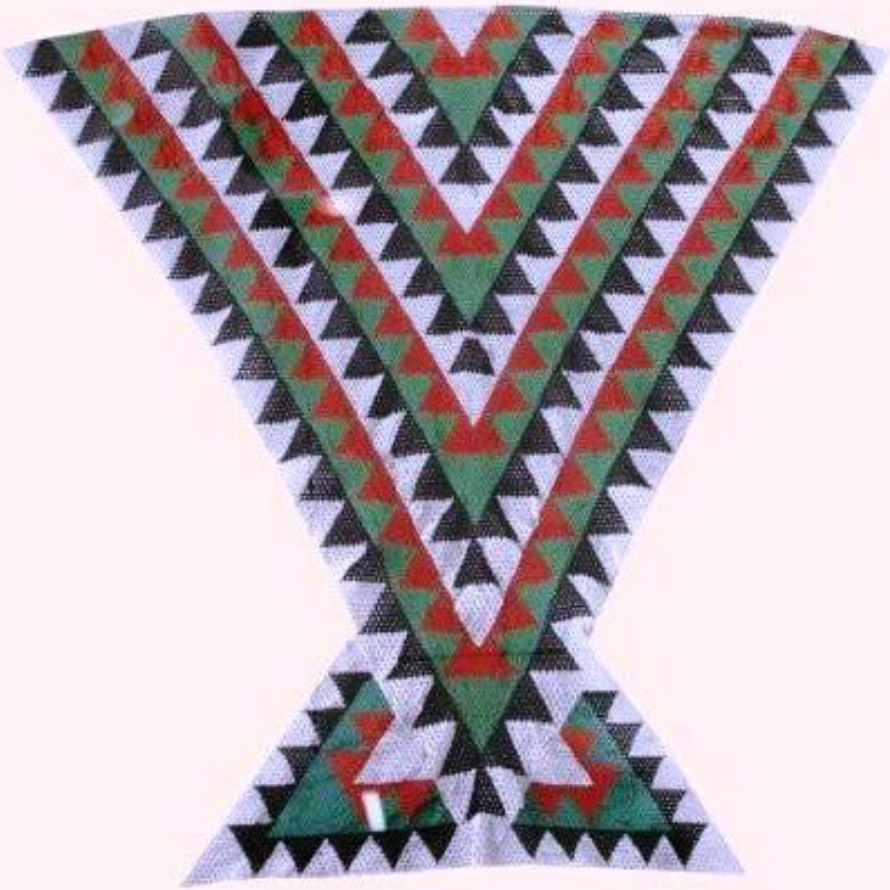
INKANYISO

The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences



Volume 5(1) 2013

Inkanyiso

The Journal of Humanities and Social Science
ISSN 2077-2815
Volume 5 Number 1 2013

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. Dennis N. Ocholla
Department of Information Studies
University of Zululand
OchollaD@unizulu.ac.za

Book Review Editor
Prof. Themba Moyo

Editorial Committee
Prof. Catherine Addison, Prof. Myrtle Hooper and Prof. Thandi Nzama

Editorial Advisory Board
Sandra Braman, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee - *braman@uwm.edu*
Johannes Britz, Professor and Provost/Vice Chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, USA - *britz@uwm.edu*
Rafael Capurro, Professor Emeritus, Hochschule der Medien (HdM) Stuttgart, Germany - *rafael@capurro.de*
Stephen Edwards, Emeritus Professor University of Zululand, South Africa - *sdedwards@telkomsa.net*,
Dr. Gillian Gane, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA - *gillian.gane@gmail.com*,
Dr. Mojalefa LJ Koenane, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa - *koenamj@unisa.ac.za*
Nicholas Meihuizen, Professor, Department of English, North West University Potchestroom Campus, South Africa - Nicholas. *Meihuizen@nwu.ac.za*
Dr. Elliot Mncwango, Senior Lecturer, Department of General Linguistics, University of Zululand, South Africa - *emncwan@pan.uzulu.ac.za*
Musonda Mpepo, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Zululand, South Africa - *vmpepo@uzulu.ac.za*
Stephen Mutula, Professor, Information Studies, School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal - *mutulas@ukzn.ac.za*
Marko Saarinen, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Oulu,Finland and Department of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Botswana, Botswana - *jarkko.saarinen@oulu.fi*, or *jarkko.saarinen@mopipi.ub.bw*
Tholene Sodi, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Limpopo, South Africa - *sodits@iafrica.com*

Indexing
Inkanyiso. Journal of humanities and social sciences is indexed by AJOL, EBSCO, DOAJ and SABINET.

Publisher
Forum Press, PO Box 93895, Boordfontein 0201
Managing Editor: Dr Ian Raper
Publishing Editor: Mrs E van Dyk
inkie@lantic.net; rosslyni@lantic.net; www.rosslynpublishers.com; www.scientificpublishing.net

Inkanyiso

Journal of Humanities and Social Science
ISSN 2077-2815
Volume 5 Number 1, 2013

Contents

The problem of language in contemporary African philosophy: some comments
Fayemi, Ademola Kazeem 1
African indigenous knowledge: scientific or unscientific?
Adebayo Anthony Ogungbure 12
'Miss Independent': gender and independence on the African continent
Elvis Imafidon 21
***Ole Jija*: Rethinking theft in the Yoruba ethical system**
Babalola Joseph Balogun and Sunday Layi Oladipupo 31
Identity construction and gender involvement in online social networks among undergraduates in two universities, Southwest Nigeria
Ojo Melvin Agunbiade, Mary Olufunke Obiyan and Gbenga Biola Sogbaike 41
An analysis of the opinions of African immigrants on service delivery by the Department of Home Affairs, South Africa
Samuel Augustine Umezurike and Christopher Isike 53
Understanding metacognitive awareness among teachers in the school system: 64issues and benefits
Jolly Okoza and Oyaziwo Aluede 64
Contestations of identity: colonial policing of female sexuality in the Cross River region of Southern Nigeria
Mfon Umoren Ekpo-Otu 72

1. Copyright © 2012, *Inkanyiso*, Faculty of Arts, University of Zululand

EDITORIAL

Dear *Inkanyiso* Readers,

I am delighted to present to you *Inkanyiso* Vol 5(1), our first issue this year. Most papers in this issue focus on philosophy and public administration. Other areas covered are: social media, indigenous knowledge, gender studies and psychology.

The first article, by Fayemi Ademola Kazeem from Lagos State University, is entitled "The problem of language in contemporary African philosophy: some comments". Fayemi questions and compares reactionary views to the language from the conservative and the progressive perspectives and defends the prospect of using contemporary African philosophy in African languages. The second article, by Adebayo Anthony Ogungbure from the University of Ibadan, poses the question: "African indigenous knowledge: scientific or unscientific?" Adebayo argues that the rejection of African indigenous knowledge as "unscientific" knowledge stems from a false dichotomy and provides critical arguments to justify his paradigm. The third article, entitled "Miss Independence: gender and independence on the African Continent", is by Elvis Imafidon from Ambrose Alli University. He argues that modern African societies have emerged from rich cultural heritages and traditions, and have become tangled with an ambivalent colonial experience. He explores a growing new trend towards the rejection of male domination by women, who question the traditionally held stereotypical masculine role of independence.

Online social networks are an increasingly popular form of new media in our society. This is the basis of the fourth article, "Identity construction and gender involvement in online social networks among undergraduates in two universities, Southwest Nigeria" by Ojo Melvin Agunbiade from Obafemi Awolowo University and the University of the Witwatersrand and Olufunke Obiyan and Gbenga Biola Sogbaike from Abafemi Awolowo University. The authors recognise identity construction as an essential element of network relations within virtual and physical spaces. They find that identity construction in online social interactions is a frequent occurrence and an extension of reality. However, the findings also revealed perceived risks of involvement, especially relating to privacy. The fifth article is entitled "*Ole Jija*: rethinking theft in the yoruba ethical system" and is co-authored by Babalola Joseph Balogun from Obafemi Awolowo University and Sunday Layi Oladipupo from Adekunle Ajasin University. The article reflects on the moral controversies surrounding theft within the Yoruba ethical paradigms and concludes that a morally good person should not indulge in dishonesty in any form, as these are the foundations upon which the Yoruba ethical system thrive. The sixth article focuses on xenophobia, which is equated to the violation of human rights and is closely associated with all negative and artificial social phenomena in our society such as racism and tribalism. The article by Samuel Augustine Umezurike and Christopher Isike, both from the University of Zululand, is entitled "An analysis of the opinions of African immigrants on service delivery by the Department of Home Affairs, South Africa". It represents an investigation into the views of African immigrants in South Africa on vital services that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) renders to immigrants. It suggests that the service delivery rendered to African foreigners by the DHA is generally poor and discriminatory as it is largely shaped by the popular ideology of 'Makwerekwere' within which African immigrants are imagined and treated as the 'out-group' and excluded from belonging to the host community. An inclusive model of belonging, for African immigrants in South Africa, is recommended in order to reduce inter-group anxiety. The second last article, that focuses on psychology, is entitled "Understanding metacognitive awareness among teachers in the school system: isues and benefits". Jolly Okoza from National Open University of Nigeria and Oyaziwo Aluede from Ambrose Alli University propose specific metacognitive strategies in the classroom and deliberate school training programmes on metacognitive instruction. The last article is by Mfon Umoren Ekpo from the University of Port Harcourt, and is entitled "Contestation of identity: colonial policing of female sexuality in the Cross River region of Southern Nigeria". Mfon argues that colonial rule profoundly impacted on the lives of Nigerian women and led to a reconfiguration of gender identities, producing sites of contestation and negotiation as imperial ideas of feminity were contested and reconstructed by using historical and philosophical analysis. Mfon provides thoughtfully crafted arguments clarifying this abnormal situation that also deepened the marginalisation of women.

Enjoy the reading

Dennis N. Ocholla, Editor-in-Chief, *Inkanyiso*, JHSS

www.inkanyiso.uzulu.ac.za

The problem of language in contemporary African philosophy: some comments

Fayemi, Ademola Kazeem[1]
Department of Philosophy, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos
kcaristotle@yahoo.com

A critical discussion of the contentious problem of language in contemporary African philosophy is attempted in this paper. The problem centres on whether or not African languages can be used in 'doing' contemporary African philosophy, where 'doing' means teaching, writing and researching. It also revolves around the question of the extent to which words and concepts in use in traditions of philosophy outside Africa can be translated into indigenous African languages without loss of content meaning. Two camps are delineated in this paper as reactionary views to the language question: the conservatives and the progressives. In taking sides with the conservative position, a critical discussion of the relationship existing between thought, language and reality is given. On the basis of the nexus established, as well as the conviction, that the challenges occasioning the irresistibility of doing African philosophy in non-African indigenous languages are surmountable, the paper defends the prospects of doing contemporary African philosophy in African language(s).

Key words: Language, African philosophy, thought, reality

Introduction

The question of the most appropriate language for inseminating ideas and communicating scholarship in the field of African philosophy is brought to light by Wiredu (1980). In his book *Philosophy and an African Culture,* Wiredu advances the idea that African philosophers might bring an added dimension to their theoretical consideration by taking philosophical cognizance of their indigenous language. While Wiredu in many of his later works[2] further defends his call and argument for doing African philosophy in African languages, ever since the publication of *Philosophy and an African Culture,* in 1980, there have been heated controversies and debates among African philosophers on its plausibility or impossibility.

In this debate, two groups are noticeable, namely the conservatives and progressives. Given that research and teaching in African philosophy today is predominantly, conducted in foreign languages, some scholars think that in avoiding conceptual distortions arising from the use of alien languages, and the false representations of African knowledge systems in African (and non-African) philosophical meditations, texts and conceptual frameworks, African indigenous languages must be adopted. I call those in this group the conservatives. Previously, Keita has tagged this as the *phenomenological* approach. The advocates of this approach as Keita (1999:28) puts it "believe that a post-colonial Africa should seek to restore its identity by reverting to its indigenous languages for both written and speech purposes."

The crux of the conservatives' argument is that all aspects of a colonial legacy which are inimical to the development of the African people should be removed. These include European languages as media of the philosophical thought of the African people. Articulate members of this orientation are: Wiredu (1980), Hallen and Sodipo (1986), wa Thiongo (1993), Ogunmodede (1993), Gyekye (1995), Bewaji (2002), Uroh (1994), and Afolayan (2007).

On the other side of the debate are scholars who, though mindful of the significance of the vernacular to the production of authentic African philosophy, assert strong scepticism against the veracity and feasibility of such an endeavour. For the sake of convenience, I identify scholars in this camp as the progressives, though Keita has tagged this as the *pragmatic* approach. The pragmatists, according to Keita (1999:28), "would argue that there is nothing untoward to having European languages as the official languages in contemporary African society because such languages are already in place and they offer a gateway to forms of knowledge and expression that are international in scope."

These broad categorizations should not suggest that proponents of either camp maintain the same line of reasoning and arguments on the issue of language; rather, it is just for the convenience of collective categorization.

The progressives advocate the maintenance of the status quo and the continuous use of English, French, Portuguese and other foreign languages in Africa as the official medium of communication whether in personal and economic realms

1. Kazeem Ademola Fayemi, PhD, is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Lagos State University, Nigeria.
2. Some of his later works where he consolidated the charge of African philosophers on intensifying their theoretical efforts on African languages are: Formulating Modern thought in African Languages: Some Theoretical Considerations. In Mudimbe, V.Y (ed.) *The Surreptitious Speech: Presence Africaine and The Politics of Otherness (1947-1987).* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1992; The Need for Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy. In *Conceptual Decolonization: 4 Essays in African Philosophy* Introduced and selected by Olusegun Oladipo. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 1999 and his article, Toward Decolonizing African Philosophy and Religion. *African Studies Quarterly: The Online Journal for African Studies. Vol. 1, Issue 4.*

or in educational researches and teachings. In the progressive camp are African philosophers such as Bello (1987), Makinde (1988), Tangwa (1992) and Azenabor (2004).

Given the above exposition of the divides in the language debate in African philosophy, some fundamental questions necessarily need to be raised: which side of the arguments in the debate is more convincing? What are the likely problems and limitations besetting each perspective and the lines of the debate? How can they be overcome? Should African philosophy not be done in African languages? Of what philosophical relevance is this language problem to the development of African philosophy? This paper attempts to provide some comments on these and related fundamental questions concerning the problem of language in African philosophy. A proper starting point of this discourse, however, is an elucidation of the nexus between language, thought and reality.

Language, thought and reality

Philosophy as an academic and human enterprise is not possible without thought and language. Philosophy, through metaphysics, is the study of reality, its nature and constituents. Reality, though a very vague concept, can be defined as the "totality of all things, structures (actual and conceptual), events (past and present) and phenomena that actually exist, whether observable or not, comprehensible or not" (Wikipedia n.d:par.1). Thought is the human capacity for self-consciousness, awareness and intellectual knowledge. It is also the capacity to reflect critically on our being and the other entities in the external world or universe (Ogunmodede 1993:13). Language is a social and cultural phenomenon used in communication. Rand (1977:3) defines language as "a code of visual-auditory symbols that denote concepts". These symbols are the written or spoken words of any language. Language is a subjective agreement by a group of people to conceptualize and verbalize their perceptions of reality in a certain way. It is the principal means by which individual thought incorporates social elements.

Is there some conceptual connection between language, thought and reality? Answers to this question can be viewed from diverse angles – philosophy, psychology, linguistics, etc. Philosophically, in Kant, there is a link between thought and reality. Though reality for Kant is the realm of 'noumena' which is quite unknowable, he believes that one's consciousness creates the external world: "The world men perceive and deal with, the 'phenomenal world', is a human creation, a product of fundamental mechanisms inherent in the structure of human consciousness" (Peikoff 1982:59). In his application of Kant's view to language, Von Humboldt (as quoted by Chomsky (1968:67) claims that "language is not really learned – certainly not taught – but rather develops 'from within', of its own accord, by processes more like maturation than learning." This view relies on the idea in Kant's philosophy that the innate structure of the human mind creates an image of the external world independent of what the external world is. The simple implication of this view is that since words are created by the innate structure, language then precedes the objects it describes. It then means that reality is independent of consciousness or thought. Thought is then the means of perceiving reality, not of creating it.

The above position is likely to be objected to by someone who shares the convictions of (early) Ludwig Wittgenstein that the limit of one's language determines the extent of one's concepts. In Wittgensteins reasoning, while language then precedes the objects it describes, it is the structure of one's language that affects the way one thinks and perceives the world. Concepts are abstractions of units perceived in reality. Given that reality provides the data from which we abstract and form concepts, reality is the source of all words – and of all languages (Fram-Cohen 1985).

At the level of psychology, the view of Vygotsky (1962) is worthy of note on the relationship between language and thought. He explains the function of word meaning in a given language in the development of thought. Vygotsky (1962) claims that there is a form of pre-linguistic thought that comes into contact with speech and is gradually transformed by it during the process of a child's cognitive development into adulthood. He writes:

> A prelinguistic period in thought and a preintellectual period in speech undoubtedly exist also in the development of the child. Thought and word are not connected by a primary bond. A connection originates, changes, and grows in the course of the evolution of thinking and speech (Vygotsky 1962:119).

Vygotsky in the above passage is saying that language and thought have independent roots from the outset in childhood; however, some partial connections evolve later in maturity. In explaining the partial connection between language and thought, Vygotsky said the connection is formed in childhood as the child first learns to speak for others. By this, it is meant that the child acquires word meanings without being aware of their conceptual potential. But later, the child begins to use language as an aid to thought. It is at this point that thought is identical with and can be transformed into language in the cognitive act and processes of thinking and perception. He writes:

> Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child ...The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of

> thought, that is, language … The nature of the development itself changes, from biological to sociohistorical (Vygotsky 1962:51).

Vygotsky is of the view that the above interrelation of language and thought reveals on the one hand that the development of thought is contingent on language; on the other hand, the relationship enables the emergence of the higher mental functions such as abstract, systematic, and conscious control. It is in this sense that Vygotsky thinks that language provides the essential ground for the development of human consciousness and the ultimate cognition of reality.

From the linguistic angle, Whorf (1956) notes that the relativity of all thinking is brought about by the fact that the structure of one's language shapes one's thoughts and world-views. Whorf (1956) believes in the deterministic connection of thought and language. He notes that thinking is "the [psychological] function which is to a large extent linguistic" (Whorf 1956:66). The differences between languages are differences between conceptual interpretations of reality. Whorf (1956:v) notes that "all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some ways be calibrated." He notes further that:

> The background of the linguistic system is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but is itself the shaper of ideas, the programme and guide for the individual's mental stock in trade. (Whorf 1956:212).

Whorf is of the view that language provides the concepts for representing, determining and making sense of our experiences in reality. He thinks there is an implication of grammatical meaning in a variety of languages for the characteristic thought patterns in a culture. For him, the most important consequence of the language and thought interaction is that it leads to the cultural contextualization of thought. In Whorf's view, language guides thought, although not to a higher level of development but to a culturally specific interpretation of experience. In a sense, language constrains thought by either its implications for the limit of human awareness or guiding it in culturally specific patterns. Lending credence to Whorf's position, Liamson (1986:67) says "language is indeed, the cause of thought and a presenter of reality." In the same vein, Bieshauvel (1952:45-57) asserts that:

> The "characteristics of language spoken by a people determine considerably" the nature of their thought process, especially, the degree these function at the conceptual level. As thought is one of the principal means by which man adjusts himself to his environment, it follows that the nature of this adjustment will differ according to the language structure.

This above position, that language unavoidably shapes the way we think, no doubt is not entirely correct; it is a logical possibility that people possess many concepts which their language does not directly encode. The existence of some forms of thought independent of language presupposes that language may only influence or transform thought in important ways, and not strictly determine it. In conceptualizing the nature of the relationship thus existing among language, thought and reality, caution needs be exercised in using language to make a final objective analysis of reality. Each language is supposed to describe the particular subjective reality of its speakers (Fram-Cohen 1985: par. 7). But the problem likely to be posed by this is the translation between two languages, which may be impossible in this view.

While the above mentioned scholars agree that language and thought are not identical, their position may be seen as extreme. A moderate position on the above is that even though language does not necessarily and completely determine thought, it in one way or another affects people's habitual thought patterns by either promoting the significance of some conceptual contrasts or de-emphasizing others. The point here is that since thoughts are flexible, non-completely dependent and streamlined by linguistic terminology, differences in language do not necessarily mean differences in thought pattern. While it is true that both language and thought are significant in any philosophical cognition of reality, a philosopher's analysis of reality should not depend only on his linguistic resources, but also on the development and refinement of his thought. In view of the fact that language is generative and dynamic, it should not merely be a means of describing reality. It can and should expand to include newly discovered or innovated objects in reality. Reality is not described but created by language, and each language should create its own reality.

On the above showing, one may ask what the implications of the above varying views and contentions are for the problem of language in African philosophy. The foregoing analysis of the relationship between thought and language is relevant in this paper's attempt better to understand the issues, challenges and prospects on the possibility of conducting African philosophy in African languages. There is an implication for accepting or rejecting the above analysis on the relationship among language, thought and reality. If one accedes to the strong nexus thesis, that is, the deterministic relationship between language and the formation of thought, then one may see the position of the conservatives as having a stronger edge; but if one sticks to the moderate thesis, which sees the relationship between language and thought as

one of influence and degree, the progressives' position may seem to hold sway. I now turn to the arguments of the conservatives.

The conservative arguments on the language problem in African philosophy

Wiredu is in the front line of the advocacy for doing African philosophy in the vernacular; hence his view will be discussed first. Wiredu concedes that linguistic decolonization is a vital subset of the general need for cultural decolonization. While warning of the danger of cultural alienation implicit in an uncritical adoption of the European languages as the linguistic paradigm in African philosophical discourse, Wiredu proposes his agenda of conceptual decolonization. But what does the whole idea of philosophy of decolonization entail?

Philosophy of decolonization is a brain-child of the intellectual consequences of the colonization of Africans by Europeans. Colonialism is a political instrument and a governmental policy of acquiring and controlling a foreign territory or country by another country. In the case of Africa, colonialism was imposed politically; additionally, it was a cultural imposition of Western education and values on Africa. A consequence is the interpretation of African experience, thought and mind-set in foreign terms. Colonialism introduced Western education to Africa, and education in this sense is taught in the medium of one foreign language or the other.

The implication of this education on the value system and identity of the Africans is complex. The African today, as Wiredu (1995:33) writes, "lives in a cultural flux characterized by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cultural legacy of colonial origin." This cultural flux has the effect of "historical super imposition of foreign categories of thought on African thought system" (Wiredu 1995:33) This super imposition, as Wiredu (1995:33) argues, does not only generate distortions of African world-views, it also "could be responsible for many of the instabilities in contemporary African society." For Wiredu (1995), the best way to avoid these distortions and other implicit associated problems of conceptual and mental colonization is by thinking about philosophical problems in African languages. This is the idea of conceptual decolonization. In some of his articles, "Formulating Modern Thought in African Languages: Some Theoretical consideration" and "The Need for Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy", Wiredu advocates the use of African languages in every conceivable area of human endeavour. Wiredu (1984:1) is of the opinion that much progress cannot be made in the teaching and research of African philosophy without conceptual decolonization.

One may ask why his advocacy for African language in African philosophy? For Wiredu (2000:par. 30), "the way your language functions can predispose you to several ways of talking and, indeed, to several ways of reasoning." By implication, if one learns:

> Philosophy in a given language that is the language in which one naturally philosophizes, not just during the learning period but also, all things being equal, for life. But a language, most assuredly, is not conceptually neutral; syntax and vocabulary are apt to suggest definite modes of conceptualization (Wiredu 1998:3).

Wiredu is quite careful in his choice of words by noting that language only 'suggests' and does not 'compel'. Suppose it was to necessitate, the idea of conceptually decolonization that Wiredu is advocating would be counter-factual. Consequentially, Wiredu (1998:3) writes further:

> The starting point of the problem is that the African who has learned philosophy in English, for example, has most likely become conceptually westernized to a large extent not by choice but by the force of historical circumstances. To that same extent he may have become de-Africanized. It does not matter if the philosophy learned was African philosophy. If that philosophy was academically formulated in English and articulated therein, the message was already substantially westernized, unless there was a conscious effort toward cross-cultural filtration.

By efforts toward cross cultural filtration, Wiredu (1998) means conceptually decolonizing concepts and categories of thought. What then is conceptual decolonization? Conceptual decolonization means the attempt to disassociate African philosophical thinking from ideas and frameworks that have been unduly influenced by the historical fact of colonization. This meaning of conceptual decolonization has two complementary understandings in Wiredu's view. The first is negative, while the second is positive:

> On the negative side, conceptual decolonization means avoiding or reversing through a critical conceptual self-awareness the unexamined assimilation in our thought (that is, in the thought of contemporary African philosophers) of the conceptual-frameworks embedded in foreign philosophical traditions that have had an impact on Africa life and thought" (Wiredu 1995:22).

The positive side, as Wiredu (1995:22) grants, involves "exploring as much as judicious, the resources of our own indigenous conceptual schemes in our philosophical meditations on even the most technical problems of contemporary philosophy." Here, Wiredu (1995) is advocating that indigenous African languages and intellectual resources should be optimally put into use in the process of reflection and writing in African philosophy as well as in African contributions to philosophy at the global level.

From the above, it can be seen that the process of conceptual decolonization can be described as one of intellectual reconstruction through conceptual understanding and clarification. Conceptual decolonization can be said further to involve a comparative utilization of different African languages in philosophical thinking with a view to guarding against the uncritical assimilation of conceptual schemes embedded in foreign languages and culture. At the same time, it aims towards "promoting an adequate understanding of the intellectual foundations of African culture" (Wiredu 1991:98). In addition, "philosophy of decolonization will liberate us from colonial mentality and help us determine which philosophical problems are tongue-dependent or otherwise tongue neutral or universal" (Wiredu 1984:47). It will help clear ambiguities in linguistic usages which can obstruct the process of cross-cultural comparison of ideas. In all, philosophy of decolonization involves linguistic contrasts, comparative studies, conceptual clarification and understanding of issues concepts and philosophical problems, using African indigenous languages.

Wiredu is not alone in the intellectual camp that advocates doing African philosophy in indigenous languages. One can also find the likes of Gyekye (1995), who shares the view that "language, as a vehicle of concepts, not only embodies a philosophical point of view, but also influences philosophical thought". The thought of a given philosopher is to some extent determined by the structure and other characteristics of his or her language, such as the grammatical categories and the vocabularies in the language. The point of truth in Gyekye's position can be seen in the works of African philosophers like Kagame, Mbiti and even Sodipo.

Kagame (1956) examines the concept of being among the Rwanda-Burundis and has established that Bantu metaphysical categories are based on the grammatical categories of the Bantu language. Mbiti (1970:21) also treads the same path with his thesis that in the East African languages there are no concrete expressions to convey the idea of a distant future. As a consequence, he infers that the Africans have a two-dimensional conception of time with a long past and a present. Sodipo & Hallen (1986) maintain that there is a fundamental distinction between the Western epistemological system and the Yoruba African option. They defend the idea of Yoruba moral epistemology by making some remarkable distinctions amongst epistemic concepts such as belief, opinion, knowledge and truth (with a two-prong typology, cognitive and moral). They expose the dangers in assuming that epistemic terms such as 'know', 'truth' and 'believe' in the English language have precise meaning and equivalence in the Yoruba language.

While my interest is in the main not to explore the cogency or otherwise of the positions of these scholars, as each of their positions has been controversially contended in African philosophy, the point of their reference here should be clear. This is that linguistic structures and characteristics influence – and may in fact determine – the construction of moral, metaphysical and epistemological doctrines. In the words of Gyekye (1995:31), "language does not merely suggest, but may also embody philosophical perspectives." With this conviction that every language implies or suggests a vision of the world, Gyekye, using the Akan language and its linguistic repertoire, analyses some concepts in Akan thought, which include: God, causality, person, destiny, ethics, time, among others.

Some inferences can be made from the above view of Gyekye. One, if philosophers are thus influenced by the structures and characteristics of language, then such a situation is an invitation to relativism. To hold this view will suggest that philosophical theses are language-oriented and depend on language for their plausibility or validity. Two, if it is accepted that philosophical theses are strongly influenced by the characteristics of the languages in which they are formulated, a meaningful and profound assessment of the theses can best be achieved through an adequate understanding of the structures and characteristics of the language in question.

One fundamental presupposition of having an adequate understanding of the native language that has influenced or conditioned the philosophical theses is that one is either a native speaker or an indigene of the culture of the language. For Gyekye (1995:169), "whether a particular philosophical thesis or problem is language-oriented or language neutral, it must be determined within the structure of a given natural language." I may not entirely agree with Gyekye's position because philosophical problems, I think, may be language neutral but philosophical theses are usually language-oriented; it is worth considering the view of Bewaji, who is another conservative on the language debate in contemporary African philosophy.

In his defence of African languages in the doing of African philosophy, Bewaji (2002:271-295) argues their "suitability for critical, scientific, technological, mathematical, educational and most importantly, philosophical discourse." According to him (2002), African languages, like all other living languages, including European languages, are dynamic and sufficiently

able to express African philosophical thoughts. Thus, while supporting the use of African languages in African philosophy, Bewaji (2002) notes that African languages are dynamic enough to accommodate and express new phenomena and issues of philosophical relevance. Arguing the case for why African philosophy should be done in African language, Chris Uroh (1994:138) writes:

> The problem becomes more complex when foreign languages with markedly different worldviews are imposed on a people in place of their own language. In that case, they are forced to perceive themselves through an alien cultural screen, which is bound to distort their own image. Such a people will suffer an identity crisis, for they will neither really be like "themselves" nor exactly like the culture they are imitating.

The point in the above excerpts is that if we do not utilize African languages in education, especially in philosophical thought and discourse, our emancipation from colonial domination remains incomplete.

Other scholars whose perspectives on the language problem are worth mentioning are Wa Thiong'o (1993) and Ogunmodede (1993). In a critique of the progressives' position, Ogunmodede (1993:12) argues that "it is none of the business of the African to Africanize or de-racialize English or French or German as argued by the advocates of these languages in African philosophy." But it is our business to express ourselves in our own language that will promote our culture. He further claims that in order to evolve a unique and true Africanity of our philosophical thought, the use of African languages is indispensable. He noted that the present crop of African philosophers and scholars speculate on what African philosophy, or African history, African literature or whatever ought to be without succeeding in identifying and stating what it is. In his words, "we fail to do so because we use borrowed Western linguistic categories to analyse the matter and contents of our thought according to the values of these predetermined Western categories, only to end up in a vicious circle" (Ogunmodede 1993:12).

In the same vein, wa Thiong'o (1993) says that linguistic decolonization, which is a vital subset of the general process of cultural decolonization, has been neglected in African scholarship. He notes with dismay how African scholars and philosophers have unwittingly been carrying out the process of cultural reaffirmation, after much ethnocentric bastardization of African values, in foreign languages. His argument is that "any attempt at cultural decolonization carried out within the ambit of the European languages is already a capitulation to a European cultural standard crudely disguised as universalization" (wa Thiong'o 1993:xvii). wa Thiong'o's (1986:16) opposition to colonial language is ideologically inclined in order to "control how the Africans manage their daily lives, their mental universe, and their perception of themselves and their relationship to the world." Hence, like other conservatives, he too has called for the need to start doing African philosophy in indigenous African languages.

Afolayan (2006), who is another conservative on the debate on language in African philosophy, notes that the linguistic problem is one of the major problems facing contemporary African philosophers. This problem has to do with whether African philosophy should be done in African language(s) or not and the extent to which meanings can be translated across cultures without distortions. Unlike other conservatives, Afolayan (2006:55) argues that "it is better for an African writer and philosopher to think and feel in his own language and then look for an English transliteration approximating the original." This view of Afolayan derives from the major challenges of doing African philosophy in pure African languages. One is the translation problem, which often arises as a result of the failure in translating some categories, expressions and concepts in the native language into foreign languages and those in foreign languages into indigenous languages. Wiredu (1980:27) points to this problem when he notes that "unless different languages share basically the same logic, it would be impossible to translate one into another." The second major challenge of doing African philosophy in pure African language has to do with communicating African philosophical research findings to a non-African audience and other audiences outside the linguistic tradition.

Towa's (1997) position is unlike the views of the conservatives considered above. He emphasizes the importance of "an inter-regional language such as Swahili for communication in Africa while retaining the colonial languages for communication with the non-African world" (Towa 1997:178). Like Towa (1997), Keita (1999:34) also suggests "the establishment of one or two *lingua franca* languages for the African world, which includes not only the African continent but areas where relatively large numbers of persons of African origin reside." After all, the world has no problem with the fact that most speakers of Spanish or Portuguese do not live in Spain or Portugal respectively.

On the whole, conservatives such as Wiredu, Hallen, wa Thiongo, Ogunmodede, Bewaji, Oluwole, Uroh, and Afolayan agree that all forms of colonial legacy and undue imperialist influences in contemporary African life and thought should be avoided. The European languages, which are the media of communication in African philosophical discourse, are recommended for replacement with indigenous African languages. They believe foreign languages distort the cultural

identity and foster Eurocentric African philosophy; until philosophy is written and taught in an African language, African philosophy may turn out in future to be nothing but Western philosophy in an African guise.

The progressive arguments on the language problem in African philosophy

Now I initiate a discussion of the progressives in the language debate in African philosophy. I shall start with an exposition of the view of Bello (1987). In the article "Philosophy and an African language", Bello establishes a two-fold conclusion on the language question in African philosophy. One, he maintains that while "the language of a people can be a good index or pointer to a people's philosophy, linguistic considerations alone cannot in themselves be decisive in philosophical disputes" (Bello 1987:5). This is because they can only serve the function of providing additional data. Two, "the African philosopher should be wary of over-emphasizing the importance of his vernaculars if only for the sake of being able to communicate with fellow African philosophers" (Bello 1987:5).

In advancing arguments for the above conclusions, Bello employs some supportive arguments earlier advanced by Wiredu (1980) in his *Philosophy and an African Culture*. In this book, Wiredu enjoins that the African philosopher should pay close attention to his language because doing so has the advantage of yielding not only dividends in philosophical clarity but also adding some theoretical dimensions to African philosophizing. Wiredu cautions in this regard that "language can only incline but not necessitate"; granted this, Wiredu (Wiredu 1980:35) suggests that "it is premature to seek to carry out the teaching of philosophy in the vernacular." On these points, Bello agrees with Wiredu.

But against Wiredu, Bello critically notes that in some of Wiredu's later works, especially those he published on "The concept of truth in the Akan language" and his paper on "The Akan concept of mind" together with his article on "Conceptual decolonization", Wiredu (in these aforementioned later works) seems to abandon the caution which he had earlier considered appropriate on the issue of language and philosophy. Without necessarily going into details of Wiredu's positions in these papers, Wiredu's central position in the articles in question is that some philosophical problems are not universal. There are some that can be posed in English language but not in the Akan language, which he philosophized in.

In critically evaluating Wiredu's positions, Bello makes some inferences worthy of examination. One is that no major natural language is intrinsically superior or inferior to another. But as he (Bello 1987:7) notes, "one language may be more or less developed in some specific respect, for example, literature, philosophy, science, etc. than another language." Bello is quick to add that at the level of possibility, any language can catch up with any other in some specific respects in which it is deficient if there are serious efforts and doggedness in place. The two ways by which this can be possible, as outlined by him, are through coining and borrowing.

The second inference of Bello is that while it is not wrong in principle to label philosophical problems as 'universal', 'fundamental' or pseudo as Wiredu had done, Bello is sceptical as to whether such a classification can be derived from the fact that the problems either cannot be stated in a vernacular at all or cannot be stated without uninformative repetition as we have in Wiredu.

Bello's third inference is that while philosophical insights can be drawn from linguistic facts (at least, as evident in ordinary language philosophy in Britain and US), we should be "wary of using purely linguistic facts (for example, translatability or non-translatability) as knock-down arguments for philosophical beliefs or doctrines" (Bello 1987:7).

I think this is the core of Bello's position on philosophy and language, as well as his critique of Wiredu's (1985) position on the problem of truth in Akan thought. Wiredu's (1985) position is that "if this theory does translate into my language with tautology or repetition, therefore, its rivals in my language are preferable." Bello's critique here is that this type of reasoning says nothing about the plausibility or otherwise of the theory in question, but only goes to show the deficiency or the unsuitability of the native language in discussing certain types of theories. Thus, Bello urges that we should not use the evidence of linguistic facts alone as knock-down arguments for either affirming or denying philosophical theories or beliefs in African philosophy. He insists that the African philosopher cannot use the insights derived from his language as decisive arguments for or against a philosophical position.

One other major issue in the discourse on language in African philosophy is that of the problem of translation. On the use of translatability as a tool of philosophical analysis, Bello agrees that translatability is crucial to intercultural understanding. Much as it is, he (Bello 1987:9) suggests that "if a theory does not translate easily into a vernacular, more energy should be applied to the translation." If upon such efforts there is a failure of translating a theory into the vernacular successfully, Bello says such a situation should be regretted and not celebrated as Wiredu had thought and done.

Giving credence to Bello's critical stance on Wiredu, I think Wiredu was more motivated by the quest for asserting or affirming a unique and authentic Akan conception of truth and even mind; otherwise, Wiredu wouldn't have celebrated the untranslatability of the cognitive notion of truth and fact into one word in Akan language.

On a suggestive note, Bello highlights some of the tasks in which the resources of an African language can be advantageously employed. He advises that African languages can be employed in supporting or refuting the popular and

unpopular conceptions about African thought and culture. On his list are issues such as whether or not Africans are in all things religious, whether or not African morality is based on religion, as well as whether traditional beliefs are rational or non-rational. Bello (1987:9) also advocates that "African languages can be used in the process of elucidating some of the concepts that traditional Africans lived by such as divination, kinship, destiny, sacrifice, etc."

In an attempt to employ African languages with respect to elucidating some of the concepts that traditional Africans lived by, Bello (1987:10) critically notes problems that one will unavoidably encounter. For instance, "the use of vernaculars for all philosophical activity will mar philosophical communication not only between Africans and the rest of the world, but also among Africans themselves." This is because "Africa does not yet have a *lingua franca* and not all Africans understand or speak other indigenous African languages" (Bello 1987:10). To illustrate this point, "only an Akan speaking philosopher could meaningfully have contributed to, or arbitrated in the debate between Wiredu and Bedu-Addo on the concept of truth in Akan language" (Bello 1987:9).

Makinde (1988) is another progressive whose viewpoint is worth courting with on the language problem in African philosophy. While he agrees with the Wittgensteinian view that the limit of a people's language is the limit of their world, he also shares the position that language has an important influence on a people's understanding of culture, reality and ultimately, philosophy. The knowledge of a language induces reality in a way quite similar to the culture whose language it is. Indeed for Makinde, the best way to propagate a people's philosophy and culture is through their language. However, in the African context, Makinde thinks that there is a lack of a developed language capable of communicating scientific ideas and philosophical erudition. In his words:

> At present, none of the African language is satisfactory enough to be adopted as a continental language, rich enough for analytic philosophy and science. Most of the advances countries of the world have succeeded in spreading their ideas and cultures, especially by means of their philosophy science and religion to other parts of the world through their well-developed language ... The poverty of African languages has led to the poverty of scientific ideas and meaningful contributions to the development of philosophy, science and technology (Makinde 1988:16-17).

Recognizing that the problem of language concerns how to translate concepts (be it scientific or philosophical) across cultures, Makinde notes that African thinkers are today confronted with the linguistic problem of finding words in their native languages that would catch precisely the meaning and reference of foreign words and terms. The implication of this, in Makinde's view, is that "it has led to the situation where serious efforts are being made by African intellectuals to make their thoughts fit into the thoughts and pictures of reality of the owners of these foreign languages" (Makinde 1988:18). In Makinde's perception about the poverty of African languages, he thinks that they restrict and depreciate the role of reason and analytic thinking in contemporary efforts at understanding the African world. Not only this, he bemoans the multiplicity of languages in Africa and the absence of a continental language as an obstacle to the development of a distinctly homogenous African philosophical frame of mind. As a consequence, Makinde neither sees the plausibility nor possibility of doing African philosophy in African languages.

