from raw textual data to meaningful patterns that reflect underlying structures. In this study, themes are developed around key analytical categories derived from the theoretical framework, including technological dependence, financial dependence, local content effectiveness, and pathways to industrialisation. The analysis proceeds through coding, categorisation, and interpretation of patterns across the dataset.

*Justification of Methodological Approach*

The choice of this methodology is directly informed by the theoretical framework. Dependency Theory and the Resource Curse Thesis both emphasise structural relationships, institutional dynamics, and historical patterns rather than isolated numerical indicators. A qualitative approach makes it possible to trace these relationships across policy documents, industry practices, and scholarly interpretations.

*Limitations of the Study*

While the reliance on secondary data allows for broad coverage and depth of analysis, it also introduces certain limitations. The study depends on the availability and quality of existing

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materials, which may reflect institutional biases or gaps in reporting. However, this limitation is mitigated through careful source selection and cross-comparison of multiple materials. The aim is not to produce a definitive measurement, but to provide a coherent and critically grounded interpretation of the structural conditions affecting industrialisation in Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

## Findings

### Technological Dependence and Limited Domestic Capability

The analysis shows that Nigeria's oil and gas industry remains significantly dependent on foreign technologies, particularly in upstream operations such as exploration, drilling, and reservoir management. Multinational oil companies continue to dominate high-value technical processes, limiting the extent of indigenous technological control and learning. Evidence from existing studies indicates that local firms are largely concentrated in low to mid-level service provision, while advanced engineering and proprietary technologies remain externally controlled (Ovadia, 2016; Lebdioui, 2020).

This creates a stratified industry structure where participation does not mean capability. Although local content policies have expanded opportunities for Nigerian firms, the absence of deep technological ownership restricts innovation and long-term industrial growth. This supports broader findings

that integration into global extractive value chains does not automatically result in technological upgrading unless deliberate capability-building measures are in place (Morris *et al.*, 2012).

### External Financing and Weak Capital Retention

Findings further reveal that financial dependence is a critical constraint on industrialisation within the sector. Large-scale oil and gas projects are predominantly financed through foreign capital, determining ownership structures and influencing how value is distributed. This results in significant capital outflows, as profits are often repatriated rather than reinvested locally. Empirical studies suggest that such financial arrangements weaken domestic capital accumulation and limit the ability of local firms to compete. Itaman and Awopegba (2021) show that oil rents, when combined with externally oriented financial systems, can reinforce patterns of premature deindustrialisation in Nigeria. At the same time, indigenous firms face serious barriers in accessing long-term financing, which constrains their capacity to invest in technology and expand operations (Odeleye, 2014). This dual structure undermines the financial foundations required for industrial transformation.

### Partial Gains from Local Content Policies

The findings indicate that local content policies have produced measurable improvements in domestic participation, particularly in employment, service

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delivery, and basic technical functions. There is evidence that these policies have contributed to increased involvement of Nigerian firms and professionals within the sector (Nwankwo & Iyeke, 2022). However, these gains remain limited in scope as local participation has not been matched by equivalent progress in technological sovereignty or financial control. Studies emphasise that local content frameworks often improve inclusion without fundamentally altering production structures (Hilson & Ovadia, 2020). As a result, local firms frequently operate within systems that is still defined by foreign technology and capital, limiting their ability to move into higher value segments of the industry.

### **Weak Integration Across the Value Chain**

Another key finding is the limited integration across the oil and gas value chain. Upstream activities dominate the sector, while downstream operations such as refining and petrochemicals remain underdeveloped relative to production capacity. This imbalance restricts domestic value addition and reduces opportunities for industrial spillovers. The literature on extractive industries points that industrialisation depends on the strength of linkages between different segments of production, including backwards, forward, and knowledge linkages (Weldegiorgis *et al.*, 2021). In Nigeria, these linkages remain weak, resulting in a sector that functions more as an enclave than as a driver of broader

industrial development. This explains why high levels of crude production have not translated into diversified industrial growth.

### **Emerging but Fragmented Efforts Toward Sovereignty**

Despite these structural constraints, there are emerging efforts aimed at strengthening technological and financial sovereignty. Investments in modular refineries, local fabrication, and indigenous service companies suggest a growing recognition of the need for domestic capacity building. Policy reforms have also attempted to improve regulatory frameworks and encourage greater local participation. However, these efforts remain uneven and lack strategic coordination. Comparative studies show that successful local content outcomes depend on coherent policy plans between technology development, financing systems, and industrial strategy (Lebdioui, 2020; Tsani *et al.*, 2024). In the Nigerian context, the absence of such coordination limits the overall impact of ongoing initiatives and slows the pace of industrial transformation.

### **Discussion**

The findings point to a structural contradiction that sits at the heart of Nigeria's oil and gas industry. Production has expanded, participation has increased, and policy frameworks have evolved, but industrial transformation remains limited. This reflects a deeper issue of control as Nigeria participates in extraction, but

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does not sufficiently control the technological and financial systems that determine how value is created and retained. Technological dependence, as revealed in the findings, is best understood within the logic of global production systems. Integration into global value chains has enabled continued extraction, but not necessarily domestic capability building. Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark (2016) explain that upgrading within global value chains is not automatic, noting that firms in developing economies often remain confined to lower value activities unless deliberate efforts are made to build capabilities.

The expansion of domestic participation has often been treated as evidence of progress. However, participation without capability does not produce industrialization as successful industrialisation depends on “policies that promote learning and technological capabilities,” rather than those that merely expand market participation. In Nigeria’s oil and gas sector, local content policies have opened space for domestic actors, but they have not fully moved into instruments of technological sovereignty. The result is a system where local firms operate within externally defined technological boundaries.

It is true that industrialisation requires long-term investment and the ability to direct capital toward productive activities. However, where financing is externally sourced, domestic control over investment decisions becomes limited. UNCTAD (2022 p.191)

emphasises that financial systems play a central role in structural transformation, noting that “access to finance is a key determinant of productive capacity and diversification”. In Nigeria, the dominance of external financing arrangements means that a significant portion of value generated in the sector is not retained within the domestic economy.

The findings of this study support that position that financial sovereignty is not simply about ownership of capital, but about the capacity to sustain industrial development over time. When technological and financial dependence are examined together, the limitations of current policy approaches become clearer. Local content policies have addressed participation, but they have not squarely integrated technology development and financial strategy into a unified industrial framework. This explains why progress remains uneven, with gains in employment and services not translating into deeper industrial capacity.

While existing literature has examined local content, linkages, and policy design, it has often treated technological capability and financial systems as separate domains. The findings and analysis here suggest that this separation is part of the problem. Industrialisation depends on the interaction between these two dimensions. Technological capability requires financing to develop and scale, while financial capacity depends on productive sectors that can generate sustainable returns. Where both are

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externally controlled, industrialisation becomes structurally constrained. This is where Dependency Theory and the Resource Curse Thesis converge. Dependency Theory explains the external control of technology and capital, while the Resource Curse Thesis explains the internal failure to convert resource wealth into productive capacity. The implication is clear as industrial transformation in Nigeria's oil and gas sector requires a shift from participation to control, from extraction to capability, and from fragmented policy to integrated strategy. Technological sovereignty and financial sovereignty are not abstract ideals but practical conditions under which industrialisation becomes possible.

### Conclusion

What this study has shown in a step by step manner is that the problem is not production but control. The industry operates, generates revenue, and sustains economic activity but does not sufficiently root industrial transformation within the domestic economy. This gap is not accidental but rooted in a persistent condition where the key drivers of value creation remain largely external. The analysis has demonstrated that technological dependence limits the ability of the sector to evolve beyond extraction. Where core technologies are imported and controlled externally, domestic firms are restricted to lower-value activities, and opportunities for learning and innovation remain narrow. At the same time, financial dependence

weakens the capacity for reinvestment and long-term industrial growth. When capital is externally sourced and externally directed, value is not retained in ways that support domestic industrial expansion. The core argument therefore, is that technological sovereignty and financial sovereignty are not optional but necessary conditions for transforming the oil and gas sector into a driver of industrial development.

### Recommendations

Government and industry stakeholders should move beyond basic participation targets and invest deliberately in indigenous technological development. This includes establishing specialised research and innovation centres focused on oil and gas engineering, supporting technology transfer frameworks that prioritise knowledge ownership, with partnerships that lead to local design and fabrication capabilities.

There is a need to expand domestic financial institutions capable of supporting long-term industrial investment. This can be achieved through strengthening development finance institutions, promoting sector-specific investment funds, and creating financial instruments that enable local firms to access affordable capital for expansion and technological upgrading. Finally, local content frameworks should be entrenched within a broader national industrial strategy. This means aligning participation requirements with clear targets for capability building, value addition, and sectoral linkages.

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Policy coordination across ministries and regulatory bodies is essential to ensure that local content contributes directly to industrial transformation.

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## Deconstructing the Lived Experiences of Breadwinning Women in 21st Century

### Abstract

The experience in many West African families shows a decline in male bread winners and the rise in female bread winners. This has led to tension in homes that is not sustainable for families. However, the problem with this switch of positions is a result of a fundamental error in gender training connected to colonial incursion and imbibing of Western ideas as against previous indigenous approach to breadwinning. The consequences are the rise of emergence of resentment, and conflicts in homes, which if left unresolved disrupts social life, with the capacity to threatens 21<sup>st</sup> century homes, and the stability of family members. This paper employed the phenomenological framework of lived experiences to interrogate themes like gendering and breadwinners. The objectives include examining how the adoption of western values of gender influenced the gender training. It compared western and indigenous views of breadwinning. It interrogates the resulting concern of personality switch and how women lived experiences propelled them out of their comfort zones to bring the sheaves home. The paper employed literary review, critical elucidations, and applies phenomenological concepts, to interrogate faulty gender stereotype and factors responsible for the state of affairs. It concludes that the reality of breadwinning, left unresolved will continue to lead to internal conflicts and crises in 21<sup>st</sup> century homes, families and relationships. It proffers and advocates for open approach to gender role plays for sustainable families in the 21st-century.

**Keywords:** Lived experiences. Breadwinning. Gender and sustainable families.

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### Introduction

Providing for the family used to be the exclusive domain of men, while indigenous families cooperated with their wives to ensure the sustenance of the families, this approach is common amongst Isoko people who have a system of division of labour of the gender. Here men and women had roles

assigned to them. But with infusion of Western ideals a new culture emerged where men were portrayed as sole bread winners, compelling them to act up. But many men failed badly to live up to this position.

The problem of imported family dynamics was not the fault of the genders but masculine approach

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contributed to the crisis. Masculinity enjoyed the pedestal but couldn't meet the demands, and this impacted their egos, those who could not deal with empowered women, demanded need submission. Male leadership is not just about egos and positions, but about direction and providing family visions. Lived experience showed that many men were unable to dream beyond their financial capacity and this must have impeded their ability to support their families.

The preachers of submission also contributed negatively to the situation, as submission was approached from one angle, that is female submitting to male. Thus, self-driven women were perceived as crossing gender lines, yet, the history of African women revealed that many African women who were celebrated their bravery. However, susceptibility to Western family dynamics saw men leaving their homes to the care of women. It became apparent to many women, that should they keep waiting for their men, they would be settling for a 'let down', hence taking up the challenge, many women choose survival over ego and social perception. The challenge is that where famine and lack exist, women were the more likely to live the experience, in reality the threat of starvation compelled women to add to their assigned roles, mandating them to contribute their quota to the family wellbeing, Janssens, (1997) point to the act of. "Breadwinning" as literally providing food.

This paper's research contributes to knowledge, and is significant for exploring a silent problem in many families, it evaluates the 'take-for-

granted' gender role play, a critical concern for sustainable 21st century families. The paper contributes to knowledge for proposing other model of parental training for 21<sup>st</sup> century children. It proposes government policy options and how social agency can help create a new narrative. Thus, ideas and lived experiences explored in this paper is important for family stability, and, the suggested ideas, when applied, helps to create enabling environment at homes, that produces mentally balanced children. Again, literature shows a gap in studying how families approach the trend of breadwinning women, as little exploration has been done about female breadwinners, the act of bread winning and its approach in Africa, particularly West Africa.

### **Defining Breadwinning**

The term seems self-explanatory as Warren, (2007) observes that little works of research has taken place about breadwinning, insisting that "so little attention has been paid to theorizing and operationalizing breadwinning. Breadwinning seems to lie uncontested, with an unproblematic taken-for-granted", clearly those assumptions mean that breadwinning roles were already ascribed and uncontested. Furthermore, Potuchek, (1997) in his study demonstrates that, "breadwinning is still widely used as a boundary that creates gender by distinguishing the meaning of men's employment from that of women's" insisting that this is the case despite the fact there are couples who share the experience and responsibility of breadwinning, his term is 'dual-earner marriages' .He insists that "breadwinning is used as a gender

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boundary is strongly influenced by adult experiences and circumstances and by the material conditions of couples' lives" Potuchek, (1997). Claiming that men and women's employments were approached and perceived differently, constructed through negotiation, contention and cooperation. While the issue of approach is partly true for many Africans, but not in the lived experience of negotiation and cooperation. Rather African experiences reveal starvation as the driving force of women becoming bread winners. Clearly when it relates to breadwinning Africans also need to adopt the dynamic process of renegotiated and reconstructed gender boundaries, as Jean Potuchek, shows to be the standard in Western hemisphere, in changing circumstances, and in other, related gender boundaries. In many traditional African cultures, girls were groomed to be home keepers, baby makers and sacrificial lambs. And, men portrayed as home visionaries and leaders. The gap in the style of gender training, that molds women to wait at home for men, believing that men would bring the bread home becomes obsolete.

The usual practice where boys and girls grooming has different scripts is being rescripted as parents are now conscious of the need to change the narrative. While government and many organizations are training and empowering girls and women to help improve family life, another challenge evolves. Boys and men are in a limbo, they do not understand the new dynamics and how to deal with the situation, and this explains why many

empowered women could not fully enjoy their new status.

The inability of both genders to meet in the middle way in resolving the problem of poverty and threat of starvation, amongst other things meant that "women" had to do something to resolve the conflict or decrease its impact. One approach is secret, hiding their new personality and character traits which results from developing fighting skills, thus, dual personality. Owing to lived experiences women hide the fact that they win 'the bread' by taking on a facade. Impeding their families from navigating their new reality of working women.

### **Phenomenology and West African Women Experiences with Bread Winning**

Mapp, (2008: 308-311). Indicates that "Phenomenology "is that aspect of philosophy that describes experience exactly as it occurs, without any prior presumptions, and to achieve the aim, one is expected to perform eidetic deductions of previous experiences, in this way, its objective is to discover the essence of things. In Edmond Husserl's view, eidetic deduction should be performed on the object of experience, to reveal its essence. Phenomenological has been approached from different views, however the most common approach is from the concept of lived experiences.

In exploring West African women experience, this concept becomes relevant in the gender discourse of bread winning. A historic review of the breadwinning reveals fundamental issues particularly the concerns of social mold. Here, the idea

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of mold is another way of reviewing gender boxes and categories responsible for creating the mold, a common feature for many West African girls who experience their girlhood as a time of grooming. The standard approach to girls training in many Southern cultures, is being prepared for home keeping and this training comes naturally, as younger girls are taught about how to care for their homes and younger ones, knowing that they will one day birth their own children and continue the circle of populating the earth nurturing children.

Once the girl becomes of age, which is usually recognized through puberty the usual expectation is home and family. Colonialism introduced concerns about education. But not many people bother about educating girls, boys are always preferred in cases of low funds. The point is pointing girls to home babies and husbands is a lacuna, as breadwinning was not part of the script. The usual assumption is that their spouses would fill in the gap, but when men return home empty handed, reality dawns. Most devastating is when social agency still expects women to make do, they were expected to silently deal with the threat of children starving and imminent poverty without complaining. However, this lived experience explains why many women choose to take the reins of bread-leading.

The new trend shows women on the move, confronting their challenges and developing the necessary character traits along the way. Yet, instead of being cheered, a new challenge arises, insecure men, who may perceive the move either as a threat to their masculinity or a question of their ability.

Lived experiences amongst city women show that while fighting to make a living, some men live like the ostrich, trying to deny reality others become discouraged when they focus on the daunting task of supporting their families, and more become defensive, vindictive and confrontational.

This situation though requiring conflict resolution, see many women suffer in silence as social and family responsibility compels them to deal with it, however, phenomenologically, women concerns and their lived experiences have a way of rubbing off on everyone, it has a boomerang effect which many ignore until too late. Again, lived experiences connect these situations to mental break downs and other health problems. Inevitably, patriarchy and other fundamental notions that enabled masculinity, or ideas that encourage men to continue to dominate home affairs came under attack as feminist theorist engaged in the debate, demanding policies that helped change the narrative. This is the case in many developed countries, it is only a matter of time before it boomerangs to more women activism, and advocacy for better spaces, leading to empowerment of many women.

In recent times, many African countries have taken the same approach girl's up bringing by trying to support women empowerment and reduce the dart of women in public space, this can be experienced through the international interventions Camacho-Miñano, LaVoi, and Barr-Anderson, (2011). These studies and interventions focus on the girl children and their challenges. These endeavors, and many like it produced educated girls and

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women who are not scared of standing alone, or stand with their partners, with equal or better economic power. Hence with better education more West African women contribute to bread winning at homes, this way they have more capacity to help. Owing from lived experiences, the gender battle of breadwinning necessitate a switch in gender roles play, reducing men's exclusive position as bread winners, where some employ the carrot and stick privilege. For women it means developing new traits. As women lived experiences show them under threat of abandonment, fear of living in poverty or dealing with betrayal. This happens when their husbands decide to start another family. The new reality of conflicts and tension becomes a challenge for both genders; men do not know how to approach women whose economic power means they may be equal. In this conflicting family situations, many West African agencies are caught between living in the past and facing present reality, many are not used to regarding and respecting women. Others, wielding the weapon of guilt, accusing women of abandoning their homes, family and children. Such thoughts and sentiments effectively subdued many women, as family was their natural concerns.

### **Gendering, and Family Conflict: The Lived Experience of Breadwinning Women**

Women who became breadwinners experience victimization from intimate partner, and sometimes violence from family members. In one study Loke, Alice Yuen, Mei Lan Emma Wan, and Hayter, (2012) explains that

women are often ashamed to disclose their situation, in many West African cultures this owes to their cultural inclinations and beliefs that they will be open to ridicule. But, reluctance in seeking help means that the abuse continues until it becomes too late. They insist that women experience "low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal ideas. They are ambivalent about staying in an abusive relationship and endure violent incidents in silence until they cannot tolerate any more and seek help at an emergency department" Loke, Mei Lan, and Hayter. (2012: 2336-2346).

This negative attitude in help-seeking is cultural as the general notion is that we should be able to cope and build their homes, no matter the situation at home. other family members and health professionals colored by cultural restraints generally ignore women's complaints and need for help. This reiterates previous cultural concerns about women being groomed to accept that they are expected to sacrifice themselves and their careers on the altar of family.

Agency wields the guilt weapon to steal their satisfaction and mental wellbeing. Again, the experience of bread winning seem complicated, from the point of patriarchy, which is anchored on traditional social structure in many African families. The reason for this position is that the government of many African countries, though making the efforts to create more room for women to project their reality, has failed to bridge the gaps left behind by the women folk, and their families are at loss of perception. The traditional role ascribed to women as home makers, and men as breadwinners is far from the

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reality, women's hope have been dashed, and they watch helplessly as their children 'make do' and live below poverty lines.

Here, conflict resolution means the intervention of agency in girl's training, resolving women's guilt that comes from living their cubs behind. Conflicts resolutions also portend active listening to women complain about abuse, and families should explore the idea of clear communication. Though uncommon in many home where men have been portrayed as sovereign, undisputed leaders. Many men are not conversant notions of negotiating at home. Again, managing conflict means emotional intelligence, acknowledging the issues, and understanding the views of others. In this discourse, it is important to understand the training of girls and boys impacts their expectations, mentioning the old view of gender roles can lead to crises in 21<sup>st</sup> century homes. Both genders should maintain an open approach to possible roles in sustainable homes. Particularly for 21<sup>st</sup> century family living, clearly women as bread winners equals to them competing for the few available resources, in these developing nations, it does not reflect that more jobs, rather it shows that women also join the 'the rat' race, as the competition is commonly referred.

The lived experiences of women reveal them as partakers of the survival of the fittest, as employers are not planning to pay two people for the same job, they choose the best and pay the best. Hence, with empowered women entrepreneurs and more educated girls, there is always the possibility of them snatching the few paying jobs, by

outdoing their male counterpart. Again, another study Edicleia, Basini, and Cooney, (2024) reveals how women entrepreneur their successes also perpetuated male-biases, they indicate that "intentionality and temporality in analysing women entrepreneurs' agency within gendered institutional contexts... perpetuated a male-biased"

More West African women now have the ability to attain better economic power, thereby reducing their reliance on parents and husbands, thus, as the ratio of capable women increase, the ratio of bread winning men reduces. This turned table observe explains the emergence of independent women, empowered and self-confident, young ladies who no longer look up to men to save them and their families. however, the act of empowering women raise more question, like who is keeping the home and the idea of submission. Again, lived experience portray submission as a game played by women. However, this new status of women affects the family structure and impacts family dynamics. Those who have not come to terms with the significance of a working wife, mother, daughter or sister perceive this as a threat to masculinity. Some cultural views believe that a working woman indicts that family, that women works because the parents or spouses could not support them. But could this be all there is to working women? Couldn't women work just for self-actualization, must they sacrifice their personal needs for family? Clearly, Male ego, pride and arrogance make it difficult for many families to enjoy the privilege of empowered women. As this calls for adjustment of views, about what is mean to be a woman, and associated

gender roles. Therefore, agencies need to be more open to, and embrace working women. Just as women themselves also need to change their belief about money, and leadership in the family. Ideas about bread winning also need reviewing.

### **Breadwinning and its Implication for Being a Woman.**

Many West African women experience awareness of their being, that transcend self to deal with the need of others. Exploring the self inevitably reveal the essence of a woman or rather what makes a woman. Though the general belief is to point at the woman as the weaker vessel, yet lived experience reveal a sturdy and solid substance, showing that the being and nature of women is stronger than anatomy. The strength of women particularly indigenous ones, could be deduced from their lived experience and their capacity to rise to the challenges of poverty, and starvation to defend their children, while they experience their own personal struggle with body and hormones. Thus, it should not be surprising when they take up the additional task or burden of bread winning, traditional roles ascribed to men.

More commendable is when the develop the required skills and character traits to compete and win their bread. They only confirm the local saying about necessity being the mother of invention. In this debate, the contention is with social agency, that sets different standards for the genders. Also, other international organization drawing attention to women's condition, including other women agitating for

self-actualization. Notwithstanding, those who belief that training a girl impacts the nation could not be wrong, yet, training and empowering one gender to the detriment of the other has several consequences like the concern with sustainable homes, all belief that disregard one gender in favour of the other should be abolished to strike the balance. The breadwinning experience has not been a merry go ride for those concerned; men and women have scars and should be regarded equally. Moreso, for women who stumbled into breadwinning, they too have scars to show for their sacrifices, they feel betrayed.

### **The Lived Experience and Consciousness of Betrayal**

Many female bread winners are familiar with the lived experiences of betrayal and being let down, which owes to double standards of social agency concerning the genders. Burch, (1990) explains this by insisting on "philosophical vantage point from which to begin to mediate the conflicting expectations" Husserl views it from consciousness, insisting that consciousness is always consciousness of something, in unconscious consciousness. Bernet, (2002) explains that "Phenomenology of consciousness can show how it is possible that consciousness can bring to present appearance something unconscious, that is, something foreign or absent to consciousness, without incorporating it into or subordinating it to the conscious present". This style of unconscious consciousness is similar to women's perception of betrayal, when

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they remember their efforts, and how they endeavored to save their families.

Again, the consciousness of betrayal impact women to the extent of impacting their essential nature, though social agency refuses to recognize this reality, such lived experience enables women to develop other character traits, which includes the ability to switch personality. This is clearly the case as docility does not win bread, it is impossible for women to remain docile, and when women acquire new traits, they are then labelled as rude. Such self-ownership could possibly portray their husbands in other light, like being tagged a “women wrapper”. According to Onoyona-Ekeocha, (2025) labelling a man as women wrappers aims to ridicule him, indicating a domesticated man. Being a women wrapper has diverse interpretations, which usually portray men negatively, when used in a local sense, as it implies that such a husband has become docile, and is manipulated by his wife, and, this does not bode well for the home, a man who wants to reverse this perception would become a terror, even as dread leads to conflicts and crises.

In many West African homes, lived experiences portrays submission from only one gender, that is female. This explains why submission from women is the only approach to peace at home, and, the reason that breadwinning women or entrepreneurs, have to navigate this social expectation. Should this one-sided approach to family life continue, it implies that, the rise of bread winning women portends danger for sustainable families. Otherwise, submission faces possible extinction, easily be eroded as women’s

traits. In this view self-confidence is opposite to this kind of submission. Particularly, if women breadwinners must succeed. In reality many West African men are not prepared to deal with women as their equal, not their spouses.

Notwithstanding, breadwinning women should be used to navigating conflicts, as part ‘rat race’ all rats run, and ‘dog eat dog situation’. The lived experiences of women show that achieving success in this condition would definitely change a women’s attitude and views to life. Many women in this situation develop new self-image. Self-image being how she sees herself, as she develops personality.

Undauntedly, many women’s the essential nature encounter changes as they transcend in this environment. While many can maintain a balance between the home and office, not many women can cope with this reconstruction, as expecting women to remain the same after their lived experiences is very painful, tantamount to betrayal. Shockingly, those culpable to betraying women are those closet to them, their spouses, families and agencies.

### Critical Analysis

Phenomenology as a theory that explores the notion of essences, compels everyone capable of betraying breadwinning women to answer the question, about how they expect her experience to remain the same? Particularly, in the light of gender performative training that created boxes for her. It is commendable that she courageously stepped-off the script, to ensure the survival of her family. And, lived experiences show that families

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survived, many were sustained by breadwinning women, despite clear restrictions. Particularly when men returned home carrying their professional traits, but women switch postures between “putting on and putting off” as indicated by Butler, (2003) and Salih, S. (2007) who examines Butler and performativity notion that involves communication in everyday life, pointing to gender traits that can be put off and on, owing to the lived experiences of bread winning women. Showing that as bread winners new skills must be developed by women, yet, the general belief is that one can still be a woman and succeed in the rat race.

Phenomenologically, one should expect everyone who contributed to propelling women out of their boxes, to cooperate with them and celebrate them, but the opposite seems to be the case, as different standard applies to the genders, and we confront the problem of meaning. But the question is, should agency be interpreting the meaning of women’s experience differently from those of men, shouldn’t women be allowed to label their experiences, surprisingly, many West African women cannot be quoted, because they prefer to suffer in silence.

However, women lived experiences of breadwinning shows that moving out of one’s assigned space has implications, and consequences. This is significance for women and progressive families in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Clearly, agencies must actively create atmosphere that breed progression and sustainable living for both genders.

Though, many breadwinning women deal with personal struggles, and fight silent battles, including the

regular hormonal and emotional issues. Thus, supportive homes should be encouraged, for producing girls who a determined and self-driven, as they progress into womanhood. Girls who are committed to their self-goals and dreams, this is critical to the quality of life and boomerangs to others.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper attempted to deconstruct the lived experiences of breadwinning women in West Africa; it examined the resulting challenges of women leaving their comfort zone to help as bread winners or co-breadwinners. It critically analyses the consequences of breadwinning, for the genders, the place of agency and what could be done to create enabling environments for sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century families. it insists that, to remedy the situation and demystify bread winning, more actions should be taken to deconstruct the idea of breadwinning, that attributes family support to one gender. Or insist on role playing for genders. This is critical for 21<sup>st</sup> century policy making, and agencies should do more advocacy for the idea that ‘home keeping’ be considered a job. The reason is that paying a salary to the partner who remains behind, would resolve dependency, remove tension and reliance on only one source of income. In this view, home keeping should be the responsibility of the person who has more time, not a strict script directed at women. Also, this calls for a total removal or renegotiation of certain archaic ideas, notions that cause tension like blind submission.

Also, the strict scripts about women as home keepers, men as

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breadwinners should be discarded. As concerted efforts to support families encourages both genders to improve and progress. Special care and policies that support and encourage pregnant women and those nursing children should be enacted, for sustainability. Including "Bedroom Tax" as indicated by Greenstein, Burman, Kalambouka, & Sapin, (2016).

Finally, deconstructing gender roles implies that roles are open in different situations, and no longer ascribed unreasonably. Clearly, many women are smart and they have strong leadership skills, thus, recognizing and accepting such possibility will limit the personality crises, that compels them to take on dual identity. This calls for accountability, training and retraining of the genders, including re-script the genders with open approach.

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## A Kelsenian Critique of Justice as a Subjective Judgment and an Irrational Ideal

### Abstract

Scholars have consistently built the ideas of justice on two major camps: the utilitarian and deontological for decades now. The utilitarian camp is populated by the view that an ideal conception of justice should be based on a set of principles, rules and institutions that are instrumental to its achievement. In the modern era, utility was based on the maximization of happiness. The deontological position extols the view that justice is a matter of strict duties that cannot be overruled, even by realizing any desirable goal. The oldest and probably the most widely endorsed understanding of justice focuses on the characteristic of relations among persons. To ensure a balanced reciprocity, techniques were harnessed, such as legal justice. Hans Kelsen extols legal justice, on the ground that it is objective, and berates other accounts of justice which he termed subjective judgments. Previous theorists anchored their findings on the flaws of legal justice. Little attention was given to the nature of justice as an objective virtue just as this work adopts a qualitative research design employing expository and analytical methods to interrogate Kelsen's conceptual underpinnings of justice. It further examined the degree of validity of the various arguments regarding the possibilities of justice as a subjective judgment and irrational ideal. The study discovered that justice is a blueprint, although people's conceptions about what is just vary and even whether it is served in one's everyday life, it is not an irrational ideal.

**Keywords:** Legal-Justice, Subjectivity, Objectivity, Virtue, Morality, Utilitarianism, Deontologism

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### Introduction

The search for justice is a continuous one which dates back to the pre-socratic era. The word 'Justice' is derived from the old French 'jostise' or Latin 'justitia' meaning uprightness or equity. The co-habitation of humans in the society demands commensurable treatment and happiness. Without these, some humans will suffer misery in the

hand of others, this is because justice is necessary for mutual co-existence.

Scholars have made several efforts to state what justice connotes with some describing it based on the goal it is to realize. Some describe it in its strict form devoid of any goal (Johnston, 2011). The oldest and probably the most widely endorsed understanding of justice focus on the

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characteristic of relations among persons. This understanding is rooted in the concept of reciprocity (Johnston, 2011). Societies, as collections of individuals seeking their own self-interest, require justice to ensure that no one, in the process of satisfying oneself, exposes the other to harm without adequate justification. Evaluations and judgments about justice and fairness can be contrasted with prudential evaluations and judgments. The decision to execute or accept a line of action because it will lead one to an expected destination is backed by prudential judgment and based on objectives that are contingent, whereas evaluations and judgments about fairness are based on standards that human beings construe quite different from the way in which they think about contingent objectives. It is therefore, a general belief that the fundamental standards underpinning judgments about fairness should be shared by everyone (Johnston, 2011). To ensure a balanced reciprocity, the society harnessed techniques which are moral and legal measures.

Moral justice is derived from the expected and welcome behavior of group of members in the community so that by abiding by these behaviors, everyone will be at peace with each other and justice is maintained. The position that moral justice is not specific and objective at all time and in all situations, and cannot serve justice consistently, created an opportunity for other forms of justice. Legal justice is simply and squarely the conception that the established rules made by humans grant justice for all. Hans Kelsen, a twentieth century philosopher stipulates

that justice can never be realized because people's conception of justice vary. It is only in law that lasting peace and equality can be consistently maintained. The reciprocity between citizens as guaranteed by law should replace justice which is an irrational ideal that is almost impossible to attain (Rosenbiom, 2025). This work therefore examines Kelsen's position on justice. Its specific aims are to (1) discover whether justice is a subjective judgment (2) assess where legal justice lies, and (3) evaluate legal justice by situating it in human society. This work adopts a qualitative research design. It employs expository and analytical methods to expose conceptual underpinnings of justice, and examine the degree of validity of the various arguments regarding the possibilities of justice as a subjective judgment and irrational ideal.

### Justice and Equality

In evaluating the principle of equality which past theories hold in high esteem, Kelsen rejects the position that all men are equal by nature. The principle of equality directed at the authority creating the law, which implies equality in the law, should not be confused with the principle of equality before the law, which is directed at the authorities applying the law to concrete cases. The latter depicts that the law applying organs shall not, in deciding a case, use a procedure not provided for in the law (Kelsen, 2022). It is the principle of legality, of lawfulness, which is immanent in every legal order. It is presented sometimes as justice under the law, but, in truth, it has nothing to do with justice at all. Aristotle's conception of justice as

equality is nothing but the logical law of contradiction with reference to the application of a general positive law to particular cases. Karl Marx's conception of equality, which demands equal share of products among workers, is an unequal right. It does not consider differences in capacity for work. Natural aptitude should be considered in determining what equality entails. The definition of justice as giving to everyone his due is ambiguous. The question of what is everyone's due will have to be determined by a social-positive order (Kelsen, 2022). Kant's golden rule which states that, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, is portrayed as a perfect definition of justice, but it is based on a false illusion. The golden rule, as maintained by Kelsen, did not set up how one should behave, and what should be the penalty of one who violates this rule. It also failed to stipulate the actions to be tolerated, performed or prohibited. By being silent in wide range of actions, the golden rule indirectly tolerates them. An instance is lying as those who lie may not care that others lie to them. Indirectly, all persons should lie to one another since it is tolerable. This behavior may lead to the abolition of law and morality if it assumes the literal meaning (Kelsen, 2022). The golden rule, for Kelsen, must establish an objective criterion to maintain a just state. The answer to how one should behave and the penalty for violating the rule is given by an established social other; which in other words depicts one to 'behave in conformity with the general norm of the social order.'

## Justice and Law

A just social order is impossible if individuals have variant desires, and some are considered at the expense of others. Justice is defined differently based on different ethical conviction. The answers to what justice imply, by people of different ethical background, are relative judgments of value. With regards to this, Kelsen postulates that:

Every system of morals and its central idea of justice is a social phenomenon, the product of a society and is subjective and relative in nature... that many people agree in their judgment is not a proof that these judgments are correct in its objective sense. The criterion of justice, like the criterion of truth, is not dependent on the regular judgment about reality or judgment of value (Kelsen, 1971 p. 8).

From the above quotation, Kelsen maintains that what is regarded as just may not be the correct or best decision. An instance is the blood revenge or retaliation formally accepted as the best way to ensure justice. Such practice is being changed in modern times. Despite the variant conceptions of justice, agreement on value judgment is possible, and positive system of value is generated from mutual influences of individual exercise upon one another within a particular group. This does not in any way connote that the dictates of law must make reference to morality because it is part of morals (Kelsen, 2002).

The longing for justice is the longing for happiness, and this makes justice a social virtue which is guaranteed by a social order. Justice, from this perspective, is not an

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individual happiness because each person has what makes him happy, which may not be the same with other individuals. Since there exists conflict of interests among individuals, it is impossible to prove that only the one and not the other solution is just. If social peace is to be attained, a compromise solution as the ultimate end and just one will has to be reached. But the justice of peace is not an absolute justice, but a relative one (Kelsen, 2002). On this footing, Kelsen argues that absolute justice is an irrational ideal, and the claim by the natural law school that it can determine in objective way what is just is a lie. He postulates that from the point of view of science and a quest for truth, such a method is completely worthless. Those who consider the doctrine as useful, should make use of it as a useful lie (Kelsen, 2022).

The value judgment present in the science of law are two kinds, with one referring to the behavior of subjects considered as lawful or unlawful, and the one referring to the law itself or the activities of the legislators considered as just or unjust. The legislator who function in one's law-creating capacity is presumed to create just laws. If he applies the law, his behavior qualifies as lawful or unlawful just like the behavior of the subjects of the law (Kelsen, 2022). The statement that a legal order or a particular legal institution is just or unjust simply depicts that the institution in question corresponds or does not correspond to a norm whose validity is presupposed by the person making the statement. Justice is not synonymous with truth. It is primarily something that can be possibly attained, but not a

necessary quality of a Legal order regulating the mutual relations of men. It is secondarily a man's virtue in so far as a man's action conforms to a social order that is termed just (Kelsen, 2022).

