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Special Edition, December, 2020

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

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DISEASES AND NEW MORAL ORDER IN SOCIETY

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Abstract

To a great degree of validity, it can be postulated along Heideggerian pattern of reasoning that being human inevitably means being an entity that sometimes experiences disease-conditionsinitslifetime. This implies that the absence of such possibilityrenders individuals non-human.Indeed, it wouldalso be inappropriate to conceive them as living organisms, for it is in the general structure of the organisms to stand the chance of being so afflicted sometimes.And the chance forms one of the factors that causeindividuals toappreciatethe finitudeof their existenceas it takes them close toanother fact of life, which is death. Death hovers aroundevery ailing individual and becomes the possible difference between their seeking-for, responding and not responding to clinical treatments.Given individuals'realisation of the finitude of their lives as a consequence of disease affliction, it is typical of them to evaluate their moral livesduring illnessespecially with respect to how best or worst they had related with fellow individuals and the environment. With the assessment,sometimes,comes a desire to survive so as to amend their moral approaches, especially where they adjudge themselves reprehensible.That amendment,sometimes,involves desiring tobe more benevolent than malevolent; creating a humane society.

This is because it dawns on diseased-individuals that life is short, nasty and vain. Hence, it is more meaningful to be benevolentthan alreadylived. This essay deploys analytic method of philosophic discourses to explore human disease-condition as a stimulus fora new moral order in society.
Keywords: Human being, Disease, New moral order, Society

Introduction

When the question "what is man?" is raised, a myriad of responses comes to mind. Some of them are anthropological, bearing various empirical notions of human nature that unify understanding of individuals as both creatures of their environment and creators of their own values. Others are existential, bearingnotions of essentialstructures of average everyday life that characterise the ontological nature of general human being.With the former idea,definitions are to reveal individuals as entities engaged indifferent occupations and stations of life such as medicine and surgery as physicians, engineering as engineers, academics as teachers, the home-front as parents and children, etc. And the latter ideais to reveal individuals as entities who live outexperiencesthat can be distinctively characterised as human – in contradistinction to those of non-humans. Existentialexperience is something universal to all human beings despite differencesin theiroccupations and stations of life.

This essay aims at deploying analytic method of philosophic discourses to describehumankind in both ways. It, however, commences with the latter approach and describesindividuals as entities whose being it is tosometimes be afflicted by diseases. This is done in line with Martin Heidegger's pattern of reasoningon human existence. Then the essay transits to anthropological description of diseased or ailing individuals as entities that sometimes reconsider to reform their senses of moral valuesand the environment due to their realisation of the finitude of existence as occasioned by fear of death, which sometimescharacterisethe affliction.

From this outset, it is imperative to clarify that analysis of a philosophical discourse – as the method utilised in the essay – involves breaking down of complex terms, notions, concepts, or views into simple ideas in order to present them and explain their implications more understandably than they were in the complex form (Etukudoh, 2017, p. 47). It is in accordance with this technique, therefore, that this paper approaches its subject of discourse.

Man as a Being-Towards-disease

Martin Heidegger's very important literature, *Being and Time*(1962), is a work that lays bare fundamental ontological considerations about what it means for humankind to exist – distinctively as human beings. Due to its depth of analysis and meaning, the literature has since attracted a widerange of applications in interpreting, explaining, and justifyingvarious modes of human being, even including thosenot discussed byHeidegger. This is evident in the works of scholars like Hannah Arendt, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, Lawrence Hass, and the present essay.

In analysing what it means for humankind to be human being, Heidegger, in *Being and Time,* was primarily concerned with a more foundational necessity of responding to a perennially perplexing question of the general meaning of Being. And in that concern, he discovered through his studies that the perplexity can only be adequately unraveled following one science – the *logos*(account) of *onta* (the Being of beings or being insofar as it is being) orOntology (Heidegger, 1977, p. 5). Having studied Husserl's brand of phenomenology and being aware of its methodic emphasis on 'going to the things themselves' in describing phenomena, Heidegger chose to apply the method in his ontological project– to let his subject of research (i.e. Being)manifest itself exactly as it is in itself. This is because he considered very strongly that only as phenomenology is ontology possible (Heidegger, 1962, p. 60).

Still, in order to give the analysis an accurate direction, Heidegger (1962, p. 26) considered that one important question which needed to be addressed first before full analysis was: where and with what being should the question of Being begin? And the answer, in his view, lay in both the nature of the question and its inquirer. This is because he considered that both the question of Being and the one who asks the question are relevant to unraveling the meaning of Being (Heidegger, 1962, pp.24-27). The question, to him, is often raised in a certain way and by a certain being (Heidegger, 1962, p.26).While, for the purpose of this essayhowever, it is needless to focus on analysing the nature of question of Being, it is imperative to focus on the nature of the questioner. This is because the nature of the question is not as important to the substantiation of this essay's position as is the nature of the questioner.

With this focus, the next important question to this essay is: who is the questioner of Being? Heidegger responds to this by asserting that it is human beings that pose the question humanly in transcendence (Heidegger, 1962, p.26). Explaining this more succinctly, Unah (1996, p. 10) and Azenabor (1996, p. 266) aver that, apart from human beings, no other being interrogates the meaning of existence. Given this reasoning, it canbe further interpreted that insofar as it is human beings that raise questions concerning Being it is imperative that attempts at understanding meaning of Being should begin with an analysis of their own being.It is this reasoning, therefore, that led Heidegger toa concrete posing of the question of Being(Krell, 1977, p.18) – with the concreteness referring to investigation of human ways of existing,both partially and completely, in their average everydayness (Heidegger, 1962, p. 37-38). It also made his phenomenological investigation of human ontology to become an exercise in fundamental ontology.
Taking up his fundamental ontological project and maintaining focus on answering the question "what is man?" or, alternatively, "what is the being of the questioner?" Heidegger found that existing ways of responding to the question would not offer the result he desired. That is because those traditional ways, right from Aristotle, erroneously reduced general character of human existence to particular, fragmented, scientifically-specialised, regional or onticaldescriptions of man(Unah, 2010, p. 7). Theydescribed the general being of man from

rational, economic, biological, historical, etc, perspectives. And that led to a *reductio absurdum*, for some individuals exist that may not adequately share the specific traits.Hence, to avoid such error,Heidegger had to approach his response to the question in a different, but proper andmost general way, which all individuals share. Accordingly, he postulated that a human being is to be considered as a dynamic entity which has the capacity to be what it is not and not to be what it is (Heidegger, 1962, pp.24-27). Humankind – as an inquirer – is not fixed. He "…is always – in no matter how vague a way – aware of his being in the world… (He) questions his own Being and that of other things in the world" (Krell, 1977, p.19).

That necessity to vary his conception of "Man" from those of traditional ontologies also informed Heidegger to differentiate his neologism for the concept as well as the objective of his project from existing inquiries into human nature. Accordingly, heinvented the concept of*Dasein* to replace "man', "humankind," "human being," "the individual," or "the inquirer"(Heidegger, 1962, p. 32). Then, the rest of his vocation became activities in *Dasein* analysis.Indeed, Heidegger(1962, p. 34) asserted that any meaningful discussion about meaning of Beingis to be presented only within the framework of existential analysis of *Dasein*. And such presentation is to concentrate on analysing the characteristics (*existentiale*) of "essential structures" (*existentialia*) of *Dasein*'saverage daily modes of being as against that of existing Aristotelian "categories" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 35-37).This is because analysis of essential structures of average daily living is precisely for *Dasein* and that of Aristotelian categories can be extended to other entities in the world (Hass, 1988, p. 82). Following that reasoning, Heidegger then proceeded to identify various *existentialia* of *Dasein*which *existentiale* he also anlaysed.

Of all *existentialia*, the first and major one is "Being-in-the-world," whichall otherstake their *locus* from (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 78-80). This essay anchors its position onthetheory.It, however, also deploysthe theoryof "Being-with-others," which is an ancillary of "Being-in-the-world," for a deeperand clearer intelligibility of the discourse. Accordingly, whereas"Being-in-the-world" presents the framework for describing human beings as entities that can sometimes be afflicted by diseases,"Being-with-others"presents the framework for explaining the possibility of ailing human beingsdesiring to re-invent values and their environment. But we concentrate on the first theory, presently.

Dasein– as a Being-in-the-world – would ordinarily be considered as an entity that necessarily exists in some place, namely, the world (Heidegger, 1962, p. 79). But this kind of existence, which appeals as "Being-in" makes *Dasein* a present-at-hand kind of entity – sharing*its* "in-the-worldness" with other non-*Dasein* entities. It gives the impression of"in-the-worldness" that is akin to:

… 'Being in something'…as the water is "in" the glass, or the garment is "in" the cupboard. By this "in" we mean the relationship of Being which two entities extended "in" space have to

> each other with regard to their location in that space… in the sense of a definite location (Heidegger, 1962, p. 79).

Accordingly, *Dasein*'s present-at-hand "Being-in-the-world"takes the form of existence that humankinds possess as objects in the world. Human beings are locatable 'inside' the world – just like other non-human entities. This constitutes the sense of existence in which one speaks of trees, stones, houses, cars, etc, as existing – in the same way as human beings. Yet, this is not the only kind of "Being-in"the world character that *Dasein* has, for in addition to this kind of character *it* also has a ready-to-hand mode of "Being-in" that distinguishes it from other non-*Dasein* entities.

The second anddistinctive trait of "Being-in" of *Dasein*'s "Being-in-the-world" is an existential description of its essential state of dwelling in the world. To dwell in the world is, according to Heidegger (1962, pp. 81-82), to belong there or to have a *familiar* place there. It is like:

…producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining…All

> these kind of ways of Being-in have concern (Bersorgen) as their kind of Being (Heidegger, 1962, p. 83).

Such sense of familiarity with the world makes*Dasein* an essential entity,which understands and interprets phenomena and the world. It makes the world to acquire through *Dasein*the meaning that it has at any point in time. This is why Heidegger (1962, p. 80) sometimes uses the term *dwelling* to express the distinctive ready-to-hand nature in which *Da-sein is* in the world. To dwell in the world (like a house), for instance, is not merely to be inside it spatially; it is also to be able to understand and interpret the meaning of the world or house as a dwelling place, its purpose for dwelling, and the purpose of the dweller in the dwelling. The world of a physician, for example, is not only the hospital as a healthcare facility, building, place, location or world space. It is also the purpose of the place as a healthcare facility as well as the entirety of the physician's occupation as a professional.

Being-in-the-world as a ready-to-hand entity, for *Dasein*, lies in the essence of having to do or be concerned with phenomena in a familiar way. That concern and familiarity lies in thought (Heidegger, 1971, p. 10). *Dasein* is the only entity that thinks (Heidegger, 1977, pp. 193-194). All non-*Dasein* entities do not think. Hence, it is as thought that *Dasein* can be said to exist in a distinctively ready-to-hand sense. All non-*Dasein* entities do not exist as such.

With thought,*Dasein*'s beingis identical with the world. This isbecause the world is as *Dasein* thinks that it is. To be *Dasein* at all is to be worldly – i.e. to be *involved* in a link of network of intelligibility with the world (Heidegger, 1977, pp. 193-194). And, conversely, to be worldly is to be *Dasein*. As a worldly entity*Dasein* is a consciousness that is not only conscious of phenomenaoutside itself but,either partially or completely,is also conscious that it is consciousness.This means that*Dasein* is the meaning-maker of the world (Unah, 1996, p. 10). Indeed, *it* is the unified territory that involves meaning itself.Human being-in-the-world is the totality of *Dasein*'s involvement or absorption with activity of thinking and existing (Dreyfus, 1992, p. 5).

With the foregoing, it is to bededuced from Heidegger's analyses of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world that being human means beinga conscious consciousness, a meaning-maker of the world, dwelling in the world in some familiar way or being meaning itself. But these are positive modes of describing human worldlybeing for,with respect tothem,individualsare expected – at least, by Heidegger – to engage in activities of existing normally and maintain healthy average everyday approach to things in ways that are distinctively human. To be conscious implies dwelling in the world or thinking in ways thatnormal or healthy average everyday individualsexist,making-meaning of phenomena and events and being meaning themselves – as emulable models. Unconsciousness – the opposite – therefore, implies lacking in such normalcy or health. An unconscious individual, although remains a *Dasein* in the present-at-hand sense of "Being-in-the-world," lacks the presence of mind necessary for discerning-thinking, meaning-making, and being a meaning. To be an emulable modelrequires the presence and serenity of mind, which an unconscious individual lacks. Meaning-making or dwelling in the world in some familiar mode of consciousnessor getting absorbed in the world in the Heideggerian sense of reasoningrequires *Dasein*'s physical, mental and social well-being. Andthe lack or absence of such well-being implies*Dasein*'s loss of thecapability formeaning-making, dwelling and absorption in the world.

This is how Heidegger's positive description of individuals as meaning-making beings-in-the-world also mirrors their negative possibility of lacking-the-well-being for it. But it must be noted in line with Heidegger's pattern of reasoningthat the positivity and negativity of *Dasein*'s possibilities in the afore-described directions are not to be interpreted morally as good or bad. This is because neither *Dasein*'s positive mode of being-in-the-world as conscious consciousness, meaning-maker, dwelling in the world in some familiar way or being meaning itself nor its negative mode of lacking the well-being for the positivity is a moral category that should be commended (in the case of the positive one) or condemned (in the case of the negative one). They are simply the essential characters of human being in the world.They point to the idea that human ready-to-hand existence in the world is characterised by both healthiness and unhealthiness. And every individual is ontologically composed of both modes of being.
In contrast to healthiness, an unhealthy individual is one who sometimes experiences absence of health. This is because*Dasein* is not and cannot be healthy at all times. Time, in the pattern of Heidegger's thought, is tied to

individuals' possibility of healthiness and unhealthiness. Time is "the transcendental horizon with which man tacitly understands and interprets Being in terms of its own temporal being" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 39-41). Given this, individuals experience unhealthiness as a trait that has always been in the structure ofhumankind since the beginning of life;is always presently with them; and shall continue to be with them. Indeed, as *Dasein* discovered itself in and, fundamentally, with the world, it did, always does and shall continue to do so in both healthiness and unhealthiness.

Biologically, health is "an absence of signs and symptoms associated with any disease" (Ahmed et al., 2007, p. 1). Unhealthiness, accordingly, is the presence of signs and symptoms associated with a disease.A disease is "any abnormality or failure of the body to function properly and this may require medical treatment" (Ahmed et al., 2007, p. 1).And there are a myriadof such abnormalities or bodily dysfunctions that may require medical treatment including, but not limited to,ailments such asMalaria fever, Typhoid fever, Lassa fever, Hepatitis, Ebola, andCOVID-19.All of them, insofar as they afflict human beings, are possibilities identifiable with the being itself – especially as a living organism.

Butdescribing health in this way fails toaccord human being the distinctiveness that distinguishes it from other living entities, for other living entities also experience biological disease-conditions, sometimes. Non-human animals and plants are known to also ail through biologicalabnormalities or bodily dysfunction. Does that, therefore, mean that there is no way that human beings ail in a distinctively human character? There is, for according to the above fundamental ontology of both healthy and unhealthy individuals,it is to be re-emphasised that human beings are unhealthy or diseased when they lack the presence and serenity of mind to be conscious consciousnesses, meaning-makers of the world, and dwellers in the world in some familiar way or emulable models.Even research in biological science reveals that there are possibilities of complications in limiting the description of human health to biological interpretationsasthere are circumstances where individuals could be biologically ill yet lack detectable indications of disease (Ahmed et al.,p. 1). There are also circumstances where individuals may appear biologically well, yet detailed examination of their system would reveal serious disease(s) in them (Ahmed et al.,p. 1). It is on these bases, therefore,thatthe World Health Organisation (WHO) guides that health should be conceived as *a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease* (Ahmed et al.,p. 1). And the conception agrees with our ontological conception of health above. It also reinforces our analysis of human beings as beings-towards-disease, for it is in human nature not to always be so well – even if in one of the dimensions of life.

Human Diseased-Beings as Reformers of Moral Values

As beings-in-the-world which sometimes falls ill, human beings have the proclivity to desire reformation of moral values and their environment,especially where theepisode of illness is critical. This is because the criticality is characterised by serious physical weakness, social and emotional withdrawal,which together, occasion a realisationof the shortness, nastiness andvanity of life. The realisationdeepensasthe criticality advances and fear of death begins to descend on theailing individual.

Death is, biologically, the cessation of vital processes of the body – like heartbeat and respiration (Black, 1977, p. 136). It is also a state of irreversible coma where, "on two occasions 24hours apart, there is unreceptivity and unresponsivity to all stimuli, lack of movement or spontaneous breathing, lack of reflex, a flat electroencephalogram, and an absence of hypothermia or drug overdosage as preceding events" (Ad Hoc Committee, 1968, p. 85). But these definitions only present ontic descriptions of individuals' death. They do not also account also an ontological, existential or essential way which they distinctively die as human beings. With the biological descriptions, death becomes a condition of being that other living entities also share with human beings. Indeed, human beings are described as living organisms because, like other living organisms, it is one of their characteristics to die. However, there is a distinctive way that human beings die, which other entities do not experience. And that is as termination of all possibilities for *Dasein*s (Unah, 2002, p. 107). As thought par excellence, human beings begin to die when all their transcendental possibilities begin to dwindle; and actually die when the possibilities come to an end. Human death isan experience that characterises social aspect of "Being-in-the-world." This is because, first, individuals learn from the death of fellow individuals that the experience is a capital extinguisher of all possibilities. It is impossible for anyone to experience by themselves what it means to die (like they do other lived experiences). No dead individual knows that they are dead when they die. Experience of death is often inferred from the death of other individuals. And it is the inference that communicates the experience to living individuals as an inevitable possibility for all *Dasein*s. That is why death, for Heidegger (1962, p. 307), is "the possibility of the impossibility for any existence at all,"

Second, from the understanding of death as an inevitable end of individuals' existence, individuals realise the shortness or finitude of life. With the realisation, they live with utmost determination to accomplish projects, including being emulable models, serving the self (in greed), or serving humanity (in selflessness), etc. The determination is motivated by the fear that they may die at anytime, for individuals are beings-towards-death (Heidegger, 1962, p. 290). They begin to die as soon as they are born because death is latent in both their biological and essential structures.