Makinde's position has been brilliantly countered by Bewaji (2002). Contrary to Makinde's (1988:19) claim that "the poverty of African language has led to the poverty of scientific ideas and meaningful contributions to the development of philosophy, science and technology."[1] Bewaji (2002) argues that Makinde's (1988) view is incorrect. According to Bewaji, the reason for the lack of a continental language in Africa is not a poverty of grammar, syntax or semantics. The point is that "each ethno-cultural linguistic group differs culturally from others and has an identity, which is borne by language" (Bewaji 2002:278). Thus, "it is more of a political issue which language is now an inter-continental language, not because of any special superiority of the language, but because of political, economic, military, and technological power" (Bewaji 2002:278).

Arguing along the same lines as Makinde, Tangwa (1992) posits that both French and English languages should be domesticated in African scholarship since these two languages possess inexhaustible ideas, paradigm and philosophies, etc. He maintains this position in contrast with indigenous African languages, which he considers as "destitute on the account of being grounded mainly on oral traditions" (Tangwa 1992:36-38). He supports his position with the fact that "the use of foreign languages is now an unchangeable and irreversible historical antecedent in Africa" (Tangwa 1992:42).

Azenabor (2004:46) in support of the progressive thesis argues that "we need not write in African languages in order to write authentic African philosophy. What we need is to express our thoughts in a language that is universally

1. Makinde's (1988) position on this is spurious. An instance of a brilliant localization of scientific language in Yoruba thought is Professor O.L. Olopade's Inaugural lecture, entitled *Software System in Mother Tongue: The Yoruba Perspective*. Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2009.

understandable and intelligible and avoid foreign categories and models." Furthermore, he notes that learning, understanding and writing in an African language is not what really matters; rather what matters is having the experience of African people. Language does not determine the authenticity of African philosophy but rather how philosophy is applied to the problems of African life and experience. Azenabor (2002:47) adds that it is not pertinent doing African philosophy in African languages because "African languages are really underdeveloped in syntax, localized and lack the needed vocabulary to meet up with modern challenges and sophistication."

Evaluation and conclusion

The controversial nature of the language debate in contemporary African philosophy has made the issue an open-ended one. The above exposition of the problem of language in African philosophy reveals on the one hand the contention between the conservatives and the progressives, which sums up on whether or not African languages can be used in doing African philosophy, where 'doing' means teaching, writing and researching. On the other hand, it also revolves around the question of the extent to which words and concepts in use in traditions of philosophy outside Africa can be translated into indigenous African languages without a loss of content meaning. While each side of these problems has been extensively explored by scholars, I think the assumption of divides in the debate cannot just be given as necessarily correct.

For instance, it may be argued against the conservatives' position that simply because one speaks or writes in English does not entail that one necessarily takes on board certain colonialist ideas, as Wiredu would have us believe. Similarly also, contra to the progressives' stance, it is arguable that it is naïve to think that we escape colonialist ideas simply by speaking and writing in an indigenous language. However, before taking sides, I think some pertinent questions, which are central to the resolution of the contentions, remain yet ever to be raised. Why do we continue to do African philosophy in European languages? Related to this question is to ask whether or not there are efforts currently being made in creating a philosophical glossary in an African language or to translate Western philosophical literatures into African language(s)? Owing to the large number of African languages, which one are we to choose from in doing African philosophy – ethnic dialects, national *lingua franca*, regional African language or continental African language?

Much as it is desirable to have contemporary African philosophy in African languages, especially in view of the intricate connection among language, thought and reality, the difficulty in not having a wholly expressed African philosophy in African indigenous languages is not because of the deficiency of the language as Makinde (1988), Tangwa (1992) and Azenabor (2002) have maintained. Rather, in the words of A. Rettova (2002:148), the "lack of writing in African languages is the main obstacle to writing African philosophy in African languages" and to a robust elaboration of the philosophical components entailed in African cultural heritage. Without necessarily rejecting the sentiments of the conservatives on their insistence that African philosophy in contemporary time should cease to be done and communicated by African philosophers in alien language(s), I think what is more fundamental as a precursor to this goal is first understanding and overcoming the challenges of doing contemporary African philosophy in non-African indigenous languages.

One factor is the lack of a written tradition in African languages. Another point is that European languages, which are dominantly used in African philosophy, are the languages of power. "The more widely the European languages propagate themselves, the more widely their influence pervade in post-colonial Africa be it in education, culture, art, law or sciences" (wa Thiong'o 1993:37). In sharing in the linguistic power of influence, African scholars are therefore wont to use the European metropolitan languages (English, French, Portuguese or German). More fundamental is the economic reason for unavoidably using European languages in African philosophical communication. As a matter of fact, "anybody who works in African languages is most likely to be limited to the skimpiest of audience in terms of geography and numbers" (Imbo 1998:120). In reaching to a wider audience, which at the end will promote scholarly recognition and its economic consequence, African philosophers cannot but despise their indigenous African languages. These reasons are more primary than the desire to promote intercultural communication and discourse among other African philosophers in different linguistic groups. Perhaps appropriate solutions can be found in all these respects, and the doubting dust of doing African philosophy in African languages would be settled.

If language is essentially not neutral such that it usually mirrors reality in a given culture, or using the words of Masolo (2003:33), "the language of any community reflects the structure of their world in terms of how they understand, define, and taxonomize ideas about themselves," then it is high time we began taking African languages seriously by assiduously making efforts to create and develop a tradition of writing and general proficiency in the mother tongue in respective African cultures. In fortifying, therefore, the conservatives' position on the use of African languages in the communication of African philosophical thoughts and ideas, the promotion of proficiency of Africans (both in speech and writing) in their indigenous mother tongues from foundational educational levels should be paramount. The use of indigenous language in contemporary African philosophy can be seen as just good in itself. It may also be instrumental in rating the level of

learning admiration of African languages even by non-speakers of the language. One couldn't help noting the large number of English speaking scholars of Heidegger who have found it useful to learn to read German in order to appreciate the depths and subtleties of Heidegger's writing, and yet who have been able to make these apparent to an English speaking audience. Western Philosophy is written in many different languages (for instance, Greek, English, French and German) and it is extremely varied. Much of this intellectual cross-linguistic involvement can be achieved in African philosophy only if the conservatives' position is accepted.

It is more cogent to suggest that the progressives reconsider the need to explore the possibility and prospects of doing African philosophy in (an) African language(s). This will add to the extant meaning of contemporary African philosophy by saying it is the philosophy in an African language. In the words of Brown (2006:vi), "African philosophy is the philosophy that reflects the philosophical concerns that are manifested in African conceptual languages." It is instructive and pertinent therefore that we direct our philosophical thinking away from distortive foreign language(s) and express ourselves in autochthonous, indigenous and relevant language(s) in our philosophical discourse.

The challenges confronting the reality of such a programme are enormous; however, they are surmountable. To the challenge of evolving a unified continental *lingua franca* for African states, despite their cultural ethnic heterogenousity, I think it is possible. Much as it may seem impracticable for us to work exclusively and wholly in indigenous African languages while doing African philosophy, we may proceed in a piecemeal manner. By this, I mean proceeding through analysis of indigenous concepts by way of thinking in indigenous language and communicating that in foreign language(s). This is what the likes of Mbiti, Oruka, Sodipo, Hallen, Wiredu, and Balogun have been doing by picking and analysing some concepts in their respective cultural languages and communicating them in the English language without attenuation for promoting the vector of African tradition.

But we may ask: even in such analytic exercises on indigenous concepts, how do we resolve the problem of meaning and translation? I think language analysts in Africa have a crucial task in coming out with continuously improved translation. "Orthographic undertakings for the preservation and improvement of our different languages should be encouraged" (Brown 2006:35). While this is being done, residual meta-philosophical issues could still arise. However, with continuous philosophical reflections, refutations and counter refutations, the storm of doing contemporary African philosophy in African language(s) will be weathered in the near future. This is very possible. With the sincere support of relevant stake-holders in the planning and methodical execution of the idea of an indigenized language of African philosophy, it is hoped that many of the teething problems militating against this programme will be effectively challenged. Ensuring the reality and sustenance of doing contemporary African philosophy in African language(s) is a historical responsibility which contemporary African scholars must not neglect. The success in this regard constitutes the greatest assurance for not only genuine interactions among philosophical traditions in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, but also for indigenous scientific, technological, cultural and intellectual development in 21st century Africa.

References

Afolayan, A. 2006. The language question in African philosophy. In Olusegun Oladipo (ed.) *Core issues in African philosophy.* Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Ayn, R.1977. *Global balkanization.* California: Palo Alto Book Service.

Azenabor, G. 2004. *Understanding the problems in African philosophy.* Lagos: First Academic Publishers.

Bello, A.G.A. 1987. Philosophy and an African language. *Quest.* Vol. 1. No.1.

Bewaji, J.A.I. 2002. African languages and critical discourse. In Olusegun Oladipo (ed.) *The third way in African philosophy: essays in honour of Kwasi Wiredu.* Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Biesheuvel, S. 1952. The study of African ability. *African Studies.* Vol. 11. No.2.

Brown, L M. 2006. Preface. In Brown, L. (ed.) *African philosophy: new and traditional perspectives.*Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chomsky, N. 1968. *Language and mind.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.

Fram-Cohen, M. 1985. *Reality, language, translation: what makes translation possible*. Proceedings of the American Translators Association Conference, Miami.

Gyekye, K. 1995. *An essay on African philosophical thought: the Akan conceptual scheme*. Revised edition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hallen, B & Sodipo, J O. 1986. *Knowledge, belief, and witchcraft: analytic experiments in African philosophy.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Imbo, S. 1998. *An introduction to African philosophy.* Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kagame, A. 1956. *La philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de l'etre.* Brussels: Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales.

Mbiti, J S. 1970. *African religions and philosophy.* New York: Double Day.

Keita, L. 1999. Africa and its linguistic problematic. *Quest.* Vol. xiii. No. 1-2.

Liamson, B S. 1986. Language: a universal cause. *Listening: journal of religion and Culture*. Vol. 21. No. 1.

Makinde, M A. 1988. *African philosophy, culture and traditional medicine.* Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies.

Marcien, T. 1997. Interview: Richard Bjornson with Marcien Towa. *Research in African Literatures.* Vol. 28. No. 4.

Masolo, D. A. 2003. Philosophy and indigenous knowledge: an African perspective. *Africa today.* Vol. 50. No. 2.

Ogunmodede, F. 1993. *African philosophy in African language*. Proceedings of the international conference on African philosophy and feministic studies, Lagos, 6-10th July.
Peikoff, L. 1982. *The ominous parallels.* New York: Stein and Day.
Rettova, A. 2002. The role of African languages in African philosophy. In Bidima, Jean-Godefroy (ed.).*Philosophies Africaines: traversees des experiences.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Tangwa, G. 1992. Colonial legacy and the language situation in Cameroon. *Quest*. Vol. 6, No. 2.
Uroh, C. 1994. Colonialism and the language question: a reply to Godfrey Tangwa. *Quest*. Vol. viii. No. 2.
Vygotsky, L. 1962. *Thought and language.* In Hanfmann, E. and Vakar, G. (eds. and Trans.) Cambridge, M.A. MIT Press.
Whorf, B L. 1956. *Language, thought and reality: selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf.* Carroll, J. (ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
wa Thiong'o, N. 1986. *Decolonizing the mind: the politics of language in African literature.* London: James Currey.
wa Thiong'o, N. 1993. *Moving the center: the struggle for cultural freedoms.* Portsmouth: Heinemann.
Wikipedia. N.D. Reality. Accessed May 29, 2013, from: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality.*
Wiredu, K. 1984. Philosophical research and teaching in Africa: some suggestions. In *Teaching and Research in Philosophy.* Paris: UNESCO.
Wiredu, K. 1991. On defining African philosophy. In T. Serequeberhan, (ed.) *African philosophy: the essential readings*. New York: Paragon House.
Wiredu, K. 1995. Custom and morality: a comparative analysis of some African and Western conceptions of morals. In *conceptual decolonization in African philosophy: 4 essays* (selected and introduced by Olusegun Oladipo). Ibadan: Hope Publications.
Wiredu, K. 1998. Toward decolonizing African philosophy and religion. *African Studies Quarterly.* Vol. 1. Issue 4.
Wiredu, K. 2000. Decolonization, multilingualism, and African languages in the making of African philosophy: Kwasi Wiredu in dialogue with Kai Kresse. *Polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy. http://them.polylog.org/2/dwk-en.htm.*

African indigenous knowledge: scientific or unscientific?

Adebayo Anthony Ogungbure[1]
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Philosopher.bayo@yahoo.com

The conventional idea is that there is only one superior way of knowing. That is rational and scientific knowledge … Yet, across the globe, people perceive reality in different ways, and the resulting worldviews lead to different ways of learning and different ways of knowing.[2]

Human knowledge within Western culture is generally adjudged to have reached its apogee in terms of the study of the natural world and the development of technological equipment directed towards making life worth living. Meanwhile, the attainment of such a sophisticated status in Western scientific research has been facilitated by its experimental methodology which has made possible the transfer of knowledge from one generation to another. However, other non-Western forms of knowledge that lack these characteristics are regarded as "unscientific". African indigenous knowledge, a victim of such censure, is seen as an unscientific accumulation of native wisdom, lacking in sophistication, logicality, coherence, and technicality which disqualifies it from being called "scientific" knowledge as we have it in Western culture. This paper seeks to argue that the rejection of African indigenous knowledge as "unscientific" knowledge stems from a false dichotomy.

Keywords: Africa, Indigenous Knowledge, Scientific, Epistemology and Culture.

Introduction

Our task in this paper is to critically examine assumptions and notions that stimulate the tension[3] between Western science and African indigenous knowledge in order to determine whether there are justifiable grounds for this tension. The challenge levelled against African indigenous knowledge (AIK) that it is inferior to Western scientific knowledge (WSK) has its roots in two important antecedents. The first can be traced to the consequence of the colonialist agenda in Africa and the self-acclaimed conceptual superiority of its benefactors over and above the people of the conquered territories. In fact, there were European scholars[4] who thought of Africans as a people so primitive that they could not even interpret their experiences in a logical and coherent manner and were accustomed to allow others to do the thinking and organize their experience for them.

This argument depicting African dependency on the West for structuralizing their conceptual schemes is well captured in the work of Placid Tempels[5]. In Tempels' view, if an African is asked to explain his world view on the nature of existence and the universe as a whole, one should not expect him to give a systematic account of his ontological system. But this does not in any way mean that such ontology does not exist; the African is only incapable of articulating his system of thought. He desperately needs help; this help lies in using Western paradigms and methods of analysis to systematize and logically present the primitive thinking of the African in a coherent manner. As colourful as this pattern of thinking is, it is simply an undisguised form of ethnocentrism, an offshoot of the colonial mentality which believes that Africans lack the general awareness or the possession of information and the acquisition of knowledge to transcend the bounds of credulity, and certain basic environmental limitations. This explication, in part, portrays the basis of the rejection of African indigenous knowledge as inferior to its Western equivalent.

1. Adebayo Anthony Ogungbure, is a PhD candidate in the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
2. Bertus Haverkort and Coen Reijntjes, 2011, p.1.
3. Some important articles by notable African scholars further animate the views expressed in this essay. The following articles on the discourses of Africa published in *The African Philosophy Reader* (first and second editions), New York: Routledge, 2002; Editedby P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux, are important in this respect. They include: MB Ramose's "The struggle for reason in Africa", H.O. Oruka's "Ideology and culture: The African experience", T. Serequeberhan's "The critique of Eurocentrism and the practice of African philosophy", P.J. Hountondji's "An alienated literature", D.Kaphagawani & A.P.J. Roux "African epistemology", G.G.Sogolo "Logic and rationality".
4. Robin Horton, in "African Traditional thought and Western Science" points out two cogent reasons why European researchers, especially anthropologists, have failed to understand African traditional thought systems. First, he claims that many of them have been unfamiliar with the theoretical thinking of their own culture, which is a major handicap to their understanding of the African culture which they intended to study. Secondly, he affirms that even those familiar with theoretical thinking in their own culture have failed to recognize its African equivalents, simply because they have been blinded by a difference of idiom. This implies that the barrier of understanding how language is used in different cultures prevents the proper interpretation of conceptual schemes. See. Horton, 1998, p. 181.

The second one has to do with the response of African scholars to this Eurocentric bias as a way of showing that Africans are not unscientific and incapable of abstract reflection and are not in any way intellectually, culturally or ideologically inferior to their Western counterparts. This preoccupation has generated some polemics in African scholarship between those who have favoured the dogmatic veneration of African culture and those who took a divergent route. Those who believe that African culture should provide the raw data upon which any scientific and technological progress can be made are referred to as the traditionalists. However, those who believe that for any system of knowledge to qualify as scientific, it must be a product of certain systemic theoretical formulations, rigorous philosophical analysis, logical thinking, and critical reflection are referred to as modernists. Of particular relevance here is the agenda of the modernists. They intend to present African theoretical frameworks as similar to Western categories of thought using established scientific models. The implication is that all indigenous forms of knowledge must be similar to other Western categories of thought in order to qualify as meaningful. This situation of borrowing external theoretical paradigms for the characterization of African knowledge is what Paulin Hountondji refers to as an extraverted scientific activity; fabricating indigenous knowledge in an externally oriented manner "intended to meet the theoretical needs of our Western counterparts and answer the questions they pose" (Hountondji 2009: 8). Following this line of reasoning, it is difficult to see how African indigenous knowledge can be said to be scientific or sharing the same quality with Western scientific knowledge when it is still Western concerns and paradigms that direct the thrust of the African system of thought. It is from these two perspectives that the knowledge produced by Africans (AIK) has been criticized as being inferior to the Western alternative.

In fact there are some scholars who believe that an exploration of the conceptual structure of traditional African thought will reveal that science is absent from traditional African thought schemes (Oluwasanmi 1972:5). But in what follows, we reject such views by arguing that knowledge is a cultural phenomenon and in so far as Africans have a cultural understanding, they are also capable of scientific thinking. Human knowledge is a cultural phenomenon because enlightenment and sophistication, which are aspects of the cultural experience, are acquired through social means of education and the beliefs, customs, norms and traditions of a people are preserved, transmitted through this medium from one generation to another. Indeed, knowledge is a powerful human ideal which usually have a formative effect on the human mind. The acquisition of knowledge is power and power is a value that is highly sought after because of its massive potential to control and influence others. This explains why any culture that exhibits superior knowledge, whether scientific or non-scientific, over another is regarded as being in possession of power.

The idea of "knowledge-power" being stressed here portrays the nature of the epistemic tension between African and Western cultural epistemologies. This tension is generated by the rejection of African indigenous knowledge as lacking the elements of sophistication found in the Western scientific enterprise. This situation of the battle for the supremacy of cultural knowledge is what Masolo has recently referred to as "knowledge war"[1]. According to Masolo (2010:17), in a world where people travel carrying their cultural knowledge with them, knowledge wars are likely to ensue, and history tells us that there have been such wars, both within and between different cultures. It is this war within cultures that Snow (1990) attempted to bring to the fore in his work titled "The two cultures", describing the controversy between the scientific and the literate culture, while that between cultures is exemplified by the issue in focus in this essay. It is important to begin by attempting a clarification of the central notions in this article.

5. Placid Temples is widely regarded for his pioneering work on the Bantu people of Africa; his seminal work titled *Bantu Philosophy,* an exercise in ethnophilosophy, has a strong ethnocentric undertone in that it presents Africans as intellectually feeble and incapable of cognitive formulations of a world view on their existential status. He was so convinced that Western theoretical modes of thought need to be applied in investigating and interpreting African conceptions of reality that he boldly asserts thus: "We do not claim that the Bantus are capable of presenting us with a philosophical treatise complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is our own intellectual training that enables us, effects its systematic development. It is up to us to provide them with an accurate account of their conception of entities, in such a way that they will recognize themselves in our words". This assertion is as good as saying that Africans do not know anything – not even themselves or what happens in their immediate environment; in short that Africans are less human than Europeans. See. Tempels, P. 1969, p. 24.

1. By "knowledge war" we mean literally the struggle for knowledge. This struggle for knowledge is not necessarily between two distinct cultures (though our thematic focus is on this archetype); it could be a similar culture – where a group of people see themselves as being intellectually superior to "others" as is the case of the Oromo in Ethiopia. Although the Oromo have no political power, they are the largest ethno-nation in the Ethiopian population. Ethiopia, with the help of the European colonial powers, colonized and annexed the Oromo people during the last decades of the 19th century, when Africa was partitioned among the European colonial powers. Since then they have been treated as colonial subjects and second class citizens. With their colonization and incorporation into Ethiopia, the Oromo could not develop independent institutions that would allow them to produce and disseminate their historical knowledge freely. The point then is that Ethiopian knowledge elites with the support of the Ethiopian state produced "official" history that completely denied a historical space for the Oromo and other colonized peoples. See Jalata, 1995, pp. 95-96.

Conceptual clarifications

Western scientific knowledge and African indigenous knowledge

We regard both Western and African forms of knowledge as being cultural because knowledge is a cultural phenomenon – although both are produced within two distinct frameworks, they are not diametrically opposed. What this implies is that African modes of knowing are not dissimilar to other cultural modes of knowing. To maintain a contrary view will inadvertently mean that we are granting the thesis that all humans are not humans and that human beings can be ideologically inferior to one another along cultural lines. In this case, we conceive of both AIK and WSK as cultural epistemologies because they are products of dynamic levels of civilization or human awareness developed through unconnected geographical space. Western scientific knowledge (WSK) has a long-standing history which can be traced to the work and basic scientific philosophies of great thinkers like Galileo, Newton, Einstein, and Descartes, among other notable scholars. The modern sciences as we have them today emerged in Europe in the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment of the 17th century aimed at the empirical observation of facts. Knowledge within this scientific culture is accumulated through a rigorous process of rational inquiry, logical thinking, critical reflection, empirical perception, and the aptitude for abstraction. All these human abilities are applied in the investigation of phenomena, interpreting reality and providing meaningful hypotheses for further scientific research. The knowledge gained in this expedition is precise, theoretically rigorous, predictive and interpretive. The point being stressed here is that:

> With respect to modern science, the heart of the process is neither the stage of data collection nor that of the application of theoretical findings to practical issues. Rather, it lies between the two, in the stages of theory building, interpretation of raw information and the theoretical processing of the data collected. These stages lead to more or less complex experimental methods and machinery. Based on these procedures, statements are produced (Hountondji 1995:2).

The statements produced by science may be subjected to various tests and scientific investigation to determine not only their veracity but also accuracy. This is why WSK is described as having an empirical character in the sense that it follows an empirical research cycle in a methodological framework that combines induction and deduction to formulate researchable hypotheses based on theories and the systematic collection and processing of data. The empirical character of science leads to the systematization of knowledge through the deployment of mathematical models, cryptic symbols, and other mechanistic representations in order to explain natural phenomena. In this regard, the efforts of classical scientists like Galileo, Da Vinci, Newton, Bacon, Descartes and Einstein in popularizing the mechanistic character of science cannot be overemphasized. Looking at the history of science from a holistic perspective, it is evident that from the writings of Francis Bacon, through Enlightenment philosophies to nineteenth-century positivists, the progress of science demanded a favourable environment, which meant freedom of thought and publication, state protection and adequate rewards. In order that science would help transform social existence, a fundamental method was required to carry out this important function within society. This gave birth to the experimental method for science, its strongest weapon, fashioned by Galileo. According to Strømholm (1975), within the ranks of the saints of science the name of Galileo Galilei has always held a special place. The dramatic circumstances of his life, his crucial role in the transition from one world-view to another and the fame and influence of his works have all conspired to put him in his position of a cultural hero. Meanwhile, Newton may justly be regarded as a hero in science like Galileo for introducing the principle of inertia into theoretical physics, which is believed to have influenced Albert Einstein's discovery of the relativity theory.

> The principle of inertia was obviously an important element in Newton's mechanics and cosmology, and one might conceivably justify the claim that the arrival at this principle constituted the essence of the transition from Greek and Medieval thought to the incontestable modern science of Newton's *Principia* (Strømholm1975:346).

From the foregoing it is obvious that historic metamorphosis of modern Western science has its roots in the mechanistic conception of change and motion by some of these scholars. That is, much emphasis is placed on positivism and mechanism as a way of arriving at scientific knowledge. However, one shortcoming of this scientific tradition is that it pushed the bounds of the empirical method of science too far; in the sense that it became a categorical maxim for scientists to reject all forms of knowledge that do not correspond with the verification principle and the empirical method of arriving at truths. The positivist simply assumed that science is the only source of knowledge about the world. Even their discussions of the verifiability principle, which concerned demarcating science from non-science, presupposed that only science yields synthetic knowledge (Gutting 1990: 256).

Thus, it is on this note that AIK has been referred to as "non-scientific" and has been tagged with the epistemological status of being "traditional" and lacking all the paraphernalia of the scientific enterprise. So what then do we mean when we talk about AIK? Is it something inferior or similar to the Western scientific culture? There is a need to look at the nature of indigenous African knowledge in order to grapple with these issues. Generally, African indigenous knowledge (AIK) has been associated with African thought systems that are uninfluenced by alien accretions. The word "indigenous" would suggest to the reader that knowledge in this context is immutably fixed, immutable and reluctant to change over the centuries. In a sense, it could be appropriate to refer to this cultural epistemic framework as a sum total of the accumulated knowledge, or wisdom within a given communal, social or traditional setting. All around the world, ndigenous populations have lived in perfect harmony with nature. Over long periods of time these populations have acquired knowledge about the inner workings of their immediate surroundings or environment (Adesiji 2011:2). This is why it is defined thus:

> Indigenous knowledge systems are a body of knowledge, or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time. They are knowledge forms that have failed to die despite the racial and colonial onslaught that they have suffered at the hands of Western imperialism and arrogance. They are knowledge that was swept aside, denigrated by the colonialists and their sciences as empirical and superstitious as they sought to give themselves some form of justification on why they had to colonise other people's lands (Mapara 2009: 140).

This acquisition of knowledge comes through experience, familiarity and understanding of the ecosystem. In the words of Masolo, the term "indigenous" is used to define the origin of an item or person in relation to how their belonging to a place is to be temporally characterized, especially in comparison to other contenders in claiming belonging. What this means is that this form of knowledge is developed specifically by Africans in the light of all other existing cultural philosophies. This sort of explains why AIK has been referred to as a form of "endogenous knowledge" by Paulin Hountondji. According to him, "the term evokes the origin of the kind of knowledge in question by identifying it as an internal product drawn from a given cultural background, as opposed to another category of knowledge which would be imported from elsewhere" (Hountondji 1997:17). What this goes to show is that when we are talking about AIK we mean the kinds of knowledge that are developed by Africans, within a given cultural framework. As the World Bank's Knowledge and Learning Centre (1998) puts it;

> Indigenous Knowledge is unique to a particular culture and society. It is the basis for local decision-making in agriculture, health, natural resource management and other activities. It is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals. It is essentially tacit knowledge that is not easily codifiable(1998: 8)).

There is practically no way we can talk about African knowledge as indigenous knowledge without making reference to the analytic philosophers' critique of African philosophy as a form of ethnophilosophy. The debate on whether AIK is different from WSK is a corollary of the question about whether African philosophy can be likened to Western philosophy in terms of method, rigour and theoretical analysis of issues. Although this debate has now been laid to rest, it is still rearing its ugly head through the modernist quest to determine the quality of anything tagged "African" by Western standards. One reason that is easily identifiable as being responsible for reference to AIK as ethno-thinking is that it grew out of tradition – a tradition immersed in the culture of orality rather than literacy. This culture of oral tradition through which AIK is preserved includes the following dynamics; moral values; participation in ceremonies, rituals; imitation; recitation; demonstration; sport; epic; poetry; reasoning; riddles; praise; songs; story-telling; proverbs, folktales; word games; puzzles; tongue-twisters; dance; music; plant biology; environmental education, and general forms of awareness derived from the task of observing the external world (Itibari 2006).

But this medium of preserving knowledge is believed to be largely prone to error, embellishments, emendation for personal reasons, and could also breed the idea of unanimity which prevents the development of a critical attitude necessary for social transformation; this explains why any form of knowledge developed within this cultural system is largely regarded as anachronistic and obsolete. The oral tradition in which African knowledge originally existed has also contributed to why AIK is considered inferior to its Western equivalent which has enjoyed a long history of writing. Thus, looking at other forms of knowledge through these same spectacles of literacy and sophistication attained in the Western world, would amount to methodical incommensurability. Since as Masolo (2010:24) maintains; to describe or characterize any knowledge or value as "indigenous" would mean to claim that it bears the desirable qualities of anachronism, self-representation, and self-preservation, which, by contrast, its "alien," "foreign," or "extraneous" counterparts lack. Now, we need to survey the issue at hand critically – the issue of whether African knowledge is

conceptually different from Western knowledge having pursued a conceptual analysis on the nature of both cultural epistemologies.

The cultural basis of the dichotomy between African Indigenous and Western Scientific Knowledge

In any situation of cultural collision, there is bound to be a clash of civilizations. As one dominant culture will perpetually seek to overshadow the sub-dominant "other", which often is the casualty of the clash of cultures. There is no doubt that the struggle for knowledge in Africa today is a direct consequence of the colonial experience that has brought about the African cultural crisis. This African experience which places anything with the appellation "African" or "Africans" in doubt and as substandard in the global market place shows that the tension on the accumulation of knowledge is culturally derived. The Western world has no interest in granting the status of "science" to African indigenous knowledge because it still wants to be in control of the power of knowledge which is best described by the sophisticated products of technology being produced in the Western world. This is what Samuel Hutington (2002) in his work titled: *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order* intends to depict when he suggests that the distribution of cultures in the world reflects the distribution of power. The point then is that since the Western world is interested in continued ownership of global power, it has to exert the superiority of its knowledge by refusing to grant other cultural systems of knowledge the status of scientific knowledge which drives social change. So anything that does not meet this standard is referred to as either traditional or inferior knowledge. But in response to this ethnocentric musing, we conceive of knowledge as a cultural phenomenon, and in so far as this is the case, scientific knowledge does not exclude the social context of knowledge as the Western world will have us believe. This is in line with the fact that "the striking difference between the long-term histories of peoples of different continents has been due not to innate differences in the people themselves but to the differences in their environments" (Haverkort, and Reijntjes, 2011:3). This is corroborated by Snow when he asserts that "the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense" (Snow, 1990:5).

However, the response by Africans to the ethnocentric challenge has led to what Hountondji referred to as the epistemic culture of *extravertism* such that AIK is now wrongly being patterned after Western systems of knowledge in an unjustified manner. In this regard

> Scientific and technological activity, as practiced in Africa today is just as "extroverted" or externally oriented as economic activity. Most of the shortcomings that can be identified should not be perceived, therefore, as natural and inevitable. They should be traced back, on the contrary to the history of the integration and subordination of our traditional knowledge to the world system of knowledge, just as underdevelopment as a whole results, primarily, not from any original backwardness, but from the integration of our subsistence economies into the world capitalist market (Hountondji 1995:2).

There are bound to be problems with the integration of world cultures into the world system of knowledge because not all cultures have developed the skill of critical inquiry which is very crucial for the exploration of scientific knowledge. While scientific activity in developed economies is running at a massive pace in the Western world due to the development of specific scientific methodology aimed at further understanding nature and making human existence more meaningful, in Africa the scientific culture is at its lowest ebb. This disparity perceptible between these two cultural epistemic frameworks is what we have traced to the accident of colonialism which brought about a cultural dislocation in Africa. It is instructive to note that the one essential shortcoming of scientific activity in colonial Africa was the lack of specific theory-building procedures and infrastructures. Only the initial and final stages of the whole process were developed. No facilities for basic research, no laboratories and no universities existed in colonial Africa. We only had centres for so-called applied research that allowed, first, the feverish gathering of all supposedly useful information, aimed for immediate exportation to the so-called mother country research findings to some local issues. Even though there have been some improvements recorded in terms of universities and research laboratories carrying out scientific research in contemporary Africa, the current African situation on scientific exploration is not especially different from the past. African scientific research activities are directed towards the West in order to attract research grants from foreign host-institutions, organizations, and even governments; the sponsors in most cases tend to dictate the direction, scope and framework for such scientific research programmes (Hountondji 2005).

Another cultural factor that we have identified as principally contributing to the struggle for knowledge is the ethnocentric biases of discourse in modern science. The recent practice of distinguishing between "science" and "ethno-science" even within the Western scientific tradition is a pointer to this fact. Houndtonji observes that the development, within Western science, of a discipline or group of disciplines known as ethnoscience, including ethnobotany, ethnozoology, ethnomathematics, and the like, shows the only kind of relationship that could exist in the context of

domination between so-called traditional knowledge, where the latter is either marginalized or, better still, eaten by the former (Oladipo1999). So the question that one can raise here is this: why should there be the prefix – "ethno" before these scientific disciplines? This is simply a way of demarcating between traditional scientific knowledge and mainstream scientific knowledge; it is also a reflection of the fact that the ideas, achievements and thinking processes that have characterized scientific efforts in the Western tradition have contributed to its strong ethnocentric biases towards other cultural epistemic philosophies.

This demarcation is also to show that traditional or indigenous knowledge cannot be classified as science in the real sense of the world. But underlying such ethnocentric dichotomies is the desire to monopolize knowledge which is the source of dominance of other cultures. But why should there be a struggle for knowledge? It is because knowledge is crucial to human survival and flourishing. It is one of the means by which human beings seek to master and control their environment and regulate their social interactions. Indeed, without knowledge, human beings would hardly have been better than brutes. But the production, transmission and application of knowledge are not easy tasks; it is largely dependent on the development of the culture of inquiry. The culture of inquiry involves systematic investigations of phenomena – natural and social – with a view to enhancing our understanding of their nature. These investigations demand not only systematic observation of things and processes in nature and society; they also involve the use of reason to conceive of possible explanations to what we observe. Thus, the culture of inquiry is usually propelled by the pursuits of meaning. It involves seeking and purposeful effort aimed at creating a better world (Haverkort and Reijntjes 2011). It is upon this notion of the utility value of knowledge that AIK has been disregarded as a culturally inferior product compared to WSK which is thought to be culturally superior. It is from this same cultural perspective that AIK has been classified as inferior to WSK that we shall attempt a possible resolution of the tension between these two epistemic systems.

Towards a dispelling of the false dichotomy between the two cultural epistemologies

Essentially, in this work we maintain the view that the dichotomy between AIK and WSK which has led to the struggle for knowledge is unnecessary because knowledge is developed within a cultural context. We agree with Haverkort and Reijntjes (2011) that there is no fundamental difference between mainstream knowledge and other ways of knowing that are labelled as traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge or local knowledge. Thus, human knowledge may at best be seen as an approximation to truth within a specific knowledge tradition and therefore no knowledge can make exclusive claims on truth or superiority. There have been some attempts by scholars to respond to this challenge of the disparity between these cultural systems of thought. One such attempt takes a cue from Paulin Hountondji's emphasis on the task of producing knowledge in Africa, which can be measured as both qualitatively and methodically up to standard with the Western knowledge system. It is believed that the external or extroverted orientation of the African indigenous knowledge, patterned after Western paradigms of knowledge, should be redirected towards an internal orientation. That is, African philosophers, thinkers and theorists should direct their efforts at the evolution of knowledge devoid of any external influence. Although Hountondji's effort in this respect is quite commendable, it has not totally resolved the crisis of the struggle for knowledge. In this article, we conceive of an additional way of tapering the gulf between these two cultural epistemologies.

Apart from directing efforts towards the production of non-extraverted knowledge in Africa, efforts should also be directed towards the re-discovery of scientific knowledge in Africa which should be harnessed with the on-going task of "producing knowledge in Africa". Why the need for the re-discovery of aspects of indigenous knowledge? This is expedient because during the colonial period in Africa, vital or important knowledge was lost with the loss of native cultures. There is historic and oral evidence to show that Africans have developed some forms of knowledge which can be likened to the present efforts of Western scientific knowledge in metallurgy. Metallurgy is the scientific study of metals, especially its structure and properties; it also entails the extraction of these metals from the ground and making things from them. Although there were preliminary attempts by anthropological archaeologists[1] to exclude Africa from discussions on the origin of metallurgy, there is now textual evidence to support the view that this scientific enterprise was found in indigenous African culture. In his article titled "Indigenous African Metallurgy: Nature and Culture", Terry Childs maintains that:

> Western observers have commented on the technology of mining and metallurgy in sub-Saharan Africa for over three hundred years, but Western awareness of the cultural dimensions of African metallurgy is much more recent. It was not until the looting of Benin City by the British expedition of 1897 that the outside world

1. One of such scholars that seem not to regard the African origin of metallurgy in a discourse on the early casting of iron is Thomas Read. In his article published in 1934 titled "The Early Casting of Iron: A Stage in Iron Age Civilization," he traced the history of metallurgy of iron as a prerogative of the European world after which it was transferred to other parts of the world like China and India.

> learned of the West African traditions of figurative art in metal, and not until the late 1940s that these traditions were first investigated by archaeologists (Childs 1993:317).

This observation by Childs corroborates what we have been saying all along in this essay, that is, the Western world's interest in keeping Africa perpetually under its inferiority radar led to the "tagging" or characterization of indigenous knowledge as "unscientific" even though there is evidence to the contrary. The origin of metallurgy has been traced to multiple origins like in Nigeria, Niger, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Egypt; the dates recorded against the discoveries in these regions differ as well as the extent of their exploration. But what is of importance from this ethnographic finding is the fact that indigenous knowledge had attained an appreciable level of sophistication before the colonial interjection in Africa as ironworking technology has been used to make artistic works in various metallic mediums. This type of technical knowledge which entails the smelting of metals, coppers and precious stones is to be consolidated and assembled as aspects of metal production and use in Africa which is a very crucial aspect of the application on indigenous scientific knowledge.

The other step towards the re-discovery of AIK should be to emphasize the environmentalist discourse on the significance of indigenous knowledge. It may be necessary to consider the ethnoecologists or environmentalist conception of knowledge. As it is used by ethnoecologists, the word knowledge[1] is generally applied to discussions of indigenous understandings of the natural world: systems of classification, how various societies cognize or interpret natural processes, what such groups know about the resources they exploit, and so forth (Brosius1997). This environmentalist conception of knowledge, which is very crucial to the notion of science as it is held in the Western culture, has a rich heritage in AIK. This is evident in the way Africans represent and apply their various understandings of nature or natural processes to life. A good example of this environmentalist representation of indigenous knowledge is the Ijala-chanting among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. According to Babalola (1967:3), Ijala-chanting is a genre of spoken art practised mainly by the y Yoruba of Western Nigeria. It is mythically and ritually associated with the worship of Ogun; is performed at well-defined ritual and social occasions by trained specialists (onijala); and has a characteristic range of subject matter.

It is with this subject matter of Ijala that we are primarily concerned here; it is consonant with the type of occasion at which these chants are performed. The subject matter of Ijala[2] consists of a kind of scientific understanding of nature because it includes chants that describe animals like the elephant, bush fowl, domestic fowl, duiker, etc., and particular crops and plants. For instance, the Ijala chants about a tree, a shrub, a herb, or a crop are collections of remarks about its significant features and its uses. The point we are trying to make here is that the Ijala is a veritable source of indigenous knowledge about nature because it is required that before a string of ideas about things are formalized into chants, there must be a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena about which the chant is to be formulated. It is this accumulated knowledge derived from the empirical investigation of nature that is subsequently woven into and interpreted and exposed through the Ijala chant. The virtue in this line of reasoning lies in the fact that all forms of knowledge first exist as social phenomena before being systematized as a form of procedural knowledge.