Juristic value judgment can be tested objectively by facts but the judgment of justice cannot be tested objectively. Kelsen maintains that a science of law has no room for them. Legal norm is the standard of value since its existence and content is determined objectively by verifiable facts (Toteff, 2025). The pure theory of law cannot answer whether positive law is just or unjust neither can it answer what constitutes justice. Justice and law, from this dimension, must be considered as two different concepts. If the idea of justice has any function at all, it is to be a model for making good law, and a criterion for distinguishing good from bad law (Kelsen, 2022). The concept of good as well as justice will lose their meaning if positive law is always just and if law is identified with justice (Kelsen, 1967). Also, if there is objectively recognizable justice, there will be no positive law, and hence no state and it will be irrelevant to coerce people to be happy. The legal order presents what is real and possible, and not the correct law. The legal order reaches a compromise to secure peace and possibly realize justice, and to guarantee peace, the positive social order authorizes certain individuals to use force under certain conditions (Kelsen, 2000). The positive law changes the concept of justice by withdrawing the problem of justice from the realm of subjective judgment of value and establishes it on a secure ground of a given social order. Justice through this

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measure attains legality (Kelsen, 2002). That a positive law is just will not be directed to its content rather to its application; it is just to apply it to all cases and not some. Only in the sense of legality can the concept of justice enter into the science of law. "It is an inveterate prejudice of the natural lawyer which, in total misapprehension of the special nature of positivism, repeatedly sounds the reproach of formalism against the scientific treatment of positive law (Kelsen, 1973 p. 31)." He argues that the question who is competent to decide whether a positive law is or is not in conformity with the objective law presents two answers: the legislator and the judge. Kelsen further opines that "justice is that social order under whose protection the search for truth can prosper (Kelsen, 1971 p. 24)."

### Post-Kelsenian Conception of Justice

Kelsen's successors made several reactions with regards to Kelsen's paradigm shift from the previous conceptions of justice to his legal conception of the just or right action. Kelsen denied justice an objective status meaning the objectivity of justice could only be fathomable as legal justice and as that which was prescribed by the legal norm. In his *The Law in Quest of itself*, Lon Fuller (2012) criticizes Kelsen's idea of justice as an irrational ideal. He stipulates that the positivists stance on justice is traced to their insistence on a sharp distinction between what is - law - and what out to be - Morality. The natural law theorists deny a rigid separation of them. The positivists consult the rules of law and pay less attention to the fundamental rules of justice. For a lawyer preparing a

case, he chooses a point of anchorage from the law, for his argument. A question remains whether he finds it in rules of law or in the purposes for which rules were established; will he argue the rights of his client's case or base his argument on the footing of elementary conceptions of justice. In his *Positivism and Fidelity to Law*, Fuller argues that it is in everyday life and in time of troubles that we need clarity about the obligation of fidelity to law. He further argues that "if all the positivists' school has to offer in such times is the observation that, however you may choose to define law, it is always something different from morals, its teachings are not of much use to us (2000 p. 76)."

In his *Concept of Law*, H.L.A Hart (2012) berates the opinion that morality is a subjective judgment. He stipulates that the development of law has been influenced by both conventional morality, ideas of particular social group, enlightened criticism by individuals which has been accepted. The rules of morality and justice, in this scenario, forms part of legal rules and remain legally objective. He argues that it does not follow that legal validity must be based on morality or justice. There are certain rules of conduct which any social organization must contain if it is to be viable. These rules, in Harts conceptual schemes, constitute a common element in the law and conventional morality of all societies. These rules are universally recognized principles of conduct which are based in elementary truths concerning human beings, their natural environment and aims. These, for Hart, are the minimum content of natural law (Hart, 2012). These minimum content are derived

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from the fact that some humans are vulnerable to others; hence the need for approximate equality, limited altruism and understanding. These minimum content of natural law remains objective and must form part of legal rules.

In his *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls (2009) denies the position that justice is an irrational ideal. He portrays justice as the first virtue of social institutions. A society is well ordered when it is effectively regulated by a public conception of justice. Justice, in this light, connotes the practicable aspect of spelt out rules. That a rule of an institution exists must presuppose the participation of everyone concerned with the rules. Rawls argues that the inevitable vagueness of laws in general and the wide scope allowed for their interpretation encourages arbitrariness in reaching decisions which only an allegiance to justice can allay (Rawls, 2009).

In his *Taking Rights Seriously*, Ronald Dworkin includes both legal rules and legal principles (rules of morality) as part of law. He criticizes the position that law should be independent of morality. A general theory of legislation must be normative and conceptual (Dworkin, 2014). While the normative part provides a theory of legislation, adjudication and compliance, the conceptual part considers other subjects that do not fall within the normative part. In his *Law's Empire*, Dworkin maintains that people stand to gain or lose more by one judge's nod than whatever they could gain in their lives. A moral injury is caused when an innocent person is convicted of a crime while the guilty is acquitted, and when this verdict of the judge becomes the

law. Dworkin draws a distinction between two senses of the law: the physical document with words printed on it and the very words of congressmen or members of the parliament when they voted to enact the document (Dworkin, 2024). Judges need to construct the real statute from the text in the statute books. Both legal rules and moral rules, from this perspective, are objective.

In his *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, John Finnis (2011) rejects the conception that moral rules are subjective. He argues that Kelsen misconceived the natural law theory. Finnis argues that natural law theorists do not accept only moral validity and reject whatever they consider as unjust. The principles of natural law, in Finnis' conceptual schemes, entail two significant facts:

There is a set of basic principles which indicate the basic forms of human flourishing as good to be pursued and realized; the good is in one way or the other used by everyone who considers what to do, however unsound his conclusions, secondly, between ways of acting, there are morally right or morally wrong acts; which entails that there is a set of basic methodological requirement of practical reasonableness with which one can distinguish sound from unsound practical thinking (Finnis 2011 p. 23).

Natural law principles justify the exercise of authority in community ensuring that authority exercise is in line with the label of the rule of law, and with due respect for the human rights which embody the requirements of justice, and for the purpose of

promoting a common good. The claim of the law having supreme authority, in Finnis' conceptual schemes, would have no plausibility unless the subjects have reasons to think that compliance with the law and its officials would not expose them to assaults and depredations of their enemies (Finnis, 2011). The authority of law depends on the securing of justice. Justice becomes an objective judgment of actions through which law is accessed.

In his *Law as a Leap of Faith*, John Gardner (2012) berates the thesis that moral rules are subjective judgments. He stipulates that just as the natural law theorist may portray God as goodness personified, a Kelsenian resolves that law is rightness institutionalized. He argues that even the discretion which officials of law enjoy opens the way for selective faith in law, and this depicts introducing subjectivism even in legal rules. Just as the label 'legal positivism' denotes legal thought in relation to empirical fact, legal positivism when used in philosophical debates, generates a different meaning because it seeks the truth of propositions rather than what is stated. Gardner argues that legal positivism is not a whole theory of law's nature rather, it is a thesis about legal validity. In dealing with the full gamut of human decision, both sourced-based and merit-based norms are equally essential, at least, sometimes. Law's inner morality adds extra-moral objectives and imperatives for legal norms to live up to, like avoiding the infliction of suffering, not deceiving its addressees (Gardner, 2012); not purposely manipulating the law to one's advantage, and so on.

## Evaluation

Kelsen effort's at presenting an account of justice that is legally recognized is commendable. His rationale towards legal justice is to ensure the recognition of what is generally accepted as right or wrong, just or unjust and good or bad. But subjecting justice to subjective judgment and an irrational ideal is way out of line. Even the search for an objective and recognized rules of justice which gave rise to legal rule is the yearn for justice. Kelsen's affirmation that justice and law are not one and the same, and that law and truth are different concepts, is only another way of affirming that legal justice may or may not grant justice even though it is a recognized means of granting justice. Justice is a rational ideal sought especially when things go wrong.

Kelsen presents the legal norm as an alternative of justice on the footing that the ideal is unattainable. He admits that legal justice, occasionally, may not serve the truth but may pass the validity test as long as it receives legal backing. The positive law remains a means to an end and if the means cannot guarantee the end, it remains a lacuna on the part of the means. One does not scrape the end because the means cannot reach its destination.

Furthermore, Kelsen appears to use the terms 'justice' and 'the just' interchangeably in the manner that create a grave misinterpretation of both of them. The just may conjoin with justice as an ideal virtue, and may not, especially if what is considered just is not just, in the real sense of the word. The just may not be what people think it is, and justice is not the definition given

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by diverse people. It is that ideal everyone looks up to. Kelsen's interchangeable usage of them, made him portray justice as a subjective value and an irrational ideal. He derived this from the premise that there exist conflicts of interests which make it impossible to prove that one thing, and not the other, is just by appeal to rational cognition (Kelsen 2006). This conception of justice is faulty. That different people have different desires do not entail that humans will encounter the difficulty of knowing what desire is just or not. A man who wants to be rich and desires to use a human being to acquire wealth has an unjust desire. We do not need a social order to express a disdain for such actions neither is it impossible to prove that it is unjust to use someone else's life to acquire wealth.

Kelsen's postulates that the concept of the good and justice will lose their meaning if positive law is always just. This position appears right when taken at face level but a deeper scrutiny of that statement reveals that the concept of the good and justice will realize more value if the law established by humans, for the society's common good, is always just. The law is not synonymous with the behaviour of criminals it is to judge, but remains an order on which their behaviour are regulated. If the law is unjust, then it implies that there is no template for judging crimes.

Dworkin observes that one legal mistake could ruin lives of citizens. Legal justice relies on legislators and judges to make legal decisions. Judges exercise discretion in courts which form part of the law. This discretion, which is

the subjective judgment of the judge, enters the law and becomes recognized as an objective judgment. Justice considers these legal activities and raises concern about how they actually defend the society's interest. It is not an irrational ideal

Edwards Phil (2025) observes that Kelsen's attempt to present a uniquely scientific theory capable of guaranteeing justice encounters difficulty especially in the face of international law where, Kelsen admits, only a primitive legal order is possible among nation states. There are no objective law binding states rather, individual states employ reprisals or war to get justice.

Kelsen's conception that justice is a social order under which the search for truth can prosper (Kelsen 2022), is superfluous. Reducing justice to a social order is outrageous. Even if a particular social order is just, one cannot give it the status of justice. There may be future lapses in the social order since humans sometimes err. Justice remains an ideal which is sought regardless of whether it is served in one's everyday life.

### Conclusion

Justice remains a blueprint to assess actions, even though our conceptions about what is just may vary partly because of our desires, customs and locations, justice remains unchanging. This explains why what was formally practiced could be changed. It is not because law was enacted to its effect but because humans deliberated on such actions and expressed their will, through law's creation, to its effect. The yearning for justice is the yearning for peace, security

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and order. That people have a misconception of it does not reduce it to an irrational ideal.

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## Hardware-Based Security Mechanisms for IoT Devices in Emerging Economies

### Abstract

Underneath smart systems in homes, farms, industries, and public services lies the security of Internet-connected devices, which depends on the small pieces of hardware embedded within them. For emerging economies, IoT technologies are expanding rapidly, but resource and infrastructure constraints persist. To secure these hardware foundations becomes not just a technical concern, but a developmental one. This study examined how hardware-based security techniques currently defend IoT devices and how far these mechanisms stretch when applied in environments with limited budgets, inconsistent standards, and evolving cybersecurity capacity. Employing a systematic literature review approach, recent scholarly works were gathered, screened, and synthesized to capture contemporary viewpoints on secure boot processes, cryptographic chips, trusted execution environments, physically unclonable functions, and related hardware-anchored defenses. The findings showed that hardware-rooted trust models offer durable resistance to physical tampering and unauthorized access. They also require investment, specialized supply chains, stable power supply and skilled talent, which can be uneven or emerge in developing regions. The study concluded that strengthening hardware security in IoT systems for emerging economies will demand not only technology but also strategic, inclusive innovation that prioritizes cost realities, infrastructure maturity, and the need for scalable, context-sensitive protection.

**Keywords:** Internet Security, Hardware, Emerging Economies, Device Protection, Power Supply

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### 1. Introduction

The proliferation of Internet-connected devices in homes, farms, industries, and public services is reshaping how emerging economies engage with the digital infrastructure. The mainstay of this transformation is

not only the network layer but also the fixed hardware within each device. Hardware elements such as microcontrollers, microprocessors, system-on-chip (SoCs), and field-programmable gate arrays (FPGAs) are used for processing and form part of the brain of IoT systems. (Williams, 2022) In resource-constrained settings, where the

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power supply is inconsistent and supply chains may be fragile, the reliability of these hardware components becomes a critical issue. Failures in hardware-anchored security can undermine the trustworthiness of the entire IoT ecosystem.

Hardware-based security mechanisms such as secure boot, cryptographic modules, trusted execution environments, and physically unclonable functions offer a durable approach to resisting physical tampering and unauthorized access. For example, Chatterjee (2025) observed that hardware security has become one such layer that focuses on safeguarding various hardware components and embedded systems against physical and side-channel attacks. These mechanisms are especially relevant in emerging economies where IoT devices may be deployed in unattended or less-secure environments. However, the gap between mainstream research and practice in such environments remains significant.

Emerging economies confront infrastructure, budgetary and skills constraints in ways that differ significantly from those of high-income economies. A recent study examining IoT acquisition in emerging economies points out how factors such as unreliable power supply, limited regulatory frameworks and scarcity of technical talent hamper deployment (Tondro, Jahanbakht, & Ozay, 2025). When hardware security requires specialized supply chains or stable environmental conditions, the promise of the IoT can be compromised. Furthermore, the transfer of hardware-

anchored security technologies to low-resource settings is seldom seamless as the design often neglects local realities.

Rapid IoT adoption, rising hardware-rooted security threats, and context-specific constraints in emerging economies are imperative to the study's focus. First, the device numbers are growing, raising the attack surface. Williams (2022) reported a growing number of studies emphasizing IoT security threats and solutions. Second, hardware-rooted trust models are gaining traction as a more robust solution compared to purely software-based defenses. Lastly, emerging economies may not reap the full benefits of those models without adaptation to local budget, infrastructure and capacity realities. This suggests a developmental dimension to the hardware security in IoT systems.

The current study examines how hardware-based security techniques defend IoT devices and how far these mechanisms stretch when applied in environments with limited budgets, inconsistent standards, and evolving cybersecurity capacity. The analysis proceeds by systematically surveying recent scholarly works, screening and synthesizing findings on secure boot processes, cryptographic chips, trusted execution environments, physically unclonable functions and related hardware-anchored defenses. The study also uncovers evidence that while global research has progressed strongly, direct technology transfer to resource-constrained regions is uneven.

## Objectives of the Study

The study's objectives are to:

- i. Identify and analyze contemporary hardware-based security mechanisms used in IoT systems, including secure boot processes, cryptographic modules, trusted execution environments, and physically unclonable functions.
- ii. Assess the practical applicability and performance of these mechanisms in emerging economies.
- iii. Examine the key infrastructural, economic, and technical constraints that affect the deployment of hardware-anchored IoT security in low-resource environments.
- iv. Explore how global hardware security technologies can be adapted, simplified, or redesigned to suit the realities of emerging economies.

## Research Question

- i. What contemporary hardware-based security mechanisms are used to protect IoT devices, and what functions do they perform in safeguarding device integrity and trust?
- ii. How effectively do these hardware-based mechanisms operate when applied in emerging economies where budgets, standards and technical capacity may be uneven?
- iii. What infrastructural, economic, and skills-related constraints limit the deployment and

performance of hardware-anchored IoT security in resource-constrained settings?

- iv. In what ways can existing global hardware security technologies be adapted or redesigned to align with the specific realities of developing regions?

## Statement of the Problem

The expansion of IoT devices globally brings a dramatically increased attack surface as the precipitate volume of IoT devices enormously increases potential vulnerabilities, which means that hardware vulnerabilities cannot be ignored (Laghari *et al.*, 2024). Simply deploying hardware-rooted security mechanisms under the assumptions of well-resourced settings introduces a mismatch when applied in emerging economies. In many developing regions, IoT devices are introduced into contexts characterized by infrequent power supply, weak regulatory oversight, fragmented supply chains, and limited technical skills. For example, a recent investigation found that businesses acquiring IoT technology in emerging markets face infrastructure constraints, regulatory frameworks, and the importance of strategic alliances as major hurdles. (Tondro, Jahanbakht & Ozay, 2025). When high-end hardware security features require constant power, secure installation environments, and specialized maintenance, the conditions in emerging economies threaten their effective deployment.

Additionally, hardware-based security mechanisms are often developed with the assumptions of strong manufacturing quality, stable

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logistics, and regular firmware updates. However, research shows that IoT devices are often deployed in unattended or physically exposed locations in resource-limited regions, increasing the chance of tampering or side-channel attack. This means that hardware threats may be amplified in situations where environmental protections are weaker. While hardware-rooted trust models promise robust resistance to physical tampering, their cost, supply chain complexity, and need for skilled talent can render them impractical in low-resource settings. In short, the technology transfer from high-resource to low-resource settings is rarely seamless.

### Literature Review

Recent research positions hardware as the anchor point for securing IoT systems. Hardware-based identity mechanisms provide stronger resistance to device impersonation and cloning attacks because they rely on physical properties rather than software constructs. This establishes the hardware as not only a performance component but also a foundational trust layer. Shamsoshoara *et al.* (2020) buttressed this status by noting that the hardware roots of trust create a reliable security baseline for authentication and attestation in distributed environments. Therefore, the literature converges around the idea that robust IoT security begins with reliable embedded hardware.

Ling *et al.* (2021) explained that secure boot protects IoT platforms by ensuring that only verified and authorized firmware images are

executed during startup. This function blocks persistent malware and firmware tampering. Trusted execution environments extend this defense by isolating sensitive operations inside dedicated secure zones. Trusted environments built on TPM 2.0 support attestation protocols that strengthen device-level trustworthiness, especially in distributed IoT deployments. However, these mechanisms depend on stable provisioning processes and reliable update channels, which are often inconsistent in emerging economies.

Cryptographic modules embedded in IoT devices also allow for secure key storage and on-chip cryptographic operations that reduce the exposure to memory-based exploits. Modern secure elements serve as isolated hardware containers for sensitive credentials, which limits the damage that software-level compromise can cause. Studies from the International Telecommunication Union add that TPM integration improves device authentication and attestation in IoT architectures, but requires reliable supply chains and skilled maintenance to function effectively (ITU, 2024). These requirements become major constraints in low-resource environments.

Physically Unclonable Functions use microscopic manufacturing variations to generate device-unique responses. Gebali and Mamun (2022) describe PUFs as providing an intrinsic identity... impossible to replicate even by the original manufacturer. This makes them useful for authenticating large numbers of small, low-cost IoT devices. However, field studies also

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showed that PUF responses can fluctuate with environmental factors. Shamsoshoara *et al.* (2020) reported that PUF values vary noticeably under changes in temperature and voltage, which requires additional error-correction layers for reliable use. These stability requirements pose challenges for regions where devices operate outdoors or under inconsistent environmental conditions.

IoT hardware designed for stable, well-resourced environments does not always perform well under the constraints common in developing regions. Laghari *et al.* (2024) observed that weak power infrastructure and inconsistent regulatory enforcement create vulnerabilities for IoT deployments in low-resource settings. Pourrahmani (2023) noted that hardware-embedded defenses frequently assume predictable manufacturing quality and secure provisioning processes that are not always guaranteed in emerging markets. Furthermore, Tondro *et al.* (2025) found that many IoT start-ups in developing economies struggle with technical capacity and supply-chain limitations that affect both device quality and the ability to maintain hardware-based security solutions.

These constraints reveal the structural challenges in implementing advanced hardware-rooted protections at scale in emerging economies. Across the literature, there is a clear gap in the empirical work examining how hardware-security mechanisms behave under real-world conditions in emerging economies. Much of the scholarship focuses on theoretical

benefits or controlled laboratory evaluations. Lighter secure boot mechanisms are being developed for constrained environments, but their performance across variable power and environmental conditions remains understudied. Thus, there is a need for a more contextual understanding of how hardware-based IoT defenses can be adapted to suit infrastructure, economic realities, and skill availability in developing regions.

### Theoretical Framework

The diffusion of innovation theory helps explain how new technologies spread across populations and why certain innovations gain traction while others face resistance. When applied to hardware-based IoT security, the theory emphasizes three important issues.

First, innovations that require specialized skills, higher costs, or complex infrastructure tend to diffuse slowly, especially in environments with limited resources. Second, adopters evaluate hardware security mechanisms based on their perceived compatibility with their existing systems and conditions. Therefore, early adopters influence broader uptake, which means that institutions or industries in emerging economies that lack early champions may experience slower adoption of secure hardware designs. This theory supports the argument that strong technical solutions alone do not guarantee adoption; perceived fit, cost and capacity shape whether hardware-rooted security becomes practical within emerging economies.

Socio-Technical Systems Theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the interaction between human, organizational and technical components. This is relevant here because hardware-based security mechanisms do not operate in isolation. They rely on supporting human skills, organizational processes, regulatory structures, and supply chains. Applying this theory shows that IoT hardware security is influenced by social conditions such as technical expertise, maintenance culture, and institutional support. It also reveals that weaknesses in any part of the social or organizational environment can reduce the effectiveness of even the most robust hardware protections.

Hardware security rests on the assumption that devices can be trusted at their most fundamental layer. Trust models explain how systems establish and maintain confidence in devices, identities, and processes. Hardware-based mechanisms such as secure boot, device identity anchors and trusted execution environments create what is commonly referred to as a root of trust.

Risk management principles help clarify why such hardware anchors matter as they provide a baseline level of certainty that reduces the probability of catastrophic failures higher up the system. These principles also clarify why environments with weak infrastructure or unstable conditions face higher residual risks. Therefore, the trust and risk models support the study's focus by explaining both the potential reliability of hardware protections and the challenges that arise when they are deployed in resource-constrained environments.

## Methodology

This study applied a systematic literature review design to examine the current state of hardware-based security mechanisms for IoT devices and to evaluate their suitability for emerging economies. The approach was guided by the theoretical framework, particularly the insights from Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Socio-Technical Systems Theory and Trust and Risk Models. These theories emphasize that the practical value of technological solutions depends not only on their technical properties but also on their contextual compatibility, which makes a systematic, structured review the most appropriate method for this investigation.

### *Research Design*

A systematic literature review was selected because it provides a transparent and replicable process for gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing scholarly work. This design helps identify patterns, strengths, and gaps in existing knowledge while avoiding the selective bias that may arise from narrative or informal reviews. The nature of hardware-based IoT security, which spans multiple technical components, justified an approach that could organize and evaluate diverse findings coherently.

### *Search Strategy*

The review process began with the development of a comprehensive set

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of keywords and a search that captured both the technical and contextual elements of the topic. These terms included expressions relating to hardware security, device identity, secure boot, trusted execution environments, physically unclonable functions, cryptographic hardware, and IoT deployment challenges. The searches were conducted in reputable academic databases and digital libraries that specialize in engineering and technology research. To achieve relevance, the search focused on materials published within a defined timeframe and on sources that offered direct relevance to hardware-level IoT security.

#### *Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

Clear criteria guided which materials were selected for review. Studies were included if they examined hardware-based security techniques for the IoT, analyzed their effectiveness, or explored device-level trust mechanisms. Materials were excluded if they focused solely on software security, general networking issues, or unrelated cybersecurity topics. Priority was placed on peer-reviewed publications, technical evaluations, and studies that offered conceptual or practical insights relevant to hardware protection.

#### *Screening and Evaluation Process*

The screening involved reviewing titles and abstracts to determine their alignment with the topic. Full-text screening was followed to assess the methodological quality and thematic relevance. Each selected paper was then evaluated on the basis of its

contribution to understanding hardware-rooted security, its discussion of practical constraints and the clarity of its findings. This systematic approach ensured that only credible and relevant studies informed the analysis.

#### *Data extraction and synthesis*

Key information was extracted from each study, including the hardware mechanism discussed, the problem it addressed, the deployment conditions and any identified limitations. The extracted data were then organized into thematic categories reflecting major security mechanisms, practical concerns and contextual constraints. Themes were synthesized to identify recurring patterns, strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the existing work. Through this synthesis, the review connected technical findings with theoretical insights and the practical realities of emerging economies.

## **Findings**

The review shows that hardware-rooted security mechanisms form the most reliable foundation for securing IoT devices, but adoption remains uneven and technically constrained. A central finding is that many IoT systems still lack dedicated hardware protection even though the security value of such mechanisms is well-demonstrated. A 2023 industry report confirms that 66% of all cellular IoT modules shipped worldwide in Q2 2023 contained no dedicated hardware security component, while 29% lacked any security features at all (IoT Analytics GmbH, 2023). This absence of basic hardware protections

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means that a significant proportion of deployed IoT devices begin their lifecycle without hardware-anchored trust, leaving them susceptible to low-level exploits, unauthorized code loading, and identity spoofing.

Where hardware-based mechanisms are implemented, the literature shows that they provide strong, measurable improvements in device resilience. Secure boot techniques, for instance, consistently demonstrate effectiveness in preventing firmware manipulation. Ling *et al.* (2021) showed that secure boot and trusted boot architectures built on ARM TrustZone ensure that only authenticated firmware is executed and allow remote attestation of device integrity. The study stresses that these protections remain stable even in constrained processors as long as key provisioning and measurement values are maintained accurately. Similar technical strengths appear in work on trusted execution environments with Geppert *et al.* (2022) showing that TEEs provide isolated runtime environments that safeguard sensitive operations even when the operating system is compromised, strengthening confidentiality and integrity guarantees.

Lightweight authentication mechanisms based on the physical characteristics of the hardware also show practical potential. Shamsoshoara *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that physically unclonable functions can generate device-unique responses without storing long-term secrets, offering a low-cost way to authenticate constrained devices. However, they note that PUF reliability is sensitive to

voltage, temperature and aging, requiring error-correction schemes to ensure stability over time. Golofit (2024) extends this in a recent Scientific Reports article, showing that even “memoryless” IoT devices can implement PUF-based primitives and true random number generators to establish secure identities with minimal hardware overhead. These findings collectively suggest that PUFs represent one of the most feasible hardware security mechanisms for low-cost IoT deployments.

The review also identifies the operational and environmental constraints that limit the consistent performance of the hardware-based mechanisms. Pourrahmani and Yavarinasab (2023) observed that many IoT systems assume conditions such as stable power supply, reliable update channels and predictable environmental behavior assumptions that do not always hold in diverse deployment contexts. The point is that hardware-rooted protections, while robust in design, depend on secure provisioning, manufacturing quality and maintenance processes that must remain reliable across the device lifecycle. When these supporting conditions break down, even strong hardware primitives underperform or become challenging to manage.

The findings demonstrate that hardware-rooted IoT security mechanisms such as secure boot, trusted execution environments, PUFs and hardware-based identity modules are technically sound and effective. However, their adoption at scale is limited by cost, supply-chain

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dependencies, environmental sensitivities, and infrastructural requirements. The evidence points to a widening gap between the technical strength of available hardware-security features and the prevalence of real-world deployments that lack them. This underscores the need for adaptable, context-aware hardware-security strategies for settings where resources and conditions vary significantly.

## Discussion

The findings point to a consistent pattern that hardware-based IoT security mechanisms are technically reliable, with their adoption and real-world performance depending on structural and environmental factors that vary widely across contexts. The industry report showing that most IoT modules still ship without hardware security (IoT Analytics GmbH, 2023) points to the systemic lag between available technology and deployment trends. This adoption gap reflects not only production costs but also the uncertainty among manufacturers about integrating hardware trust anchors into low-cost devices.

A central insight from the findings is that a secure boot, trusted execution environments and physically unclonable functions deliver demonstrable gains in device integrity. Studies such as those by Ling *et al.* (2021) and Geppert *et al.* (2022) confirm that hardware isolation layers can maintain trustworthy execution states even when other software layers fail. These technologies succeed because they create security guarantees independent of the main operating system. As the

theoretical framework suggests, innovations requiring new manufacturing processes, firmware signing infrastructure, or specialized skill sets will diffuse more slowly in environments where capacity is uneven.

The findings also show that the operational conditions in which IoT devices function play a critical role in the effectiveness of these protections. As noted earlier, PUF-based authentication can be sensitive to environmental factors, and this concern is strengthened by broader security analyses. The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity observes in its ENISA Threat Landscape for IoT (2022) that environmental instability and inconsistent component quality remain major contributors to IoT hardware vulnerabilities across global markets. This aligns with the empirical findings of Shamsoshoara *et al.* (2020) and Gołofit (2024), who showed that PUF reliability depends on controlled operating conditions.

Furthermore, the structural challenges identified in the findings are echoed in the international cybersecurity guidance. The NISTIR 8259 series (NIST, 2020) emphasizes that secure hardware capabilities require lifecycle support provisioning, update mechanisms, and continuous monitoring. These requirements are not easily met in settings with limited infrastructure or where devices operate in remote areas without consistent maintenance. The difficulty of providing reliable firmware updates, for example, means that secure boot chains may degrade over time if measurement values cannot be refreshed or authenticated reliably.

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Complementing this, the GSMA IoT Security Guidelines (GSMA, 2021) note that cost pressures in the IoT market lead many manufacturers to avoid implementing secure elements, trusted execution support, or hardware-backed identities. This industry perspective explains why even technically strong mechanisms fail to appear widely in deployed devices. The motivations extend beyond technical capability into market incentives and manufacturing economics.

These sources support the argument that hardware-based IoT security, though mature and effective, cannot be separated from the socio-technical systems in which devices operate. The theoretical expectation that innovation adoption depends on compatibility, cost, and support structures is reflected in real-world deployment patterns. The hardware protections examined in the findings offer credible trust anchors, even though their practical value is shaped by environmental conditions, supply-chain decisions and institutional capacity. This explains why strong mechanisms coexist with widespread under implementation and underscores the need for adaptive hardware security frameworks that account for the constraints of emerging and resource-variable environments.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how hardware-based security mechanisms protect IoT devices and how these mechanisms perform under

the conditions typical of emerging economies. The review and analysis demonstrate that hardware-rooted protections such as secure boot, trusted execution environments and physically unclonable functions provide a strong foundation for device trust by anchoring identity, integrity and key material in silicon rather than software alone. These mechanisms close entire classes of attacks that exploit low-level compromise, unauthorized firmware modification, or device impersonation, confirming their centrality to modern IoT security.

However, the findings also show that the presence of capable technologies does not automatically translate into widespread or effective deployment. A significant proportion of IoT modules still ship without any dedicated hardware security, explaining why many devices begin their operational life with structural vulnerabilities. The technical literature makes clear that even the most robust hardware primitives depend on stable provisioning, reliable update mechanisms, predictable environmental conditions, and a supporting ecosystem of skills and processes. Where these conditions are weak, the practical value of hardware security diminishes, and devices struggle to maintain the trust models they were designed around.

The theoretical framework helps clarify this gap with the diffusion of innovation theory explaining why cost, compatibility and perceived complexity slow adoption, especially in markets where manufacturers prioritize affordability. Socio-technical systems theory also shows that hardware

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security must interact with organizational processes, maintenance culture and environmental realities, which vary widely across deployment regions. Risk and trust models reveal that the hardware roots of trust can only sustain their guarantees when the broader lifecycle and operating conditions remain reliable. The study therefore takes the direction that strengthening hardware security in IoT systems for emerging economies demands a blend of technical excellence and contextual awareness. Where hardware-based protections are adapted thoughtfully and supported by appropriate processes, they offer a path toward durable, scalable, and trustworthy IoT environments capable of supporting development goals and digital transformation efforts in diverse environments.

### Recommendations

The analysis shows that hardware-based security mechanisms are technically sound but are unevenly adopted and sensitive to deployment conditions. Therefore, strengthening IoT security in emerging economies requires measures that address both the hardware itself and the systems surrounding it. The following recommendations become germane to informing practice:

i. Promote low-cost, scalable hardware security designs

Manufacturers serving emerging markets should prioritize implementing lightweight hardware primitives that offer strong protection without significant cost increases. Mechanisms

such as physically unclonable functions, small secure elements, and simplified secure boot chains can be integrated into low-cost devices without major redesigns.

ii. Strengthen the local supply chain and provisioning capacity

Hardware-rooted security depends on secure provisioning, reliable update pathways, and consistent device quality. Countries and regional markets should work toward developing local or regional provisioning services, certification bodies, and integration hubs that ensure device keys are generated, stored, and managed securely. This reduces dependence on foreign supply chains and mitigates the risks associated with inconsistent manufacturing practices.

iii. Build technical capacity for hardware security management

Emerging economies require targeted investment in skills development to manage secure hardware mechanisms throughout device lifecycles. Training programs for technicians, engineers, and system administrators can focus on secure firmware signing, update validation, attestation verification, and environmental diagnostics. When technical personnel understand the hardware trust anchors and lifecycle requirements, the devices are more likely to remain secure after deployment.

iv. Encourage public-private partnerships to reduce the implementation cost

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Given the financial constraints common in emerging economies, shared investment models can help distribute the cost of integrating hardware security. Governments, private-sector partners, telecom operators, and IoT solution providers can collaborate on secure provisioning centers, firmware update infrastructure, and trust systems. These collaborative structures can reduce the cost burden of individual manufacturers and speed up the diffusion of secure hardware technologies.

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## Digital Epistemology, Knowledge Production and Justification in the Algorithmic Age

### Abstract

The central epistemological question of “Who decides what counts as knowledge and by what standards?” still persists. The aim of this article was to conceptualize digital epistemology and show that it represents not merely a technological development but a paradigmatic shift in the structure of knowledge production. The question of authority in knowledge production has historically structured epistemological inquiry. The place of knowledge justification, truth and belief are being replaced by discursive validation to algorithmic mediation, thereby reconfiguring the very conditions of epistemic authority. This study explored the interplay between traditionalism, modernity, and the implications for future knowledge frameworks. The philosophical challenge was to reconcile technological mediation with normative commitments to truth, justice, and rational deliberation to avoid epistemic flattering. Digital epistemology emerged as the philosophical investigation of this transformation. Unlike modern epistemology, which privileged institutional validation, digital epistemology interrogates the socio-technical systems that structure visibility, credibility, and access. The study adopted ontological analysis as its methodology to investigate the kinds of knowledge legislated by the digital age. Findings showed that it neither abolishes authority nor fully democratizes truth; rather, it reconfigures credibility within algorithmic infrastructures.

**Keywords:** Digital Epistemology, Social Epistemology, Knowledge, algorithm, technological mediation.

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### Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a profound transformation in the production, dissemination, and validation of knowledge. Historically, epistemic authority was concentrated in institutions such as universities, scientific academies, state agencies, religious establishments, and

professional bodies. Knowledge transmission operated through structured gatekeeping processes such as peer review, editorial scrutiny, and institutional accreditation. However, the emergence of digital infrastructures such as search engines, social media platforms, and artificial intelligence systems, has reconfigured the epistemic

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landscape. Platforms such as Google, Meta Platforms, YouTube, TikTok, and AI developers like OpenAI now mediate access to knowledge through algorithmic ranking, personalization systems, and generative models. The difference between “being on the internet” and “being in the real world” is fast corroding, thus, the popular maxim “social media can whine you.” This means that life on digital space is not same as physical even though digital space has replaced the traditional social and human interaction. This show how epistemic space is shifting from traditional to digital. People can increasingly be said to “live on their phones” or other devices.

This transformation has given rise to what could be describe as ‘digital epistemology’ which is the philosophical study of how digital technologies shape the nature, authority, and structure of knowledge. The digital age has transformed the architecture of knowledge production. This transformation demands philosophical scrutiny. Classical epistemology focused on justification and belief; digital epistemology must interrogate visibility, ranking, data extraction, predictive modeling, and artificial intelligence as epistemic actors. The aim is to develop a comprehensive philosophical account of digital epistemology as a paradigmatic transformation in contemporary knowledge production. While modern epistemology relocated authority from

sacred tradition to rational method and institutional validation, the digital age reconfigures credibility through algorithmic mediation, datafication, platform governance, and artificial intelligence. This study will critically examine how digital technologies particularly algorithmic systems, artificial intelligence, and social media platforms are reshaping epistemic authority, knowledge validation, credibility structures, and public trust in the contemporary information ecosystem.<sup>1</sup> The objectives of the study includes (i) conceptually clarify the meaning of digital epistemology within contemporary philosophical discourse; (ii) examine the traditional structure of epistemic authority in modernity. (iii) Analyze how algorithmic systems mediate, rank, and filter knowledge claims. (iv) Evaluate the epistemic consequences of personalization, recommendation engines, and AI-generated content. (v) Investigate the implications for epistemic trust, autonomy, and democratic deliberation as well as propose normative guidelines for responsible epistemic governance in the digital age. Algorithms curate attention, platforms rank information,

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<sup>1</sup> The study seeks to analyze the philosophical implications of the transition from institutional epistemic authority (e.g., academia, state institutions, scientific communities) to platform-based and algorithmically curated knowledge systems.

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and predictive systems influence decision-making. This study is guided by the following research questions: How do digital infrastructures reconfigure traditional markers of epistemic authority and credibility? In what ways do algorithmic systems function as regimes of truth? Does digital democratization enhance or undermine epistemic reliability? How does datafication transform justification and belief formation? What normative principles should guide epistemic responsibility in digital environments?

The justification of the study is from the rise of epistemic crisis and knowledge diffusion experienced in the digital age. The digital age has intensified misinformation, polarization, and epistemic fragmentation. There is a shift in knowledge legislation, sources, epistemic justification transformation and transition in the conception of authority. Democratic deliberation depends on shared epistemic standards. Algorithmic filtering creates epistemic bubbles and echo chambers. While digital media studies are extensive, there remains a need for deep philosophical analysis of epistemic authority in algorithmic systems. This is a philosophical gap this study identified.

The significance of this study is that it contributes theoretically to literatures on social epistemology and more importantly digital epistemology. It developed a framework for

understanding algorithmic authority. It expands debates on epistemic dependence and autonomy. In terms of its practical significance, the study offers normative insights for digital governance. Informs AI ethics and policy discourse as well as enhances public understanding of algorithmic influence. The study offers societal significance in promoting epistemic literacy in digital citizens and encourages critical engagement with AI-generated content. It also addresses epistemic injustice in digital spaces. In developing contexts, where digital platforms increasingly mediate access to education and political information, understanding shifts in epistemic authority is crucial for equitable knowledge systems.