Third, the fear of dying anytime, together with the realisation of the finitude of life, reconnects individuals with their conscience, making them reflect judgmentally on how they have lived in themselves and in relation to other people and the environment. Conscientious assessment of lifeis one of the states of individuals being. Conscience is the innermost voice of individuals' judgmental minds, whichsummons them to the reticence of themselves (Heidegger, 1962, p.319)**.**And the summoning is often strongest during episodes of critical illnesses,which drag individuals to the brink of death. The fear of dying anytime, together with the realisation of the finitude of life, makes them reflect judgmentally on how they have lived in relation to other people and the environment prior to the illness. Then the self-judgmental reflection stimulates a desire to amend the relationship, especially in good direction. It also has the tendency to stimulate a desire to amend the relationship in bad direction.

All these are, as a matter of focus, possible because human being-in-the-world is not solitary. It involves "being-with-others" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 158). Life's meaning isconscientiously interpretedonly in association with "others."And those "others" include both fellow human beings and non-human entities of the environment. Heidegger (1962, p. 155) affirms this by submitting that "involvement-with-the-world" or "dwelling-in-the-world" or "familiarity-with-the-world" as states of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world is meaningful only in interaction with other *Daseins* in the world and the world environment. This means that individuals are, both ontically and ontologically, social beings.
The sociality of human being is such that, far beyond other entities, they have the capacity to consider other's minds, empathise with others' needs, and transform the empathy into sympathy, care and generosity (Waytz, 2014, p. 1). They also have the capacity not to engage such transformations of empathy and even neglect the presence of the "others." Heidegger (1962, p. 158) speaks of this mode of individuals' relationship with "others" where he says that *Dasein*'s immersion with the world entails encountering "others" in one form or another, either indifferently or positively. The indifferenceentails passing by other *Daseins* in such a way that they do not matter to each other. And the positivity entails leaping-in and

leaping-ahead others such that *Dasein* gets involved in others' affairs to the point where it takes over their problems and anxieties and solves for them.

With *Dasein*'s sociality, moral values are considered necessary and, thus, created in society. This is because individuals' interaction with others need to be regulated by some standards of right and wrong that avails them internal (self) and external (social) peace, harmony, order, happiness and fulfillment (Omoregbe, 1993, p. ix). It is on thatbasis that they are able to assess the goodness or badness of their actions individually and collectively. While good actions avail them internal (self) and external (social) peace, harmony, order, happiness and fulfillment bad actions do not. This, then, provides the basis for which a critically ill person applies his conscience and fear of death to assess his already-lived experience and seek to amend things, depending on the result of the assessment. Usually, the result of the assessment motivatesindividuals to wish for recovery, not just for pleasurable longevity, but to stand another chance to reform their moral approachesto life and set things right and straight in society. It is common to find individuals who recover from critical illnesses becoming more humane than they used to be prior to the illness. They try to be more benevolent than malevolent, more enduring, tolerant and accommodating than overbearing and intolerant, and more altruistic than egoistic. In living the morally reformed life, they do not merely do so personally, they also do so emotivistically. By this is meant that they try to persuade others to understand life in the new light of their personal conviction and join them in living in that way too. This constitutesthe way in which once critically ill or diseased individuals recreate societal or world moral order.

Conclusion

Getting afflicted with disease is a painful and unsavory experience for individuals. It makes life appear lonely, boring, short, nasty, and meaningless. Yet it is an inevitable state of human being. No matter how it may be wished away, it is part of individuals' way of being-in-the-world. Accordingly, when it occurs, individuals are to embrace it as one of the facticities of their existence, struggle through,and live life meaningfully with it.

An attempt to live life meaningfully by disease-afflicted individuals is tointrospect about their pre-affliction social relations. And the introspection is to aim at positively changing their moral approaches to the relations. Such positivity is to create a more friendly and humane society than they knew and practiced prior to the affliction. That is not only to be personal but also proliferated through some emotivistprogramme,which would influence other people. These offer a pattern of reasoning in which disease-conditions of human beingcontribute positively to creating and sustaining a new moral order in society.

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TRIAL AND ERROR IN COVID-19 VACCINE HYPOTHESIS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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Abstract

This study analysed the quest for discovery of a vaccine for Covid-19 using the units of appraisal of science advanced by Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, ImreLakatos and Paul Feyerabend. The study observed that scientific and clinical phases towards discovery of a Covid-19 vaccine and other vaccines involve the logic of scientific discovery and the trial and error method of Popper; the stages of science of Kuhn; the research programme of Lakatos, and that all these are tailored toward the growth of science or scientific progress. The successful vaccine makes the paradigm-shift, the Gestalt switch. Nevertheless, there are alternative ad hoc attempts towards treatment of Covid-19 which do not necessarily follow the scientific procedure, but are still aimed at the same goal of saving lives, for instance, attempts to treat Covid-19 through herbal medicine. This latest dimension is equally given a philosophically *theoretical back-up in Feyerabend's Against Method, where he declared that: "Anything Goes!", thus suggesting methodological pluralism. This paper concluded that sustaining human life and health may sometime go beyond the corridors of the canonical scientific methodology, since life is larger than science.*

Key words: Covid-19, vaccine, scientific method, scientific progress, scientific discovery, trial and error, paradigm-shift, Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend.

Introduction

Developing a vaccine to cure a disease is a hypothesis enmeshed in trial and error. So, the struggle by scientists to develop a Covid-19 vaccine was a hypothetical exercise. In this entry, we shall discuss how relevant this exercise is to the philosophy of science, with focus on the philosophers of science who presented their different units of scientific appraisal. We shall clarify the key terms in our analysis, including science, Covid-19 and Covid-19 vaccine. Thereafter, we shall discuss the philosophers and how their concepts are relevant in the quest for discovery of a vaccine, in this case, Covid-19 vaccine.

Science

Science is a systematic body of knowledge which is made, popularised, confirmed and sometimes rejected by the scientific community (Essien, 2008; 2016: 4). Otherwise expressed, science is a systematic body of knowledge which is enacted, promulgated, ratified and sometimes repealed by the scientific community. Science involves a step-by step observation, experimentation and investigation of nature. The procedure through which a scientific investigation is carried out is the scientific method.

COVID-19

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2 (*Gorbalenya, Baker, Baric, de Groot, Drosten, Gulyaeva, et al., 2020: 536–544)*) is the virus strain that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which is a respiratory illness. It is colloquially known as the coronavirus, and was previously referred to by its provisional name2019 novel coronavirus,2019-nCoV (Harmon: 4 March 2020). SARS-CoV-2 is a positive-sense single-stranded RNA virus (*"CoV2020". GISAID EpifluDB*).It is contagious in humans, and the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Taxonomically, SARS-CoV-2 is a strain of *severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus, SARSr-CoV* (*Gorbalenya, Baker, Baric, de Groot, Drosten, Gulyaeva, et al., 2020: 536–544*). SARS-CoV-2 will, hereinafter, be referred to as Covid-19. It was first identified on December 2019 in Wuhan in the Hubei province, China, and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation. As at the time of writing (17.25 hours UTC) on 30th April, 2020, there were 3,224,079 confirmed cases of Covid-19 with 228,907 deaths globally, and 848,408 recovered, with the United States of America being the worst hit with 1,040,442 cases and 61,000 deaths (coronavirus/jhe.edu).

COVID-19 vaccine

A Covid-19 vaccine is a hypothetical vaccine against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In April 2020, 115 vaccine candidates were in development (Thanh Le, Andreadakis, Kumar, Gómez Román, Tollefsen, Saville, Mayhew, 9 April 2020: 1974-1776), with five having been initiated in Phase I-II safety and efficacy studies in human subjects, and six in Phase I trials. Among the vaccine candidates in Phase I-II trials is the **Ad5-nCoV** which is in its Phase II interventional trial for dosing and side effects, with 500 human participants; developed by CanSino Biologics, Institute of Biotechnology of the Academy of Military Sciences, China. Another popular Covid-19 vaccine candidate is the **ChAdOx1 nCov-19**, which is in its Phase I-II trial with more randomized, placebo-controlled, multiple sites experiments carried out by University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.

The phases of clinical research are the methodological steps in which scientists conduct experiments with a health intervention in an attempt to obtain sufficient evidence for a process which would be useful as a medical treatment. In the case of pharmaceutical study, the scientific methodological phases start with drug design and drug discovery and then proceed on to animal testing. If this is successful, they begin the clinical phase of development by testing for safety in a few human subjects and expand to test in many study participants to determine if the treatment is effective.

Obviously, developing a vaccine involves the scientific method. And any scientific discovery is an indication of the growth of science. Thus, this study involves an analysis of the philosophical proponents of the method of science that could lead to scientific progress. So, in this entry, we shall have interactions with Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, ImreLakatos and Paul Feyerabend on their notions of the method of science and scientific progress. We shall evaluate each of their notions within the context of Covid-19 vaccine hypothesis.

Karl Popper, Trial and Error and Falsification

Popperheld that scientific theories and human knowledge generally are conjectures or hypotheses and that a theory should be considered scientific if and only if it is falsifiable. So, he advanced the doctrine of falsification or trial and error as the basis for science.

Popper noted that "every genuine test of a theory is an attempt to falsify it, or to refute it."Popper, *2002*). The process of testing to ascertain the validity of scientific theories and conjectures is falsification. In falsification scientific theories must be tested in order to bring out anomalies, and theories that are found to contain anomalies should be rejected outright. According to Popper, theories that have anomalies have been falsified whereas theories without anomalies are corroborated. Falsification involves the ability to identify an anomaly (fault) in a scientific finding or theory (Popper, 1972). Scientific theories are conjectures or hypotheses that must be tested to ascertain their validity. The supreme law for this procedure states that all rules of empirical method must be designed in such a way that they do not protect any statement in science against falsification.

In inductive logic, a statement of supposed fact, that is, a hypothesis, is proven true if repeated observations substantiate it. In opposing this viewpoint, Popper insisted that the hypothesis must be tested, and the right test for a scientific hypothesis is to look for some circumstance for which it does not hold. If no such circumstance is found, then the hypothesis is true. "A theory which is not refutable by any conceivable event is not scientific.

Popper argues that "A good scientific theory has a higher level of verisimilitude than its rivals".

Verisimilitude was coined from two Latin words, "veritas", meaning "truth" and "similis", meaning "likeness" or "similarity". Literally, verisimilitude means "truth-likeness". Popper put forth questions like, what is the so-called truth? How are we getting closer to the truth? He then presents his idea of verisimilitude. The idea behind verisimilitude is that the assertions or hypothesis of scientific theories can be objectively measured with respect to the amount of truth and falsity that they imply. And in this way, one theory can be evaluated as more or less true as another on a quantitative basis.

The strongest motive for scientific discovery is what Popper describes as the search for truth. He writes about the much-criticised notion of truth as a correspondence (Popper, 1972). In 1935, Popper writes of learning of the consequences of Tarski's work (Semantic Theory of Truth)[11] and how the theory brought him intense joy. This theory met critical objections to truth and thereby rehabilitated it. He developed his notion of verisimilitude and asserted that scientific theories can be objectively measured with respect to the amount of truth and falsity that they imply. Popper claimed that on quantitative basis, one theory can be evaluated or assessed as more or less true as another.

Popper puts forth a mathematical formulation of checking the verisimilitude of theories. He defines it as:Vs (a) = CT_v (a) – CT_f (a)

Where Vs (a) is the verisimilitude of ‘a’, Ct_v (a) is a measure of the content of truth of ‘a’, and Ct_f (a) is a measure of the content of the falsity of ‘a’ (Popper, 1963). Popper held that knowledge was objective in the sense that it had an ontological status and also truth-like.

It may be pragmatically useful to accept a well-tested theory as true until it is falsified, but this does not solve the philosophical problem of induction. As Bertrand Russell put it, “the general principles of science… are believed because mankind has found innumerable instances of their truth and no instances of their falsehood. But this affords no evidence of their truth in the future, unless the inductive principle is assumed” (Essien, 2016) . In essence Popper addressed justification for belief (“why do you believe”) that the sun will rise tomorrow, not justification for the fact that (“how do you know”) that it will, which is the crux of the philosophical problem. Said another way, Popper addressed the psychological causes of our belief in the validity of induction without trying to provide logical reasons for it. In this way, he provided a psychological account of the use of induction, but left the philosophical ground of induction as a valid mode of knowledge unaccounted for. Popper, however, left the legacy of falsification in the history of thought which formed a strong basis for the method of trial and error used in scientific practice in general and in vaccine development in particular.

Thomas Kuhn, Paradigm-Shift and Scientific Progress

Kuhn made several notable claims concerning the progress of knowledge that science undergoes periodic “paradigm shifts” instead of progressing in a linear and continuous way, that these paradigm shifts open up new approaches to understanding that scientist would never have considered valid before; and that scientists can never divorce their subjective perspectives from their work. Competing paradigms are frequently incommensurable; that is, they are competing accounts of reality which cannot be coherently reconciled. Thus, our comprehension of science can never rely on full “objectivity”. We must account for subjective perspectives as well. Kuhn sees his concepts of paradigm shift as the corner stone and principal determining factor responsible for revolutions in science. Paradigm shifts make scientific progress.

Kuhn argued that science does not progress through a linear accumulation of new knowledge but undergoes periodic revolutions, also called “paradigm shift” in which the nature of scientific enquiry within a particular field is abruptly transformed (Kuhn, 1970). Kuhn also challenges the view that the history of science is the study of discontinuous and incommensurable paradigms.

Unlike Popper who believes that the unit of appraisal in science is a single theory, Kuhn opines that the unit of appraisal is paradigm and we can discern two senses in which Kuhn uses the concept, ‘paradigm’. First, there is paradigm as “exemplary”. This has to do with the accepted ways or patterns of solving a problem which then serves as a model of example for future research workers. Secondly, there is paradigm as “disciplinary matrix”. Disciplinary matrix refers to the common possession of members of a professional discipline composed of ordered elements of some sort each requiring further specification. It can also be defined as the commitment, beliefs, values, techniques shared by members of a given scientific community. A scientific community is made of practitioners of a scientific specialty.

There are three stages through which a scientific theory progresses in Kuhn's structure of scientific revolution.

1. ***Pre-paradigmatic stage***: In this stage, there is confusion as multiple paradigms are put forward by different schools of thought. Scientists may disagree vociferously with one another as they propose and support their individual theories. Over time, as the ideas compete, scientists cluster around a small set of paradigms (often two), each trying to support their own ideas and destroy the opposing paradigms. Eventually, one paradigm wins through and become the dominant principle.
2. ***Normal stage***: Most science is "normal science" in which scholars accept the dominant paradigm of the day, performing experiments that test and prove its efficacy in a range of situations. New explanations may extend the paradigm but do not change its fundamental nature. In this way, the paradigm may grow with many extensions to explain the various exceptional cases that are not easily covered by the original paradigm.

Paradigm or Revolutionary stage: Eventually, a new and perhaps simplified paradigm is explored and proposed which challenges the existing paradigm. New methods may be used as new theories are proposed and proven. This work is outside of the canon of normal science and assumes

1. that the dominant paradigm is probably not fully true in certain circumstances. All the same, scientists abandon one paradigm and adopt another to what psychologists call a "Gestalt switch", because scientists cannot hold two competing paradigms at the same time. What this boils down to is, that different paradigms are incommensurable.

Choice for the new paradigm may be made if the paradigm is:

1. ***Accurate***- empirically adequate with experimentation and observation;
2. ***Consistent***- internally consistent but also externally consistent with other theories;
3. ***Broad in scope***- a theory's consequences should extend beyond that which it was initially designed to explain;
4. ***Simple***- the simplest explanation, principally similar to Ockham's razor; and
5. ***Fruitful***- a theory should disclose new phenomena or new relationship among phenomena.

ImreLakatos and Scientific Research Programme

ImreLakatos introduced the concept of 'research programme' in his philosophy and attempted to resolve the perceived conflict between Popper's falsification and the revolutionary structure of science described by Thomas Kuhn. Karl Popper's theory of falsification has often (inaccurately) implied that scientists should give up a theory as soon as they encounter any falsifying evidence, immediately replacing it with increasingly 'bold and powerful' new hypotheses (guess work). In other words, falsification proposed that scientists put forward theories and nature may shout 'NO' in the form of an inconsistent observation. According to Popper, it is irrational for scientists to maintain their theories in the face of nature's rejection, yet this is what Kuhn had described them as doing. For Lakatos, "it is not that we propose a theory and nature may shout 'NO', rather we propose a maze of theories and nature may shout 'INCONSISTENT' (Lakatos, 1970: 130). This inconsistency can be resolved without abandoning our Research Programme by leaving the hard core alone and altering the auxiliary hypotheses. However, Kuhn described science as consisting of periods of normal science in which scientists continue to hold their theories in the face of anomalies, interspersed with periods of great conceptual change. This position was also held by ImreLakatos. Popper acknowledged that excellent new theories may be inconsistent with apparently empirically well supported older theories. However, whereas Kuhn implied that good scientists ignored or discounted evidence against their theories, Popper regarded counter evidence as something to be dealt with, either by explaining it, or eventually modifying the theory. Popper was not describing actual behaviour of scientists, but what a scientist should do. Kuhn was mostly describing actual behaviour. Lakatos sought a methodology that would harmonize these apparently contradictory points of view, a methodology that could provide a rational account of scientific progress, consistent with the historical record. This method he called "Methodology of Scientific Research Programme".