In his work titled "History of Science" Herrington (2003:385) further buttresses this point when he affirms that science is a systematised positive knowledge, or what has been taken as such at different ages and in different places. But it should also be noted that the oral practice of Ijala-chanting poses a problem of preservation and emendation via cross-generational rendition; this raises doubts on the scientific content of its formal structures. Much as this issue is contentious, it does not actually negate the idea that the Ijala chants contains verbal assertions about the natural world. The onijala who is an embodiment of indigenous knowledge can be likened to the Western environmental scientist who has knowledge of plants and animals. It is partly from this premise that we maintain that African indigenous knowledge is not in any way inferior to the Western alternatives.

Meanwhile, Paulin Hountondji's quest in Endogenous Knowledge is to argue that it is not the case that Africans are not capable of evolving scientific knowledge, but the problem lies in the fact that whatever element of scientific knowledge can be identified within the African cultural context is not only seen through Western spectacles but used in the service of

1. There are now different approaches to the study of indigenous knowledge, but that of Brush (1993) seems consistent with our work. He holds that there are four distinct, historically-situated approaches that can be discerned in the discourse of indigenous knowledge. These are: descriptive historical particularism, cultural ecology, cognitive anthropology and human ecology. Each of these presupposes a different set of starting assumptions regarding the nature of indigenous knowledge. See. Brush, S. 1993, "Indigenous knowledge".
2. The Ijala which exists in an oral format has some legendary and mythic colouration; so it does not mean that everything about it is true or derived from nature. However, there are different occasions like the annual celebration of Ogun festival, final funeral obsequies for a hunter, festival in honour of lineage ancestors, and the annual conference of all hunter chiefs of Yoruba land.

the West. This is why he asserts that African indigenous knowledge is "extroverted" and it is this extroversion that has created the gap or what we refer to here as the "knowledge war" between AIK and WSK. The popular belief is that the production of knowledge in Africa that is non-extraverted will help to integrate the Third World into the process of knowledge. But we are of the view that this step alone will not do the magic as it has hastily accepted the Western stereotype that classified AIK as "unscientific". There is a need to realize that the way science has been defined in contemporary times precludes the social context of knowledge which is why those aspects of indigenous knowledge that qualify as science were rejected as being "traditional" or "products of primitive mentality". Thus, the important position advocated in this paper is that both the efforts at producing knowledge in Africa and re-discovering elements of scientific knowledge in Africa should be harnessed towards meeting the challenges posed by Western scientific knowledge through dialogue and a promotion of the culture of inquiry over the culture of belief. The demand that dialogue of cultures of knowledge must evaluate its presupposed epistemological framework arises due to the fact that the invocation of dialogue itself presupposes a difference (Okeja 2010). The differences between these two cultural epistemic systems may be in terms of method or in the degree to which certain knowledge traditions have had the chance to develop a robust science. Thus, the stringent criteria for any knowledge to be considered as scientific, paradigms patterned after Western methods of scientific investigation, like experimentation, observation, theory formation, etc. do not hold.

Conclusion

As we conclude, it should be stated that the issue at stake here is not about how human beings across various cultural lines acquire knowledge – it is whether African indigenous knowledge is radically different from the Western equivalent, a situation which depicts the struggle for knowledge. However, we have referred to this trend as a false dichotomy because it is a fall-out of the Western denigration and marginalization that has continued to question the epistemological and scientific basis of African indigenous knowledge. However, the logic of marginalization, as developed through centuries of forced integration, including the slave trade, colonization and neo-colonization, in Africa has not succeeded in blowing out our age-old heritage of knowledge, both practical and theoretical. If this had been the case, we should no longer have any handicraft, any weaving, any pottery and basket-making, any cooking, any metallurgy, any rain-making technique, any traditional medicine and pharmacopeia, any divination system, any botanical and zoological taxonomy or any teaching methods or procedures for the transfer of such skills – which are all evidence of the existence of scientific knowledge in Africa.

Thus two urgent steps need to be taken in order to dispel this false notion that regards AIK as being scientifically inferior to WSK. They are: ensuring the massive development of scientific knowledge in Africa and re-discovering possibly forgotten or lost knowledge in Africa. African people, as well as their political leaders, had simply forgotten that they themselves had developed, for thousand years before colonization, a strong and wealthy iron industry. The iron industry included not only secondary metallurgy, consisting of transformation of the metal as blacksmiths do, but also primary metallurgy, or the extraction of iron from ore (Hountondji 1995:7). As we have argued, the efforts in this respect should be complementary rather than disintegrating. Let it be known that there is no basis for the dichotomy between these two cultural epistemic frameworks, because every epistemology is a product of a culture just as every philosophy is a product of an age, or the cultural expressions of a people. From our explication thus far, it is obvious that both the African and Western cultural epistemological systems share some similar features. A possible charge that may be brought against the position advanced in this essay is that of relativism. But this challenge is surmountable – as we do not see indigenous knowledge as an enclosed system that is disconnected from the social context; rather what we are saying essentially is that this dual approach to the portrayal of indigenous knowledge should serve as the basis for dialogue with other cultural epistemologies in an ever changing world.

References

Adesiji, G.B. 2011. Indigenous Adaptation Strategies Practice in Climate Change by Farmers in Kwara State Nigeria. A Paper presented at the Alexander von Humboldt Conference. 11-15th October, 2011. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Babalola, S.A. 1966. *The Content and Form of Ijala*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Brosius, J.P. 1997. Endangered Forest, Endangered People: Environmentalist Representations of Indigenous Knowledge. *Human Ecology*. 25.1: 47-69.

Brush, S. 1993. Indigenous Knowledge of Biological Resources and Intellectual Property Rights: The Role of Anthropology. *American Anthropologist*. 95.3: 653-671.

Childs, S.T. 1993. Indigenous African Metallurgy: Nature and Culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 22: 317-337.

Gutting, G. 1990.Continental Philosophy and the History of Science. R.C. Olby. Et.al *Companion to the History of Modern Science*. London: Routledge. 127-147.

Haverkort, B. and Reijntjes, C. 2011. Diversities of World Views, Knowledge, Communities and Sciences and the Challenges of its Co-Evolutions. Viewed 13th October, 2011, from: *www.captured-edu.org/afbeeldingen/bertus-coen-edited2%20corrections-coen-bertus%20final.pdf* .

Herrington, N.S. 2003. *History of Science.The Encyclopaedia Americana*. Connecticut: Scholastic Library Publishing. International. Ed. 385-391.
Hountondji, P. 1995. Producing Knowledge in Africa Today. *African Studies Review.* 3.3: 1-10.
Hountondji, P. 1997. *Introduction: Recentring Africa. Endogenous Knowledge: Research trails.* P. Hountondji. Ed. Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.
Hountondji, P.2009. Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies, *RCCS Annual Review,* 1: 1-11.
Horton, R. 1998. African Traditional Thought and Western Science.*African philosophy: an Anthology.* E. C. Eze. Ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 181- 192.
Huntington, S. 2002. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* London: Simon & Schuster Ltd. 20
Itibari, M. Z. 2006. Critical Indigenous African Education and Knowledge.*The Journal of Pan African Studies*. 1.3: 32-49.
Jalata, A. 1995. The Struggle for Knowledge: The Case of Emergent Oromo studies, *African Studies Review.* 39.2: 95-123.
Mapara, J. 2009. Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe: Juxtaposing Postcolonial Theory. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. 3.1: 139-155.
Masolo, A. D. 2010. *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Okeja, U. 2010. Narratives and the Dialogue of Cultures of Knowledge: a Perspective on the Experience of the West Africa. *kritike*. 4.2: 142-154.
Oladipo. O. 1999. Knowledge and the African Renaissance.*WAJOPS: West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*. 2. 2: 5-17.
Olufemi, T. 1993. Colonialism and Its Aftermath: The Crisis of Knowledge Production. *Callaloo*. 16/3: 891-908.
Oluwasanmi, H.A. 1972. Foreword.*Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy.* 1.1: 3-6.
Read, T.T. 1934. The Early Casting of Iron: a Stage in Iron Age Civilization. *Geographical Review.* 24. 4: 544-554.
Snow, C.P. 1990. The Two Cultures.*Leonardo*. 23. 2/3: 169-173.
Strømholm, P. 1975. Galileo and the Scientific Revolution.*Inquiry.* 18: 345-365.
Tempels, P. 1969. *Bantu Philosophy.* Trans. C. King. Paris: PrésenceAfricaine [1945].
World Bank. 1998. *Indigenous Knowledge for Development: a Framework for Action*. Africa Region: Knowledge and Learning Centre.

'Miss Independent': gender and independence on the African continent

Elvis Imafidon[1]
Department of Philosophy, Ambrose Alli University, Faculty of Arts, Ekpoma, Nigeria
elvismafi@yahoo.com

Modern African societies have emerged from rich cultural heritages and traditions tangled with an ambivalent colonial experience. One aspect of the rich African cultural heritage that has however persisted in post-colonial Africa is the perception of independent social living as a male dominated prerogative in which the female is seen as a submissive subject. My intention with this paper is to show that, over the past two decades, a growing new trend towards a rejection of this male dominated concept has emerged in African traditional society and is fast growing in social life on the continent; a trend aptly captured by the pop music of the R&B superstar Ne-Yo in his single 'Miss Independent'. This trend strongly illustrates the growing rejection by women of the traditionally held stereotypical masculine role of independence. Women are increasingly rejecting the submissiveness and dependence on the male as contained in the 'old order'. This paper illustrates that there are fast emerging consequences for this new trend with particular reference to family life, courtship and marriage. The research method used in the study is both descriptive and analytical.

Keywords: Gender, independent living, African, Ne-Yo, masculine, feminine, marriage, Africa-gender

Introduction

The African experience of modernity in the post-colonial era is supported by a large and growing list of scholarly literature devoted to this area of discourse. According to Abiola Irele (2001: ix):

> African literatures may be said to derive an immediate interest from the testimony it offers of the preoccupation of our writers with the conflicts and dilemmas involved in the tradition/modernity dialectic. This observation is based on the simple premise that, as with many other societies and cultures in the so-called Third World, the impact of Western civilization on Africa has occasioned a discontinuity in forms of life throughout the continent. It points to the observation that the African experience of modernity associated with a Western paradigm is fraught with tensions at every level of the communal existence and individual apprehension.

Thus, the aim of these numerous literary sources on the African experience of colonialism and the resulting post-colonial experience has basically been twofold: (a) to determine the extent to which damage or good has been done to the African cultural heritage and (b) to understand the tension between tradition and modernity that results from the post-colonial experience (Gyekye 1997; Lauer 2003).

This tension between tradition and modernity is often held by many involved in this discourse on the African experience to be responsible for the many social problems faced by the African continent today. As Moses Oke (2006: 333-334) says:

> "One of the general points to be drawn from discussions of the African predicament is that the root cause of the postcolonial continental failure is the erosion of basic African values that have helped to promote stable social existence over the ages. The erosion is then traced to the advent of colonialism and the consequent introduction of European socio-political systems, values and structures of capitalist economy. The net effect of all these cultural incursions, it is suggested, is that while emphasis was placed on political and economic development to the detriment of social development, Africans' basic human values were suppressed or totally obliterated by the largely 'inhuman' Western values. Ironically, Africa, as things have turned out, has lost out on all fronts of development – political, economic, social, psychological and moral – presumably because the indigenous social culture was superimposed upon by the alien colonialist social cultures."

Since the collapse of colonialism more than five decades ago, one aspect of the African cultural heritage that persevered in the face of modernity is the gender stereotypical role of independent social living associated with masculinity and dependent social living associated with feminity. This perception has however been increasingly challenged over the last two decades by global (largely Liberal Western) norms and values propagated through the Internet. Many African women, particularly those living in the larger African cities today, are challenging the male stereotypical roles cherished in African traditional society. This trend is strongly supported by younger women who do not yet possess independent

1. Elvis Imafidon, is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria.

social status. The aim of this paper is not to establish whether the new trend is having a positive or negative impact on gender issues in the African cultural heritage but simply to illuminate/highlight the existence and rapid development of this trend and its social consequences. Thus, the discussions we are engaged in right now can be located within a delimited segment of the discourse on the African post-colonial experience: the issue of gender as it presents itself in tradition and modernity. We may then begin our discussion proper by pinpointing what contemporary discourse on gender *really* involves in today's scholarship.

Gender: is it about sex or about women? Re-reading the gender issue

Sex refers to the biological difference between men and women and such difference is genetically determined. Thus, it is out of our hands to determine the sex category we belong to. Gender, on the other hand, refers not to the genetically or biologically determined differences between sex categories, but to the socio-culturally determined differences between sexes concerning their roles, attitudes, behaviours, and values (ADF VI 2008: v). Such socially determined differences between men and women are often held stereotypically and are often defended as tallying with the biological or genetic differences. However, the hope of human-kind is that since gender is socio-culturally determined, it isn't out of our hands; that is, it can be modified and revised every now and then when necessary to meet the humanistic goal of human wellbeing.

On the basis of this understanding, an active gender discourse has developed over the last two decades. The present century has experienced and continues to experience such development on an unprecedented scale and one can pinpoint the reason for this unprecedented development in the disenchantment of metaphysico-religious worldviews or traditions in the wake of modernity or the age of Enlightenment (Habermas 1984: 186-216). In the wake of modernity, the challenging of traditions that held beliefs beyond the reach of humans, including those concerning gender stereotypical roles, led to the flourishing of critical discourse in all spheres of our being, gender discourse inclusive.

Gender discourse thus occupies a prominent place in scholarship, policy-making, and everyday social life today. It is often centred around such issues as gender equality, which is now considered a basic human right (Feinstein, Feinstein & Sabrow 2010: 98), gender and development, commonly called GAD (Baden & Goetz 1997: 3), gender analysis, gender discrimination (Sidanius & Veniegas 2000: 47-69), sexist stereotypes, and gender empowerment measure commonly called GEM (Feinstein, Feinstein & Sabrow 2010: 98) which is often centred around women empowerment as a means of breaching the gap between male and female empowerment (See Lopez-Claros & Zahidi 2006), as well as gender and culture.

The significance of these issues in gender discourse has led to the development of the concept of gender mainstreaming. In the words of the United Nations Economic and Social Council,

> Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. *The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality* (UNDP 2006: 2).

However, what is the gender discourse *really* about? Is it about revising and improving the gender stereotypical roles in society as they affect men and women, or is it simply about revising the gender stereotypical roles in favour of women without any concern for the male counterpart? There are indications that the gender discourse proceeds on the assumption that social stereotypical roles about sexes do not favour women as such and that it is women who are neglected and victimized. On this basis, women need to be empowered to overcome their subjective roles in a predominately African male dominated society. Thus, the accusation has often been laid that we have mainstreamed gender already, which means that there is really no further need for gender mainstreaming. As Baden and Goetz (1997: 3) say, "Gender" has become a synonym for "women" such that all talk about gender is actually about women.

The local and international organizations that pursue the gender agenda vigorously are aware of this accusation. Some deny it as a mere myth (UNDP 2002: 9), while others appreciate the evidence that necessitates such a conclusion and make an effort to bridge the seeming gap. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2002: 9) disagrees with this position, insisting that gender issues are actually about both genders and not about women only:

> It is true that a lot of the work on gender in humanitarian assistance focuses on women. This is primarily because it is women's needs and interests that tend to be neglected. However, it is important that the analysis and discussion look at both sides of the gender equation. More attention is needed to understand how men's

> roles, strategies, responsibilities and options are shaped by gender expectations during conflicts and emergencies.

But isn't this painting of the gender discourse over-shaded with the women's agenda? Is gender equality, for example, not simply seen as promoting women's empowerment and ending violence against women? Some are aware of the bias in the gender agenda and have suggested ways on how to limit the bias by making gender-based discourse more male-friendly. The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC 2005: 2) say, for example, that

> We need to develop approaches and strategies for male inclusion in the gender equality process. We need to deepen our understanding of the resistance encountered, document what works and develop tools for field-based use. We need to bring men and boys front and centre, in line and in place with women and girls, in the promotion of gender mainstreaming and in the march for gender equality. We need to stress that promoting gender equality is not about granting privileges to women while disempowering men. It is about creating integrated approaches that benefit all. It is about creating a more socially just world.

The aim here is not about the gender discourse-focus controversy or which of the disputing parties – those who feel the gender discourse is really about women or those who feel it is truly about gender – is right. The author simply wishes to point to the existence of such a controversy and the implication that this has for the gender agenda. It can be implied from such disagreements that the gender agenda, at least often if not always, strongly promotes women's assertiveness. The glaring evidence for this is the feminist trend, which is a by-product of the gender discourse. Women's assertiveness, we can say, is now paying off (whether for good or for ill) and it is one of such pay-offs concerning independent living that I seek to unfold in this paper.

Independent living and women liberation in Africa

Independent living is commonly defined as having a choice and control over the things needed to go about one's daily life in a successful and fulfilling manner (Johnson and Kossykh 2008: 32). It is the ability for one to live his/her daily life without undue dependence on others (say family members) for one's livelihood and subsistence. Living independently is therefore seen as a manifestation of self-empowerment, self-determination and self-fulfilment. However, this does not mean that the one who lives independently does not need any kind of support. In fact, living independently may involve substantial support from public and private sectors, only that personal choice and control remains solely for the independent individual (Elder-Woodward Hurst & Manwaring 2005: 9). In other words, independent living implies *being head over one's affairs*.

Independent living as a concept first came into being in the 1960s at the University of California, Berkeley, when a group of 12 students at the University came to recognise their own 'right to living'. These students, who despite their severe physical disabilities attended university lectures and seminars alongside their non-disabled friends, were housed apart from other students in a wing of the Student Health Service, at Cowell Hospital. Most of their time was spent confined to the University campus, partly because their electric wheelchairs did not have the range to take them out into the community, but largely because the surrounding area was not set up to accommodate people with such disabilities. Essentially, they were thus basically isolated and in close contact only with each other (Gillinson, Green & Miller 2005: 17)

Thus, the concept of independent living became associated with the quest to empower the disabled or physically challenged, to give them the kind of life the non-disabled adults often take for granted. However, the concept has evolved with time and can now be used in connection with any human activity that impedes self-fulfilment and subsistence for any individual or group of people. Thus, the quest for freedom from colonial rule by colonized countries in African some decades back is surely the quest for independent living. When Nelson Mandela, for example, fought against racial apartheid in South Africa, he was fighting against barriers to the independent living of blacks who had been discriminated against by whites for long. Black people faced barriers to independent living in South Africa as a result of a very conscious, large-scale social and political movement, which discriminated against them on the grounds of their skin colour. This necessitated Nelson Mandela's fight against the apartheid regime (Gillinson, Green & Miller 2005: 19).

But what role did such quests for independent living in the United States, colonial Africa, and apartheid South Africa play in women liberation? What bearing, direct or indirect, did they have on women's self determination as against male dominance, a pivotal issue in feminist agenda? History shows that these events which were aimed at attaining independent living happened primarily for the following reasons: in the United States, it was a struggle for equal rights such as the right to vote and to participate in American society as equal citizens. Women's rights were only included within such rights rather than being the primary aim. In Africa, it was primarily the rejection of political, economic and social colonialism in favour of total political independence and self-determination. One can claim as well that very little

mention is made of women's rights as part of the primary aim of the anti-colonial struggle. Also, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa was against political social and economic separation based primarily on race not gender issues. Although women played an active and important role in the anti-apartheid struggle, gender issues as seen in independent living above were not at the forefront of the struggle as such at the time.[1] Then, how do they relate to the achievement of the feminist agenda of womens liberation as against male dominance?

The struggle for independent living in the instances cited above had, if nothing else, an indirect but strong implication for gender discourse in general and the feminist agenda in particular. In the United States, the struggle for independent living and, by implication, equal rights was thought by the women folk to be impossible to achieve if gender stereotypical roles of male dominance over women were not completely overhauled. This line of thought served as the fuel for the advancement of the feminist movement in the United States in the twentieth/twenty-first centuries. In colonial Africa, although the primary aim was political, economic and social independence, women's emancipation was intrinsically interwoven with the post-colonial agenda. Aniekwu (2006: 144-145) explains the relevance of the feminist agenda for post-colonial African experience:

> After colonisation, hierarchical gender roles and discriminatory relationships in politics, economics, religion and culture have tended to be continual. African women's struggle against gender asymmetry and inequality is often described in terms of the relationship between public and private spheres, or the 'domestic versus public' distinction in gender roles. In colonial Africa, female subordination took intricate forms 'grounded' in traditional culture and implemented through this domestic-public dichotomy. In many historical African societies, male and female roles were peculiar to the original social patterns and ideologies of those societies, but these became reconfigured around the edges as the society changed and evolved ... Feminist research has disproved the pervasive stereotype that African gender roles are mired in an 'archaic' past, and demonstrated that these roles have changed as culture is reshaped by experience and development.

As an effect of the colonial and post-colonial experience, African women have become more aware of their rights not only as human beings but as women, and of the need for addressing their subordinate position in public and private life. There is a strong and growing willingness among African women to strategise for change and be more specific in their goals and modes of operation for achieving a new gender compact. African women are striving to understand the 'patrimonial autocracy' that African states have experienced and why and how these conditions have affected women more negatively than men. Women are questioning men's ideological perceptions of women as nurturing, acquiescent, subordinate and familial and not as people with equal capabilities and rights. More than ever, African women are challenging the inequitable relationships that exist in their societies, the cultural models or compacts that continue to influence their lives, and the deep social issues that are affected by ethnic, political, religious and economic crises (Aniekwu 2006: 145). Thus, women's emancipation becomes an essential ingredient in the quest for independence in post-colonial Africa

During the struggle for liberation from apartheid in South Africa, the feminist agenda was also a pivotal issue for the political/liberation parties and movements such as the African National Congress (ANC). This is made clear in the Statement on the Emancipation of Women in South Africa, issued by the ANC National Executive Committee on May 02, 1990 which states: "Gender oppression is everywhere rooted in a material base and is expressed in socio-cultural traditions and attitudes all of which are supported and perpetuated by an ideology which subordinates women ... Patriarchal rights, especially but not only with regard to family, land and the economy, need serious re-examination so that they are not entrenched or reinforced" (Hassim 1991:65). Unfortunately, the ANC only succeeded in mobilising women for the national liberation struggle as opposed to mobilising them for women's liberation. This mobilisation process had the effect of reinforcing rather than challenging patriarchal relations of domination. Fortunately, however, the transitional period created the space for a feminist movement to emerge to challenge these existing forms of women's organisations that promote patriarchal relations of domination for the first time since the 1950s (Hassim 1991: 65). This trend continues to grow today.

Therefore, today, the struggle for independent living is strongly associated with the feminist agenda of women's liberation from male subjugation. Roughly put then, the aim of the feminist agenda is to assert that women are in no way less significant that men but are rather equal to men and should be given equal opportunities to men rather than merely being submissive to the dictates of men. But due to the patriarchal nature of African indigenous societies, with their emphasis on male headship and female submissiveness, some have doubted if the feminist agenda can be successful on

1. For these points, I am indebted to the very useful comments of the reviewer of the first draft of this paper.

the black continent (see, for example, Mwale 2002: 114-137). In other words, as the feminist movement has emerged and continues to grow in Africa, what chances are there that they will record reasonable success in achieving their goals and objectives, bearing in mind the nature of traditional African thought on gender roles? The present paper shows in part that such fears can be put to rest once we pay attention to the growing trend of female assertion of male independence on the African continent today.

Independence as a masculine symbiotic role among Africans

Perhaps, the appropriate route to take in understanding why independent living is strictly a masculine yet symbiotic role in the rich cultural heritage of Africans is a concise but vivid clarification of the ontological foundation of African communalistic societies. According to Polycarp Ikuenobe (2006: 63-64),

> In the traditional African view, reality or nature is a continuum and a harmonious composite of various elements and forces. Human beings are a harmonious part of this composite reality, which is fundamentally a set of mobile life forces. Natural objects and reality are interlocking forces. Reality always seeks to maintain an equilibrium among the network of elements and life forces … Because reality or nature is a continuum, there is no conceptual or interactive gap between the human self, community, the dead, spiritual or metaphysical entities and the phenomenal world; they are interrelated, they interact, and in some sense, one is an extension of the other.

Interconnectedness in the African community is seen as the most essential factor for wellbeing, and the maintenance of this interconnectedness, of harmony and equilibrium among beings is, in the words of Desmond Tutu (1999: 35), for "... the *summum bonum* – the greatest good. Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like the plague. Anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of this good."

Communal harmony, therefore, is seen as a good that is vehemently pursued and as such forms the basis for the much discussed African communalism. If maintaining the interconnectedness of things or ensuring equilibrium among beings is the goal, and since aggressive competitiveness is evidently inimical to such a goal, then, the African community is saddled with the responsibility of encumbering unhealthy competitiveness and promoting complementary relations among beings. Hence African communalism, in Ikuenobe's words (2006: 65),

> ... implies the need to impose social responsibilities on people in order to rationally perpetuate the relevant traditions and maintain harmony. So, maintaining harmony with the aid of the community is an essential human interest. The idea of pursuing and maintaining human welfare and interests is at the moral centre of communalism and the moral conception of personhood in African traditions … As such, communalism prescribes that people should act in a way that would enhance their own interest within the framework of pursuing the goal of human well-being and welfare in the context of natural harmony in their communities.

The community assigns roles to individual entities in a manner that promotes unity of purpose and sustains the equilibrium that is much desired. To avoid unhealthy competitiveness, such roles are complementary in nature such that if everyone plays his/her role in the community of beings, there will be harmony, and coexistence will be sustained.

The African community assigns such gender roles to both males and females. These roles are symbiotic and complementary (Taiwo 2010: 230). The African man, in his familial and social relations, exercises headship. He acts as head over his family and he takes leading roles in the community. In familial relations, he exercises authority over his wife (or wives) and children. This headship, however, comes with its responsibilities. He provides food, shelter and other necessities for his family. A man unable to do so brings disgrace and shame to himself and his household and inevitably loses the respect of both family and community members.

In terms of social organizations or institutions for the sustenance of equilibrium in the community, traditional African societies generally operate a patriarchal gerontocracy (Okoduwa 2006: 47-51). The traditional African elite group, which usually comprises kings, chiefs, elders, heroes, professional craftsmen, and priests, who are in charge of the day-to-day affairs of the community (Onobhayedo 2007: 270-271), are basically males. In fact, the African tradition is said to be permeated by patriarchal headship in areas such as religion, family life, and politics (Kambarami 2008). Men, therefore, take the lead in familial and social relations.

Women (and children), on the other hand, are submissive to the men who take the lead. The primary goal of the beautiful black girl and her family is to be under the headship of a man once she has attained the age of marriage. This

wifely position is seen as a privileged and respected one as it avails the woman the opportunity to complement the man and support him as he carries out his duties as head.

There is certainly no doubt that the woman in African traditions has vital roles to play in the society at large, roles that complements those of the man. The basic gender role of the woman in African traditions is that of a care-giver. She has the principal responsibility of caring for her husband and the children particularly in terms of carrying out domestic activities. In other words, while the man provides life's necessities for the family and goes about the duties assigned him by the community, the wife takes good care of the home and the children. By implication, she also plays a very important role in the training of the children, particularly concerning the instilling of socio-cultural and religious values and morals in the children. She therefore provides the needed support for her husband by assisting in the general upkeep and building of the family and giving backing and encouragement to the husband in his headship over the family as well as in other duties assigned to him by the community.

It therefore follows that in traditional African societies, men enjoy independent living while women are dependent on the men who lead. This is the reason a woman in African traditions is conventionally regarded as a "housewife", that is, one who rather than working (conventionally seen as a manly duty) stays at home to manage the home. Even when she works or trades, the income from her work is used to assist the husband in sustaining the household. At no time does she become the head.

Feminist movements in post-colonial Africa have often characterised the woman's role in African traditions as that of a submissive wife and a care-giver, as one of passivity compared to the active role of the man as head. According to these movements, the active roles played by both men and woman in familial and social relations can be likened to those played by the brain and the heart in humans' biological system. While the brain is the controlling centre of the nervous system, it still depends on, and needs the support of the heart to circulate blood around the body. According to Taiwo (2010: 230):

> The contributions of women towards the social, economic, political and educational developments of African societies cannot also be gainsaid. In fact, traditional African society attached no importance to gender issues because every individual had a role to play both in the family as well as in the larger society. Each gender had its traditional role in the development of the society. In other words, the position of women was complimentary to that of men. There was the non-existent of gender inequality. Each role, regardless of who performed it was considered equally important because it contributed to the fundamental goal of community survival. What this simply implies is that indigenous people in Africa performed varying roles to maintain the efficient functioning of their society, prior to colonialism. The claim, therefore, is that gender inequality came with the advent of colonialism.

However, these complementary masculine and feminine roles embedded in African traditions are fast taking a new direction in post-colonial Africa, one that is quite different from the African cultural heritage. In the section that follows, the paper pays attention to how such fast-emerging trends in gender roles in post-colonial Africa are being felt, particularly in the area of independent social living.

Miss Independent: an emerging trend in the African gender experience

The rapidly emerging and fast developing trend in the African gender experience referred to here is aptly pictured by the black American POP/R&B artist Shaffer Chimere Smith. Smith, popularly known by his stage name, Ne-Yo, on his 2008 single "Miss Independent" portrays a black working-class lady that he admires because she defies the gender stereo-typical role of a (black) woman as a dependent person. The title of the single clearly captures this point and lines within the lyrics lay emphasis on it:

Verse 1:
... Ooh there's something about, there something about the way she moves
And I can't figure it out there something about her ...
Cause she walk like the boss
Talk like the boss ...
Do what a boss do ...
That's the kind of girl I need

(Chorus):
She got her own thing
That's why I love her

Miss Independent ...

Verse 2
... Kinda woman that can do for herself
I look at her and it makes me proud
... Kinda woman that don't need my help
She says she got it, she got it
... Car and a crib she bouta pay em both off
And the bills are paid on time ...

Bridge
... Her favourite thing to say "don't worry I got it"
And everything she's got best believe she bought it ...

In these lines from "Miss Independent", Ne-Yo sings about his admiration for a girl who "takes charge" in all ramifications: she pays for her car, her house (or "crib"), and all her bills. According to Ne-Yo, we can be rest assured that "everything she's got ... she bought it;" she depends on no one for (financial) support. She is independent. The music video shot on December 8, 2008 in Santa Monica, California clearly captures such a lady that is an independent, no-nonsense bossy lady.

The remix (or Part 2) of "Miss Independent" titled "She Got Her Own" was released barely three months after the first release, in the Japan edition of the *Year of the Gentleman* album (*Intuition and Year of the Gentleman*) and features the artists Fabulous and Jamie Foxx. Ne-Yo's sentiments about the independent woman are even more strongly expressed in this version of the song.

Intro (Ne-Yo singing):
A dedication to the independent woman
To the one working hard for hers
That is just my way to let you know
I see you baby ...

Verse 1 (Jamie Foxx singing):
... She don't need mine, so she leaves mine alone
There ain't nothing that is more sexy
Than a girl that wants but don't need me
Young independent, yeah she works hard
... She don't expect nothing from no guy ...

(Chorus):
I love her cause she got her own
... I love it when she says
"It's cool, I got it ..."

Verse 2 (Ne-Yo singing):
... All the while paying the bills on time
She don't look at me like, "captain save'em"...

This author's immediate concern is not so much with the implication that Ne-Yo and his friend's appreciation and love for an independent woman have; but rather with the fact that Ne-Yo's song is obviously motivated by the same factor that motivates the present paper: the apt recognition of an ongoing change in female stereotypical role of dependency especially in African/African-American women.

Black women in Africa, particularly in urban cities, are quickly embracing this trend of independence. They are well educated, some are professionals occupying sensitive positions in big firms; others hold less professional but well-paying white collar jobs or, in some other cases, are successful entrepreneurs. This new generation of modern women are intensely buried in activities once thought to be strictly masculine, especially when viewed from the African cultural heritage: pursuing education even to post-graduate levels, securing well-paying jobs, living in well-furnished apartments, riding flashy cars, procuring landed properties, vying for political offices and appointments.

There is no doubt that the post-colonial black continent is experiencing a condensed atmosphere of competitiveness between females and males and with regard to headship roles in such spheres of our being as religion, politics, business, and education. To be sure, the focus has shifted from complementarity to competitiveness. In the area of education, for example, the number of women pursuing both graduate and postgraduate degrees has increased tremendously in the last two decades; women writers, women university lecturers, doctors, and professors have also increased greatly as well (Nnaemeka 1994: 139).

Politics is the most obvious sphere in which the masculine-feminine competitiveness has been felt. The United Nations Factsheet for "Progress of the World's Women Report" particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (UNWOMEN: 2011/2012) testifies to this. It shows for example that Rwanda with 51% of its parliamentarian being women has the highest level of women legislators in the world. According to Aili Mari Tripp:

> In the 1990s, for the first time in the post-independence period greater numbers of African women began to aspire to political leadership at the national and local levels … The 1990s was a decade of beginnings for women in politics in Africa and all indications are that we will see even greater pressures for female political representation and participation in the decade ahead.

In the area of business, economy and administration both in the private and public sectors of nation-states, the number of women holding sensitive and leadership positions such as directors, chief executive officers, general managers, and ministers are also on the increase. In fact, there are often speculations that some of these women perform more effectively than their male counterparts. One case to be quickly recalled here is that of Nigeria's Dora Akunyili who served as the Director General of Nigeria's National Agency of Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) between 2008 and 2010. Her tenure is popularly reckoned to be the best ever in the country. This has earned her an international reputation and also availed her the opportunity to serve as a Nigerian Minister of Information and Communications. These women have proved to be assertive and independent leaders.

Everyday social life in terms of social interactions and behaviours has also experienced enormous measures of feminine assertiveness and a rebuffing of submissiveness. In the standard nuclear family, it is no news that wives are no longer housewives and can no longer be "ordered around"; family life is gradually becoming one where agreements are reached between couples to avoid or minimise unhealthy competitiveness and disagreements. It is hardly the case anymore for a man to simply decide and for the wife to follow or execute such decisions. In fact, the growing trend of feminine assertiveness is so strong that it is gradually becoming an accepted norm among women such that if a woman shows elements of submissiveness today, she is seen by her fellow women as being weak and timid.

Among many female youths, there is an intense competition going on, particularly in terms of social and financial status acquired. In traditional or indigenous African societies, marriage for young African girls is a foremost priority, pursued in their late teens or early twenties.Today marriage for many African girls is, on average, from their late twenties to early thirties. It is no longer a primary focus because, on the list of priorities, other things like education and employment come first. The priority is no longer to be under a man's authority, but to be able to stand on one's own such that even when the female later gets married to a man, she can pursue her own life course and desires.

This fast developing trend of female assertiveness in African social life has emerging consequences for social relations and interactions especially between men and women.

Emerging consequences of female assertiveness

The emerging consequence of female assertiveness are twofold in their effect, namely: (i) on courtship and marriage between men and women in particular; and (ii) on family life in general. The intention here is not to delve into whether these consequences are advantageous or disadvantageous to social growth but simply to show that they exist.

In a patriarchal society, men automatically assume that they are in charge. They thus assume that it is normal that when courting a girl for marriage he should be in charge of the situation. He wants the girl and her family to know that he is prepared for marriage, that he is settled and independent enough for the girl to depend on. Most likely, this would be a situation where he is materially more buoyant than the girl, as this would give him more confidence in exercising his authority.

The case is becoming different in modern Africa. Many African girls, particularly those living in cities, secure good jobs that are sometimes better than that of the average man around them. Whether such jobs are secured by hook or by crook, these ladies are able to build a well-stocked material life around them. They live in well-furnished apartments and drive flashy cars; they take good care of themselves and their looks. There are two major reactions to this by the men in term of courtship and marriage. I will simply classify them here as the *ego-driven reaction* and the *gold-digger-driven reaction*. In the former, the man who may not be as financially buoyant as the working-class lady, but has a huge ego and

cherishes his culturally-defined headship position, is uncomfortable to approach such a lady for marriage for the simple reason that two captains cannot sail a ship. There is the strong conviction among the men that such a lady cannot and will not agree to be under a man; that, if the marriage is contracted, there will be an unhealthy competition in the home; that the lady will see him as being attracted to her because of her material possession and, by implication, depending on her. On her part, the lady will simply conclude that the man is being immature, over-bossy, afraid of a little competition and simply not man enough. This ego-driven reaction is the basic cause of delays in marriage by many young ladies.

In the latter case, the man is definitely not as materially buoyant as the working class lady; he seeks intimate relationships with the well-to-do African lady primarily for material gains. He maintains this intimate courtship with the lady but never really takes it to the point of marriage. When it becomes clear to the lady that he isn't serious, she sends him packing from her apartment. Then he goes in search for another victim to prey on. Such men are often referred to as gold diggers, who are too lazy to hustle for their own material possessions or are too selfish to provide for the lady. Ne-Yo's "Miss Independent" and "She Got Her Own" may be implicated in this regard on the basis that the praises he showers on the independent woman are mainly because she is not dependent on him, but pays her own bills. An African man with an ego believes it is his responsibility to cater for a lady no matter what she possesses materially.

In family life, the effects of feminine assertiveness have also been strongly felt. In post-colonial African societies where men and women work for similar lengths of time, being a domestic wife is hardly a virtue. In fact, many African husbands today are moving with the trend. In order to meet the economic demands of the society, men encourage their wives to take up appointments and work. Often women work for longer hours and earn more than men do (EOC 2007). For this reason, the use of house help in homes in Africa is very rampant. In this way, someone is paid to do the work allocated to the wife by African traditions. This would include cooking, washing, going to market, caring for the children and so on. In fact, house helps, nannies, teachers, boarding school masters, daycares, drycleaners, fast-food shops and the like are doing more work to cater for family needs than are parents. Many African men are also getting used to doing some domestic work themselves, particularly cooking.

Concluding remarks

The world is changing and so are socio-culturally assigned gender roles. Two things are vividly notable from our discourse so far: the culturally assigned gender social roles in Africa traditions of independency on the part of men and dependency on the part of women have been challenged by the growing trend of female assertiveness. This new and rapidly developing trend has consequences particularly in the areas of courtship, marriage and family. Whether such consequences are advantageous or disadvantageous to social interactions in post-colonial Africa is left for further research and deliberation. But one thing cannot be denied. A return to past ways of thinking and of doing things is only a mirage. Challenges in post-colonial African must be faced squarely by those they affect. If there are any adjustments to make, it will be dependent on the binding efforts on the community of selves.

References

Baden, S. & Goetz, A. M. 1997. Who Needs {Sex} When You Can Have {Gender}? Conflicting Discourses on Gender at Beijing. *Feminist Review* 56: 3-25.

Elder-Woodward, J., Hurst, R. & Manwaring, T. 2005. Foreword to Gillinson, S., Green, H. & Miller, P. *Independent Living: The Right to be Equal Citizens*. London: DEMOS: 9-16.

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), 2007. *The Gender Agenda*. Retrieved December 15, 2011 from: *www.gendernetwork.com/*

Feinstein S., Feinstein R. & Sabrow, S. 2010. Gender Inequality in the Division of Household Labour in Tanzania. *African Sociological Review* 14.2: 98-109.

Gillinson, S., Green, H. & Miller, P. 2005. *Independent Living: The Right to be Equal Citizens*. London: DEMOS: 9-16.

Gyekye, K. 1997. *Tradition and Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Habermas, J. 1984. *Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ikuenobe, P. 2006. *Philosophical Perspective on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions*. London: Lexington Books.