The methodology used in this study is ontological analysis which enables the integrating of conceptual analysis with interdisciplinary engagement. Ontology simply mean the study of being; the essence of the general structures and entities of whatever is (Unah, 2018: 143). The digital world is part of human lived-in experiences, ontology, here is concerned with the philosophical study of being (particularly living - on - the - internet) and the fundamental structure of reality, which the digital world created, this remained a central issue in philosophical inquiry in algorithmic age This study is built on two theoretical frame works including ontological relativity and social epistemology. The

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ontological relativity shows how knowledge emerges from ones environment which influences sources, constitution and kinds of knowledge legislated (Osuji, 2020: 49). It refers to the fundamental connection or relationship between entities, beings or concepts at level of existence. It is about understanding how things are interconnected or interdependent in terms their very nature and existence. This have govern what knowledge is. People in primordial age saw knowledge from gods, nature and revealed. People in the digital age see knowledge from information and digital perspective. The distinction between “being on the internet” and “being in the real world” is eroding. People can increasingly be said to “live on their phones” or other devices. This paper interrogate the meaning and structure of the world and the self as mediated by such devices. It looked at the way modern digital technology enhances, hampers, or alters our experience of our lived worlds especially in knowledge formation. In line with this, Luciano Floridi argues that we inhabit an “infosphere” where informational entities shape reality (Floridi 2014, 6). The “infosphere” is a new ontological condition in which informational entities shape reality. Knowledge becomes ‘datafied,’ networked, and computationally mediated. Constructivist epistemology is now interfaced with digital environments.

Social epistemology integrates all manners of social relations in the production of knowledge. This includes information, powers relations, linguistic connections, political economy, communicative rationality and more. All these shapes knowledge of people and the way reality is perceived. Michel Foucault demonstrates that knowledge is inseparable from power structures (Foucault 1977, 27). In digital contexts, power is embedded in platform architecture and algorithmic ranking systems. Truth becomes a product of visibility regimes rather than purely discursive justification.

The study incorporates media studies, information ethics, AI ethics and communication theory as part of interdisciplinary engagements. The study is limited to philosophical analysis of epistemic authority in digital environments, algorithmic systems influencing information dissemination (search engines, recommendation algorithms, generative AI) and democratic and public-knowledge implications. It does not aim to interrogate technical programming analysis of algorithms, empirical statistical modeling or legal regulatory drafting (except where conceptually relevant). The geographical scope may use global examples, though contextual reflections may include African digital environments, especially relevant to knowledge democratization and epistemic marginalization.

## Digital Epistemology

Digital epistemology came from two words, digital and epistemology. The term “digital” derives from the Latin *digitus* (finger), originally referring to counting using discrete units. In contemporary usage, it has expanded across fields such as computer science, philosophy, media studies, and social theory. The term digital fundamentally refers to the representation of information through discrete numerical units, most commonly binary code. This distinguishes it from analog systems, which rely on continuous signals. As Nicholas Negroponte explains, the digital involves the conversion of all forms of information text, sound, and images into bits that can be stored, transmitted, and manipulated computationally (Negroponte, 1995: 14). In its most basic sense, *digital* refers to the representation of information using discrete units, typically binary code (0s and 1s). Unlike analog systems, which operate through continuous variation, digital systems function through quantization and symbolic encoding. From a scientific standpoint, digital systems rely on: Binary logic, Algorithmic processing and data storage and retrieval mechanisms. Thus, the digital is fundamentally about discreteness, precision, and computability. Beyond its technical meaning, the digital has evolved into a broader socio-philosophical construct. It now signifies a condition in which

human existence is increasingly mediated by information technologies and networked systems. Manuel Castells conceptualizes this as the “network society,” where social structures are organized around digitally processed information flows (Castells, 2010: 70).

The digital also refers to a mode of social existence shaped by technology: it involves digital communication (social media, emails, messaging), digital identities and self-representation as well as online communities and virtual publics. In this sense, the digital is not just a tool but a condition of contemporary life, often described as digital culture. A useful clarification is the distinction between digital and analog: Digital is discrete, binary (0/1), précised but segmented and algorithmic. The analog is continuous, infinite gradation, smooth but less exact and phenomenological. Philosophically, this contrast reflects deeper tensions between fragmentation versus continuity and symbolic abstraction versus lived experience.

Philosophically, the concept of the digital extends beyond mere technology to questions about reality, knowledge, and representation. In ontology, the digital raises questions about the nature of being in a technologically mediated world: Is digital reality *less real* or *equally real* as physical reality? Do digital entities (avatars, data, virtual objects)

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possess a form of existence? The digital introduces what some scholars call “virtual ontology”, where existence is not tied to physical substance but to informational structure. In epistemology, the digital reshapes how knowledge is produced and validated: (i) Knowledge becomes data-driven (ii) Authority shifts from traditional institutions to networks and algorithms, (iii) There is a rise of what is often termed digital epistemology. This raises issues of information overload, algorithmic bias, credibility and truth in online spaces. Conceptually, the “digital” is not merely a technological term but a multidimensional construct encompassing. It is a technical system of discrete representation. This leaves a philosophical challenge to ontology and epistemology and a socio-cultural transformation of human life. It signifies a shift from a world understood in terms of continuous physical processes to one increasingly structured by information, computation, and symbolic logic.

Epistemology could be said to begin with the sophists in fifth century. They change the focus of study from cosmology to man. They were critical, skeptical and relativistic in their conception of knowledge. They refuted earlier scholars and proved that objective knowledge is possible (Unah, 2011: 20). Knowledge can be objective, universal certain, stable and acquired through human reason. Epistemology

is the theory of knowledge. It studies the nature and possibility, as well as the scope and limits of human knowledge; how knowledge is acquired and perceived. Epistemology inquiries into knowledge related notions such as perception, certainty, memory, proof, evidence, and belief (Jimoh, 2012:51). It deals primarily with the definition of Knowledge and concepts related to knowledge. it attains to the criterion needed to attain genuine knowledge., sources of knowledge and kinds of knowledge the degree of certainty of various kinds of relationship between the knowing subject and the known object (Jimoh, 2021: 53).who argued that Epistemologies arrived at the position that if belief is true, it can be justified and then qualifies as knowledge,. Hence the traditional justified true belief (Omogbe, 2011: 11). This was generally accepted until it was challenged by E. L. Getter, who argued that justified true belief was inadequate as a condition of knowledge. A person, he argues, could belief something that could be true, and he could be justified in believing it, yet he does not know it (*ibid*:15). There are true beliefs that are not knowledge. Every knowledge must have sufficient and necessary evidence for it to be called knowledge.

Philosophers are concerned with the study of knowledge because of the importance of knowledge and its resulting power relations. Digital epistemology refers to the study of

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knowledge and its acquisition in the digital age. It explores how digital technologies influence our understanding of knowledge, the processes of knowing, and the credibility of information. Digital epistemology examines the evolution of knowledge production and dissemination in the digital age, bridging traditional approaches with modern technological advancements. Digital epistemology does not merely extend classical epistemology into technological contexts; it interrogates the structural transformation of knowledge production itself. Digital epistemology examines how digital infrastructures transform knowledge acquisition, distribution, validation, and authority. It extends social epistemology into technologically mediated contexts. Authority is no longer exclusively institutional or discursive rather it is infrastructural. Basically, digital epistemology interrogate how digital technologies shape (i) knowledge production; this extends to how digital tools influence what we know and how we can create knowledge. (ii) Knowledge validation; this examines how digital platform form access truth, credibility and expertise, (iii) knowledge dissemination, here interrogates how digital media influence how knowledge spreads and is accessed. It mediated the interplay between technology and knowledge processes.

Digital Epistemology investigates how digital technologies especially algorithm-driven platforms are transforming the structure, distribution, and legitimacy of knowledge in contemporary society. With the rise of entities such as Google, Meta Platforms, X (formerly Twitter), and OpenAI, epistemic authority is increasingly mediated by algorithmic systems rather than traditional institutions such as universities, peer-reviewed journals, or professional bodies. In the algorithmic age, epistemic authority is no longer exclusively institutional but infrastructural and computational. Search engines rank truth-claims; social media amplifies certain voices; AI systems generate knowledge-like outputs. Digital epistemology examines how knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated within digital environments. It interrogates the transformation of epistemic practices in an age dominated by computational technologies. According to Luciano Floridi, knowledge in the digital age is increasingly shaped by information processing systems and distributed networks rather than solely by individual cognitive agents (Floridi, 2011: 286). Digital epistemology refers to the study of knowledge production, validation, and dissemination within digital environments. It examines how digital technologies transform the sources, structures, and authority of knowledge (Fallis, 2008). Traditionally,

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epistemology focused on justified true belief, relying on human cognition and institutional validation. However, in the digital age, knowledge is increasingly mediated by algorithms, databases and artificial intelligence systems. This shift raises critical epistemological questions: What counts as knowledge in a data-driven environment? Who or what qualifies as an epistemic agent; humans, machines, or both? How is truth established in algorithmically curated spaces? According to Floridi (2011), digital epistemology must account for distributed cognition, where knowledge is no longer located solely in individual minds but in networks of humans and machines.

Digital epistemology examines the epistemic implications of algorithmic mediation, datafication, automation, and networked communication. The algorithmic age represents a shift from institutional epistemic authority to algorithmic epistemic authority. Instead of deferring primarily to recognized experts or peer-reviewed institutions, individuals now rely on search engine rankings, recommendation systems, trending metrics, and AI-generated responses. These systems do not merely transmit knowledge; they filter, prioritize, and sometimes generate epistemic content. The digital transformation of knowledge has created an epistemic paradox. On one hand, digital platforms democratize access to information, enabling broader

participation in knowledge production. On the other hand, they introduce new epistemic vulnerabilities: misinformation, echo chambers, algorithmic bias, epistemic polarization, and the erosion of institutional trust. Traditional epistemic authorities operate through established standards of evidence and accountability (Goldman, 1999). In contrast, algorithmic systems prioritize engagement, personalization, and optimization metrics that may not align with epistemic reliability. As a result, epistemic authority is increasingly redistributed from human experts to computational systems. More so algorithmic opacity complicates epistemic evaluation. Users often cannot access or understand the mechanisms by which information is ranked or generated. This opacity challenges epistemic autonomy and informed trust. The central problem, therefore, is the lack of a comprehensive philosophical framework for understanding how epistemic authority is shifting in digital and algorithmic environments and what normative implications follow from this transformation.

Digital epistemology thus involves ontological transformation: reality itself becomes datafied and computationally interpreted. Jürgen Habermas conceptualizes legitimacy as emerging from rational-critical debate within the public sphere (Habermas 1962, 89). Digital media expand participation but fragment discourse into echo chambers

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and algorithmically curated publics. The digital public sphere lacks the structural conditions Habermas considered necessary for rational deliberation: equal participation, sincerity, and freedom from coercion. Shoshana Zuboff describes digital platforms as extracting behavioral surplus to predict and modify human conduct (Zuboff 2019, 94). Knowledge production becomes economically incentivized toward engagement rather than truth. Epistemic environments are economically structured around engagement metrics rather than truth. All are critical in knowledge formation. Social Epistemology focuses on communal aspects of knowledge in the context of digital collaboration and sharing. Characteristics of digital epistemology include:

(i) *Datafication of knowledge*: One of the defining features of digital epistemology is the transformation of knowledge into quantifiable data. Data is real, and part of human ontological existence. We live in a world where being – on – the – internet is existentially ascertained. Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier note that big data enables new forms of knowledge production based on correlation rather than causation (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013: 7). Digital epistemology is characterized by the transformation of knowledge into data. Information is quantified, stored, and analyzed at unprecedented scales, giving rise to “big data” epistemology

(Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). This shift privileges measurable and computable forms of knowledge over qualitative or experiential forms. This represents a shift from interpretive understanding to computational analysis.

(ii) *algorithmic mediation*: Digital knowledge is increasingly filtered and structured by algorithms. Tarleton Gillespie emphasizes that algorithms determine the visibility and accessibility of information, thereby shaping what counts as knowledge (Gillespie, 2014: 169). Algorithms now play a central role in filtering, ranking, and generating knowledge. Search engines and social media platforms determine what information is visible and credible. This introduces epistemic concerns regarding bias, transparency / opacity, epistemic manipulation and control.

(iii) *Distributed and Networked knowledge*: Digital epistemology is characterized by distributed cognition, where knowledge is produced collaboratively across networks of humans and machines. Henry Jenkins describes this as participatory culture, in which users actively contribute to knowledge creation (Jenkins, 2006: 3). Digital technologies have disrupted traditional epistemic authorities such as universities and publishing institutions. Knowledge production is now more decentralized, with individuals contributing through blogs, social media,

and collaborative platforms. While this democratizes knowledge, it also raises issues of misinformation and credibility.

(iv) *Acceleration of information*: The speed of digital communication has transformed the temporality of knowledge. Paul Virilio argues that the acceleration of information flow leads to a “collapse of time,” affecting critical reflection and epistemic depth (Virilio, 2000: 10). Digital knowledge is produced and disseminated rapidly, often at the expense of depth and verification. The accelerated pace of information flow challenges traditional standards of epistemic justification.

### **Critical Issues on the future of Digital Epistemology**

There is need to conceptual clarification such terms as traditional epistemology; rooted in classical philosophy. It emphasizes the importance of established knowledge systems, often valuing authoritative sources and static forms of knowledge (Jasanoff, 2018, 45). This perspective is characterized by a reliance on scholarly publications and expert opinions, which provide a framework for understanding truth and validity. Traditionalism prioritizes stability and continuity, often resisting the rapid changes introduced by digital technologies. In this research the term modernity refers to the advent of digital technologies which marks a significant shift in epistemological practices. Modernity, characterized by the rise of

the internet and social media, democratizes knowledge production, allowing for user-generated content and diverse voices (Gitelman, 2013: 78). This shift challenges traditional notions of authority and credibility, as information flows freely across platforms, often without rigorous vetting. The modern digital landscape necessitates new critical skills, as users must navigate vast amounts of information and discern credible sources from misinformation. The term posterity is meant here as looking towards the future, digital epistemology raises important questions about the sustainability of knowledge practices. The legacy of digital knowledge will likely shape future generations' understanding of information and truth (Moser & Trout, 2005:102). Concerns regarding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the role of artificial intelligence will influence how knowledge is produced and consumed. Additionally, the emphasis on digital literacy will be crucial for empowering individuals to engage critically with information in an increasingly complex landscape.

On the philosophical issues, digital epistemology must therefore address three interrelated questions: Who controls algorithmic infrastructures of knowledge? How are credibility and authority reconfigured by digital mediation? What normative standards should govern epistemic responsibility online? Drawing from Foucault's

analysis of power, Habermas's communicative rationality, and Floridi's philosophy of information, a critical digital epistemology recognizes that digital knowledge systems are neither neutral nor purely democratizing. They are socio-technical assemblages shaped by economic interests, political structures, and human cognition.

On the move of epistemic authority to Infrastructural authority: Frameworks reveal that authority is migrating from institutional validation to infrastructural mediation. Infrastructural authority operates through algorithmic ranking, data extraction, predictive modeling and platform governance. Unlike institutional authority, which is visible and accountable, infrastructural authority is opaque and automated. Modern epistemology rested upon visible institutions: universities, journals, laboratories. Authority was explicit and contestable. However, Michel Foucault complicates this narrative by demonstrating that knowledge and power are co-constitutive (Foucault 1977, 27). Institutions do not merely discover truth; they produce regimes of truth. Digital infrastructures extend Foucauldian insight. Algorithmic systems determine which claims become visible and which remain obscure. Visibility becomes a proxy for validity. Yet visibility is governed by proprietary algorithms optimized for engagement rather than epistemic reliability. Thus, epistemic authority becomes

infrastructural embedded in technical architectures rather than deliberative forums.

### Epistemological Issues on Conceptualizations, Criteria for knowledge and its Sources in 'Digital Epistemology'

Digital platforms, such as collaborative online systems, challenge traditional epistemic frameworks by decentralizing knowledge production and authority (Fallis, 2008:1665). This shift necessitates a rethinking of classical epistemological concepts such as justification, truth, and belief. The shift in epistemic authority through which algorithms curate attention and determine visibility. Platform ranking systems act as epistemic gatekeepers, influencing public belief formation. Visibility becomes a proxy for credibility, yet ranking criteria remain opaque. There is now algorithmic authority. Another epistemological issue is in knowledge creation and distribution. Digital platforms facilitate rapid knowledge dissemination. Digital democratization expands participation but destabilizes markers of expertise. The flattening of epistemic hierarchies complicates trust formation and institutional authority. Datafication and predictive knowledge: Digital democratization expands participation but destabilizes markers of expertise. The flattening of epistemic hierarchies complicates trust formation and institutional authority. Datafication

transforms qualitative phenomena into quantifiable metrics.<sup>2</sup> This transition reflects a move from hermeneutic understanding to probabilistic governance. Shoshana Zuboff highlights how data-driven systems enable new forms of epistemic domination through surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019: 8). This is a warning for custodians of epistemologies and theories of knowledge to be on vanguard.

There is the information overload. The internet provides vast amounts of information, leading to challenges in discerning credible sources from unreliable ones. The role of algorithms in shaping information access and how they can create echo chambers. The cognitive challenges emphasizes the sheer volume of information can overwhelm users, leading to decision fatigue and difficulties in discerning fact from opinion. The abundance of information online complicates the assessment of credibility (Fallis, 2008: 168 ). This leads to misinformation and challenges epistemic trust. The Algorithms and content curation is important. Algorithms prioritize certain types of content, which can skew user perceptions and limit exposure to diverse viewpoints. This phenomenon

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<sup>2</sup> Predictive analytics govern, Policing strategies, credit scoring, healthcare diagnostics, Electoral targeting. Credibility becomes equated with statistical probability. Justification shifts from argumentative coherence to computational output.

can reinforce existing biases. There are instances of misinformation and disinformation. Digital Literacy emphasizes the need for critical thinking and skills to evaluate digital information. The importance of teaching digital literacy in educational curricula and the need for critical evaluation skills: As misinformation spreads, the ability to critically evaluate sources becomes essential. This includes understanding bias, recognizing propaganda, and distinguishing between fact and opinion. Educational Initiatives for schools and universities are increasingly incorporating digital literacy into their curricula to prepare students for a world saturated with information. This is because unequal access to digital technologies leads to disparities in knowledge acquisition and participation (Castells, 2010: 77).

### **Ethical Implications for Knowledge Producers**

Who is responsible for the accuracy of information shared on digital platforms? Content creators may face ethical dilemmas regarding the reliability of their sources. Another issue here is the spread of false information: Digital platforms can rapidly disseminate misinformation, which can lead to public panic, misinformed opinions, and harmful actions (during health crises). The digital realm often blurs the lines between anonymity and identity, leading to potential misuse of personal

data and identity theft.<sup>3</sup> The ease of copying and sharing digital content can lead to ethical challenges regarding the ownership and attribution of intellectual property. There is need for data surveillance. Digital platforms often collect vast amounts of personal data. Users may unknowingly consent to data tracking, raising concerns about how this information is used and who has access to it. Many users are not fully aware of the implications of their data being collected. Lack of transparency can violate ethical standards regarding informed consent.

Deliberate disinformation campaigns, often funded by political or commercial interests, can sway public opinion and undermine democratic processes. The prevalence of misinformation can diminish trust in credible sources and institutions, leading to a more polarized society. Trust in digital platforms and sources is crucial for effective knowledge acquisition. There is need for trust in sources of information and data. Algorithms used in content curation can perpetuate biases and misinformation, leading to ethical questions regarding fairness and representation. The responsibility of Tech Companies are necessary. Companies must grapple with their ethical obligations to mitigate harm from their algorithms, ensuring

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<sup>3</sup> With the digitalization of knowledge, issues surrounding data privacy and surveillance emerge and users often trade privacy for access to information.

they do not contribute to the spread of misinformation. The credibility of information sources is crucial. Users must navigate a landscape where misinformation can spread rapidly, necessitating skills to assess reliability. Alvin Goldman emphasizes that reliable belief depends on trustworthy expert systems (Goldman 1999, 4). Modern societies rely on specialized knowledge. Digital environments, however, flatten epistemic hierarchies. Social media platforms present expert analysis and uninformed opinion in identical visual formats. Virality replaces credentialed authority. Epistemic flattening produces: distrust in scientific institutions, proliferation of misinformation and politicization of expertise. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated this dynamic, as algorithmically amplified misinformation competed with scientific.<sup>4</sup>

Epistemic Injustice arises in digital infrastructures that replicate social hierarchies and structural inequality. Algorithmic bias disproportionately affects marginalized groups. Algorithmic bias and testimonial

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<sup>4</sup> Democratization enables marginalized voices to challenge elite monopolies of knowledge. Historically excluded communities gain platforms for testimony. Digital democratization is normatively valuable. However, democratization without epistemic standards risks relativism. The challenge is balancing inclusion with reliability.

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marginalization highlight the ethical dimension of digital epistemology. Voices may be systematically discredited or suppressed. Safiya Umoja Noble (2018: 4) demonstrates how search engines can reproduce social inequalities and distort knowledge. Epistemic injustice persists when testimonial credibility is unevenly distributed. Digital platforms can exacerbate such injustices through biased moderation and content curation. Thus, digital epistemology intersects with political philosophy and social justice. Interdisciplinary approaches combines insights from philosophy, sociology, information technology, and education to understand the impact of digital media on knowledge. Digital epistemology draws from these disciplines to understand how knowledge is constructed and validated in online environments. Information Technology Insights from IT contribute to understanding how digital platforms influence knowledge dissemination and user interaction.

### **Implications for Society**

The evolution of knowledge in digital contexts affects education, policy-making, and public discourse. Understanding digital epistemology is vital for navigating contemporary issues like misinformation and digital citizenship. Digital epistemology shapes how communities engage in discussions about politics, science, and culture. The

ability to access and analyze information influences civic engagement. The need to evaluate digital impact on vulnerable Populations in instance of exploitation of data where Marginalized groups may be disproportionately affected by data exploitation and misinformation campaigns, as they often have less access to reliable information. There is this digital divide: The unequal access to digital technologies creates disparities in knowledge acquisition, further entrenching social inequalities. As digital platforms become central to knowledge distribution, policymakers must consider regulations to mitigate misinformation and protect users.

### **Implications for Contemporary Knowledge System and Posterity**

The rise of emerging technologies affect the shift in knowledge, its production and global perspectives, The rise of AI, machine learning, and augmented reality presents new challenges and opportunities for knowledge creation and dissemination As digital access expands worldwide, understanding how cultural contexts shape epistemology in different regions becomes increasingly important. Digital epistemology reveals that: authority is infrastructural, credibility is metricized, knowledge is economically embedded and truth is algorithmically mediated. Philosophical issues continued to be generated here. The epistemic center of

gravity shifts from universities and journals to platforms and code.

The need for normative model for critical digital epistemology. This ensures robust digital epistemology must articulate normative standards where Algorithmic transparency (Platforms must disclose ranking criteria and data practices), epistemic accountability (Developers and corporations must assume responsibility for epistemic harms) democratic oversight Regulatory frameworks should ensure public governance of epistemic infrastructures) and digital literacy (Citizens require critical skills to evaluate algorithmically mediated information) are maintained it must also include the protection against epistemic injustice (especially introduce policies must address algorithmic bias and testimonial marginalization. Digital epistemology does not signify the end of authority but its transformation. The central philosophical task remains justification of belief, yet the terrain is now algorithmic. Digital epistemology challenges foundational assumptions: Knowledge is no longer solely human-generated. Authority is infrastructural. Credibility is metricized. Truth is economically entangled: This shift demands interdisciplinary engagement between philosophy, political theory, and technology studies. The normative challenge is to reconcile technological mediation with democratic accountability and epistemic justice. The

guiding question persists: Who governs the infrastructures that govern knowledge?

## Conclusion

Digital epistemology is a critical area of study that reflects the changing landscape of knowledge in the digital age. It underscores the importance of developing skills to navigate and critically assess the information that shapes our understanding of the world. Digital epistemology marks a transformation from institutional authority to algorithmic mediation, from expert gatekeeping to networked participation, and from textual justification to data-driven validation. While it expands epistemic access, it also complicates credibility and destabilizes traditional expertise. In this sense, digital epistemology does not abolish authority; it reconfigures it within technological infrastructures. The central philosophical task remains the same as in classical epistemology, justification of belief, but the terrain has shifted from the academy to the algorithm. The digital represents a paradigm shift from continuous, analog modes of representation to discrete, information-based systems that structure contemporary reality. Digital epistemology, in turn, examines how this transformation reshapes the nature, production, and validation of knowledge. While digital technologies expand access to knowledge and democratize participation, they also introduce significant epistemic challenges that require sustained philosophical critique and regulation.

Digital epistemology is not only a theoretical framework but also a practical guide for navigating the complexities of knowledge in the modern world. It emphasizes the necessity for critical engagement with digital content and highlights the ethical responsibilities associated with sharing and consuming information. The digitalization of knowledge presents significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding privacy and misinformation. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from policymakers, tech companies, and users to foster an informed and responsible digital environment. Digital epistemology represents a dynamic intersection of traditionalism, modernity, and posterity. As knowledge practices evolve, understanding these shifts is essential for navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. Digital epistemology reveals a paradigmatic shift from institutional validation to infrastructural governance. The central philosophical challenge is ensuring that technological mediation remains accountable to democratic and epistemic norms. The epistemic question is no longer merely “What is knowledge?” but “Who controls the systems that determine knowledge?” Reclaiming epistemic responsibility requires embedding normative commitments within technological design. The future of epistemology depends on democratizing not just

access to information but governance of the infrastructures that structure belief.

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## Demographic Characteristics and Get-Rich-Quick Tendencies of Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

### Abstract

This study examined the influence of demographic characteristics on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Two research questions and corresponding two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of 358,965 SS2 students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Multistage sampling procedure involving proportionate stratified sampling and simple random techniques was used in selecting 1896 Senior Secondary Two Students for the study. Data was collected using a researcher developed instrument named, "Demographic Characteristics and Get-Rich-Quick Tendency Questionnaire (DCGRQTQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts. One of the experts was from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education and two of the experts from the Department of Guidance and Counselling in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. The reliability of the DCGRQTQ was .84 determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation statistics and the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Independent t-test Statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant influence of gender and school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. It was recommended among others that the government should support community based programmes that provide adolescents, especially in underserved areas, with positive pathways and tangible skills to achieve their aspirations, thereby reducing the allure of speculative shortcuts.

**Keywords:** Demographic characteristics, Gender, School location, Get-rich-quick tendencies and Secondary schools.

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### Introduction

The promise of fast money, often glamorised through social media, popular culture, and peer influence, presents a seductive alternative to the

slow, demanding path of education and disciplined effort. For adolescents standing at the crossroads of identity formation and future aspiration, this allure can be particularly intoxicating.

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What begins as a fascination with wealth without work can gradually evolve into a mindset that sidelines integrity, devalues patience, and embraces risk laden shortcuts. These get rich quick tendencies, whether expressed through online fraud, gambling, or other unethical means, do not merely threaten individual futures; they quietly erode the very values that sustain communities and nations.

Get-rich-quick tendencies refer to mindsets, dispositions, or behavioural tendencies that prioritizes the acquisition of wealth within a short time frame, often through unregulated, risky, or morally questionable means. Oyeniyi and Ajibola (2021) define get-rich-quick tendencies as ‘persistent inclinations, especially among youth, to engage in activities or develop attitudes focused on amassing sudden wealth, usually without regard for legality, ethics, or long-term sustainability.’ They argue that this mindset is fuelled by a disregard for conventional routes of value generation and an overreliance on shortcuts. Supporting this view, Asuai and Ebinuwa-Okoh (2023) describe the syndrome as an irrational pursuit of instant wealth that frequently intersects with behaviours such as cybercrime, ritual practices, and social media flaunting. These definitions jointly underscore two critical components: the intensity of the drive for rapid financial gain and the morally ambiguous or illicit methods by which some adolescents seek to fulfil this ambition.

The manifestations of this syndrome among public secondary school students are varied yet interlinked through their underlying

motivations and social dynamics. Online fraud, commonly referred to as “yahoo-yahoo,” manifests in schools where peer influence, mobile phone access, and weakened perceptions of risk converge. Motivational interviews and school discipline records from Akwa Ibom State schools indicate that students involved in online scams often rationalize their behaviour as a necessary short-term survival tactic or social equalizer. Alongside this, persistent reports from rural and semi-urban districts highlight ritualistic practices aimed at wealth accumulation. These practices typically involve occult invocations rooted in spiritual beliefs that equate affluence with blessings granted through hidden means. In urban settings, gambling and sports betting have also become increasingly accessible through mobile applications, as more adolescents seek thrill and profit through speculation. Social media, in turn, functions as both a conduit for flaunting wealth and an enabler; adolescents frequently post images and videos purporting an affluent lifestyle, which may attract validation, sponsorship, or even peer admiration with long-term psychosocial consequences. The observed troubling pattern could require situating it within the framework of demographic characteristics.

Demographic characteristics are statistical characteristics used to categorize and describe populations. These include factors such as age, gender, marital status, educational level, income, occupation, religion, ethnicity, and geographical location. Demographic variables are typically external and

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observable, and they are commonly used in research and surveys to analyze patterns and trends within specific population groups. However, Ogunlade and Oriyomi (2024) present a widely accepted definition of demographic characteristics as inherent attributes of individuals, including gender, family background, religion, education, and aspirations, which collectively shape attitudes and behaviours. These characteristics do not operate in isolation but interact with social, economic, and cultural forces to influence adolescents' decisions. In the context of the present study, demographic characteristics such as gender and school location are especially relevant.

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics, roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities associated with being male, female, or other gender categories. Unlike sex, which is typically assigned at birth based on biological attributes (such as chromosomes, hormones, and anatomy), gender is understood as a social and cultural construct. According to Jack (2021), gender emerges as a significant factor in shaping get-rich-quick tendencies among adolescents, albeit in complex and contextual ways. While some studies, such as work conducted by Badejo and Chinwuba-Anameje (2023), did not find significant differences between male and female adolescents in Nigeria's urban centres, other research suggests that peer norms and opportunities for risk-taking vary by gender. For instance, adolescent boys may be influenced by societal expectations to demonstrate boldness

and status-seeking through ventures such as online micro-fraud and betting, while adolescent girls may seek validation or monetary gain through social media presentation, such as lifestyle endorsement or perceived sponsorship. In Akwa Ibom's varied cultural context, gendered representations of success further shape the platforms and methods through which get-rich-quick ideologies are adopted or resisted. School location is another demographic characteristics.

School location refers to the geographic setting or environment in which a school is situated. It is typically categorized to distinguish between different types of communities that influence the school's resources, demographics, infrastructure, and educational context. School location works synergistically with gender and socioeconomic status to influence adolescent behaviour (Effiong, 2023). Urban schools tend to provide greater access to the internet, smartphones, and digital resources, facilitating engagement with online schemes and greater visibility of ostentatious lifestyles. Adolescent exposure to get-rich-quick content is therefore more immediate and normalized in many urban schools. Conversely, rural schools, where digital exposure may be more limited, often form spiritualized and ritualistic interpretations of wealth-seeking, reinforced by traditional beliefs (Umeh, 2022). The coexistence of these variables underscores the dynamic interplay between context and culture in shaping get-rich-quick behaviour, providing a compelling argument for

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exploring the school environment as a variable in its own right.

### Literature Reviews

In a related empirical review, a study by Singh and Sharma (2020) examined gender differences in adolescent involvement in internet fraud, petty theft, and risk-driven entrepreneurial ventures in urban Uttar Pradesh, India. The study utilized both quantitative surveys (n = 600 students aged 13–18; equal gender distribution) and qualitative interviews with 40 participants, this mixed-method study assessed how gender roles and expectations shape risky behaviour. The survey instrument measured self-reported engagement in digital and offline illicit activities ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), while interviews explored motivations and peer influences. Analysis revealed that male adolescents were more likely to engage in internet fraud and petty theft ( $\chi^2 = 21.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ), often citing peer pressure and masculine image associated with financial prowess. Female adolescents reported greater involvement in informal entrepreneurial schemes such as online resale and cash-for-friendship arrangements often for peer acceptance or personal mobility. This study underscores the relevance of gender in shaping risk trajectories and informs the present research by highlighting gendered patterns in wealth-related deviance, though it focused on international adolescents and broader risk rather than specifically get-rich-quick attitudes. The previous study adopted a mixed method research

method. The present study also adopted an ex post facto research design.

In a comparative cross-sectional study conducted by Chen and Lee (2019) in Taiwan, researchers investigated how urban, suburban, and rural school environments affected adolescent engagement in online gaming fraud and peer-led black-market trading. The study adopted a correlational research design. The study sampled 780 teenagers aged 14–17 from 12 schools (4 in each location type), using a stratified random sampling approach. Data were collected via a validated self-report questionnaire measuring environmental exposure, peer influence, and engagement in risky digital-economic behaviours, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84. Multivariate analyses indicated that adolescents in urban schools reported significantly higher involvement in online gaming scams and illicit trading ( $F = 7.56$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), attributed to greater access to technology and unsupervised internet use. Suburban schools demonstrated moderate levels, while rural schools registered the least participation. This study underscores the importance of contextual school settings in shaping youth risk behaviour, directly informing the present research's attention to school location as a key personal-demographic factor influencing get-rich-quick tendencies. The previous study adopted a correlational research design. The present study also adopted an ex post facto research design.

The above empirical reviews showed that most existing studies that address these issues focus on university populations or urban youth, thereby

neglecting the unique circumstances of adolescents in public secondary schools within local districts like Akwa Ibom State. There remains an urgent need to investigate how demographic variables contribute to get-rich-quick tendencies specifically among this group. A more detailed understanding of these variables will help school counsellors, educators, and policymakers design interventions that are evidence-based, culturally relevant, and tailored to the real-life experiences of these students. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the influence of demographic characteristics on get-rich-quick tendencies among adolescents in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In an ideal educational environment, adolescents in secondary schools are expected to concentrate on academic achievement, character development, and long term career aspirations. They are meant to embrace values such as hard work, delayed gratification, integrity, and discipline, which are the principles that form the foundation for responsible adulthood and societal progress. Schools, working together with families and communities, are designed to nurture these qualities through structured learning, guidance, and positive role modeling. However, in recent times, this vision is being seriously undermined by the growing interest of adolescents in get rich quick activities, behaviours, and mindsets that prioritise rapid wealth acquisition over personal development and ethical responsibility.

In many secondary schools across Akwa Ibom State, there is a disturbing reality that contradicts the expected norm. An increasing number of students, particularly in public schools, are becoming attracted to fraudulent online practices, gambling, and in extreme cases, ritualistic acts, all in the hope of attaining sudden wealth. These behaviours reflect a deeper social and psychological drift from the values that education seeks to instil. Reports from school counsellors, teachers, and administrators indicate that even students with strong academic potential are not immune. The allure of quick money has grown so strong that it now competes directly with the appeal of hard earned success through education. Despite numerous efforts by school counsellors to curb these tendencies, the interventions employed have yielded limited success.

Unfortunately, most existing studies that address these issues focus on university populations or urban youth, thereby neglecting the unique circumstances of adolescents in public secondary schools within local districts like Akwa Ibom State. There remains an urgent need to investigate how personal demographic variables contribute to get rich quick tendencies specifically among this group. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the influence of demographic characteristics on get rich quick tendencies among adolescents in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the influence of demographic characteristics on get-rich-

quick tendencies of adolescents in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this study were determine the influence of;

- i. gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.
- ii. school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

### Research Questions

In line with the stated objectives, the study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. What is the influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents?
- ii. What is the influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents?

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study at .05 level of significance:

- i. There is no significant influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.
- ii. There is no significant influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

### Methodology

The study employed an ex post facto research design. Ex post facto research design is a design in which groups with qualities that already exist are compared on some dependent variable (Nwankwo, 2016). Ex post facto research design was considered appropriate because the researcher did not manipulate the variables (self-interest, self-motivation and career

aspiration) as they already existed. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprises 358,965 Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students enrolled in 263 public secondary schools across the study area during the 2024/2025 academic session (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2025). A sample of 1896 Senior Secondary Two Students determined through Cochran's formula was selected for the study. This sample size was obtained using multi-stage sampling procedure. At the first stage, proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of 30% of schools in each of the three Senatorial Districts (Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial district, Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District and Akwa Ibom Southern Senatorial District). This resulted in the selection of 79 schools from the 263 public secondary schools in the State. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of 79 participating schools using balloting method. In the third stage, in each of the selected schools, simple random sampling technique was also used in the selection of 24 SS2 Students each as the respondents through balloting method. This results to the total of 1876 SS2 Students as respondents for the study.

Data for this study was collected using a researcher made instrument: Demographic Characteristics and Get-Rich-Quick Tendency Questionnaire (DCGRQTQ). The DCGRQTQ had two sections (A and B). Section A contained demographic characteristics (gender and school location). The section B contains 20 items on get-rich-quick

tendency of adolescents. The instruments were scored using a four-point rating scale as shown: Strongly Agree (SA)= 4 points, Agree (A)=3 points, Disagree (D)=2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 points. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts. Two of the experts were from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and one expert was from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Psychological Foundations, University of Uyo. The purpose of the study and the research questions as well as the hypotheses were made available to the validates at the time of validation. During instrument validation, validates ensured that the items in the instrument were clear, relevant, and capable of accurately measuring the intended variables. All their comments were incorporated in the final copy of the instrument that was used to collect data for the study.