For Lakatos, what we think of as a 'theory' may actually be a succession of slightly different theories and experimental techniques developed over time, that share some common idea, or what Lakatos called their ‘hard core’. Lakatos called such changing collections “Research Programmes”. The scientists involved in a programme will attempt to shield the theoretical core from falsification attempts behind a protective belt of auxiliaryhypotheses. Whereas Popper was generally regarded as disparaging such measures as 'ad hoc', Lakatos wanted to show that adjusting and developing a protective belt is not necessarily a bad thing for a research programme. Instead of asking whether a hypothesis is true or false, Lakatos wanted us to ask whether one research programme is better than another, so that there is a rational basis for preferring it. He showed that in some cases one research programme can be described as progressive while its rivals are degenerating. A progressive research programme is marked by its growth, along with the discovery of stunning novel facts, development of new experimental techniques, more precise predictions, etc. A degenerating research programme is marked by lack of growth that does not lead to novel facts. Lakatos also took the view that a research programme contained 'methodological rules', some that instruct on what paths of research to avoid (he called this the 'negative heuristic') and some that instruct on what paths to pursue (he called this the ‘positive heuristic’). Therefore, the typical unit of Lakatos’s philosophy of science is not an isolated hypothesis, but rather a *researchprogramme*, consisting in a *hard core* (theory), *protective belt* (auxiliary assumptions) and a *heuristic*.

Paul Feyerabend and Scientific Anarchism

Feyerabend understood the history of science to reveal "anarchism" in scientific methodology, whereby discoveries are produced not through an adherence to any scientific methodology, but through the rejection of the prevailing wisdom and any established ways of doing science.

In *Against Method*(Feyerabend, 1975)and *Science in a Free Society*(Feyerabend, 1982), Feyerabend defended the idea that there are no methodological rules which are always used by scientists. He objected to any single prescriptive scientific method on the grounds that any such method would limit the activities of scientists. In his epistemological anarchism, Feyerabend holds that there are no useful and exception free methodological rules governing the progress of science or the growth of knowledge. It holds that the idea that science can or should operate according to universal and fixed rules is unrealistic, pernicious and detrimental to science itself. The theory advocates treating science as an ideology alongside other sphere of life such as religion, magic and mythology and considers the dominance of science in society authoritarian and unjustified. In his view science would benefit most from a dose of theoretical anarchism. He also thought that theoretical anarchism was desirable because it was more humanitarian than other systems of organization by not imposing rigid rules on scientists.

Feyerabend was critical of falsification. Feyerabend argues against the theory that no interesting theory is over consistent with all the relevant facts. This would rule out using a naïve falsificationist rule which says that scientific theories should be rejected if they do not agree with known facts. Feyerabend uses several examples, but "renormalization" in quantum mechanics provides an example of his intentionally provocative style: "This procedure consists in crossing out the results of certain calculations and replacing them by a description of what is actually observed. Thus one admits, implicitly, that the theory is in trouble while formulating it in a manner suggesting that a new principle has been discovered" (Feyerabend, 1975; 61). Such jokes are not intended as a criticism of the practice of scientists. Feyerabend is not advocating that scientists do not make use of renormalization or other ad hoc methods. Instead, he is arguing that such methods are essential to the progress of science for several reasons. One of these reasons is that progress in science is uneven. For instance, in the time of *Galileo,* optical theory could not account for phenomena that were observed by means of telescopes. So, astronomers who used telescopic observation had to use ad hoc rules until they could justify their assumptions by means of optical theory.

"Ad hoc" hypotheses actually have a positive function: they temporarily make a new theory compatible with facts until the theory to be defended can be supported by other theories. Feyerabend sanctioned the introduction of theories that are inconsistent with well-established facts. Furthermore, a pluralistic methodology that involves making comparisons between any theories at all forces defendants to improve the articulation of each theory. In this way, scientific pluralism improves the critical power of science.

According to Feyerabend, new theories came to be accepted not because of their accord with scientific method, but because their supporters made use of any trick –

rational, rhetorical or ribald – in order to advance their cause. Without a fixed ideology, or the introduction of religious tendencies, the only approach which does not inhibit progress (using whichever definition one sees fit) is "anything goes": "'anything goes' is not a 'principle' I hold... but the terrified exclamation of a rationalist who takes a closer look at history" (Feyerabend, 1975) .

The connection between Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend and Vaccine Development

Generally, the phases of vaccine development involve the principle of trial and error and falsification. They involve the stages of science in search for a paradigm vaccine, and the preclinical stage is essentially a research programme where the scientific researcher, after developing the vaccine candidate, tests the drug in non-human subjects in order to gather efficacy, toxicity and pharmacokinetic information. The dose is unrestricted and it is applied *in vitro*. The next phase, Phase 0, a clinical researcher is involved, partly due to the fact that the test involve human participants, usually a very small group of about ten humans. This phase is primarily aimed at determining what the body does to the drugs (*The Lancet, 2009: 374 (9685):176).* At Phase I, the clinical researcher goes on with an expanded group of human trial. He tests the drug on healthy human volunteers to determine whether the drug is safe to check for efficacy, side effects, best dose, and formulation method for the drug (*NCI Dictionary. National Cancer Institute. 2011-02-02*). At Phase II, the clinical researcher carries out trials on a larger number of volunteers and patients with specific diseases in order to evaluate whether the drug has any biological activity or effect (DeMets, Friedman and Furberg,2010).

This phase is designed to assess how well the drug works and to continue Phase I safety assessments.

Phase III are randomized controlled multicentre trials on large patient groups (300- 3000 0r more). The aim is to ascertain the definitive assessment of how effective the drug is. Drugs that prove satisfactory at Phase III are most often recommended and marketed. In case of any adverse effects being reported anywhere, the drugs are often recalled immediately from the market. This is clearly a best instance of of a falsified hypothesis in the Popperian scheme, whereas, for Lakatos, the drug would be modified upon and made more effective and safer. Phase III involves the clinical researcher as well as a personal physician. The last Phase, that is, Phase IV, is the postmarketing surveillance trial, or the confirmatory trial.

Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at Jenner Institute, University of Oxford, is the the scientific researcher in the development of the Covid-19 vaccine candidate, ChAdOx1 nCoV-19. On April 30, 2020, AstraZeneca, the Cambridge-based pharmaceutical group, teamed up with Oxford University to manufacture and distribute this coronavirus vaccine if clinical trials currently under way show it is effective. The potential vaccine, aimed at preventing Covid-19 infection, is being tested on more than 1,100 healthy human volunteers in the first phase of clinical trials at five centres in southern England. More than 1,000 volunteers aged between 18 and 55 are taking part in trials of the vaccine, ChAdOx1 nCoV-19. The results of the trials could be available from May. If the vaccine proves successful, late-stage trials could take place in the middle of this year, in a significant acceleration of the usual vaccine testing process (UK Guardian guardian.com 24 April, 2020).

Other clinical trials are taking place in China, the United States and Germany. All these are scientific experiments operating within the context of Karl Popper's trial and error; but with a caveat. For instance, the first clinical trial in the UK took place on 24th April, 2020, with Dr. Elisa Granato (BBC News Online. 30 April, 2020). If the vaccine proved effective with this volunteer, Popper's falsification would require that it be accorded the status of corroboration with further tests; but if it proved ineffective, it would mean that the vaccine as a hypothesis, is falsified, refuted, rejected, and discarded; that it typifies trial and error. But Lakatos would not accept rejection. He would accommodate the anomaly but work towards its correction and improvement. For Lakatos and for Kuhn, science is progressive in stages. Kuhn, particularly, believes that in the historical progress of science, the quintessence of which is the Gestalt switch, the paradigm shift.

All the above Popperian, Kuhnian and Lakatosian dimensions of scientific progress operate within rigid scientific methodologies. Feyerabend, however, forms his company apart from rigid preponderance on the scientific method. By Feyerabend's verdict, scientific theorizing, far from solving the pressing problems of our age, glorifies ephemeral generalities at the cost of confronting the real particulars that make life meaningful. This implies that Feyerabend adjures us to make use of whatever method of research that we find convenient and useful to man, be it science or not, since "Anything Goes". This brings alternative medicinal treatment and management of Covid-19 into our context of discourse. Herbal medicine is still a scientific advancement devoid of the rigid scientific method.

According to AfricaNews, Madagascan President, AndryRajoelina, had officially launched a medicine he believes could prevent and cure patients suffering from COVID-19. Developed by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research and branded *COVID Organics*, President Rajaolina presented the remedy to the press on, 22nd April, 2020. It contains *Artemisia*, a plant that fights against malaria. President Rajaolina said that it had cured two COVID-19 cases. For the Madagascan leader, clinical observations had shown a trend towards its effectiveness and that other clinical studies were underway. This president had previously made claims about herbal remedies despite scientific opinion that there was currently no cure for COVID-19 and that any experimental formula should be rigorously tested to see if it is safe and effective. As of April 22, Madagascar's case stats stood at 121 cases of which 44 had recovered with no deaths (*Africa News*. Africanews.com 22 April, 2020). However, Madagascar's Covid-19 later went higher, otherwise Feyerabend would have been justified. There are other claims of herbal medicinal cure of Covid-19, from Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire to Nigeria. The Oyo State Governor in Nigeria, SeyiMakinde, had claimed that he fought the novel coronavirus (COVID-19 with carrots (daucuscarota), vitamin C and black seed (nigella sativa) oil with honey while in isolation, after having tested positive (*The Guardian*. Guardian.ng 9 April, 2020). In these alternative medicinal claims, we can see the application of Feyerabend's suggestion, to deploy any alternative means to give solution to human problems. All that is important is to save lives irrespective of the methodology. This is where Feyerabend becomes more relevant with his methodological pluralism.

Conclusion

This study brought the relevance of the history and philosophy of science in the current and on-going quest to develop a vaccine that would cure the corona virus disease. This study demonstrated this relevance through the works of Karl Poper, Thomas Kuhn, ImreLakatos and Paul Feyerabend. The philosophical concepts of trial and error, falsifiability, verisimilitude, paradigm shift, scientific progress, scientific method, scientific research programme and scientific anarchism were made relevant in the discussion. In the end, the overarching concept in the struggle to develop a medicine that would cure Covid-19 is the concept of *trial and error*. There are multiple claims that chloroquine and remsidivir can reduce the power of Covid-19. There are claims, too, that Covid Organics can cure Covid-19. Many countries, scientific experts, including herbalists have all laid claim to their ability to obliterate Covid-19. In the final analysis, whatever their claims, their activities are still exercises of trial and error. The World Health Organisation has repudiated any claim to cure of Covid-19 via herbal medicine. This means the World Health Organisation may say NO to what nature has said YES. This is because the healing element in the orthodox medicine and the alternative medicine may be the same or similar, because both draw from nature and both are aimed at saving life. Science and non-science revolve around life, and life is larger than science. Let the preservation of life be the supreme rule of science. When there is life there is continuity of being.

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THE NOVEL CORONA VIRUSIN THE DYNAMICS OF THE INTERNATIONALSYSTEM: DISRUPTIONS AND CONNECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

As a novel actor of International Relations, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID19) has created major upshots on the evolution of the contemporary International System: At the level of International Health (the WHO and States have been in discord and continuous verbal fracas) ; in terms of the International Economy (the economic crisis, the recession, etc.); on the aspect of International Security (increased activity of non-state armed groups); and finally, in terms of the ambiance of international society, it creates a new competition: the Vaccine Race. This paper examines and discusses these numerous facets and impacts of COVID19 on the international society and concludes that the novel virus, far from being just a flu", has created fundamental alterations of disruptions and connections in the international society.

KEY WORDS: Corona Virus, International Relations, Vaccine Race, Competition

INTRODUCTION

It has been assumed that international relations (IR) consist of the relations between states. But such a definition of world politics has been increasingly challenged since the late 1960s and the early 1970s, as many other non-state actors have become more and more involved in the international political process. As a result, transnational relations permeate world politics in almost every issue-area in which state and non-state actors interact regularly across national boundaries. The globalizing and liberalizing forces in the last three decades of the twentieth century have fundamentally transformed the structure of the world economy, thereby undermining the ability of states to govern. These great global transformations have influenced and modified the traditional paradigm and theories of IR, particularly the realist school of thought because of its basic premises that actors are states, and states operate in a system of anarchy.

Transnational relations, according to Thomas Risse-Kappen (1995: 172), are regular interactions across national boundaries involving at least one non-state actor or when such an actor does not operate in the interest of a national government or an intergovernmental organization. It is no exaggeration to say, as he claims, that transnational relations in this sense permeate world politics in almost all issue-areas. IR captures a vast array of themes ranging from the growing interconnectedness of people to old and new forms of security, dialogue and conflict between visions, beliefs and ideologies, the environment, space, the global economy, poverty and climate change. The sheer number of actors and issues that are relevant to IR can be overwhelming and are incessantly evolving with the times and tides. Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a novel corona virus (nCoV), officially named as SARS-CoV-2 has become one of them.

The Coronavirus outbreak became global in January 2020, in the Chinese City of Wuhan, in the province of Hubei. The common symptoms of the virus are cold with fever, cough and difficulty in breathing. This new emerging virus novel Coronavirus (nCoV-2019) is a new strain but similar to earlier viruses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic is a crisis on a global scale that is currently affecting nations, international bodies, and citizens everywhere. Covid-19 has caused considerable morbidity and taken a heavy toll of lives.

The fact that the Coronavirus is not tied to any particular region nor grants immunity to nations with high GDP and HDI ratings does awake images of a World War One

"Homefront" mentality, an era in which most of the dominant theories and perspectives in the field of International Relations took root and solidified. Months after the emergence of the worst global health crisis in a century the race is on to find the medical equivalent of the Holy Grail—a COVID-19 vaccine.

This paper seeks to clearly show the processes through which COVID19 alters the international system as it emerges as the newest actor in IR (Part I) and its afferent creation: the vaccine race (Part II). In each level of analysis, we shall clearly elaborate in a detailed form the several confrontations amongst state actors and how these confrontations affect the modus operandi of the international society, multilateralism and international security. Our task shall dwell on the scrutiny of COVID19 as a new actor of IR through its impact on the dynamics of the contemporary international system: International security, inter-state relations, etc. and on how the pandemic solidifies the global capitalist assertions of demand and supply (as shown in the scramble for sanitary supplies.

I. COVID19: A NOVEL ACTOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected international relations and caused diplomatic tensions, as well as resulted in a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding a global ceasefire (UNSC, S/RES/2532). The diplomatic relations have been affected much due to the tensions around trade and transport of medicines, diagnostic tests and hospital equipment for the corona virus disease. Leaders of some countries have accused other countries for not containing the disease effectively and resulting in the uncontrolled spread of the virus. Developing nations in Latin America and Africa cannot find enough materials for testing for corona virus disease, partly because other countries in Europe and the United States and outspending the resources. In the bid to demonstrate the major disruptions caused by COVID19 to the international system, we shall examine the international impacts of the pandemic in three key themes: the impact of covid19 on International Peace, Security and Conflicts; covid19 as the new cold war battle-line between the United States and China; and the scramble for sanitary supplies: how the rich kill the poor.

A.) The Impact of Covid19 on International Peace, Security and Conflicts

In December 2019, when the novel strain of coronavirus first hit the headlines, 12 countries in the world were experiencing organized violence on an extensive scale, with more than 100 incidents of violence and attacks against civilians recorded in that month (Pavlik, 2020: Accessed 5/11/2020). To most of these countries, the virus seemed a distant threat at the time. Yet, a few months and over 7 million recorded Covid-19 cases later, it has evolved from a distant threat to a stark reality. The global crisis – which has unleashed an emergency in the world's public health, political, and economic systems simultaneously (Homer-Dixon, 1991: 79) – has subjected even the most stable societies to unprecedented disruption. In conflict-affected countries, i.e. countries with ongoing conflicts or a high risk of relapse into conflict, and countries emerging from conflicts, the pandemic has added another layer on top of often multiple existing layers of crisis.

On March 23, the UN Secretary General AntónioGuterres made an unprecedented call for a global ceasefire. The call gained broad political support and encouraged hopes that the pandemic might serve as a catalyst for a cessation of armed hostilities. Nevertheless, if anything, a trend of intensifying conflicts and increased insecurity has been observed, as the pandemic responses have created opportunities for armed actors and left civilians more exposed to violence. In many conflict-affected countries, the weeks since the call have witnessed unabated or increased violence (Mustasilta, 2020: 2). Non-state armed groups in particular seem to have taken advantage of the global disruption to step up violent activities. In Western Africa, for example, violence by non-state armed groups and militias was over 50% higher between 23 March and 25 April than the monthly average (Pavlik, 2020: Accessed 5/11/2020). Likewise, the so-called Islamic State has ramped up its activities in both Iraq and Syria (Cruickshank and Rassler, 2020: 4).