Irele, A. 2001. *African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, P & Kossykh, Y. 2008. *Early Years,, Life Chances and Equality: A Literature Review*. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission in association with Frontier Economics.

Kambarami, M. 2006. Feminity, Sexuality and Culture: Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Zimbabwe. *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series: Culture, Feminity and Sexuality,* South Africa: Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre in collaboration with Health Systems Trust, South Africa and University of Fort Hare.

Lauer, H. 2003. *Tradition versus Modernity: Reappraising a False Dichotomy*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Lopez-Claros, A. & Zahidi, S. 2005. *Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap*. Switzerland: World Economic Forum.

Ne-Yo, Jamie Foxx & Fabulous. 2008. She Got Her Own (Miss Independent Part 2). *Intuition and Year of the Gentleman*: Japan Edition. New York: Butter Beats.

Ne-Yo. 2008. Miss Independent. *Year of the Gentleman*. New York: Stargate.

Nnaemeka, O. 1994. From Orality to Writing: African Women Writers and the (Re) Inscription of Womanhood. *Research in African Literature* 25.4: 137-157.

Oke, M. 2006. Cultural Nostalgia: A Philosophical Critique of Appeals to the Past in Theories of Re-Making Africa. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15.3: 332-343.

Okoduwa, A. I. 2006. Tenacity of Gerontocracy in Nigeria: An Example of the Esan People in Edo State. *Studies in Tribes and Tribal* 4.1: 47-51.

Onobhayedo, A. 2007. Western Education and Social Change in Esan Land. *IRORO: A Journal of Arts* 7.1 & 2: 266-276

Sidanius, J. & Veniegas, R. C. 2000. Gender and Race Discrimination: The Interactive Nature of Disadvantage. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination The Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp 47-69.

Taiwo, A.O. 2010. Power and Womanhood in Africa: An Introductory Evaluation. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 3.6: 229-238.

The Sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI), 2008. *Action on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Ending Violence against Women in Africa: Progress Report on Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa*. Addis-Ababa: United Nations Conference Centre.

Tripp, A. M. ND. *New Trends in Women's Political Participation in Africa*. Viewed 10 July 2013, from: *http://democracy.stanford.edu/Seminar/AiliTripp.pdf*

Tutu, D. 1999. *No Future without Forgiveness*. New York: Random House.

UNDP, 2002. *Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations*. New York: United Nations Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

UNDP. 2006. *Taking Gender Equality Seriously: Making Progress, Meeting New Challenges*. New York: United Nations Development Programme

UNWOMEN, 2011-2012. *Progress of the World's Women: Factsheet: Sub-Sahara Africa*. Viewed 11 January 2011, from: *http://progress.unwomen.org*

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC), 2005. *Masculinities: Male Roles and Male Involvement in Gender Equality: A Resource Packet*. New York: Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Ole Jija: Rethinking theft in the Yoruba ethical system

Babalola Joseph Balogun[1]
Department of Philosophy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Tel.: +234(0)8100657444
talk2joey@yahoo.com

Sunday Layi Oladipupo[2]
Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State
Tel.: +234(0)8038468455
habaksunlayi@yahoo.com

The paper rethinks the moral controversies surrounding theft within the Yoruba ethical paradigms. It argues that the concept of theft has a broader theoretical perspective amongst the Yoruba people of south-west Nigeria than its narrow conception of taking without the consent of the owner to do so, prevalent especially in the Western legal frameworks. Since it is generally considered a shameful act, the paper posits that theft is morally forbidden in the Yoruba ethical system, even with a full recognition of the possibility of its being supernaturally imposed on the erring agent either by his/her primordial choice of a faulty ori or by other inimical spiritual means, such as spells or curses. Hence, while it acknowledges the role of propitiative sacrifice as a mollifying antidote for a curse-caused act of theft, the paper dispels theft due to a bad ori, and instead prescribes modification of character through social self-rebirth, something akin to the Christian concept of being born again. In conclusion, the paper holds that a morally good person should not indulge in dishonesty in any form, should be hard-working and be ready at all times to extend a hand of alms to others who do not have, as these are the foundations upon which the Yoruba ethical system cum *social code of conduct are made manifest.*

Key Words: *Ole Jija*, theft, Yoruba, ethical system.

Introduction

Our main concern in this essay is to reflect on the moral issue of theft within the Yoruba ethical paradigms. The paper conceives the act as a morally neutral issue and tries to find out under what circumstances it becomes morally induced and thus described as morally wrong. The paper is particularly interested in knowing what it is about theft that makes it morally condemnable in all human societies. Is it because it violates the moral principle or golden rule that we should do to other people what we would wish that they do unto us? Suppose I don't mind being stolen from, am I still bound by the moral imperative not to steal from others? Is this general unpleasant attitude towards theft and thieves consistent with the Yoruba belief that different people choose different *oris* from heaven; and given this, is it possible a person chose in heaven to become a professional thief on earth? This is coupled with the belief that the social pathological act of theft is sometimes imposed on an agent from without where the agent unwillingly perpetrates the act without knowing and only becomes aware when the act has been done. Given this backdrop, are all thieves condemnable?

Theft as a controversial ethical issue

Ethical issues are issues in which, unlike mathematical issues, a point of agreement is neither always intended nor reached. This, according to Moses Makinde (1988:1), is "what qualifies ethics as a proper subject in philosophy – a discipline in which there often are no winners or losers, and in which a previously rejected views might bounce back into life again in the wake of further inquiry." Thus, controversies in ethics can be generated from different perspectives. They could arise from the need to clarify the meaning of certain ethical concepts. This is the purview of meta-ethics, the branch of linguistic philosophy that analyzes and seeks to clarify the meaning and use of ethical expressions and concepts such as "good" and "ought". The confusions or disagreements engendered by the clarification of ethical concepts often arise from the imperfect nature of natural languages, coupled with the inability of philosophers to cope with the fluidity of linguistic meaning as encountered in natural languages.

In relation to the moral issue in question, for instance, such controversy is generated by the failure of ethicists to come to terms on the meaning of theft as a moral concept. As generally understood, the term theft may mean "taking something which does not belong to one without the expressive consent of the owner to do so". A second-order examination of this definition, however, reveals that many hidden absurd implications (which may make one to conclude that the definition is not well thought out) are packed into it. Consider a hypothetical case where an individual named

1. Babalola Joseph Balogun is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
2. Sunday Layi Oladipupo is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Ogbeni shares an office with a colleague. On a particular day, Ogbeni needs some plain paper, and having none himself, decides to take some sheets from his colleague's table, who by chance is not in the office. Now, this fellow has not sought the consent of his office-mate before taking the paper, and by implication of the definition of theft, has stolen them.

One may reiterate that, though he has not sought the required consent of his office-mate before embarking on the action, Ogbeni has not intended it to be an act of stealing. This is because he intends to inform his colleague of his action while the latter comes around. Such observation would render our initial definition conceptually faulty, and the need for another definition arises. The new definition will have to be cognizant of the deficiency of the old one, and appropriately avoid it. One may then modify the definition thus: theft is the unlawful taking of another person's things/belongings with the *intention* of permanently dispossessing them of the taken items. The inclusion of intention here indicates that stealing is a deliberate act; that no one steals unintentionally. One can therefore describe theft as a conversion of another's belongings to one's own through means other than the socially acceptable ones. This could be by force, deceit, position, secrecy or any other means that render such illegal conversion possible.

Another point is also deducible from the foregoing. It is what could be called "partial stealing". This has to do with the moral status of the action of Ogbeni when he takes some papers from his office-mate's table. This action cannot be morally neutral. It dangles between stealing and non-stealing. It is not actual stealing because he still has the moral obligation to inform his office companion when they eventually get to see each other that he took some plain sheets from his table while he was not around. The kind of consent he gets from this is belated, though, for it ought to have come before the execution of the action. Hence, until this occurs, the act is a partial stealing. It however becomes actual stealing when the opportunity comes for Ogbeni to inform his colleague of what happened in his absence, and he does not. In this case, he is said to have stolen the plain sheets from him. The case is worsened if, on demand by his office-mate, Ogbeni denies having taken any paper from his table.

The illustration as adopted here reveals that the absence of the owner's consent renders a form of taking an act of theft. Thus, any taking backed up with the owner's consent raises no moral controversy of theft. However, a question arises as to the mode of consent required for a morally neutral act of taking. In other words, in what form should the consent of the owner be sought or given? This question is so important that it makes all the difference in such morally bad actions as robbery, fraud, trickery, among others. In the case of robbery, for instance, the owner's consent is given, albeit not willingly. In that of fraud, it is given ignorantly. In the two cases, what is given is not really the consent of the owner, or at best, it is an externally imposed consent. This is what makes the owners' consent in both cases a wrongful one.

By the same token, a politician who rigs an election in order to emerge as the winner has stolen people's mandate, and hence qualifies for the title of thief. As a political thief, he is guilty on a two-count charge. On the one hand, he is guilty of sabotaging the process of good governance. This is a crime against the state. On the other hand, such a politician is also guilty of the theft of people's political rights by inhibiting their freedom to choose the candidate of their choice. On this point, he has committed a crime against the people. One is bound to be dumbfounded, therefore, to see politicians found guilty of this offence go through our streets unfettered by the supposedly impartial shackles of the law.

Although laws against electoral theft have not received substantial backing for a serious punitive consequence, law against political corruption, especially embezzlement of public funds, has been more intolerant. It should be noted that the embezzlement of public funds is theft on a large scale; an illegal conversion of public funds into private coffers. Hence, legally speaking, such offence ought to attract a stricter penalty than petty stealing, or even armed robbery, which in most cases is less felt on a social scale. This explains why some countries (for example, China, Vietnam (Scobell 1990) have made corruption in public office an offence punishable by death. It is only hoped that African countries, especially Nigeria, would have the moral boldness to incorporate a similar temperament into their legal frameworks.

The moral issue of theft can generate a different perspective of ethical controversies. This has to do with the consideration whether there is something in theft that makes it morally wrong or that it is intrinsically, irredeemably morally wrong. This point could be debated using the ethical foundations provided by the Consequentialist-Deontological theoretical divides.

Consequentialism, on the one hand, upholds the view that actions are right or wrong based on the results they bring to bear on the moral agents. These end results must be non-moral (Oke and Esikot 1999: 94). Applied to theft, consequentialism embodies the position that stealing is either morally right or wrong consequent upon the end or purpose which it serves. Should the consequence be good, the consequentialist believes nothing is morally wrong with the act of stealing, which may be only a means to a morally justifiable end. A similar view has been defended by Joseph Fletcher, who in his *Situation Ethics* argues that actions are neither morally right nor wrong in themselves, but are made so by situations under which they are carried out. Thus, an action can be morally justified in one instance of its execution, while it is morally unjustified in another. Situations make the difference between good and bad actions.

As an ethical theory, on the other hand, deontologism is the view that certain actions are inherently wrong, and however well intended they may be, they lack the essential credibility for moral justification. This implies that moral rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, etc. are intrinsic part of actions. Consequent upon the deontologist rigid moral structure, theft is condemned as morally wrong in and of itself. This could be shown in the light of Kant's (1948) categorical imperative or the so-called principle of universalization: the personal policy (maxim) on which our action is based must be one that we could consistently will that all persons follow. If our maxim cannot be universalized, the action is immoral (Abel 1994). In effect, theft, since it cannot pass the universalization test, is immoral in all possible worlds, regardless of its consequence or the situation under which it is done.

We risk stating here that the Yoruba ethical system is an admixture of the two ethical paradigms stated above. This implies that the Yoruba have a flexible moral structure with the sole aim of ensuring human welfare and happiness. Being flexible here, as it is capable of interpretation, does not entail arbitrary inclusiveness in the sense of "anything goes" but in a more pragmatic sense of being thorough and many-sided. For when the Yoruba say, *Ohun ti ko dara ko dara* (what is not good is not good), they seem to agree with Kant that certain actions are to be avoided for their inherent wrongness. This does not make the Yoruba ethical system sufficiently Kantian in flavour. On the contrary, that which is not morally worthy of being done is to be eschewed for its harmful consequence on the acting agent and other people around him/her. This explains why, in *Odu Eji Ogbe, Ifa* advises: *K'a wo waju ojo lo titi; k'a tun bo wa r'ehin oran wo, nitori ati sun ara eni ni* (Let us give continuous attention to the future; let us give deep consideration to the consequences of things, and this is because of our eventual passing).

Taken as a whole, the Yoruba moral system makes a fine example of virtue/character ethics. "Virtue Ethics is a classification within Normative Ethics that attempts to discover and classify what might be deemed of moral character, and to apply the moral character as a base for one's choices and actions" (Gowdy 2010). The Yoruba central ethical concept is *iwa* (character) (Idowu 1962; Abiodun 1983; Oyeshile 2002; Ogundeji 2010). Beside ethics, *iwa* also takes a critical position in Yoruba hermeneutics, aesthetics, theology, and ontology. "Sayings such as *iwa l'ewa* (character is beauty); *iwa l'esin* (character determines how religious one is); and *iwa l'oro* (character is wealth) testify loudly to this" (Ogundeji 2010). A model of ideal character (*iwa rere*) in Yoruba ethics is *Omoluabi*. Such an individual is expected to demonstrate moral soundness in all his/her private and public life. Theft is apparently antithetical to this moral vision.

Applied to the issue of theft, the Yoruba moral attitude is unfavourable. The Yoruba consideration of the consequence of action stems from their adherence to the principle of Golden Rule, which is overtly expressed in their proverb, *k'a to be'gi n'igbo, k'a f'oro ro ara eni wo* (Before one fells a tree in the forest, one should apply the matter to oneself). The statement "it is good to steal", therefore, is a statement which no rational human being seems capable of making consistently. For this applies to both the maker of the statement and other agents who are also morally permitted to steal from him, thus taking us back to the Hobbesian state of nature, which if we are to escape it, must be through not doing to others that which we do not want done to us by them. This analysis represents a theoretical merger between consequentialism and deontologism, because it shows that the duty that Kant talks about is, after all, not for duty's sake, but in its final analysis, in each person's interest.

The foregoing is therefore sufficient to conclude that, as it is characteristic of ethical controversies, there seems to be no way to resolve the moral issue of theft for the time being. The point to be noted, however, is that, as an ethical issue, theft can either be justified or otherwise based on the meaning one attaches to it, on the one hand, and the ethical school of thought to which one belongs, on the other. This point is defensible even where theft is disapproved of by all human societies. The rightness of an action does not flow from its social approval nor the wrongness of an action from its social disapproval. In other words, just as the approval of an act by all does not make it right, so does the disapproval of an act by all not make it wrong.

The concept of the owner

An important clarification about the moral issue of theft has to do with the concept of the owner. What does it mean to own, or be the owner of, something? This presupposes the general question at what point a thing becomes private; that is, *mine* or *yours*? In asking this question, we are concerned about finding out under what conditions we are legitimately warranted to describe certain objects using the possessive adjectives such as 'your' and 'my' and pronouns such as 'yours' and 'mine'. This inquiry is significant in some respects. Knowing when things become personal is not only essential to our quest to understand the nature of the act of taking designated by the term theft, but also it helps to settle the question whether abstract entities such as love, heart, belief, joy, happiness, technology, etc. belong to the category of things that can be stolen. It also helps to show why the consent of the owner is important in any meaningful discourse on theft. The import of this remark will become relevant shortly.

The question of ownership of a thing can be generally explicated within the social-contract theoretical frameworks provided by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. To Hobbes, human nature, in its original state, is basically selfish and unhappy. In the state of nature painted by Hobbes, man is seen as constantly in strife with other men not only as a means of safeguarding his own life against the onslaught of untimely and violent death, but as a way of earning and protecting certain objects which make life worth living for him. Such a scenario is best described as a war of one against all and all against one so that the life of man is laconically described by Hobbes as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes 1978: 100).

Given the endless strife that characterizes the Hobbesian state of nature, it becomes practically impossible for any man to hold on to anything on a permanent basis. One can only make claim to ownership of a thing for as long as a stronger person is not drawn to, or interested in, that which he claims to be his. Thus Hobbes (1978: 101) writes:

> It is consequent also to the same condition that there be no propriety, no dominion, no *mine* and *yours* distinct, but only that to be every man's, that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it.

One could then describe Hobbes' state of nature as essentially governed by the 'might is right' principle. For one to be in possession of a thing, one has to compete violently for it, and things only become one's own after one has fought and subdued the former owner of the things in question. This is primarily because, according to Hobbes, "in such a condition, every man has a right to everything; even to one another's body." Hence, right to ownership is conferred on people by how well they can compete for the things owned, and they remain owners thereof for as long as they do not come in contact with another, more powerful than them, who will convert the ownership, by force, to theirs. This means that conversion of ownership is achieved through force, and not through consent. It also implies that the notion of thievery has no meaning in such state, for that is the very condition through which survival is achieved. In other words, everyone is a thief in the Hobbesian state of nature.

Locke, being a liberal thinker, is more optimistic in his description of human nature, especially as depicted in his theory of the state of nature. In Locke's social contract theory, the concept of private property is given a most comprehensive treatment. According to Baradat (1984: 60), the high status Locke gives to private property rests on two major assumptions.

> First, he assumed that accumulation of private property allowed people to provide for themselves and their families the necessities of life. Once freed from the pressures of survival, people could turn to the task of developing their characters. If a society is in the throes of famine, its people care little whether the sun revolves around the earth or the earth orbits the sun ... The second assumption in support of private property involved individual identity. Locke believed that property ownership was more than a simple economic fact. A person's property reflected the individual who owned it. People were identified in part by the things they owned.

How then did people come to form the concept of private property? What is its origin in man's social existence? How does the machine on which I am typing this piece become *mine*, distinct from *yours* or any body else's for that matter? Locke's answer to this question appears more plausible and more historically justifiable than one offered by Hobbes before him.

According to Locke (1994), the universe was given to all men in common by God. This means that we are joint heirs to the natural property called the earth. As Locke (1994: 423) puts it, "whether we consider natural *reason*, which tells us that men, being once born, have a right to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence; or *revelation*, which gives us an account of those grants God made of the world to Adam and to Noah and his sons, it is very clear that God, as king David says (Psalm115: 16), *has given the earth to the children of men*; given it to mankind in common …" (Locke 1994: 423). The question then naturally arises as to how a thing presumably owned by all becomes a privately owned property? Put differently, how is a commonly owned property converted to a privately owned property? This question is pertinent in the light of the moral requirement of consent of the giver, if the new private owner is to be exonerated from the guilt of robbery.

In Locke's opinion, although God has given the earth to the children of men in common, He has endowed each man with certain powers the proper use of which helps him to convert common ownership of the contents of the earth to his private property. This is his labour. Hence Locke (1994: 423-424) writes that "though all the fruits it (earth) naturally produces and beasts it feeds belong to mankind in common, as they are produced by the spontaneous hand of nature; and nobody has originally a private dominion, exclusive of the rest of mankind, in any of them, as they are thus in their

natural state: yet being given for the use of men, there must be of necessity a *means to appropriate* them some way or other, before they can be of any use or at all beneficial to any particular man." Locke (1994: 424) explains further:

> Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet even man has a property in his own person: this nobody has the right to but himself. The labour of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature has provided and left it in, he has mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property …

Having mixed one's labour with an object in its original state, same becomes, so to say, a fruit of one's labour, and therefore one's private property. Perhaps the foregoing could be illustrated with some hypothetical examples. Consider a case of a bird in the fowler's trap. While the bird was a free bird, it belonged to all as a common property. It belonged to all men and any man. It, however, becomes a private bird when it gets entrapped in a creatively designed effort (trap, snare, etc.) of the fowler.

A similar case could be developed for how people became landowners. Unlike in the contemporary time, when ownership of land is acquired through monetary means, land in the early time, especially in Africa, was acquired through occupancy (use). In those days, the size of one's land was measured proportional to one's farming ability; that is, how large one's farmland was. Since shifting cultivation was widely practised as a means of preserving the land for high produce, people relocated their farmland on a yearly basis, and any piece of land on which they once farmed automatically became their private property, where future farming activities could take place. Because one's farm size depended on the size of one's family, it is probable that men with large families usually had the largest portion of land among their peers.

Locke's analysis also covers cases where what is owned is purchased with money. Thus buying is another means through which ownership right is conferred on objects. This is because the money with which one buys is presumed to be a product of one's labour (except where it is a gift or a stolen item), and being so, has the converting ability to change the ownership status of objects. The only difference between primitive mixture of labour with a commonly owned object, such as the case of the fowler above, and purchasing is that, while in the first case, the bird is taken from its original state as a commonly owned property, in the second, the bird is bought from the fowler who needs to sell it to earn a living, or in the achievement of some other un-specifiable end.

The foregoing seems to suggest that the concept of ownership is inherently rooted in individualism. This is true even among Africans, who have been mostly, sometimes derogatorily, described as essentially communalistic in almost all their approaches to life (Mbiti 1992; Turnbull 1976; Ruch and Anyanwu 1981). Although the Yoruba practise communal ownership of certain things, such as farmland, water sources (e.g. streams, rivers, ponds, etc.), masquerades, new-yam festivals, among others, they do not own all things in common. Farms, farm-tools, clothes, houses, bicycles, beads, money, wives, children, etc. are rather owned individually than communally. This point is clear enough in one of their (Yoruba) proverbs: *oko kii je ti baba ati omo ki o ma ni ala* – a farm does not belong to a father and his child without a boundary. The *ala* (boundary) alluded to in the proverb is significant in at least two respects. One, it reveals that the Yoruba, in spite of their acclaimed communality, have a sense of private property. Two, it helps to distinguish between a success and failure, as found in *ala nii f'oko ole han* – it is boundary that differentiates a lazy man's farm. The implication of this is that such delicate property as a farm should not be owned together, as it forms a basis for social assessment of persons either as diligent or indolent.

Among the Yoruba, ownership connotes an inalienable right of an individual. Sometimes, it is thought of as an inextricable attribute or property. This explains why the Yoruba say that *eja lo ni'bu; erin lo n'igbo; efon lo l'odan; lekeleke lo l'efun,* meaning: the fish is the owner of water; the elephant is the owner of the forest; the buffalo owns the jungle; the egret owns whiteness. Whereas water, forest, and jungle are natural habitats of the aforementioned animals, whiteness is the colour of egrets. These animals metaphorically own these attributes by virtue of their spatio-temporal relation to them, coupled with the fact that they (i.e. the animals) can hardly be thought out of them (the attributes). Stressing the inseparability of the individual and property owned, the Yoruba will say: *A kii gba akata l'owo akiti; a kii gba ile baba eni l'owo eni* – no one takes *akata* from *akiti*; no one dares usurp one's father's house from one.

The Yoruba believe that ownership confers a sense of pride on individuals. As they put it, *ohun a ni laa naani/gbe l'aruge* (it is what we own that we cherish/are proud of). This expresses the ideal of contentment and the need to be appreciative to God (*Olodumare*) for whatever, however insignificant, one owns. It is worth noting that, among the Yoruba, things themselves are imbued with ontological and social values, accounting for why they incite in their owners a feeling of satisfaction and pride. Emphasising the social importance of things owned, the Yoruba will readily say: *teni n teni; t'akisa ni t'aatan* (literally: one's own is one's own).This is like saying a bird in hand is worth a thousand birds in the bush.

It also reveals the Yoruba abhorrence for the state of lack, as this tends to divide the society into two unequal parts, with those at the bottom of the societal ladder looked down upon as social misfits. No man gives his daughter in marriage to a wretched man, nor does any society honour him with a chieftaincy title. Hence, *Odu Ose Okaran* in *Ifa* literary corpus says, *Iwo ko fe; emi ko fe. Ise nikan rin* (literally: you do not want it; I do not want it. Deprivation walks alone.) (Karenga 1999). Since *ajoje o dun b'enikan o ni* (eating together is uninteresting when one party does not have), the Yoruba extol the moral virtue of hard-work as a means of eliminating social inequality in ownership of the means of livelihood.

There seems, therefore, to be no significant difference between the Western and Yoruba conceptions of private ownership, except that the latter covers more categories of things than the former can allow. Unlike in the West, the Yoruba concept of ownership transcends material things. For instance, human beings can be owned within the Yoruba context. A husband is the owner of his duly married wife/wives. The cultural explanation for this can be found in the social practice of bride price payment, which among the Yoruba, signifies the right of ownership of a husband over his wife. A typical Yoruba woman sees her husband as *olowo orimi*, meaning the payer of my price/my owner. She thereby sees herself as a bought gift/property. Like a property, she is inheritable. Hence, when her husband dies, she is shared alongside other properties. This practice is called *opo sisu* among the Yoruba.

Theft within the Yoruba ethical system

The Yoruba as used in this article represents the indigenous people (inhabitants) of South-West Nigeria. As one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Yoruba occupy Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Oyo and Lagos states of South-West Nigeria. Beyond Nigeria, the Yoruba are found in several parts of Africa as well as in the world. Olusanya (1983) claims that, "the Yoruba constitute one of the best known indigenous groups in the world today." They are also found as a diaspora population in countries such as Brazil, the Caribbean: Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica; in Europe and the United States of America (Adetugbo 1991). Albert (2010) argues that, "many of what goes under "African Art" in the developed world today are disproportionably Yoruba in origin." This revelation seems to cement the importance of the Yoruba ethical ideals as having a wide range of impact and applicability on a significant bulk in Africa and the world.

The concept of *ole jija* (theft) is much wider and more complex when considered from the perspective of the Yoruba people. Two probable reasons can be given for this. One, the moral pathology of *ole jija* is believed capable of being induced in the moral agent from an external cause so that the suffering agent just performs the act against his/her will to do so. It may come in the form of a curse or spell placed on the agent. In this case, *ole jija* is seen as a disease from which the patient, like a medical patient, has to be cured. This is usually done through appeasing the gods to remove the curse from the suffering agent. Perhaps, this is the African equivalent of kleptomania in the Western psychological literature. On the other hand, the Yoruba believe that *ole jija* may be *ise ori ran ni* (literally meaning the work imposed on one by one's *ori*). Hence, one cannot but steal as failure to do this has the implication of working against one's lot on earth.

Ole is the general name for a thief in Yoruba language. This name is used to describe a wide variety of people with a tendency to claim as theirs what is not rightfully their own. One of such groups is called *alafowora,* literally meaning "he whose hand makes things disappear." *Afowora* is light-fingeredness or pilfering manifesting in acts such as shoplifting, pick-pocketing, or petty stealing. Secrecy of operational mode is the defining characteristic of this kind of theft. It can be done at any period of the day, provided no one is watching. This category is unique because it takes only an individual to carry out the act; and the items stolen are usually not of much value or worth. These acts may range from stealing meat from a mother's pot, a few tubers of yam, entrapped animals, to jewellery, money, among others. Agents in this category have in common the triviality of the objects stolen.

Another category of *ole* is *adigunjale* (they that are armed while stealing). This is group-theft, implying that it always comes in gangs. It is properly called armed robbery and members of the group are armed robbers. Due to the deadly nature of their operation, the Yoruba refer to them as *a-lo-ki-olohun-kigbe* (they that leave and the owner starts to shout, i.e. crying) and *olosa* (burglar). The shared characteristic of this group is the involvement or use of arms and the proclivity to harm while carrying out the activity of stealing. In addition, this group makes a profession out of stealing. Although they often operate under the secrecy of night, the introduction of sophisticated weapons into Yoruba society has equipped armed robbers (among them) with so much boldness that they now rob in broad daylight. It should be added that armed robbery involves stealing highly valuables items such as large sums of money (mostly from banks and other financial institutions), cars, gold, diamonds, etc.

There is also the group called *dana-dana*. This is an equivalent of the idiomatic gentlemen of the highway. *Dana-dana* shares virtually all the characteristics of the *adigunjale* and *olosa*, but with the slight difference that their operations are carried out on highways or footpaths. This makes the targeted victims of *dana-dana* primarily travellers and other road users. In traditional Yoruba society, the *dana-dana* were known for attacking businessmen and women, mostly on their way to the market, robbing them of their money and other valuables. In modern time, however, items robbed by *dana-*

dana have been extended to include mobile phones, laptops, iPods, iPads, jewellery such as rings, necklaces, earrings, wristwatches, ATM cards, etc.

Diverging slightly from the orthodox understanding of theft, the Yoruba consider as a thief anyone whose behaviour, especially in relation to things owned by others, is dishonest. Such persons include *gb'oko-gb'oko* (husband snatchers), *alonilowogba* (extortionists), *arenije* (swindlers), *wobia* (gluttons), *gbaju*-e (fraudsters), *sogundogoji* (money doublers), *akowoje* (embezzlers), *gb'omogb'omo* (kidnappers), among others. The rationale behind this generic classification might be the common features of greed and duplicity involved in them. Being largely bred out of lack of satisfaction in what one owns, this group acts in non-compliance to a line in *Odu Osa Ofun* (225: 1) which says: *A nsa fun ohun olohun ki a ma baa di ole; nijokan airotele ki a ma baa pariwo leni* – We avoid other people's property so that we might not become thieves; and so that one day people, without warning will not yell out at us (Karenga 1999: 395-397).

The concept of theft in the Yoruba traditional ethics covers a range of other activities. An unacknowledged favour is described as an outright theft. Thus, departing from the conventional meaning of a thief, the Yoruba consider an unappreciative person a thief. This is evident in the saying that *eni ti a se l'oore ti ko dupe, o dabi olosa ko ni l'eru lo ni,* literally meaning "he to whom a favour is done and who fails to acknowledge it, same is like a bugler." With the same token, a man who 'marries' a woman without observing all the required marriage rites is also considered having stolen the woman. The reason is this: parental consent to give out a daughter in marriage comes in the form of the observation of marriage rites by an intending suitor. Failure to do this qualifies the act as a theft of the woman in question.

The Yoruba believe that *ole jija* is chiefly caused by *ojukokoro,* literally meaning greed. The word *ojukokoro* is a derivative of the original word, *oju-ko-ku-ro*, that is, the inability of the eyes to leave something (i.e. object of one's desire). It is thus lack of satisfaction or contentment in one's possession, which often leads one to desire more. *Ojukokoro* and *iwora* are like twin brothers. *Iwora* is the negative desire to cheat others. If someone with *iwora* is to choose from items presumed to be shared among several people, he/she would want to take more than it is required to share with the others equally. This is probably the foundational habit that graduates into the anti-social behaviour of embezzlement popular among politicians. To this end, the Yoruba would say *oju kokoro ni s'iwaju ole jija;* literally, greed is the beginning of theft. This is the Yoruba way of drawing the causal relationship between greed and theft.

A related causative factor in theft is what the Yoruba refer to as *okanjuwa.* This is what can be described as a get-rich-quick attitude; a desire to be successful in life with little or no hard work. It is more prevalent among the youths. A twenty year old, unemployed person desires to drive the latest car in town and wants to live in a mansion in the choicest part of the city. The Yoruba trace this unholy yen to *afarawe* meaning comparing oneself with another. A young man who just graduated from the university wants to own the same thing or more than a man who has been in the active service of his employer for twenty years, forgetting the virtues of hard work and perseverance.

Where it is discovered that the cause of a habit of theft is rooted in any of the causal factors highlighted above, that is, *oju kokoro, okanjuwa* or *afarawe*, the Yoruba often prescribe *itelorun* (contentment) to the erring agent. *Itelorun* is a moral virtue, which leads to a moral life of self-satisfaction. To this end, the Yoruba refer to *itelorun* as *baba iwa* (*itelorun* is the father of good characters). This seems to share a close similarity with the biblical wisdom that "godliness with contentment is a great gain" (1Timothy, 6: 6). *Suuru* (patience) is also pontificated as a virtue, which, if inculcated, has the propensity of sustaining one until a fulfilled life is achieved. Teaching about *suuru* (patience), *Ifa* Corpus, in *Eji Ogbe* (1: 1) admonishes that,

K'a ma fi kanjukanju j'aye.
K'a ma fi warawara n'okun oro ...
K'a wo waju ojo lo titi.
K'a tun bowa r'ehin oro wo.
Nitori ati sun ara eni ni.

Let us not engage the world hurriedly.
Let us not grasp at the rope of wealth impatiently ...
Let us give continuous attention to the future.
Let us give deep consideration to the consequences of things.
And this because of our eventual passing (Karenga 1999: 1).

Ole jija (theft) can also be brought about by a faulty family upbringing. The Yoruba take very seriously the role of parenting in the shaping of the individual's moral life. It is believed that an individual may make stealing a habit ignorantly if his/her parents fail to reprimand him/her for repeatedly doing the act. A parent who does not rebuke a child for taking wrongly –

that is, taking things that don't belong to him/her – is seen in the Yoruba society as teaching the child the act of stealing. This is evident in the saying *Omo yin ko s'agbafo, o n' k'aso wa'le; e r'oju ole e o mu* – your child is not a washman, yet he brings home clothes; you have seen the face of a thief and failed to catch him. It is an indulgence of stealing for a parent or any elderly person to suspect an act of stealing in a child and refuse to rebuke it. Thus, the Yoruba would say *Eni gb'epo l'ajao ja'le bikose eni ba gba a l'aja* – it is not the person that carries the vessel of red-oil from the ceiling who is the thief but the person that helps him put it down. This implies that a collaborator with a thief is himself also a thief.

Yoruba parents are saddled with the responsibility of training up their children properly in social etiquette, values and public morality. Children are expected to be exposed to the fundamentals of socially acceptable standards of human conduct from their individual homes. The Yoruba accept the ideal that *Ile la ti n ko eso r'ode* – charity begins at home. In congruence with Solomon's insightful counsel to train up a child in the way that he should tread, for when he grows up, he will not depart from it (Proverb 22: 6); the *Ifa* Corpus, in *Oturupon Ogunda* (206: 1), advises:

Kerekere li a tii p'eka iroko.
Bi o ba d'agba tan,
A maa gba ebo.

It is when they are still young that we should prune the branches of the *iroko* tree.
For when they are fully grown,
We will have to make greater sacrifice (Karenga 1999: 370).

Iro pipa (lying) is another habit that predates *ole jija*. *Iro pipa* is a general attribute among all thieves, but more prevalent among young thieves. The Yoruba abhor telling lies because they believe that whoever takes delight in telling lies will one day take to stealing. Hence, they will say *eni ba npa'ro, a ja'le* (he that lies will surely steal). The Yoruba recognise the fact that lying may get one rich, but its consequence is always not in the interest of liars. *Otura Meji*, an *Odu* in the *Ifa* Corpus has it that:

> *Iro pipa kii wipe k'a ma lowo. Ile dida kii wipe k'a ma dagba. Sugbon ojo ati sun l'ebo.*
> (Lying does not mean that one will not become rich. And breaking commitments does not mean that one will not reach an old adage. But on the day of death, the sacrifice will be required) (Karenga 1999: 97).

Lying and theft are Siamese twins: they are inextricable. The proper beginning of theft is the denial of having taken something. This is often done to avoid the consequent punishment for the act of taking wrongfully, and without the consent of the appropriate owner, such as one's parents. Thus lying serves as a cover-up for a shameful act of stealing. However long a lie persists, nevertheless, the Yoruba believe that truth will catch up with it one day. They say *B'iro ba lo fun ogun odun, ojo kan l'otito yio ba* – if a lie goes for twenty years, the truth will catch up with it in one day. The corollary of this is found in the Yoruba belief couched in the saying *Ojo gbogbo ni t'ole, ojo kan ni ti onihun* – all days are for the thief; one day is for the owner. This expresses a strong conviction that to whatever degree a thief appears elusive, he would surely be caught someday. Such an expression is used as a note of warning to yet-to-be-caught thieves and their intending counterparts.

On a general note, the Yoruba consider theft as a shameful act that should not be found in the community of *Omoluabis*. An *Omoluabi* (good person), in contrast to *Omo lasan* or *Eniyan lasan* (worthless person), is expected to eschew anything that could tarnish his/her social image. Among other things, it is socially expected of an *Omoluabi* to exhibit the moral virtues of *iwapele* (good and gentle character) (Abimbola 1975), *iteriba* (respect), *inu rere* (having good mind to others), *otito* (truth), *iwa* (character), *akinkanju* (bravery), *ise* (hard work) and *opolo pipe* (intelligence) (Fayemi 2009: 169). In addition to these, *Omoluabi* is supposed to be *eni ti a ko* (someone who is properly nurtured); *ti o si gba eko* (and who behaves accordingly) (Oluwole 2007: 13). It is doubtful if a person with the foregoing moral features could have anything to do with theft. A poem in the late Odunjo's (2010) *Alawiiye: Iwe Kerin* summarises the *Omoluabi's* attitude to theft thus:

Ki ni n o f'ole se l'aye ti mo wa?
Ki ni n f'ole se l'aye ti mo wa?
L'aye ti mo wa, kaka ki nja'le,
Kaka ki n ja'le, ma kuku d'eru.
Ki ni n f'ole se l'aye ti mo wa?
Eni to ja'le a de'le ejo.

Eni to ja'le a de'le ejo.
Adajo a wa f'ewon si i l'ese,
Fewon si i l'ese bi olugbee.
Eni to ja'le a de'le ejo. etc.

What do I do with stealing in the world that I have come?
What do I do with stealing in the world that I have come?
In the world that I have come, instead of me to steal
Instead of me to steal, I will prefer to become a slave
What do I do with stealing in the world that I have come?
He that steals will get to the court
He that steals will get to the court
The judge will come and bind him with shackles
Bind him with shackles like a debtor
He that steals will get to the court.

The professed preference to be a slave over being a thief indicates that an *Omoluabi* does not approve of theft under any existential circumstance. It is an acceptance of a worse condition that could result from a refusal to steal. The reason for this may not be unconnected with the fact that no matter the degree of success a man has attained, once caught stealing, he automatically loses his honour on a permanent basis. A popular Yoruba song says *eni j'ale lere kan, to wa d'aran b'ori, aso ole lo da bo'ra...* – he that steals even once and wears an *aran* cloth; it is a stolen cloth that he has worn ... Among the Yoruba, therefore, theft is an anathema; so is a thief.

Conclusion

What we have attempted to do in this paper is to investigate the Yoruba ethical system with regard to theft. The paper demonstrates that being a shameful social habit, theft is morally inexcusable in the Yoruba ethical system. The Yoruba, however, reckon with the fact that the individual who engages in the act of theft can be doing such out of his/her own desire. This is the possibility of one being cursed to do contrary to one's moral will through casting of a very powerful spell by one's enemies (*elenini eni*) to destroy one's moral character and consequently one's moral-social standing. Although the Yoruba believe that an individual under such a character-killing spell, like a medical patient, can be cured, perhaps through some ritual propitiations, this possibility raises the epistemological problem of the paradigm of identification of the individuals under the influence of such spell. This must be connected to the non-empirical nature of the claim, which makes it fall out of the purview of scientific enquiry. It also can be advanced to explain why law, being a scientific institution, does not recognise such claim as legally founded/appealing in lawsuits.

The Yoruba have explained away this difficulty by appealing to the triviality of things stolen by these individuals whose social worth is often estimated as higher than what they steal. One could illustrate this with an individual who comes into a stationery store in an expensive car, and who by all standards of value, appears rich, stealing a cheap pen, after having bought goods worth a substantial amount of money. Common sense tells us that the stolen pen belittles him. Besides, persons carrying this curse never steal successfully: they are always caught during the act. This intensifies their shame, which is the original motive behind the spell. The Yoruba believe that such individuals deserve our pity, rather than our scorn.

The possibility of choosing an *ori* whose content condemns one to a life of theft is circumvented by the Yoruba concept of *itu'ra-eni-bi* (self-rebirth). In the Yoruba social thinking, there are two kinds of birth: parental birth and socially self-rebirth. Although the importance of the former is incontestable for its necessity makes the latter possible, the Yoruba consider the latter more important for it is that which renders one morally fit for a successful social life. Self-rebirth means self-reconstruction. A self-reconstructed person is one who is morally balanced, and who observes moderation in all his/her dealings. An observer of moderation, according to *Odu Otura Rete* (245: 1), is one who is hardworking, who does not squander money, who dares not steal, who does not owe excessive debts, who does not drink liquor, who does not break commitments to a friend, and who wakes early in the morning, meditates and thinks deeply about his actions (Karenga 1999: 403-404). These moral do's and don'ts summarily describe an *Omoluabi*, a morally ideal person in the Yoruba socio-ethical universe.