To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, the researcher randomly selected 30 SS2 students in the public secondary school in Akwa Ibom State who were not part of the study sample to respond to the instrument. Data generated was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability Statistics for determination of the reliability coefficients of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of DCGRQTQ was .82. These coefficient revealed that the instrument was reliable and suitable to be used for the study since the reliability coefficient was above .70. Data for the study was collected through the direct in-person administration of structured

questionnaires to SS2 students in the selected public secondary schools across the three sampled Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State. 98.9% of the responded questionnaires were considered for data analysis because some of the questionnaires were not properly filled by the respondents. Means and standard deviations statistics were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test statistic was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at .05 alpha level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question One

What is the influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents?

**Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard deviation for get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents based on gender**

Gender	n	Mea n	Std. Deviation
Female	1055	31.28	13.34
Male	821	56.95	18.86

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents (2025).

From the result in Table 1, it is reveals that the mean and standard deviation scores of get-rich-quick tendencies of female adolescents is 31.28 and 13.34 and that of male adolescents is 56.95 and 18.86 respectively. The result means that female adolescents had a lower mean score on get-rich-quick tendencies compared to the male adolescents. With this observation, it implies that gender has a high influence on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

**Research Question Two**

What is the influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents?

**Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard deviation for get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents based on school location**

School location	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rural	943	30.81	12.82
Urban	933	57.37	18.56

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents (2025).

From the result in Table 2, it is revealed that the mean and standard deviation scores of get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents from rural schools is 30.81 and 12.82 and that of adolescents from urban schools is 57.7 and 18.86 respectively. The result means that adolescents from rural schools had a lower mean score on get-rich-quick tendencies compared to the adolescents from the urban schools. With this observation, it implies that there is an high influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

**Null Hypothesis One**

There is no significant influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

**Table 3: Summary of Independent t-test of get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents based on Gender**

Gender	n	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig.	Decision at .05 Alpha Level
Female	10	31.28	13.34	-33.093	.000	(S) H <sub>03</sub>
Male	55					

df= 1874,	S= Significant at .05 alpha level
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Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents (2025).

In Table 3, the significant (sig.) value for the influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents is .000. This significant level is less than .05 alpha level in which the decision is based. This indicated that there is a significant influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis that there is no significant influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents was rejected.

**Null Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents.

**Table 4: Summary of Independent t-test of get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents based on School location**

School location	n	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig.	Decision at .05 Alpha Level
Rural	94	30.81	12.82	33.009	.000	(S) H <sub>04</sub> Rejected
Urban	93	57.37	18.56			

df= 1874, S= Significant at .05 alpha level

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents (2025).

In Table 4, the significant (sig.) value for the influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents is .000. This significant level is less than .05 alpha level in which the decision is based. This indicated that

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there is a significant influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis that there is no significant influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents was rejected.

## Discussion of the Findings

### Gender and Get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents

The findings from research question one indicates that gender has a high influence on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. Furthermore, the result of the hypothesis one shows that there is a significant influence of gender on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. This result is in supports with the study by Singh and Sharma (2020), which reported that male adolescents were more likely to engage in internet fraud and petty theft, often citing peer pressure and masculine image associated with financial prowess. Female adolescents reported greater involvement in informal entrepreneurial schemes such as online resale and cash-for-friendship arrangements often for peer acceptance or personal mobility.

The lower mean score among females may be linked to a combination of socialization processes, risk perception, and divergent motivations. From a young age, societal norms and expectations often guide girls toward valuing stability, security, and relational well-being, which can cultivate a more cautious and long-term approach to life goals, including financial aspirations. This orientation likely makes the high-risk, speculative nature of get-rich-quick

schemes less appealing, as they conflict with a preference for predictable and secure outcomes. For male adolescents, the higher observed mean score may reflect a different set of social and psychological pressures. Traditional masculine socialization frequently emphasizes traits such as boldness, rapid success, and financial achievement as key components of identity and status. This can create a potent attraction to narratives of fast wealth and dramatic financial ascent, which are often portrayed in media and popular culture as emblematic of masculine success. The desire to quickly establish independence, prove capability, or gain social prestige may therefore make male adolescents more receptive to the promises of shortcuts to wealth, even when such pathways are recognized as uncertain or risky.

### School location and Get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents

The findings from research question two indicates that school location has a high influence on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. Furthermore, the result of the hypothesis two shows that there is a significant influence of school location on get-rich-quick tendencies of adolescents. This result endorses the study by Chen and Lee (2019), which reported that adolescents in urban schools reported significantly higher involvement in online gaming scams and illicit trading, attributed to greater access to technology and unsupervised internet use. Suburban schools demonstrated moderate levels, while rural schools registered the least

participation. The result may be attributed to the fact that adolescents in rural settings are often immersed in an environment where economic rhythms are visibly tied to cyclical, effort-based processes, such as agriculture or local trades. Success in these contexts is frequently understood as the result of patience, hard work, and a deep connection to a tangible process. The social fabric of rural communities also tends to emphasize stability, collective support, and pragmatic resource management over rapid, speculative gain. Exposure to this reality likely cultivates a more grounded and cautious perspective on financial advancement. The promise of instant wealth may seem not only unrealistic but also disconnected from the observable world of work and reward that surrounds them, making such schemes less psychologically compelling.

Conversely, the urban environment presents a starkly different landscape of stimuli and social narratives. Adolescents in urban schools are constantly exposed to concentrated displays of wealth, aggressive consumer marketing, and a fast-paced culture that often celebrates overnight success stories in business, entertainment, and social media. The city embodies possibility and immediate gratification, but it can also amplify feelings of economic inequality and the pressure to acquire status symbols quickly. In this context, get-rich-quick narratives can resonate more powerfully. They may appear as a plausible, even necessary, shortcut to overcome perceived barriers or to achieve a lifestyle that feels urgently within sight yet frustratingly

out of reach through conventional means.

### Conclusion

This study conclusively shows that an adolescent's likelihood of embracing get-rich-quick schemes is significantly shaped by where they come from, including their gender and social environment. Therefore, effective interventions must move beyond generic financial warnings and instead address these specific demographic factors to foster resilience and promote a future oriented mindset grounded in patience and planning.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

- i. The government should develop and fund a dynamic national financial literacy curriculum that is sensitive to the diverse influences of gender on young people's economic attitudes.
- ii. The government should support community based programmes such as seminar and conferences that provide adolescents, especially in underserved areas, with positive pathways and tangible skills to achieve their aspirations, thereby reducing the allure of speculative shortcuts.

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## Gender Representation and Equality in Leadership positions in Nigeria

### Abstract

In Nigeria, gender representation in governance and decision-making is significantly low, with women accounting for just about 7 per cent of elective and appointive positions. Studies have shown this is far below the African average of 23.4 percent and the 35 per cent affirmative action, a national policy designed to enhance women's participation in governance. Despite women making up roughly 49 per cent of the population of the country, they still face major barriers ranging from limited financial resources to other structural and cultural norms that hinder their progress. This underrepresentation limits the development of gender-sensitive policies, perpetuates systemic gender inequalities and hampers democratic consolidation. It is against this backdrop that this paper explored the gender gap in leadership positions in Nigeria and examined particularly how leadership development programmes have impacted on women representation. The paper discovered that while progress has been made in specific sectors such as the banking sector, much remains to be done in other areas such as politics. It therefore, recommended that both the government and the private sector should commit to the 35% affirmative action such as reserving at least 35% of the cabinet seats at both the federal and state levels for women, support economically and educationally disadvantaged women with scholarships, fellowship and access to financial networks.

**Keywords:** Gender representation, Gender equality, leadership development, 35% affirmative action, gender policies.

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### Introduction

The history of Nigeria has been shaped by numerous women who have contributed immensely in various fields. These women have overcome many challenges and barriers to emerge as leaders, pioneers and trailblazers in many fields, they have broken stereotypes glass ceilings and paved

ways for future generations of women in Nigeria. Women such as Queen Amina of Zazzau, the first woman to become a Queen in a male dominated society, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, prominent Nigerian feminist, activist and politician who through the Abeokuta Women's Union contributed to the fight for Nigeria's independence,

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Hajia Gambo Sawaba, women's rights activist, politician and philanthropist who served as deputy chairman of the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), Margaret Ekpo another women's rights activist and social mobilizer, a politician of no mean repute of the First Republic and a leading member of a class of traditional Nigerian women activists, many of whom rallied women beyond notions of ethnic solidarity, Nwanyeruwa who alongside Ikonnia, Nwunedia and Nwugo (the Oloko trio) famously led the Aba women riots of 1929 to protest against a census they feared would lead to taxation on women and so on played major roles in the development of pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria.

In the modern time, women such as Prof Grace Alele Williams the first female Vice Chancellor of a Nigerian university, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the first African Director General of the World Trade Organization, former Managing Director of the World Bank and Minister of Finance in Nigeria, Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Patricia Ette, former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, a former Vice President of World Bank's Africa region, Arunma Oteh, a former Treasurer and Vice President of the World Bank and former Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Adaora Umeoji, Miriam Olusanya, Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, Yemisi Edun, Bolaji Agbede, Tomi Somefun, Yetunde Oni managing directors of Zenith Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB), Fidelity Bank, FCMB, Access Holdings, Unity Bank and Union Bank respectively and a

host of other women have risen to prominent decision-making and leadership positions in Nigeria and internationally.

Despite accounting for almost half the population of Nigeria in 2024, 49.4 percent according to World Bank (2014) and having demonstrated capabilities and competence in the various leadership roles they have taken, women continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles across various sectors including the academia, politics, military, business and civil society.

Nigeria has traditionally faced the problem of gender inequality where deep rooted cultural and religious norms and systemic discrimination have limited the opportunities of women to participate in governance. Traditional gender roles, expectations and stereotypes have perpetuated the subordination of women in various spheres of life. The legacy of colonization and modernization has also influenced gender dynamics in Nigeria, further exacerbating existing inequalities and disparities.

While Nigeria has formulated gender policies designed to promote gender equality and social inclusion by addressing gender gaps and empowering women and other marginalized groups, and integrating gender considerations into all aspects of development, including social protection particularly in the workplace, humanitarian actions and legislations and enhancing women's participation in leadership and governance, the percentage of women in leadership positions in the country is still very low compared with the menfolk.

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For instance, since independence in 1960, no woman has ever elected to the office of President, Head of State, Prime Minister or even Vice President. There are only 20 women in the national assembly, representing a very insignificant 4.3 percent of the 469 member strong national assembly while there are only 13 female ministers in a 48 member strong cabinet of President Bola Tinubu. Across the states, there is no single female governor, while out of the 991 seats at the states' houses of assemblies, women occupy only 45 seats representing a paltry 4.5 percent. In the academia, there are currently only 12 female vice chancellors in Nigeria, out of approximately 270 universities representing only 4.7 percent of the population of vice chancellors. Since independence in 1960, only 38 women have served as vice chancellors of universities in the country.

In the military, no woman has ever served as Service Chief or General Officer Commanding (GOC) despite several women like Major General Aderonke Kale breaking the ranks to reach high ranks. The situation of women in the military has even got worse with a 2017 policy revision which reportedly ended the admission of female cadets into the regular combatant course at the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) which is a factor that may prevent them from reaching the Service Chiefs positions in the future. Even the Nigerian Police has never had a female Inspector General (IG) since the establishment of the force in 1930.

Evidence suggest that the exclusion or underrepresentation of women across the various sectors has caused negative

consequences such as perpetuation and widening of the income gap or inequality between men and women, leading to limited access to social protection and hindering economic empowerment (Abubakar, 2025), undermining democratic values including violation of women's fundamental rights as citizens of their various countries, exacerbating workplace challenges including harassment, unequal workloads and limited opportunities for advancement in fields dominated by men and promotion of social injustice which cause women to lose their voices in decision-making enterprises.

This research is designed, therefore, to explore how diversity and gender policies by organizations and the Nigerian government have impacted on gender representation in leadership positions in Nigeria; study the factors that have militated against women's effective participation in leadership and decision-making in Nigeria as well as the impact of leadership development in promoting gender inclusivity in Nigeria.

### **Gender Representation**

Gender issues in Nigeria and elsewhere reflect the complexities relating to the roles, rights and obligations of men and women. Gender representation refers to the ways in which different genders are depicted, included and recognized in various social, political and cultural contexts. It involves both the presence of the two genders (like in a workforce or a political party) and the quality of those portrayals which can either reinforce or challenge stereotypes and social norms. It can be measured in terms of numbers (to ascertain how both genders are

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represented in the workplace) or analyzed qualitatively for the depth and accuracy of the roles shown.

To be able to have a better understanding of gender representation, it is important to clarify the concept gender and understand the distinction between it and sex – another concept with which it is often confused. This distinction between gender and sex will enable us to understand the complexities of human identity and social roles.

Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormonal profiles. The classification is typically binary, with individuals categorized as male and female based on these biological factors, although some biologists these days tend to think there is a wider spectrum than just the binary male and female.

In contrast, gender is not biological but a social construct which encompasses the roles, behaviours, activities, expectations and societal norms that cultures associate with being male or female, it varies across different cultures and historical periods. For instance, what one society/culture considers 'masculine' or 'feminine' may differ from the perceptions of other cultures and the traits can evolve. Coates (2013) emphasized the dynamism of gender. Her perspective aligns with the concept of performative gender which argues that gender identity is expressed through repeated behaviours and social interactions. It challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender, highlighting that individuals may embody a range of traits and identities

that do not conform strictly to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity. Coates advocates for recognizing plural masculinities and femininities for she believed that there is no single way to be a man or a woman due to prevailing factors such as race, class, sexuality and culture.

### **National Gender Policy and Women Participation in Governance**

Nigeria's diversity and gender policies are centered on the National Gender Policy (2021-2026). The Policy formulated in 2006 is designed to promote gender equality, women's representation and social inclusion across all segments of national life. It seeks to mainstream gender into development by addressing inequalities in governance, health, education and economic participation. It makes provisions for the support of vulnerable groups like persons living with disabilities thereby creating a just society free from discrimination.

Ayamba *et. al.* (nd) averred that the revised policy of 2021-2026 places practical and strategic gender needs at the heart of both the policy and Nigeria's common objective of achieving social inclusion and promoting shared values irrespective of ethnicity, sex or other differences unlike the 2006 document conceptualized on institutional engagement.

The National Gender Policy is aimed at complementing regional and international efforts and initiatives on gender equality, as well as inspiring other national and subnational efforts to ensure equality in democratic governance and inclusive representation of women in all strata of leadership.

**Citation:** Ogu, Uchechukwu K. "Gender Representation and Equality in Leadership positions in Nigeria". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp156-166.

Among the initiatives include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948 and which established that all humans are born free and equal in right; 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN-CEDAW) which obligates states to eliminate discrimination in public and private life, covering legal, social and cultural aspects; 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) which sets strategic objectives and actions across 12 critical areas (such as poverty, health, power, education) for women empowerment; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically SDG 5 which targets gender equality while other goals integrate gender perspectives, supported by monitoring frameworks; Equal Remuneration Convention (No 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No 111) of the International Labour Organizations; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa which requires state parties to combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative measures; the African Development Bank (AfDB) Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Index; ECOWAS Gender and Election Strategic Framework among other relevant documents, treatises and domestic initiatives designed to promote gender balanced representation in politics, policy and decision-making in Nigeria.

While the Nigerian government has ratified the UN-CEDAW and the African Union protocol on the rights of women in Africa otherwise known as the Maputo Protocol, these initiatives

have produced marginal results in Nigeria considering the low statistics of women political participation in the country (Ogu, *et. al.* 2016)

### **Specific Sectors Examples Gender Policies**

Various institutions in Nigeria have formulated and are implementing gender policies designed to address gender inequality and increase the representation of women in decision-making and leadership. Here we shall examine specific sectors to understand what have been done.

### **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**

INEC Gender Policy (IGP) was adopted in 2014 and reviewed in 2021 and is anchored on the 1999 Constitution of the FRN and other international and regional documents on human rights such as International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325) (INEC, 2021) and so on. The policy is a strategic commitment to gender equality in Nigeria's electoral process aimed at ensuring women's full participation as voters, candidates and staff.

The policy hopes to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making, achieve gender balance in recruitment, promotion and appointments within the commission and integrate gender perspectives in all electoral processes and activities, It uses a Gender and Development (GAD) framework for mainstreaming, involves

internal, policy reviews, stakeholders engagement and practical actions like voters education for women and creates platforms for women's voices and experiences to shape governance.

### **Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)**

Nigeria's apex bank Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) promotes gender equality through mandatory regulatory measures such as the mandate requiring banks to aim for at least 30-40% female representation on boards and in senior management, internal initiatives such as that created the CBN Women's Network that addresses women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion through dedicated tasks.

The policy aims to increase women's presence in decision-making roles which it recognizes as an economic necessity and not just an ethical one. It supports female talent pipelines, mentorship, flexible work arrangements and leadership development programmes. The bank supports the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) which increases female agents in financial networks. The bank has formulated the Corporate Governance Guidelines of 2023 which requires that no bank board should be composed of only one gender.

It is noteworthy to point out that under the current leadership of the bank, there has been remarkable improvement in women's participation in decision-making. As at the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2025, there are 11 females leading some of Nigeria's most prominent banks as managing directors making a 50% female representation and a 35% women representation in banks' board of

directors according to the CBN Governor (Abimbola, 2025).

### **University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN)**

Nigeria's premier university, University of Nigeria Nsukka addresses gender equality through its Gender and Development Centre (Gen-Cent) focusing on promoting gender equality, women leadership and strictly enforcing a sexual misconduct policy. The University's gender policy aligns with the broader national gender policy seeking to empower women and ensure equal opportunities, particularly in education with Gen-Cent advocating for greater female participation in governance in leadership positions such as principal officers (VC, DVCs, Registrar, Librarian, Bursar etc), deans and Heads of Departments.

While Gen-Cent strives to ensure gender equality, challenges remain. Notable is the fact that since establishment in 1960, no woman has ever served as vice chancellor and only 2 out of the 17 current deans of faculties are women making a paltry 12% representation. This shows a historically male dominated leadership.

### **Impact of the National Gender Policy of Women Representation in Leadership**

In the past two decades, there has been an impressive rise in women's political representation across the world with the global average in the share of women in national parliaments particularly doubling during that time, and all regions making substantial progress towards the goal of 30 percent women's representation in decision-making.

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It is important to note that while the rate of increase in the political representation of women has been fast in Africa with four of the world's top 10 countries, in terms of women share of single or lower house of parliament, being Sub-Saharan African countries (Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal and South Africa), Nigeria has achieved little in this regard. Nigeria has a policy environment that seems to support gender equity. Firstly, the country is a signatory to most of the international conventions on gender equality and women empowerment. Secondly, successive national governments have established a vibrant institutional structure for the development and implementation of gender policies. There is also a widespread appreciation of gender issues as both government and non-governmental organizations emphasize gender mainstreaming in their activities but in reality so little progress is being made.

Nigeria since return to democratic rule in 1999 has organized seven general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023) of which the record of women's participation has been abysmal. Available records show that women's representation especially at the National Assembly has never crossed the 10 percent threshold. In 1999 and 2003, it was 3.4 and 4.9 percent respectively. It slightly improved to 7.0 percent in 2007 but declined to 6.8 and 5.6 percent in 2011 and 2015 respectively. In 2019, women representation was 4.4 percent (6.4 in the Senate and 3.6 in the House of Representatives) and 3.8 percent in 2023 (4.2 in the Senate and 3.7 in the House of Representatives). At the state houses of assemblies, the figure is

even more abject with only 45 seats out of 991 seats occupied by women giving a 4.5 percent representation (Opara, 2025). It is equally important to note that of the 18 former senate presidents and House of Representatives speakers, only one (Patricia Ette) is a woman giving a 5.5 percent representation.

**Table 1: Women Representation in Federal Cabinets (1999-2023)**

President	Period	No of female ministers/no of ministers	Percent
Olusegun Obasanjo	1999-2003	7/47	14.9
	2003-2007	6/49	12.2
Umaru Yar Adua	2007-2010	7/36	19.4
Goodluck Jonathan	2010/2011-2015	13/41	31.7
Muhammad Buhari	2015-2019	7/36	19.4
	2019-2023	7/43	16.2
Bola Ahmed Tinubu	2023 to date	8/48	18.6

What the table above shows is that no president other than Goodluck Jonathan has come close to meeting or exceeding the 35 percent affirmative action. Similarly, in the judiciary, only two women (Miriam Aloma Mukthar and Kudirat Kekere-Ekun) out of eighteen have served as Chief Justices of Nigeria since 1999 which gives a percent of 11.1. At the Court of Appeal, only two women (Zainab Bulkachawa and Monica Dongban-Memsem) have served as presidents out of seven since 1976.

It is perhaps in the banking sector that tremendous progress seems to have been made with woman occupying almost half of the position of managing directors and other top management positions. The biggest challenge,

however, is with the Central Bank where no woman since 2006 has served as governor out of four appointed within the period.

### **Factors Militating against Women's Effective Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making**

Without the full participation of both men and women in the development process, it is impossible to have sustainable and all round development of a society. According to Hora (2024), such a balanced development requires that all forms of discrimination against women are removed and they be protected from all forms of violence. It is important therefore to examine the factors that militate against women's participation in leadership and decision-making.

Despite the benefits of women participation in leadership and decision-making, women have not fully participated in leadership and decision-making as a result of the following factors.

- i. Deep seated socio-cultural norms, stereotypes and traditional gender roles: Nigeria being a highly patriarchic society, many cultures believe women's role is basically domestic - cooking, washing, caregiving and submission while restriction their education, participation in leadership and decision-making in the society and economic power. These abuses are reinforced by practices like bride price (Ogu and Areji, 2023), limited inheritance rights, harmful widowhood rituals (Ifemeje and Umejiaku, 2024)

- and gendered violence disguised as cultural correction.
- ii. Lack of education: Ogu and Areji (2023) have argued that lack of education especially at the grass root level and most importantly in the rural areas is the single most potent factor causing discrimination and marginalization of women. When a woman is educated, she becomes empowered and enlightened, the knowledge that comes with that dispels ignorance and empowers her to compete favourably with the mensfolk but when a woman lacks education as many women in Nigeria do, she finds herself at the mercy of those who.
- iii. Limited Financial resources: this constitutes a major barrier to women's participation in leadership and spans across all spheres of life including political, corporate and entrepreneurial. These entrenched economic disparities mean that women often have less access to capital, fewer professional networks. This means that they have to greatly rely on family a resource which directly restricts their ability to launch campaigns, secure senior positions in government and businesses. Financial independence often serves as a catalyst for leadership, while a lack of resources restricts women from entering, competing, and succeeding in leadership positions (WEF, 2023). Because political campaigns are expensive in Nigeria and with women

- having limited resources, they are prevented from entering races.
- iv. Lack of role models: the lack of female role models in top-level positions in leadership significantly hinders women's participation. It perpetuates stereotypes, reduces confidence and limits mentorship opportunities and Dagneu *et. al.* (2020) said, in the absence of visible examples, women often struggle to navigate male-dominated "sticky floor" environments, reinforcing the perception that high-level leadership is strictly a male affair. A 2022 study from the UK found that 43% of women believe that they would be more successful if they had a role model in the workplace. The research also revealed that whilst 67% of women do have someone they look up to in life, more than half (55%) agree that there is a lack of relatable role models in the workplace. Gladstone *et. al.* (2024) showed that exposing girls to role models in STEM careers led to greater motivation in those fields of study among girls of colour.

### **Has Leadership Development been Impactful in Promoting Gender Inclusivity?**

The importance of leadership development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. It promotes gender inclusivity by dismantling patriarchal barriers, fostering diverse decision-making and equipping women with skills needed to overcome systemic

discrimination. Training targeted at women empowerment, mentorship and gender-responsive policies improve organizational culture, enhance productivity and increase female representation in leadership roles.

Leadership development programmes such as the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) which runs the "empowering Young Women for Political Leadership Hub" to boost women's presence in governance and address the low representation of women in the National Assembly since 1999; the Evolve mentoring program (SEGEI) of LEAP Africa which connects strong enough girls between the ages of 18-35 to outstanding female professionals for real-world leadership and career inspiration and guidance and support on their life journey; NITDA IgniteHer Bootcamp which accelerates gender inclusion and economic empowerment of women through digital literacy skills to boost their economic participation; IFES Young Women's Leadership Training Programme (YWLTP) which targets women aged 18-30 including those with disabilities, to build the needed confidence for political and civic engagement; Renewed Women's Voice and Leadership (RWVL) supported by ActionAid Nigeria to strengthen women's leadership at all levels, particularly for marginalized women and many others have been initiated and implemented though with varying degrees of success.

Leadership development is critical for achieving gender equity, fostering innovation and driving inclusive decision-making processes. It empowers women to overcome systemic barriers

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and ensures diverse perspectives in leadership, which are essential for addressing complex global challenges. In addition, developing women leaders enhances performance, as diversity in leadership is linked to improved financial outcomes, employees satisfaction and social impact.

Nigeria has made progress in improving gender diversity and bringing an increasing number of women particularly in the corporate world into leadership roles. Global consulting firm, McKinsey and Company in its latest report revealed that women hold about 29 per cent of managerial and C-suite roles (Ekugo, 2025). The report is supported by the United Nations report that 22 per cent of decision-making positions are held by women in Nigeria's private sector (Clement, 2024).

While appreciable progress has made in the corporate world, many of the structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's progress remain stubbornly intact particularly in politics where women occupy only about 6.7 per cent elective and appointive positions, far below the African regional average of 23.4 per cent.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Nigeria faces a gender disparity problem particularly against women who have demonstrated enough competence even in those fields traditionally reserved for men. While successive governments through well-articulated policies have attempted to bridge the gap in gender representation, many structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's progress remain intact. Challenges such as traditional gender roles that typically see women as

only fit for domestic duties, lack of financial resources and access to networks, lack of role models and education have created a disproportionate representation of women at the top level of decision-making in Nigeria. It is important, however, to note that a new wave of leadership, institutional reforms and shifting social norms offers reasons for optimism. It is to that effect, that the following recommendations are made:

- i. To ensure that leadership development contributes to fairer women representation in leadership and decision-making, leadership development should be culturally responsive. Programs should integrate modules that explore the impact of culture on women empowerment; leaders particularly in politics should reflect on their cultural biases and assumptions so as to develop inclusive mindsets; cross cultural mentorship should be broadened and leadership training should be tailored to local contents to align with regional cultural norms which have improved women participation elsewhere in Africa.
- ii. Supporting economically and educationally disadvantaged women in leadership roles: this can be done through award of scholarships and fellowships. This financial aid will aid their education and leadership training; providing them access to networks that enable them participate in leadership workshops and conferences that connect them with mentors and

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sponsors; reforms like paid internships, equitable wages and inclusive hiring practices and promoting community-based leadership trainings to empower women locally and help them rise to broader leadership roles.

- iii. Commitment to the 35 per cent affirmative action which requires 35 per cent representation of women in all governance, appointive and elective positions aimed at gender inclusion. In addition, diversity quotas could be promoted through the setting of measurable targets for hiring and promoting women from diverse backgrounds; promoting transparency in hiring by creating clear pathways for advancement with objective criteria to reduce bias and offering childcare, transportation subsidies and mental health resources to women to enhance their participation.

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## Valorization of Slaughterhouse Waste Fats Using Hybrid Catalysis: Process Optimization, Fuel Characterization, and Engine Performance

### Abstract

The increasing demand for sustainable energy and the environmental challenges associated with fossil fuel have intensified interest in renewable fuel alternatives. This study investigates the conversion of slaughterhouse waste fats (goat and cow) into biodiesel using a hybrid catalytic process integrating acid-catalyzed esterification and base-catalyzed transesterification. Response Surface Methodology (RSM) was used for the optimization. The approach addresses the high free fatty acid (FFA) content of animal fats while enhancing overall conversion efficiency. Waste lipids were rendered, pretreated, and subjected to process optimization by varying methanol-to-oil molar ratio (6:1–12:1), catalyst loading (0.5–1.5 wt%), reaction temperature (55–65 °C), and reaction time (60–150 min). Under optimal conditions (9:1 molar ratio, 1 wt% catalyst, 65 °C, 120 min), a biodiesel yield of 90.6–91.2% was achieved. The produced biodiesel exhibited favorable fuel properties, including density (0.835 g/cm<sup>3</sup>), kinematic viscosity (4.6 mm<sup>2</sup>/s), cetane number (63.17), and calorific value (40.21 MJ/kg), meeting ASTM D6751 specifications. Engine performance evaluation indicated slightly higher brake-specific fuel consumption compared to conventional diesel, while emissions of carbon monoxide and particulate matter were reduced, demonstrating improved combustion characteristics. The integration of homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis enhances process efficiency and supports catalyst sustainability. The results demonstrate the feasibility of valorizing slaughterhouse waste into high-quality biodiesel, offering a sustainable pathway for waste management, energy diversification, and reduced environmental impact.

**Keywords:** Slaughterhouse waste; Biodiesel production; Transesterification; Free fatty acids; Renewable energy

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### 1.0 Introduction

The global energy landscape is undergoing a profound transformation driven by high energy demand, the depletion of fossil fuel reserves, and growing environmental concerns about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Fossil

fuels, particularly petroleum-based diesel, remain the dominant energy source for transportation and industrial applications due to their high energy density and well-established infrastructure. However, their continued exploitation contributes

significantly to climate change, air pollution, and ecological degradation (IEA, 2022; Jeswani et al., 2020).

Diesel engines, widely utilized in heavy-duty transportation, agriculture, and power generation, are known for their efficiency and durability. Despite these advantages, they emit harmful pollutants including nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM), and unburned hydrocarbons (HC), all of which pose serious environmental and public health risks (Lapuerta et al., 2017). These challenges have led to increased research into renewable and low-carbon alternative fuels. Biodiesel has emerged as one of the most viable substitutes for conventional diesel due to its biodegradability, non-toxicity, and ability to reduce emissions when blended or used in neat form (Knothe & Razon, 2017). Biodiesel consists of fatty acid alkyl esters produced via transesterification reactions involving short-chain alcohols such as methanol or ethanol. Its compatibility with existing diesel engines without major modifications further enhances its attractiveness as a transitional fuel in the global energy mix (Verma et al., 2021). Biodiesel production has traditionally relied on edible vegetable oils such as soybean, rapeseed, palm, and sunflower oils. While these feedstocks offer high conversion efficiency and relatively stable fuel properties, their large-scale utilization has raised significant ethical and economic concerns. The competition between food and fuel production—commonly referred to as the “food-versus-fuel” dilemma—has

led to increased food prices and potential food insecurity in developing regions (Zhang et al., 2018).

In response to these challenges, research has increasingly focused on non-edible and waste-derived feedstocks, including used cooking oil, microalgae, and animal fats. These alternatives provide a more sustainable and cost-effective pathway for biodiesel production while minimizing competition with food resources (Atabani et al., 2017). Among these, slaughterhouse waste fats represent a particularly promising yet underutilized resource due to their abundance and high lipid content. Other by-products that can be obtained from slaughterhouses include blood, offal, fats and bones, much of which is discarded or underutilized. Animal fats, in particular, are lipid-rich materials that can be valorized into biodiesel feedstocks (Hafid et al., 2021). Goat and cow fats are commonly available in abattoir environments and contain high triglyceride content suitable for conversion into fatty acid methyl esters. Compared to vegetable oils, animal fats typically contain higher proportions of saturated fatty acids. This characteristic is known to influence biodiesel properties such as cetane number and oxidative stability. While higher saturation improves ignition quality, it may adversely affect cold flow properties, necessitating careful process optimization (Buivydas et al., 2022). The utilization of slaughterhouse waste fats for biodiesel production aligns with circular economy principles by transforming waste into valuable energy resources while reducing environmental

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pollution and supporting sustainable resource utilization. (Diamantis et al., 2021).

Despite their advantages, waste animal fats present challenges for biodiesel production due to their high free fatty acid (FFA) content. One of the primary issues is the presence of high free fatty acid (FFA) content, which results from hydrolysis of triglycerides during storage and handling. Elevated FFA levels can interfere with base-catalyzed transesterification by reacting with alkaline catalysts to form soaps, leading to emulsification, reduced yield, and difficulties in product separation (Rasheed et al., 2021). To overcome this limitation, a two-step process is typically employed. The first step involves acid-catalyzed esterification to reduce FFA content by converting FFAs into esters. This is followed by base-catalyzed transesterification of triglycerides into biodiesel. This hybrid approach improves overall conversion efficiency and product quality (Cheng et al., 2021).

In addition to FFA content, moisture significantly affects the synthesis of biodiesel. The presence of water promotes hydrolysis and soap formation, negatively impacting reaction kinetics and catalyst performance. Therefore, proper drying and pretreatment of feedstocks are essential to ensure optimal reaction conditions (Naseef & Tulaimat, 2025). These limitations have motivated the development of hybrid catalytic approaches that combine the high activity of homogeneous catalysts with the separation and reusability advantages of heterogeneous systems.

Homogeneous catalysts such as sodium hydroxide (NaOH) and potassium hydroxide (KOH) are widely used due to their high activity and low cost. However, they present drawbacks including difficulty in separation, generation of wastewater, and lack of reusability (Verma et al., 2021). Heterogeneous catalysts have gained increasing attention as sustainable alternatives due to their ease of separation, recyclability, and reduced environmental impact. Calcium oxide (CaO), often derived from waste materials such as eggshells, has been extensively studied as an effective heterogeneous catalyst for transesterification reactions (Cheng et al., 2021). These catalysts contribute to greener and more cost-effective biodiesel production processes.

Hybrid processing integrates multiple unit operations or catalytic systems to enhance process efficiency and sustainability. In the context of biodiesel production, hybrid approaches typically combine pretreatment (esterification), catalytic transesterification, and post-treatment purification steps. This integrated strategy improves yield, reduces impurities, and enhances fuel quality (Diamantis et al., 2021). Currently, the data on integrated, statistically optimized, and hybrid-catalyzed approaches for biodiesel production from blended high-FFA animal fats is scanty, based on available literature. This study provides a framework for combining blended feedstock utilization, hybrid catalysis, moisture-FFA integration, and statistical optimization with engine validation. It explores the

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valorization of slaughterhouse waste, which is often discarded and underutilized, thereby contributing to waste management and environmental sustainability. Second, it investigates a hybrid catalytic approach that combines acid and base catalysis to overcome limitations associated with high FFA content in animal fats. Third, it evaluates both physicochemical properties and engine performance, providing a comprehensive assessment of fuel applicability.

Additionally, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on alternative biodiesel feedstocks, particularly in regions with abundant livestock production such as developing countries. By leveraging locally available resources, the research supports energy diversification, economic development, and environmental protection. The aim of this study is to develop and evaluate a sustainable hybrid process for converting slaughterhouse waste fats into high-quality biodiesel suitable for diesel engine applications. The specific objectives were to;

1. extract and preprocess waste goat and cow fats obtained from slaughterhouse residues
2. reduce free fatty acid content using acid-catalyzed esterification,
3. produce biodiesel via base-catalyzed transesterification using homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysts,
4. optimize key process parameters including methanol-to-oil ratio, catalyst loading, reaction temperature, and

reaction time using Response Surface Methodology (RSM)

5. characterize the physicochemical properties of the produced biodiesel in accordance with ASTM standards,
6. evaluate engine performance and emission characteristics of the biodiesel,
7. compare the results with conventional diesel fuel and international fuel standards.

## 2.0 Materials and Methods

Waste goat and cow fats were collected from Itam Abattoir in Uyo Capital City, Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. These were the primary feedstocks due to their high triglyceride content and availability as low-cost residues. A blending ratio of 1:1 (cow:goat fat) was adopted for the experiments. Approximately 2 kg batches of raw fat were collected within 24 h post-slaughter, stored at 4 °C. Rendering was performed in a closed stainless-steel vessel at 80–100 °C for 45 min, with a heating rate of 5 °C/min and continuous stirring. The rendered fats were then filtered using a 100 µm stainless steel mesh to remove residual solids, yielding ~1.6–1.7 kg of purified lipid phase. To minimize hydrolysis and saponification, the filtered fats were further dried at 110 °C for 30 min, reducing moisture content below 0.1%, as confirmed by Karl Fischer titration.

Calcium oxide (CaO) was derived from eggshells. The preparation steps included: washing with distilled water, drying at 105 °C for 12 h, and grinding to a particle size of 100–150 µm. The eggshell powder was then calcined

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at 900 °C for 3 h in a muffle furnace to obtain CaO.

Methanol ( $\geq 99\%$  purity) was obtained from Sigma-Aldrich, Germany. Sulfuric acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ , 1 wt%) served as the acid catalyst during esterification, while sodium hydroxide (NaOH, 0.5–1.5 wt%) was used for base-catalyzed transesterification. CaO was applied simultaneously with NaOH in the transesterification stage to enhance reaction efficiency and enable heterogeneous catalyst recovery. Distilled water was used for biodiesel washing. Free fatty acid (FFA) content was determined via titration using KOH (0.1 M), phenolphthalein indicator, and ethanol–ether solvent mixtures.