The increased activity of non-state armed groups reflects the broader effect of a power vacuum created by an external crisis (Ide et al., 2020: 4). The pandemic hits incumbent state authorities hard, as they face political pressures and responsibility to take drastic measures to combat the virus. Reallocation of resources and manpower (often military) can harm counterinsurgency efforts and weaken a state's capability to respond to armed challengers – unless it can rely on external support to avoid losing capacities (e.g. Libya). Armed groups, who do not face the same pressure to manage the crisis, are quick to seize the momentum to weaken their opponents (Columbo and Harris, Accessed on 10/08/2020). Aside from violent tactics, actors aiming at destabilizing the incumbent authorities can hinder or obstruct the state's response to the pandemic and/or act proactively and present themselves as more reliable alternatives – a tactic that may well work in the face of inadequate or unpopular policy measures. In internationalized conflicts (see the cases of Libya and Yemen), the extent to which armed actors are (or are not) constrained by the pandemic is contingent on the responses of their external allies.

There are three main ways in which the pandemic affects peace and conflict dynamics: the public health crisis, the policy responses to it, and the economic fallout arising from the coronavirus. Thus far, the pandemic has been accompanied by a rise in political violence around the world. Armed groups have capitalized on the crisis, while the global distraction caused by the pandemic has made it difficult to seize opportunities for peace. Clearly defined ceasefire frameworks, support towards local peace-builders, and the provision of substantive and long-term economic support in conflict-sensitive ways are crucial for mitigating the risk of an escalatory spiral.Besides its impact on international conflict, covid19 has also become the new center stage for a war of rhetoric between China and the US.

A.) Covid19 as the New Cold War Battle-Line between the United States and China

There is already a rich expert literature on the US-China trade war (Blustein, 2019; Lukin, 2019; Chong & Li, 2019: Accessed 9/8/2020). Mistrust and rivalry have been simmering between the US and China for years. However, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has given way to open hostility: A "new Cold War"? This loaded term had already been floating in the air for some time, but on May 24 it was first used publicly by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the recent National People's Congress in Beijing. He was reacting to Washington's accusations that China was responsible for the global spread of the corona virus pandemic (FMPRC, 24th May 2020). Wang accused Washington of spreading "lies and conspiracy theories," telling journalists that in addition to the corona virus, there was a "political virus" running rampant in the United States.

The coronavirus has shifted sentiment in Washington in favor of a more severe decoupling of the US and Chinese economies than previously contemplated following the realization that US dependence on China extends to pharmaceuticals and medical equipment critical to combating the spread of the virus and maintaining public health (Huang, 2020: 6; Lee,2020: 12). Early decouplers argued for a selective disengagement focusing on China’s predatory economic practices, technologies with military application, and high value commercial IP and sensitive areas of the knowledge economy. But the gravity of the coronavirus crisis has spurred talk in US policy circles of the need to consider a more extensive disentanglement of the US and Chinese economies and supply chains.

Hard decouplers, like Peter Navarro, have used the crisis to argue for greater economic self-reliance on public health and national security grounds, and a lessening of dependence on foreign markets, especially China. Navarro wants "to look strategically about moving supply chains on shore for essential medicines so that the American public is safe and the U.S. economy is secure" (Cassella, Accessed on 8/8/2020). Director of the US National Economic Council, Larry Kudlow, has floated the idea that the government could pay 100 percent of the removal costs of American firms willing to relocate manufacturing from China back to the US (Delaney, 2020).

The shift is also being driven by an increasingly vitriolic blame game about responsibility for the pandemic. Trump has unapologetically labeled COVID-19 as "the Chinese virus" and criticized Beijing for allowing it to get out of control. There have also been calls for China to pay reparations for the damage inflicted by the corona virus and for an international investigation to determine its origins and how it spread so rapidly. Chinese officials have struck back by suggesting that American soldiers visiting China were the initial source of the virus (Sherwell, 2020: 8). And China's state media has once again drawn comparisons to the eight-nation alliance that put down the Boxer Rebellion and carved up the powers and territories of the Qing government while extracting reparations (Hess, 2020: Accessed 6/8/2020).

Some US hardliners view COVID-19 coordination with China as a "self-harming exercise in zero-sum competition for global leadership", while their Chinese counterparts see opportunities to advance the country's economic and geopolitical influence as foreigners look to invest in early recovered economies (Hass & Dong, 2020: Accessed 6/8/2020). They argue that China's ability to weather the pandemic's storm on its own proves that the country has nothing to fear from a decoupled world which may well occur on Beijing's terms. Apart from becoming a battle ground for a cold war theatre, the novel corona virus has also become a yardstick for economic inequality and a platform for the demonstration of global capitalism.

A.) The Scramble for Sanitary Supplies: How the Rich Kills the Poor.

As the United States and European Union countries compete to acquire scarce medical equipment to combat the corona virus, another troubling divide is also emerging in the international system, with poorer countries losing out to wealthier ones in the global scrum for masks and testing materials. Scientists in Africa and Latin America have been told by manufacturers that orders for vital testing kits cannot be filled for months, because the supply chain is in upheaval and almost everything they produce is going to America or Europe. All countries report steep price increases, from testing kits to masks. The huge global demand for masks, alongside new distortions in the private market, has forced some developing countries to turn to UNICEF for help. EtlevaKadilli, who oversees supplies at the agency, said it was trying to buy 240 million masks to help 100 countries but so far had managed to source only around 28 million (Bradley, 2020: Accessed 7/8/2020).

The pandemic has had immediate and pronounced consequences in terms of medical supplies in the Commonwealth and globally. As countries tackle the virus, there has been a significant spike in demand for diagnostic kits, critical medicines and artificial respiratory equipment like ventilators, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline healthcare professionals. The scramble to acquire these essential medical goods has led to various unilateral trade measures – from curbing exports to eliminating import tariffs (Evenett, 2020; WTO, 2020) – as well as price wars and more extreme tactics, including allegations of 'modern piracy' as vital shipments are seized or contracts nullified. The disrupted production and supply of these goods, as well as global port closures and logistics hurdles, have led to difficulties meeting the increasing demand for medical supplies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought considerable attention to trade in medical products, and specifically trade in products for prevention, testing and treatment. The COVID-19 pandemic has spread to most countries and territories with hundreds of thousands of people infected, and a growing burden of fatalities. Understandably, governments are taking protective measures to stem the pandemic of the virus. Some of these measures may inadvertently impact the flow of critical medical goods across territories or might lead to breach of international trade contracts; for example, the seizure of 20 ventilators destined for Barbados by the US government in April 2020 (Smith, 2020: Accessed 8/8/2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic places Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in an extremely precarious position, given their high levels of economic and social vulnerability, fragile healthcare systems and limited preparedness to tackle the unfolding crisis. While the full impact of the pandemic, its duration and its aftereffects are still uncertain, it represents a significant blow to their prospects for achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as a setback for countries expected to graduate from the LDC category. Amid the global scramble to secure supplies of medical goods, many governments are harnessing trade policy to help tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and bolster the effectiveness of their national health responses. They are doing so by curbing exports or easing imports. Several have also imposed nontariff measures that limit other countries' imports of COVID-19 related supplies and medical products (Evenett, 2020: 6).

One of the biggest disruptions to medical supply chains relates to port closures and global logistics hurdles. Around 80 per cent of global trade, including medical goods, is seaborne. To prevent the spread of the virus, a number of ports and shipping companies have implemented measures, including restrictions on the movement of professional seafarers and marine personnel. This is causing severe disruptions within the industry. It is therefore imperative to enhance trade facilitation and expedite customs procedures to keep vital goods moving as quickly as possible, especially the transit of essential medicine and equipment. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has proposed a number of measures to speed up the movement of goods at the border. These include reducing or minimizing physical interaction between officials and traders at the border; introducing regulations that enable the use of information and communication technologies to use e-payments, e-signatures and e-contracts; and relaxing cross-border data flow of sensitive information to monitor the epidemic (OECD, 2020: Accessed 8/8//2020).

I. THE COMPETITION OR RACE FOR A VACCINE

The assumption of competition among nation-states is a well-established premise of historical and sociological research on the modern state-system. The literature, however, typically focuses on certain forms of competition: States are seen as engaging in a continual power struggle for "hard" goods such as territories and natural and human resources while competition for "soft" ones such as attention, legitimacy, and the achievement of prestige tends to be neglected.

Since the global outbreak in early 2020, a wide range of researchers, backed by public and private funders, have rushed to accelerate R&D on vaccines and treatments. As a result, pre-clinical research and clinical trials have increased significantly. Hundreds of clinical trials have been registered since the beginning of 2020. Most of them test drug candidates but several vaccine candidates are also being tested. Testing many different approaches can increase the chances that at least one, or a few, candidates are successful.

Moscow researchers say one of the country's potential corona virus vaccines has been proven safe in small-scale human trials(Tass, 2020), and is ready for wider tests. It should be a modest win for a country that has sought for years to restore its Soviet-era reputation for cutting-edge science, and for President Vladimir Putin (Kremlin, 2020: Accessed 7/8/2020). Yet on Thursday, Britain, the U.S. and Canada accused Russia of hacking international research centers that are trying to develop a vaccine. The Kremlin denies any involvement, while the head of the country's sovereign wealth fund called the allegations an attempt to tarnish the Russian research effort. It's still an accusation that jeopardizes a hoped-for inoculation boost for prestige.

A.) Science, Politics and the Race for a Corona Virus Vaccine

The announcement Tuesday by Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country was the first to approve a corona virus vaccine did not provoke the awe and wonder of the Soviet Union's launch of the first satellite into orbit in 1957. Instead, it was met by doubts about the science and safety. But the claim underscored how, like the space race, the competition to have the first vaccine is about international rivalries as well as science. The first nation to develop a way to defeat the novel corona virus will achieve a kind of moon-shot victory and the global status that goes along with it. That's valuable to Putin, whose popularity at home has declined amid a stagnant economy and the ravages of the virus outbreak.

"To be the first one out of the block with a corona virus vaccine would be a real — pardon the pun — shot in the arm for the Kremlin," said Timothy Frye, a political science professor at Columbia University who specializes in post-Soviet politics. Russia is not alone in viewing a vaccine in this light. China, where the virus first emerged, has also raced to make progress on a vaccine. A state-owned Chinese company is boasting that its employees, including top executives, received experimental shots even before the government approved testing in people. U.S. President Donald Trump, whose handling of the corona virus pandemic has put his political fate in grave jeopardy, is hoping to get credit for his administration's aggressive push for a vaccine, ideally one that arrives before the election in November. It's far from clear at this point whether Putin has beaten Trump to this medical milestone.

It's also possible Russia had helped. The U.S., Britain and Canada last month accused hackers working for Russian intelligence of trying to steal information about a corona virus vaccine from academic and pharmaceutical research institutions. In any case, the public is eager for a vaccine as global deaths from the virus surpass 730,000. Some say they would even welcome one from Russia, provided it passes muster with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which approves vaccines used in the United States, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends who should receive them in the nation.

A.) The International Political Economy of Vaccines

The vaccine is a very special pharmaceutical product, not only medically - it is one of the very few primary preventive drugs - but also economically and socially, and even politically. The vaccine is both a product and a concept or, more precisely, it is the variation of a concept into a product.

Behind this frantic competition in search of the vaccine that would make it possible to get out of the pandemic crisis, an economic race is emerging. The United States has already spent 5.5 billion Euros, divided between different laboratories, to ensure the receipt of several million doses of the vaccines, which are still only candidate vaccines. Europe, through France, Germany, Italy and the

Netherlands, was quick to react and disbursed 300 million Euros to pre-reserve 300 million doses for the British pharmaceutical industry AstraZeneca. The UK has also stepped in and spent more than 100 million Euros to ensure it receives the necessary doses of vaccine.These staggering figures, which reflect an indirect form of research funding, are more of a “political strategy”, analyzes economist Nathalie Coutinet: “These pre-orders are used by pharmaceutical companies to allow them to adapt their production equipment to be able to quickly produce huge quantities of vaccines. Behind this, we see a political logic of states to tell their populations that they are able to meet their health requirements, as was the case with masks or beds in hospitals. "

Industrially, the vaccine market, which is small (a little over 2% of the drug market) but dynamic and innovative, has been experiencing significant upheaval for several years. New concepts (so-called "therapeutic" vaccines) have thus emerged, new pathologies including the discovery of the infectious etiology of certain cancers, new production methods with recombinant vaccines. It's a fast-moving world. And public opinion, which is no contradiction, calls on researchers to develop vaccines against HIV infection or the Ebola virus.

Long considered a separate sector in the world of medicine, the vaccine has for several years undergone a process of “pharmacization” which affects both research and development and pre- and post-MA evaluation. For a long time, the evaluation criteria for vaccines were confined to simple in vitro tests of immunogenicity and safety. Today, “vaccine candidates” are the subject of pharmaceutical-type clinical development with phase III trials which, in some cases such as HPV, have involved thousands of patients. For a long time, vaccines were produced by small specialized companies, more or less artisanal, more or less linked to public institutions, on the fringes of major industrial trends. Today, large international firms such as Sanofi, GSK and Pfizer have made it a major focus of development.

For a long time, the vaccine received little public funding, especially in developing countries; today these funds are relayed by large international “facilities”, such as the GAVI alliance, which mobilize private and public funds to carry out mass vaccination campaigns against pathologies as varied as yellow fever, cholera, measles and mumps, hepatitis B, pneumococcal infection, etc. with often spectacular results.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 was originated form Wuhan city of China and spread all over the world. Itis right that no one is safe form that. There are many political, economic, social, andreligious myths on the origin of Covid-19.Pandemics are striking with greater frequency primarily because of deforestation, environmentaldegradation, rapid urbanization, overpopulation, migration and growing animal and human conflict.There is no herd or population immunity against new pathogens such as the Sars-Cov-2 that causes thecorona virus disease (Covid-19), and till herd or population immunity crosses 70%, it will continue tospread. In these circumstances, public health interventions in combination with an effective vaccine maymitigate the situation.The speed with which the Covid-19 pandemic is progressing leaves the world with no choice but to havean emergency-use vaccine ready within six to eight months.

The spread of the Corona virus disease has revealed the fragility of health systems in all countries of the world both large and small. The measure of this pandemic in terms of financial allocations has been the most severe test facing the world since the Great Depression in 1929. More so, its catastrophic effects on the global economy, on food supply, as well as its socio-cultural and general psychological trauma calls for the need to conduct a comprehensive review of international relations frameworks by focusing on global environmental cooperation to address future sanitary risks that the world may face.

It has become apparent that the repercussions of the corona virus disease have cast a shadow on the relations within the states in the International System. However, the Corona virus pandemic has re-modified the ethos of the international scene from multilateral cooperation to that of absolute competition which threatens the existence and future of inter-national- relations. Moving forward, what's at stake for inter-national-relations? Will the post-pandemic era become collide with the end of a multilateral international Society?

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GENDER, RIGHTS AND RELEVANT AIDS IN PANDEMICS: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Proactive and reactive responses to pandemics and its impact on members of society irrespective of gender, race, religion and class, bring to the fore the issues of inequalities as it regards human rights, gender consciousness and the nature of humanitarian assistance deployment. This paper aims to analyse these impacts and responses using John Rawls' Theory of Justice. Rawls' Difference Principle is a principle chosen behind a 'veil of ignorance' in an original position that requires that social benefits and burdens are allocated in such a way as to make the position of the least well-off as good as it can be. This paper analyses the ongoing responses in the light of the Difference Principle to determine how well they promote human right, gender parity and ensure that when aids is provided to victims, that they are relevant and are aligned to the priorities and actual needs of the victims of pandemics such as the ongoing COVID-19. The value of this paper lies in the application of the Difference Principle in shaping and proposing sustainable fair, just and equitable responses (proactive and reactive) to pandemics.

Key words: Aid, Difference Principle, Equality, Gender, Human rights, Justice, Pandemics, Response.

Introduction

Pandemics generally are described as disease epidemics that affect a large proportion of the population spanning a wide geographical area. COVID-19 also known as Corona virus was declared as a pandemic by WHO as it has affected over 6.4 million people worldwide and caused over 337, 000deaths across all ages, gender and races. Pandemics like COVID-19 do not just constitute public health issues, they are beyond physical illness and boarders on economic and social issues that are equally life threatening. These unfortunately bring to the fore existing inequalities embedded in the fabric of the society. Pandemic COVID-19 has not only exposed deeply entrenched political and socio-economic problems like gender inequality, human rights abuse in both developed and developing nations, it has also unravelled the responses of various local, federal and regional governments, policymakers in both private and public institutions, law enforcement agencies including humanitarian assistance, citizens and have further exacerbated inequality concerns.

This paper will thoroughly examine the concept of pandemics with a focus on COVID-19 (Corona virus), so as to fully understand its impact on citizens in a disaggregated manner and on society in general. It will also vigorously look at the responses to the pandemics, that is, preparatory/proactive and reactionary responses and their processes within the context of political and socio-economic inequalities. This paper will in addition explore pandemics as it affects social justice, it will analyse these responses using John Rawls' Difference Principle, first to gauge how well the responses and their processes mitigate or exacerbate the inequality issues of gender, rights, and nature of aids, and then to apply the principle to shape and recommend sustainable fair, just and equitable responses that are both proactive and reactive.