Of course, the Yoruba are aware that frustrations do cause one to steal. Hence, while the ideal of hard work is given a topmost priority in the fight against poverty and the consequent temptation to dispossess others of their belongings through theft, the Yoruba morally forbid the haves from an unnecessary flaunting of their wealth, especially where the obtainable state of affairs reveals a suffering mass of people (Idowu 1962). Individual members of the society are

encouraged to extend a hand of alms to those in need to forestall the social phenomenon of theft (Onabanjo 2008: 134). Perhaps this is in response to a fundamental traditional belief among the Yoruba that fingers are not equal *(ika ko d'ogba*).

References

Abel, Donald C. (ed.) .1994. *Fifty Readings in Philosophy.* New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Abiodun, Roland .1983). "Identity and the Artistic Process in Yoruba Aesthetic Conception of *Iwa*" *Journal of Cultures and Ideas*, Vol. 1N1: 13-30.

Abimbola, Wande.1975. *Iwapele:* The Concept of Good Character in *Ifa* Literary Corpus. Wande Abimbola (ed.) *Yoruba Oral Tradition: Poetry in Music, Dance and Drama.*Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Adetugbo, A. 1991. *African Continuities in the Diaspora*. Lagos: CBAAC.

Albert, I. O. 2010. Peace, Justice, Truth and Reconciliation: The Yoruba Experience in Comparative Perspective. Being a paper presented at The 14th J. F. Odunjo Memorial Lecture at Conference, University of Ibadan.

Baradat, Leon P. 1984. *Political Ideologies: Their Origin and Impact,* 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Fayemi, Ademola K. 2009. Human Personality and the Yoruba Worldview: An Ethico-Sociological Interpretation. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 2 N9: 166-176.

Gowdy, Larry. 2010. "Virtue Ethics." Viewed 1 July 2013, from *http://www. ethicsmorals. com/ethicsvirtue.html/.*

Hobbes, Thomas. 1978. *Leviathan*, 15th ed. New York: Collier Books.

Idowu, Bolaji .1962. *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief.* Britain: Longman Ltd.

Karenga, Maulana . 1999. *Odu Ifa: the Ethical Teachings*. Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press.

Kant, Immanuel .1948. Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals. *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Works on the Theory of Ethics*, (6th ed.) transl. by Thomas Kingsmill Abbot, London: Longman Green & Co.

Locke, John. 1994. The Second Treatise of Government. Donald C. Abel, *Fifty Readings in Philosophy.*

Makinde, Moses A. 1988. African Culture and Moral Systems: A Philosophical Study. *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 1N2: 1- 27.

Mbiti, J. S. 1992. *African Religions and Philosophy.* Nairobi: Heinemann.

Odunjo, J. F. 2010. *Alawiye: Iwe Kerin*. Ikeja: Longman Nig. Plc.

Ogundeji, A. Philip. 2010. "Iwa" in Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of African Thought*, Vol. 1, New York: Oxford University Press.

Oke, Moses and Esikot, I. F. 1999. *Elementary Ethics*. Lagos: Minder International Publisher.

Olusanya, G.O. (ed.).1983. *Studies in Yoruba History and Culture: Essay in Honour of Professor S. O. Biobaku.* Ibadan: University Press limited.

Oluwole, Sophie B. 2007. Who are (we) the Yoruba? A Key Note Paper Delivered at a Pre-Word Philosophy Day Conference, June 12, at the National Theatre, Lagos.

Onabanjo, Oluwasegun D. 2008. The Yoruba Ethical Moral Virtues and the Challenges of Cultural Change. *Contemporary Humanities*, Vol. 2: 128-139.

Oyeshile, A. Olatunji .2002. "Morality and its Rationale: The Yoruba Example," *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, Nos. 11&12: 90-98.

Ruch, E. A. and Anyanwu, K.C. 1981. *African Philosophy.* Rome: Catholic Books.

Scobell, Andrew .1990. "The Death Penalty in Post-Mao China". China Quarterly (123): 503–520.

Turnbull, Collins M. 1979. *Man in Africa*. Garden City: Anchor.

Identity construction and gender involvement in online social networks among undergraduates in two universities, Southwest Nigeria

Ojo Melvin Agunbiade[1,2], Mary Olufunke Obiyan [3] and Gbenga Biola Sogbaike[1]
ojomelvin@yahoo.com

[1]Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
[2] Department of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
[3]Department of Demography/Social Statistics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

In this paper, we explore identity construction and gender involvement of Nigerian undergraduates in online social networks. This paper presents the qualitative findings on identity construction and gender involvement of Nigerian undergraduates in online social networks. This was with a view to investigating the reasons for the increasing participation of young people in online social networks. The study examines their views on what constitutes an identity and the rationale for adopting a particular identity in online social networks. Qualitative data were collected through four focus Group Discussions and twenty in-depth interviews (IDI) among undergraduate students from two universities in Southwest Nigeria. The findings reveal identity construction in online social interactions as a frequent occurrence and an extension of real life. Trust in online relationships develops overtime depending on frequency and nature of interactions. However, gender influences young people's online activities, as more females than males tend to construct their online social identities using photographs in particular with symbolic interpretations. In addition, there are perceived risks of involvement, especially those relating to privacy in online social networks. Hence, the findings call for diverse interrogations of the contexts and dimensions of involvement in online social networks among youths and how such interactions could influence further positive outcomes.

Keywords: Gender, identity, online and offline interactions, social networks, university students, Nigeria

Introduction

Online social networks perform various functions and possess some inherent dysfunctionality. Functionally, an increasing social category of young people adopt and interact on these platforms for purposes such as self-discovery, expression, pleasure seeking and identity presentation (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013). Identity formation and reconstruction is crucial in the socialization process throughout life (Friedman 1994; Padilla and Perez 2003). This includes the web of relations provided by online social networks (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013). Relationships and context are influential in identity formation and reconstruction. This does not imply the irrelevance of individual factors like personalities and will in the process (Brown and England 2005; Asgari and Kaufman 2005; Schachter 2005). In terms of definition, the concept of identity has been looked at from two positions; first as defined by the individual social actor and second the context and social relationships that define identity engagement and outcomes. This process affects what, and how, femininities and masculinities are considered in social interactions in both virtual and physical space. The context and process of identity construction is somewhat internal and external to the individual. As a social process, it is done in relation to social roles, relationships with others and values (Côté and Levine 2002).

There are slight differences in the norms and context of interactions in virtual and physical space. The variations affect the multi-dimensional nature of identity construction and reconstruction. With the increasing web of relationships found among online community members and the inevitable effects on other spheres of social relations, an encouraging number of research studies have focused on the unending social engagements and relationship outcomes within virtual and physical space. With the digital divide, more of such research studies are from developed countries despite the increasing rate of adoption and engagement in virtual interactions among youths from developing countries and sub-Saharan Africa. This paper explores the dynamics of identity construction within the platform of Facebook among undergraduates in two Nigerian Universities. This is informed by the dearth of studies on identity construction among the teeming population of Youths in Nigeria using the Facebook among other emerging online social networking sites.

Against this backdrop, Adams and Marshall (1996) argue that identity can be understood by considering an individual's subjective assessments within a given social setting. A subjective assessment within a context offers an opportunity to understand the phenomenon of identity from the social actors' position despite the influence of the socialisation process on what becomes an identity (Greenhow and Robelia 2009). Identity is dynamic and not static. It is fragmented and constructed in or through a diverse network of social relations. For instance, an online user may decide to choose a name, one that can either reflect or conceal his/her real identity to others. The freedom from physical restrictions, alongside a chance of anonymity, provides virtual community members with a platform to explore different identities (or

features) with little or no constraint and consequence compared with the real world (Greenhow and Robelia 2009; Amichai-Hamburger 2013).

The increasing access to and relevance of the Internet among youths has also led to more research interest on the role of the Internet in identity constructions at the individual or group levels as well as gender involvement and differentials in online social networking sites (Amichai-Hamburger 2013; Bosch 2009). Other areas of interest include how their online social network activities reflect the dilemma between privacy and disclosure of identities and personal concerns to others (Hargittai, 2007;Amichai-Hamburger, 2013; Livingstone and Brake, 2010). Available evidence reveals that communicating and networking with one's peers by means of the new media has become an inseparable part of the everyday lives of young people today and a tool that has a potential for learning and dynamism in knowledge production (Bosch 2009; Greenhow 2011; Dunne *et al*. 2010; Patchin and Hinduja 2010). Many people connect to social network sites at least once a day either to check their profiles or to participate in different online activities (Urista *et al*. 2009; Livingstone and Brake, 2010).

The concept of trust is increasingly relevant in negotiating identity in both online social networks and physical interactions. Trust in social relations is multidimensional and there are diverse interpretations and rationale for engaging and developing trust even in online social relations (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter, 2013). Given that trust comes through earned and negotiations from diverse positions and means, social actors acquire a degree of conscious in ensuring its formation and sustainability. Against this backdrop, Volakis (2011) argues that trust is fundamental to identity formation and online relationships and the fact that it is easy for us to shape our words and how we present ourselves online is a big factor in this. For instance, two people entering an online relationship implicitly or explicitly expect that the other party is partially or largely a true representation of the identity presented online. While truth is central to trust formation in online friendships and networking (Volakis 2011; Dwyer *et al*. 2007; Krasnova *et al*. 2010). In reality, the differences and dynamism in the ways social actors engage others are capable of defeating the precious value of trust and truthfulness needed for deeper social relations. Hence, the dynamics of developing and maintaining diverse identities between online and offline social interactions could be understood by focusing on the conscious tactics and practices of members of online social networks in presenting who and what they are. A major reason is that identity formation at this level of social interaction is susceptible to influence from regular and offline social network of relations (Krasnova *et al*. 2010; Volakis 2011; Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013).

Few researchers have focused on the perspectives of youths and their active engagement in reconstructing their identities within the framework of virtual and physical spaces. Exploring the views and experiences of Internet use among Nigerian undergraduates has relevance in increasing the body of knowledge on identity formation, reconstruction and youth empowerment. Prior studies on Internet use among Nigerian youths have focused on the practice and patterns of their involvement in cybercrime, thereby limiting the body of knowledge in this area (Agunbiade and Titlayo 2010; Aransiola and Asindemade 2011; Tade and Aliyu, 2011). Thus, in an effort to fill this knowledge gap, this article explores identity construction in the profiles and engagements of male and female undergraduates in online social networks. The paper addresses specific questions such as: what are the reasons for the increasing participation of young people in online social networks? What is the importance attached to the Internet and online Social Networks? What are the experiences of young people with online social interactions? How do young people conceive and portray acceptable identity to other social actors in online Social Networks? What are the perceived social virtues that sustain virtual relationships? Are there gender differentials in the ways identities are portrayed and sustained in online social networks? The paper, based on a qualitative approach, examines these questions from the perspectives of the undergraduates themselves.

The social practice theory as shaped by the works of prominent sociologists and philosophers like Bourdieu, Giddens, Taylor, and Foucault, provided a theoretical framework for exploring the research questions as well as the interpretation of the generated data. Social practice has diverse strands traceable to the contributions and emphases of the key figures within the framework (Ritzer and Yagatich 2011). However, the theory has potentials for descriptive and interpretative understanding of describing how individuals in diverse contexts shape and are shaped by the cultural atmosphere in which they live. It attempts to articulate the ways in which identity and individual agency rely on and produce cultural forms. For this study, attention is given to how this theory helps in exploring the influence of peer groups and other social factors in the youth's involvement and expectations in online social networks.

Hence, this article presents an empirical investigation of the process and measures of identity construction among university undergraduatesas active users of the facebook. The gender dimensions and variability of identities within and across gender are important to this study. The degree of gender involvement, the reasons for their involvement, their perceptions of online social sites as well as gender similarities and differences in online social activity present an opportunity of arriving at a clearer picture of the processes involved in identity construction and reconstruction. An underlying feminist assumption in this study is that gender differentials exist in disclosure or non-disclosure in virtual

interactions. While males and females alike tend to gain social status and image by sharing their photos and personal characteristics with others to form new relations, studies exploring the dynamics of identity construction and relationships in online social networks, especially relating to Nigerian undergraduates, have been on the margin. Hence, the article proceeds with a critical engagement with the literature and the social practice theory providing a lens for articulating the questions earlier stated. The methodology comes next then followed by a contexualised presentation of findings and a discussion of the implications.

Identity construction and trust building as a continuum

Identity is our perception and definition of self, as well as the way we are defined by others (Deschamps 2010). It touches on the kind of personality we wish to portray to others in the social space by summing up all the factors that have come to define us. For instance, identity defines what is feminine and masculine in social interactions within space and time. The functionality of identity is obvious in social interaction as people come to know and define themselves in ways that were not possible during their childhood (Abrams and Hogg 2010). Thus, identity and identity construction are inherent in the existence of every social being (Deschamps 2010).

With globalization and wider access to the Internet, in the 21st century, the forums for self-discovery have expanded. The emergence of online social networks (OSN) and multi-user domains (MUDs) have provided youths and other social categories of individuals with a veritable tool for identity exploration (Sherry 1995). The construction of identity has thus gone beyond the face-to-face real life sphere. Identity construction is a complex process because it refers both to how we consider ourselves from a subjective point of view and how we define ourselves from the position of 'others'. Against this backdrop, Cheung and Lee (2010) differentiated between two broad categories of identity, personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is the unique sense of self, knowledge and experiences that all of us possess. Social identity refers to the social groups we belong to and the commonalities we share with others. In addition, our social location within society and how we interact with other people within social groups depends on what and how our social identity is construed. Cheung and Lee (2010) argue that gender, group norms and culture are significant components in forming both personal and social identities in online social relations. Although social identities refer to what we are, often they are defined just as much by what we are not and how we see ourselves as different from others (Cheung and Lee 2010; Pearson 2009). Similarly, identities may be ascribed in ways that do not necessarily agree with our own understandings of personality but still affect how others relate to us. Social identities have a key role in shaping and interacting with our personal identities and making us the people that we are (Pearson 2009). The need to maintain acceptable personal and social identities is central to most social interactions, especially when positive image building is underlying the purpose of putting on a particular identity.

The need to maintain acceptable personal and social identities is central to most social interactions, especially when positive image building is underlying the purpose of putting on a particular identity. However, as stated earlier, it requires trust to achieve an acceptable identity at the personal or social level. As a social enterprise, trust is an essential process to social capital building and can be achieved through a process that requires diverse practices. Material and non-material means are dominant forms of establishing interaction and building trust in social relations. In online social networks, pictures, videos, language among other means are dominant forms of engaging other social actors (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013). The sharing and engaging of others through material and non-material means is a dual process, taking place both in the virtual and the real world, and is never static. Hence, the construction of identity is done simultaneously both in the virtual and physical sphere, thereby making a plural identity for the same individual possible.

Despite the continuing involvement and participation in online social networks among youths in Africa, there are few studies focusing on the prevailing practices of engaging in identity construction and dialogue among this social group of youths. This paper recognises the relevance of investing the process and practice of trust building through identity construction in online social interactions. However, much attention is devoted to the practices and not the process of identity construction. The practices and involvement are examined through a gendered lens. Thus, the next section of the article takes a theoretical look at practices within the framework of social practice theories. Due to the variance in the body of knowledge on social practice theory, Bourdiue's social practice theory was perceived to be close to the underlying assumptions and focus of this article.

Theoretical framework

Social Practice theories are sociological frameworks useful in describing the constant web of interactions between social structures and the agency. It attempts to articulate the ways in which identity and individual agency rely on and produce cultural forms. The major thesis is that structure-agency interaction is multi-directional. Social actors enjoy their agency that is utilizable in creating and interrogating structural effect. Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory provides a context for

interrogating the dialectics and nexus between agency and structure within context. The heart of Bourdieu's work, and of his effort to bridge subjectivism and objectivism, lies in his concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' as well as their dialectical relationship to each other (Aldridge 1998). While habitus exists in the minds of actors, fields exist outside their minds.

The 'habitus' is the socialized norms or tendencies that influences behaviour, thoughts and inactions. It is '*the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them*' (Wacquant, 2005:316). Online social network operate on norms and values that members are socialized into and expected to display in their interactions with others. Social actors imaginatively rehearse these norms in constructing and engaging others in trust building and identity construction. Online social networks provide fields for social actors to engage one another. 'Fields' in Bourdieu's view represents series of positions in which a variety of "games" are undertaken. The actions taken by the agents (individual or collective) in presenting their online social identity are governed by the structure of the field (online social network), the nature of the positions, and the interests associated with them.

However, it is also a game that involves self-positioning and the use of a wide range of strategies to allow one to excel at presenting an identity that may attract trust and capital formation. There is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them (Aldridge 1998). It is out of the relationship between habitus and field that practices, cultural practices in particular, are established. Practice is a routinized way of acting in which taken-for-granted assumptions affect how we act, especially how we manage our bodies, handle objects, treat subjects, describe things, and understand the world (Bourdieu 1992).

In addition, Bourdieu's construe social actors as those with at least some degrees of freedom: "The habitus does not negate the possibility of strategic calculation on the part of agents" (Bourdieu 1992). However, strategies do not refer "*to the purposive and pre-planned pursuit of calculated goals ... but to the active deployment of objectively oriented 'lines of action' that obey regularities and form coherent and socially intelligible patterns, even though they do not follow conscious rules or aim at the premeditated goals posited by a strategist*" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127). It is via strategies that "the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position and to impose the principle of hierarchy to optimise their own products. The strategies of agents depend on their positions in the field" (Wacquant and Deyanov 2002). As young people, forming relationships and sustaining the interactions for valuable purposes including altruistic, may determine the importance and efforts that will be attached to their online social identity. Bourdieu was focally concerned with the relationship between habitus and field (Wacquant and Deyanov 2002). He saw the relations between habitus and fields in two main ways: on the one hand, the field conditions the habitus; on the other hand, the habitus constitutes the field as something that is meaningful, that has sense and value, and that is worth the investment of energy (Wacquant and Deyanov 2002).

Another important concept introduced by Bourdieu is that of 'capital', which he extends beyond the notion of material assets to capital that may be social, cultural or symbolic (Bourdieu 1992). These forms of capital may be equally important, and can be accumulated and transferred from one arena to another (Navarro 2006). Bourdieu therefore saw culture as a kind of economy, or marketplace. In this marketplace people utilize cultural rather than economic capital. This capital is largely a result of people's social class origin and their educational experience. In the marketplace, people accumulate more or less capital and either utilize it to improve their situation or lose it, thereby causing their position within the economy to worsen. Bourdieu's practice theory provided a framework to interrogate the dialectical relationship between the individual's self-construction of identity (habitus) and the social and cultural milieu that aids identity shaping.

As earlier emphasised, both field and habitus were important to Bourdieu. However, it is their dialectical relationship that is of the utmost importance and significance. Field and habitus mutually define one another; *the dispositions constituting the cultivated habitus are only formed, only function and are only valid in a field, in the relationship with a field ... which is itself a 'field of possible forces,' a 'dynamic' situation in which forces are only manifested in their relationship with certain dispositions. This is why the same practices may receive opposite meanings and values in different fields, in different configurations, or in opposing sectors of the same field (Bourdieu 1992).*

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative exploratory research design. The rationale is to gain in-depth and contextual understanding of the involvement of Nigerian undergraduates in online social networks. Focused group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) were the only methods of data collection. The study population consisted of undergraduates with active profiles on an online social network. The undergraduates are either male or females who are students in two universities (One private and the other public owned) in southwest Nigeria. The rationale for targeting these two universities was the high levels of access to Internet facilities. Private and public owned universities were

selected purposively to also understand the socio-economic differentials that may exist and possibly impact on practices and gender differentials in online social networks. The two universities have an approximate population of 40,000 undergraduates with a high proportion from the south western part of Nigeria. Privately owned universities in Nigeria charge more for tuition than the public owned ones and an average Nigerian parent often finds it difficult to pay such tuition fees due to the prevailing low wages and high cost of living in Nigeria.

To account for the influence of years spent on campus and peer pressure on setting profile and active engagement in online social networks, we focused our attention on undergraduates that have spent an average of two years on campus. Two focus group discussions were conducted on a gender basis on the campus of the two universities. Four focus group discussions were conducted in total. Focus group discussions have been used in diverse studies focusing on group dynamics and behaviour. Studies on online social networks have also employed the method with encouraging findings. An average of eight discussants featured in the FGDs. In all, a total of thirty-nine discussants featured in the FGDs. Additional data were collected through in-depth interviews with twenty males and females on equal proportion.

The IDIs were conducted with undergraduates who maintain active profiles on Facebook. This was informed by a high involvement of undergraduates in the online social network. For the IDIs, 20 open-ended interviews were conducted with student subscribers to any of the online social networks. The IDIs were conducted while the participants were online checking their profiles. To achieve this, students with active profiles were approached for interaction at their convenience. The browsing was either effected through a computer system or a mobile phone with Internet functions.

Only students that were checking their profiles on the social network platform during the field work were interviewed. In addition, the content of messages posted by the participants or their friends were also accessed and for additional information on areas of interests and events that the interviewees found more appealing on their online social networks. All the qualitative data collected were transcribed, coded and subjected to thematic analysis.

The audiotape recordings were done with the consent of all the participants. Before each discussion, verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant. All the discussions and interviews took place at the preferred suitable locations suggested by the participants. Throughout the interaction periods, participants were informed of their rights to decline participation at any point in the discussions.

Findings

Findings from the study are centralized and captured under five interrelated themes, namely: Internet and online social networks, identity and identity construction in online social networks, trust in identity formation and virtual relationships and gender differentials in online social networks.

Profiles of participants

All the FGDs were conducted on a gender basis and equal proportions in the two universities, that is two FGDs in each university. In all, thirty-nine (39) discussants took part in the focus group discussion, 18 males and 19 females. Among the males, ten (10) were Christians and eight (8) were Muslims. Among the females, seven (8) were Muslims and eleven (11) were Christians. By age category, all the participants were within the ages of 18-26, with most being between the ages of 18 and 22 years. Twenty interviewees were involved in the in-depth interview; five (5) males and five (5) females in each university. While all the discussants maintain active profiles on Facebook, 17 participants also belong to other online social networks like Twitter, BlackBerry Messenger, WhatsApp and 2go. Most of them were introduced to online social networks by friends and very few by siblings and other family members and they have been on the online social networks for an average of four (4) years.

The Internet and online social networks

The participants accorded a high relevance to the Internet. In the FGDs and IDIs, both the male and female participants of both schools considered the Internet as inseparable from the everyday life of young people, especially students. The Internet was generally viewed as a platform for meeting people through online social networks and information seeking on virtually every aspect of human existence. It is even more important to students for its usefulness in research and class assignments. A particular male interviewee opined that the Internet provides opportunities for anyone 'to satisfy both personal and social goals'. The Internet also qualified as a veritable means of communication across borders. The extracts below reveal some of their views on the internet:

> *"It (internet) is very good for students especially. One can reconnect through the internet and get materials for your assignments" (Interviewee, female, 20 years)*
>
> *"It is the most effective tool of communication; a bridge of the communication gap in the world." (Interviewee, male, 21 years)*

In addition, the participants shared a consensus on online social networks as platforms for connecting with people, whether old friends, relatives or searching for new friends or contacts. In economic terms, some of the participants also opined that online social networks are more affordable in keeping in touch with loved ones compared with making phone calls. When asked about their activities on these online social networks, most participants engage frequently in activities like chatting, blogging, sending mails, viewing photos of friends and loved ones. Very few seem to utilise the online social networks and indeed the Internet space for business and playing games. While few males go online with the intention of getting into online heterosexual relationships, they expressed the fear of experiencing a mismatch between the online identity and the physical identity of their prospective girlfriends or lovers. The fear of mismatch was also described as an active factor in the readiness to engage in successful online dating. The rationale and factors that influenced the study participants to join online social networks range from the need to build new networks of contacts or reconnect with old friends. A high proportion of the FGD participants were influenced to join the online social networks by their friends. Others were either influenced by their family members or on their own. A particular female respondent joined Facebook on her 16th birthday because 'my dad opened it for me as part of my birthday gift.' Facebook is also the most popular online social network among the undergraduates in this study, as all the participants have personal accounts on Facebook.

However, despite the increasing participation of young people in online social networks, most of the participants only demonstrated their knowledge of these OSNs in terms of their individual activities on them, and some even expressed ignorance of online social networks in terms of the origin and purpose of OSNs. In addition, most participants equated the internet with online social networks, as they defined the Internet in terms of just connecting with people. Nevertheless, they recognize that Internet availability and accessibility largely drive online social networks and networking.

The experiences of participants in OSN also differ, as much as their likes and dislikes about OSN. Nevertheless, the issue of privacy, nudity and pornographic contents in online social networks remain the most disturbing for some of the users of online social networks. Other issues like 'logging out without notice', 'vulgar updates' and 'unwanted dating proposals' also determine the overall experiences of the respondents, especially the female ones in OSNs. Here are excerpts from the participants:

> *"Guys always want to woo girls irrespective of the age difference. My younger brother's friend asked me out for example. That was quite bad. But I have really been able to connect with old friends" (Interviewee, female, 23 years old)*
>
> *"I mistakenly posted a private message on my wall, which eventually became food for public consumption. Of course I was embarrassed" (Discussant, 22 years, male)*
>
> *"I have only had good experiences thus far. One of which is I have been able to help a particular friend online overcome a problem" (Discussant, 24 years, male)*
>
> *"I receive up-to-date information and also connect with friends. I was once tagged in a viral pornographic picture and this made some friends of mine delete me" (Interviewee, male, 21 years)*
>
> *"Well I met someone very nice and at the same time I met someone not so nice. The person almost raped me when we met offline, if not for GOD" (Interviewee, female, 22 years)*

While all the participants expressed concern over the growing negative use of the Internet for bullying and blackmailing, they also posited that the Internet could be addictive and time-wasting. This partially accounts for the under-utilization of conventional libraries and overall reliance on the Internet for academic materials despite their unawareness on the credibility of the materials. A similar fear was expressed over the increasing involvement of undergraduates in plagiarism and practices that are non-academic. These, among other reasons, were described as contributors to the poor academic performance of undergraduates. Often, previous moments that could be utilized for academic purposes are now spent 'over-staying' online.

Identity and identity construction in online social networks

The participants mainly explained identity in terms of their physical characteristics, attributes and conduct. Thus, identity as defined by the participants is a person's characteristics, what a person is known for and how one is defined by others. In addition, a large proportion of participants said they construct their identities online by simply transferring elements of their offline identity to the online space. This they do by 'putting your name, uploading your pictures, marital status and so on.'

"Identity is the way people think about self. Pictures, interests dictate or create your identity. I construct my identity online through my updates" (Discussant, male, 19 years)
"I am an African. A black man, easygoing and strictly formal" (Interviewee, male, 24 years)
"I am a humble, easygoing person. I am more career-inclined and very interested in project management." (Interviewee, male, 21 years)
"Well, identity is the definition of self. You construct identity online by the way you define yourself through your pictures and bio-data"(Discussant, female, 22 years)
"Identity is a kind of logo; who you are. Presenting yourself online the way you are." (Interviewee, female, 23 years)

On whether they kept same or different identities online and offline, some of the participants affirmed that their online identity did correlate with their offline identity, while others admitted maintaining 'slightly incomplete' and different identities. Nevertheless, they were of the opinion that different people have different reasons for keeping different identities online and offline. Hence, the reason for incompatible offline and online identity 'may be to make up for their (young people's) incompleteness offline. Some people create the identity that suits what they want to become offline. In particular, friends and the media have great influence on young people.' Thus, young people maintain a projected identity online for their real life identity. The online identity in this respect is actually one the individual aims to achieve but has not yet attained.

The participants also posited that a personal feeling of inadequacy, lack of self-esteem, hypocrisy, criminal tendencies, security and other privacy reasons account for the differences between online and offline identities. Lack of physical contact between OSN users, peer pressure and inconsistent access to the Internet could also account for these identities. In addition, the purpose for maintaining similar or different identities all revolve around a desire for self-esteem, respect, creating a false sense of importance and to be accepted by the larger society.

"There is no real difference. However my information online may not be up to date" (Discussant, male, 21 years)
"Yes, but it depends on the person. Some do it spontaneously or to conform to popular culture" (Discussant, female, 23 years)
"It is not deliberate. Human beings naturally want to hold back some pieces of information about themselves. It is normal" (Interviewee, male, 21 years)
"Young people keep different identities to please people. People may want to hide certain aspects of their identity. A handicapped person may for the fear of rejection refuse to upload his/her full picture" (Interviewee, female, 24 years)

Hence, young people maintain whatever identity they choose to conform with the yearnings of the wider society too.

"*Nobody or group in society appreciates failures, so why not create an identity of a successful achiever, while you keep working at it?"* (Interviewee, male aged 20).

The participants unanimously posited that young people participate more in online social networks. This is as a result of young people's greater inclination to the Internet and also being more computer literate than the adults. Joining online social networks is also the current fad and undergraduates find it trendy. Some interviewees opined that the increased participation of young people in online social networks could be traced to the increasing population of young people, greater access to the Internet and high-tech communication gadgets, to be informed and to be socially acceptable. Keeping in touch with friends is cheaper using online social networks than using phone calls.

"To make friends and it is also cheaper to connect with people online than through phone calls" (Interviewee, female, 24 years)

In essence, the participants submitted that young people participated more in OSNs and that the increase of young people in OSNs is, apart from peer pressure, a desire to meet new people, connect with old friends, find love and enjoy other benefits that OSNs afford them. Hence, a 22-year-old female undergraduate from the public owned university states that the increased participation of young people online is the result of 'youthful exuberance and the desire to catch fun'.

Trust in identity formation and virtual relationships

All the participants in the FGD and IDI expressed similar views on what trust means. Chiefly trust was explained as believing or having confidence in someone or something and that it is earned when both parties know each other well and feel comfortable with each other. They believed that trust is ensured in online interaction through honesty, truthfulness, sincerity and open communication between the two parties.

When asked if differences existed in the manner they build trust with their online friends and offline friends, most of the male and female participants responded in the affirmative. While a few others felt building trust online was the same as offline, they conceded that it would take a greater effort to trust an online friend than an offline friend. However, two males said they do not bother trying to trust anyone online as trust for them would only be possible if there was a physical dimension to their online friendships.

> *"Trust level is generally low. Everyone has something to hide, so I don't bother trying to ensure trust" (Interviewee, 22 years, male)*
> *"I don't know anything about the other person online. I have not seen him, he could be anything. "Seeing is believing". So I think trust is built on physical contact" (Interviewee, male, 21 years)*

A particular female interviewee opined that ensuring trust online is not within her powers and that she can only hope her friends in OSNs trust while she tries to trust them too. The participants also have varying opinions on online intimate relationships. Most of the participants posited that such virtual relationships are unreal and risky, and as such do not get involved in them.

> *"They work but they won't last for long because most of such relationships are built on deceit. Any relationship built on a kiss will end with a hiss" (Interviewee, 20 years, male)*
> *"I don't believe in it. It's rubbish. How can you start a relationship with someone you've not seen?" (Discussant, female, 24 years)*
> *"Online intimate relationships don't work. God didn't design intimate relationships to be online" (Interviewee, male, 25 years)*

However two male and three female participants stated that an online intimate relationship was 'okay' and acceptable. Two of these (a male and a female interviewee) have once been involved in an online intimate relationship. The male, a 400 level undergraduate student from the privately owned university, used to be in an online relationship that lasted for a year. He ended it when he discovered that the identity his partner portrayed online was different from her real-life identity. Another interviewee, a female was almost raped by her online boyfriend when they met offline.

> *"She lied about her real educational status and her physical appearance" (Interviewee, male, 26 years)*
> *"The person almost raped me when we met offline, if not for GOD" (Interviewee, female, 22 years)*

Very few participants reported having any privacy issues with their identity online. In fact, only three females have privacy issues with their identity. Hence they are always reluctant to disclose any information about themselves to anyone online. Other participants despite not reporting any privacy issue with their identity online still choose to protect their identities by limiting the degree of personal information they put online and restricting access of their online friends to such information. They also make use of tools provided by the different online social networks in protecting their privacy.

> *"I don't display online what I don't want people to know" (Discussant, 22 years, male)*

In conclusion, the degree of reality in offline interactions makes trust easier to establish between two friends than in online friendships. To ensure trust between two people who meet online, a physical and real-life contact between the two is essential.

> *"Yes. Offline interaction involves a higher degree of reality." (Interviewee, male, 21years*)

Gender differentials and involvement in online social networks

The participants deliberated on the role of gender in reaching a decision whether to join an online social networks or otherwise. A few of the interviewees claimed that gender has nothing to do with one's decision to join online social networks. Some males and females who felt otherwise stated that some chat-sites and rooms in online social networks were gender-specific and exclusive. Such chat rooms exist on 2go, Yahoo Messenger and so on.

> *"A man will always be a man even online. It determines some of the groups I join, the conversations I engage in and the people I befriend" (Interviewee, male, 24 years)*

However, some of the male and female participants in the FGD and IDI felt that gender affects the manner they present themselves online. It was a general consensus among the participants that gender differences exist in the ways both sexes

relate with the opposite sex and even same-sex members in online social networks. However, other factors may determine their activities online. Such factors according to them are personal and vary from one person to the other.

> *"Yes. My gender makes me feel more in control. Girls are more receptive and reactive. Being a male makes me go all out and also determines how I relate with the opposite sex" (Discussant, 22 years, male)*
> *"Yes. I act like a lady online. For example I don't initiate conversations with a guy. If he doesn't talk, I won't" (Interviewee, female, 23 years)*
> *"My gender determines what I do online but not so much. I write articles and post it for my friends to see and I don't do that because I am a guy, no" (Interviewee, male, 23 years)*
> *"The females feel they cannot do what guys would freely do and go unscathed"* (a chorus response from an FGD with females).

Moreover, gender-related fear was mainly expressed by some female discussants; it mainly concerns and dictates how they conduct themselves and relate to others in online social networks. Such fears include harassment and a feeling of timidity. The female discussants believe they cannot expose their bodies or speak 'too freely' with just anyone online so as not to be stalked for instance. They also fear kidnap, impersonation and other security concerns. The males, however, do not have any gender-related fear online.

However, most of the male and female participants affirmed that their gender gave them some advantages online. Others did not think so.

> *"Yes. You get to add more friends and you might even meet rich guys. You also get more responses to your posts as a lady. Nobody answers a guy, but because they want to toast you (a girl), they will post comments" (Interviewee, female, 22 years)*
> *"Gender has a way of helping you know who you really are and also streamlines your activities. It helps you determine how to relate with the opposite sex" (Discussants, male, 19 years)*

In conclusion, while gender determines what young undergraduates do online, it is but one of many factors that come to play in their routine decisions and activities in online social networks.

Discussion of findings

The study focused on the construction of identity in online social networks among undergraduates at two Nigerian universities. The study sought to unravel the dynamics of identity construction by Nigerian undergraduates using online social networks. This study was able to establish the high involvement of youths that are undergraduates in online social networks. These social categories of youths are active and often employ diverse means such as text messages, pictures and videos in projecting an identity. Participation in online social networks requires an understanding or possession of 'habitus' that matches the 'field' as defined by the online social network culture. Formation of diverse capitals as described in Bourdieu (1992) *Logic of Practice* is closely laced with the quality of habitus and the fields that are available to social actors. Thus, trust building and engaging in new and old networks of relationships are a strategy for acquiring capital in online social networks. The findings from this study also show that undergraduates are warmly receptive to joining and maintaining profiles in online social networks.

Previous findings revealed that young people and indeed students accorded high relevance to the Internet, which is seen as inseparable from everyday life (Amichai-Hamburger 2013; Bosch 2009; Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013; Greenhow 2011; Livingstone and Brake 2010). Similarly, undergraduates in Nigeria and in some other parts of the world have adopted online social networks as a means of constructing identity for diverse purposes (Amichai-Hamburger 2013; Dunne *et al*. 2010; Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013; Hargittai 2007; Krasnova *et al*. 2010; Livingstone and Brake 2010; Lounsbury *et al*. 2011). Such studies have revealed that online social networks are mainly platforms for connecting people; whether old friends whose contacts have been mislaid or new ones. The findings of this study however reveal that due to the increased interaction OSNs afford young people, the propensity for frictions increase. While online social networks are used for connecting with people (Bosch 2009; Hargittai 2007; Krasnova *et al*. 2010; Livingstone and Brake 2010), the findings from this study also revealed that young people show disaffiliation or better still disconnect from others through their online social network profiles.

Similar to findings of other studies, the participants also expressed fear over privacy issues, security, nudity and pornography on online social networks (Livingstone and Brake 2010; Urista *et al*. 2009). Sexting, which involves sending and receiving sexy messages, picture or videos, could qualify as a latent function of the Internet and membership of an online social network (Dunne *et al*. 2010; Lounsbury *et al*. 2011). The findings also showed that young people now use OSNs to

register displeasure with parents and significant others and in most cases use online deletion of a person to cement an offline disaffiliation from the person.

The findings also showed that unregulated and undisciplined access to the Internet could create problems for students. Online social networks could be addictive and time-wasting. Some of the participants argued that undisciplined access and active presence in online social networks has affected their academic performances. Over-patronization of dating, regular visits to dating and chatting sites reduces the quality and total number of hours a student can spend on reading and studying.

Findings also underscore the fact that online social networks are cheaper and more affordable in constructing identity and connecting with other people. Most online social networks operate free accounts for their subscribers with numerous benefits that aid the construction of identity and meeting of people. As such the participants in this study only need Internet access, which has become almost ubiquitous due to the improved wireless connections found on both campuses. Similar to some findings from the literature (Amichai-Hamburger 2013; Dunne *et al*. 2010; Livingstone and Brake 2010; Lounsbury *et al*. 2011), it was also found that very few undergraduates utilise the OSN for business purposes, but rather mainly use it for chatting, uploading and viewing pictures, blogging, sending mails and gossiping.

In terms of identity, a number of the participants argued in favour of the disparity that exists between online and offline identities. This may be associated with the difficulty in building and sustaining trust in online social, networks (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013; Volakis 2011). Again, the desperation for capital and quality network of relationships including engaging in intimate relations were influential in the decision of some of the participants to join may influence some of members of an OSN. Nevertheless, different people have different reasons for keeping different identities online and offline. Hence, other reasons for incompatible offline and online identities may be to make up for their (young people's) feeling of incompleteness offline. Some people were found to create the identity that suits what they want to become offline. Thus, young people maintain a projected identity online for their real-life identity.

Trust was a vital issue for the participants. As argued by some of the participants, trust is earned in online interaction through honesty, truthfulness, sincerity and open communication between the two parties. However, differences exist in building and establishing trust online and offline. Trust building with an online friend would require a greater effort than trusting an offline friend (Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013; Volakis 2011). Young people mainly keep different identities because of a personal feeling of inadequacy, lack of self-esteem, hypocrisy, criminal tendencies, security and other personal reasons (Dwyer *et al*. 2007; Grabner-Kräuter and Bitter 2013; Hargittai 2007; Krasnova *et al*. 2010; Livingstone and Brake 2010; Volakis 2011). Consistent with the literature, lack of physical contact between OSN users, peer pressure and inconsistent access to the Internet also accounted for the differences between offline and online identities (Schachter 2005; Urista *et al*. 2009).