Transesterification was conducted in a 3 L jacketed batch reactor equipped with a mechanical overhead stirrer operating at 500 rpm, a heating mantle, and a reflux condenser.

Reaction temperature was maintained at 60–65 °C, close to the boiling point of methanol, using a thermocouple-controlled system for thermal stability.

The reaction parameters varied in this study included methanol-to-oil molar ratio (6:1–12:1), catalyst loading (0.5–1.5 wt%), reaction temperature (55–65 °C), and reaction time (60–150 min). Experiments were conducted using a one-factor-at-a-time (OFAT) approach, with all other variables held constant during each parameter investigation.

After completion of the transesterification reaction, the mixture was allowed to settle at room temperature ( $\sim 25$  °C) for 8–12 h. Phase

separation occurred via gravity, without centrifugation, producing an upper biodiesel layer and a lower glycerol-rich phase.

Crude biodiesel was purified through three consecutive washing cycles using warm distilled water at  $\sim 50$  °C. A water-to-biodiesel ratio of 1:1 (v/v) was employed for each cycle, continuing until the wash water reached neutral pH. The biodiesel was subsequently dried at 105 °C to remove residual moisture and trace methanol.

## 2.1 Response Surface Methodology

**(RSM):** A **central composite design (CCD)** was employed to optimize four process variables: methanol-to-oil ratio (6:1–12:1), total catalyst loading (1–2 wt%), reaction temperature (55–65 °C), and reaction time (60–150 min). The design included 30 experiments with six center points to estimate experimental error. The biodiesel yield (%) was the response variable. The quadratic model was fitted as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \sum \beta_i X_i + \sum \beta_{ii} X_i^2 + \sum \beta_{ij} X_i X_j$$

where  $Y$  is biodiesel yield,  $X_i$  are independent factors, and  $\beta$  are regression coefficients. ANOVA was performed to determine significant factors ( $p < 0.05$ ), and 3D response surface plots were generated to visualize factor interactions.

Characterization of Biodiesel properties were evaluated using ASTM methods, viz: -

**Density:** ASTM D4052;      **Kinematic Viscosity:** ASTM D445;

**Flash Point:** ASTM D93; **FAME**

**Composition:** GC-FID;

### Engine Performance and Emission Testing

The applicability of the biodiesel was evaluated on a single-cylinder, 4-stroke, naturally aspirated diesel engine with the following specifications: Power rating: 5.2 kW

Rated speed: 1500 rpm, Load conditions: 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% of full load

Measurement instruments: digital torque meter, fuel consumption meter, exhaust gas analyzer (for CO, HC, NO<sub>x</sub>), and thermocouples for cylinder temperature monitoring

The engine tests were conducted at steady-state conditions, with each parameter measured in triplicate to ensure reproducibility.

### 3.1 Physicochemical Properties

The biodiesel produced under RSM-optimized conditions was characterized as follows Table 3.1

**Table 3.1: Comparative Evaluation of Biodiesel and Fossil Diesel Fuel Physicochemical Properties with ASTM Standards**

Property	Unit	Biodiesel (This Study)	ASTM D6751 (Biodiesel)	ASTM D975 (Diesel)	Fossil Diesel (Typical)	Engineering Interpretation
Cetane Number	-	63.17	≥ 47	≥ 40-55	~50	Higher value indicates improved ignition quality and shorter ignition delay
Kinematic Viscosity (40 °C)	mm <sup>2</sup> /s	4.6	1.9 - 6.0	1.9 - 4.1	~3.0	Slightly higher viscosity but within limits; ensures adequate lubrication
Density (15 °C)	g/cm <sup>3</sup>	0.835	0.86 - 0.90*	0.82 - 0.85	~0.84	Slightly lower density enhances atomization efficiency

**Citation:** Etuk, Victor; Isaac, Loveday; Antiaobong, Emmanuel; Innocent, Oboh & Aniefiok, Livinus. "Valorization of Slaughterhouse Waste Fats Using Hybrid Catalysis: Process Optimization, Fuel Characterization, and Engine Performance". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp167-177.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

The blended goat and cow fats (1:1 mass ratio) were characterized prior to biodiesel production. The initial free fatty acid (FFA) content was 5.85%, moisture content was 0.32 ± 0.007%, and density was 0.92 g/cm<sup>3</sup>. Acid-base titration confirmed the need for pretreatment via acid esterification to reduce FFA to <1%, preventing saponification during base-catalyzed transesterification. Proximate analysis and preliminary physicochemical characterization indicated the feedstock was suitable for biodiesel production, with high triglyceride content and low impurities.

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Property	Unit	Biodiesel (This Study)	ASTM D6751 (Biodiesel)	ASTM D975 (Diesel)	Fossil Diesel (Typical)	Engineering Interpretation
Flash Point	°C	> 68	≥ 60	≥ 52	~52–60	Higher flash point improves storage and handling safety
Calorific Value	MJ/kg	40.21	~40 – 45	~42 – 46	~45	Lower energy density may increase fuel consumption
Oxygen Content	wt%	~10–12	Not specified	~0	~0	Oxygen enhances combustion and reduces emissions
Sulfur Content	ppm	~0	≤ 15	≤ 15	≤ 10–15	Near-zero sulfur reduces SOx emissions
FAME Content	%	> 96.7	≥ 96.5	Not applicable	0	Confirms high biodiesel purity and conversion efficiency

The biodiesel meets ASTM D6751 standards, with superior cetane number and near-zero sulfur content, supporting enhanced combustion and lower emissions.

### 3.2 Biodiesel Yield Optimization via RSM

A central composite design (CCD) was employed to optimize biodiesel yield as a function of methanol-to-oil ratio (6:1–12:1), total catalyst loading (NaOH + CaO, 1–2 wt%), reaction temperature (55–65 °C), and reaction time (60–150 min).

#### 3.2.1 ANOVA for Quadratic Model

The quadratic model for biodiesel yield was statistically significant ( $p < 0.0001$ ), with  $R^2 = 0.98$ , indicating excellent fit between predicted and experimental data. Table 3.1 presents the ANOVA results:

**Table 3.2: ANOVA for Biodiesel Yield Optimization (RSM Model)**

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Model	312.45	14	22.32	45.76	<0.0001
Methanol ratio (A)	58.72	1	58.72	120.1	<0.0001
Catalyst loading (B)	31.56	1	31.56	64.6	<0.0001
Temperature (C)	24.88	1	24.88	50.9	<0.0001
Time (D)	16.35	1	16.35	33.5	0.0002
AB	4.21	1	4.21	8.6	0.013
AC	2.89	1	2.89	5.9	0.042
AD	1.76	1	1.76	3.6	0.08
BC	1.54	1	1.54	3.2	0.09
BD	1.22	1	1.22	2.5	0.12

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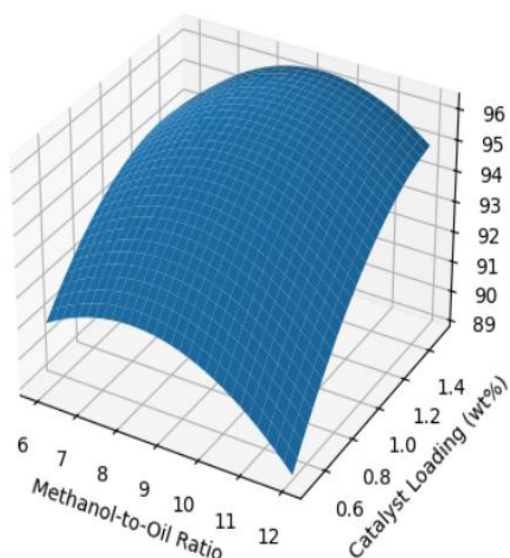
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
CD	0.98	1	0.98	2.0	0.15
A <sup>2</sup>	12.45	1	12.45	25.5	0.001
B <sup>2</sup>	8.32	1	8.32	17.0	0.004
C <sup>2</sup>	7.18	1	7.18	14.7	0.006
D <sup>2</sup>	5.21	1	5.21	10.6	0.01
Residual	6.43	15	0.43		
Lack of Fit	3.12	10	0.31	1.1	0.38
Pure Error	3.31	5	0.66		

Where df correspond to the degree of freedom.

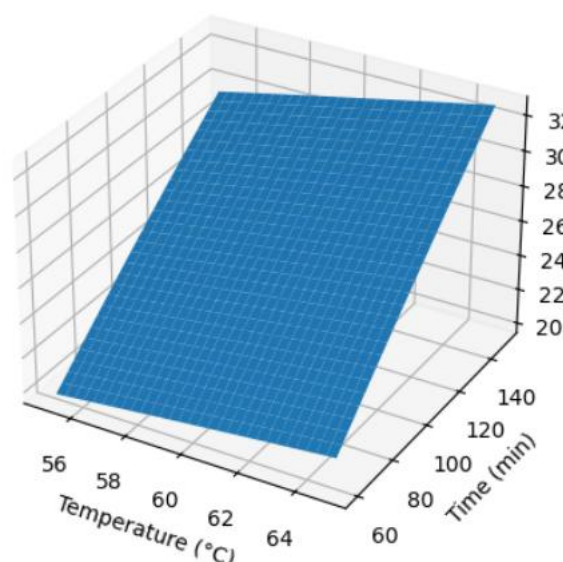
The model shows methanol ratio and catalyst loading were the most significant factors, with temperature and time also contributing significantly. Interactions between methanol and catalyst loading (AB) and squared terms (A<sup>2</sup>, B<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>) confirmed non-linear effects on yield.

**3.2.2 Response Surface Analysis**

3D response surface plots (Figure 3.1a and Figure 3.1b) illustrate the interactive effects: it was observed that for Methanol-to-oil ratio vs. Catalyst loading, Biodiesel yield increased with both methanol ratio and total catalyst loading, reaching a plateau beyond 11:1 methanol and 1.5 wt% catalyst while for Temperature vs. Reaction time, optimal yield (~91.5%) occurred at 63 °C and 130 min. Lower temperatures or shorter times significantly reduced conversion due to incomplete transesterification.



**Figure 3.1a: 3D Response Surface**



**Figure 3.1b: 3D Response Surface for**

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### for methanol vs catalyst loading

### temperature vs time profile

The simultaneous use of NaOH and CaO enhanced catalytic efficiency, enabling higher yields at lower total base loading compared to single-catalyst systems. The RSM-Predicted Optimized Conditions were, Methanol-to-oil ratio: 10.8:1, Total catalyst loading (NaOH + CaO): 1.4 wt%, Temperature: 63 °C, Reaction time: 130 min; Predicted yield: 91.8%; Experimental validation: 91.5 ± 0.4%, confirming excellent.

### 3.3 Engine Performance and Emissions

Using a single-cylinder, 4-stroke, water-cooled diesel engine (5.5 kW, 1500 rpm), the RSM-optimized biodiesel was tested under full and partial loads. The key observations were: Brake Thermal Efficiency (BTE) - 32.5% for biodiesel vs. 34% for fossil diesel; Brake Specific Fuel Consumption (BSFC) - Slightly higher for biodiesel (0.31 kg/kWh) due to marginally lower calorific value; Emissions - CO and HC decreased by 12-15% due to oxygenated fuel, while NO<sub>x</sub> increased slightly (~5%) compared to diesel. Also, the dual-catalyst approach contributed to high conversion efficiency, reducing unreacted triglycerides, thus improving combustion and reducing particulate emissions.

### 4.0 Conclusion

This study demonstrated the effective valorization of slaughterhouse waste fats (goat and cow, 1:1 blend) into high-quality biodiesel through a statistically optimized, dual-catalyst transesterification process. Using response surface methodology (RSM), the effects of methanol-to-oil ratio, total catalyst loading (NaOH + CaO),

reaction temperature, and reaction time on biodiesel yield were systematically modeled and optimized.

The dual-catalyst system, integrating homogeneous NaOH and heterogeneous CaO derived from eggshells, significantly enhanced biodiesel yield by accelerating reaction kinetics and facilitating mass transfer. Under RSM-optimized conditions, viz:- methanol-to-oil ratio of 10.8:1, total catalyst loading of 1.4 wt%, temperature 63 °C, and reaction time of 130 min; the process achieved a maximum yield of 91.5 ± 0.4%, validating the model predictions, reflecting efficient conversion.

The produced biodiesel exhibited physicochemical properties consistent with standard biodiesel fuels, exhibiting high cetane number (63.2), suitable viscosity (4.6 mm<sup>2</sup>/s), adequate calorific value (40.21 MJ/kg), and FAME content (>96%). Engine performance testing using a single-cylinder, 4-stroke diesel engine (5.5 kW, 1500 rpm) demonstrated comparable efficiency and reduced CO and HC emissions relative to conventional diesel, confirming practical applicability. The integration of RSM optimization with a dual-catalyst strategy not only

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maximizes yield but also ensures reproducibility and scalability, supporting sustainable biodiesel production from low-cost slaughterhouse wastes. These findings provide an environmentally friendly, and technically feasible framework for advancing renewable diesel substitutes, contributing to effective waste management.

However, the absence of detailed catalyst performance comparison warrants further investigation into the long-term stability and recyclability of CaO derived from eggshells is recommended. The focus areas should include catalyst deactivation mechanisms (e.g., carbonation, leaching), regeneration strategies (thermal or chemical reactivation) and surface modification to enhance catalytic activity. This will strengthen the economic and environmental sustainability of the hybrid catalytic system.

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## U. S. Economic Sanctions and Iran's Internal Crisis: A Critical Appraisal

### Abstract

The reinstatement of the large-scale U.S. economic sanctions against Iran in 2018 indicated a critical shift in the conflict that had developed between Washington and Tehran for many years. The sanctions were aligned with a period of severe domestic crisis in Iran, associated with economic degradation, widespread mass protests, and political governance challenges. This paper explored the issue of whether increased U.S. sanctions have served as a stimulus or catalyst to political change or vice versa in Iran. The article is a qualitative research with process tracing research design because it analyzes the causal mechanisms between sanctions, economic hardship, domestic instability, and regime stability between 2018 and 2026. The data was obtained from governmental publications, economic and human rights reports, media outlets, and academic assessments, and discussed on the thematic level. The outcomes showed that sanctions have significantly weakened the political economy of Iran leading to the high inflation rates, currency devaluation, poverty, and poor living conditions. Such realities have always caused massive protests that progressively blend the dissatisfaction of the economy with the more encompassing disapproval of administration, corruption and ideological agendas. The analysis however showed little to no evidence of elite disintegration or system weakness due to sanctions that may threaten the survival of the regime. Instead, sanctions have enabled the resilience of authoritarian regimes by enhancing conservative authority, increasing the economic and political strength of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and justifying repression by the discourse of foreign hostility. The paper concluded that as the sanctions escalate social instability and expose greed in the governance, they are unlikely to bring about change in the regimes without effective internal coordination and elite defection.

**Keywords:** U.S. sanctions, Iran, Political unrest, Regime resilience, Economic coercion

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### Introduction

The reintroduction of an all-encompassing U.S. economic sanctions on Iran in 2018 was a major turning point in the ancient confrontation

between Washington and Tehran. After the U.S. pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, the Trump administration returned to imposing the pressures of maximum pressure on the Iranian exports of oil, banking, and major parts

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of their industries (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2018). Several times increased in the work of the next administrations, these sanctions have decreased the oil revenues of Iran by more than 90 percent in comparison with the previous year 2018 and reduced the GDP of the country by approximately 6-10 percent per year since 2018 and 2022 (World Bank, 2023; International Monetary Fund, 2024). This change in policy overturned the partial relief to the Iranian economy provided by the JCPOA that had helped Iran reenter the international markets.

At the same time, Iran has been struggling with an intensifying domestic crisis with multisided economic misery, mass protest, and systemic governance problems. The inflation has reached more than 40 percent per year, and it devalues collective pay, aggravating the poverty levels, which currently plague more than 30 percent of the population (Statistical Centre of Iran, 2023). The cracks in the regime legitimacy have been revealed through mass protests, including the most recent fuel price protests in 2019, the 2022 uprising in Mahsa Amini, and occasional labor strikes (Dabashi, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2024). Elite factionalism, the corruption accusation, and the expanding economic dominance of the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) with an approximate of 50-60 percent of the economy all lead to the governance strains (Alfoneh, 2021). These issues have also caused dissatisfaction among the people forcing them to lose faith in the government to take care of their needs and concerns. This puts Iran in a more threatening political and economic position and may destabilize the

country should Iran not put this issue at bay.

However, the combination of both long-term foreign pressure and internal instability had not led to the Iranian regime giving way and although the sanctions have contributed to the domestic unrest, the regime has demonstrated the capacity to endure. This strength is explained by scholars with reference to adaptive policies, such as dependence on illicit oil trade with China, diversification into unauthorized areas, and increased repression within the country (Maloney, 2022; Nephew, 2023). Internet blocking and the deployment of security forces have suppressed demonstrations without prioritizing the underlying economic malaise and the ideological unity of hardliners keeps the regimes afloat (Ansari, 2020). This contradiction casts serious doubts into the effectiveness of economic coercion when dealing with authoritarian regimes.

This paper focuses on the interaction between the Iranian internal crisis and the U.S. economic sanctions using a qualitative approach, process tracing. It is aimed at determining whether the intensified sanctions can create the chances of the regime change or just the resistance.

### **Sanctions and Regime Stability: Analytical Perspective**

Coercive diplomacy through economic sanctions is aimed at imposing economic burden on regimes that are targeted in such a way that they are to change behaviour or at the worst, regime change. Coercive diplomacy

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assumes that the sanctions are a form of non-military coercion, which manipulates economic weaknesses to reflect determination and change the perceptions of benefits and costs by the elites (Baldwin, 1985; Pape, 1997). This justification is exemplified by U.S. "maximum pressure" sanctions imposed since 2018 in an effort to reduce nuclear ambitions and regional power by interfering with sources of revenue and finances (Nephew, 2018). The sanctions have been very impactful to the Iranian economy causing the increase in inflation and the rate of unemployment. There is, however, some debate about the effectiveness of this type of coercion to achieve sustainable policy objectives. According to Gehlbach *et al.*, (2020) popular support decreases due to economic deprivation, leading to protests that weaken the legitimacy of the regime and cause elite fragmentation, with cost-sensitive moderates abandoning hardliners. The rational choice models predict that the collapse of the internal coalition will occur when the opportunity costs are greater than the adaptive levels due to punishments (Milner, 1999). This heightens the chances of liberalization or collapse of the economy. This can be seen in the example of the South African apartheid being eradicated, which has proven to be a historical example of how long-term isolation of the economy combined with internal mobilization can turn complaints into transformative pressure.

Counter-arguments are centered on regime adaptation, repression and nationalist framing as the shield against changes through sanctions. The authoritarian resilience theory puts more focus on intelligent adjustments,

such as using shadow economies to avoid sanctions, seeking rents to enrich elites, and building trade partnerships, as in the case of Iran adopting China and adopting barter systems (Drezner, 2011; Early, 2015). Galtung, (1967) and Weiss, (2014) assert that, repression will suppress dissent by increasing the coercive power, and the phenomena of rally-around-the-flag redefine punishments as external antagonism, which reinforces unity. The government is further safeguarded by the institutional features, including the theocratic veto points of Iran and the existence of the IRGC, which instead of causing systemic instability dictate the opposition along the official channels.

### Methodology

This study uses a process-tracing-focused qualitative research methodology to investigate the ways in which U.S. economic sanctions have contributed to domestic crises and regime stability in Iran. Methodologically analysing sequential occurrences and intervening variables, process tracing allows one to differentiate between effects caused by sanctions and endogenous dynamics (Beach & Pedersen, 2019). In keeping with the study's focus on complex authoritarian opposition, this interpretive method prioritises depth over generalisability.

To demonstrate the limits of economic pressure on ideologically inflexible governments, the case of Iran is essential to sanctions analysis. The nation's ability to adapt, unlike less strong autocracies, is highlighted by its protracted exposure to "maximum pressure" sanctions since 2018 and the fact that continued discontent has not led to a breakdown.

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This undermines theoretical expectations of regime transition (Gerring, 2007). Theorising about the efficacy of punishments in hybrid theocratic systems is encouraged by this selection.

Primary and secondary sources, using triangulation as a validation mechanism, are utilised as data sources. Iranian government responses, including statements from the Supreme Leader and reports from the Central Bank, are included in policy documents, along with U.S. Treasury sanctions designations. The accounts of protest participants and human rights organisations like Amnesty International and the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre are the primary sources for the narratives surrounding these events. Numerous news outlets' coverage of events, including the 2019 and 2022 revolutions, provides a chronological account of what happened. Academic journals and think tanks like Brookings and Chatham House produce expert research that offer context.

The method uses theme analysis to identify commonalities among datasets, such as economic concerns, repressive tactics, and elite unity (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Opening up the data to coding, then axially associating themes with theoretical propositions, and finally selectively enhancing the analytical framework are all steps in the coding approach that adheres to iterative methodology.

Anonymising sensitive protest data to protect sources and acknowledging positionality as a scholar of Middle Eastern politics are ethical considerations. Constraints include the interpretive character that forbids

drawing causal conclusions beyond the case, the likely bias in the opposition media, and the difficulty in conducting interviews with Iranian elites as a result of sanctions. Transparency in analytical determinations and source triangulation relieve these.

### **U.S. Economic Sanctions and Iran's Political Economy**

A complex regime imposed to limit the Iranian government's actions in the domains of nuclear development, ballistic missiles, regional interventions, and human rights, U.S. economic sanctions against Iran were reinstated and tightened in 2018 following the U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (Congressional Research Service, 2025). Isolating Iran from large swaths of the global economy, these sanctions impose worldwide restrictions on commerce, banking, and asset access. The energy industry, specifically oil and gas exports, is considered a key sector targeted because the sanctions forbid foreign investments, sales, transportation, and other related activities by the entities that trade in Iranian petroleum products (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2025a). There are bans on transactions with Iranian financial and banking institutions, and advisories and inspections are imposed on transportation, shipping, and maritime, which are aimed at avoiding evasion (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2025b). The pressure is further administered with secondary sanctions along with the primary ones on non-U.S. companies conducting business with some of the Iranian actors (House of Commons Library, 2026). Such secondary sanctions include the

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activities of unmanned aerial vehicles and the purchase of ballistic missiles, metals, and aviation, among others. These are all-inclusive sanctions that are meant to put Iran in isolation both economically and politically so that the country will abide by international rules and constraints. The tiered system of sanctions proves the unity of the international community to counter the conduct of Iran in areas other than financial institutions.

These sanctions have had a deep economic impact, reflected in the growth of macroeconomic volatility and the reduced welfare of the society. Rates of inflation have continued to be elevated, with an annual rate over 30 percent in the previous 5 years and a food price inflation rate of over 70 percent in 2025, leading to more widespread cost-of-living pressures (House of Commons Library, 2026; World Bank, 2025). The nature of employment has changed to being more informal and vulnerable, as official industries like oil exports and manufacturing are shrinking in response to increased poverty and a lost decade of economic development (Euronews, 2026; Farzanegan and Habibi, 2025). The currency stability has worsened because of reduced inflows of foreign exchange through oil payments, and the value of the Iranian rial has declined by half between July 2024 and March 2025 and hit a record low in December 2025 (House of Commons Library, 2026). As a result, the standard of living has been pushed down, as real wages are down by about half, to around less than 160 dollars as of now; there is widespread poverty in which 28.1 percent of people live below the

poverty line; and there is general GDP shrinkage, which is expected to persist to 2026 (Euronews, 2026; World Bank, 2025). International economic sanctions on Iran have exacerbated such economic hardships by making it more difficult to access the markets and resources in other countries. These factors coupled together have resulted in a difficult situation for the Iranian economy, and it has profound effects on the welfare of its people.

On the political economy spectrum, the distributional impact of sanctions can be seen to have disproportionately impacted the social layers, which supported power asymmetries that were already in place in Iran. Censuses have also led to the middle class narrowing, with an average annual decline of 12 to 17 percentage points in the middle class from 2012 to 2019, as dwindling real incomes and deteriorating poverty move households backward along the socioeconomic ladder (Farzanegan & Habibi, 2025). Disproportionate welfare losses have been imposed on lower-income groups, and by the end of 2025 almost 40 million of the Iranian population will be living below the relative poverty line, with seven million living below the absolute line as a result of increased vulnerability to import restrictions, export fall-offs, and investment losses (Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2025). Conversely, the elite players, even those who are now members of the institutions such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, have experienced direct fines but continue to perform their duties by monopolizing the economy in advantageous ways (Euronews, 2026). These differences in turn have a political

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impact on the stability of the regime. As the 2019 protests over high fuel prices and the 2025 one over a declining currency illustrate, sanctions are causing people to be more dissatisfied at home, increasing the threat of repression, and making it more difficult to hold the society together without the use of force (Farzanegan & Habibi, 2025; House of Commons Library, 2026). Moreover, the use of coercion to keep the society together can also lead to an increase in the loss of the populace and the mistrust in the government. This economic misery, demonstration, suppression, and dissatisfaction are a great challenge to the stability of the regime in the long run.

The Iranian state has reacted to such pressures by seeking adaptive strategies that combine resilience-seeking with avoidance strategies, which is a political economy geared toward core regime interests. The oil revenue losses have resulted in budget deficits, which have brought about alterations in the economy, including increasing taxes by 63 percent in 2026 and investing more in defense and religious institutions compared to general welfare improvements, which have contributed to the rise in inflation (Iran International, 2026). The strategy development involves abandoning the dependence on the Western powers through the establishment of a closer relationship with non-sanctioning powers, negotiating trade agreements, and the formation of a so-called shadow fleet, which employs manipulative means such as ship-to-ship transfers, AIS manipulations, reflagging, and dubious ownership arrangements to continue oil exports, primarily to Asia (U.S.

Department of the Treasury, 2025a; Atlantic Council, 2025). These reactions emphasize the capability of the state to maintain adversarial policies during economic pressure, although the current enforcement efforts of the U.S. to address evasion networks point to the increasing costs and constraints of the adaptations (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2025b). These undercover methods show how far the state can go to circumvent the sanctions and keep its oil exports going. Nevertheless, there is more enforcement by the U.S. Treasury, indicating that these strategies are not likely to be long-term.

### Sanctions and Patterns of Domestic Unrest

The periods of U.S. economic sanctions that have been reimposed and strengthened since 2018 have been accompanied by a number of major waves of domestic protest in Iran, where long-term economic nexuses have overlapped political and social dissatisfaction as a source of unrest. The most notable ones are the 2019 fuel price riots, which broke out in over 100 cities amidst a drastic rise in the cost of gasoline due to the overall economic stress (Amnesty International, 2020, as cited in multiple analyses). The movement Woman, Life, Freedom, which was initiated by the death of Mahsa (Jina) Amini in custody on September 16, 2022, following her arrest on claims of improper wearing of the hijab, lasted several months and involved the involvement of the whole country (Rahimi, 2025). Even more recently, on December 28, 2025, initially over the collapse of the rial and skyrocketing prices, protests have swept

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across all 31 provinces by the beginning of January 2026, including bazaar strikes, university actions, and general confrontations (Salehi-Isfahani, 2026; House of Commons Library, 2026). Such trends demonstrate how the decline in the economy through sanctions has been a recurring factor in the mobilization on a larger scale.

The protesters have always put grievances into consistent terms of failure in governance and economic problems were mostly associated with political and social criticisms. In the year 2019, protests about inflation, unemployment, subsidy cuts, and other direct livelihood issues were based on lowered oil prices, reflecting the short-term needs (Clingendael Institute, 2023). The 2022 protests transformed the demands of women to be recognized as well as an abolition of the compulsory administration of the hijab into the calls aimed at the elimination of corruption, mismanagement, and the priorities of the regime concerning the promotion of foreign relations instead of domestic well-being (Rahimi, 2025; Middle East Institute, 2022). The first triggers of the latest wave of protests (which are ongoing in 2025-2026) are the dramatic devaluation of the rial (having lost about 80% of its value within the last year) and food prices rising more than 70 times, but already angry crowds are shouting slogans renouncing the ideological promises of the regime and holding it responsible (Salehi-Isfahani, 2026; The New York Times, 2026). This is a discursive transformation: of regionalized economical grievances to anti-systemic slogans, stressing the accretive effect of long-term macroeconomic instability.

These cycles have been dominated by socioeconomic classes, youth, and marginalized groups. The working classes and lower-income groups, especially in the peripheral regions and rural ones, have launched numerous mobilizations related to short-term struggles, including the price of fuel and food (Clingendael Institute, 2023). Young people, as a significant proportion of the population and with scarce opportunities in the face of economic recession, have mobilized via the digital networks and perpetuated the university-led efforts (Rahimi, 2025). The suppressed ethnic communities (e.g., Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, and women) have intensified demonstrations along the borders and the inter-ethnic solidarity and gender demands are keeping the larger population involved in the process (Atlantic Council, 2025). The loss of the middle class under sanctions, which is estimated to be an average of 11-17 percentage points in 2022 and 2023, is another motivator that has led to an involvement across classes since downward mobility increases grievances (Farzanegan & Habibi, 2025).

To control the unrest, the Iranian state has reacted with a steady plateau of control, repression, surveillance and co-optation selectively. Direct force has been used in the form of repulsion, such as live ammunition resulting in dozens or hundreds of deaths per round, mass arrest (more than thousands of times), and torture allegations (Human Rights Watch, 2026; OHCHR, 2025). The surveillance has intensified to include digital surveillance, facial recognition, and social media surveillance to find and arrest individuals, with further

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heightened surveillance since 2022 (OHCHR, 2025). The strategy of controlling is limited to internet blackouts and throttling nationwide, as well as regional blackouts to prevent coordination (The Guardian, 2026). Limited co-optation is manifested through the declaration of economic dialogue or small concessions, but it is usually hidden behind the propaganda of protesters as externally influenced threats and the focus on expenditures on security (Salehi-Isfahani, 2026). These visible tactics are indicative of a tendency to focus on containment and harbor repetition of protest alongside limiting their capacity to transform.

### Prospects for Political Change or Regime Endurance

The harsh macroeconomic pressures on Iran due to U.S. economic sanctions, which have intensified since the withdrawal of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, have manifested in terms of declining GDP of up to 6-7 percent per year since then (World Bank, 2023) and inflation reaching up to 40 percent in the years of peak pressure (Central Bank of Iran, 2024). These circumstances cast doubts on their ability to trigger any significant political change or system collapse. However, the trends of the history of approved autocracies indicate that economic disadvantage does not often initiate elite-improved change without other internal forces. The role of the sanctions in strengthening the resilience of the regime is perhaps clear in the case of Iran, where the narrative of external siege has solidified the control of the hardliners, as the election of Ebrahim Raisi in 2021 illustrated the voter

disillusionment (Khosravi, 2022). Additionally, the regime's ability to control the flow of information and suppress dissent has also played a crucial role in maintaining its grip on power. Despite economic hardships, the regime's authoritarian tactics and propaganda have effectively quelled any potential uprisings or opposition movements.

The ability to mobilize opposition is also restricted, which limits the chances of reform. Repressive forces, such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Basij forces, have substantially quelled opposition, as demonstrated by the 2019 protests called Bloody November and the 2022 Mahsa Amini uprising, in which more than 500 people were killed by the Amnesty International (2023). Sanctions have a supporting effect on this by limiting the ability of civil society to access international funding and digital tools, and an internal lack of resources increases the level of elite loyalty to patronage networks. The issue of elite defection is unlikely in the short run: middle-level technocrats and pragmatic conservatives (including those in the Rouhani government) have been marginalized, not empowered, and no dramatic rift has occurred since 2018 (Maloney, 2021). Under exogenous shocks, such as the sudden collapse of the oil price or corruption scandals among elites, the defection may be limited, but it is doctrinally held together by the veto players, such as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

In the short run (1-3 years), the continuation of the sanctions is bound to prolong the survival of the regime due

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to the adaptive sanctions, including the policy of the resistance economy, with the focus on self-reliance and regional unions with China and Russia (Dorsey, 2024). Medium-term trends (3-10 years) are dependent on such variables as the possibilities of JCPOA revival and generational changes in leadership. Positive futures look to slow reform in the case of sanctions relaxation and the restoration of moderate groups, which will encourage slow liberalization of Myanmar similar to post-sanction Myanmar (2011-2015). However, pessimistic directions have the opposite effect, enhancing authoritarianism and endorsing the dominance of hardliners with penalties, exposing the periphery to ethnic-minority unrest such as in Baluchistan (International Crisis Group, 2023). Both of them do not seem to be predetermined; political change would need a concerted effort of internal mobilization and external change of policies.

The U.S. sanctions policy has some implications with these dynamics. Although maximum-pressure campaigns have limited the nuclear ambitions and regional proxies of Iran and provided some political space (GAO, 2024), the political effectiveness of such actions is conditional on the multilaterality of the effort and targeted exemptions to incentivize the buy-in of the elite this fine point is frequently neglected in the policy discourse (Davenport, 2022). Furthermore, the effectiveness of sanctions also depends on the ability of the targeted country to find alternative sources of support and resources. In the case of Iran, its ability to navigate around sanctions through alliances with other countries like

Russia and China has weakened the impact of U.S. pressure.

### Conclusion

This study examines the connection between U.S. economic sanctions and Iran's internal crises. It focusses on the period after the U.S. exited the JCPOA in 2018. Prolonged economic sanctions have made Iran's economic problems worse and sparked frequent social unrest, but they have failed to bring about regime change or substantial political reform, according to the main conclusion.

According to the research, sanctions have severely limited Iran's political economy, which has resulted in rising prices, decreased incomes, unstable currencies, and worsening living conditions. Protests have been mobilised across different socioeconomic strata and geographic regions, and these variables have played a significant role in this. Repression, economic adaptation, and elite solidarity have all contributed to the Iranian dictatorship's remarkable longevity. Instead of weakening the ruling alliance, sanctions have often strengthened hardline dominance and reduced prospects for moderates and reformists.

### Policy Implications

U. S. sanctions policy and international initiatives against Iran and similar totalitarian regimes are profoundly affected by this study's findings.

The assumption that more economic pressure would invariably lead to political transformation needs to be

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reevaluated by policymakers. While conservative elites in Iran have benefited from comprehensive sanctions, the sanctions themselves have hurt ordinary Iranians and given power to networks and institutions that use coercion to avoid punishment. Sanctions regimes of the future should focus less on the economy as a whole and more on the assets of the elite, corruption networks, and particular institutions.

Second, a thorough diplomatic strategy should incorporate the sanctions policy. There is a greater incentive for noncompliance and less chance of elite reappraisal due to the absence of practical diplomatic alternatives or compliance incentives. Instead of unilateral maximum-pressure measures, global cooperation and conditional sanctions release tied to verifiable actions are more likely to influence internal discussions.

Third, protecting and empowering civil society should be given more priority. Unintentionally undermining social forces that could support internal reform are sanctions that restrict access to communication technologies, financial systems, and humanitarian routes. To make sure that sanctions don't weaken grassroots resistance, we need enforcement mechanisms and clear exceptions.

It is more likely that long-term political change in Iran will result from internal processes than from external pressure, and foreign bodies must recognise this. Strategies that rely solely on economic suffering are more likely to fail than those that prioritise delayed transition,

such as increasing access to information, documenting human rights violations, and maintaining diplomatic contacts.

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## Effects of Herbal Medicine on the Mental Health and Well-being of Potential Mothers: A Systematic Review

### Abstract

Maternal mental health is a vital aspect of reproductive health and general wellbeing of women of reproductive age. Among the psychological disorders that usually impact women especially potential mothers are anxiety, depression, and stress, which can have a considerable impact on maternal and neonatal outcomes. Women in most regions of the globe, especially the low- and middle-income nations, often rely on herbal medicine to treat the conditions that arise during pregnancy such as mental illnesses. The use of herbal remedies like chamomile, ginger, lavender and ginseng is also common because of cultural acceptance owing to perceived safety, cheapness, and accessibility. The research focused on the impacts of herbal medicine on the mental health and well-being of the potential mothers. The review was based on PRISMA. PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect and CINAHL were searched in databases. The published works that fall within the period 2015 to 2025 were considered and more particularly recent works published after 2020. There is evidence that there are some herbal treatments that can reduce anxiety, insomnia and emotional well-being. Nevertheless, safety issues are still raised as well as herb-drug interactions and no dosage standardization. The study suggested that healthcare providers should educate pregnant women about the use of safe herbal medicine.

**Keywords:** Herbal Medicine, Mental Health, Mental Wellness, Reproductive Health, Depression, Stress Disorders

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### Introduction

Mental illness in women during their reproductive age has become a global health issue that has attracted the concern of psychologists, health practitioners and government. These mental associated abnormalities such as depression, anxiety and stress are some of the most prevalent psychological issues that are reported to be associated with potential mothers. According to the World Health Organization, it is estimated that mental health disorders happen in about 10-20 percent of

pregnant women in the world, with higher rates in low and middle-income societies that do not have access to mental health services (WHO, 2022). These psychological issues can be caused by various factors such as hormonal alterations, child bearing anxiety, financial pressures, unsupportive social groups as well as maternal and child health anxieties. The significance of mental health during pregnancy is especially great, as maternal psychological health predetermines both maternal and fetal

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outcomes. Preterm birth, low birth weight and poor maternal-infant relationships and developmental issues in children have been linked to maternal depression and anxiety (Stein *et al.*, 2021). Maternal stress can also have effects on hormonal regulation as well as on immune functioning which can adversely impact pregnancy outcomes. This has made maternal mental health an issue of standard in the world maternal health programs and policies. To address these issues, scientists and medical practitioners have gradually been investigating different interventions that could be used to promote the mental well-being of prospective mothers. These comprise psychological interventions, pharmacological intervention, lifestyle change and complementary or alternative medicine. One of these methods has been the application of herbal medicine, and this has received a lot of attention especially to the women who want natural or traditional treatment.