Pandemics and COVID-19 in Context

While epidemic describes "occurrence of a disease in a population at a frequency higher than that expected in a given time period, which is affecting many individuals in a population" (Wikitionary, 2020), Pandemic is described as an epidemic of a larger magnitude in terms of frequency and geographical spread. A thorough examination of its description and perception will provide insight into its impact and will aid assessment of the various proactive and reactive responses to it.

Pandemic Corona virus or COVID-19 was first described as a novel virus being a new and greatly unfamiliar strain in the COVID family of viruses. Due to emerging realities of the virus such as the fact that it is constantly mutating thereby making the formulation of preventive and curative medicine difficult; the frequency of spread across national borders and other extenuating factors, it was first described by WHO as an enemy virus and later as a pandemic. These perceptions were based on its traits and how it impacted patients and the health sector globally. Another set of description and perception which is a reflection of its political and socio-economic impact is as follows:

According to Ursúa and Barro (2020), Pandemic COVID-19 has been classified as one of the leading rare macroeconomic disaster. It has with the global policies of prevention through forceful lockdown caused profound macroeconomic disruption.

Although these policies contribute to flattening infection curves and saving lives,

> they also involve difficult trade-offs with respect to economic costs. That is, the deployment of "extraordinary amounts of support in order to limit the economic damage. These policies have clear merits, but also involve trade-offs, including a substantial accumulation of public debt to levels last seen around the times of the most severe of all rare disasters … World War II." (Ursúa and Barro, 2012, 2020).

While there are clear merits of reduced fatalities and structured economic support for citizens, nonetheless the emerging way of life has a life altering impact on society. The pandemic and the forced confinement including the economic contraction impacted citizens globally and in different measures but the most conspicuous impact is the inequalities it exacerbated.

Certain terms stand out in these progressive descriptions of Pandemic COVID-19 which are as follows- its novelty, an enemy virus (invisible enemy), pandemic and a microeconomic disaster. Its novelty means the world is in an unchartered territory in its experience of the virus and the discreet threat it poses. As an enemy virus, it became 'othered' in a manner that depicts the virus as different from other previously known and experienced viruses and as against the world. That is, as the enemy virus, the invisible enemy that posed a global threat which caused a global lockdown. As a pandemic, it is believed to be a global phenomenon, a universal threat and indeed pandemic COVID-19 infected about 0.082% of the 7. 8 billion world population in less than 7 months. COVID-19 described as a significant and rare microeconomic disaster on a global scale revealed its potential to disrupt global economy. For instance, it necessitated a forced lockdown that provoked a demand and supply crisis in an unprecedented manner, greatly affecting service oriented economies.

These documented descriptions and perceptions of pandemic COVID-19 which is a highly consequential threat to global well- being reveal a need for deeper questioning and critical analysis of the pandemic that transcends the scope of morality. However, this paper's focus is on the moral significance of its impact and responses to it.

Impacts

Pandemic COVID-19 had and is still presently having global disproportionate impacts not just in its threat to health and life but as to the total global well-being. While it poses a universal health risk, as everyone irrespective of gender, race, religion and class are vulnerable, its political and socio-economic impacts are greatly disproportionate. The gravity of this is determined by an individual's pre-existing social class, geopolitical location and the policymakers' level of preparedness to mitigate the threat.

The lop-sided, bottom-heavy impact plays on the existing socio-cultural and systemic inequality globally especially in the political and socio economic sphere. It aggravated the existing gap in life expectancy, well-being and life opportunities as well as a renewed demand for social justice in the face of increasing injustice. Inequality in this sphere exposes issues which include gender equality, human rights abuses, and the nature of aids disbursed. It brings to the fore the conversation on burdens and benefits of efforts of prevention and cure of the Pandemic COVID-19. Vulnerability broadly defined are realities or characteristics over which a person or group has little control and which make the person or group more likely to experience harm or not receive a benefit. (UNAIDS, 1998) This includes realities such as gender, religion, socio-economic factors, race, legal status, culture etc. It so happens that the women, the poor, sick, disabled are included in the vulnerable group. These vulnerable groups bear the greatest portion of the burdens unjustly much more than they enjoy if at all, the benefits.

In examining the impact of pandemic COVID-19, especially in the political and socio-economic sphere, the need for gender consciousness and use of gender lens is essential as this will provide insight into the depth of injustices propagated by the pandemic. Service oriented economies irrespective of whether they are in the formal or informal sectors have been greatly impacted by the pandemic with a substantial number of them not having post-pandemic prospects. Service economies engage a disproportionately high number of women as business owners, full time or part time employees. Some of these are women who have recently become financially independent especially those in developing nations, who are also breadwinners and may have due to forced lockdown lost their means of livelihood and are back to square one. These gains have been eroded and the possibility of quick financial recovery is slim, as existing pay gap between men and women widens and cripples the progresses women have made worldwide,"(Cari Shane,2020)

In other words, girls and women are disproportionately impacted and disadvantaged by the pandemic. According to

KFF March 2020 Coronavirus Poll, “there were some gender differences in how men and women were experiencing the pandemic, with women more likely to worry about both the health and economic effects on their families, and more likely to report taking protective actions”(Hamel &Salganicoff, 2020). Lockdown places a large and increasing care burden on women more than men in terms of care for children who are locked down at home away from crèches, nurseries and schools. As well as elderly relatives locked out of care homes, and spousal commitment to shared home-care are mostly set aside due to the nature and demand of their career. It is not just about working from home alone for these women, it is about paid caregivers who have lost their income, it is about care labour migrating from paid domain to unpaid domain where the women constitute the majority of providers. The number of out-of school girls will increase as school closures due to lockdown exposed them to risk of abuse, domestic/gender-based violence, teenage pregnancies and early marriages. This also is a loss on the gains on girl-child education.

United Nations predicted that COVID-19 pandemic could have huge knock-on effects on women's health as they constitute the majority of health and social care workers, who are on the front lines of the fight against Covid-19. This also includes impact on maternal health care, pressure from increased domestic responsibility, exposure to increased risk of domestic/gender-based violence and loss of their livelihoods. (UN, 2020). Globally, domestic-violence rates rise during lockdown periods. “Stress, alcohol consumption, and financial difficulties are all considered triggers for violence in the home, and the quarantine measures being imposed around the world will increase all three. Social distancing and self-isolation are often tools of coercive and controlling behaviour by perpetrators, which also shuts down routes to safety and support." (Helen Lewis, 20202). Because the burden of proof is placed on the victim, evidence of abuse become lost due to restriction of movement, report of abuse decreases and perpetrators escape the penalty for their crime.

In addition, the burden of Pandemic COVID-19 impacts human rights and raises issues such as the right of citizens to support for or enhanced normal functioning during pandemic, rights of health workers to be protected from infection and to be able to perform their duties optimally, patients' right to care when infected as well as right to equally essential non-COVID-19 care, right to protection from occupational hazard, including protecting staff from infection in the line of duty. For instance, workers in critical sectors who are in the frontline of providing healthcare, food, and transportation who are mostly low income earners carry a huge burden of the impact without sufficient protection from the risk of infection.

In many of these workplaces employers cannot or will not take measures that protect workers from infection. For example, some 350 workers—mostly immigrants—at a single Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in South Dakota tested positive for COVID-19 in April (within a month). Those cases amounted to 40 percent of all cases in South Dakota at the time. In the past few weeks, workers have protested such conditions and called for occupational and

> health protections at places like Walmart, Amazon, and Instacart. (Archon Fung, 2020)

These human rights issues further reveal the extent of existing global social injustice as protection from infection is largely skewed towards those who are already at an advantage, who have privileged access to care, to test and protection. Compared to the poor (both existing poor and recently made poor by the effect of COVID-19) and vulnerable group who lack the capacity to protect themselves through social distancing (probably from being homeless or having small cramped–up houses mostly in slum areas), and access to constant water supply for regular hand washing and other measures.

COVID-19 has already led to significant economic and market dislocations, involving a lot of human suffering(Ursúa and Barro 2020). A Post–COVID-19 reality that fosters social justice depends on the response to the pandemic.

Response to pandemics- Policies, Processes of planning and implementation

Governments bear a moral responsibility to identify where social injustices are likely to occur as the result of a pandemic and to take reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the worst among them (Faden, 2007) This moral responsibility is borne by policy makers at all levels including the private sector.

Both proactive response, which is the planning and preparation for possible or future Pandemics and reaction to the occurrence and spread of pandemics (reactive responses), entails policy formulation, planning processes and effective implementation. These policies have goals that must be based on ethical values so as to promote social justice.

According to WHO basic principles that should guide planning for and response to pandemics are- utility, efficiency, fairness and liberty. In addition, there are principles guiding the procedure for decision making which include Transparency, Participation, Revisability and Effectiveness. These eight principles are described as follows:

The principle of **utility**,which is, acting so as to produce the greatest good. A second principle is **efficiency**, which calls for minimizing the resources needed to produce a particular result or maximizing the result that can be produced from a particular set of resources. The third principle is the principle of **fairness,** which is treating like cases alike. It should deal specifically with the risk of unfair discrimination, that is, discrimination based on irrelevant or illegitimate characteristics of a person or a group. Finally, there is the principle of **liberty**, which holds that one should impose the least burden on personal self-determination that is necessary to achieve a legitimate goal or, in other words, one should not trade all freedom for security. Additionally, principles concerned with the procedures by which decisions are made include principleof transparency. It states that information about the processes and bases of decisions should be made available to the affected population. Theprinciple of **participation**that is, that the stakeholders should be involved, through appropriate institutions and means, in the processes of formulating the objectives and adopting the policies. Then there is the principle of **review** and **revisability**. Stakeholders should have a way to appeal policies after they have been adopted, and processes should be in place that allowspolicies and plans to be reviewed and revised in light of experience. Finally, the principle of **effectiveness** states that there must be ways to translate the other principles into practice. Otherwise, the principles will have no relevance, and the whole exercise of judging the ethics of pandemic preparation and response becomes irrelevant. (WHO, 2004)

Looking at the 8 principles, it is obvious that global polices responding to the Pandemic COVID-19 reflected these principles in both formulation and implementation howbeit in differing degrees especially in relation to geopolitical location.

The most outstanding policy with global consensus and reach is the forceful lockdown as against its alternative which is adopting a 'herd mentality'. So we ask, was utility considered? Yes it was, it served to bring about the greatest good which is flattening the infection curve globally thereby minimizing fatalities. The next question will be was this good fairly distributed? Was it distributed to a large number or small number of people? If the good is simply prevention and cure of Pandemic COVID 19, then it is about preservation of life. It served a large number of people. That is, forced lockdown was enforced globally. Lockdown entails restriction of people's movement, people staying off the streets and remaining in their homes and shelters. The next question is how well were these lives protected? And how well distributed across society was this? Global health infrastructures were exposed for what they were in quality and quantity. How equally was the burden of the lockdown shared between the rich and poor countries and within each country? Has the privileged not enjoyed more benefits from and lower burden from the efforts of prevention and care?

With the shock of being stranded and not being able to travel out of their impoverished countries due to the lockdown, the political class in developing nations took advantage of available insufficient health facilities, leaving the low income earners, poor and vulnerable people to scramble for what was left. Even palliative materials were diverted from their rightful beneficiaries.

The principle of liberty is about not trading all freedom for security, how was this protected especially in developing nations? With rampant police brutality and exposure to the risk of abuse or gender-based violence, securing at least some freedom became highly- priced priority.

As a guide to policy response to pandemics both as proactive and reactive I propose fairness as an overarching underlying ethical value for policies formulated in response to pandemics like COVID-19 because of its ability to mitigate existing socio-economic inequality better than utility. I acknowledge that there will be instances where the four principles will align but where there is a conflict between utility and fairness, fairness shall be prioritized. Above all, whatever policies are formulated and practices implemented, it is important that they are geared towards reducing those inequalities that could be reduced or prevented.

Analysis of the Pandemic responses using the Difference Principle

The occurrence of Pandemics, the collation of how they impact citizens in a disaggregated manner and the proactive and the ensuing reactive responses to them constitute a moral challenge of great magnitude. The correlation between pandemic and social justice is such that pandemics provide the instances to question the justice of a society or otherwise. Pandemics expose how the unjust and unequal health and socio-economic burden of the pandemicsare consequences of a long history of policies (and in the case of developing African nations, how dearth of good leadership and neglect of core governance priorities) have created unequal health outcomes.

In the light of the injustice, widened gaps of inequality, John Rawls' notion of equality, fairness and justice become relevant, especially his thesis that justice entails deliberation about common good on the basis of fairness.

Rawls's first principle confirms widespread convictions about the importance of equal basic rights and liberties. The second principle posits the conditions for fair equality of opportunity and the Difference Principle requires that social benefits and burdens are allocated in such a way as to make the position of the least well-off as good as it can be. These principles are chosen behind a 'veil of ignorance' in an original position (Rawls 2001, 42-43). OlajumokeAkiode (2015) replaced the veil of ignorance with 'instrumental reasoning' coupled with 'empathic understanding of the other' to foster reason backed social consciousness that enhances the principles applicability to myriad situations like Pandemics.

In an ideal situation Rawls claims that the fundamental interest of free, equal, rational and reasonable citizens (with empathic understanding of 'the other') will be primary goods such as basic rights and liberties; "Freedom of movement, and free choice among a wide range of occupations;The powers of offices and positions of responsibility;Income and wealth;The social bases of self-respect: the recognition by social institutions that gives citizens a sense of self-worth and the confidence to carry out their plans". (Rawls, 1975, 2001). But in a pandemic, the primary goods will include safety, access to good health care, prevention of risk of infection and fostering normal functioning. The fundamental interest of government, that is, policy makers in both public and private institutions include protection of human rights, provision of safe health care, prevention, control and cure of the pandemic, enhancing the fulfilment of the obligations of health care workers as well as their obligations to them and so on.

This paper's main focus of policy analysis is the global forced lockdown. Analysis of this policy as a response to the Pandemic COVID-19 using John Rawls modified Difference principle to determine how well they promote human rights, gender parity and protection from gender-based violence, and how they ensure that when aids is provided to victims, that they are relevant and are aligned to the priorities and actual needs of the victims of pandemics such as the COVID-19.

The indicators for analysis include- gender consciousness and recognition of risk to women; fair promotion of prospects of normal functioning; Fair and equitable aid provision; Relevance and alignment of aid to beneficiaries' priorities and public engagement.

According to Ruth Faden "The Bellagio group concluded that international institutions and nation-states must bring these rights and interests to the forefront of consideration in efforts to prevent a pandemic, in responses during a pandemic, and in efforts to redress economic and health burdens in the post-pandemic period; and should always be taken into account as part of a serious commitment to social justice."(Faden, 2007,Bellagio Group, 2006a).

Due consideration and prioritizing of the rights and interests of the disadvantaged groups of people is the essence of true and genuine commitment to social justice that mitigates inequality in all spheres of the society. Consideration with a gender lens and diversity in the body of policy makers would have produced better outcomes for women, poor and low income earners who do not have conducive homes to stay locked-in. Both primary and secondary burdens for disadvantaged groups require due consideration in policy formulation and implementation.

If in the commendable policy formulation and implementation, there was a disaggregation of society by demographics, thereby identifying the rights, interests and possible risk exposure of each group in every society, we would have had more equitable outcomes from the global lockdown policy despite the social and economic palliatives provided. For instance if the policy formulation and implementation was gender conscious, and rights, interests and possible risk of exposure of women and girls were properly considered through gender lens, the burden of the pandemic would not have being biased towards women. The occurrence of gender based violence would not have spiked so high. Gender analysis is a foundational base for all socio-economic policies even if it is geared towards responding to pandemic; and gender mainstreaming is a strategy to ensure gender equality permeates all aspect of society even during pandemics and implementation of responses to pandemics.

It is not only government that should make policies that are gender conscious, considerate and that prioritize disadvantaged groups in the society in the pandemic prevention and cure planning, the private sector also need to do likewise. Periods of pandemics call for empathic leadership and governance that ensure the least well off groups are prioritized in the distribution of burdens and benefits of prevention and cure as well as emerging secondary harms of responses to pandemics.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Social justice demands that in responding to pandemics both proactive and reactive responses, gender analysis, prioritizing of the rights and interests of the disadvantaged groups is a must. This enables policies either for the nation or a segment of the country that is private sector, to do a disaggregated analysis of its stakeholders, to enhance a detailed risk analysis of the intended response as well as possible secondary harm that they may occur besides the unequal burden cultural and systemic inequality they are programmed to bear. It is not enough to have ethical guidelines for policy formulation if utility trumps other ethical values as maximizing good enhances inequality. The tenets of justice as fairness combine with the other principles will ensure better outcome. In addition, policy makers at all level should be relatively prepared for pandemics in terms of health infrastructure delivery that enhances life expectancy and well-being especially for the vulnerable group. There should be prompt response or planning, effective communication to citizens or stakeholders, nimble public engagement and commitment to social justice hinged on the principle of fairness so as to aid more successful response to pandemics. These will promote responses to pandemics that mitigate inequality, enhance gender parity and ensure that relevant aid is disbursed. Diversity inclusion and participatory policy formulation ensures proactive and reactive responses to pandemics favour the least well off or the disadvantaged groups globally.