Notwithstanding the strength of this study, it is limited in a few respects. The study did not take into cognisance the undergraduates who despite access to the Internet did not join any online social networks as platforms to construct their identity. In addition, the study did not investigate the different platforms that this category of undergraduates utilises to construct their identity. The study is also limited in some respects by the research design. Due to the study population and sample being entirely focused on undergraduates from just two universities in Southwest Nigeria, one cannot ultimately say the findings of this study would hold for students in other parts of Nigeria, especially those in the South-Eastern, South-Southern and Northern part of the country where a seemingly different socio-cultural milieu exists. This study seems to mainly cover students of Yoruba descent. However, the use of an FGD and IDI gave the findings more validity as the information elicited from the participants tend to be more detailed and more authentic.

In conclusion, identity construction in this present age of Internet advancement has been largely done by young people through online social networks. While the identity online may differ from the real offline identity, it is completely impossible to separate both dimensions from the real personality of the person. And despite the several issues that are associated with online social networks, it has come to stay as a veritable means of constructing identity.

Conclusion

The advent of the online social networks has largely influenced the manner of constructing identity online, especially among young people. Identity construction is a dual process, taking place both in the virtual and the real world and it is never static. In addition, students use social networking sites as avenues to interact with both their existing base of offline friends and the new ones made online. As such, online identities are usually not constructed to completely differ from the real life identities, but rather are an extension of the real-life identities and in most cases used to enhance the offline identities.

However, in cases where online identities have been constructed to differ completely from the real offline identity, a myriad of reasons could easily be put forward as an explanation. While such reasons are usually personal and may differ

from one user to the next, an aggregate of such reasons might include low self-esteem, criminal tendencies and the desire to keep up with societal demands. These reasons cut across both genders. Therefore, online social networks remain essential in young people's quest to construct a satisfactory identity both online and offline. The findings echo the relevance of interrogating the context and involvement of youths in online social networks and how social networks can be further encouraged for positive outcomes.

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the sincerity of the participants in this study by sharing personal experiences without fear or discomfort. Without their experiences, the study would have been impossible. Special thanks to the anonymous reviewers and the editorial team of *Inkanyiso* for their comments and contributions to earlier versions of this article.

References

Abrams, D. & Hogg, M. A. 2010. Social identity and self-categorization. *The SAGE handbook of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination*, 179-193.

Adams, G. R. & Marshall, S. K. 1996. A developmental social psychology of identity: Understanding the person-in-context. *Journal of adolescence,* 19, 429-442.

Agunbiade, O. M. & Titlayo, A. 2010. Spirituality in Cybercrime (Yahoo Yahoo) Activities among Youths in South West Nigeria. *Youth Culture and Net Culture: Online Social Practices*, 357.

Aldridge, A. 1998. Habitus and cultural capital in the field of personal finance. *The Sociological Review,* 46, 1-23.

Amichai-Hamburger, Y. 2013. *The Social Net: Understanding our online behavior*, OUP Oxford.

Aransiola, J. O. & Asindemade, S. O. 2011. Understanding Cybercrime Perpetrators and the Strategies They Employ in Nigeria. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking,* 14, 759-763.

Asgari, M. & Kaufman, D. Virtual environments: Identity and learning. The 3rd International Conference on Imagination and Education, Vancouver, Canada, 2005.

Bosch, T. E. 2009. Using online social networking for teaching and learning: Facebook use at the University of Cape Town. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research,* 35, 185-200.

Bourdieu, P. 1992. *The Logic of Practice,* Cambridge Polity.

Bourdieu, P. & Loïc, J. 1974. L. Wacquant. 1992. Invitation to a Reflexive Sociology. *Cambridge: Polity.*

Brown, T. & England, J. 2005. Identity, narrative and practitioner research: A Lacanian perspective. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education,* 26, 443-458.

Cheung, C. M. & Lee, M. K. 2010. A theoretical model of intentional social action in online social networks. *Decision Support Systems,* 49, 24-30.

Côté, J. E. & Levine, C. G. 2002. *Identity formation, agency, and culture: A social psychological synthesis*, Psychology Press.

Deschamps, J.-C. 2010. 3. Social identity and relations of power between groups. 2. *Social identity and intergroup relations,* 7, 85.

Dunne, Á., Lawlor, M.-A. & Rowley, J. 2010. Young people's use of online social networking sites–a uses and gratifications perspective. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing,* 4, 46-58.

Dwyer, C., Hiltz, S. R. & Passerini, K. Trust and privacy concern within social networking sites: A comparison of Facebook and MySpace. Proceedings of AMCIS, 2007.

Friedman, J. 1994. *Cultural identity and global process*, SAGE Publications Limited.

Grabner-Kräuter, S. & Bitter, S. 2013. Trust in online social networks: A multifaceted perspective. *Forum for Social Economics*, 1-21.

Greenhow, C. 2011. Online social networks and learning. *On the Horizon,* 19, 4-12.

Greenhow, C. & Robelia, B. 2009. Informal learning and identity formation in online social networks. *Learning, Media and Technology,* 34, 119-140.

Hargittai, E. 2007. Whose space? Differences among users and non-users of social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 13, 276-297.

Krasnova, H., Spiekermann, S., Koroleva, K. & Hildebrand, T. 2010. Online social networks: why we disclose. *Journal of Information Technology,* 25, 109-125.

Livingstone, S. & Brake, D. R. 2010. On the rapid rise of social networking sites: New findings and policy implications. *Children & society,* 24, 75-83.

Lounsbury, K., Mitchell, K. & Finkelhor, D. 2011. The true prevalence of "sexting". *Durham, NH, Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire*.

Navarro, Z. 2006. In search of a cultural interpretation of power: the contribution of Pierre Bourdieu. *IDS Bulletin,* 37, 11-22.

Padilla, A. M. & Perez, W. 2003. Acculturation, social identity, and social cognition: A new perspective. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences,* 25, 35-55.

Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. 2010. Trends in online social networking: Adolescent use of MySpace over time. *new media & society,* 12, 197-216.

Pearson, E. 2009. All the World Wide Web's a stage: The performance of identity in online social networks. *First Monday,* 14, 1-7.

Ritzer, G. & Yagatich, W. 2011. Contemporary Sociological Theory. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Sociology,* 35, 98.

Schachter, E. P. 2005. Context and Identity Formation A Theoretical Analysis and a Case Study. *Journal of Adolescent Research,* 20, 375-395.

Sherry, T. 1995. Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet. *NY etc.: cop*.

Tade, O. & Aliyu, A. 2011. Social Organization of Internet Fraud among University Undergraduates in Nigeria. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology,* 5**,** 860-875.

Urista, M.A., Dong, Q. & Day, K.D. 2009. Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through uses and gratifications theory. *Human Communication,* 12**,** 215-229.

Volakis, N. 2011. *Trust in Online Social Networks.* Master thesis, School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh.

Wacquant, L. & Deyanov, I. 2002. Taking Bourdieu into the field. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology,* 46**,** 180-186.

An analysis of the opinions of African immigrants on service delivery by the Department of Home Affairs, South Africa

Samuel Augustine Umezurike[1] and Christopher Isike[2]
Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Zululand, South Africa.
agonwachuku@yahoo.com, IsikeC@unizulu.ac.za

This paper is an investigation into the views of African immigrants in South Africa on vital services that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) renders to immigrants, such as issuing work permits, study permits, permanent residence permits, marriage certificates, and conferring South African citizenship. The broad research question this paper deals with concerns how the ideology of 'Makwerekwere' influences the Department of Home Affairs' service delivery to African immigrants. The views of 200 randomly sampled African immigrants based in Pretoria were used to analyse the effectiveness of the DHA in performing its duties as a government department. In so doing, the researchers profiled the immigrants and tried to unpack their views about the technical functions and competence of the department.

The findings suggest that the service delivery rendered to African foreigners by the DHA is generally poor and discriminatory, as it is largely shaped by the popular ideology of 'Makwerekwere' within which African immigrants are imagined and treated as the out-group and excluded from belonging and the formal and informal benefits of citizenship. While making the point that 'Makwerekwere" is not an official government policy, the paper recommends that the state has a role to play in not only reorienting its citizens, but also evolving a more inclusive model of belonging for African immigrants in South Africa in order to reduce inter-group anxiety.

Introduction

Following the inception of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the new South Africa was confronted with numerous challenges, including reconciling decades of mismanagement and redistributing the country's vast wealth, which is still concentrated in the hands of the white minority, and expanding service delivery to the urban and rural poor whom the apartheid regime had previously undermined. A particularly special challenge involved paving the way forward for the inclusion of the black majority of South Africans into the mainstream socio-political system, a challenge that required building a people-oriented or participatory political culture and system (Peberdy 2001). As a lesson and in moving away from its notorious apartheid past, Chapter 1 of the Constitution of the new Republic of South Africa (1996) states that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it. This clearly expressed the state's commitment to an end to any form of discrimination, thus automatically bestowing on all citizens and non-citizens resident in South Africa, equal rights, privileges and benefits from the state. In 1995, the year before the ratification of the Constitution, a major step was taken; the government released a white paper on the transformation of public services, introducing a new framework for the implementation of policies in a new era for the improvement of the general wellbeing of South Africans. Another major step was taken in 1997 with the introduction of a white paper on public service delivery, popularly known as the Batho Pele principles. Notably, none of these reforms excluded immigrants explicitly or implicitly. However, in spite of all the efforts of government through laws and policies aimed at ensuring efficient service delivery, different post-1994 governments have fallen short of rendering the much desired effective service delivery to South Africans. There have been protests and counter-protests across several sectors and localities against poor service delivery, including the so-called 'xenophobic' attacks on African immigrants in May 2008 (Dodson 2010), which left hundreds dead and thousands homeless.

As outlined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution, the government consists of three levels of government, namely national, provincial and local. Based on the operational principle of collective responsibility, the three levels and their branches are involved in service delivery, and the numerous protests across the country constitute an indictment of all of them. For example, according to SAMP (2005), accusations and counter-accusations of poor service delivery, corruption, inefficiencies and maladministration have been levelled against the Department of Home Affairs, which despite its numerous regional offices spread across the country has not been effective in the performance of functions such as the regulation of migration; registration of births, marriages and deaths; and issuing of identity documents and passports (SAMP 2005). This raises significant concerns as the services of the DHA make it central to the everyday life of South Africans and immigrants in the country.

1. Samuel Augustine Umezurike lectures in public policy and administration in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Zululand, South Africa.
2. Christopher Isike, PhD, is Acting Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Zululand, South Africa.

This article therefore focuses on the views of 200 randomly sampled African immigrants based in Pretoria, the political capital of South Africa, to analyse the effectiveness of the DHA in performing its functions as a government department. It uses the ideology of 'Makwerekwere', as espoused by Matsinhe (2011) and discussed below, in explaining the opinion of African immigrants on the state of service delivery to them and how it has affected globalisation in Africa. The broad research question is: how does the ideology of Makwerekwere influence the service delivery of the Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants? While studies and public commentaries on service delivery in DHA show that all (South Africans and immigrants) who deal with the department complain about the quality of service they receive, most studies on the topic have failed to address the views of African immigrants in this respect.

Ideology of Makwerekwere

According to social identity theory, people can form self-preferencing groups which they psychologically identify with and such groups can be formed on the basis of seemingly trivial characteristics (Tajfel *et al*. 1971; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Hogg *et al*. 1995; Haslam 2001). The social identity theory has proved useful in understanding social differentiation and discrimination between groups in society. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), people come together to form social groups in order to create a social identity that gives them a sense of worth, and this inevitably leads to a process of categorization which is expressed in a 'we' versus 'them' divide – implicit favouritism for members of the in-group (we) which automatically conduces to discrimination against the out-group (them). This differentiation is constantly maintained by not only the social construction of the group itself, but also the social construction of its superiority over the out-group from which it appropriates its sense of worth. In-group members seek to achieve positive self-esteem by positively differentiating themselves from the out-group based on some self-ascribed value. Haslam (2001) therefore posits that this quest for positive distinctiveness means that people's sense of who they are is defined in terms of 'we' rather than 'I'. It is within this we/us (in-group) and them (out-group) discourse that we seek to locate and use the ideology of Makwerekwere as an explanatory framework for the contest of belonging and non-belonging between black South Africans and black African immigrants in post-apartheid South Africa.

The term 'Makwerekwere' is derogatory slang that was originally used to describe foreignness, in particular the strange sounds of foreign languages, especially languages spoken by African foreigners in South Africa. Over time, it became popular slang used to label African immigrants in South Africa, and in some cases in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. It is inter-linguistic slang that is modified according to the language of the user. For example, a Zulu would say aMakwerekwere, a Sotho would say Makwerekwere, while an English speaker may drop the prefix altogether and simply say Kwerekwere. Ordinarily, for the authors it would not be an issue if the term was applied generally to all foreign languages or peoples in South Africa. However, this is not the case, as it is selectively used to describe only African languages and African foreigners in the country. The question then is, why is it not used to describe other foreign languages and peoples, especially those of European and even Asian descent, who migrate into South Africa just as African foreigners do? It also begs the question of why only African immigrants in South Africa are viewed as 'foreigners' who come only to take from the country, while their European counterparts are seen as 'investors' and 'tourists' and as such are treated better (see Neocosmos 2006; Strydom and Cronje 2008; Neocosmos 2008; Gebre, Maharaj and Pillay 2011 and Isike and Isike 2012). The listed authors provide some perspective on the challenges that African immigrants face in South Africa. While literature is replete with all kinds of explanations for this phenomenon, for example, Laher (2008) identified factors responsible for selective prejudice towards African foreigners by South Africans, which include inter-group anxiety, realistic threats, symbolic threats, and negative stereotypes and patterns of communication, we have chosen to stick with Matsinhe's Makwerekwere model of explaining Africa's fear of itself because it aptly locates the problem in psychosocial analysis, and this is crucial to dealing with a psychosocial issue of this kind.

According to Matsinhe (2011), what is called 'xenophobia' in South Africa is actually 'Afrophobia' caused by the dynamics of apartheid group relations between the "established white groups" and "outsider black groups" during apartheid. He contends that the social differentiations created by the painful socio-emotional situation of apartheid gave rise to a colonized self of black South Africans, comparing the colonized-self image of black South Africans to what Fanon wrote about his own people, the Antilleans, who did not see themselves as blacks but as whites after their colonial experience (Matsinhe 2011). Matsinhe explains that the apartheid experience of black South Africans who were formerly stigmatized by the white minority who saw and treated them as outcasts made it inevitable for citizenship of South Africa to be synonymous with being white. He explained that the transition from apartheid to democracy created a similar situation in which black South Africans saw the opportunity to stigmatize foreign blacks (Matsinhe 2011). The theory therefore stresses that the distorted consciousness of black South Africans caused by white domination during apartheid created the very colonized-self that makes black South Africans look for unnecessary fantasy characteristics that could set

them apart from African foreigners, creating a similar social gap that existed during apartheid days between white and black South Africans.

In Matsinhe's (2011) analysis, the oppressor's positions and privileges became the envy and aspiration of the oppressed. The black South Africans who were oppressed under apartheid have now taken on the position of their oppressors, creating room for 'others' in socio-politics. These 'others' are the black foreigners who continue to migrate to South Africa from their countries, some in search of greener pastures and others running away from conflict, war and other situations (Adepoju 2006; Neocosmos 2008; Aregbesola 2010; Ngwenya 2010). Matsinhe further argues that the fantasies created by indigenous South Africans to depict African foreigners as 'they' (illegals, foreigners, criminals, drug traffickers, etc.) are generalized stereotypes. For instance, physical appearance, such as a way of dressing, bodily physique and the inability to speak South African indigenous languages have been used to identify African foreigners, subjecting them to different forms of humiliation that escalate from suspicion to arrest, heavy strip searches, detention, torture, and all forms of assault by the state apparatus such as the police and immigration services (Isike and Isike 2012; Matsinhe 2011). Matsinhe further contends that such outlooks have also been used by the public to select African foreigners for discrimination. Logically, violent attacks on African foreigners is not rare in the socio-political system of South Africa, because in the eyes of the locals, African foreigners are jobseekers, women takers, 'diseased', and a threat to their livelihoods (Matsinhe 2011; Neocosmos 2008).

In summary, Isike and Isike (2012) have argued that the ideology of Makwerekwere, which is popularly used by black South Africans to label, despise and ill-treat black African immigrants in South Africa, is an invented imagery and ideology. This is the case because the differentiation between black South Africans and other black African nationals is not based on any real difference between them, and this is consistent with the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986). We therefore reiterate that South African exceptionalism in this respect, "is an imagined difference which is a result of long years of systematic psychosocial dehumanization that 'blacks' suffered under the apartheid era" (Isike and Isike 2012:103). This conclusion is supported by findings from that study, which surveyed 55 South Africans; the majority agreed that from watching Nigerian and other African movies, they could see that Africa's numerous cultures are more similar than they are different. For instance, 74% of the sample affirmed this view; with 90% highlighting areas of similarity in dressing, family values, marriage, ancestral belief and worship (see Isike and Isike, 2012:107-109). Our main point here is that the average black South African (the average Indian and White is also conveniently catching in on this anomaly) perceives a black African from pre-conceived negative imagery which informs their behaviour towards the African immigrant. This is not only at the grassroots level of informal social relations, but also carries on to official relations between African immigrants and South Africans, officials of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), and African immigrants seeking documentation, in the context of this paper. Neocosmos (2008) argues that xenophobia is common in state agencies such as the SAPS, Lindela Detention Centre, and the Department of Home Affairs.

This negativity underlies the poor services and ill-treatment that are deliberately meted out to African immigrants (see Johansson and Romans 2008) as the next section will show.

Research methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study's research design and data collection. The paper relied on data from both primary and secondary sources which were analysed thematically in line with the objectives of the study. Secondary sources of information included official government documents, reports, journal articles, and books. Primary data was collected using closed questionnaires which were randomly distributed to 200 African immigrants from six African countries resident in Pretoria. The six African countries were Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria. From a total sample of 200, 168 African immigrants responded; of these 10% were Mozambicans, 13% were Zimbabwean nationals, 13% Ethiopians, 17% Ugandans, 17% Ghanaians, while Nigeria had the largest representation with 30% of the total respondents.

Of note, while this paper focused on the views of African immigrants, it could also have benefited from the views of DHA officials to provide a more robust analysis. The paper is therefore constrained in this respect, as we could not interview DHA officials due to government communication policy that bars them from expressing their views without approval from headquarters. All attempts to get the required approvals did not yield any results at the time of writing this article. The results from our survey are presented below and in tables and percentages for clarity.

Research findings

Below, significant variables from the personal characteristics of the respondents (African immigrants) that impact on immigration discourse are presented and discussed. These include education and employment.

Level of education

Eight percent of the respondents indicated that they had only attained primary school education, 46% indicated that they had acquired secondary education, while 46% had acquired tertiary education, either in their home countries before relocating to South Africa or in South Africa. In total, 92% of the respondents had attained some form of education, with 46% having attained tertiary education. This is significant because it serves to confirm findings from previous studies (see Adepeju 2006; Gqola 2008; Neocosmos 2008; Ngwenya 2010; Aregbeshola 2010; Isike and Isike 2012) that African immigrants are usually highly educated people whose skills should and are being utilized variously to the advantage of the South African economy and society. In a sense, it negates the popular sentiment expressed by South Africans that African immigrants are a liability as they have nothing to offer and have only come to take out and not give back.

Employment

Directly pertinent to the discussion on the level of education is the employment status of African immigrants in South Africa. Fifty two percent of the respondents stated that they were employed, against 48% who claimed to be unemployed. Although a good number of the African immigrants who claimed to be employed were self-employed, particularly in the informal sector, they also contribute by employing others, especially South Africans, thus reducing unemployment in South Africa.

African immigrants' perceptions about DHA service delivery to African immigrants

This section discusses, analyzes and interprets the sampled African immigrants' responses to questions focusing on their perceptions of the service delivery rendered by the South African Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants resident in the country.

The respondents were asked the following questions:

- Have you visited the Department of Home Affairs in the last 5 years?
- What was the purpose of the visit(s)?
- How did you do your documentation?
- Was the level of service that you received satisfactory?
- If yes, what made the service satisfactory?
- Would you describe the level of competence of the immigration officials as satisfactory?

Visits to the Department of Home Affairs

Table 1 Visitation

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total	%
Mozambique	15	5	20	75
Zimbabwe	18	3	21	85
Ethiopia	18	2	20	90
Uganda	27	-	27	100
Ghana	20	6	26	76
Nigeria	44	5	44	90
Total	142	21	163	
%	87.1	12.8		

As Table 1 shows, 87% of all the respondents indicated that they had visited the DHA in the last 5 years, against 13% who indicated that they had never been to the Department of Home Affairs. The table illustrate the respondents' visits to the Department of Home Affairs in line with the sampled nationalities.

We note that seventy five percent of the respondents from Mozambique indicated that they had been to the Department of Home Affairs for one reason or another, while 25% indicated that they had not visited the Department of Home Affairs for any purpose. Eighty five percent of the Zimbabwean immigrants indicated that they had visited the Department of Home Affairs, compared to 15% who maintained that they had never visited the department. Likewise, 90% of the Ethiopian immigrants had been to the Department of Home Affairs, while 10% claimed that they had never been there. All the respondents from Uganda (100%) had been to the department. 76% of the respondents from Ghana had been to the Department of Home Affairs, as against 24% who claimed that they had never been there. 90% of the

respondents from Nigeria indicated that they had visited the department, while 10% claimed that they had never been there. Cumulatively, 87% of all respondents had visited the Department of Home Affairs.

Purpose of the visit to Home Affairs

The respondents were asked why they had visited the Department of Home Affairs and responded as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Purpose of the visit

COUNTRY	Documentation	Others	Total	%
Mozambique	10	6	16	62.5
Zimbabwe	18	1	19	94.7
Ethiopia	16	3	19	84.2
Uganda	24	2	26	92.3
Ghana	19	1	20	95
Nigeria	36	4	40	90
Total	123	17	140	
%	88	12.1		

It is noted that 88% of the respondents had visited the department for the purposes of documentation, such as the application for or issuing of permits relevant to their situations, while only 12% claimed to have been there for purposes other than documentation. The latter ranged from visiting friends and accompanying relatives to other personal reasons. Documentation in this instance includes applications for and the issuing of residence permits, marriage, study permits, work permits, permanent residence, and citizenship.

Further, sixty two percent of the respondents from Mozambique who had visited the Department of Home Affairs stated their purpose as documentation, while 38% said that they had been to the department for other reasons, such as visiting or accompanying friends. 94.7% of the Zimbabwean immigrants stated that they had visited the Department of Home Affairs for the sole purpose of legalizing their permits, against 5.3% who maintained that they had not been to the Department for documentation, but for other, personal reasons. 84.2% of the Ethiopian respondents indicated that they had been to the Department of Home Affairs for documentation; 15.8% indicated that they had visited the department for other purposes, mainly personal. 92.3% of the respondents from Uganda stated the reason for their visit as documentation, far above the 7.7% who claimed to have visited for purposes other than documentation. 95% of the immigrants sampled from Ghana had been to the Department of Home Affairs for documentation, while only 5% had been there for reasons other than documentation. 90% of the Nigerian respondents claimed to have been to the department for documentation, while 10% indicated that they had been there for other purposes.

Making suggestions for better service from the DHA, one respondent from Mozambique, who was unsuccessful in obtaining a residence permit, recommended the need for better service delivery to African foreigners**.** Another who claimed to have visited for the purpose of asylum and was successful in his application, called for the decentralization in the issuing of permits to African foreigners. A respondent from Nigeria claimed that he had visited the DHA to register his marriage to a South African citizen. He clearly felt that the services rendered to African foreigners in the department are poor. He complained of too many delays in service delivery, and also claimed that the department's officials used their office to intimidate foreigners, especially when they were Africans.

How documentation was done

Sixty seven percent of the total sampled population responded to this question, which asked them whether they did their own documentation or acted through an agent (see Table 3).

Of this number, 69% indicated that they did their documentation themselves, while 31% used agents[1]. For some of these respondents, doing their documentation themselves was as much about their distrust of the system as it was about not having the money to pay agents, some of whom were said to be fraudulently consorting with Home Affairs officials.

1. Agents in this context are individuals who, for a fee, act as representatives on behalf of clients to the DHA. These agents can be seen loitering around DHA offices nationwide and are believed to have connections to some DHA officials, who (it is claimed) some of these agents work for (according to over 46% of the total respondents of this study).

For those who used agents, it was more of a sign of their impatience with the procedures in Home Affairs than any other reason. Either way, the nature of service delivery at the DHA is a factor behind why people choose to use or do not use agents to process their documentation.

Table 3 Documentation

COUNTRY	Self	Agent	Total
Mozambique	5	8	13
Zimbabwe	14	3	17
Ethiopia	17	2	19
Uganda	7	5	12
Ghana	11	7	18
Nigeria	23	10	33
Total	77	35	112
%	69	31.2	

When prompted further, some of the respondents gave reasons for resorting to the use of agents. For instance, one respondent from Mozambique admitted to using a paid agent to obtain his permit, largely because doing it in person could jeopardize his stay in South Africa. He felt that not doing so was much more difficult and risky, and was afraid of deportation. A respondent from Ethiopia explained that he did not want to go to the department himself because he did not want to fail in obtaining the necessary permit. He then used a paid agent. He also complained that the insults and assaults on African foreigners start from the gate where the security guards often react angrily by beating African foreigners at the slightest misunderstanding. In both instances, these respondents confirmed that they were more confident of their chances when using agents because "these agents have connections with Home Affairs officials". According to one of them, "The agents work for some Home Affairs officers, and even though sometimes we know they can dupe us, we still use them anyway because of their connections."

The use of agents by African immigrants, irrespective of their bad reputation, is confirmed by SAMP (2005), which reported that the DHA has a bad image among the public and the media and foreign and local customers, a situation which forces immigrants to use DHA supported agents. Vigneswaran *et al*. (2010) indicted the South African immigration and security services on the grounds of double standards because they assist immigrants in breaking the law while at the same time are over-zealous to document illegal activities of the immigrants which they blamed on state monopoly of power. Neocosmos (2008) also confirms that state agencies extort money from African immigrants, and using agents is one way in which they do this.

Quality of services provided

In this section we required the respondents to rate the level of service they received from the DHA.

Table 4 Would you rate the level of service you received as satisfactory?

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total	%
Mozambique	9	8	17	52
Zimbabwe	9	10	19	47
Ethiopia	2	18	20	10
Uganda	17	11	28	60
Ghana	10	11	21	47
Nigeria	17	32	49	35
Total	64	90	140	
%	36	64		

As Table 4 shows, 36% of all the respondents claimed that the level of service that they received was satisfactory, while 64% claimed that it was unsatisfactory. When analysed according to nationality, 52% of the Mozambican respondents

indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs for whatever purpose they had gone there for, while 48% claimed to have received poor service. Forty seven percent of the Zimbabwean immigrants indicated that they had received satisfactory service, with 53% feeling that the quality of services that were given to African immigrants was unsatisfactory. Only 10% of the respondents from Ethiopia claimed to have had a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs, while 90% disapproved of the service delivery they had received from the department. Among the Ugandan respondents, 60% claimed that the level of service was satisfactory, while 40% claimed that they had received poor service when they had visited the department. 47% of the immigrants from Ghana had received satisfactory service from the Department of Home Affairs, while 53% claimed to have experienced poor service delivery. Thirty five percent of the Nigerian immigrants indicated that they had received satisfactory service from the department, while 65% of the Nigerian immigrants who responded to this question disapproved of the level of service that they had received.

The results are consistent with reports by the media that the Department of Home Affairs was struggling to deal with a service delivery crisis (SAMP 2005). However, the crisis of poor service delivery to African immigrants is not necessarily an operational one faced solely by the department; it has more to do with how African immigrants are perceived and treated. This is tantamount to our theoretical position that the dominant ideology of Makwerekwere is a factor that drives the DHA's service delivery to African immigrants. For instance, a respondent from Ghana claimed that he could not apply for a permit in person but used an agent because the officials at the Department of Home Affairs always treated white immigrants better than blacks, and he would rather use an agent than experience such blatant racial discrimination in a country with an apartheid past. It was beyond his comprehension that blacks could choose to ill-treat fellow blacks because for him, "African foreigners deserve better treatment on their own continent." Another respondent, also from Ghana, expressed similar disappointment in the level of service rendered to him by the DHA as he claimed that African foreigners are targeted and welcomed with a negative attitude, sometimes right from the entrance. For him, this was consistent with racial discrimination, which is still prevalent in the country's socio-economic system.

Table 5 Reason(s) for verdict on assessment of services rendered

COUNTRY	Good policy	Good officials	Total
Mozambique	12	3	15
Zimbabwe	12	3	15
Ethiopia	11	3	14
Uganda	13	6	19
Ghana	12	9	21
Nigeria	17	12	29
Total	77	36	113
%	68.1	31.8	

As mentioned, 36% of all the respondents indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the DHA. When probed further about what was satisfactory to them, two answers predominated: satisfaction with the state immigration policy, and the good disposition of DHA officials. Those who claimed to have received satisfactory service from the department because of good policy constituted 68% of the sample, while 32% considered the officials to be good.

In terms of country by country analysis, 80% of the respondents from Mozambique indicated that they had received a satisfactory level of service from the Department of Home Affairs because of sound policy, while 20% said that they had received satisfactory service because the officials were good at what they did. The trend is the same among the Zimbabwean immigrants, as 80% claimed to have received satisfactory levels of service because of good policy, while 20% felt that the officials were good at what they were doing. 78% of the sample population from Ethiopia opted for good policy, while 22% disapproved of the policy but agreed that the officials were good at their job. 68% of the sample population from Uganda indicated that they had received satisfactory service from the department because of sound policy, against 32% who pointed to the officials' efforts. 57% of the immigrants from Ghana cited good policy, against 43% who felt that the service was satisfactory because good officials were at work. 58% of the Nigerian immigrants pointed to the good policy that South Africa has in place towards immigration, while 42% of the Nigerian immigrants felt that the officials are doing a good job.

The 68% who rated the service that they received as satisfactory because of a good immigration policy inadvertently showed their approval of the state policy on immigration, which also underscores the fact that the discrimination that is meted out by the Department of Home Affairs is not state policy, but an act by DHA officials on their own. This confirms Morris's (2008) assertion that the South African state does not have an anti-immigration policy as her official policy or legislation. Thus far, the ruling party (ANC) does not have such (an anti-immigration) policy, and no political party has emerged with such a policy in their party manifesto since 1994. However, a respondent from Mozambique argued that both the state policy on immigration and officials are anti-immigration because of how poorly African foreigners are treated. He further argued that the officials deliberately hurt African foreigners because they are xenophobic. Another respondent from Mozambique called on the DHA officials to respect the black race by attending to them without insults and humiliation when processing their permits. He claimed that it was a deliberate act to ensure the exclusion of blacks in the country when they were not indigenous South Africans. A respondent from Zimbabwe condemned the delays in service delivery to African foreigners caused by the department's officials, but approved of the overall state policy on immigration. He further disagreed with officials' behaviour towards African foreigners because the laws state that people in South Africa must be treated equally.

Assessing the technical competence of immigration officials

Table 6 Immigration officials' knowledge of immigration laws

COUNTRY	Yes	No	Total
Mozambique	13	4	17
Zimbabwe	8	10	18
Ethiopia	8	10	18
Uganda	13	13	26
Ghana	7	14	21
Nigeria	16	32	48
Total	65	84	149
%	44	56	

In testing the technical competence of the DHA officials, we used their perceived knowledge of immigration laws as a variable. 44% of the respondents were of the view that the officials' knowledge of the laws was sound, while 56% considered the officials to be novices/lacking in respect of the laws of immigration.

In terms of country by country response, 76% of the respondents from Mozambique felt that officials had sound knowledge of immigration laws, while 24% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 44% of the Zimbabwean respondents were satisfied with the officials' level of knowledge, while 56% disapproved of their knowledge of the laws guiding immigration in South Africa. 44% of the Ethiopian respondents approved, while 56% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 50% of the immigrants from Uganda approved, while 50% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge. 33% of the respondents from Ghana approved, while 67% disapproved of the officials' knowledge of the laws. 33% of the Nigerian immigrants felt that the officials' level of knowledge was sound, while 67% disapproved of the officials' level of knowledge.

Respondents were further asked their opinion on who, between black and non-black immigration officials, were more knowledgeable about South Africa's immigration policies and laws. 56% of the respondents felt that non-blacks were more knowledgeable[1]. This conforms with findings of a SAMP (2005) study which reported that 79% of black officials were not conversant with the laws and policies guiding immigration. One respondent from Ethiopia's response to the question was that "all black workers in Home Affairs need further training", while a respondent from Nigeria complained that the officials always gave complicated, distorted and unreliable information to African immigrants, which in her opinion, was a strategic and structured way of discriminating against African immigrants.

1. However, this finding was discountenanced by the fact that we did not factor in the seniority of positions, both in the racial categories occupied, and the fact that there are more black South African officials than non-blacks in DHA. This impacts on the variable. For example, non-black DHA officials are fewer and occupy more senior positions than black officials in various departments across the Pretoria area where this study was conducted. Surely, a senior official is expected to know more about immigration policies and laws than mostly low ranking, street level bureaucrats who only implement the policies.

Concluding remarks

While the views expressed by our respondents on the documentation processes at the DHA and the competence of DHA officials are geared towards assessing the proficiency of their service delivery, our focus here is on the broad question of how the ideology of Makwerekwere influences the services rendered by the Department of Home Affairs to African immigrants. Given the relationship between perception and behaviour, this question is germane to the quality of services that African immigrants receive from the DHA.

While the South African state has been variously indicted in its role (especially through its inaction or 'quiet' action) in perpetuating anti-African immigrant sentiments amongst its citizens (Solomon 2003; Neocosmos 2006; Gordon 2010; Gebre, Maharaj & Pillay 2011; Isike & Isike 2012), immigration laws in the country do not portray or uphold any anti-African immigration disposition. Implicitly, such sentiments are the machinations of the citizenry (supported by state inaction and the media) which have carried over from the private to the public realm of relations between indigenous South Africans and African immigrants living in the country. It is a popular orientation which DHA officials, as members of society, have carried over to the work place in carrying out their duties. We have argued that this phenomenon is largely fuelled by an invented ideology of Makwerekwere which is used to profile and denigrate African immigrants as despicable 'others' who are different from the exceptional 'us'. We have also argued that this ideology is not based on any real differences between black South Africans who are the main culprits of this anomaly and black African immigrants who are at the receiving end.

Clearly then, in a third world setting such as South Africa where the state is still a significant mode of social, economic and political organization, the government has an important role to play in resocializing people and changing the mindsets of its citizenry. This is intrinsic not only to nation-building to realize the dream of a rainbow nation, but also to South Africa's leadership role in the Southern Africa region and in the continent at large. As Isike and Isike (2012) alerted, *ethnophobia* – the fear and/or hatred of one ethnic group by another – is a grim possibility in South Africa, one that could lead to intra-state war with devastating consequences for nation-building and development. Assuming this notion of "foreigners are the cause of our problems" is allowed to perpetuate unchecked and African immigrants eventually leave South Africa *en masse* because of Afrophobia or even xenophobia, which can extend to non-African immigrant groups, what will happen next? The focus will then shift to internal struggles between different ethnic groups for survival, as was the case in most post-colonial states. This is what led Ake (1996) to conclude that after chasing away the colonialists and attaining independence, most African states simply shifted their focus to intra-ethnic struggles for survival and control of the state, such that development of the state was no longer on the agenda. In the case of South Africa, given the politicization of ethnicity in the runoff to the 2009 elections, we could well have an Ivory Coast or Kenya on our hands, with other ethnicities other than the Zulu and Xhosa wishing to exercise their right to lay claim to the presidency at some point.

Apart from the nation-building consequences of allowing the notion of Makwerekwere to continue unchecked by the state, South Africa, given its past, and the present goodwill and respectability that the country enjoys from the rest of the world, cannot afford to slide down that scale. The goodwill and respectability that South Africa enjoys from the comity of nations are based on its historic principled opposition to human rights abuse and injustice, and these are important to its national prestige as well as core interests. Therefore, the state and all relevant stakeholders within it must rise to the challenge posed by the Afrophobic dispositions of not only its citizens, but also its institutions such as the DHA, which is the face of the government[1]. Studies have shown that African immigrants contribute more to the South African economy through capital and skills transfer than they get from the through any kind of welfare provision[2]. This means that African immigration has positive implications for the development of the South African economy and society at large and this potential, if left untapped, will be more detrimental to the South African state than to the countries that have suffered the brain drain of African immigrants (Adepoju 2006; Strydom & Cronje 2008; Vigneswaran, Araia, Hoag, & Tshabalala 2010; Kalitanyi and Visser 2010; Aregbeshola 2010).

1. The DHA is the first point of contact between all foreigners and South Africa at all points of entry into the country. They also have representatives in South Africa's High Commissions abroad.
2. For example, Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) found out that more than 80% of African immigrants in small scale businesses employ South Africans, and eventually transfer entrepreneurial skills to South Africans for the ultimate benefit of the South African economy.

Based on our findings, we suggest the following broad recommendations which may be helpful in harnessing the full potential of African immigration to South Africa while also fostering positive relations between African immigrants and South Africans:

- The South African government can introduce more elaborate policies that are also more inclusive of African immigrants in the country in order to reduce inter-group anxiety for the purpose of a better state (Laher 2008).
- South African leaders should take it upon themselves to explain to the South African public and state agencies the advantages and disadvantages of the presence of immigrants in South Africa.
- Corruption and exploitation of African immigrants in South Africa by the Department of Home Affairs officials should be countered with the full force of the law.
- In-service training is recommended for Department of Home Affairs' officials. The staff should also be acquainted with immigration laws and legislation.
- Increased cultural exchange between the host country South Africa and other African countries would be a major breakthrough to ending or reducing the poor treatment of Africans immigrants by Department of Home Affairs officials.
- The African Union can provide the grounds that are necessary for Africa to create a better atmosphere for the end of xenophobia, Afrophobia or Makwerekwere on the continent.

References

1995 White Paper on Transformation of Public Service, *viewed 12/12/2011, from http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1997/18340.pdf* .

Adepoju, A. 2006. Leading Issues in International Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Cross, C.D., Gelderblom, N., Roux & J. Mafukidze (eds): *Views on Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Proceedings of an African Migration Alliance Workshop, Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Ake, C. 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington DC: Brookings Institute.

Aregbeshola, R. A. 2010. The Import of Intra-Continental Migration in Africa: Interrogating the Economic Dynamics of African Migrants in South Africa, *African Institute of South Africa*, 40(1):62-77.

Batho Pele Principles, 1997. White paper on Public Service Delivery, *viewed 15/02/2012, from http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1997/18340.pdf* .

Dodson, B, 2010, 'Locating Xenophobia: Debate, Discourse, and Everyday Experience in Cape Town, South Africa', *Africa Today*, 56(3):3-22.

Gebre, L.T. Maharaj, P. & Pillay, N.K. 2011. *'The Experiences of Immigrants in South Africa: A Case Study of Ethiopians in Durban, South Africa'*, Urban Forum, p. 23-35.

Gordon, S. 2010. Migrants in a 'state of exception': Xenophobia and the Role of the Post-apartheid State. In Mapadimeng, M.S. & S. Khan (eds): *Contemporary Social Issues in Africa: Cases in Gaborone, Kampala and Durban.* Pretoria: AISA.

Haslam. A.S. 2001. *Psychology in Organizations – The Social Identity Approach*. London: Sage Publications.

Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J. & White, K. M, 1995. 'A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory'. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58, 255-269.

Isike. C. & Isike, E. 2012. 'A Socio-cultural analysis of the implications of African Immigration to South Africa, *Alteration*, 19(1), 94-117.

Johnson, L. & Roman, R. 2008. *'South Africa-Zimbabwe Photography Project'*, Pp. 1-23, viewed 21 July, 2011, from *http://www.borderfilmproject.com/SouthAfrica.pdf* .