Herbal medicine is the application of plants or plant extracts as a medical treatment. It is also among the oldest healthcare practice and is still common in most of the cultures worldwide. The World Health Organization holds that close to 80 percent of the world population uses traditional medicine such as herbs to meet their primary healthcare requirements. Herbal medicine is part of the cultural healthcare practices and traditions of maternal care in most African, Asian and Latin American communities. Herbal medicine in pregnancy has been documented as being used in numerous countries such

as Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, China and the United States. Women have been known to treat their pregnancy related symptoms like nausea, sleeplessness, tiredness and emotional turmoil using herbs. Moreover, some of the herbal preparations are assumed to enhance relaxation, alleviate anxiety, and promote overall health in pregnancy (Kennedy *et al.*, 2020). These are the perceived advantages that have led to the increased popularity of herbal medicine among pregnant mothers and mothers intending to have a baby. Although the use of herbal medicine in pregnancy has been extensively used, the safety and efficacy of this procedure have been an issue of scientific controversy.

Although there are certain herbal products that might be of therapeutic value, the toxicity of some compounds, the wrong dosage, contamination, or the interactions with traditional drugs, can potentially be a threat. This is further complicated by the absence of standard regulation and clinical evidence on the safe use of herbal medicine in maternal healthcare (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022). Cultural beliefs, accessibility, affordability, as well as limited access to formal healthcare facilities are some of the factors that affect use of herbal medicine in most regions. Potential mothers see herbal medicine as being safer compared to drug medication, particularly during the pregnancy period whereby the fetal safety is an issue of concern. Nonetheless, this impression might not necessarily be congruent with the scientific information about the safety of particular herbal products. Considering the rising prevalence of herbal medicine

among women of reproductive age and the growing awareness of maternal mental health as a severe public health concern, there is a necessity to thoroughly investigate the existing evidence on the impact of herbal medicine on the results of maternal mental health. This study would examine and compile the available literature on the impact of herbal medicine on the psychological health and wellbeing of the potential mothers.

The review shall consider the herbal medications that women take during pregnancy or in pre-pregnancy and the mental health consequences of these medications coupled with the potential benefits and dangers of such medications. Through the combination of evidence collected in various research studies, the study aims at offering insights that can be used by healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers in enhancing the practice of maternal mental healthcare.

### Conceptual Clarification

#### Herbal Medicine

Herbal medicine is the use of plant substances, including leaves, roots, seeds, bark or flowers, in medical treatments and constitutes a core aspect of the traditional medical system and other processes of complementary healthcare (World Health Organization, 2021; Ekor, 2021). Herbal medicines are also used to cure many health problems such as digestive disorders, infections, pain, insomnia and emotional stress (Posadzki *et al.*, 2021). Herbal medicine has become more popular in the world over the last few decades because of the growing interest towards natural health

products and the perceived constraints or adverse effects of specific pharmaceutical therapies (WHO, 2022; Gyasi *et al.*, 2020). In women of child-bearing age, herbal remedies are often taken to address anxiety diseases during pregnancy like nausea, fatigue and sleep disorders (Kennedy *et al.*, 2020; Holst *et al.*, 2021).

### Methodology

A comprehensive and systematic literature search was conducted across multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and CINAHL. The search strategy involved the use of controlled vocabulary and free-text terms derived from the study objectives. The search terms included combinations of:

- i. herbal medicine
- ii. potential mothers
- iii. maternal mental health
- iv. anxiety
- v. depression
- vi. stress
- vii. complementary medicine

### Eligibility Criteria

#### Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they:

- i) Were peer-reviewed empirical studies.
- ii) Focused on herbal medicine use among pregnant women or potential mothers
- iii) Reported outcomes related to maternal mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression, stress).

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- iv) Were published in English.
- v) Provided sufficient methodological details and findings relevant to the review.

**Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were excluded if they:

- i) Were non-empirical (e.g., editorials, commentaries, reviews without data).
- ii) Were duplicate publications.
- iii) Did not address maternal mental health outcomes.
- iv) Focused on unrelated populations or interventions.
- v) Had incomplete or inaccessible full texts.

All identified records were exported and managed systematically. Duplicate studies were removed prior to screening. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text assessment of eligible articles. A total of 512 records were identified from database searches. After removing duplicates, 420 records remained and were screened. Of these, 345 records were excluded based on title and abstract screening.

The full texts of 75 articles were assessed for eligibility, with 55 articles excluded due to relevance or failure to meet inclusion criteria. thus, 20 studies were included in the final review. A structured data extraction form was developed to systematically collect relevant information from each included study. Extracted variables included:

- i) Author(s) and year of publication
- ii) Country of study
- iii) Study design
- iv) Sample size
- v) Type of herbal medicine used
- vi) Maternal mental health outcomes
- vii) Key findings

**PRISMA Flow (Narrative Representation)**

- i) **Identification:** Records identified through database searching (n = 512)
- ii) **Screening:** Records after duplicates removed (n = 420); records screened (n = 420); records excluded (n = 345)
- iii) **Eligibility:** Full-text articles assessed (n = 75); full-text articles excluded (n = 55)
- iv) **Included:** Studies included in the systematic review (n = 20)

**Table 1: Summary of Studies on Herbal Medicine and Mental Health**

S/N	Author(s), Year, Place	Purpose	Design & Sample	Herbal Medicine	Mental Health Outcome	Key Findings
1	El Hajj <i>et al.</i> , (2020), Zambia	Prevalence of herbal use	Cross-sectional (n=446)	Ginger, aloe vera	Stress, anxiety	High prevalence; used for coping
2	Adeoye <i>et al.</i> , (2023), Nigeria	Herbal use outcomes	Cohort (n=571)	Mixed herbs	Stress, anxiety	Socio-cultural influence
3	Belayneh <i>et al.</i> , (2022), Ethiopia	Predictors of use	Cross-sectional	Various plants	Stress	Accessibility-driven

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4	Adane <i>et al.</i> , (2020), Ethiopia	Meta-analysis	Systematic review	Multiple herbs	Stress, anxiety	High prevalence
5	El Hajj and Holst (2020), SSA	Review	Literature review	Various herbs	Mental health risks	Safety concerns
6	Larle <i>et al.</i> , (2025), Ghana	Experiences	Qualitative (n=9)	Neem, bitter leaf	Stress coping	Cultural use
7	Sichalwe <i>et al.</i> , (2025), Tanzania	Motivation	Qualitative (n=16)	Plant remedies	Stress	Cultural beliefs
8	Bouqoufi <i>et al.</i> , (2025), Morocco	Prevalence	Cross-sectional	35 plants	Emotional well-being	48% prevalence
9	Japhari <i>et al.</i> , (2025), Tanzania	Meta-analysis	Review	Various herbs	Stress	Widespread use
10	Zamawe (2020), Malawi	Effects	Mixed-methods	Traditional herbs	Anxiety	Mixed outcomes
11	Nwosu <i>et al.</i> , (2022), Nigeria	Traditional use	Cross-sectional	Herbal mixtures	Stress	High reliance
12	Maduka and Okubor (2024), Nigeria	Predictors	Cross-sectional	Herbal remedies	Anxiety	Socioeconomic factors
13	Ogunlakin <i>et al.</i> , (2023), Nigeria	Plant effects	Review	Plant extracts	Depression	Health impact
14	Kuug <i>et al.</i> , (2023), Ghana	Cultural beliefs	Ethnographic	Herbal mixtures	Stress	Cultural link
15	Togola <i>et al.</i> , (2023), Mali	Plant use	Ethnobotanical	Medicinal plants	Distress	Coping mechanism
16	Subair & Ademilua (2022), Nigeria	Indigenous medicine	Survey	Herbal recipes	Stress	Traditional beliefs
17	Babikir <i>et al.</i> , (2021), Sudan	CAM behavior	Cross-sectional	Herbal concoctions	Anxiety	Combined coping
18	Azimi-Nezhad <i>et al.</i> , (2022), Iran	CAM use	Qualitative	Herbal + acupuncture	Anxiety, depression	Improved well-being
19	Hiadzi & Bofo (2020), Ghana	Health-seeking	Qualitative	Herbal remedies	Stress	Combined methods
20	Taner & Güneri (2023), Turkey	CAM use	Cross-sectional	Herbs, diet	Anxiety	Emotional support

Source: Researcher's compilation, 2026

## Results and Discussion

The findings of the study provide compelling evidence that herbal medicine plays a significant role in shaping maternal mental health outcomes, particularly within resource-constrained and culturally diverse settings. The widespread use of herbal remedies observed across the included studies reflects a broader phenomenon of medical pluralism, where pregnant

women combine traditional and conventional healthcare approaches to address both physical and psychological needs. One of the most consistent findings across the studies is the perceived anxiolytic and stress-reducing effects of herbal medicine. Many women reported using herbal remedies as a means of coping with emotional distress, anxiety, and pregnancy-related stress (Larle *et al.*, 2025; Sichalwe *et al.*, 2025).

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This aligns with evidence from Azimi-Nezhad *et al.*, (2022), which demonstrated that complementary therapies, including herbal medicine, contribute to improved psychological well-being. The use of herbal remedies as a coping strategy may be particularly relevant in contexts where access to formal mental health services is limited, thereby positioning herbal medicine as an accessible and culturally acceptable alternative.

Furthermore, the strong influence of socio-cultural factors in shaping herbal medicine use cannot be overlooked. Studies from Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia consistently highlight that traditional beliefs, family influence, and community norms significantly determine health-seeking behavior during pregnancy (Adeoye *et al.*, 2023; Kuug *et al.*, 2023; Belayneh *et al.*, 2022). In many African societies, herbal medicine is not merely a therapeutic option but a culturally embedded practice, often perceived as safer, more natural, and spiritually aligned with local belief systems.

Despite these perceived benefits, the findings also raise important clinical and public health concerns. A major limitation identified across the studies is the lack of standardized clinical trials and regulatory frameworks governing herbal medicine use. As noted by El Hajj and Holst (2020), the absence of rigorous scientific validation limits the ability to establish the safety, dosage, and efficacy of many herbal products. Similarly, Ogunlakin *et al.*, (2023) emphasized the potential for adverse effects and herb-drug interactions, particularly when herbal remedies are used alongside conventional medications. Another

critical issue is the variability in outcomes, as some studies reported mixed or inconclusive findings (Zamawe, 2020). This inconsistency suggests that the effects of herbal medicine on maternal mental health may depend on factors such as the type of herb used, dosage, duration of use, and individual physiological differences. Consequently, there is a need for more rigorous experimental and longitudinal studies to establish causal relationships and clarify the therapeutic potential of herbal medicine in maternal mental health.

### Conclusion/ Recommendations

Maternal mental health is a vital element of the reproductive health and the general well-being. The results of the systematic review point to the possibility that some herbal medicines could have a supportive effect on the reduction of anxiety, the improvement of sleep and the level of emotional stability in potential mothers. Nevertheless, the issue of safety and lack of clinical evidence still is a significant challenge. More studies especially randomized controlled studies are needed to determine the efficacy and security of herbal treatment at pregnancy. Medical oversight and evidence-based practice play a significant role in making herbal medicine safe in the healthcare of potential mothers. Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

- ii. Potential mothers and pregnant women should be informed by healthcare providers about the safe use of herbal medicine.
- iii. NAFDAC should strengthen supervision and controlled

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- practices for the production and distribution of herbal medicine
- iv. Herbal treatment should be examined in more randomized clinical trials.

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## Indigenous Language Values and Economic Development in Nigeria

### Abstract

Language is a crucial factor in nation-building, with its strategic importance being contingent on its communicative and instrumental roles. This paper critically examined indigenous language-propelled practical approaches to promoting Nigerian economic development. Specifically, it investigated how indigenous language education, paid language proficiency programmes, language certification programmes, and indigenous language-propelled tourism programmes would promote Nigerian economic advancement. Relying on linguistic capital theory, this paper argued that the application of the four approaches above would enhance Nigerian economic progress. Using data from existing literature and conceptual analysis, it discovered a positive correlation between the four approaches and Nigeria's economic development. Thus, the findings showed that proper deployment of the four approaches would improve Nigeria's economic development. Subsequently, this paper concluded that sustainable economic development in Nigeria requires a symbiotic relationship between Nigerian indigenous languages and Western languages, given the contemporary globalisation agenda; a synergy grounded on cultural autonomy and responsible linguistic interdependence. Subsequently, this paper recommended modifying Nigerian education policy to accord indigenous languages their pride of place in national life, with benefits accruing.

**Keywords:** *Communication, Economic development, Indigenous languages, Instrument, Symbolic power*

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### Introduction

One question that has agitated the minds of thinkers down the ages is one concerning the relationship between language and economic development. It focused on whether language is merely a communicative tool or whether it also serves as an instrument. Interestingly, some scholars have made honest efforts to respond to it. One such scholar was Bourdieu (1986, 1991), who, through his linguistic capital theory, conceived

language as a symbolic capital. Another effort in that direction was Halliday (1994, 1975), who viewed language as a resource for making meaning. Others rose from an ontological stand, and viewed language as a house of being (Heidegger, 1947), a form of life (Wittgenstein, 1953), essentially constitutive of institutional reality (Searle, 1995), and as what enhances shared meaning and fusion of horizon (Gadamer, 2004). From all these studies, one can decipher an explicit and implicit reference to the instrumental role of

language. The explicit role is evident in Bourdieu (1986, 1991) and Halliday (1994, 1975), while the implicit reference is apparent in the ontological view of language, as no economic development is possible without a proper interpretation and understanding of reality through the house of being – language. Likewise, people need to fuse their horizons to pursue and maintain the same economic objectives. Besides, one cannot develop people without an insight into their lives. Therefore, this paper sustains that Nigeria's indigenous language education, paid language proficiency programmes, language certification programmes, and indigenous language-propelled tourism are some of the practical ways of enhancing the economic development of Nigeria.

Admittedly, though some scholars had already researched language and economic development, there exists a knowledge gap in the concrete application of the aforementioned ways to economic development in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper sets out to bridge the above lacuna by examining the relationship between them and economic development in Nigeria.

### **Conceptualising Language**

Language is a subject matter of many academic fields, such as linguistics, anthropology, sociology, mass communication, philosophy, and so on. In philosophy, some scholars viewed language as one of the most common features of humans, as their daily activities are language-driven. For instance, Heidegger (1973) noted that man speaks always, whether awake or asleep. However, language is not

limited to the vocal dimension. Humans also represent their thoughts symbolically. It implies that language does not only involve vocal signs but also a symbolic representation of human thoughts, events, and things. Considered from the above backdrop, language is "that activity with which man, through vocal or written signs, puts himself in communion with his peers (or with some intelligent being, for instance God) to express his own sentiments, desires, or knowledge" (Mondin, 1991, p.133). The above definition points to the communicational dimension of language. In this role, language constitutes an information medium, a conduit enabling messages to pass among humans, as well as enabling humans to communicate with spiritual beings in the religious sphere. Besides serving a communicational role, language also performs expressive and descriptive functions (Mondin, 1991). It is language that helps humans to communicate with others, express their views and emotions, and describe the state of affairs.

### **Constitutive Nature of Language**

Further, language goes beyond the above conception to point to something more ontological, as language is viewed as a faculty in humans (Heidegger, 1973; Mondin, 1991). As a human faculty, language is humans' capability for speech and symbolic activities. Therefore, language is also constitutive of the being of man. Underscoring this, Mondin (1991) affirmed that "language denotes the function, the capacity with which man is naturally gifted to express himself and to communicate with his

own peers through the word" (p.151). The fallout from the above affirmation is that language is not something unnatural to man.

Additionally, it is significant to observe that Mondin's view of language above verifies Heidegger (1947), who had earlier conceived language as the house of being, indicating that language is the abode encasing being and the aperture for accessing it. Therefore, being reveals itself to the world in and through language. Ipso facto, the world derives intelligibility and meaningfulness in and through language. The above concept of language also confirms Chomsky (1965), who argued for an innate or genetic source of language, a theory that advocates and sustains generative and universal grammar. Also, Searle's (1995) view that language is essentially constitutive of institutional reality aligns with the constitutive nature of language, as language defines institutional structures such as money, marriage, governments, and property. Wittgenstein (1953) also supports the constitutive nature of language as it conceives language as a form of life and argues that "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life" (P1, 19). It implies that understanding is contextual, and speaking a language is part of an activity. So, one requires a speech community to understand a community, depicting Wittgenstein's theory of language games.

### **Language as an Instrumental Tool**

Language is not only a communicative tool but also an instrumental one. It implies that language is a social resource. As a resource, language represents a symbolic capital that

confers symbolic power, subsequently convertible into economic capital. The above view is glaring in Bourdieu's (1991) linguistic capital theory, where he viewed language as an asset or symbolic capital. Halliday (1994, 1975) also adopted a similar stance by viewing language as a resource for making meaning and a meaning potential. Likewise, Halliday (2003) argued that language is a reality which one learns by learning how to mean. All these points are related to language as an instrument.

### **Indigenous Languages and Development**

It is also important to look at works dealing with indigenous languages and development, especially those related to Africa. Even though the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis or linguistic relativity hypothesis was not about Africa, it is still very relevant in this discourse as it explains how the structure of a people's language shapes their thought and their perception of the world (Whorf, 1956). Hence, a people's real world is to a great extent unconsciously built up on their language habits, and their language habits predispose their choices of interpretation (Sapir, 1929). For the above reason, Whorf (1956) insists that people should dissect nature along lines laid down by their native languages. Following the value of language above, particularly the place of a people's language in shaping reality, Fanon (2008) critiqued epistemic violence. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (2006) made a case against any form of linguistic domination. Wiredu (1995) sued for conceptual decolonisation.

Hountondji's (1997) call for Africa to embrace endogenous knowledge against

depending on the Western knowledge system is also a support for the use of indigenous languages for development, though he did not use the concepts endogenous and indigenous interchangeably. According to him, endogenous embodies knowledge originated, inherited, identified by a people as theirs, while the term indigenous always has a derogatory connotation emanating from the West. In this denigrating connotation, he noted that indigenous refers to a specific historic experience, precisely one of integration of autochthonous cultures into a world-wide 'market' in which these perforce are pushed down to inferior positions. He stated that 'endogenous' becomes 'indigenous' in and through such a world-widening process (Antony, n.d.). So, the above distinction notwithstanding, ordinarily the two terms point to the same thing.

### **Concrete Ways of Using Nigerian Indigenous Languages as an Economic Resource**

There are many practical ways of using the Nigerian indigenous languages for sustainable development. These diverse ways include indigenous language education, paid language proficiency programmes, language certification programmes, and indigenous language-propelled tourism.

### **Indigenous Languages Education**

Language is not merely a medium of communication. It is also constitutive of reality, implying that it is crucial for interpreting and understanding reality, as evident in the Heideggerian notion of language as the house of being (Heidegger, 1947). If language in general

is significant for understanding the world, indigenous languages play a more significant role in that direction, as they are the languages of people's daily engagements. Besides, following Wittgenstein's (1953) concept of language as a form of life and his language game, which argues that reality is socially constituted, one requires an understanding of a social setting to understand and interpret reality within a given community. Interestingly, indigenous languages readily offer this much-needed contextual understanding and interpretation.

Based on the above submission, it is glaring how using Nigerian indigenous languages as formal languages for teaching and learning could promote sustainable development in Nigeria. The use of Nigerian indigenous languages as prescribed above is important for improved teaching and learning, as the structure of a people's language shapes their thought and world perception (Whorf, 1956). Besides, their real world is to a great extent unconsciously built up on their language habits, and their language habits predispose their choices of interpretation (Sapir, 1929). Hence, indigenous languages are critical to accessing reality, a view supported by Whorf's (1956) argument that people should dissect nature along lines laid down by their native languages.

Presently, in Nigeria, English is the official language of formal instruction. Subsequently, teaching and learning are done in and through the English language. So, following the significance of language as constitutive of reality as presented above, it is crucial to use

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Nigerian indigenous languages as the languages of formal academic instruction. The adoption would promote effective teaching and learning and enhance the economic value of Nigerian languages, as language is a social resource convertible into economic capital. Of course, the above argument corroborates Bourdieu's (1991), who conceived language as an asset or symbolic capital. Likewise, it confirms Halliday (1994, 1975), who viewed language as a resource for making meaning and a meaning potential.

Under the situation above, Nigerian indigenous languages would no longer be viewed as inferior vis-à-vis other Western languages, such as English, French, German, and so on. Rather, they would be considered as enjoying equal status with them. This new understanding of the status of Nigerian languages will not only save them from extinction, but also goes deeper to create and expand job opportunities in Nigeria, as emphasis on indigenous languages would imply demand for more hands to teach them.

Another important fact about language is that it embodies people's culture and worldview. Thus, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (2006) contends that "language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history" (p.15). It means that language is a repository containing basic facts about people. So, in people's language is archived their history, thinking pattern, and vision of reality. These repositories are a basic matrix for understanding and interpreting people. Therefore, they offer instructional material for learning

about a people. Then, as teaching and learning are facilitated through instructional materials, the adoption of Nigerian indigenous languages will also lead to the production of more indigenous language-based instructional materials, which would subsequently impact the economy of Nigeria. The increase in productivity also has positive implications for the labour force in the affected industries, as an increase in production would require an increase in the labour force. Even in a situation of mechanised production or where robots are used instead of human beings, it will also affect the labour force in the affected industries, which will resultantly affect the economy of the nation. In a situation where the materials are imported, the Nigerian economy will be positively affected by the fact that import duties are also a source of revenue to the nation. Additionally, the need to domesticate the industries producing the above instructional material will not only encourage greater participation of Nigerians in their production but could also lead to indigenisation of the industries, thereby providing employment opportunities to Nigerians. Furthermore, it can lead to optimal utilisation of local resources to make up for those that are not importable, and promote creativity and entrepreneurship, given that necessity is the mother of invention.

Besides, languages enhance common understanding and shared vision. Hence, Gadamer argued that mutual understanding arises from the fusion of horizons and shared meaning. Likewise, Taylor viewed open dialogue and

predefined social scripts as the platforms for the formation and shaping of identities, respectively. If language in general offers the above advantage, the use of indigenous languages offers more, as they are the languages of people's daily interactions. Subsequently, teaching and learning in Nigerian indigenous languages would have a practical economic impact on the use of online learning packages for learning various languages. Today, there are many such packages. However, with the adoption of Nigerian languages as the official medium of instruction in schools, people will be encouraged to create similar packages to facilitate their understanding. The creation will not only impact the economy of the creators but will also have a cumulative effect as it will improve the economy of the website owners, as well as those of network companies, such as MTN, AIRTEL, to name but a few. This improvement arises because access to the online material requires data provided by the network establishments. The more people access the online materials, the more data they consume, which subsequently implies an improved economy for the nation and all connected with the process. Therefore, using Nigerian languages as official languages of academic instruction is one of the ways of utilising language as a resource towards sustainable development of the nation, as it presents language as a marketable asset, which will positively impact other sectors of the economy.

However, it is crucial to note that emphasis on indigenous language education does not call for a total

repudiation of Western and non-Nigerian languages. Instead, it is a call to give Nigeria's indigenous languages their pride of place in domestic and official engagements in Nigeria. So, it calls for a symbiotic relationship between them, one grounded on what Fricker (2007) calls epistemic justice. It is a recognition that Nigerian indigenous languages enjoy equal validity vis-à-vis Western languages, and so deserve linguistic autonomy and should never be marginalised under any guise.

### **Paid Language Programmes and Language Proficiency Certification Programmes**

As a social resource, language represents a symbolic capital. Here, Bourdieu (1986) viewed symbolic capital as capital, that is, "apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity" (p.255). There is a symbiotic relationship between symbolic capital and other forms of capital: social, cultural, and economic. The rapport lies in the fact that, whereas symbolic capital derives its root from them, they in turn derive their validation from symbolic capital. Instances of symbolic capital are intellectual property, trade mark, reputation, certification, etc. Through symbolic capital, one obtains proficiency and competence to perform certain acts. Thus, symbolic capital confers symbolic power. Paid language programmes and language proficiency certification programmes are two of the ways of obtaining this symbolic power.

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Paid language programmes entail learning Nigerian languages as a prerequisite for entrance into Nigeria, as is the case in some other countries, such as Germany, France, Italy, to name but a few. With the above programmes, the persons concerned acquire competences to work in the designated places. Likewise, when such is in place in Nigeria, entrants into Nigeria first learn the language of the respective community in which they desire to work to acquire competence in the language. This competence, now subsisting as symbolic power, is convertible into symbolic capital and subsequently economic capital, as it makes the new entrants employable at the place. The above development will also impact the Nigerian economy greatly, as it would reduce unemployment, given that the facilitation of the programmes will require a workforce, mostly indigenes, to achieve it.

Furthermore, when there are employment opportunities, there is a high probability of a reduction in crimes and insecurity plaguing the nation, with their resultant retrogression, economic instability, loss of lives and property, as the majority of those who would have taken to such unpatriotic behaviours will be meaningfully engaged. Of course, such engaged minds are domains of creativity and progression vis-a-vis idle minds, which most often are considered as a safe terrain for all kinds of evil machinations. The argument above is further supported by fragile state theory, which maintains that when a state fails to provide its citizens with basic needs and expectations, it renders itself a

fragile state. Consequently, it exposes its citizens to five clusters of fragility indicators: violence, lack of access to justice for all, ineffective, unaccountable, and exclusive institutions; economic exclusion and instability; and inability to prevent and adjust to socioeconomic and environmental shocks and disasters (Mcloughlin & Idris, 2016; Nnaemedo & Ugwu, 2025). Under a fragile state, development is the first casualty. However, when a state is strong, it is economically viable. Paid language programmes are sure to confer competencies that would provide such viability, since they offer citizens job opportunities leading to economic empowerment and vitality.

Another way of obtaining the symbolic power translatable into economic capital is through language proficiency certification programmes, which aim at ensuring that new entrants into a country have basic language proficiency before the country grants them work or study access. Unlike paid language programmes, which could be done within the country the entrant wants to study or work, Language proficiency certification programmes are a requirement for applying to work or study in countries requiring it. Today, there are many such programmes globally, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) required in the United States of America and Canada. There is also the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), a global test that measures people's ability to use English. It is commonly required for employment, migration and university admission in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia,

New Zealand, the United States of America, and Ireland. Also, there is *Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française* (DELF)- Diploma in French Language Studies, required for studies, scholarship, and employment in France. Also, there is *Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (HSK) - "Chinese Proficiency Test", demanded of those wishing to work or study in China.

Language proficiency certification programmes confer language proficiency on those who acquire it, which subsequently improves their market value, especially among those needing such competence. This competence makes them employable, thereby converting the symbolic power they possess into symbolic capital and ultimately economic capital. Such helps to improve their countries' economy, given the financial accruals from the applicants all over the world. Of course, because this financial value trickles from individuals, one may erroneously overlook the amount to which they add when brought together. Besides, they also serve as sources of income for individuals. In fact, it could be likened to a case of little drops of water that grow into a mighty ocean. For instance, outside the amount paid to the government, there are other related services which are not within the jurisdiction of the government. Other agencies and individuals run such processes as online lectures for prospective candidates for these examinations. By so doing, the programme also helps to improve their income. Beyond financial empowerment, language proficiency certification programmes also provide the citizens of

countries where they are run with job opportunities, as they require human resources to manage. Understandably, the demand for the workforce increases with an increase in the number of applicants in the countries running the programmes, which at the same time results in greater or improved productivity, with its attendant economic boost.

### **Indigenous Language-Propelled Tourism**

As a social resource, language is a cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986) conceived cultural capital as comprising all capabilities, based on resources, knowledge, and culture. Significantly, he noted that, like other forms of capital, cultural capital is convertible into economic capital. Such is evident from the fact that cultural heritages are not only recreational facilities but, at the same time, sources of economic growth to different nations in the world. Tourist centres are one of these cultural heritages.

Presently, in Nigeria, there are many places of tourist attractions, such as Zuma Rock and River Niger-River Benue Confluence in the North-Central; Yankari National Park and Bima Hills in the North-East; Ancient Nok Settlement and Agungu Fishing Festival Site in the North-West; National War Museum, Ojukwu Bunker, Ezioba cave, Ogbaukwu Cave, Igbo-Ukwu Archaeological sites, Cathedral Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity Onitsha, Maria Assumpta Cathedral Owerri, and Immaculate Conception Cathedral Okigwe in the South-East; Benin Bronze casting workshop, Obudu Mountain Resort, and International Pilgrimage

Centre, Elele in the South-South; Oke Maria Pilgrimage Centre, Lekki Conservation Centre, National Theatre, Fajuyi Memorial Park, and Olumo Rock in the South-West, to name but a few.

Language plays a great role in tourism as it confers certain competences on tourist guides, who in turn translate the competences into symbolic power and subsequently to symbolic capital and economic capital. Hence, the competence confers on the tourist guide the symbolic power to lead and instruct tourists as they visit various sites and historical scenes. For instance, in Israel, every arrangement for pilgrimage includes a provision of a tourist guide. Usually, sometimes tourists do not understand the language of the country they visit for pilgrimage. It is this tourist guide that takes them to the various places they are to visit and explains to them things they need to know as they travel along the road, for sites to behold are not limited to the specific sites they stop over, but also the significant places they pass as they travel to these sites.

In the same way, tourists visiting Nigeria need a tourist guide with language competence to direct them as they visit prominent locations in the country. This language competence, in turn, will offer job opportunities to Nigerian citizens and, accordingly, provide them with financial support, which would positively impact the Nigerian economy. Additionally, the Nigerian languages could also play an economic role in hotel management, as tourists also need people who are at home with the language to help them know more about the hotel environment, which will subsequently make them feel

relaxed. The same applies to the airport. Tourists need immigration and airport staff to make them feel at home in the environment. These staff, though their services are short, unlike those of a tourist guide, contribute immensely to ensuring the overall success of tourists' visits. Thus, language competence is always taken into consideration in employing staff to work in an airport and places of tourist attractions. It implies that this language competence translates into symbolic power and symbolic capital and subsequently into economic capital by promoting employment and the economy of the staff and the nation at large.

### Conclusion

This paper focused on some indigenous language-driven practical approaches to enhancing economic development in Nigeria. The approaches include engaging in indigenous language education, paid language programmes, language proficiency certification programmes, and indigenous language-propelled tourism. Centrally, this paper argues that the practical application of the four above-mentioned approaches would enhance Nigerian economic advancement exceedingly.

This paper notes that engaging in indigenous languages education in Nigeria would promote teaching and learning, leading to academic competence, as the learning process rests on people's language structure, thinking patterns, vision of reality and other linguistic repositories, which shape their thought and world perception. This academic competence confers symbolic power on beneficiaries,

which subsequently translates to economic capital.

Paid language programmes and language proficiency certification programmes are other practical ways of attaining academic competence and proficiency with their attendant symbolic power, which is, in the long run, convertible into economic capital. The veracity of the above claim is contingent on the fact that attainment of academic competence promotes employability, thereby impacting Nigeria's economy constructively.

Nigeria's indigenous languages are critical to tourism as they confer certain competences on tourist guides, who in turn translate the competences into symbolic power and subsequently to symbolic, cultural, and economic capital, respectively. Thus, places of tourist attractions are not only recreational facilities but at the same time sources of Nigerian economic development.

Therefore, this paper concludes that sustainable economic development in Nigeria requires a healthy marriage of indigenous language and other languages used in Nigeria, given the contemporary globalisation agenda and grounded on cultural autonomy and responsible linguistic interdependence. Hence, it recommends adapting Nigerian education policy to accord indigenous languages their pride of place in national life.

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## A Critique of the Transcendental and Pantheistic View of God in the Ibibio Tradition

### Abstract

This study presented a philosophical critique of the transcendental and pantheistic view of God in the Ibibio tradition. To understand this cosmology, it should be borne in mind that the Ibibio conceive of the universe as being made up of hierarchy of beings with Abasi (Supreme God) as being at the apex, followed by Ndem or Obot Emana (guidian angels), then the ancestors, man, and lastly Isong (man's environment). The Ibibio conception over time has been misunderstood as pantheism which is the concept that God and the universe are necessarily one and the same. Drawing from ethnographic, anthropological and African philosophical sources, this study adopted the method of critical analysis to define the concept of Abasi (Supreme Being) in Ibibio cosmology as both transcendent and pantheistic with reference to hierarchy of being. While the Ibibio metaphysical conception avoids absolute anthropomorphism and preserves divine supremacy, its simultaneous affirmation of both realities raises conceptual issues concerning divine personality, causality, moral agency and metaphysical coherence. In analysing this terms, this paper maintained that, the diffusement of the transcendental and pantheistic nature of Abasi in Ibibio cosmology responsibly participates in shaping the world in co-creating it as well as underpins the solidarity we have with other human beings.

**Keywords:** Ibibio, Cosmology, Abasi, Transcendent, Pantheism.

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### Introduction

The concept of God in African traditional religions has long attracted scholarly attention. Early anthropologist's such as Edward Burnett Taylor mischaracterized African religious thought as animistic and

philosophically primitive. However, subsequent African scholars, particularly John S. Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu have demonstrated that many African traditions maintain sophisticated conceptions of a Supreme Being. Within the Ibibio tradition, God

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is known as Abasi. Abasi is conceived as supreme, omnipotent and beyond human comprehension. Simultaneously he acts within the cosmos, manifesting in natural forces and accessible through spiritual intermediaries. The dual structure invites philosophical questions such as: is the Ibibio God strictly transcendent? Is the world view truly pantheistic? or does it approximate pantheism (the belief that the universe is in God). This paper critically examines these questions through conceptual analysis, comparative metaphysics and critique.

Historically, the Ibibio people are found predominantly in Akwa Ibom State, the Southern coastal area of Nigeria. Before we talk about the cosmology of Ibibio people, who are the Ibibio people and what does 'Ibibio' really mean? Sarcastically, the word Ibibio has long ago been interpreted to mean 'petit', 'shortness', 'briefness', as not relating to a significant height. Funny as it sounds, but fundamentally held some accuracy of fact especially in the physique nature of a typical Ibibio person. Although, not in a general sense because of course a good number of Ibibio natives are born naturally possessing a tall physique, however, a noticeable number of her indigenes do not possess a significant height. Geographically, the Ibibio people are situated in the South South Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It has the largest ethnic group among the Annang and

Oron which are also ethnic group among the Akwa Ibom State. Historically, the Ibibio forefathers sojourned through the East Africa down to Ghana. Some settled in Cameroon, while some migrated to Benue Republic. When the Ibibio arrived in the Nigeria, they first settled at Ibom. It is believed that they were the original founders of 'Ibom' which is now known as Arochukwu in Abia State which is also located in the South East of Nigeria. It is estimated that the Ibibio settled in Arochukwu for over four hundred years before the Igbo's declared war. As at the time the Igbo's were migrating South South at about 1550 - 1720, from this point, the different ethnic groups and clans migrated until the Ibibio finally settled in what is now known as Akwa Ibom State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to critically examine the concepts of the transcendental and pantheistic views of God within the Ibibio traditional religious worldview. Other objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the concept of God in the Ibibio traditional religion, particularly how the Supreme Being is understood and represented within the cultural and religious worldview of the Ibibio people.
- ii. Analyze the transcendental view of God in the Ibibio tradition, focusing on the belief that God exists above,

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- beyond, and independent of the physical world.
- iii. Investigate the pantheistic view of God within the Ibibio worldview, especially the idea that God is present in nature and manifested in various aspects of the universe.
  - iv. Evaluate the philosophical implications of these two views, identifying their strengths, limitations, and areas of tension within Ibibio religious thought.
  - v. Provide a critical appraisal of whether the Ibibio conception of God is better understood as transcendental, pantheistic, or a synthesis of both perspectives.
  - vi. Contribute to the broader discourse in African philosophy and philosophy of religion by clarifying how indigenous African religious traditions conceptualize the nature of the Supreme Being.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The nature of God has remained one of the most enduring problems in the philosophy of religion. Philosophers and theologians have long debated whether God should be understood primarily as transcendent, existing beyond and independent of the universe, or as immanent, present within and throughout the natural world. In Western philosophy, this debate is often expressed through the rigidity between classical theism, which emphasizes divine transcendence, and pantheism,

which identifies God with the totality of existence (Spinoza 32; Hick 74). While these conceptual frameworks have been extensively discussed in Western philosophical discourse, their relevance and applicability to African indigenous religious traditions remain a subject of scholarly inquiry. Within African philosophy of religion, scholars have argued that traditional African conceptions of God often embody both transcendental and immanent characteristics. For instance, the Supreme Being is commonly portrayed as a creator who exists beyond the physical world while simultaneously being present and active within it through natural forces, spirits, and ancestral agencies (Mbiti 29; Idowu 45). This dual characterization raises important philosophical questions about the precise nature of the African conception of God: whether it should be understood as strictly transcendental, pantheistic, or a unique synthesis that transcends these conventional categories.