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POLITICAL DECEPTION AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Political deception is one of the familiar tactic used by politicians to sway the masses and further their political aims; this is not new in Nigerian politics and politics all over the world. Political leaders in Nigeria have applied this tool in every way possible: during campaigns and even during their tenure in office. The question of how far this deception can go to be considered morally wrong is a big question. Thispaper raises certain moral and pertinent questions on the ways which political deception has affected the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria: Do political leaders have the right to lie to their followers? is playing politics with COVID-19 pandemic morally justifiable? Can employing deceptive tactics when handling the pandemicbe morally justifiable? Hannah Arendt establishes that lying in politics is real and a challenge to both local and international politics and that such lies are always counterproductive. Using the analysis method, this paper holds that lying and other deceptive acts by political leaders during this pandemicis morally wrongand *counterproductive. It violates democratic and moral principles and creates an atmosphere of mistrust between the people and their leaders. It further erodes the already fragile relationship between the Nigerian people and their leaders and this is detrimental to the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria.*

Keywords: Political Deception, Covid-19 Pandemic, Morality, Lying in Politics, Truth Telling, Hannah Arendt.

INTRODUCTION

Recent happenings around the world especially the COVID-19 pandemic have raised many moral questions which have led to renewed debates on solutions to the pandemic. Nigeria is not left out of the scourge of the pandemic, although the country has recorded lower cases of the virus so far compared to other nations across the world.There is no telling what the future holds as far as this virus is concerned but the fight against the virus is ongoing and there is hope that humanity will overcome and eradicate it. There are many problems which arise as a result of not just this deadly virus but because of the existing political situation in the country. Nigerian politics has been characterized by violence, intolerance and most of all, deception. Deception is not new in Nigerian politics and many politicians have been accused of deceiving the masses into giving them their votes and once they get into power, they forget their promises to the people. This paper explores political deception in Nigerian politics and how this has influenced the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. It uses the analytic method to break down the nature of deception in Nigerian politics. Using Hannah Arendt 's position which establishes that lying in politics is real and pervades political behavior to the highest levels of domestic and international politics, it raises pertinent questions on lying in politics and its effects on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Considering the arguments in favor of deception in politics like Plato, Machiavelli, Waltzer, etc and those not in favor like Arendt, Bok, Ravin, etc, The paper argues against the use of deception in Nigerian politics especially during this Pandemic. It maintains that lying in politics is counterproductive both to the fight against COVID-19 and Nigerian democracy. This conclusion is based on the nature of Nigerian political condition and the novel nature of COVID-19.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

i. Deception

Deception is defined as the act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid or the act of deceiving, resorting to falsehood and deception(Merriam-Websterdictionary.com). The Encarta dictionaries also define deception as a practice of misleading somebody; of deliberately making somebody believe things that are not true or something intended to mislead somebody, an act , trick or device intended to deceive or mislead (Encarta Dictionaries 2009)

ii. COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or ‘2019-nCoV.’The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe

Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold (WHO 2020).

iii. Pandemic

The W.H.O. defines a pandemic as the worldwide spread of a new disease, an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people(Heath 2011)

POLITICAL DECEPTION

Political deception has been used as a tool in politics for a very long time. Plato (360BC) is known to have sanctioned its use in his Republic when he advocated for a 'noble lie' be told to the citizens in the state. This lie was to be told to the masses to make them accept the policies of the government and the division of the state into three sections made up of the rulers, the soldiers and the craftsmen. This so called 'noble lie' was to deceive the people into accepting whatever status or class allotted to them by the state. Miller and Robinson(2019) captures this aptly when they stated:

> Plato's concept of the 'noble lie' (360 BC: Book 3: 414b-415d), relaying the thinking of Socrates, referred to the importance of deceptive myths that were essential to maintaining order in society: the idea here was that to ensure harmony in the context of a social hierarchy, myths needed to be created in order to help people accept their location

within that hierarchy: God made some to rule (the golden race), others to build (iron and bronze workers) and still others to fight (soldiers).

Another interesting perspective on political deception comes from Machiavelli (1532/2003)who is known for his position on the use of craftiness or cunning by political leaders. Heunderstood deception as one amongst many tactics, others including coercion, that are necessary in order to secure and protect the state. He epitomized the doctrine of deception as a necessary political tactic. The Prince sets a rationale for the importance of deception as a political strategy. “importantly, the prince must and can be a great pretender and dissembler and men are simple and so subject to present necessities that he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who is willing to allow himself to be deceived.{1532}ch:18). There is no agreement on the use of deception by political office holders by scholars. While some accept that politicians lie or use other forms of deception and consider it wrong, others do not accept this. Following the same line of thought as Machiavelli, MichealWalzer (1973)with his theory of “Dirty Hands” defends the necessity of officials breaking moral codes. He agrees with Machiavelli that an effective political leader must learn how not to be good nor do most of us believe that those who govern us are innocent even the best of them.Walzer has no illusions about the virtue of democratic leaders: “The men who act for us and in our name are necessarily hustlers and liars." Walzer is convinced that we would not want to be governed by people who consistently took the uncompromising absolutist" position, but he worries about leaders who accept the utilitarian calculation unreflectively with no sense of guilt about the moral norms they have broken. (Pasquerella&Killilea2014). Bok (1978) rejects Machiavelli's and Walzer's realist argument that politics demands deception. She argues that lies on sensitive topics such as the intention to impose wage and price restraints can be avoided by having an established policy that officials will not comment on matters dealing with the economy, national security and other delicate areas(Pasquerella and Killilea, 2014). Similarly, for Ramsay et al (2000) there is nothing special about politics that would justify applying different evaluative criteria to political actions or require a transcendence of ordinary morality. However, she argues that even if we accept consequentialism as the appropriate theory by which to judge acts of deception and secrecy in politics, these acts will be difficult to justify, especially in a democratic political order. Miller and Robinson(2019) hold that deception as a strategy can undertake a number of forms like lying, manipulation of information involving omission and exaggeration, distortion….and misdirection.Mearsheimer (2011) identifies 3 forms of deception: Lying, spinning and concealment.

HANNAH ARENDT ON LYING IN POLITICS

Hannah Arendt in her essay titled "Lying in Politics: A Reflection on the Pentagon Papers" (1971)establishes that lying in politics is real and shows to what extent this practice has eaten into political life. Historically, this is not new and since the beginning of political history, deception has been practiced. She opines

For secrecy—what diplomatically is called discretion as well as the

> arcana imperii, the mysteries of government—and deception, the deliberate falsehood and the outright lie used as legitimate means to achieve political ends, have been with us since the beginning of recorded history.

Lying in politics transcends local politics and spreads as far as international politics and truthfulness has not been considered a political virtue. The position of the political realists are more popular and it has now been established that lying and other deceptive practices or acts are normal in politics.

Truthfulness has never been counted among the political virtues, and lies have always been regarded as justifiable tools in political dealings. Whoever reflects on these matters can only be surprised how little attention has been paid, in our tradition of philosophical and political thought, to their significance, on the one hand, for the nature of action and, on the other, for the nature of our ability to deny in thought and word whatever happens to be the actual fact.

Arendt observes that even in the United States, deception has been enshrined in politics even at the international level. In her paper, she cites several examples in her papers on how government officers and advisers are plotters and accomplices to deceptive ploys to cover their operations. This is shown from "the phony body counts of the "search-and-destroy" missions, the doctored after-damage reports of the air force, the "progress" reports to Washington from the field written by subordinates who knew that their performance would be evaluated by their own reports”(Arendt,1971)

There always comes the point beyond which lying becomes counterproductive. This point is reached when the audience to which the lies are addressed is forced to disregard altogether the distinguishing line between truth and falsehood in order to be able to survive. Truth or falsehood—it does not matter which any more, if your life depends on your acting as though you trusted; truth that can be relied on disappears from public life and with it the chief stabilizing factor in the ever-changing affairs of men.

She holds that education of the people is important for this deception to be stopped and there is need for information and education of the public who are being deceived by their government who are supposedly acting on their behalf. She notes the role that the Press has to play in sharing information to the people. Information and education can inform the people of actions which are undertaken on their behalf without their consent, for her,’ so long as the press is free and not corrupt, it has an enormously important function to fulfill and can rightly be called the fourth branch of government. Information and education was important because it informs the people on things that the perpetuators of political deception keep hidden from them.

POLITICAL DECEPTION AND THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

The relationship between Nigerian political leaders and the masses in Nigeria has not been a relationship built on mutual respect and trust. Many people in Nigeria do not trust their leaders and politicians in general. Politics in Nigeria has been referred to as a dirty game and most people of high moral integrity avoid politics because of this ıegative connotation of politics and politicians in general. While those who go into politics are assumed to be dirty, immoral and corrupt. Lying and half-truths, deception, distortion of information, propaganda, misrepresentation of facts and omission and manipulation of information are tools used by politicians to achieve their aims and these are all common in Nigerian politics.

Deception/lying by politicians in Nigeria has come into the spotlight with the outbreak of this virus and both national and international attention has been drawn to the level to which deception by political leaders affects the lives of people both in their home countries and abroad. The decisions made by leaders in China where the virus was first recorded affected the way which the virus was contained or spread to other countries. To defeat this pandemic, there must be a collaboration between the government and the people who have to act the right way to prevent further spread and casualties. Many governments across the world are under fire for how they responded to the outbreak of this virus. Many like the U.S and Nigeria were accused of not acting fasting enough while others like China were accused of hiding the severity of the virus and not revealing to the world the nature of what it was dealing with. In all of these accusations it is clear to see the role that deception played and how a wrong decision can spiral out of control and spill over to cause greater problems. In Nigeria, the earliest cases of the virus infections were among the political class and few returning travelers. These individuals infected their close contacts and other unsuspecting persons.

The Nigerian government and its agency The NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) which is in the fore front of the Nigerian fight against COVID-19 has also been under the spotlight. The NCDC has been in charge of testing and announcing the results of tests on suspected cases of the virus in the country and there has been a lot of worry of how efficient the agency has been in testing and treatment of those infected by the virus. Diagnosis and contact tracing of infected persons across the country have been successful in identifying thousands of cases and preventing uncontrolled spread of the virus. On the other hand, there have also been concerns on the preparedness of the agency to handle this pandemic. Availability of facemasksand gloves and other protective equipment for health workers and the general public has also been a serious concern because of the high demand on these materials. Many Nigerians cannot afford them and there is worry that lack of protective gear will increase infection rates.

The Nigerian government received donations from many individuals andinstitutions in the state like banks and other big firms to aid in the fight against the virus. There is also a lot of controversy surrounding how these funds are been used. The lockdown measures enforced in cities worst hit by the virus has caused a lot of hardship to average citizens and the palliative measures promised by government is yet to reach the majority of people whose livelihoods have been affected. Many people including health workers are forced to go to work every day without any protective gear and while this should be a priority to the government, it seems the people have been left on their own by their government to fight an formidable enemy with bare hands. The monies contributed to government should at least be used to provide some form of protection to health workers who are in the fore front of the fight against the virus.

Many health workers around the world have contracted and died from this virus from patients because of the unavailability of protective gear.

DO POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE THE MORAL RIGHT TO LIE TO CITIZENS?

The COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria has raised a lot of questions which are not new but nonetheless have been relegated to the background on the discourse on the political life of the country. The role that government officials or leaders play during this pandemic could either lead to the success or failure of the fight against this virus.The way which government reacts to and manages the fight against this virus can either lead to compliance from its citizens or noncompliance as well. Compliance would be borne out of trust and confidence in its leaders or noncompliance from distrust, suspicion and lack of confidence in its leaders. Government officials have been known to lie and deceive the people on various matters concerning how the state is being run and on how they use the resources of the state. From the ideas of scholars on the question of deception, there is no consensus on whether lying can prove to be good or beneficial in the long run, arguments from Machiavelli(2003) and Walzer(1973)make a case for lying in politics. Similarly, Aidan Markland (2012)making a case for lying in politics, argues that although lying can't be clearly described as objectively wrong, yet there are also clear cases where one ought to be deceitful. From the thoughts of the above mentioned writers, it is clear that at some point public officers do lie and use deception to their advantage or for a perceived public good. This raises concerns on how far lies are allowed to go or when it is admissible to lie or use leception. The question of whether it is admissible to lie or use deception while holding public office has been disputed as many scholars feel it is okay to lie but to what extent this lie can go is a bigger question that is more difficult to answer.

ying or deceptive politics during this pandemic can take many dimensions. In Nigeria, many questions have been raised on how the pandemic is being managed. For instance if we ask: is it right to lie about the total figures of infected persons in the country for what ever reason? Is it right to lie about the death rate or casualties of the virus in the country? Is it right to lie about how the funds raised for the management of the virus are disbursed? Is it right to consider political enemies or friends in the allocation of the country's resources to states who need help or is this allocation done according to the genuine need for funds in fighting the virus in the country?

The answers to these questions seem obvious and clear when we consider how we ought to act (morally) but in reality, there may be difficulty in applying it. We can argue that it is morally wrong to lie at all but when we come to politics, we do not find straight cut answers to moral questions. In an attempt to answer some moral questions like: is it right or morally permissible to inflate figures of infected persons in the country even if it is for a good reason like for instance to make people more scared and conscious of the reality of the virus in the country and as a result make them more willing to obey safety instructions? Some might argue that such a lie can be for the good of the people because it will reduce infection rates but there is also other side to this lie, it can cause widespread panic and fear which could also be counterproductive. Or is it morally admissible to reduce the number of infection persons announced by the NCDC with the intention of reducingfearand panic and to prevent the economy from being drastically affected? This lie can also be counterproductive and cause higher rates of infection.

On the question of how far these lies can go, we consider a scenario where government officials inflate the figures of infected people in the country to get funding from international organizations or the federal government for fighting the virus. To cover this up, a lot of deception is involved to keep the people in the dark, fake hospitals and test results would have to be manufactured while these monies are diverted to private bank accounts and in the case where there is an actual outbreak of the virus, there would be no help for the sick. It would have far reaching effects on the country which may have to lockdown highly infected areas or the whole country in general with serious economic effects on a developing country like Nigeria. It would be highly irresponsible for political leaders to be involved in such immoral acts for economic gain and this is a clear case of a lie that has gone too far.

TRUTH TELLING AND PUBLIC TRUST IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 IN NIGERIA

Truth telling in politics has not been a popular topic addressed by political philosophers. Political leaders get away with a lot of manipulative tactics like lying or half truths all with the aim of manipulating the people's beliefs; to induce them into accepting their ideas or to act in some particular ways. Telling lies has been considered morally wrong and many adults were taught this moral right from when they were children: we are always expected to tell the truth. Why then do we act differently when it comes to politics or political leadership?

Bok S, (1978)asserts that although people generally reject lying, they often feel that lying in the name of the collective good is morally justified because white lies serve some pro social purpose. The problem with this understanding that political office holders can lie for the public good leaves many questions unanswered.Mearsheimer(2011) considers white lies as harmless but considers lying generally as morally wrong, he argues:

> It seems clears that leaders and their publics believe that lying is an integral part of international relations but in domestic politics, lying is generally considered wrong save for some special circumstances…most people consider white lies that friends tell each other e.g. when a dinner guest praises an ill cooked meal or lies that parents tell their children to protect them is permissible. These are considered small lies because they involve small stakes and they are told for someone else's benefit, but on the whole, lying is widely seen to have a corrupting effect on individuals as well as the broader society in which they live.

Considering the above position, it is obvious that political deception goes beyond white lies and must be considered norally wrong. Arendt (1971) takes deception seriously because deception in politics goes beyond white lies to carefully executed acts to cover up the truth. These acts are deliberate and aimed at convincing the masses to believe what is not true often to the benefit of those in power. Lying is wrong no matter the reason for which we do it.

Iow do we really know that these officials or politicians are acting in public interest or for their private gain? How can these officials be held accountable when they do itfor interests other than the public good? How can we know that information withheld from the public is for the benefit of the people and not to cover up some misdeeds of public officers and their associates?

The Political terrain in Nigeria is characterized by mistrust of politicians by the citizens and Nigerians have failed to deliver on most of their campaign promises. Many politicians tell as many lies as they think they need to in order to win elections however, delivering on those promises when they do get into office is another thing entirely. When those politicians they still maintain those deceptive attributes that got them into office. This creates lack of trust in political leaders. Dana Radcliffe(2019) clearly spells this out when she argued that:

Because lying inevitably undermines trust including citizens trust in their leaders and in government generally, we have cause to worry about the increasing dishonesty of political campaigns. For leaders distrusted by their constituents cannot hope to unify them behind efforts to tackle urgent problems afflicting our communities, states and nation.

The result of such lies/deceptions by politicians is an inability of their citizens to trust and believe their leaders even when it is for their own good to do so. When leaders are believed to be liars or deceivers, the people do not trust and comply with their directives. In the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria, we see doubt in the actions and reactions of Nigerians of the intentions of government because of distrust. Many Nigerians belief that government is not sincere in its fight against corona virus from the result of confirmed cases in the country, the management of funds contributed to fight the pandemic, to the distribution of the palliatives to relieve the people of the economic effects of the lockdown on major cities and businesses across the country, etc.

Another serious problem that arises from deception by politicians is a poorly informed pubis that can make informed. Bakir et al clearly(2018) argue that free and informed consent cannot be obtained under conditions in which information has been so manipulated that people do not possess sufficient information with which to rationally evaluate an issue. A publics that does not know the true nature of the extent of the ravage of COVID-19 cannot make well informed decisions on safety measures to take or whether they would be needing vaccines against the virus.