Kalitanyi, V. & Visser, K. 2010. 'African Immigrants in South Africa: Job Takers or Job Creators?' *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 13(4):376.

Laher, H. 2008. Antagonism Towards African Immigrants in Johannesburg, South Africa, An Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) Approach', Research Report for MA, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p. 1-108.

Matsinhe, M.D. 2011. 'Africa's Fear of Itself: the ideology of Makwerekwere in South Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 32 (2):295-313.

Morris, A. 2008. 'Our Fellow Africans make our lives hell: the lives of Congolese and Nigerians living in Johannesburg', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(6):1116-1136.

Neocosmos, M. 2006. *From 'Foreign Natives' to 'Native Foreigners': Explaining Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa.* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Neocosmos, M. 2008. 'The Politics of Fear and Fear of Politics: Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43(6): 588-589.

Ngwenya, N. 2010. African Expatriate Communities in Africa: Their Size, Lifestyles and Relationships with their Sending State. *Africa Insight* 40, 1: 5-18.

Parliament of Republic of South Africa. 2008. '*Background Research Report compiled by the Research Unit for the Task Team of Members of Parliament Probing Violence and Attack on Foreign Nationals*', Annexure p.1- 20.

Peberdy, S. 2001. 'Imagining Immigration: Inclusive Identities and Exclusive Policies in Post-1994 South Africa, *Africa Today*, 48(31):15-32.

SAMP. 2005. *'The Quality of Migration Services Delivery in Southern Africa', The Southern African Migration Project*, Migration Policy Series No. 41, Cape Town: Idasa, and Southern African Research Centre, Queen's University, Canada, p.1-63.

Solomon, H. 2003. 'Turning Back the Tide: Illegal Immigration into South Africa', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 16(4):91-111.

Strydom, H. & Cronje, F. 2008. *'A Participatory Action Research Approach in Dealing With Mozambican Migrant Labourers to South Africa'*, p. 87-99.

Tajfel, H., Billig, M., Bundy, R.P. and Flament, C. 1971. 'Social categorization and intergroup behaviour'. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1(2): 149–178.

Tajfel. H. and Turner, J. C. 1986. 'The social identity theory of inter-group behavior'. In S. Worchel and L W. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chigago: Nelson-Hall

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. p. 3, 25, (Act 108 of 1996).

Trimikliniotis, N. 2008. 'Globalization and Migration of Labour in a 'Rainbow Nation': a Fortress South Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 29(7):1323-1339.

Vigneswaran, D., Araia, T., Hoag, C. & Tshabalala, X. 2010. 'Criminality or Monopoly? Informal Immigration Enforcement in South African', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36(2):465-481.

Understanding metacognitive awareness among teachers in the school system: issues and benefits

Jolly Okoza[1]
School of Education, National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria

Oyaziwo Aluede[2]
Dept of Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma-Nigeria
prof.oyaziwoaluede@yahoo.com, oyaziwoaluede@gmail.com

This paper deals with the understanding of metacognitive awareness among teachers. The concept of metacognition is operationalized. This is followed by the essence of metacognition and learning. We move further to examine issues and benefits of metacognition in the school system. To make metacognitive strategies an integral part of the school curriculum, the paper proposes: (1) Specific metacognitive strategies in the classroom, and (2) deliberate school training programmes on metacognitive instruction. The study concludes that both pre-service and in-service teachers should be trained on general awareness of metacognition to enhance learners' academic performance.

Key Words: Higher-Order Cognition; Metacognition, Self- Instruction, Self- regulated Learning, scaffolded instruction,

Introduction

Educational psychologists are promoting the importance of metacognition for nurturing and regulating students' learning. This trend in educational reform is to teach and learn from a constructivist perspective, which is derived from a cognitive approach to children's learning. The constructivist belief is that for too long, in our educational system, children have been required to sit still, be passive learners, and rotely memorize irrelevant and relevant information. Teachers should not attempt to simply pour information into children's minds as if they were receptacles or containers. Rather, children should be encouraged to explore their world, discover knowledge, reflect, and think critically. To achieve this, metacognition, which acts as the 'manager' or 'coach' of a person's learning, should be applied in schools.

According to Anderson (2002), developing metacognitive awareness in learners may lead to the development of stronger cognitive skills and deeper information processing. It also results in critical but healthy reflection. These qualities are not common features among some learners in schools. In their study on students' use of self-regulated learning strategies, Okoza and Imhonde (2010) found that metacognitive strategies were neglected. This gap in the school system may delay teaching and learning.

Insufficient training of teachers is the main factor that may inhibit learners' use of metacognitive strategies. Our recent oral interview conducted with 123 in-service teachers (68 primary and 55 secondary school teachers) in Edo State, Nigeria, revealed that little is known about the role of the teacher as a model in metacognitive strategies; that is, as setting the example for students and providing them with feedback. When the interviewees were interviewed about the concept of metacognition in teaching and learning in the classroom, the participants' responses showed they were novices about the meaning of the concept. A further probe about the application of metacognition in their classrooms revealed a paucity in their knowledge.

Furthermore, our experience in the process of teaching practice supervision of pre-service undergraduate education students and postgraduate diploma in education students in secondary and primary schools in Edo State, Nigeria revealed that the teaching strategy most commonly used was the didactic approach. The didactic teaching method is where the teacher assumes complete control in setting tasks, prescribing procedures and evaluating results. Didactic teaching inhibits children's thinking and reflection as it encourages learners to be passive in the classroom (Fisher 1998). This approach does not favour students' optimal learning and productivity. For effective teaching and successful learning, we need to introduce metacognitive strategies into classrooms. This involves planning, monitoring, evaluating, checking, revising and self-testing (Schneider & Lockl 2002).

Educational psychologists have recommended a number of specific instructional approaches to teaching metacognition. Schraw, Crippen, and Hartley (2006), Paris and Winograd (1990), Darling-Hammond, Austin, Cheung, and Martin (2008) urged teachers to provide instruction in cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Okoza and Imhonde

1. Jolly Okoza Ph. D is a Lecturer in the School of Education, National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria
2. Oyaziwo Aluede Ph. D. is Professor of Guidance and Counselling, Dept of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma-Nigeria

(2010) specifically lamented the poor use of self-regulated learning strategies in the classrooms in Nigeria and found that teachers and students in Edo State, Nigeria, often failed to reflect upon and regulate their teaching and learning strategically.

The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to create an understanding of metacognitive strategies in teachers in order to raise teachers' self-awareness in teaching, and train learners to become self-regulated learners. This paper seeks to promote the integration of metacognition into the classrooms in schools and to train teachers on how to teach with metacognitive strategies and train students on how to learn metacognitively. Consequently, this paper is organized in the following ways: meaning of metacognition; metacognition and learning; issues and benefits of metacognition in classrooms; and strategies teachers can adopt to foster metacognition in the school system.

Meaning of metacognition

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* (Colman 2003), metacognition refers to knowledge and beliefs about one's own cognitive processes, an important class of metacognition being meta-memory. Writings on metacognition can be traced back to De Anima and the Parva Naturalia of the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle (384-322BC). Fisher (1998) opined that the concept of metacognition can be seen as a turning point in our understanding of the mind. The prefix "meta" has come to refer to something that transcends the subject it is related to – "cognition".

The term "metacognition" was introduced by Flavell in 1976 to refer to the individual's own awareness of and consideration for his or her cognitive processes and strategies. He defined metacognition as follows: "in any kind of cognitive transaction with the human and non-human environment, a variety of information processing activities may go on. Metacognition refers among other things to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive object or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective" (232). Flavell sees metacognition as that unique human capacity of people to be self-reflective, not just to think and know, but to think about their own thinking and knowing

It is important to note that subsequent development and use of the term have remained relatively faithful to this original meaning by Flavell. Cross and Paris (1988) defined it as the knowledge and control children have over their own thinking and learning activities. Kuhn and Dean (2004) see it as awareness and management of one's own thought. As Kuhn and Dean (2004) explain, metacognition is what enables a student who has been taught a particular strategy in a particular problem context to retrieve and deploy that strategy in a similar but new context.

Further, Schraw (1998) describes metacognition as a multidimensional set of general, rather than domain specific skills. These skills are empirically distinct from general intelligence, and may even help to compensate for deficits in general intelligence and/or prior knowledge on a subject during problem solving. More specifically, metacognition is "an appreciation of what one already knows, together with a correct apprehension of the learning task and what knowledge and skills it requires, combined with the ability to make correct inferences about how to apply one's strategic knowledge to a particular situation, and to do so efficiently and reliably" (Peirce 2003:2). Students who are able to identify suitable learning strategies in the proper situation are using metacognition. For example, if a student may understand that he/she has been taught to use a graphic organizer, such as a concept map to identify main concepts, and link them together using lines similar to a spider web, then that student has used metacognition to complete the task (Nelson & Conner 2008).

Put simply, metacognition is knowing about knowing, and it is most broadly defined as awareness and control of one's cognition (Baker & Brown 1984; Gourgey 2001). As remarked by Garner (1988), and Paris and Winograd (1990), since cognition includes all human mental activities, it is rather difficult to give the notion an operational definition; and researchers emphasize different aspects of it and adopt different terminology to explain the concept. According to Veenman, Van Hout-Walters, and Afflerbach (2006), what most conceptualizations of metacognition have in common is that they take the perspective of "higher-order cognition about cognition". This means that there is a higher-order agent overlooking and governing the cognitive system, while simultaneously being part of it. In reality, metacognition draws on cognition. If metacognition is conceived as knowledge of a set of self-instructions for regulating task performance, then cognition is the vehicle of those self-instructions (Veenman *et al.* 2006).

Furthermore, cognitive strategies are used to help an individual achieve a particular goal (e.g. understanding a text) while metacognitive strategies are used to ensure that the goal has been reached (e.g. quizzing oneself to evaluate one's understanding of that text). Metacognitive experiences usually precede or follow a cognitive activity. They often occur when cognition fails, such as recognition that one did not understand what one had just read. Such an impasse is believed to activate metacognitive processes as the learner attempts to rectify the situation (Roberts & Erdos 1993).

Metacognition and learning

Metacognition allows an individual to control, govern or direct his/her own activity through self-imposed rules and regulations during learning in the classroom and in different circumstances. Learning of students involves self-monitoring and self-control. According to Nelson and Narens (1990, 1994), self-monitoring and self-regulation or control correspond to two different levels of metacognitive process that interact very closely. Self-monitoring refers to keeping track of where one is with one's goal of understanding and remembering (a bottom-up process). In comparison, self-regulation or control refers to central executive activities and includes planning, directing and evaluating one's behaviour (a top-down process) (Schneider & Lockl 2002). These two processes are essential in learning. When a learner applies self-monitoring in learning a task, he or she is engaged in inductive strategies. This involves learning from parts to the whole. In self-regulation, learning is from general to the specifics. These metacognitive elements are veritable processes that enhance students' learning in the school.

When introduced deliberately into the school system, metacognitive strategies will foster students' learning and academic achievement. It should be pointed out that an ordinary person almost never approaches a problem systematically and exhaustively unless specifically educated to do so (Robert & Erdos 1993). Consequently, we must deliberately integrate metacognitive strategies into schools. Students without metacognitive strategies are novice learners who engage in shallow processing of learning materials. Novice learners do not stop to evaluate their comprehension of the material. They generally do not examine the quality of their work or stop to make revisions as they go along (Robert & Erdos 1993). Satisfied with just scratching the surface, novice learners do not attempt to examine a problem in depth (Xiao 2007). They do not make connections or see the relevance of the material in their lives. To correct these anomalies in learners, we need to integrate metacognitive strategies in our school curriculum.

In the last two decades, researchers have attempted to prove that making students metacognitive learners is beneficial not only in general learning but also in specific subject areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and problem solving. Adey and Shayer (1993) lend strong support to the view that metacognitive elements in thinking exist and can assist the transfer of learning, especially if the teaching explicitly targets metacognition as a key aim of the learning activity. For our students to develop metacognitively in learning, we need to develop in them the qualities of expert learners. Research suggests that experts who study in a wide range of fields have acquired a repertoire of automatic cognitive responses which are not available to novices (Hennessy 1993). In solving complex problems, a novice typically needs to focus on each part of the task; whereas the expert recalls the appropriate technique or thinking frame from past experience, enabling their thinking to be concentrated at a broader and more strategic level. Experts are able to review and process larger chunks of information than novices because their thinking is strategic rather than localized. Experts tend to categorise their knowledge, whereas novices need to focus afresh on each individual task (Fisher 1998).

Metacognition helps children make the most of their mental resources and develop their learning processes through self-reflection. According to Vygotsky (1978), at an early age young children may talk to themselves when encountering difficulties for the purpose of self-guidance and self-direction. The monologues help children reflect on their own behaviour and plan alternative actions (Veenman, VanHout-Wolters & Afflerbach 2006). As children get older, the self-directed monologues will gradually become internalized as silent, inner speech. Later, researchers found abundant evidence to support Vygotsky's assumptions and concluded further that the children who talk to themselves, or monitor themselves in terms of metacognition, when facing challenging tasks tend to outperform those who do not think about their own cognitive behaviour. This cognitive development observed by Vygotsky and other researchers lends strong support to the importance of teaching students how to know about and regulate their cognition to enhance their learning.

Metacognitive development in learners will serve as a veritable means to use monitoring to regulate their study time. This is commonly referred to as the allocation of study time. It shows how learners deploy their attention and effort in learning a task. Brown, Bransford, Ferrara and Campione (1983) posit that the ability to attend selectively to relevant aspects of a problem-solving task is a traditional index of learners' understanding of the task. Developmental studies on the allocation of study time reported an age-related improvement in the efficient allocation of study time (Lockl & Schneider 2004; Masur, McIntyre & Flavell 1973). It is revealed that older children spent more time studying hard items than they spent studying easy items, relative to their younger counterparts. This metacognitive strategy can enhance students' optimal learning in the school. The development of metacognitive skills and strategies in our school system is of paramount importance.

Issues and benefits of metacognition in the classroom

Teachers ought to be knowledgeable in educational psychology where teaching strategic information may have been well learnt. For example, topics such as theories of learning, remembering or forgetting, transfer of learning, memory and motivation and many others should be at the beck and call of content experts (Fordham 2006). The acquisition of skills

and strategies of metacognition as a concept which is being currently advocated by psychologists for teachers in schools may in no small measure transform the teaching/learning process. A quick distinction between skills and strategies is presented. Skills refer to repeated practices or simple directives and connote an automatic, mechanical and consistent cognitive behaviour, while strategies are procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential and facilitative in nature. What distinguishes skill is automaticity and strategy is distinguished by its 'intentionality'. Intentionality presupposes thinking that is deliberate, goal directed and involves planning a sequence of actions (Bormotava 2010).

In fostering metacognition in schools, both veteran teachers and teacher trainees should be well equipped with the nitty-gritty of how to teach metacognitively. Teaching metacognitively involves either teaching with metacognition or teaching for metacognition (Hartman 2001a). The former, i.e. teaching with metacognition, means that teachers know about and think about their own thinking concerning their teaching, whereas the latter means that teachers design instruction that will activate and develop their students' metacognition (Hartman 2001a; Xia 2007). Put simply, teachers must possess both the skills and strategies to teach metacognitively. Metacognition enables teachers to gain awareness about and control over how they think and teach and to monitor, evaluate and regulate their teaching activities in accordance with specific students, goals, contexts, thus exerting great impact on their teaching (Hartman 2001a; Xiao 2007).

On teaching pre-service and in-service teachers, the concept of metacognition and how to teach with and for metacognition in schools, this article discusses some metacognitive approaches. On teaching with metacognition, Hartman (2001b) divides the notion into two types: strategic knowledge and executive management strategies. Strategic knowledge includes knowing "What information/strategies/skills you have, when and why to use them and how to use them", while executive management strategies include "planning, what and how you are going to teach, checking up on or monitoring how the lesson is going as you are teaching, making adjustments as needed, and evaluating how a lesson went after it is finished" (Hartman (2001b:150). In the perspectives of Paris and Winograd's (1990) and Schraw's (2001) taxonomies, strategic knowledge is the teacher's knowledge of cognition, whereas executive management strategies are the teachers' regulation of cognition.

In teaching, both with and for metacognition, Xiao (2007) recommends that teachers need to enhance their own teaching models by knowing strategic metacognitive knowledge about teaching strategies and by self-regulation. Strategic metacognitive knowledge about a teaching strategy includes knowing about what the strategy is, why it is a useful teaching strategy, and how and when it is to be used in a classroom. Veenman (1998) referred to these principles as the WWW and H rule (what to do, when, why and how). For example, a teacher's strategic metacognitive knowledge will include such a strategy that groups of two to four students review and revise their work in a subject period together, i.e. a strategy based upon collaborative learning. Instead of reviewing and revising their work individually on their own, this strategy makes use of collaborative learning that encourages the students in the same group to help each other improve in their work. According to Veenman, Elshow and Busalo (1994), metacognitive instruction from teachers appears to enhance metacognition and learning in a broad range of students; obviously, it is of particular relevance to poor students. The collaborative learning strategy in the classroom, if well utilized by teachers, will lead to learners' optimal achievement.

Researchers recommend the use of collaborative or cooperative learning structures for encouraging the development of metacognitive skills (Cross & Paris 1988; Hennessey 1999; Kramarski & Mevarech 2003; Kuhn & Dean 2004; Martinez 2006; Mcleod 1997; Paris & Winograd 1990, Schraw & Moshman 1995; Schraw *et al*. 2006). This recommendation appears to be based on Piagetian and Vygotskyian models that emphasize the value of social interactions for promoting cognitive development. Piaget portrayed the instructional value to cognitive conflict for hastening growth, purely attained by interacting with another person at a higher developmental stage. Similarly, Vygotsky identified the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as the distance between what an individual can accomplish alone and what he or she can accomplish with the help of a more capable person (either a peer or an adult). The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow, but are currently in an embryonic state (Vygotsky 1978).

Students participating in cooperative or collaborative learning expressed their mathematical ideas in writing more competently than those who worked alone (Mevarech 2003). Moreover, as Schraw and Moshman (1995) note, peer interaction can encourage the construction and refinement of metacognitive theories, which are frameworks for integrating cognitive knowledge and cognitive regulation. Kuhn and Dean (2004) argue that social discourse can cause students to "interiorize" processes of providing elaborations and explanations, which have been associated with improved learning. Teachers having knowledge of collaborative instruction is not enough; how it is used and when it should be employed is essential. The teacher must also know that the strategy can effectively assist students in planning actual work and in revising their learning process. Furthermore, he or she should be aware that the strategy can also

lower students' anxiety and teach the importance of audience awareness when students learn from each other (Xiao 2007). Therefore, students should be explicitly taught how to collaborate, a point echoed by Kramarski and Mevarech (2003).

A teacher's metacognitive regulation enables him or her to plan for the instruction and application of strategies in the curriculum, to develop compensatory activities to assist students, and to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching and students' learning. According to Xiao (2007), many teachers think about their students, teaching material, activities and objectives before they teach. For instance, novice teachers may spend much and great effort planning for their teaching by writing detailed teaching plans, designing teaching aids and preparing external rewards.

Specific metacognitive instructional strategies for the classroom

Researchers have recommended a number of specific instructional approaches to teaching metacognition. For example, many researchers have noted the importance of providing explicit instruction for both cognitive knowledge and cognitive regulation. Cross and Paris (1988) recommend providing explicit instruction in declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. Similarly, Schraw, Crippen and Hartley (2006) and Schraw (1998) urge educators to provide explicit instruction in cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Schraw (1998) emphasizes that such strategy training needs to emphasize how to use strategies, when to use them, and why they are beneficial. Several researchers echo the importance of highlighting the value of particular strategies in order to motivate students to use them strategically and independently (Cross & Paris 1988; Kramarski & Mevarech 2003; Schneider & Lockl 2002).

Pressley (1997) argues that when learners are given instruction about effective strategies, they can often apply strategies that they previously have not used on their own. He emphasizes that learners benefit when the teacher models appropriate strategy and overtly verbalizes its steps. Learners subsequently practise the strategy, guided and supported by the teacher's feedback, until they can use it autonomously. When instructing learners about employing a strategy, it is good to explain to them how using the strategy will benefit them. Initially, it takes time to learn to execute the strategies, and it requires guidance and support from the teacher.

Students can be encouraged to develop a sense of their own knowledge by asking questions such as, "What do I know?" "What do I not know?" and What do I need to know?" These types of reflective questions can help students become more self-aware and help them make real-world connections to the information they are currently learning (Peirce 2003). In an effective classroom, teachers are responsible for helping students develop better metacognitive skills by incorporating active reflection throughout the learning. This paper advocates the integration of such practice in schools. To achieve this purpose in schools, pre-service and in-service teachers should be knowledgeable on how to apply the metacognitive strategies of Darling -Hammond *et al*. (2008) in the classroom.

Darling-Hammond *et al*. (2008) listed the following examples of explicit, effective instructional metacognitive strategies that teachers should help students to learn:

1. Predicting outcomes: Help students to understand what kind of information they might need to successfully solve a problem;
2. Evaluating work: Reviewing the work to determine where their strengths and weaknesses lie with their work;
3. Questioning by the teacher. The teacher asks students as they work: "What are you working on now?" Why are you working on it", and "How does it help you?"
4. Self -assessing: Students reflect on their learning and determine how well they have learned something;
5. Self-questioning: Students use questions to check their own knowledge as they are learning;
6. Selecting strategies: Students decide which strategies are useful for a given task;
7. Using directed or selective thinking: Students choose consciously to follow a specific line of thinking;
8. Using discourse: Students discuss ideas with each other and their teacher;
9. Critiquing: students provide feedback to other students and their works in a constructive way; and
10. Revising: Students return their work after receiving feedback .

When these steps are explicitly taught to students by teachers, it will motivate students because it directly affects attribution and self-efficacy. Consequently, this model of metacognitive strategies should be emphasized in schools as it may lead students to achieve good results.

School training programme on metacognitive instruction for schools

Metacognitive instruction needs to be an integral part of the instructional objectives and to be taught over entire school years. The most effective way for teachers to teach their students to become metacognitive learners is probably to allow metacognitive instruction to permeate their curriculum (Xiao 2007). To teach with metacognition, teachers should always

reflect upon and monitor their teaching for all the classes. To teach for metacognition, it is particularly important for teachers to devote the entire school curriculum, not just a single class or unit, to the instruction that gradually guides the students to internalize the metacognitive knowledge and strategies to an automatic state (Fisher 1998). In adopting the explicit and scaffolded strategies, teachers should clearly know that teaching activities that are aimed to develop students' metacognitive models usually take more than one week for a unit to be taught. For example, appropriate scaffolded instruction takes at least five weeks to complete (Hartman 1994; Palincsar & Brown 1984).

For effective development of school training programmes on students' metacognitive strategies in schools, scaffolded instruction is recommended for two main reasons: First, teachers' modelling and step-by-step guidance and support can help lower students' anxiety in learning metacognitive knowledge. Secondly, scaffolded instruction gradually shifts learning responsibility from teacher to learner, and thus facilitates the development of students' metacognitive models and academic learning.

To effectively practise scaffolded instruction in schools, the six basic guidelines identified by Rosenshine and Meister (1992) should be followed by school teachers. These strategies are as follows: (1) Present new cognitive strategies; (2) regulate any difficulties during guided practice; (3) provide varying contexts for students to practise; (4) provide feedback; (5) increase students' responsibility; and (6) provide independent practice.

To commence the scaffolded instruction, the teacher needs to firstly model how to do it to provide the students with complete guidance. The students observe the teacher, an expert model, and do little independent thinking at this point. Furthermore, the teacher provides guided practice in different contexts for the students to practise the strategies modelled in the first step. At this stage, the students attempt to perform the task with the support supplied by the teacher. The support can include the teacher providing additional modelling or thinking aloud, offering hints and feedback, and giving partial solutions. As more guided practice is conducted, the teacher gradually transfers the responsibility to the students by decreasing the amount of support and increasing the students' independent thinking. At this stage, the teacher's role changes from model to facilitator, and the practice changes from teacher's control to students' self-regulation. Finally, when the strategies are internalized, the students are able to perform the task on their own.

Educational psychologists are in agreement on the perseverance of teachers in carrying out school training programme in metacognitive instruction. Teachers who implement metacognitive instruction in their classrooms will need a lot of patience. Teachers must imbibe this attitude to enhance students' motivation in learning the metacognitive instructions. Garner (1988), Hartman (2001a), Paris and Winograd (1990), and Sitko (1998) all advise that metacognitive instruction takes up a great deal of class time, and that sometimes students' progress and improvement are hard to observe. Thus, both teachers and students need much patience and persistence to practise the series of teaching activities to achieve the desired goal. At this point, let us look at practical applications of metacognitive instruction to learners.

Practical application of metacognitive instruction to learners

The goal of this activity is to make learners reflect on strategies that can be useful to solve the problem at hand. Thus this activity helps learners to think of relevant strategies, their purposes and appropriate moments to apply them.

What Teachers Should Do

1. Lists of pre-defined strategies are presented to the learners and they are asked to select those they think may help them to solve current problems. Besides that, learners should be allowed to create their own strategies and also to edit existing ones. Extra functionalities can be incorporated, such as ordering the strategies by importance or relevance, identification of strategies that are always used for all problems, etc. We can achieve this if we carefully adapt what Schraw and Dennision (1994) have recommended in teaching metacognitive instruction. These are:

1.1 Strategies for Monitoring Understanding of Metacognition

- Read the problem more than once.
- Read the problem to separate important parts or identify components.
- Think of a related problem you have already done and use it as a model.
- Before starting to solve the problem, think what you are supposed to learn from it.
- Read the problem and determine which parts you do not understand well.
- Review the basic concepts that are not clear before attacking the problem.
- Set a goal to yourself and plan the steps to reach this goal.

1.2 Strategies for Controlling Errors.

- Stop and review each step to see if you have made a mistake.
- Reread the problem from time to time to check the forgotten important parts.
- Stop and change strategies if you get lost and confused and do not seem to move anywhere.

1.3 Strategies for Revising

- Think about a way of checking to see if your solution is correct.
- Review all you did to make sure you are not forgetting anything.
- Reread the task description and ask yourself if your solution really meets the task goal (Schraw & Dennision 1994).

We perceive strongly that if teachers can meticulously teach learners these methods of applying metacognitive instruction in the classroom in Nigeria and other countries, it may help to enhance learning.

Conclusion

The basic fact that guided this article was that there is dearth of knowledge about metacognitive strategies for use by teachers in schools. Although teachers do not possess a good knowledge of metacognition and metacognitive strategies, they can be trained to do so. Several studies examining the relationship between metacognition and academic achievement showed that students with higher levels of metacognition were more strategic in mind, resulting in better performance than sdisplayed by students with lower metacognition levels.

Successful students have a greater sense of self-efficacy; attribute their success to controllable factors such as effort and strategy use, and perseverance when facing challenging academic tasks. A concerted effort should therefore be made to train pre-service and in-service teachers by promoting a general awareness of metacognition that will aid them in modeling metacognitive strategies during classroom instruction.

References

Adey, P. & Shayer, M. 1993. *Really raising standards: Cognitive intervention and academic achievement.* London: Routledge.

Anderson, N.J. 2002. *The role of metacognition in second language teaching and learning.* ERIC Digest. Education Resource Information Center.

Baker, L. & Brown, A.L. 1984. Metacognitive skills and reading. In: Barr, R. Kamil, M.L. Mosenthal, P. & Pearson, P.D. (eds). *Handbook of reading research*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Bormotava, I.S. 2010. *A qualitative study of metacognitive reflection: The beliefs, attitudes and reflective practices of developing professional educators.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Bloomington: Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Brown, A.L. Bransford, J.D. Ferrara, R.A. Campione, J.C. 1983. Learning, remembering and understanding. In: Flavell J.H. Markman E.A. (eds). *Handbook of child psychology.* New York: Wiley.

Colman, A.M. 2003. *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology.* London: Oxford University Press.

Cross, D.A. Paris, S.G. 1988. Developmental instructional analyses of children's metacognition and reading comprehension. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(2):* 131-142.

Darling-Hammond, L., Austin, K., Cheung, M. & Martin, D. 2008. *Thinking about thinking: Metacognition.* Viewed 16 January, 2008, from *http://www.learner.org/resources/series172.html*.

Fisher, R. 1998. Thinking about thinking: Developing metacognition in children. *Early Child Development & Care, 14:* 1-15.

Flavell, J.H. 1976. Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In: Resnick, L.B. (ed). *The nature of intelligence.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Flavell, J.H. 1979. Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist, 34*: 906-911.

Fordham, N. 2006. Crafting questions that address comprehension strategies in content reading. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 49*: 390-396.

Garner, R.1988. Metacognition and reading comprehension. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing.

Gourgey, A.F. 2001. Metacognition in basic skills instruction. In: Hartman, H.J. (ed.). *Metacognition in learning and instruction*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Hartman, H.J. 1994. From reciprocal teaching to reciprocal education. *Journal of Developmental Education. 18*: 2 - 8.

Hartman, H.J. 2001a. Developing students' metacognitive knowledge and skills. In: Hartman, H.J. (ed.), *Metacognition in learning and instruction: Theory, research and practice*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Hartman, H.J. 2001b. Teaching metacognitively. In Hartman, H.J. (ed.), *Metacognition in learning and instruction: Theory, research and practice*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Hannessy, S. 1993. Situated cognition and cognitive apprenticeship: Implications for classroom learning. *Studies in Science Education, 22*: 1-41.

Hennessey, M.G. 1999. *Probing the dimensions of metacognition: Implications for conceptual change teaching-learning.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, Boston, Massachusetts.

Kramarski, B. & Mevarech, Z.R. 2003. Enhancing mathematical reasoning in the classroom: The effects of cooperative learning and metacogniive training. *American Educational Research Journal, 40* : 281-310.

Kuhn, D. & Dean, D. 2004. A bridge between cognitive psychology and educational practice. *Theory into Practice, 43*: 268-273.

Lockl, K. & Schneider, W. 2004. The effects of incentives and instructions on children allocation of study time. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 1*: 153-160.
Martinex, M.E. 2006. What is metacognition? *Phi Delta Kappa*, 696-699.
Masur, E.F. Mcintyer, C.W. & Flavell, J.H. 1973. Developmental changes in appointment of study time among items in a multi-trial free recall task. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology,* 15: 237-246
Mcleod, L. 1997. Young children and metacognition: Do we know what they know? And if so, what do we do about it? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 22*: 6-11
Nelson, S. & Conner, C. 2008. *Developing self-directed learners*. Viewed January 15, 2008, from *http://www.nivrel.org/planning/repots/self-direct/self*.
Nelson, T.O. & Narens, L. 1990. Matamemory: A theoretical framework and new findings. In: Gower, G. (ed). *The psychology of learning and motivation: Advances in research and theory.* New York: Academic Press.
Nelson, T.O. & Naren, L. 1994. Why investigate metacognition? In: Metcalfe, J. & Shimamura, A.P. (eds). *Metacognition, knowing about knowing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Okoza, J. & Imhonde, H.O. 2010. An assessment of the use of self-regulated learning strategies by secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District, Edo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Applied Psychology, 3*: 197- 216.
Palincsar, A.S. & Brown, A. 1984. Reciprocal teaching of comprehension. Fostering and Comprehension-monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction, 1*: 117-175.
Paris, S.G. & Winegrad, P. 1990. How metacognition can promote academic learning and instruction. In: Jones, B.F. & Idol, L. (eds). *Dimensions of thinking and cognitive instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Peirce, W. 2003. *Metacognition: study strategies, monitoring and motivation.* Viewed January 14 2002, from *http://academicpg.cc.md.us/- wpeirce/MCCCFR/metacognition.htm.*
Pressely, M. 1997. Strategies and metacognitive regulation. In : Santrock, J.W. (ed). *Strategies and metacognitive regulation* (pp. 274-276). New York: McGraw Hill
Roberts, M.J. & Erdos, G. 1993. Strategy selection and metacognition. *Educational Psychology, 13*: 259-266.
Rosenshine, B. & Meister, C. 1992. The use of Scaffolds for teaching higher-level cognitive Strategies. *Education Leadership*, 43: 26-33.
Schneider, W. & Lockl, K. 2002. The development of metacognitive knowledge in children and adolescents. In Perfect, T. (ed). *Applied metacognition.* London: Cambridge, University Press.
Schraw, G. & Dennison, R.S. 1994. Assessing metacognitive awareness. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 19*: 460- 475.
Schraw, G. 1998. Promoting general metacognitive knowledge awareness. *Instructional Science, 26*: 113-125.
Schraw, G. 2001. Promoting general metacognitive awareness. In: Hartman, H.J. (ed). *Metacognition in Learning and Instruction*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.
Schraw, G., Crippen, K.J. & Hartley, K. 2006. Promoting self-regulation in science education. *Education,* 36: 111-139.
Schraw, G. & Moshman, D. 1995. Metacognitive theories. *Educational Psychology Review, 7*: 351-371
Sitko, B.M. 1998. Knowing how to write: Metacognition and instruction. In: Hacker, T.D., Dunlosky, T. & Graesser, A.C. (eds.). *Metacognition in educational theory and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Veenman, M.V.J. 1998. Knowledge and skills that are relevant to math tasks. In: Andeweg, A., Van Luit, J.E.,H. Veenman, M.V.J. & Vendel, P.C.M. (Eds.). *Hulp bij leer problemen, Rekenen-wiskunde.* Alphen a/d Rijn: Kluwer.
Veenman, M.V.J. Elshout, J.J. & Busato, V.V. 1994. Metacognitive mediation in learning with computer-based simulations. *Computers in Human Behaviour,* 10: 93-106.
Veenman, M.V.J. Van Hout-Wolters,.B. & Afflerback, P. 2006. Metacognition and learning: Conceptual and methodological considerations. *Metacognition and Learning,* 1: 3-14.
Vygotsky, L. 1978. *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Xiao, Y. 2007. Appling metacognition in EFL writing instruction in China. *Reflections on English Teaching, 6*: 19-33

Contestations of identity: colonial policing of female sexuality in the Cross River region of Southern Nigeria

Mfon Umoren Ekpo-Otu[1]
Department of History & Diplomatic Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria
mekpootu@yahoo.co.uk

Colonial rule impacted profoundly on the lives of Nigerian women and led to a reconfiguration of gender identities, producing sites of contestation and negotiation as imperial ideas of feminity were contested and reconstructed. Through the prism of prostitution using the Cross River region of the present-day Akwa Ibom and the Cross River States as a case study, this paper navigates the landscape of female sexuality in the twentieth century and the colonial government's effort to contain a phenomenon that undermined normative conjugal and family relations and also muddled the packaging of a colonial identity. The optimal utilisation of their colonies by the British necessitated the cooperation of the chiefs and seeking to impose a new moral, economic and social order to facilitate their economic and political control. The British rulers/colonists in collaboration with the local chiefs and elders reinterpreted morality and reconstructed the Nigerian woman in accordance with the Victorian values of what constituted a virtuous and good woman. Prostitution with its thwarting of culturally and morally acceptable expressions of sexuality drew state censorship. In some cases, local actors colluded with the colonial government to police female sexuality and more often than not deepen women's marginalisation. In many other instances, they aided the entry of women into prostitution. Perception and the resulting behaviour of kinsmen and local governing bodies toward the sex trade were tied in part to their benefits from the derivable income which contributed significantly to the survival of rural households. At diverse points and to varying degrees, institutional structures and spaces became sites of contestation as the prostitutes sought to assert their rights over their sexuality.

Keywords: Gender identities, prostitution, female sexuality, morality, Nigeria

Introduction

Colonial law constructed gender and sexuality, thus criminalising what was previously not considered offensive. It was through arbitrations in the coital and conjugal sites that the colonial authority sought to reconfigure female identities. Conjugal relationships became the socially acceptable norm of the expression of intimacy and sexuality was thus confined to the realm of marriage (Pederson 1991; Chacha and Nyangena 2006)

Colonial male-privileging narratives on sexuality conceived women as submissive, operating within the bounds of the domestic sphere and sexually subjugated to man's control. Such discourses produced distinctions of the good/respectable from the bad/immoral women. Women operating within non-regulated spaces like the prostitutes belonged to the latter category.

Interventions in African social organisations and institutions by the colonial authority were not left uncontested. Inaccurate reading of the above resulted in contradictions between colonial desires and women's lived experiences. For instance, the dominant consciousness of the male breadwinner and his dependent, submissive wife promoted by the colonial narrative failed to correspond to reality. The dynamics of colonialism bred: wage labourers incapable of sustaining the family and dependent on the wife's subsistent earnings, female-headed households and independent single women. The colonial experience was fraught with contestations and negotiations as colonial policies attempted to reproduce the tenets of Victorian society in the colonies. Studies draw attention to legal mediations into marriages across colonial Africa that attempted to stamp out practices deemed morally abhorrent or impediments to colonial economic expansion (Mann and Roberts 1991; Masisi 2001). In the process of redefining women's sexuality and social identities, indigenous concepts of female sexuality became criminalised and drew State sanction.

Theoretical framework

In the course of the discourse on colonial studies, new intellectual arenas have opened up, from the concentration in the 1970s on issues on global capitalism to attempts to integrate the colonizer and the colonized into the same analytical framework. This integration is not one of binary opposition, but a hybrid, with one rubbing off on the other. From the 1980s there has been a re-reading of colonial literature, of what constitutes colonial knowledge (Phillips 1989). This post-colonial paradigm, within which this work is anchored, opened a space for voices contesting the production of knowledge and its authenticity, and while acknowledging its importance as a source of historical reconstruction, called for a more

1. Mfon Umoren Ekpo-out PhD is a lecturer in the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

nuanced reading of colonial reports with a filtering out of biases and prejudices that European officials brought to the study of African social institutions (Schler 2004).

Feminist discourse has illuminated the engendering of the colonial experience. Attention has been drawn to the differential impact of colonial rule on men and women and women's double colonisation, first as a colonial subject and secondly as a woman. Stoler (1991:211) points out that the markers distinguishing the colonized from the colonizer were based on sexual policing that delineated positions of power as well as "the personal and public boundaries of race". In an extension of Foucault's argument on sexuality[1] in Europe onto the imperial setting, Stoler points out that in the colonial agenda the cultural identity of the colonisers was enhanced by the objectification and eroticising of the local women. Racial differences were linked to sexual differences and the African woman's voluptuous body was taken as representative of deviant proclivities and promiscuity (Spivaky 1999). Images of the African woman derived from the above enabled the centralisation of the European woman as chaste. As reiterated by Balos and Fellows (1999 cited in Gibson 2003:10), a worthy category obtains its status against the existence and identification of an unworthy category.

Female sexuality in pre-colonial Nigeria

Colonialist discourses on Nigerian female sexuality were underpinned by the particular cultural definition of sex and the female's role in sexual relations in the imperial centre. It erased or subverted in the process alternative forms of sexuality as found in Nigeria, and imposed a universalistic notion of sex and sexuality rooted in Victorian ideology. The organisation of social and sexual relations is contextualised and perceived differently in different societies. In pre-colonial Nigeria, chastity was highly valued and there existed certain traditional rites and customs which acted as a deterrent to the practice of illegitimate sexual liaisons. One of these was the *mbokpo* or fattening rites practised in Southern Nigeria among the Efiks of Calabar in the Cross River State, and the Annangs of Ikot Ekpene in Akwa Ibom State, located further inland to the West of the Cross River State. Still practised by some in contemporary times, *mbokpo* is a passage rite undertaken by young girls prior to marriage. Among other things, the girls are placed in confinement for some months. Among the Annangs this is usually three months. During this time, they are taught the duties of a woman as well as the laws of the land. The girls are also made aware of the heinous crimes of pre-marital sex and adultery, punishable by death through *ekpo nka aqwo* or the goddess of adultery (Nyoyoko 1997: 85-6). Unmarried girls found pregnant were stripped naked, blackened with charcoal and paraded around the village to the shouts and jeers of the villagers. Such stigmatization and social shame, which extended to the girl's parents, served to impress on the act of sex notions of guilt and fear. The 'Umunna' institution in Igbo land served the same purpose (Uchendu 1965:3). The practise of early marriage and child betrothal helped sustain pre-marital chastity.