In the Ibibio traditional religious worldview, God, often referred to as *Abasi*, is generally regarded as the supreme creator and ultimate source of moral authority. At the same time, elements of the divine are believed to be manifested in natural phenomena, spiritual beings, and sacred aspects of the environment. Such beliefs suggest an intimate relationship between God and the cosmos, which some scholars

interpret as reflecting a pantheistic or panentheistic orientation (Udo 63; Ekong 118). However, this interpretation appears to stand in tension with other aspects of Ibibio belief that portray God as remote, supreme, and distinct from creation. The philosophical problem that arises, therefore, is the apparent ambiguity and conceptual tension in the Ibibio understanding of God. On the one hand, the transcendental view emphasizes God's separateness, supremacy, and absolute existence beyond the world. On the other hand, the pantheistic interpretation suggests that the divine is inseparable from nature and manifested in the totality of existence. This duality raises critical questions about whether these views are genuinely compatible within the Ibibio religious framework or whether they represent conflicting interpretations imposed by external philosophical categories. Consequently, the central problem of this study is to critically examine whether the Ibibio conception of God can be adequately explained through the philosophical categories of transcendence and pantheism, or whether these frameworks fail to capture the complexity of the Ibibio religious experience.

### Conceptual Review

**Transcendent:** When we say that God is transcendent we mean that he is beyond all other things or beings. In ontological sense, God transcends all creation and created beings because He is distinct from creation. In His very essence, He is different, He is beyond physical creation. God is transcendent beyond the need for 'body' time and space. God as a transcendent being does not depend on the universe because, He is independently set aside. According to St. Aquinas, "God is not mainly a being among beings but Being itself, subsistent and uncaused (42). God is not one being among others but the necessary act of being upon which all contingent realities depend. For Immanuel Kant, "God functions as a necessary postulate of practical reason rather than object of speculative knowledge" (328). In transcendental philosophy, God is not empirically demonstrable but functions as a postulate of practical reason. Kant situates God as a necessary moral assumption that guarantees the unity of virtue and happiness. In Tillich view, "God is not a Supreme being but the ground of being-itself" (235). Hegel also expounded the transcendental nature of God thus, "The divine is understood as Absolute spirit manifesting itself dialectically in history" (67). The concept of God as the transcendental being is understood not merely as a

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Supreme entity within the ontological order but as the ultimate ground, condition and foundation of all being. In other words, transcendence does not imply spatial remoteness but ontological superiority and foundational ultimacy. These philosophical and theological views provide a systematic analysis of the transcendental nature of God (the Supreme Being). It avoids reducing God to methodological imagery, empirical objectivity or pure subjective projection. Instead it situates God as the ultimate ontological ground and transcendental condition of reality itself.

**Pantheism:** This is the belief that the entire universe is divine and that God and nature are one and the same. Instead of saying that God is a one and separate being who exists apart from creation. Pantheism pictures every part of nature as an expression of the divine. This idea can be expressed in various ways. From an observation in the physical world to the speculation from philosophical views that all things are simply different part of all-encompassing substance. The root of pantheism dates back to ancient times in Eastern traditions especially in Hindu text "Upanishads" - the idea that the ultimate reality "Brahman" is identical with the universe. In ancient Greece, early philosophers Thales and Heraclitus explored expounded ideas about a single underlying principle in nature. Later the Stoics saw the divine

as the rational face that holds the universe together. In the modern era, the term pantheism began in the 17th century by thinkers like Joseph Raphson and popularized by John Toland. Baruch Spinoza's work in "*Ethics*" was hugely influential arguing that there is only one substance God or nature of which everything is a mode. His ideas alongside Glordano Bruno helped spread pantheistic thought in western culture. For pantheists God is not a separate personal being but the same as the universe. Every star, tree and river is part of God. Some forms of pantheism see the divine as having a kind of spirit or consciousness. Pantheism believes that while God is present everywhere it is not the same as his creation. Unlike the transcendental reality that cannot be perceived empirically, pantheistic realities are often personal and experiential. Many pantheists engage in meditation, nature walks and artistic expression to feel connected to the universe. This approach often emphasizes environmental responsibility. In summary, pantheism is the view that sees the divine as identical with the natural world. To influential modern philosophers like Spinoza and Bruno, pantheism challenges the naturals separation between the transcendental God and the creative world.

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## Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual-analytic and hermeneutical method of research. Rather than merely describing Ibibio religious practices, it extracts the metaphysical implications embedded within oral traditions, ritual practices, linguistic categories, moral structures and cosmological hierarchies.

## Findings

The critical examination of the transcendental and pantheistic views of God in the Ibibio traditional religious worldview reveals several important philosophical insights about the nature of the Supreme Being and the structure of Ibibio cosmology. From the analysis carried out in this study, the following findings were identified:

i. **The Ibibio Conception of God Primarily Affirms Divine Transcendence:** One of the major findings of this study is that the Ibibio traditional understanding of God strongly emphasizes the transcendence of the Supreme Being, **Abasi**. Abasi is widely regarded as the creator and ultimate authority over the universe, existing beyond the physical world and superior to all spiritual and natural forces. This view aligns with the classical theistic conception of God as a supreme and independent being who is not identical with the material universe (Mbiti 43).

- ii. **Elements of Divine Immanence Are Present in Ibibio Cosmology:** Although the Ibibio worldview emphasizes divine transcendence, the study also found that the religious system contains strong elements of divine immanence. The sacred significance attached to aspects of nature, such as rivers, forests, and other natural phenomena, reflects the belief that divine power is present within the natural order. This belief suggests that the divine is actively manifested in the world, thereby creating an impression that the Ibibio conception of God contains pantheistic tendencies (Ekong 121).
- iii. **The Presence of Intermediary Spiritual Beings Challenges a Strict Pantheistic Interpretation:** Another important finding is that the Ibibio religious system recognizes the existence of divinities, spirits, and ancestors who function as intermediaries between human beings and the Supreme Being. The hierarchical structure of these spiritual entities indicates that the Ibibio worldview does not equate God directly with nature. Instead, the Supreme Being remains distinct from other spiritual forces, which contradicts the strict philosophical definition of pantheism (Idowu 59).

iv. **The Ibibio Conception of God Reflects a Synthesis of Transcendence and Immanence:**

The analysis further revealed that the Ibibio understanding of God cannot be adequately categorized as either purely transcendental or purely pantheistic. Rather, it represents a synthesis in which God transcends the universe while simultaneously manifesting divine influence through natural and spiritual agencies. This integrative perspective suggests a worldview that accommodates both divine transcendence and immanence within a single metaphysical framework.

v. **Western Philosophical Categories May Not Fully Capture the Ibibio Religious Experience:**

The study also found that applying rigid philosophical categories such as transcendentalism and pantheism to African traditional religions may sometimes distort the indigenous understanding of the divine. The Ibibio conception of God reflects a holistic worldview that integrates spiritual, natural, and social dimensions of reality, thereby challenging the adequacy of conventional Western metaphysical classifications (Mbiti 69).

vi. **Ibibio Traditional Religion Possesses Significant Philosophical Depth:** Finally, the study discovered that the Ibibio religious worldview

contains sophisticated metaphysical insights regarding the nature of God and the relationship between the divine and the cosmos. These insights demonstrate that African indigenous religions are not merely systems of belief but also contain rich philosophical reflections that deserve critical scholarly attention.

### Discussion

The philosophical discourse on the nature of God has often revolved around two major conceptions: transcendence and immanence. The transcendental conception portrays God as a being who exists above and beyond the universe, independent of space, time, and material reality. In contrast, the pantheistic view identifies God with the universe itself, suggesting that the divine is present in all aspects of nature and existence. These two perspectives have shaped philosophical and theological debates for centuries, particularly in the philosophy of religion (Hick 78). In many African traditional religious systems, including the Ibibio worldview, the concept of God appears to incorporate elements of both transcendence and immanence. The Ibibio people traditionally recognize a Supreme Being known as Abasi, who is regarded as the creator and sustainer of the universe. Abasi is often considered supreme, omnipotent, and morally authoritative, which suggests a transcendental conception of

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God similar to the classical theistic notion found in many religious traditions (Mbiti 39). However, despite this transcendental characterization, the Ibibio worldview also emphasizes the presence of divine power within the natural and spiritual order. Natural phenomena such as rivers, forests, and other elements of the environment are often perceived as possessing sacred significance or spiritual forces connected to the divine. This belief suggests that the divine is not entirely removed from the world but actively present within it. Such a perspective resonates with pantheistic or panentheistic interpretations, where the divine permeates the natural order (Idowu 52).

This apparent duality raises an important philosophical question: Is the Ibibio conception of God truly pantheistic, or does it merely reflect a form of divine immanence within an essentially transcendental framework? Pantheism, as traditionally defined in philosophical discourse, equates God entirely with nature, implying that the universe itself is divine (Spinoza 35). However, the Ibibio understanding of Abasi does not necessarily reduce God to nature. Instead, nature and spiritual forces may be understood as expressions or manifestations of divine power rather than God Himself. Furthermore, the presence of intermediary spiritual beings - such as divinities, spirits, and ancestors - within

the Ibibio religious system complicates the interpretation of the divine. These entities often serve as mediators between human beings and the Supreme Being. Their existence suggests a hierarchical spiritual structure rather than a strictly pantheistic system in which all existence is identical with God (Mbiti 75). This hierarchical structure reinforces the idea that God remains supreme and distinct from the rest of creation, thereby supporting the transcendental interpretation. Another philosophical dimension of the Ibibio conception of God relates to the issue of divine accessibility and remoteness. While Abasi is recognized as the ultimate source of existence and moral order, He is often perceived as distant from everyday human affairs. As a result, worship and ritual practices are frequently directed toward lesser divinities and ancestral spirits rather than directly toward the Supreme Being. Some scholars interpret this phenomenon as evidence of divine transcendence, suggesting that the Supreme Being is too exalted to be approached directly (Idowu 60). However, the symbolic presence of sacred forces in nature and communal life indicates that the divine is not entirely detached from the world. Instead, the Ibibio worldview appears to maintain a dynamic relationship between transcendence and immanence. The Supreme Being remains above and beyond creation while simultaneously

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expressing divine influence through natural and spiritual agencies.

From a philosophical perspective, this synthesis challenges the adequacy of strictly Western categories such as pantheism or classical theism when applied to African religious thought. The Ibibio conception of God may be better understood as a holistic worldview in which transcendence and immanence coexist without contradiction. Rather than equating God with the universe, the Ibibio tradition recognizes the universe as deeply connected to the divine source from which it originates. Consequently, the philosophical task is not merely to categorize the Ibibio conception of God within existing metaphysical frameworks but to critically examine whether these frameworks sufficiently capture the complexity of indigenous African religious thought. Such an examination reveals that the Ibibio understanding of God reflects a distinct and integrative worldview in which the divine transcends the world while remaining actively present within it.

The Ibibio people believe in a sky-dwelling Being which is Supreme and above all deities, man and other creation. The Ibibio cosmological system recognizes Abasi as the Supreme Being. Their belief in the Supreme God does not counter nor stand in disalignment to the African cosmological belief. According to Mbiti, "African traditional

religions generally affirms God as a Supreme Being who is the creator, sustainer and moral formator" (29). Similarly, the Ibibio own a popular divine exclamation thus, "Abasi asana-nyong (God of the sky). 'Abasi asana-nyong' is one and the same as the Supreme God - the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God. The pantheistic notion or perception of God by the Ibibio people is regarded as Abasi Isong (God of the earth). According to Ubong, this pantheism view involves the believe in many deities (29). Abasi Isong permeates His essence through nature found in water, earth, air and fire. These elements are recognized as "nature force", drawing God's essence through the cosmic flow of abundance, purity, wisdom and justice. Owing to these relational force, God shares his existence through everything of existential importance, which brings us to the hierarchy of being.

The Ibibio cosmology and perception of being is structured hierarchically and can be summarized as follows:

- i. Abasi (Supreme Being) - Absolute and Transcendent
- ii. Divinities/Spirits (Ndem or Obot Emana) - Guardian Angels and intermediaries
- iii. Ancestors
- iv. Human beings (Man)

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- v. The physical cosmos (Isong Udót Ukót) - Environmental elements.

Within this hierarchy, Abasi is not one spirit among many but the ontological ground of all spirits and beings, which indicates metaphysical transcendence rather than mere superiority. In Ibibio metaphysics Abasi (God) is; self-existent (uncreated), Supreme over all divinities, beyond human limitation, invisible and incomprehensible in essence. Abasi as the Supreme God does not belong to the class of Obot Emaná (spirits), rather, the spirit derive their existence and authority from Him. Although Abasi is transcendent he is not absent. Hence, the Ibibio cosmology holds a complementary structure which are:

- i. Abasi Enyong (God of the sky) - emphasizing transcendence
- ii. Abasi Isong (God of the earth) - emphasizing pantheism

The dual expression does not imply two gods but reveals the dialectical balance between divine remoteness and presence. God transcends the world yet sustains and governs it. The plants and animals which occupies the terrestrial plain also have a place in the dimension of beings. According to Etim, "they are believed to be created and imbued with the spiritual dimension - Ukpong (soul) and Odudu (force) by God" (213). This clearly explains the sacredness and reverence given to some plants and animals. It is tenable to mention that not

all animals and plants are regarded as sharing the nature potency of God. This interconnectedness is what the Ibibio cosmological system embraces as pantheism - Abasi enyong ye Abasi Isong (God of heaven and the earth).

The transcendental conception of God emphasizes the idea that the Supreme Being exists beyond and above the physical universe, independent of the limitations of space, time, and material existence. In the philosophy of religion, transcendence implies that God is not identical with the world but stands as the ultimate cause and foundation of all reality (Hick 81). This understanding is commonly associated with classical theism, where God is regarded as omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly distinct from creation. Within the Ibibio traditional religious worldview, the Supreme Being known as Abasi is widely perceived as the creator and supreme ruler of the universe. Abasi is believed to possess absolute authority over the cosmos and is responsible for the origin and sustenance of all forms of life. This perception reflects a transcendental understanding of God, since Abasi is viewed as superior to and independent of the natural world (Mbiti 43).

Another element that reinforces the transcendental nature of Abasi is the belief that the Supreme Being is remote and not directly involved in the

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everyday affairs of human beings. In many Ibibio communities, religious practices are often directed toward lesser divinities, ancestral spirits, and other spiritual intermediaries who are believed to act as mediators between humanity and the Supreme Being. This religious structure suggests that Abasi occupies a higher metaphysical level that is not easily accessible to human beings (Idowu 59). Furthermore, the transcendental interpretation of Abasi is evident in the way moral authority is attributed to the Supreme Being. Abasi is believed to be the ultimate judge of human conduct and the source of moral order within the universe. This moral supremacy implies that the Supreme Being exists above the natural and social order, thereby reinforcing the notion of divine transcendence (Mbiti 67). However, the transcendental interpretation of God in Ibibio tradition also raises philosophical questions. If God is completely transcendent and distant from the world, it becomes difficult to explain how the divine interacts with the natural and spiritual realms. This challenge has led some scholars to argue that the Ibibio worldview contains elements that point beyond a purely transcendental understanding of God.

Pantheism is a philosophical doctrine that identifies God with the universe, suggesting that the divine is present in all aspects of nature and

existence. In classical pantheistic philosophy, as exemplified by Spinoza, God and nature are essentially identical; the universe itself constitutes the divine reality (Spinoza 37). From this perspective, everything that exists is a manifestation of the divine substance. Certain aspects of the Ibibio religious worldview appear to support a pantheistic interpretation of the divine. In traditional Ibibio cosmology, the natural environment is often perceived as possessing sacred qualities. Rivers, forests, mountains, and other natural elements are sometimes regarded as dwelling places of spiritual forces that reflect the presence of divine power. This belief suggests that the divine is intimately connected with the natural world (Ekong 121).

Additionally, the Ibibio belief in various spiritual entities - such as divinities, spirits, and ancestral beings - indicates that the spiritual dimension permeates the universe. These entities are often associated with natural phenomena and communal life, thereby reinforcing the idea that the sacred is embedded within the fabric of reality. However, describing the Ibibio conception of God as strictly pantheistic presents certain difficulties. Pantheism implies that God and the universe are completely identical, leaving no distinction between the creator and creation. In contrast, the Ibibio worldview maintains a clear recognition

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of Abasi as the Supreme Being who created the world. Natural elements and spiritual beings may reflect divine power, but they are not necessarily regarded as identical with the Supreme Being. This distinction suggests that the Ibibio understanding of the divine may be closer to panentheism, a philosophical position in which God is present within the universe while simultaneously transcending it. Such an interpretation allows for the coexistence of divine transcendence and immanence within a single religious framework.

### **A Critical Evaluation of the Transcendental and Pantheistic Conceptions**

The coexistence of transcendental and immanent elements in the Ibibio conception of God presents an important philosophical challenge. On one hand, the transcendental interpretation emphasizes the supremacy and independence of the Supreme Being. On the other hand, the apparent presence of sacred forces within nature suggests a form of divine immanence that resembles pantheistic thought. A critical analysis reveals that neither the purely transcendental nor the strictly pantheistic framework fully captures the complexity of the Ibibio religious worldview. The transcendental view, while highlighting the supremacy of Abasi, tends to overlook the deep spiritual connection between the divine and the natural world that is evident in

Ibibio cosmology. Conversely, the pantheistic interpretation risks oversimplifying the Ibibio conception of God by equating the divine entirely with nature.

From a philosophical standpoint, the Ibibio worldview appears to integrate both transcendence and immanence in a complementary manner. The Supreme Being remains the ultimate source and ruler of the universe while simultaneously expressing divine presence through spiritual beings, natural forces, and communal life. This synthesis reflects a holistic understanding of reality in which the divine is both beyond the world and active within it. Therefore, the attempt to classify the Ibibio conception of God strictly as transcendental or pantheistic may impose external philosophical categories that do not adequately reflect the indigenous worldview. Instead, the Ibibio understanding of the divine may be better interpreted as a unique metaphysical perspective that transcends the rigid distinctions commonly found in Western philosophy of religion. Such an interpretation contributes to the broader discourse in African philosophy by demonstrating that indigenous religious traditions possess sophisticated metaphysical insights that deserve careful philosophical analysis rather than simplistic categorization.

## Conclusion

This study examined the transcendental and pantheistic views of God within the Ibibio traditional religious worldview with the aim of critically evaluating the philosophical implications of these perspectives. The analysis revealed that the Ibibio conception of the Supreme Being, Abasi, embodies elements that appear to support both transcendence and immanence. On one hand, Abasi is regarded as the creator and supreme authority who exists above and beyond the physical universe. This perception aligns with the transcendental conception of God commonly discussed in the philosophy of religion, where God is understood as independent of and superior to creation (Hick 84). On the other hand, the Ibibio worldview also reflects a strong sense of divine presence within the natural and spiritual order. The sacred significance attributed to elements of nature, as well as the recognition of spiritual intermediaries such as divinities and ancestral spirits, suggests that the divine is actively manifested within the cosmos. These features have led some scholars to interpret the Ibibio understanding of God as containing pantheistic or panentheistic tendencies (Mbiti 70). However, a critical philosophical examination indicates that neither the purely transcendental nor the strictly pantheistic interpretation fully captures the complexity of the Ibibio religious worldview. While the transcendental

perspective emphasizes the supremacy and distinctness of the Supreme Being, the pantheistic interpretation risks overlooking the hierarchical relationship between God, spiritual beings, and the natural world that characterizes Ibibio cosmology.

The study therefore concludes that the Ibibio conception of God represents a holistic metaphysical framework in which transcendence and immanence coexist. The Supreme Being remains distinct from creation while simultaneously expressing divine influence through natural and spiritual agencies. This integrative understanding challenges the adequacy of rigid philosophical classifications that attempt to impose purely Western categories on African indigenous religious thought. Ultimately, the Ibibio worldview demonstrates that African traditional religions possess rich philosophical insights regarding the nature of the divine. A careful and critical engagement with these traditions contributes not only to the development of African philosophy but also to the broader discourse in the philosophy of religion. Based on the findings of this study, and the conclusion given above, the following recommendations are proposed:

## Recommendations

- i. **Further Philosophical Research:** More scholarly studies should be conducted on African indigenous

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religious concepts in order to deepen philosophical understanding of the nature of God in African thought. Such studies would help clarify misconceptions that often arise when African religious beliefs are interpreted solely through Western philosophical categories.

- ii. **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Researchers should adopt interdisciplinary approaches that integrate philosophy, anthropology, and religious studies when examining African traditional religions. This approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the metaphysical and cultural dimensions of indigenous belief systems.
- iii. **Comparative Studies:** Future research should explore comparative analyses between the Ibibio conception of God and other African traditional religious perspectives. Such comparisons may reveal broader patterns in African metaphysical thought and contribute to the development of a unified philosophical framework for interpreting indigenous religious worldviews.
- iv. **Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge:** There is a need for greater documentation and preservation of traditional religious knowledge among the Ibibio people. Many aspects of indigenous belief

systems are transmitted orally and risk being lost due to modernization and cultural transformation.

- v. **Integration into African Philosophy Curriculum:** Universities and academic institutions should incorporate more studies on African traditional religions into philosophy and religious studies curricula. This would encourage critical engagement with indigenous philosophical traditions and promote a more balanced representation of global philosophical thought.

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## Investment De-risking and the Renewed Quest for Nigeria's Industrialization

### Abstract

The quest to industrialize Nigeria with a view to shaping her economic destiny towards an all-inclusive prosperity and in-country value addition has been a perennial one since independence. Nigeria's industrial sector is plagued by high political and regulatory risk, financial market gaps and lack of capital, infrastructure and operational constraint and insecurity. The objective of the study is aimed at critically reviewing the role of investment de-risking mechanisms in catalyzing Nigeria's renewed industrialization agenda. The study investigated that with Nigeria's large domestic market, abundant natural resources, and youthful population, industrialization has remained shallow and uneven. The paper explored how persistent investment risks: macroeconomic instability, policy uncertainty, weak institutions, infrastructural gaps, and security challenges continue to deter long term productive investment. Employing a literature-based methodology and grounded in structural transformation, the infant industry argument and the development state frameworks, the work draws from diverse scholarly works that signal a renewed commitment to industrialization. Findings reveal that while Nigeria adopted internationally recognized derisking investment models such as development finance institutions, special economic zones and sovereign guarantees, their impact had been constrained by weak institutional coordination and limited policy credibility. The study concluded that lack of mechanisms to mitigate these risks had consequently led to capital flight, deferred investments and stagnation in manufacturing growth.

**Keywords:** Industrialization, Institutional credibility, Investment de-risking, Investment financing

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### Introduction

Nigeria's industrialization trajectory has been shaped by shifting development paradigms and policy regimes since independence. In the immediate post-independence period, industrial policy

was largely state led, emphasizing import substitution, public enterprise development, and the use of oil revenues to finance industrial expansion. This era witnessed the establishment of basic manufacturing and heavy

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industries, supported by protective trade policies and direct government participation in production (Newman *et al.*, 2016; Ogundipe, 2022). However, inefficiencies, weak managerial capacity, and overreliance on oil rents limit the sustainability and competitiveness of these initiatives.

The adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the mid-1980s marked a decisive shift toward market-oriented reforms, including trade liberalization, privatization, and currency deregulation. While these reforms aimed to correct macroeconomic imbalances and enhance efficiency, they also exposed domestic industries to intense external competition without commensurate improvements in infrastructure, finance, or technological capability (Essien & Mozie, 2012; Nelson, 2025). As a result, Nigeria's manufacturing sector experienced stagnation and deindustrialization, with declining capacity utilization and a persistent dependence on imports of manufactured goods.

Investment derisking for Nigeria's industrialization aims to overcome chronic barriers namely, poor power infrastructure, forex instability, policy inconsistency, insecurity and high financing costs that stifle local production and FDI. It involves targeted government/ partner interventions to reduce financial losses and project failure, unlocking capital for sustainable growth. Derisking is necessary because Nigeria is viewed in the international scene as a high-risk destination where industrial projects require massive, long-term capital that is easily scared

off by instability and for the mere fact that many industries have collapsed due to mismanagement, lack of funds and external shocks. The aim of derisking is to transit from import dependency to local production, boosting GDP, job creation and foreign exchange earnings and reducing capital flights when local content survival is achieved. It is also about growing the environment to make industrial ventures viable rather than just providing funds.

### **Investment Climate and Risk Perception in Nigeria**

Nigeria's investment climate is characterized by elevated risk perceptions that continue to constrain long-term industrial investment. Macroeconomic volatility manifested in exchange rate instability, inflationary pressures, and fiscal uncertainty has undermined planning horizons for both domestic and foreign investors (Aregbeshola & Adekunle, 2025). Frequent policy reversals and inconsistent implementation further weaken confidence the predictability of the business environment. According to Newman *et al.*, "Infrastructure deficits, particularly in power supply, transport networks, and logistics systems, impose high operating costs on manufacturers and erode competitiveness. These constraints are compounded by governance and regulatory challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, overlapping mandates among public agencies, and uneven enforcement of rules and contracts" (Newman *et al.*, 2016). Institutional weaknesses thus translate into heightened transaction costs and uncertainty for industrial investors.

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The authors cited below hold the view that Security concerns and broader political economy dynamics also shape investment risk perceptions. Regional insecurity, social unrest, and contestations over resource control increase operational risks and influence capital allocation decisions, especially for long-gestation industrial projects (Blair *et al.*, 2021; Jelilov *et al.*, 2018; Omodero, 2023; Osuma *et al.*, 2024). Together, these factors contribute to a risk environment that discourages patient capital essential for industrialization.

### **The Concept of Investment De-risking**

Investment derisking refers to deliberate policy, financial, and institutional interventions designed to reduce or redistribute risks associated with private investment in productive sectors. Rooted in development economics and institutional theory, derisking recognizes that markets alone may underprovide long-term industrial finance in high-risk environments due to information asymmetries, coordination failures, and uncertainty (Johnson & Toledano, 2023). Within development finance and industrial policy literature, derisking is conceptualized as a means of crowding in private capital by improving the risk return profile of investments. Instruments such as guarantees, concessional finance, blended finance structures, and regulatory reforms are commonly employed to mitigate macroeconomic, policy, and project-level risks (Cull *et al.*, 2024; Seema & Kibuuka, 2017).

The state plays a central role in setting credible policy signals and providing

foundational public goods, while multilateral development institutions offer risk-sharing mechanisms and technical expertise. Private capital, in turn, responds to improved certainty and aligned incentives. In this sense, investment derisking emerges as a critical bridge between Nigeria's renewed industrial ambitions and the mobilization of sustained, large-scale investment necessary for structural transformation ("Coordinating Innovation and Industrial Policy: Nigeria's Experience," 2015; Iarossi *et al.*, 2009; Maliki, 2025; Newman *et al.*, 2016; Ninyio, 2024; Odey, 2018).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the nature and sources of investment risk affecting Nigeria's industrial sector
- ii. Review existing derisking instruments deployed in Nigeria and comparable economies
- iii. Assess the effectiveness of institutional, financial, and policy-led derisking approaches
- iv. Identify gaps and constraints in Nigeria's current derisking architecture
- v. Propose strategic pathways for aligning derisking with sustainable industrial development

### **Literature Review**

This study integrates classical and contemporary theories of industrialization with investment risk and development finance literature. Together, these perspectives illuminate how derisking mechanisms can catalyze long-term capital mobilization and reinvigorate Nigeria's industrialization

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drive. Structural transformation theory provides a foundational lens for understanding industrialization as the reallocation of labor and capital from low-productivity sectors, particularly agriculture and informal services, into higher-productivity manufacturing and modern services (Dabla-Norris *et al.*, 2013; Gollin & Kaboski, 2023; Herrendorf *et al.*, 2013). The theory emphasizes productivity gains, learning-by-doing, and technological upgrading as central to sustained economic growth. In the Nigerian context, weak industrial absorption capacity and capital flight constrain this transformation, underscoring the importance of investment conditions that support scale, efficiency, and long-term commitment (Chang *et al.*, 2016; Effiom *et al.*, 2019, 2021).

The infant industry argument (Aghion *et al.*, 2012; Juhász & Lane, 2024; Melitz, 2004; Thaker, 2018) further justifies targeted state intervention to nurture emerging industries that are initially unable to compete with established foreign firms. Protection, subsidies, and preferential financing are viewed as temporary measures to enable domestic firms to achieve economies of scale and technological competence. However, the effectiveness of such interventions depends on credible policy implementation and the mitigation of investment risks that discourage private participation in early-stage industrial ventures (Juhász & Lane, 2024; Melitz, 2004; Ravikumar *et al.*, 2022).

The developmental state framework situates industrialization within a broader political economy perspective, emphasizing the strategic role of the

state in coordinating markets, guiding capital allocation, and disciplining rent-seeking behavior (Caldentey, 2008; Ricz, 2020; Routley, 2012; Vázquez & Prego, 2020). Successful developmental states leverage institutional capacity, policy coherence, and public-private collaboration to steer industrial outcomes. Within this framework, derisking emerges as a key instrument through which the state lowers entry barriers for private capital while retaining strategic oversight of industrial priorities (Gabor & Sylla, 2023).

Risk return theory posits that investors demand higher expected returns to compensate for increased risk (Chepkoech, 2017; Schoenmaker & Schramade, 2023; Shefrin, 2001). In environments characterized by macroeconomic volatility, policy uncertainty, and weak infrastructure, required risk premiums often exceed what productive industrial investments can sustain. Consequently, capital flows gravitate toward short-term, speculative, or extractive activities rather than long-term manufacturing. Derisking mechanisms seek to alter this calculus by reducing perceived and actual risks, thereby realigning risk-adjusted returns in favor of industrial investment.

Insights from institutional economics and transaction cost theory highlight how weak regulatory frameworks, contract enforcement challenges, and information asymmetries elevate the cost of doing business (Ekel *et al.*, 2022; Gundelach, 2021; Makhmadshoev *et al.*, 2015). These institutional frictions disproportionately affect capital-intensive industrial projects with long

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gestation periods. Effective derisking therefore extends beyond financial instruments to include regulatory reforms, credible institutions, and predictable policy environments that lower transaction costs and enhance investor confidence.

Public-private risk-sharing models provide a practical framework for mobilizing private capital by reallocating risks to actors best positioned to manage them. Through instruments such as public guarantees, first-loss capital, and co-investment structures, the state and development finance institutions absorb systemic and political risks, enabling private investors to focus on operational and market risks (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2021; OECD, 2021). Such models are increasingly central to industrial financing strategies in emerging economies.

Blended finance and catalytic capital approaches conceptualize derisking as a means of crowding in private investment using concessional or patient capital from public and philanthropic sources (Choi & Laxton, 2023; Flammer *et al.*, 2024; Louman *et al.*, 2020). By strategically deploying subsidies, junior equity, or concessional loans, governments and development partners can unlock multiples of private capital for priority industrial sectors. The catalytic effect lies not merely in financing volume but in signaling long-term commitment to industrial development.

Guarantees, insurance, and credit enhancement mechanisms directly address specific risk categories such as political risk, currency volatility, and credit default (Ray & Bisbey, 2020;

Thierie & Moor, 2018; Walter, 2016). When credibly designed and transparently administered, these instruments lower financing costs and extend investment tenors, making industrial projects more bankable. However, their effectiveness depends on institutional credibility and fiscal sustainability. Policy credibility and signaling effects play a critical but often underappreciated role in derisking. Consistent industrial policies, enforceable contracts, and transparent governance structures signal seriousness of intent to investors, reducing uncertainty beyond what financial instruments alone can achieve (Hausmann *et al.*, 2008; Zoogah *et al.*, 2023). In this sense, derisking functions both as a technical intervention and a reputational strategy within Nigeria's broader industrialization agenda.

## Methodology

### Study Design

This study adopts a desk-based review and qualitative synthesis approach to examine the role of investment derisking in advancing Nigeria's renewed industrialization agenda. The design relies on secondary sources, the study integrates diverse perspectives on investment risk, derisking instruments, and industrial outcomes, enabling a holistic understanding of how policy and institutional arrangements shape industrial investment dynamics in Nigeria.

### Data Sources

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Data for the review were drawn from multiple secondary sources to ensure breadth and analytical depth. These include peer-reviewed academic literature addressing industrialization, investment risk, and development finance policy documents and government reports related to Nigeria's industrial, trade, and investment frameworks. Again, multilateral development bank publications provided evidence on derisking instruments, blended finance, and private sector mobilization in developing economies. This is in addition to investment climate assessments and industry reports offering practitioner-oriented insights into investor perceptions, constraints, and sectoral risks in Nigeria and comparable economies.

### **Analytical Approach**

Policy and institutional mapping is used to examine the alignment, coherence, and effectiveness of Nigeria's derisking architecture, including the roles of state institutions, development finance actors, and regulatory frameworks in shaping the industrial investment landscape.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The findings of the study reveal that while Nigeria adopted internationally recognized derisking investment models such as development finance institutions, special economic zones and sovereign guarantees, their impact had been constrained by weak institutional coordination and limited policy credibility. This section discusses these outcomes in relation to existing scholarships and the theoretical frameworks of structural transformation,

the infant industry argument and the development state.

*The De-risking Imperative:* Interplay between Investor Confidence and Industrial Scale-Up Investor confidence is the bedrock of industrial investment. Without a credible framework to mitigate perceived and actual risks, private capital remains scarce, costly, and short-term, preventing firms from achieving the scale and efficiency required to drive structural transformation. The primary function of a derisking strategy is, therefore, to create an environment where the risk-adjusted returns on long-term industrial projects are attractive enough to mobilize domestic and foreign capital. In Nigeria, a multifaceted web of risks systematically undermines this confidence through:

- **Insecurity and Political Instability:** A significant impediment to investment is the prevalence of insecurity and political volatility. Omodero (2023) argues that terrorism, insurgency, and political unrest directly undermine investor confidence, creating a tumultuous environment that dissuades both international and domestic investors and impedes Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows.
- **Policy and Regulatory Uncertainty:** The lack of predictable and stable policy is a critical deterrent. Research by Babatunde *et al.* (2021) identifies a lack of "Government Policy Continuity" as a significant factor that negatively affects the return on investment (ROI) for Nigerian

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businesses. This uncertainty makes it difficult for firms to engage in long-term planning and capital-intensive projects.

- **Infrastructure and Operational Deficits:** The operational environment for manufacturing is severely constrained by infrastructural deficiencies. Studies by Orjiakor (2022) and Adenikinju (2003) highlight the deplorable state of infrastructure, particularly the poor power supply, which forces many firms to spend between 20 to 30 percent of their initial investment on costly self-generation of electricity. This imposes a significant cost burden that erodes competitiveness.
- **Macroeconomic Volatility:** Broader macroeconomic instability, evidenced by issues such as capital flight, further discourages long-term investment commitments. Effiom *et al.* (2019) find that capital flight has a detrimental impact on domestic investment, reflecting an environment where investors are hesitant to commit capital due to unpredictable economic conditions.

These factors are mutually reinforcing: policy uncertainty and political instability exacerbate macroeconomic volatility, which in turn deepens investor aversion to making the long-term commitments needed to overcome Nigeria's significant infrastructure deficits. These interconnected risks are fundamentally rooted in the nation's

political economy and the perceived credibility of its governing institutions.

*Political Economy and the Challenge of Institutional Credibility:* Effective derisking is not merely a technical or financial exercise; it is deeply embedded in the political economy of a nation. The credibility of institutions, which according to North (Makhmadshoev *et al.*, 2015). Without trust in the state's ability to enforce contracts, maintain policy stability, and provide essential public goods, specific incentives and guarantees will fail to attract sustained, transformative investment.

This legacy of mismanagement and corruption, as detailed by Nelson (Babatunde *et al.*, 2021; Orjiakor, 2022). The period before the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was characterized by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) plagued by gross incompetence and mismanagement, which took a heavy toll on the national economy. In response, the Nigerian government has made efforts to rebuild institutional credibility. As noted by Ninyio (2024), the establishment of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) as a one-stop agency for investors and the formulation of strategic frameworks like the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) are designed to improve the business environment and signal a commitment to a more stable and attractive investment climate. For these reforms to be truly effective, however, they must be aligned with a clear and compelling vision for an inclusive and sustainable industrial strategy.

*Aligning De-risking with Local Value Chains:* The purpose of a derisking

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strategy is as important as its practice. To be genuinely developmental, derisking interventions in Nigeria must be intentionally designed to foster the integration of local value chains, promote inclusive growth, and align with the global transition toward a green economy. Merely attracting capital is insufficient; the goal is to channel that capital in ways that build domestic capacity and distribute benefits broadly across society.

*Integrating Local Value Chains and Ensuring Inclusivity:* Historically, Nigeria's development efforts have been critiqued for failing to achieve transformation through "internal resource utilization and capacity building," with a consensus that development must be inclusive to be sustainable (Essien and Mozie, 2012). An effective industrial strategy must therefore prioritize linkages with the domestic economy. In key sectors like agriculture, this can be achieved through models such as smallholder aggregation within landscape approaches, which organize local stakeholders to address complex issues and connect them to larger value chains (International Monetary Fund, 2024). In this context, Nigeria's innovative use of digital tools to scale up social safety nets demonstrates a potential capacity that could be leveraged for broader inclusive development programs.