TRUTH TELLING BEYOND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

There may be no way to stop politicians and government officials from lying and sometimes it is difficult to determine when a public officer is lying or saying the truth. There must be a way to hold leaders accountable for the ies or deception they practice while in public office. This is necessary because many political office holders hide under the cloak of acting for the public good to foster their personal agenda. The decisions of public officers should be for the good of the country and its people who have given them their mandate to make decisions on their behalf. Many politicians have even led their countriesto war based on this claim that they are acting for the public good but it was later discovered that such claims were false. This deception goes as far as the international political arena. Arendt maintains that aside playing dominant roles in the foreign and domestic policies of most countries, lying constitutes a fundamental part of the decision making processes of government in that it is used by dictatorial and authoritarian governments to eliminate anything that is against their interests. This lying is not peculiar to authoritarian and dictatorial regimes but also democracies in which such practices should not be found. She further argues that lying and deceptions remains the essential feature of the foreign and domestic policies of most governments and if this is left unchecked, it can destroy governments and mislead citizens(Nnamdi, 2019). Ravins et al (1971) also asserts that

Politicians are more committed to falsehood and deception rather than truthfulness and at the peak of government…because of the extravagant lengths to which the commitment to non-truthfulness in politics went on at the highest level of government…lying was

> permitted to proliferate throughout the ranks of all government services, military, and civilian.

Lying in politics from the arguments presented above is so widespread that it has become a part of the political system in our world today. Does this mean that there are different moral codes for politicians and another for citizens? Ramsay(2000) begs to differ on this matter, "They reject the realist claims that politics is outside of the moral realm; for them, there is nothing special about politics that would justify applying different evaluative criteria to political activities to require a transcendenceof ordinary morality." Bok, S. (1999) also asserts that deception in political processes creates dangers of bias, self harm, proliferation and severe injury to trust. Political deception should not be accepted no matter who is telling the lie and for whatever reason the lie is being told. Beyond that question of rational and informed decision making and harms to the body politic lies the concern that deception can be a powerful tool with which to exercise political power and engender corruption and abuse.(Miller and Robinson, 2019)

Lying in fact violates democratic principles because voters choose to vote for a candidate who they trust enough to deliver on their campaign promises. Lying and deceiving the people is a violation of the trust vested in political leaders. If the public is deceived by politicians and other powerful actors, it is very difficult to conceive how meaningful democratic debates can occur. (Miller and Robinson, 2019) Public trust is important in growing a democracy because when the people trust their leaders, there is a harmonious society .The leadership of Nigeria needs to do more in this regard because there are many instances where the leaders have been accused of lying to the people especially because of the corruption that has marked the government or administration of the country.Arendt(1971) makes a case against lying in politics because lies most of the time are discovered no matter how much effort is put into covering up reality because, "there is no substitute, no matter how large the tissue of falsehood that an experienced liar has to offer, it will never be large enough; even if he employs the help of computers to cover up the immensity of factuality"

Conclusively, it is necessary for government officials to set the records straight on the way the country is being run. This is especially true of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, there must be transparency in the way the government and its agencies are handling the testing, treatment and disbursement of palliatives to the people. Without building the trust of the public by being transparent and accountable in all its dealings no democracy can grow. The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be completely successful in any country without cooperation between the government and its people, the Nigerian government has to sit up and address these matters if the fight against COVID-19 in the country is to be successful. The importance of an informed and educated population should not be neglected because and informed public will not be easy to deceive or manipulate

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DISTRIBUTING COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS IN NIGERIA: PERSPECTIVES FROM JOHN RAWLS' DISTRIBUTIVE THEORY OF JUSTICE

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Abstract

This paper argues that every responsible government has an obligation, to the best of its ability, to ensure an adequate provision of economic welfare and healthcare for its citizens. In view of this global pandemic, the Nigerian government, like many other nations, has urgently developed a plan to provide health and economic assistance to the tens of millions of people who are vulnerable. However, the provision of these palliatives by the government designed to assuage the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the poor and vulnerable Nigerians is not fairly undertaken. Adopting an expository and analytic approach, this paper examines the role of the government in distributing the COVID- 19 relief funds; in doing this, the questions in this paper are in two fronts: firstly, what constitutes vulnerability and who is vulnerable? Secondly, what is the criterion adopted by the government for determining who benefits from these palliatives? Finally, the paper proposes a model for assessing the role of government in the distribution of palliatives from the prism of John Rawls's principle of distributive justice. This is imperative because the fair distribution of relief funds and benefits from the *government will further ease the burdens, and it will fundamentally affect the people's wellbeing.*

Keywords: Covid- 19 Distributive Justice; Vulnerable, Palliatives, Pandemic

Introduction

The wide spread of Coronavirus 2019, otherwise referred to as Covid-19, all over the world is devastating. This has prompted most world leaders to employ adequate measures in order to prevent it from further spreading. The pandemic has become the matter of concern and a topic of deliberation across the globe because of its apparent impact on all countries of the world. This virus is said to have originated from the Wuhan province of China and has been exported virtually all over the world. Nigeria as a country is not left out in the spread of the virus; it was however, on the 27th of February 2020 that an Italian citizen was tested and confirmed as Nigeria's first case of Covid-19 infection. Since then, new cases are being reported by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) on a daily. The reason for the rapid spread of the virus in Nigeria and its effects on poor citizens, as Ozili (2020) intimates, is because of weak institutions that are ineffective in responding to the pandemic, and the lack of social welfare programs that would have catered for poor and vulnerable citizens who were affected by the impact of the global health crisis.

The above notwithstanding, one of the measures that have been put in place to curb the spread of the virus in the country is the imposition and enforcement of the governmental social distancing policy and movement lockdown (either total or partial) in the country, the effect of which has been felt by most citizens. It must be noted that the provision of social welfare services to vulnerable citizens in the population is the most proven way to protect them from economic hardship in times such as these. In a bid to cushion the effect of the physical/social distancing policy and movement lockdown which has crippled and brought almost all economic activities to a halt, the federal government made pronouncements regarding funds and palliatives, and ordered the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management to ensure that palliatives in terms of funds and food items are distributed to citizens that are worst off and are affected by the situation. Several individuals, corporate organisations and international donor agencies have contributed to supporting the funds voted for this purpose by the government.

The distribution process, as some analysts have argued, have been marred with inequalities and irregularities that raise the question of who is really vulnerable, and what constitutes the criteria for benefitting from the relief funds? While some still grapple with these questions, the theory of distributive justice seems plausible and workable in answering them. There are, however, varied versions of the theory of distributive justice. These theories, as Allingham (2020) argue, seek to specify what is meant by a just distribution of goods amongst members of the society. These theories are best considered as providing moral guidance for the processes and structures to be used in the distribution of benefits and burdens to citizens in the society. Drawing from the above, the brand of distributive justice that this paper considers plausible and adopts in its assessment of the role of government in the disbursement of the Covid-19 relief funds is the one propounded by John Rawls. Rawls in his *Theory of Justice* and the *Political*

Liberalism advances a theory of distributive justice which encompasses his notion of justice as fairness and other such schemes as the two principles of justice and difference principle. The high point of his theory in the context of this paper is the difference principle which permits inequalities in the distribution of burdens and benefits to citizens if and only if, the least advantaged are benefitted.

In carrying out the assessment of the distribution of the Covid-19 relief funds from the perspective of Rawls' distributive justice, this paper is divided into three major sections preceding the conclusion. The first section concerns itself with a discourse on what constitutes Rawls' theory of distributive justice, the second section accounts for government and the question of the equitable distribution of the Covid-19 relief funds while the third section accounts for an assessment as well as a prescription of the philosophical orientation that should guide the distribution of the Covid-19 relief funds.

Delineating John Rawls' Theory of Distributive Justice

The concept of justice has elicited responses from philosophers in history. For Plato, justice entails doing one's job; for Aristotle, it can be said to be treating equals equally and treating unequals unequally; while in the thoughts of Marx, it can be said to be from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. While these conceptualizations hold true and can be said to philosophers philosophizing in their time, it remains to state here that the world, more than ever, stands in dire need of justice. This need permeates all aspects of human life and existence and the continual absence of justice spells doom for humanity. This is because, without justice, peace and development will amount to an illusion. As one will expect, a discourse on distributive justice within the context of the thoughts of John Rawls is what is required in this section. However, it must be noted from the onset that rather than expect a detailed exposition of Rawls understanding of justice, a synopsis of his thoughts on distributive justice will be here presented with the intent of using it as a spring board for anchoring the discourse on the framework for the equitable distribution of the Covid-19 palliatives to the people.

John Rawls (1921-2002) is regarded as one of the greatest of the 20th century and perhaps, its greatest political philosopher. He contributed immensely to discourse on the concept of justice in his book entitled *A Theory of Justice* (henceforth referred to as *TJ*) and the *Political Liberalism* (henceforth referred to as *PL*). In the opening pages of *TJ* (1971), Rawls notes the role as well as the importance of justice and argued that it is the first virtue of social institutions. According to Rawls (1971):

Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise, laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason, justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages

> enjoyed by many. Therefore, in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests. The only thing that permits us to acquiesce in an erroneous theory is the lack of a better one; analogously, an injustice is tolerable only when it is necessary to avoid an even greater injustice. Being first virtues of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising (p. 3).

From the above quotation, it is clear that any theory or guiding principle that is unjust should be either revised or rejected in view of the importance of justice in a society. It is following from this background that Rawls advances his theory of justice with its distributive temper. What should be noted is that distributive justice is primarily concerned with the question of how both benefits and burdens should be allocated in the society. Rawls (1971) expresses his general conception to be a situation where: all social values, liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage. Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all (p.54). His two principles of justice as he will later argue are a special case of the general conception as stated above.In the TJ, Rawls shows what the principles of justice are, and does so with his analysis of the original position and the veil of ignorance. For him, the appropriate arrangement of the basic structure of the society can best be done by individuals from the hypothetical "original position" from the "veil of ignorance". This is quite plausible for him because such individuals would not be able as it were, to predict how any particular structure or institution (be it social or economic) would affect them. In the original position, to quote Rawls (1971): No one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain. For, given the circumstances of the original position, the symmetry of everyone's relations to each other, this initial situation is fair between individuals as moral persons, that is, as rational beings with their own ends and capable, I shall assume, of a sense of justice (p. 11).

Rawls believes that it is only from this prism that justice can be realized and fairness guaranteed. This is because "behind the veil of ignorance, Rawls claims that risk aversion will overcome all other considerations: one would not risk the little he might have in order to increase what he would receive were he one of the wealthy (Elkins, 2012). The concomitant effect of the above would be the maximization and realization of the welfare of the least well-off and less privileged in society. Regarding the principles of justice, Rawls advances two basic principle of justice in the *TJ* and further expounded them in the *PL*.

After proposing various formulations of the principles, the final formulation is that of *PL*. According to him in the *PL* (2005: p. 5-6) while rendering the two principles of justice,

> Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value (first principle). Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be the greatest benefits to the least advantaged members of the society.

In his analysis of Rawls two principles of justice, Allingham (2020) avers that “these principles are lexically ordered: the first principle has priority over the second; and in the second principle, the first has priority over the second part. For the specific question of distributive justice, as opposed to the wider question of political justice, it is the final stone in the edifice that is crucial: this is the famous difference principle”. What should be noted is that Rawls used reflective equilibrium as the method of distribution of a targeted just society, while talking about the allocation of benefits and burdens; Rawls accepts that inequalities exists in the society and hence, he discussed it in his difference principle. The Difference Principle as Rawls argues in the *TJ* is strongly egalitarian in the sense that it ensures that there is a distribution that makes everyone better off. To quote Rawls *TJ*, “Assuming the framework of institutions required by equal liberty and fair equality of opportunity, the higher expectations of those better situated are just if and only if they work as part of a scheme which improves the expectations of the least advantaged members of society. The intuitive idea is that the social order is not to establish and secure the more attractive prospects of those better off unless doing so is to the advantage of those less fortunate".

Azam (2007) corroborates the above with specific reference to the second principle when he stresses that there are two elements of the second principle: the first one is called the equality of opportunity and the second element is called the difference principle. It proposes an equal division of the primary goods unless an unequal distribution is to the advantage of the least well-off. To do that, the social contractor will formulate options of distribution and then will accept the one that will maximize the benefit of the worst off. The thinking of Rawls, when properly understood indicates that inequality in the society is like bi-conditionals in logic, they are accepted if and only if it allows the least well-off in the society the latitude to be benefitted. And it is on this note that he argues for the compensation of natural and social inequalities. In *TJ,* as quoted in Arneson (2007), Rawls suggests how to draw a line between the misfortune that is society's responsibility and the misfortune that is not by distinguishing between deep and shallow inequalities. The former is associated with inequalities in the "basic structure" of society in this passage:

For us the primary subject of justice is the basic structure of society, or more exactly, the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and

> duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. By major institutions I understand the political constitution and the principal economic and social arrangements... The basic structure is the primary subject of justice because its effects are so profound and present from the start. The intuitive notion here is that this structure contains various social positions and that men born into different positions have different expectations of life determined, in part, by the political system as well as by economic and social circumstances. In this way the institutions of society favor certain starting places over others. These are especially deep inequalities. Not only are they pervasive, but they affect men's initial chances in life; yet they cannot possibly be justified by an appeal to the notions of merit and desert. It is these inequalities, presumably inevitable in the basic structure of any society, to which the principles of social justice apply.

Deducible from the above quotation is the fact that the kind of inequality that the society should be responsible for is that type that is deep and are perhaps, inevitable. Drawing from the above, one can argue that the hardship occasioned by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) fits well into the kind of inequality that Rawls argues is the society's responsibility to try to address. It is also inevitable as the worst-off can do little or nothing to help themselves considering the lock-down of the most part of the State and the effects it has on their subsistent means of livelihood.

Furthermore, these principles primarily apply to the basic structure of society and govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages in perilous times as we have it now (Covid-19 pandemics). This formulation presupposes that, for the purposes of a theory of justice, the social structure may be viewed as having two more or less distinct parts, the first principle applying to the one, the second principle to the other (1971, 267). Distributive justice as theorized by Rawls has come under the sledge hammer of critics. For Allingham (2020), if justice is to be grounded in a choice from behind the veil of ignorance, then it is flawed within the context of its construction. Again, the problem of identifying the least advantaged and defining the primary good is unavoidable. In the same vein, Lamont, J. and Favor, C. (2017) aver that “advocates of strict equality argue that the inequalities permitted by the difference principle are unaccepted even if they benefit the absolute position of the least advantaged”. However, what these advocates have not been able to do is to convincingly explain the rationale as well as sustain the argument for preventing the society from materially benefitting the least advantaged when these benefits require a deviation from strict equality. It is on that basis that one can argue that these critiques, their plausibility notwithstanding, do not deride Rawls distributive justice. Hence, Rawls’ two principles of justice and the Difference Principle are still potent in showing the path to the equitable distribution of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) relief funds.

Government and the Question of the Distribution of the COVID-19 Relief Funds

Every responsive government is supposed to make sure that all sectors of society are involved in pandemic preparedness and response. The government is the expected leader and it is in-charge of overall coordination and communication efforts. In its leadership role, the government through the Ministry of Health or Humanitarian and Disaster Management ought to: appoint and lead the coordinating body for pandemic preparedness and urgent response. The government is supposed to provide and monitor the distribution of the Covid-19 relief materials/funds to the vulnerable in other to ease them from hardship. The paper suggests that, during a pandemic, it is important that the government make sure that households take measures to ensure they have access to accurate information, people should have access to reliable information from sources such as WHO and local and national governments.

The Coronavirus began in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Residents who live in Wuhan had some link to large seafood and live animal market, which suggests that the mode of transmission of Coronavirus was from animal to person. The virus has been named SARS-CoV-2 and the diseases has been named "Coronavirus disease 2019" abbreviated as "Covid-19". The first known patient of Coronavirus started experiencing symptoms in Wuham, China on December 1, 2019 (Ozili, 2020). Since then, there have been millions of recorded cases all over the world with an increasing death toll. It was however on January 30, 2020 that the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 virus as a Public Health Emergency of

International Concern (PHEIC) because of its spread to countries of the world and its effect on trades and travels (DAWN 2020). Regarding the spread of Coronavirus to Nigeria, Ebenso and Otu (2000) aver that news broke on the 27th of February that an Italian citizen was Nigeria's first case of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The individual landed at Lagos airport two (2) days earlier on a flight from Northern Italy, and had subsequently travelled from Lagos to Ogun State, western Nigeria where he became ill and was promptly isolated. While the Federal Ministry of health announced the confirmation of the first case of Covid-19 in Lagos State, Nigeria, in the same communication, the minister of health announced that the multi-sectoral Coronavirus preparedness group led by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) has immediately activated its emergency operation centers (see the Nigerian Education sector Covid-19 response strategy in North East (2020).

Since the first case was recorded in February 2020 in Nigeria, government, at all levels, has set up action committees with the intent of containing the pandemic and cushioning its effect on the masses. To this end, government at all levels has voted monies in billions of naira to these committees. There have also be several donations (in cash and medical equipment) to the government by individuals, international donor agencies, corporate bodies (foreign and local) towards combating the pandemic and ameliorating the sufferings of the people occasioned by the lockdown. In fact, The President of Nigeria said that, the government would put in place measures to "preserve the livelihoods of workers and business owners to ensure their families get through this very difficult time in dignity." He said that "the most

vulnerable in our society" would receive Conditional Cash transfers (CCT) register, an ongoing government initiative to cater for the less privileged and the poor in the society be increased from 2.5million to 3.5million people.
These donations and contributions were meant to be converted into some form of palliatives and relief funds for the people. The crux of this paper, resulting from the lockdown is the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on the average Nigerian, the most part of whose survival depends largely on daily earnings. This constitutes about 65% of Nigerians who work in the informal sector – the street hawkers, barbers, mechanics, hairdressers, bricklayers, farmers amongst others who already live below the poverty line and are considered as the poorest of the poor (see Page 6 of the joint memo by the Civil Society Organisations in Nigeria). While these efforts are somewhat commendable, the question of justice and equity in the distribution of the contributions that have been made as well as the monies voted for the same have been raised. In fact, a consortium of anti-corruption organisations, under the umbrella of the Upright for Nigeria, stand against corruption campaign called on the Federal and state governments to immediately publish the names of all the beneficiaries of the government palliatives to ensure transparency and accountability in the distribution of the Covid-19 palliatives.