Sexual discussions were and to a certain extent still remain coded in languages that can only be assimilated by members (Ikpe 2004: 6). In her work Ikpe (2004: 6) has analysed the various forms of sexual relations in Nigeria. Sexual promiscuity was censored through public ridicule in songs by secret societies. Among the Ibibios of the Akwa Ibom State, the 'ekpri – akata', a secret society, taunted guilty parties with songs at night. Marriage as in 19th century Victorian England was the acceptable space for sexual expression. Taboos and deities were used to repress such deviant acts as adultery. In Ibibio land adultery attracted fees as compensation to the wronged husband and offenders could be sold into slavery. The spirit of adultery or '*ekpo nka aqwo*' would claim the life of the woman if compensations were not offered to appease the spirit. In Yoruba culture there was the 'magun' usually invoked by an irate husband, that could make offenders incapable of separating in the sexual liaison and sometimes result in death.

Despite the high premium placed on chastity, scholarly writings have shown that more permissive sexual liaisons beyond the borders of conjugal relations existed, sometimes cloaked with societal approval, in other cases tolerated or censored (Uchendu 1965; Ikpe 2004). An example of this was the system of concubinage (Uchendu 1965; Lovejoy 1988). Others included 'iko mbara' existent in certain parts of Igboland such as Awka and Owerri Division (Uchendu 1965; Ikpe 2004). It was a practice which allowed a married woman to have illicit sexual relations with the consent of her husband. Uchendu (1965: 5-6) notes that the husband's approval was sought with a gift of two jars of palm-wine, meat, chicken and monetary gifts among the Igbos in Owerri Division. Such liaisons were common in marriage contracts involving an older man. Similar practices were recorded by Ikpe (2004:17) among the people of Birom near Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Among the Tivs hospitality towards guests was defined by the gift of their wives for the guests' sexual gratification and constituted another 'alternate' form of sexual expression.

Case studies across Africa demonstrate the inter-dependence of men/women prior to colonial rule. Scholarly attention has been drawn to the important role of women in trade in Africa, particularly West Africa (Illife 1987; Coquery-

1. Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, in his *History of Sexuality* draws a link between power, discourse and sexuality. He argues that discourse is imbued with power and bodies and identities are discursively constituted. He refutes the theory of biological determinism and argues rather that gender and sexuality are socially constructed and thus vary over time.

Vidrovitch 1997; Chukwu 2005). The Shebro women of Sierra Leone according to Coquery-Vidrovitch were so successful that they requested British protection in Free Town to facilitate their economic activities. For the Bete women of Cote d'Ivoire, economic activities extended beyond long distance trading to include prospecting for gold (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1997:31). Female market activities were also recorded, though to a lesser extent in East Africa, for example among the Kikuyu women of Kenya. The traders were menopausal and they often acted as peace brokers between warring trading comities.

Female identity in traditional Nigerian society was derived from multiple sources: as wives, mothers, breadwinners and producers. Motherhood deriving from a woman's reproductive power and linked to fertility was a vital source of female power. One's ownership of labour rather than land determined her level of agricultural expansion (Strobel 1982: 113). The importance of labour in the traditional agrarian Nigerian society was a contributing factor to the practice of polygyny and woman to woman marriage. Uchendu (1965: 10) notes that the Ngwa women enjoyed a high status, with opportunities for advancement almost comparable to men's.

Impact of colonial rule on gender relations and sexuality

The re-ordering of gender and sexual relations in colonial Nigeria and its negative impact on women has received much attention from scholars (Korieh 2001; Allen 1976; Amadiume 1987). Women, it is argued, lost their power under the male-privileging capitalist colonial economy which ascribed more value to male skills. Women's economic and reproductive skills were devalued and relegated to the domestic sphere. Chukwu (2005), in her study of Igbo women and the economic transformation of the colonial period, notes that colonial institutions influenced by the Victorian gender ethos favoured men. Technological innovations aimed at enhancing agricultural output such as the mechanised graters in the cassava industry and new techniques in the oil palm industry that targeted men, resulted in the loss of women's monopoly of the production and marketing of these products. In the same vein Korieh (2001:119) has argued that women's exclusion from agricultural extension and support services extended by the Colonial State encouraged the separation of economic roles by gender. Denial of access to credit and capital accumulation were some of the debilitating factors faced by women. At the same time the female's unremunerated labour and her role as reproducers of the labour force were pivotal to the colonial enterprise. Fundamentally, the entire gamut of the colonial economy marginalised women. Capitalist structures such as the coal and tin mines, the railroads, and the ensuing wage labour were male dominated. Alongside these were the demographic changes arising out of male emigration into urban centres for wage labour. It created a pool of single men and a market for commercial sex trade to flourish.

Prostitution devoid of all emotion is an economic transaction in which sex is traded for money. It therefore requires the existence of capitalist accumulation, an economy of money exchange. In pre-colonial Nigeria, structured by ties of kingship relations and a system of reciprocity, sex was devoid of monetary value. Extra-legal sexual liaisons rather than prostitution could be said to have pre-dated colonial rule.

The colonial experience became a site of contestation and negotiation for both the European and local actors as the new gender ideology of colonialism facilitated changes in gender roles and female sexuality in Nigeria. Prostitutes rewrote the patriarchal Victorian script of a woman's place in the domestic arena where her reproductive skills can be appropriately harnessed. By utilising the space opened up by colonial rule for material accumulation, prostitutes contested prescribed sexual identity. The body no longer became the last frontier subject to patriarchal control but could be utilised by the woman herself. Commercial sex was for some the more profitable means of economic survival in a capitalist money economy which subverted women's earning power.

Prostitution and the colonial policing of female sexuality

Prostitution in colonial Nigeria was a consequence of the socio-economic dislocations effected by European colonisation. It flourished in cosmopolitan centres such as Lagos, Kaduna, and Enugu where capitalist structures were well entrenched and had facilitated a high level of industrialisation and urbanisation. Ediba, Itu, Ikot Ekpene and Eket, where European companies like United African Company [UAC], Miller Brothers and John Holt had opened factories, also attracted migrant labour. This pool of wage-earning single males created new markets for sexual services. The Cross River region was a major source of prostitutes, particularly in the Upper Cross River region including the Ogoja Province. The official statistics of the Obubra division in the Ogoja Province show that 12% of the female population in the Nta clan were involved in prostitution. In the Bahumunu clan, about 15% had emigrated for purposes of prostitution, while in Nnam the number constituted about one-third of the adult female population (Naanen 1991:60). Indeed, by 1948, prostitution had become so endemic in Agwagune [Akunakuna] that its name became synonymous with prostitution (Naanen 1991:60). For instance, amongst the people of the Benue State, located to the north of the Cross River region, the word for

prostitute is akuna (Ochefu 1989:7), and in the Ibo-speaking areas to the west of the Cross River region prostitutes are referred to as akwunakuna.

An important feature of prostitution in the Cross River region during this period was its transnational network. The colonial era witnessed the proliferation of transnational prostitution along the African coastline to the Gold Coast (Ghana), Equatorial Guinea (Fernando Po) and Cameroun (Duala). The commercial centres in the Gold Coast (Ghana) – Accra, Kumasi, Secondi and Tamale in the northern territories – were common places for prostitutes from the Cross River Basin to ply their trade. Private letters from serving soldiers to the colonial authorities revealing locations of wives who had migrated to the Gulf of Guinea for sex attest to this[1]. In the 1940s, official statistics put the number of prostitutes practising at the Gold Coast to be 532[2]. Such was the intensity of the Gold Coast-Nigeria sex trade that in 1939 the Gold Coast branch of the Nigerian Youth Movement commented that "the Gold Coast men and women who have not travelled further than their area believe that all Nigerian women are harlots and that (it) is a recognized custom in Nigeria"[3]. The lax anti-prostitution laws in the Gold Coast was one of the motivating factors for the sustained emigration of Nigerian females. The Gold Coast Criminal Code Section 435[1] persecuted only non-West African prostitutes. By implication, any West African including Nigerians could engage legally in the sex trade. The rationale behind this, as enunciated by Carina Ray (2007: 67), was to 'protect white women from the alleged depravities of African men'. The preponderance of Nigerian sex workers in the Gold Coast was widely reported in the media.

Entry into prostitution was driven by poverty. Colonial rule engendered new forms of poverty which heightened women's marginalisation. Direct taxation imposed on the people of the Eastern Provinces in 1928 was an essential prerequisite for integration of the domestic market into international trade (Naanen 2006:2). The basis for tax assessment proved disadvantageous to the rural peasants: it was on the basis of provable income, the wage earners whose income could be ascertained were charged a tax rate of 1 percent per annum, while the local peasant producers whose income could not be determined were charged a flat rate of 2-5 percent (Naanen 2006:6). As noted by Naanen, the palm belt attracted a heavier tax rate because of is relative prosperity. Ikot Ekpene Division whose calculable farmers' income was estimated between £19-8s attracted a tax rate of 7 shillings per annum relative to that imposed on Aba Division where farmers' income was estimated at £16.

Colonial rule saw the gradual erosion of rural standard of living exacerbated by the long worldwide economic depression of the late 1920s to 1930s. The slump in the world economy led to declining terms of trade and as noted by Martin (1989:77), during the 1920s the barter terms of trade for cocoa, groundnut and palm produce failed to reach 1910-1914 levels. Palm produce exporters suffered most in this economic recession: the volume of exported palm oil rose by 112 percent from 1909-13 and 1926-30; palm kernels and copra by 89 percent and cocoa by 256 percent (Martin 1989:77). The Cross River region which comprises part of the palm belt was most adversely affected since the people were dependent on palm produce for cash income. Naanen posits that the ability of the people to pay tax and their economic well-being was subject to activities in the world market (Naanen 2006:17). The displacement of the manila currency by the British West Africa currency further deepened rural poverty. Hitherto the manila had been the medium of exchange for local transactions, but with the introduction of direct taxation payable in British West Africa currency, the need for acquiring cash income became more pressing as it was needed not just for paying taxes but also for buying imports (Martin 1989; Naanen 2006).

Falling prices of palm produce led to increased output in an attempt to boost trade. The local farmers forced to concentrate more wholly on cash crop production became major markets for staple food items supplied by communities beyond the major palm belt. The effect was an integration of the local food prices with those of palm produce and by 1938 the impact of declining export prices had extended to other sectors of the economy (Martin 1989:80). Women who controlled local trade came to be adversely affected by fluctuating export prices (Phillip 1989; Illife 1987).

Male migrations, occasioned by various factors including attempts to evade taxation and the need for money income, resulted in the increase of female-headed households and were an important source of female poverty. One means of survival open to the woman was prostitution. Several studies on prostitution have also drawn a relationship between abandoned women or female-headed household and prostitution as illustrated by Van Onselen's (1982) study of prostitution in South Africa and Ssewakriyanga's (2004) study of female sex workers in Kampala. In the Nigerian context,

1. Obubdist 4/1/71 OB: 197, 1948, National Archive Enugu (thereafter NAE), *"Complaint from Samuel Enyi Awara"*, 21st July: No 259/86/1947, 1949, *"Re: Madam Jenny Ofem-Wife of Ayep Nkanu"* NAE 23rd April.
2. OB:503/2, 1941, *Cross River Harlot,s* NAE 7th February.
3. Cadist 3/3/238, 1939, "*Nigerian Prostitutes in the Gold* Coast". Letter from the Nigerian Youth Movement, National Archives Calabar (hereafter NAC), 28th June.

Ochefu's (1989) work on prostitutes in the Benue State of Nigeria as well as Naanen's (1991) exposition of prostitutes in the Obubra division of the Upper Cross River further substantiates this link.

The low level of development in the Upper Cross River region as noted above was an added impetus to the growth of prostitution. With the integration of the domestic economy into the global market, Nigeria became an enclave from which surplus was expatriated to the 'mother country'. Focus was on the production of cash crops to boost the revenue base of the colonial government. As a result, there was considerable regional variation, relating to degrees of integration into the global money economy (Naanen, 1996; Rodney, 1972). The tendency was for socio-economic activities to decrease in areas of limited economic importance to the colonial government. Attention came to be focused on the palm belt of the Owerri, Ikot Ekpene, and Calabar Province. Beyond this rich palm belt in the region of Nsukka, Abakaliki and Ogoja, the rate of development was slow (Ikime 1980: 11).

In this economic stagnation, women in a patriarchal society, where their labour was less valuable than that of men, were the hardest hit. The result was a growing resentment of the traditional patriarchal system which 'exploited' women; the creation of new tastes, values and status symbols occasioned by the colonial economy and which could not be sustained by the local economy (Naanen 1991: 64); as well as the lack of alternative means of earning a money income, made a large number of the female population turn to prostitution as a means of sustenance. This development was not peculiar to the Upper Cross River women, but was also noted among the Idoma women of present day Oturkpo, Okpokwu and Ado local government areas of Benue State (Ochefu 1989: 2). Similar circumstances of migrant labour and its demographic distortion of the economy, together with economic underdevelopment, also pushed women into prostitution.

The economic benefits of prostitution cannot be overlooked in the drive to engage in commercial sex trade. The high remuneration earned sex workers the name 'itinerant gold mines' (Naanen 1991). In the Obubra Division in 1942, calculable remittances by prostitutes amounted to 6,791. This figure represented more than a 100 percent over the public revenue of 3,325 accruing to the Obubra Division from 1937-1938 (Naanen 1991:64). In the Ogoja Province, remittances from prostitutes abroad from January to July 1943 totalled 4,534 (Naanen 1991: 64). The wealth accruable to migrant prostitutes is underscored in the context of the high level of impoverishment of the Upper Cross River region. Illife (1987:152) reports poor relations in Yako Village offering their services in exchange for a payment of yams. Transnational prostitutes came to number among the wealthiest class in the Upper Cross River region, and could influence decision-making in their communities. Income derived from prostitutes directly and indirectly through levies, taxes, remittances and gifts became an important source of capital accumulation in the region (Naanen 1991:64-5).

Prostitutes controlled their sexuality and derivable income from the sale of their sexual services. The absence of pimps contributed to this self-assertion although colonial reports reveal the utilisation of their 'town-boys' by the prostitutes for errands. They acted as part-time brokers for the prostitutes, in addition to working in the shipyards as casual laborers. The relative independence of prostitutes is also reported by Emmanuel Akyeampong (1997) in his study of prostitutes among the Akan of Gold Coast. The prostitutes developed collective strategies with shared responsibilities to protect their interests. Social networking was one of the ways they could negotiate and contest sites of oppression. Social and personal networks aided migration of trans-national sex workers and facilitated access to employment opportunities.

Colonial action on prostitution was not devoid of rumblings in the imperial centre. It was a manifestation of the impact on the domestic scene of norms and standards originating from the international arena. Calls to end prostitution could therefore be fitted into a wider platform built on patriarchal notions of a woman's proper place in society. This concern with welfare itself resonated from the post-World War II global reconfiguration: the politics of decolonisation; activities of the United Nations; and the policies of the newly elected Labour Party in Britain, and resulted in a landscape of regulated prostitution (Fourchard 2006; Aderinto 2007).

The 1940s reforms were predicated on British intervention in the lives of working class families in Britain who were said to breed destitute and needed to be properly trained and civilised. It was, as Foulchard (2006: 131) said, a 'transfer of British reform philosophy and practices into the colonies'. In the case of the latter, however, implementation became subject to contestation and negotiation as the reach of the colonialists into the Nigerian socio-economic milieu was fractured.

Media publications sensitising the public to rising criminality in Lagos; the danger of girl hawking, which not only led to prostitution but subjected them to molestation (Fourchard 2006; Aderinto 2007) and the linking of prostitution with the spread of venereal disease among European and African military personnel in Nigeria were significant in drawing the colonial government's attention to the need for regulating prostitution. In 1942, the city council of Lagos passed a law banning street hawking. This was followed the following year by the Children and Young Person's Act Ordinance. Policing of female sexuality with particular reference to prostitution cannot be divorced from the labour question. Family stability

was necessary for the creation and maintenance of a stable, responsible and responsive labour force especially in the aftermath of the 1940s strikes in British West-Africa (Cooper 1996). It became unprofitable to encourage prostitution in mining camps and other industrialised centres. Such considerations informed attempts by the state to assert moral and marital norms, as well as to instil a code of sexual morality.

Prostitutes thwarted culturally and morally acceptable expressions of sexuality, and prostitution opposed the cultural discretion expected in sexual matters. Such unpacking of dominant narratives provoked public censorship reinforced by politico-cultural and religious narratives (Esiet *et al*. 2001). Colonial schools were sites for the production and regulation of the local 'other' (Izugbara 2004).

One of the measures for regulating prostitution was the issuance of an exit permit. The Immigration Office of the Nigerian Police made it imperative for emigrants to procure a travel certificate and an exit permit. The former was to be issued by the local superintendent of police as a pre-requisite to the issuing of an exit permit by the national body of the Nigerian Police[1]. The difficulty of ascertaining the purpose of travel militated against its success. The tightening of emigration laws stimulated a rise in the illicit "canoe traffic" between Nigeria and the Gold Coast[2].

Repatriation was another policy measure by the Nigerian Governor in collaboration with his Gold Coast counterpart. Repatriation took the following form:

> [R]efusing admittance to women from Nigeria (a) when no good reason for entering the Gold Coast is advanced, and (b) repatriation to Nigeria of prostitutes and any other person connected with the profession, when they are known to be of Nigerian origin[3].

The cost of repatriation was to be borne by the Nigerian government. However, this legislative measure was soon discontinued and the Governor of Nigeria noted that: "… it is doubtful whether even with unlimited extra staff, any control by the use of exit permits or by any other system would be feasible."[4] Colonial authorities' perceived challenges to regulating prostitution derived from racist assumptions about the sexuality of Nigerians – of the eroticised and promiscuous female incapable of controlling her deviant desires (Stoler 1996; Aderinto 2007; Ray 2007).

Beyond fears of immorality in the Cross River region, issues of sexuality were tied to the internal structure of British rule. It helped to maintain racial borders. Sexual control was utilised as a fundamental tool for class and racial distinction and was implicated in a wider set of relations of power [Stoler 1996: 213]. This was not peculiar to Asia upon which Stoler's work is based, but was an important aspect of the internal structure of British rule in all her colonies including Nigeria, though to a lesser extent, and in varying locations. With the sustained presence of the Europeans in the colonies, sexual prescription by class, race and gender became increasingly central to the politics of empire and subject to varying scrutiny by the colonial power. Thus sexual politics in colonial Nigeria was important to the construction of imperial supremacy. The British tolerated concubinage as long as imperial control was not in question. Administrative reasons were proffered for this tacit encouragement of sexual access to local women. It served British interests by permitting the settlement and rapid growth of colonial personnel by a cheaper means than the importation of European women. Preference was given to bachelors in recruitment to the colonies and extra-marital relations were promoted (Ming 1983: 69).

In policing sex workers, the ambivalent roles of traditional and native authorities need to be interrogated. The overarching concern of these local actors seemed to be centred less on imposing morality and more on the generation of income by tapping into the wealth of the prostitutes as members of the family or through sanctions and levies on the prostitutes. The high levels of remuneration placed sex workers among the affluent members of society. A tremendous amount of income filtered into the coffers of the local governing body from fines imposed on prostitutes. The division's official report lucidly demonstrates this:

> It is not an exaggeration to say that in certain areas of this division (notably Bahumunu, and between Afunatam and Bansara) … all the elders of the areas mention … openly admit of taking a "harlot fee" of two pounds from every woman prostituting on the Coast[5].

---

1. Z.P. 1/XVII/3168, 1943, "*Letter from Principal Immigrant Officer*", NAE, 10th December.
2. O.B. 197/56, 1943, *"Prostitution"*, NAE 10th December.
3. No.36005/116, 1941, "Traffic in Women in the Gold Coast", NAE, 26th September.
4. No 36005/116, 1941, *ibid.*
5. OB. 503/2, 1941 *op cit.*

Struggles over access to property and labour were implicated in attempts at regulating prostitution. The employment of matrilineal ties in the inheritance of properties circumscribed husbands' control over wives (Naanen 1991: 67), and meant that the benefits accruing from the sex trade were largely enjoyed not by their spouses but the prostitutes' relations. Colonial data provides evidence of complaints by men of mothers and brothers encouraging their daughters/ sisters to emigrate for prostitution for economic benefits.

Access to labour cannot be divorced from the agitation of the chiefs for a legal sanction against prostitution. As shown by Phillips (1989: 43), the colonialists operated in collaboration with the local chiefs. It was the responsibility of the chiefs to supply the local labour needed to further the colonial aims. The joint emigration of young boys to the Gold Coast as an illegal source of cheap labour to the prostitutes depleted human capital and posed a problem for the chiefs as guarantors of labour. Aside from the inability to supply labour, the depletion of the population caused by the sex trade hindered revenue collection. Colonies had to be self-sufficient, thus funds for development projects had to be locally sourced. The economic viability of the colonies depended on the boost of trade and consequent development of enterprises that could be taxed to accommodate administrative costs. At the same time, the dynamics of the colonial economy had rendered communities in the Upper Cross River region remote and underdeveloped. With a population deprived of a large majority of the income-generating group, the capacity for public works was greatly reduced. In a letter of complaint to the Obubra division District Officer, the 'Egbism Quarter' in Agwagwune, a group of elders and members of the Egbism Improvement Union lamented that:

> Our taxable males are few and for that sake our taxable money is so little that it does not suffice for use for general improvement of the town … even the school fees which the church of Scotland Mission (sic) requests for the proper maintenance of the school is hard to be collected[1]

Women's changing status brought about other changes. Most importantly, it reduced men's right over women. Income accruing from the sale of sex made the women financially better off than the men. They became the breadwinners in the family and with this role came authority. Although agitation by the menfolk against prostitution derived partly from the disrupted family life, a lot of it also derived from the fear of the change in power relations within the family in favour of the women.

An investigation of women's letters during the colonial period provides some evidence of the terms in which the prostitutes themselves made sense of their experiences. Prostitution was engaged in as an economic activity, and approached and undertaken as such. In the Gold Coast and other locations of work, some of the prostitutes had to work long hours to pay back transport debts incurred in the emigration process.

The women's letters allow one a glimpse of the hazards of the job. In a letter to her husband, in which she sends him money, twenty-two pounds to build a house, Elina Obinowo, a practising prostitute at the Gold Coast narrates her ordeals at the hands of one of her clients to her husband Eze. This man kicks her in the stomach for her refusal to take him as a lover. One assumes here that the request was to be an exclusive client as the letter points to a previous sexual relationship. According to her,

> "At times one part of my body is dead right down. No quarrel bet[ween, me] and him, only he ask me to take him as my love … I am trying for treatment.[2]

Disparaging remarks about other prostitutes give a hint of the rivalry involved and it was not uncommon for charms and amulets to be made use of by the girls. These charms were brought from the girls' communities through the help of their relations. To help her recover, and in accordance with her request, Elina's husband Eze Omeji procured medicine for her from a native doctor[3]. Elina's letter further highlighted the strong and pervasive matrilineal bond and buttresses the complaints by husbands and members of the local councils about male siblings and their deep involvement in the management of the prostitutes' finances. In her letter, Elina sent 10 shillings to her brother to assist in the maintenance of her daughter. The brother was also directed to assist her husband in the bulding of a house[4].

In examining the diverse correspondences of this period, one notes the near absent refusal by husbands of practising prostitutes to re-absorb them into the household. What were prevalent were rather agitations for the colonial government to institute steps to force the recalcitrant wives back. For instance the protestations by Mr Samuel Enyi

1. Egbism Quarter, 1948, "*Letter from Egbism Quater, Agwagwune*", NAE 3rd April.
2. Obinowo, E. 1943, *Letter to Husband Eze Omeji* NAE 26th August.
3. Omeji, E. 1943, *Private Letter* NAE 2nd March.
4. Obinowo, E. 1943 *Letter to Brother James* Enyi NAE 10th January.

Awara, working in Sekondi about his wife prostituting in the same area and requesting the District Officer, Obubra Division, to enforce her repatriation[1]; in the same vein Mr Ayep Nkanu of the same Division complained of being left alone at home for two years to care for four children while the wife ran away tobe a prostitute in the Gold Coast[2]; there was also Mr John Okon's objection to his wife's participation in the sex trade at the Gold Coast[3].

Despite these remonstrations, the men all show a willingness to take back the "fallen" women. This opens an interesting analysis in trying to understand the underlying motives in the sex trade. One of these could be economic motives, the need to tap into the wealth accrued by their wives as prostitutes. It should be noted that wages earned by African labourers were very low. At the same time, this was happening when the Colonial government was attempting to create a more stable labour force (Cooper 1996). This encouraged the emigration of families to join their husbands at their places of work or stations. It generally tried to ferment a more stable family perceived as necessary for a more effective and productive wage earner.

Another way of analysing men's acceptance of their prostitute wives could be through a gender lens. As women through niches opened by colonial rule became masculinised, there was a turning of gender ideologies. As the women of the Cross River region became breadwinners, the authority of the men over them was greatly reduced. Collaboration with the Colonial government in policing prostitution could be read as attempts to re-assert their authority through the help of the state. Women in a patriarchal setting are defined within the realm of domesticity and a distinction is made between the public sphere, designated as a space of socially valuable activities and male, while the private is drawn as the women's space (Tamale 2004: 20). The repatriation of the women from the Gold Coast, served also to wrest them from the public sphere back to the domestic space, where they are biologically equipped to look after children and keep the home.

Conclusion

Colonial narratives eroticising the Nigerian 'other' were employed in the colonial 'civilising mission' of moulding 'proper' women out of the primitive, sexually uncontrollable Nigerian woman. It was in the conjugal space that colonial interventions brought the most profound changes. In reconfiguring indigenous sexualities, the Colonial discourse silenced alternative expressions of sexuality, ascribing criminality to such indigenous social relations like polygyny, woman to woman marriage and concubinage. Utilising the prism of prostitution, this paper has shown how the prostitute body became a site of the contestation of prescribed sexual identity. By asserting her sexuality, the prostitute thwarted the hegemonic control of colonial dominant consciousness.

Acknowledgement

The archival evidence used in this research has been primarily derived from the National Archives, Enugu (NAE) and to a lesser extent the National Archives, Calabar. The paper forms part of a larger body of work on prostitution and child labour in Southern Nigeria. I am grateful for the insightful comments gleaned at several international conferences on gender, including the CODESRIA Gender Institute, Cairo.

References

Aderinto S. 2007. 'The Girls in Moral Danger: Child prostitution and Sexuality in Colonial Lagos, Nigeria 1930s-1950'. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol.1, no. 2: 1-22.

Akyeampong, E. 1997. 'Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast 1650-1950', *Past and Present*, Vol. 156: 14-73.

Allen, Judith V. 1972' "Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women'. *Canadian Journal of African Studies,* Vol. 6, no. 2: 165-181.

Amadiume, I. 1987. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society.* London: Zed Books.

Chacha, Babere Kerata and Nyangena, Kenneth. 2006. "Globalisation of Sex and the Problematics of Gender Identities in Africa: From Human Rights to Women's Rights to Sexual Freedom" *CODESRIA Bulletin*, nos.1&2:29.

Chukwu, Gloria. 2005. 'Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in South-Eastern Nigeria 1900-1960' in Molefi Asante (ed.), *African Studies History, Politics, Economy and Culture,* London: Routledge: 237-246.

Cooper, Frederick..1996. *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa,* Cambridge: African Studies Series 89.

Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catharine. 1997. *African Women: A Modern History,* Colorado: Westview Press.

Esiet, U.E., Adebayo, C.O., Bello, M.V., Booth, R., Esiet, I. I., Esiet, N. and Yusuf, B. 2001. "Sexuality in Nigeria", *The International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality*, viewed 10 February 2012, from *www.hu-berlin.de/sexology.IES/Nigeria.*

1. Awara, S. E. 1948. "*Complaint from Samuel Enyi Awara*" NAE 21st July.
2. Nkanu, A. 1949. Letter to District Officer (D.O.) Obubra Division, NAE 30th January.
3. Okon, J. 1943. Letter to D.O. Obubra Division, NAE 15th October 1943.

Fourchard, Laurent. 2006. "Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency in Nigeria 1920-60", Journal *of African History,* Vol. 47: 115-137.

Gibson, Lisa. 2003. Innocence and Purity vs Deviance and Immorality: The Spaces of Prostitution in Nepal and Canada, MA, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, viewed 19 February 2012, from *http://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/GIBSON-INNOCENCE.pdf.*

Haste, C. 2002. *Rules of Desire,* London: Vintage.

Ikime, O. (ed).1980, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Hienemann.

Ikpe, E. B. 2004. 'Human Sexuality in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective' *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series 2,* Lagos: African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre.

Illife, J. 1987. *The African Poor: A History* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Izugbara, O. 2004. 'Patriarchal Ideologies and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria' *Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar 2,* Lagos: African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre.

Korieh, C. J. 2001. 'The Invisible Farmer? : Women, Gender and Colonial Agricultural Policy in the Igbo Region of Nigeria 1913-1954', *African Economic History,* Vol. 29: 117-62.

Lovejoy, P. E. 1988. 'Concubinage and the Status of Women Slaves in Early Colonial Northern Nigeria' *Journal of African History,* Vol. 29, 2: 245-66.

Martin, S. M. 1989. "The Long Depression: West African Export Producers and the World Economy, 1914-45" in Ian Brown (ed.) *The Economics of Africa and Asia in the Inter-war Depression* London: Routledge.

Ming, H. 1993. 'Barracks – Concubinage in the Indies, 1887-1920' *Indonesia* Vol. 35 April.

Musisi, N. B. 2001. 'Gender and the Cultural Construction of 'Bad Women' in the Development of Kampal-Kibuga 1900-1962' in Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy (eds.).

Naanen, B. B. B. 1991. '"Itinerant Gold Mines"': Prostitution in the Cross River Basin of Nigeria, 1930-1950" *African Studies Review:* 57-79.

Noah, M. E. 1978. 'Efik Expansion and European Influence in the Cross River Basin, 1884-1935' *The Calabar Historical Journal,* Calabar: University of Calabar Vol. 2, no. 1: 1-31.

Nyoyoko, V. G. 1997, "Ethno-Cosmological Survey of Annang Society, *AFE Annang Journal of Minority Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1: 8-19.

Ochefu, Y. 1989. 'The impact of Women Colonialism on Nigerian Women: The Case of Prostitution ion Idoma Society' in Institute of African Studies university of Ibadan, *Conference on the Impact of Colonialism on Nigerian Women* Ibadan, Nigeria 16-18 October.

Parpart, J. 1990. 'Wage Earning Women and the Double Day: the Nigerian Case' in Shawn Stichtu and J. Parpart (eds.) *Women Employment and the Family in the International Division of Labour,* London: Macmillan.

Pederson, S. 1991, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-Making" *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 63, no. 4: 647-680.

Phillips, A. 1989. *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa* London: James Currey.

Ray, C. 2007. 'The Sex Trade in Colonial West Africa (Part 2)' *New African* January : 66-67.

Roberts, R., and Mann, K. 1991. 'Introduction' in Kristen Mann and Richard Roberts (eds.) *Law in Colonial Africa* London: James Currey.

Schler, L. 2004. 'Writing African Women's History with Male Sources: Possibilities and Limitations',

Spivak, G.C. 1999, *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Towards a History of Vanquishing Present* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ssewakiryanga, R. 2004, "Sexual Identities and Sex Work – Interrogating the Interface: A Study on Constructed Identities Among Female Sex Workers in Kampala" *Gender, Economies and Entitlements in Africa*, CODESRIA Book Series 2, Dakar: CODESRIA.

Stoler, A.L. 1996. "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia" Joan W. Scott (ed.) *Feminism and History* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strobel, M. 1982. "African Women" *Sign* Vol. 8, no. 1, Autumn: 109-131.

Tamale, S. 2004. "Gender Trauma in Africa: Enhancing Women's Links to Resources, *Gender, Economies and Entitlements in Africa* .

Uchendu, V. C. 1965. Concubinage among Ngwa Igbo of Southern Nigeria *Journal of the Internal African Institute* [online] Vol. 35, no. 2,.viewed 28 May 2012, from *http://www.jstor.org/stable/1158231.*

Van Onselen, C. 1982. Studies in the Economic and Social History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914. Vol. 1, New Babylon. Hallow Essex: Longman.

Walter, R. 1972, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle-L'Overture.

Inkanyiso

Guidelines for submission

Copyright

The copyright of any article accepted for publication in *Inkanyiso* belongs to *Inkanyiso*. The author of such an article who wishes to publish it in another journal may be granted permission to do so after the lapse of six months, on condition that she or he acknowledges its prior publication in Inkanyiso in a footnote.

Disclaimer of Warranties

Inkanyiso. JHSS takes no responsibility for the content published within this journal, and disclaims all liability arising out of the use of or inability to use the information contained herein. We assume no responsibility, and shall not be liable for any breaches of agreement with other publishers/hosts.

Editorial objectives of *Inkanyiso*

The Journal's objectives are to publish papers of broad interest in the humanities and the social sciences.

Reviewing process

(a) Every submitted paper that the editors deem acceptable as to topic, style, length and general quality will be sent to at least two peer referees for blind review.
(b) The referees will be scholars of standing, members of the Editorial Advisory Board, the Journal Management Team and others identified by their specific expertise and publication profile.
(c) The referees will comment on the papers' eligibility for publication in *Inkanyiso*, taking originality into account as well as the quality of research, argument, use of sources and writing style. Each referee will be granted not more than one month for this process.
(d) The Reviewers' Evaluation Form will be enclosed with each manuscript for the reviewer's guidance. It will require a referee to classify her or his response to a paper in one of four categories: acceptance as is; acceptance with specified changes; rejection with the possibility of revision and resubmission for another issue; and rejection.
(e) After receiving the referees' reports, the Editor-in-Chief will verify manuscripts for publication in *Inkanyiso*. Selected parts of these reports will be sent back to the authors (without disclosing referees' identity) in order to explain the Journal's acceptance or rejection of the paper and in order to guide revision either for the upcoming issue or to help the author rewrite for future submission.
(f) Accepted authors should make the required corrections and email their final document to the Editor within the time specified.
(g) The Editor, after verification, compiles all the manuscripts into an issue with the addition of an appropriate introduction and then sends the issue to the publisher.
(h) Publication is normally expected within the specified dates that will normally be June and December each year.
(i) It is our policy to encourage and support novice and established authors. However, in order to improve on the quality of publications, manuscripts that are unanimously recommended by at least two reviewers for substantive revision or rejection may not be published.

Page fees

Page fees may be levied to cover the costs of publication once the Journal is SAPSE accredited.

Manuscript requirements

Length of articles

These should comprise 4000-8000 words, including the list of works cited and notes. Shorter essays (500-2000 words) such as book reviews and debates on topics introduced by specific papers may be accepted.

Format

Papers should be submitted electronically, as email attachments formatted in a recent version of MsWord or Rich Text Format. While each article should be accompanied by a note in which the author provides his or her full names, personal telephone number and email address, the article itself should be stripped of all references to the author's identity. This is in order to assist the blind review process.

Style of articles

Inkanyiso uses a specific version of Harvard style. Authors should make sure that their papers are already formatted in this style before submission to the journal.

An *abstract* of the paper comprising a single paragraph of no more than 300 words should precede its first paragraph.

Numbered subheadings may be used throughout the article, but are not compulsory unless referees request them.

Single quotation marks are used in Harvard style for direct quotations from texts and for 'mention' of words and phrases to be discussed or defined. Double quotation marks are used only for a quotation-within-a-quotation. End punctuation is placed *after* the closing quotation mark.

Footnotes should be used very sparingly or not at all. If possible all information should be included in the main text. If footnotes are used, they should not exceed about five in number and should not be used for references, only for parenthetic material not directly relevant to the argument in hand but of use or interest to a researcher in the field.

Textual references should be used in preference to notes wherever possible. All textual references should include page numbers, unless the original text does not display page numbers. A reference should accompany almost any mention of a text, not only direct quotations from it. Textual references normally include the author's surname, the date of publication and the relevant page numbers. They are punctuated thus, with a colon separating date and page number, but no space after the colon: (Thorpe 1999:135-141).

The list of Works Cited should include all texts referred to in the article and no other texts. The list should be alphabetized, unnumbered and arranged on the page as indicated in the examples below. Each item in the list should include the following, in the order designated: author's surname; author's initials or names (depending on how the author is designated in the text described); date of publication; title and subtitle, separated by a colon (upper-case used only for the first letter of the first word); place of publication and publisher.

Please note that the 'place of publication' *must* be a town or city; it may not be a country, province, state or other area. The place of publication must *precede* the publisher's name and be separated from it by a colon. A list follows that demonstrates the required punctuation and arrangement. If an author uses a type of text not included in this list, a more comprehensive handbook of Harvard Style should be consulted.

Here is a sample list of works cited (with annotations):

Works cited

Arom, Simha. 2000. Prolegomena to a biomusicology. In Wallin, Merker & Brown. 27-29. **[*NOTE WALLIN AND SLATER ENTRIES BELOW – only refer to an edited work in this way if more than one essay is cited. See TAFT below for the citation of one essay only from an edited collection.*]**

Buthelezi, Mangosuthu. 1990. Personal interview on August 5, 1990. Empangeni. `[Cassette recording in possession of author.] **[*INTERVIEW*]**

Davies, R T (ed). 1963. *Medieval English lyrics: A critical anthology*. London: Faber & Faber.

Gumbi, Rachel Vuyiswa. 2009. Personal communication on January 16, 2009. **[*INTERVIEW*]**

Jacobs, D. 2001. A bibliometric study of the publication patterns of scientists in South Africa 1992-96, with special reference to gender difference. In: M. Davis & C.S. Wilson(Eds.). Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Scientometrics and Informetrics, Sydney, 16-20th July 2001, Vol.2, 275-285 **[CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS]**

Mason, B L. 1994. The psychological effects of violence on children: An exploration of a sample of black primary school children from the Natal Midlands. Unpublished masters thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal. **[*THESIS*]**

Oosterlinck, A. nd. Knowledge management in post-secondary education: Universities. Accessed online on September 8, 2008, at: *http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/21/2074921.pdf.[**NO DATE**]*

Schiesari, Juliana. 1992. *The gendering of melancholia: Feminism, psychoanalysis, and the symbolics of loss in Renaissance literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Sembene, Ousemane. 1976. *Xala*. Transl. Wake, C. London: Heinemann. **[*TRANSLATION*]**

South African Law Commission. 1997. *Project 90, discussion paper 74: Customary marriages*. Accessed online on August 17, 2007, at: *http://www.doj.gov.za/salrc/dpapers/dp74_prj90_cstmar_1998.pdf.* **[*GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT*]**

Taft, R. 1981. The role and personality of the mediator. In Bochner, S (ed). *The mediating person: Bridges between cultures*. Cambridge: Schenkman. 53-88.

Taylor, Hollis. 2008. Decoding the song of the pied butcherbird: An initial survey. *Transcultural Music Review* 12. Accessed online on November 8, 2008, at: *http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans12/art13.htm.*

Thorpe, W H.1958. The learning of song patterns by birds, with especial reference to the song of the chaffinch *Fingilla coelebs*. *The Ibis* 100:535-570.

Wallin, Nils L, Merker, Björn, and Brown, Steven (eds). 2000. *The origins of music*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Address for submission

Papers should be submitted electronically to the Editor-in-Chief at *Docholla@unizulu.ac.za*