*The Frontier of Green Industrialization:* This imperative for inclusive growth finds a powerful new pathway in the global energy transition, which presents a frontier for industrial policy that can simultaneously address infrastructure deficits and create new value chains.

The "derisking developmentalism" model, as applied to Namibia's green hydrogen sector, provides a powerful conceptual framework for how a state can strategically position itself to attract investment in green technologies (Gabor and Sylla, 2023). For Nigeria, the massive deployment of renewable energy represents a significant opportunity to attract private investment, provided the right enabling environment is structured (Hutchinson et al., 2021). Innovative financial instruments, such as green bonds, can play a critical role in mobilizing capital for these projects. However, a significant challenge remains in generating a pipeline of "good quality and scalable projects" that are attractive to investors (Bas et al., 2020). Successfully aligning derisking with these strategic goals requires a practical and coherent policy architecture to translate vision into action. To be effective, Nigeria must move beyond ad-hoc incentives to a deliberately architected derisking framework. Such a framework must ensure policy coherence across government, strategically target key sectors, and skillfully leverage development finance to mobilize private capital. Its design should be guided by principles of strategic collaboration and evidence-based targeting.

*Strengthening Institutional Coordination and Coherence:* Drawing on the model suggested by Hausmann *et al.* (2008), a more coherent approach to industrial policy requires new institutional arrangements designed for collaboration and information discovery.

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- i. **Establish Strategic Collaboration Platforms:** A critical step is to create formal institutions that facilitate an "ongoing conversation" between government and the private sector. The experience of Singapore's Economic Strategies Committee, co-chaired by a minister and a business leader, provides a useful example of a high-level body designed to formulate and guide economic strategy (Lin and Vu, 2015).
- ii. **Develop Demand-Driven Public Inputs:** Industrial growth is often constrained by the lack of highly specific public inputs, such as targeted infrastructure, specialized training, or bespoke regulations. A powerful mechanism to address this is the creation of a central fund that finances these inputs based on proposals solicited directly from the private sector, thereby ensuring that public resources are directed toward solving real-world business constraints.

*Designing Sector-Specific De-risking Frameworks: The Case of SEZs:* The success of zones, as seen in the case of the Lusaka MFEZ in Zambia, depends on a few key determinants: high-quality zone infrastructure, a stable and predictable regulatory environment, and effective zone management (Government of the Republic of Zambia et al., 2020). To maximize their impact, SEZ strategies should be guided by the principle, identified by Aghion *et al.*, (2012) that industrial policies are most effective not when 'picking winners' in uncompetitive sectors, but when they are designed to be competition-friendly either by supporting sectors where competition is already present or by

allocating support in a way that preserves or increases competitive pressures.

*Leveraging Development Finance to Crowd-In Private Capital:* A central pillar of modern derisking is the use of "blended finance." This involves the strategic use of development or concessional finance to mobilize private capital for projects with high developmental impact but perceived high risk (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2021). Blended finance mechanisms are designed to improve an investment's risk-adjusted returns by having public or philanthropic funds absorb first losses, provide technical assistance grants, or offer guarantees (Bas *et al.*, 2020). This approach directly addresses the primary barrier preventing private investment in crucial sectors by altering the risk-return calculation for commercial investors. Even a well-designed framework, however, must be capable of continuous adaptation to remain effective in a dynamic environment.

*Embedding Adaptive Governance: Monitoring, Accountability, and Learning:* In a volatile global economic landscape, a static industrial policy is destined to fail. A successful derisking strategy must be a dynamic, iterative process, incorporating robust mechanisms for monitoring performance, ensuring accountability, and fostering institutional learning. The goal is to create a policy environment that can adapt to new information and correct course when initiatives underperform. The experience of successful developmental states offers a stark contrast to Nigeria's historical challenges. Successful Asian economies

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have been described as "great learners" who embraced a "pragmatic, problem-driven and iterative approach" based on trial-and-error (Ricz, 2020). South Korea, in particular, built its industrial transformation on a model of "regular strategizing, re-strategizing due to monitoring and evaluation" (Uma et al., 2019). This contrasts sharply with the conclusion of scholars like Ekpo, who found that Nigeria's past industrial policies have been largely ineffective, suggesting a systemic failure in learning and adaptation (cited in Uma et al., 2019).

To build a more effective system, Nigeria's derisking framework should embed principles of adaptive governance, as outlined by Hausmann *et al.* (2008). This requires creating institutions with the capacity and authority to perform three critical functions:

- i. **Continuous Evaluation:** The institutions overseeing industrial policy must have the technical ability to "recognize new venture's mistakes as they occur."
- ii. **Corrective Action:** They must be empowered to "orchestrate their correction" by working with private sector partners to solve emerging problems.
- iii. **Disciplined Exit:** Crucially, they must possess the authority and political independence to "pull the plug" on initiatives and firms that are failing to meet clear, pre-defined performance benchmarks, ensuring that public support is not wasted on unviable projects.

The implementation of such an adaptive governance model is the ultimate test of political will for Nigeria's industrial transformation.

Derisking investment for Nigeria's industrialization is not a matter of adopting isolated incentives but requires a comprehensive, integrated strategy grounded in a modern understanding of state-market collaboration. This assessment has argued that such a strategy must be built on four essential pillars. First, it requires a concerted effort to rebuild institutional credibility, which is the ultimate currency of investor confidence. Second, industrial policy must be aligned with the broader developmental objectives of inclusive growth, local value chain integration, and green industrialization, ensuring that growth is both sustainable and broadly shared. Third, this vision must be operationalized through a coherent architected framework that enhances institutional coordination, provides targeted support to competitive sectors, and leverages development finance to mobilize private capital. Finally, the entire system must be underpinned by adaptive governance, with robust mechanisms for monitoring, learning, and accountability that allow policy to evolve based on evidence and results. Charting this path forward has profound implications for policy formulation and development planning in Nigeria, demanding a shift from static plans to dynamic, problem-solving partnerships between the state and the private sector, aimed at unlocking the nation's immense industrial potential and positioning Nigeria not merely as a follower of established development

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models, but as a potential architect of a new paradigm for African industrialization in the 21st century

### Conclusion

The study has critically and analytically shown the role of investment derisking within Nigeria's industrialization agenda and has found that persistent macroeconomic volatility, policy uncertainty, infrastructure deficits, and security risks continue to undermine the mobilization of long-term productive capital. The findings and discussion reveal that While Nigeria has adopted internationally recognized derisking instrument such as development finance institutions, special economic zones, and sovereign guarantees, their impact has been constrained by weak institutional coordination and limited policy credibility. The evidence shows that derisking, as currently practiced, remains insufficient to drive structural transformation. The theoretical frameworks of structural transformation, the infant industry argument and the development state provide tools for the emergence of derisking as a key instrument through which the state lowers key entry barriers for private capital while retaining strategic oversight of industrial practices. Adopting this comprehensive and adaptive derisking framework has significant implications for policy reform and future research. If effectively implemented, it offers Nigeria a viable pathway to overcome long-standing investment constraints, catalyze industrial upgrading, and contribute to the emergence of a resilient model of industrialization relevant not only for Nigeria but for other African economies

in the context of 21st-century development challenges.

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## Nigeria-Niger Relations and Challenges in Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria (2010 to 2023)

### Abstract

This study examined the challenges of Nigeria-Niger Relations towards Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria from 2010 to 2023. With the rise of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the region, cross-border cooperation between Nigeria and Niger had become crucial in addressing security challenges and promoting regional stability. The study adopted the survey research design method. Data was obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OPHK and the MNJTF. Members of staff from the office of the NSA were sampled using Krajechie and Morgan method of sample size. A total of 380 population were arrived at as the population sample of the study. Primary data were obtained using questionnaires and interviews which were administered to the chosen population. The responses gave credibility and validity to the research work. Data collected from the quantitative method were analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentages and frequency distribution tables. These were bar charts and pie charts, as well as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20), while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Through a comprehensive analysis of diplomatic, military, and socio-economic factors, the study investigated the challenges of bilateral relations between the two countries and how it influenced the effectiveness of Counter Insurgency Operations in North East Nigeria. This was predicated on the background that the collaborative efforts in Counter Insurgency Operations between these countries were rooted in Nigeria's foreign policy approach towards enhancing internal and regional security in the West African sub-region. The study found that effective cooperation between Nigeria and Niger was required to achieve good foreign policy objectives that would address shared security challenges. The research identified some issues which included ineffective COIN strategies for enhanced security in the NE zone of Nigeria. The study further underscored the impact of bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger on the effectiveness of COIN operations in NE Nigeria. It was observed that the bilateral relations were fruitless occasioned by failed diplomatic, economic and political ties. The proffered strategy to mitigate the issues therefore require close cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Nigeria and Niger. Implementing these strategies in a coordinated and sustained manner could enhance Counter Insurgency Operations and contribute to peace building and stability in North Eastern Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Bilateral relations, Insurgency, Counter Insurgency, Niger Niger

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### Introduction

Nigeria's relations with Niger Republic, as with the rest of the world, were initially built upon historical and political connections (Vasudevan, 2014). The bilateral relations between both countries which were initiated after Nigeria's

independence have considerably expanded in recent years with both nations building strategic and commercial ties (Eton, 2016). Thus, significant progress has been made by successive Nigerian Governments to promote diplomatic ties with Niger in the social, economic and defence spheres. In

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recognition of the geo-strategic nature of interactions and the expanding scope of socio-economic relations and partnership, Nigeria and Niger signed a number of bilateral agreements including Security Cooperation Agreement, Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, and Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) in 2014. However, a number of these agreements, especially the security cooperation agreement has remained moribund, thereby culminating into inefficient management of emerging security threats, particularly insurgency which have bedeviled both nations in recent times (Illiya, 2019).

The Maitasine uprising in the 1980s serves as an example of the prevalence of insurgency activities, but the emergence of the Boko Haram (BH) insurgent group in 2002 has posed significant challenges for Nigeria. The BH insurgents operates cells along Nigeria's borders in the Lake Chad region especially within the North Eastern (NE) zone of Nigeria, making it difficult for Nigeria to control the situation without support from neighboring countries. Initially, these neighbouring countries couldn't offer much assistance. Considering the high intensity of insurgency attacks and destructions within the Lake Chad region which extended to NE Nigeria, informed the need to reinvigorate efforts to decimate BN insurgents (Duruji, Chidozie, Olanrewaju, and Duruji-Moses, 2019).

The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) is a multinational agency comprising member States from Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroun, setup to enhance defence cooperation and the protection of the shared natural resources of Lake Chad. The LCBC member states have suffered several attacks carried out by BH insurgents, which ruined the peace of the LCBC, thereby threatening the national security of member States (African Union, 2015). Nigeria and the Republic of Niger have suffered several attacks carried out by

BH insurgents and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) Terrorists, which threatens the territorial integrity of both nations. This prompted both countries to strengthen bilateral relations with a view to conducting efficient COIN operations (Saidu, 2017).

Accordingly, Nigeria and Niger entered into a defence bilateral cooperation which was subsequently replaced with a multilateral arrangement through the auspices of the MNJTF established by LCBC member states. Although BH insurgents in January 2015 overran a military base in the NE zone of Nigeria that was the Headquarters (HQ) of the MNJTF in Baga, Borno State, the MNJTF was subsequently remodeled in 2016, through an improved defence cooperation framework with a new HQ sited in Ndjamena, Chad (Ahmadu, 2019).

The Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) has embarked on COIN operations due to the intense activities of BH insurgents and ISWAP in the NE zone. A Joint Task Force (JTF) COIN operation previously code-named Operation LAFIYA DOLE (OPLD) but renamed Operation HADIN KAI (OPHK) has been employed as a mechanism for curtailing activities of BH insurgents in the NE zone which shares borders with Niger Republic (Suleiman, 2020). The increasing menace of the BH insurgency has brought to the fore, the imperative for enhanced defence security collaboration and the necessity for the military forces of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger to work together in order to achieve success against a common enemy.

Nigeria and the Republic of Niger have extended maximum military cooperation and have always obliged each other with all the required information and intelligence on the activities of insurgents and associated criminal elements whenever necessary. The Nigeria-Niger bilateral relations which had each of the country contingents deployed within its own national

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boundaries enabled the MNJTF to regain control of some areas under the insurgents' occupation thereby supporting local agencies to maintain State authority, and provide protection to the civilian population of the countries (Haruna, 2022). Despite the efforts of the MNJTF Operations within the framework of defense bilateral agreements to restore order and enhance security in the region, each participating nation appears primarily focused on defending its own territory and reacting to insurgency threats accordingly. This approach has constrained the effectiveness of the defense cooperation between Nigeria and Niger, particularly impacting COIN operations in NE Nigeria. Consequently, there's a need for a comprehensive study aimed at evaluating the challenges of Nigeria-Niger bilateral relations on COIN efforts in NE Nigeria. The researcher aims to propose suitable strategies to address the perceived deficiencies in the defense cooperation agreements between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger, with the goal of enhancing COIN efforts in both NE Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Bilateral Relations**

Bilateral relations refers to relationships that exist between only two countries, coming together to cooperate and achieve certain mutual objectives, which may be political, economic, social, or collective security (Ravenbill, 2011). Bilateral Security relation is therefore an aspect of bilateral relations that basically focuses on security matters affecting two countries such as border security, banditry, transborder piracy, smuggling of contraband items, human trafficking, armed robbery, drugs dealing, terrorism, transnational insurgence etc.

Bilateralism generally concerns relations or policies of joint action between two parties or countries. Typically, bilateralism has applications concerning

political, economic, diplomatic, cultural and security matters between two states. The term 'bilateralism', however, stands for an organizing principle of bilateral conduct and, as postulated in political science literature, appears to have a more implicit meaning on institutional form than just 'relations involving two states or parties (Kiatpongson, 2023). For example, as Baumann pointed out in the framework of multilateralism, bilateralism carries two generic senses. The first one connotes the patterns of relations among states in international relations while the second generic sense describes the orientation of a state's foreign policy conduct (Baumann, 2001).

In establishing an understanding of the nature of bilateral relations, Holsti (2005) posits that bilateral relations between nations are principally influenced by their foreign policies. Wanjohi (2011) highlights that good understanding of foreign policies of nations and factors influencing them are crucial to attainment of maximal benefits from bilateral relations. He further posits that a country's bilateral relations framework, is a set of goals outlining how the country will interact with other countries economically, politically, socially and militarily, and to a lesser extent, how the country will interact with non-state actors.

Webber & Smith (2013) submit that the nature of bilateral relations primarily shapes the boundaries between the external environment of the nation state and the internal or domestic environment, with its variety of sub-national sources of influence. Thus, bilateral relations according to the authors are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals, and economic prosperity. This can occur as a result of peaceful cooperation with other nations, or through exploitation.

After reviewing and evaluating various scholastic definition of the concept of bilateral relations, it is worthy of note at this juncture that Ravenbill's

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conceptualization both acknowledges the political, economic, social and collective security which all fall under the realms of the nature and character of Nigeria-Niger relations. This perspective is therefore considered suitable and adopted for this study.

### **Insurgency**

The concept insurgency has been seen used differently in many literatures. However, the popular definition is one put forward by the United State as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.” Moreover, from its legal point of view, an insurgency is seen as a violent protest carried out by rebels against a constituted authority or state that has been recognized by the (United Nations, n.d) cited in (Gana, 2023). Ibiang (2018) have given more characterization of insurgency as a battle that it is usually the product of asymmetric conflict, where one party has an overwhelming force and incontestable physical influence and other instruments of coercion over the other.

Insurgency is the actions of an organized, often ideologically motivated group that seeks to effect or prevent political change of a governing authority within a region, and the actions focused on persuading or coercing the population through the use of violence and subversion (North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO, 2011). In the same vein, the British Army Field Manual (AFM) defined insurgency as “the actions of a minority group within a state that tend toward forcing political change by a means of a mixture of subversion, propaganda and military pressure, aiming to persuade or intimidate people to accept such a change” (cited in Liolio, 2013). For Metz & Millen (2004), insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups, which cannot attain their political objectives through a quick seizure of power but often characterized by protracted, asymmetric

violence, ambiguity as well as the use of complex terrain such as jungles, mountains, urban areas, psychological warfare, and political mobilization - all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favour. Simply put, Beck (2008) conceives insurgency as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities where the non-ruling group deliberately uses a combination of politics and violence to further its cause. However, when this happened, the state needs to take COIN measures to suppress it.

Subsequent to the conceptualization of insurgency, it is pertinent to note that the study is convinced and at par with Ibiang’s postulation which both acknowledges the two actors in the realm of insurgency, the insurgents and the counter insurgents (government). Perhaps, he considered insurgency as a product of asymmetric conflict, where one party has an overwhelming force and incontestable physical influence and other instruments of coercion over the other. This perspective is therefore considered suitable and adopted for this study.

### **Counter-Insurgency**

Counter-insurgency is the opposite of insurgency frequently refers as an acronym COIN. By definition, Counter-insurgency is a combination of measures undertaken by legitimate government of a state or country to curb or suppress an insurgency taken up against it (Liolio, 2013). The U.S. COIN Guide (2009), defined COIN as a "comprehensive civilian-military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes." For Davidson (2016), it is “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency”. And it requires a comprehensive assessment of the root causes, strategy and technique of the insurgents.

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Similarly, NATO (2011) conceived it as set of political, economic, social, military, law enforcement, civil and psychological activities with the aim to defeat insurgency and address any core grievances. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents employ varied tactics and methods. These include political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure activities (ways), in an attempt to reach a favourable outcome (ends) and within the resources available, including time (means). If this broad array is generally categorized as political and military in nature, political considerations are of much greater importance than military considerations in a struggle for the consent of the population. Anyway, this is contestable. In comparison, Liolio (2013) notes that, while insurgents for instance try to overthrow the existing political authority in order to establish theirs, the counterinsurgent forces try to reinstate the existing political structures as well as reduce or annihilate the usurping authority of the insurgents. Hence, in this study borderline is seen as a defence line, line of demarcation between Nigeria and her north-eastern African neighbours. Insurgency is viewed as the violence asymmetric strategy by Boko Haram militants aiming at gaining political authority in some states in the Nigeria's north-eastern region. While, counter-insurgency is the various measures the Nigeria governments is employing in collaboration with other African neighbours to suppress the Boko Haram violence activities in the region.

Counter-insurgency operations: refers to all military and humanitarian efforts deployed by the Nigerian state to address the Boko Haram insurgency in the north east region of Nigeria. In this regard, COIN operations cover both military offensive against Boko Haram and defensive provision of security for internally displaced persons and camps by COIN forces. This definition is consistent with the Buhari Plan

(2016: 21), which identifies security agencies as key partners in the management of IDP camps in the north east.

Ogbonnaya (2013) views Counter-insurgency Operations as an integrated set of political, economic, social, and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, create and maintain stable political, economic, and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions necessary for lasting stability.

As examined above the conceptualization of counter-insurgency by different authorities, it significant to state that the conceptualization of Ogbonnaya resonates well with the researcher simply because the conceptualization both acknowledges the causes and dynamics of insurgency and the three-dimensional complexity of dealing with them and places of military and security operations firmly within the wider context of the conflict. Perhaps most important, it also establishes the end-state of successful Counter-insurgency which is a major mandate of Nigeria-Niger agreements. This perspective is therefore considered suitable and adopted for this study.

### **Empirical Review of Related Studies**

Sowale & Orogun (2021), *Bilateral Relations and the Challenges of Multinational Joint Task Force in West Africa*. The paper adopts the qualitative and content method of data collection and analysis respectively. Findings of the study unveiled that despite the establishment of MJTF, Boko Haram continues to wreck devastations in the North east Nigeria and other neighbouring states. The study concluded defective bilateral relations of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBCs) countries adversely affect the functionality of MNJTF. It is therefore recommended that Lake Chad Basin Countries (LCBCs) need to correct problematic bilateral relations in

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order to successfully combat Boko haram menace in the West Africa sub-region.

Shehuri, Muhammad & Musa (2018) in their study titled “Challenges of Nigeria-Chad Bilateral Relations” adopted the use of both primary and secondary (structured interview) sources of data in arriving at their research findings. The authors posited that Nigeria and the Republic of Chad share a common border of the Lake-Chad Basin, which stretches to 85 Square kilometres. The two countries have enjoyed diplomatic relations over the years culminating in the exchange diplomatic missions and various bilateral relations on trade, culture, education, defence and security, with a view to promoting their mutual national interests. Their study concluded that there is the need for Nigeria and Chad to address the alarming security challenges, especially insurgency that tried to hamper their relations. Their study however did not investigate the nature of Nigeria-Nigerrelations, and also failed to evaluate the influence of the state of their relations on the conduct of COIN operations in Nigeria.

Olufade, Ibrahim, Baban’umma, & Abdul (2023), Challenges of Diplomacy in Securing External Defense Arrangement in Nigeria (2007-2022). The study adopted mixed research design using both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was found out that a lot still need to be done to improve the strategies and methods of securing diplomatic arrangements in a way that will favor Nigeria in dealing with the challenges encountered in diplomatic defense relations to combat the effect of terrorism both locally and regionally. The study recommended that Nigeria must intensify efforts at holding regional security summits for defense diplomats while intensifying joint military exercises for regional states in the Multi-national Joint Task Force to promote unity, improve communication and information sharing; and that the state must improve defense budgeting while joining multiple

counter terrorism coalition both regionally and globally.

Arzika (2023), Issues and Challenges in Nigeria- Niger Republic Border Security. Qualitative method was employed for this study. The paper employs reactive re-active model approach as a variant of linkage theory as a tool in understanding the study. The paper concluded that the government of the two countries should be proactive in securing their borders. The study recommended among others the need for an allied of bi-lateral arrangement of customs and immigration to enforce minimum standards at international travel. Government of the two countries should provide employment opportunities to the unemployed youths in the region in order to dissuade them from being indoctrinated in various crimes and terrorism

Ibiang (2018), Nigeria’s Insurgency and Counter-insurgency: Implications, Issues, and Lessons for National Security. The paper utilized qualitative and content method of data collection and analysis respectively. Disagreeing with the human needs centred view on national security and drawing from studies by other scholars, this paper uses the state-centric perspective on national security to examine the interaction between insurgency, counter-insurgency, and national security. It points out the issues and lessons emanating from the interaction and their implications for national security. The paper concluded and recommended among others that national security efforts should be more dynamic and responsive to a certain range of problems and issues in the COIN operation.

Ugwueze & Onuoha (2020), Hard Versus Soft Measures to Security: Explaining the Failure of Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Nigeria. The paper utilized qualitative and textual method of data collection and analysis respectively. The study observed that Nigeria continues to face the challenge of containing terrorism despite adopting diverse counter-terrorism

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measures. While extant literature has evaluated the impacts of these measures, explaining why terrorist attacks in Nigeria persist despite a robust hard approach through the traditional use of force is still lacking. The paper concluded and recommended among others that to effectively address the threat posed by terrorism, Nigeria needs to take concerted efforts to address the gap between what exists on paper and what it delivers in practice.

Gana, Ku-Samsu, & Ismail (2018), *Counter-insurgency Responses in Nigeria: Unveiling the Constraining Challenges*. The paper utilized qualitative and content method of data collection and analysis. To remedy the observed challenges in this study, the paper hence recommended for redesigning of counter-insurgency tactic to focus on winning the hearts and minds of the local population. It also recommended for strengthening the Civilian Joint Task Force through establish code of conduct to checkmate excess and abuses.

Eke (2015), *why this Charity Begins Abroad: Comparing Nigeria's Foreign Peacekeeping Undertakings and Domestic Counter-insurgency Operations*. The paper utilized secondary and content method of data collection and analysis. The paper identified the politicisation of and corruption within the military establishment as plausible explanations for the disconnect between the recorded past (victories) and the inadequacies of today. The study recommended among others the need for a holistic security sector reform in Nigeria.

Hussain, Okeke, Oyebanji, Akunne, & Omoruyie (2020), *Combat injuries sustained by troops on counter terrorism and counter-insurgency operations in North east Nigeria: Implications for intervention*. A retrospective cross-sectional study of combat casualties managed in 7 Division (Field) Hospital, an equivalent of UN Level 2 facility Maiduguri, North east Nigeria between November 2013 and October 2014.

The study utilized data obtained from a designed Operational Casualty Card that contains their socio-demographic characteristics, categorization (as Combat Arm, Combat Support Service, Civ-JTF), nature, mechanism and sites of injury as well as inpatients records. The data were collated and analysed using SPSS version 20. The results of the study revealed that a total of 209 casualties were treated. The study revealed that gunshot and IED/blasts on the extremities were the most frequent mechanism and pattern of injuries sustained with less than a tenth of the casualties resulting from friendly forces. The paper recommended among others the training of health personnel on CTC, deployment of combat lifesavers to improve pre-hospital CTC, employment of skilled Orthopaedic Surgeon and other relevant surgical subspecialties and timely air evacuation of critical cases from the Field Hospital to the Base Hospital.

From the body of literature search above, it can be deduced that, there is an observable gap in the body of literature in the area of Nigeria-Niger relations and the challenges in enhancing counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria which is considered to be left unattended to. This study therefore filled the observed gap and contribute to the body of existing literature.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted mixed-method research design. The targeted population of the study is 40,128 which comprises of individuals drawn from selected participants affiliated with key institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Niger's embassy in Nigeria, the officers and troops of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Sector 3 (Nigeria) and Sector 4 (Niger), staff of the office of National Security Adviser and personnel responsible for counter insurgency operation within the ambit of Nigeria-Niger relations among others. These groups were carefully chosen because they

are positioned at the intersection of bilateral relations, community engagement, and counter insurgency operations, offering crucial perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) statistical formula was employed to reduce the population of the study to a manageable standard of 380.

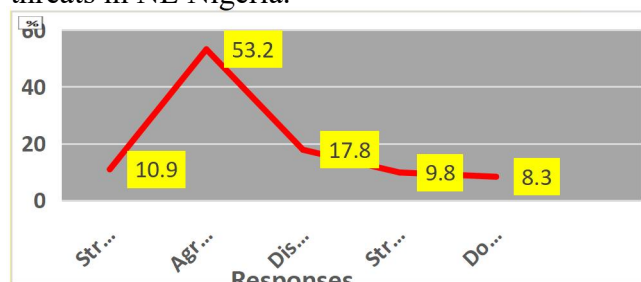
The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are oral interview, questionnaires and secondary sources. Stratified and Random Sampling Techniques were used in selecting the respondents among different categories for the administration of questionnaire. For interview, purposive sampling technique was used. The sampling comprised of people with many similar characteristics such as deep knowledge on the subject of investigation, years of experience and age. This study made use of tables as a platform to present the research data and also analyze the data collected from the field on the subject matter using simple percentage and graphs as the case may be for the descriptive analysis. The version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information.

### **Data Presentation on Nigeria-Niger Relations and Challenges in Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.**

The section presented data on the challenges confronting Nigeria-Niger relations towards enhancing COIN Operations in NE Nigeria. The study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at Figures 1 to 2 and Table 1.

### **Figure 1: Respondents' Opinions on Whether Several Nigeria-Niger Relations' Defence Agreements are Moribund Which Culminates into Inefficient Management of Emerging Security Threats in NE Nigeria**

Respondents were asked to ascertain whether several Nigeria-Niger relations defence agreements are moribund which culminates into inefficient management of emerging security threats in NE Nigeria.

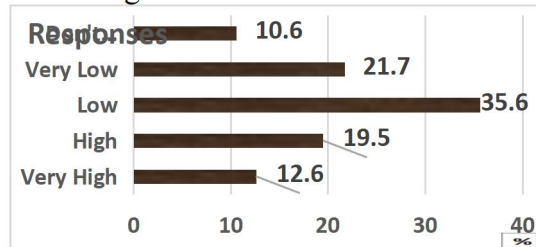


**Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023.**

As highlighted in Figure 1, 223 (64.1 per cent) respondents cumulatively affirmed the assertion that several Nigeria-Niger relations' defence agreements are moribund which culminates into inefficient management of emerging security threats in NE Nigeria. In addition, 27.6 per cent of respondents cumulatively opined that Nigeria-Niger relations defence agreements are not moribund. It could be surmised from the analysis that several defence agreements that emanated from Nigeria-Niger relations are moribund and not efficiently operationalized which culminates into inefficient management of emerging security threats in NE Nigeria. Hence, the need for the FGN to review the security agreement to Defence Cooperation Agreement with the Republic of Niger.

### **Figure 2: Respondents' Rating of the Level of Mistrust in the Conduct of Defence-Inclined Nigeria-Niger Relations with Implications for Enhanced COIN Operations in NE Nigeria.**

Respondents were further asked to rate the level of mistrust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger relations with implications for enhanced COIN Operations in NE Nigeria.



**Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2023.**

As highlighted in Figure 2, 199 (57.3 per cent) respondents cumulatively indicated that there was a low level of mistrust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger relations with implications for enhanced COIN Operations in NE Nigeria. In addition, 112 (32.1 per cent) respondents cumulatively opined that there was a high level of mistrust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger relations. It could be surmised from the analysis that the level of trust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger relations was adequate towards enhancing effective COIN operations in NE Nigeria.

*The analysis was supported by an interview with vast practical knowledge on the conduct of Nigeria’s diplomatic relations with Niger and senior staff of Posting and Passages MFA, who stated in an interview on (18/10/23) that there was a reasonable amount of trust in the management of Nigeria-Niger relations with a focus on defense. He pointed out that regular interagency security meetings, both formally and informally, have improved the defense-oriented bilateral relations between Nigeria and Niger, thereby reducing insecurity in Nigeria’s North East region. He continued by saying that the bilateral ties between Nigeria and Niger, which are oriented toward defense, gave the AFN and Nigerian troops the chance to collaborate toward a*

*shared goal. Therefore, in order to improve COIN operations in North Eastern Nigeria, it is essential to fortify the bilateral ties between Nigeria and Niger, which are oriented toward defense.*

**Challenges Affecting Nigeria-Niger Relations in Enhancing COIN Operations in NE Nigeria**

Another question was posed to respondents to rate the prominent challenges constraining the effectiveness of Nigeria-Niger relations towards enhancing COIN operations in NE Nigeria. Accordingly, the challenging factors posed to respondents include: incomprehensive policy and legal framework; difficult terrain and harsh weather conditions; weak economy of TCCs in MNJTF; language and socio-cultural barriers amongst troops of Nigeria and Niger; as well as deficits in intelligence gathering. Others include: inadequate manpower holding; weak command and control centre; as well as lack of high-tech armoury in MNJTF.

**Table 1: Rating the Challenges Affecting Nigeria-Niger Relations towards Enhancing COIN Operations in NE Nigeria.**

Challenges	Yes	No	Don’t Know
Incomprehensive Policy and Legal Framework	55.3	37.9	6.8
Difficult Terrain and Harsh Weather Conditions	63.5	29.3	7.2
Weak Economy of Troop Contributing Countries in MNJTF	67.1	25.3	7.6
Language and Socio-Cultural Barriers amongst troops of Nigeria and Niger	74.2	19.3	6.5
Deficits in Intelligence Gathering	69.0	23.6	7.4
Inadequate Manpower Holding	64.8	27.3	7.9
Weak Command and Control Centre	39.4	52.5	8.1
Lack of High-Tech Armoury in MNJTF	68.7	23.8	7.5

**Citation:** Isah, Ibrahim J. “Nigeria-Niger Relations and Challenges in Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria (2010 to 2023)”. *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp239-251.

**Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023.**

As evident on Table 1, majority of respondent gave high ratings to most of the indices, thereby affirming them as prominent challenge confronting the effectiveness of Nigeria-Niger relations towards enhancing COIN operations in NE Nigeria. However, a high number of respondents ranking 52.5 per cent indicated the weak Command and Control Centre in MNJTF did not constitute a challenge.

*In an interview, a Major in the MNJTF (22/10/23) said that the use of amphibious equipment is necessary due to the characteristics of the AOO in North Eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Area. He said that other neighboring countries, including Niger, do not have amphibious forces, with the exception of Sectors 1 (Cameroun) and 3 (Nigeria). But it is important to note that Sectors 1 and 3's amphibious forces are woefully underequipped. Additionally, they lack the necessary platforms to guarantee effective amphibious operations around Lake Chad. The amphibious elements would need to be outfitted in the OPHK Theatre with flat-bottom boats and other swift assault craft, along with the related equipment, in order to stop this situation.*

From a diplomatic standpoint, non-enforcement of laws pertaining to the violation of immigrants' rights and poor community relations among Nigerian-Nigeria citizens are some of the challenges associated with the conduct of Nigeria-Niger relations that limit collaborative effort towards enhancing COIN operations in NE Nigeria.

*According to a Senior Official of African Bilateral Affairs Department MFA (25/10/23), who said in order to strengthen the defense-oriented mechanisms of Nigeria-Nigeria bilateral relations and enable enhanced COIN operations in North Eastern Nigeria, all of the aforementioned challenges will need to be addressed with the appropriate policies and plans.*

### Discussion of Findings

#### **Nigeria-Niger Relations and Challenges in Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.**

The study established that several defence agreements that emanated from Nigeria-Niger relations are moribund and not efficiently operationalized which culminates into inefficient management of emerging security threats in NE Nigeria. It was revealed that the level of trust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger relations was adequate towards enhancing effective COIN operations in NE Nigeria. The challenges constraining the effectiveness of Nigeria-Niger relations towards enhancing COIN operations in NE Nigeria were found out to include: weak economy of TCCs in MNJTF; language and socio-cultural barriers amongst troops of Nigeria and Niger deficits in intelligence gathering, inadequate manpower holding; as well as lack of high-tech armoury in MNJTF.

Accordingly, this study established that the nature of the Area of Operation (AOO) of the NE Nigeria and the Lake Chad Area requires the employment of amphibious equipment. The Force Commander MNJTF, stated in a KII that apart from the Sectors 1 (Cameroun) and 3 (Nigeria) that have amphibious elements, other neighbouring countries including Niger do not have. It was equally noted that the amphibious elements of both Sectors 3 and 4 are ill-equipped. This

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constrains efficient COIN operations in NE Nigeria. This finding is in consonance with the works of Zagga and Yakubu (2016) who posited that the MNJTF has addressed the challenges of insecurity as a result of insurgency in the Lake Chad region, although the outfit is faced with problems of inadequate funds, equipment and manpower to engage and curtail the menace of insurgency in the region.

### Result/Findings

- i. Several defence agreements that emanated from Nigeria-Niger bilateral relations are moribund and not efficiently operationalised which culminates into inefficient management of emerging security threats in NE Nigeria
- ii. The level of trust in the conduct of defence-inclined Nigeria-Niger bilateral relations was adequate towards enhancing effective COIN operations NE Nigeria. However, the recent coup in Nigeria and threat for ECOWAS military led intervention championed by Nigeria has created animosity posing threat to the counter insurgency operations in the North Eastern Nigeria.
- iii. The current economic challenges being faced by Nigeria and Niger is really creating enormous challenges in the fight against BH insurgents in the NE zone of Nigeria.
- iv. The amphibious elements of both Sectors and 4 of MNJTF are ill-equipped.
- v. Non-enforcement of laws that relates to the violation of immigrants' rights; and poor community relations among Nigerian-Niger citizens are significant challenges of Nigeria-Niger bilateral relations.

### Conclusion

Nigerien forces operate outside the defence cooperation agreement with Nigeria

which portends great danger in North Eastern Nigeria. In addition, the objectives of Nigeria-Niger relations in terms of the defence cooperation agreements and operations of MNJTF in the NE zone of Nigeria are yet to be achieved, which informed this investigation.

Nigeria-Niger relations is a vital mechanism that must be sustained towards enhancing effective COIN operations in NE Nigeria. Niger's defence pacts based on its financial capacity and military capability to combat insurgency has shown that the country has in most instances focused on quelling insurgency threats within the Nigerian territory. It was however noted that the operationalisation of the MNJTF framework has facilitated an extension of COIN measures of Niger to the COIN AOO in NE Nigeria. The study further established that MNJTF troops of Nigeria and Niger are deficient in terms of facilitating systematic surveillance which could constrain efforts to enhance effectiveness of COIN operations in NE Nigeria. Hence, the DHQ needs to put in place measures to strengthen the systematic surveillance and reconnoitring mechanisms of MNJTF troops of the AFN in order to engender efficient COIN operations in NE Nigeria.

There are challenges constraining the effectiveness of Nigeria-Niger relations towards enhancing COIN operations in NE Nigeria and these include, among others weak economy of TCCs in MNJTF; language and socio-cultural barriers amongst troops of Nigeria and Niger, deficits in intelligence gathering, inadequate manpower holding; inadequate logistics requirements in MNJTF, as well as lack of high-tech armoury in MNJTF.

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations and implementation strategies are proffered.

### Recommendations

- i. The Nigeria and Nigerien government should work assiduously towards addressing language and socio-cultural barriers amongst troops of Nigeria and Niger, enhance intelligence gathering,

*Nigeria-Niger Relations and Challenges in Enhancing Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria (2010 to 2023)*

- improved manpower holding; as well as high-tech armoury in MNJTF in order to achieve the desired goal of the Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.
- ii. There is need for increased bilateral trade exchange, improved border security and enhanced intelligence sharing between Nigeria and Niger which would strengthen the effectiveness of COIN operations in NE Nigeria.
  - iii. It is absolutely necessary for HQ MNJTF in collaboration with HQ OPHK to be adequately empowered to augment the logistics requirement provided by Troop Contributing Countries (TCC's) to the Sectors.
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