Another question that has been raised is that how many people have really been able to access these relief funds either in terms of cash transfers or palliative? It must be noted that very many of those who need these palliatives do not have access to them and hence, the imperativeness of advancing a philosophical operation that will help attain a fair and just distribution of these palliatives. To this end, this paper finds John Rawls distributive justice as germane to this task.

Assessing the Role of the Government in the Distribution of Relief Funds from the Prism of John Rawls

It must be stated from the beginning of this section that the task of comprehensively assessing and evaluating the distribution of the Covid-19 relief funds and palliatives within the context of a kind of evaluation that is summative may not be very much exhaustive. This is because the Covid-19 pandemic has not been conquered completely (at the time of writing this paper) neither has the lockdown been fully relaxed for the people to live their normal lives. It is only when the virus ceases to hold sway and to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), that the success or failure of the attempts of government at all levels at assuaging the effect of the pandemic on the people through the relief funds and other palliatives can be successfully and sufficiently assessed. However, the evaluation that is intended in this paper is what is called the initial/on the spot evaluation. This evaluation is intended to appraise the success and the gains so far recorded as well as to show the areas that leave much to be desired.

This paper argues that it is the responsibility of government to make adequate provisions for the economic and healthcare needs of its citizens to the best of its ability and within the confines of its resources. It is to this effect that the government usually calls on the corporate world and individuals to support its efforts when it is constrained or faced with an apparent lack of resources. Again, government is supposed to be concerned and driven by the resolve to deliver the goods of human flourishing to the people especially at a time when its citizens are grappling with a global pandemic such as the Coronavirus 2019. Rawls seems to hold the above view when he argues in the *TJ* (1971: 250) that "government is assumed to aim at the common good, that is, at maintaining conditions and achieving objectives that are similarly to everyone's advantage".

A critical look at the Covid-19 relief funds in Nigerian and other palliatives reveals that government at all levels have voted monies in billions into this fund. Corporate organizations, foreign and local have also contributed billions of dollars to this fund. This is not forgetting the millions of naira that have been donated by individual, celebrities and businessmen to this fund. Besides, other non-monetary interventions in terms of medical equipment, isolation centres, ambulances, amongst others have also been donated to the Federal and State governments. However, when one takes a look at the distribution of these funds and palliatives with an unjaundiced eye and from the screen of objectivity, one finds out that the funds and the palliatives have not been evenly and justifiably distributed. Aside the question of who is to be considered vulnerable? What is the total number of the vulnerable in Nigeria? Is there any statistical tool for determining the numbers of the vulnerable? How do we know if all the vulnerable really benefitted from this relief fund? One finds a disparity in the distribution with some States in some regions of the country giving out as much as a full bag of either 10kg, 25kg or 50kg of rice and while in other States, one finds people leaving the distribution centres with cups of rice and a few cubes of Maggi or loaves of bread.

Again, the above situation leaves us with the questions of who is vulnerable and what is the criterion for determining the people who benefit from the Covid-19 relief funds? As dicey as these questions may be, I will attempt to answer them in conjunction with Rawls' principle of distributive justice. As stated earlier, Rawls sanctions inequalities, in so far as it is geared towards benefitting the least favoured, that is, the vulnerable in the society. While Rawls does not answer the question of how the society can identify the least advantaged people, he rather gives a lead on how to identify the representatives of the least advantaged people in the society. For Rawls, the well-being of the representatives of the least advantaged in the society is assessed by their allocation of what he calls the primary goods. In his division of the primary goods, Rawls classifies two broad groups of primary goods: the first is the social primary goods which include liberty, income, opportunities and wealth (the subject matter of the first and second parts of the second principle of justice) and the second group is the natural primary goods (which for the most part have personal characteristic). It must however be noted that Rawls' justice as fairness is concerned with the distribution of social primary goods.

For Rawls, a just system is such that is being situated behind a veil of ignorance where the representatives of government do not know anything about themselves or their situations, and accordingly seek equality. This veil is one that essentially blinds them to all facts about themselves so they cannot tailor their own advantages. The intention is that as the parties to the contract have no information about themselves, they necessarily act impartially, and thus as justice as fairness requires. As no one knows his circumstances, no one can try to impose principles of justice that favor his particular condition. But this is completely the opposite for the Nigerian system; this is because the representatives consider their own interest first, before others. They tailor the criteria for the distribution of palliatives to their own advantage and that of their ally.

Hermeneutically, one can argue that the government can identify the economically least advantaged in the society just like Rawls advances, by assessing the allocation of wealth, opportunities, income and the nature of the people's means of livelihood. In this manner, the government can reach them through their various trade associations, local community development associations and by dealing directly with the people in the countryside and the urban centres. While one can also argue that the most part of citizens are living below the poverty level and hence, are vulnerable, it is doubtful how far one can sustain the argument for the fact that the level of vulnerability is the same across board. To this end, the prescription of this paper, following from Rawls difference principles is that, the very least disadvantaged, the artisans who usually need to work on a daily basis to be able to sustain themselves and their families; the unemployed, the petty traders who needs to buy goods, retail same and survive from the proceeds (gains) of their sales; the private school teachers whose employment are temporarily put on hold and hence, cannot earn salaries to survive and other groups whose earnings and means of livelihood are basically dependent on what energy they are able to exert daily constitutes the vulnerable and the least advantaged. Consequently, the Covid-19 relief funds should be made available to them as a matter of necessity to cushion the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Following the above very closely is the question of equality of opportunity. While it has been agreed that the only form of inequality that is accepted in Rawls scheme is that which benefits the least advantaged, the paper argues that the distribution of food items is not the economic distribution that is important to the people on the one hand. It also argues on the other hand that even within the context of the distribution of food items, conditional cash transfer (CCT), Trader money, market money and other social welfare schemes, the principle of equality of opportunity which Rawls argues for in his distributive justice should be allowed to play out. In this context, the proclivity and inclination to think that one ethnic or religious group is more human than the others and hence, ensuring that the said group benefits from this relief funds to the detriment of the other will be taken care of. When this is done, such discriminatory index and primordial sentiments as ethnicity, religion and gender will be ruled out.

The above argument is based on the fact that the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is a global pandemic that threatens our collective existence. It is also based on the fact that ethnicity, religion etc. are not the substance of our existence; they are rather, accidents within the context of the Aristotelian understanding of substance and accident. Again, the lockdown and stay at home order of the government is given to all citizens, regardless of the ethnic and religious affiliation so, these twin factors should not be used to determine who get what, how and when within the context of the distribution of the Covid-19 relief funds and the question of equality of opportunity.

Conclusion

In the foregoing, attempt has been made to undertake on the spot assessment of the distribution of the Coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) relief fund in Nigeria. This attempt was guided by the question of vulnerability as well as that of what are the criteria for benefitting from the relief fund? As have been argued earlier, the distribution process, when viewed with an unjaundiced eye, has not been equitable and leaves much to be desired. That notwithstanding, the philosophical dimension that this paper brings to the discourse with the intent of guiding the distribution process is Rawls' distributive justice that is hinged on the two principles of justice and the difference principle. The high point of this orientation spells out the fact that in the distribution of the burdens and benefits to citizens in the society, equality should be the watchword and inequalities are accepted in so far as they benefit the least advantaged and vulnerable in the society. Drawing from the above, this paper has argued that considering the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic occasioned by the total or partial lockdown in most States of the Federation, the least well-off or the least advantaged in the society (the artisans, the petty traders, the pensioner and senior citizens, people that live below the poverty threshold, those who have to work daily to earn wages for survival amongst others) should benefit as a matter of necessity from the relief fund. The paper also argued for equality of opportunity in the distribution process devoid of such discriminatory factors as ethnicity and religion. The conclusion that is reached in this paper is that, the flaws of Rawls' distributive justice notwithstanding, it is yet potent and finds relevance in the search for a philosophical orientation that should guide the government in her task of equitably distributing the Covid-19 relief funds in Nigeria.

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PARTIALITY AND ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE: THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE IN COVID-19 PALLIATIVES REGIME

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Abstract

Actions and inactions of our political leaders, like every other member of our society, is subject to moral consideration since what they do or fail to do affects governance and our quest for social good. However, the morality or otherwise of their actions are not judged outside our moral intuitions if we must be fair to them. As Africans, is our ethical framework best captured and defined in terms of impartiality or partiality? In this work, I defend the idea that African ethics is defined in terms of partiality. AdoptingMolefe's defense of partiality as characterizing African ethics but going beyond his characterization of it, I argue that African ethics defined in terms of partiality rests fundamentally on human nature/personal identity. Given that partiality is what defines our ethical framework, and given that our public office holders involved in governance are members of our society, then it is only natural to expect them to live and operate within this ethical framework. Be that as it may, on the particular concerns raised concerning the administration of Covid-19 palliative regime in Nigeria, I argue that strong partialism defeats our quest for a just

society, encourages disunity and separation and above all hampers development because of its proclivity to moral myopism and parochialism. Based on the African maxim of 'charity begins at home', I argue thatthe administrators can act from the foundational premise of partiality and arrive at impartial conclusions for society's well-being based on the principle of permeable boundaries.
Keywords: African ethics, governance, partiality, impartiality, personal identity, social well-being

Introduction

From the moment the civil society came into being through the collective and conscious will of the people to leave the state of nature in other to secure a better atmosphere for the preservation of their lives and properties, the question of governance became imperative. The people willfully chose the government to help streamline and give direction to their actions and manage the common resources of the people for the common good of all. The people did not surrender their power to the government but rather delegated it to the government for the mutual preservation of their lives, estates and liberties. Thus the government is the creation of the people and therefore a servant to them. This is definitive of true majority rules. As a servant to the people, it is required that the government should be accountable to the people in running the affairs and managing the resources of the people. To this end therefore, the actions and inactions of the handlers of government as members of our society become subject to moral judgement and appraisal in view of the objectives and expectations of the social contract. But this must be done within our prevailing ethical framework. What then defines our ethical framework, partiality or impartiality? It is necessary for me to state that partiality as I use it here (unless otherwise stated) is partiality of a moderate type (moderate partiality/partialism) hereafter simply called partiality.

Although I defend partiality as defining African ethics, however I do not subscribe to strong/thick partialism (Metz,2009:335-356) which is synonymous to selfishness. I argue that African understanding of partiality as that which defines their ethical framework does not support or endorse strong partialism which amounts to moral myopism and parochialism. Given the concerns raised on the administration of Covid-19 palliative regime in Nigeria, I argue that strong partialism defeats our quest for a just society, encourages disunity and above all hampers development. Based on the African maxim of 'charity begins at home', I argue that the administrators of Covid-19 palliatives regime can act from the foundational premise of partiality and arrive at impartial conclusions for society's well-being based on the *Principle of Permeable Boundaries* (PPB).

Governance

Every state is faced with challenges from time to time. These challenges may range from politics to economics; from social problematics to religious idiosyncrasies. The effect of these challenges on the generality of the state is determined by the quality of its leadership. The ability of the leadership of the state to harness available natural potentials and resources both internal and external to manage the affairs of the state for the common good of all is what governance is all about. To this end therefore, governance is the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs (Ademolekun, 2002, p.

59). Governance is also a process of exercising political, economic and administrative authority, especially over a state. As a concept central to democracy, governance refers to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment and broad-based participation (Imoukhnede, 2016, p. 4).

From the above explications on the concept of governance, it shows that governance is a human activity and therefore can be practiced badly or well. It is from this perspective that the concept of good governance enters our political lexicon. Thus, as a concept, good governance describes how public institutions and political actors conduct public affairs and manage public resources for society's well-being. When a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate; when it is committed to improving the public and is responsive to the needs of its citizens; when it is able to create an enabling public environment for productive activities and is equitable in its conduct, then good governance can be ascribed to such a government (Lawal and Owolabi, 2012, p. 4).

Given the above indices for good governance, how can we rate successive Nigerian governments especially this present Administration? Nigeria is said to be the giant of Africa perhaps because she is the most populous nation in the whole of Africa and not because of what she brings to the table in terms of good governance. The highly respected Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 2018 Report shows that Nigeria is at the 33rd position with a low rate of 47.9% and this is particularly worrisome when one considers the abundance of resources the nation is blessed with. These resources are managed by our representatives at various levels.

The question now is, given the fact that these representatives are first and foremost members of various ethnic groups, political parties, geo-political zones et cetera and as it were, defined by certain familial, socio-cultural and religio-political relationships, what should be the best moral intuition and framework that should guide the discharge of their duties and obligations to their constituencies and the Nigerian state at large? This question is posed because whatever happens, the actions and inactions of our political leaders and administrators are expected to be assessed and judged within this ethical framework otherwise we will be unfair to them.

African Ethics and Impartiality

In what way must we define or construe morality – utilitarianism, deontologism, egoism, care ethics et cetera? All these are grouped either as impartiality or partiality. Impartial theories generally suggest and instruct that in our moral judgments and considerations, we must ignore personal relational features such as family ties and communal proximities and that our moral judgments of what ought to be done should not regard such features as being intrinsically significant (Wareham,2017, p. 129).

One good and famous defense of impartiality in African ethics is provided by Kwasi Wiredu who is equally a very respected voice in African philosophy. Wiredu defends the thesis that African ethics is defined in terms of impartiality through his theory of Sympathetic Impartiality (Molefe, 2016, p. 106; Okeja, 2013, p.14). In other to make sense of Wiredu's sympathetic impartiality, Molefe notes Wiredu's definition of morality according to which what is 'good in general is what promotes human interests and correspondingly, what is good in the more narrowly ethical sense is, by definition, what is conducive to the harmonization of human interest. Again, in making sense of what morality means for Wiredu, Molefe quotes Wiredu as saying, 'Every Akan maxim about the specifically moral views that I know… postulates the harmonization of interests as the means, and the securing of human well-being as an end, of all moral endeavours' (Molefe,2016, p.110; Wiredu.2008, p.334; Wiredu,1996, p.65; Wiredu,1992, p.194).

From Wiredu's characterization of morality, it is clear that 'the good' is human well-being and this is the end which must be pursued; but the process and the means of reaching this end, is the harmonization of interests. Human well-being is the intrinsic good which is good in and of itself whereas the harmonization of interests is the instrumental good. What this means is that 'the good' cannot be achieved without harmonizing interests.

Individuals qua individuals have personal interests that are most times conflicting one to another and in other to escape a drifting back to the Hobbesian state of nature, there is need to harmonize these interests for the sake of the common good. Herein lies the morality of the 'harmonization of interests' as a process and means of achieving 'the good'. Selfishness has the capacity to turn a man a wolf to his fellow man thereby tearing the society apart. This makes selfishness, as an attitude, behavior and disposition morally reprehensible. Given this reprehensibility and undesirability of selfishness as a sound moral intuition and disposition, what then is the best principle 'for the survival of human society' and the achievement of its (society) well-being? Wiredu sees 'sympathetic impartiality' as the principle capable of harmonizing conflicting individual interests 'for the survival of human society', a principle which he equates with the golden rule in its different formulations – negatively (do not treat others in ways you would not want them to treat you) or positively (so act towards others in ways you would want them to act towards you) (Molefe,2016, p.111; Wiredu,1996, pp.29, 41,170). Thus said, Wiredu's sympathetic impartiality shows that in taking a moral decision or making a moral judgment, we must consider the interests of others guided and motivated by sympathy and show neutrality towards our personal interests or the interests of our special relationships.

According to Wiredu, welfarism or human well-being is the end of all moral endeavor (Wiredu, 1996: p.65). Be that as it may, Wiredu does not tell us clearly what he means by human well-being or human interest. That is, when and to what extent does the harmonization of human interest lead to human well-being. Is human well-being guaranteed only when someone has all that she wants and needs (which is practically impossible giving the insufficiency of life itself) or when one is provided with the basic and necessary needs to live a minimally decent life? I think the latter is more of it (Gyekye,2004; Wiredu,1992, p.194;2008, p.334; Metz,2007, p.331). And if in the distribution of life's goods, the basic needs are given to all including one's non-proximate ties (although perhaps they may not get as much as they may wish), then such action though partial, is not morally wrong in Wiredu's understanding of a morally right action. According to Wiredu, harmonization of interest is a right action which guarantees human well-being. By this, I do not think Wiredu means equalization of interest. Equalization of interest is different from harmonization of interest. While the former may be difficult to achieve, the latter is more plausible for the achievement of peace, harmony and well-being through consensual compromise and 'give and take' that is a natural feature of life. The lack of conceptual and theoretical clarity in Wiredu's thought warrants this interpretation. This interpretation of Wiredu's 'harmonization of interest and human well-being' suffices based on his principle of sympathetic impartiality. Since for Wiredu, well-being is the end of all moral endeavor, sympathetic (empathetic) impartiality calls on us to identify with other people by empathically *making* the goods go round so as to generate greater happiness for the greater number (utilitarianism). In making the goods go round, there is need to harmonize (and not necessarily equalize) all interest. To this end therefore, I think Wiredu's sympathetic impartialism is an impartialism of a moderate type (to which I subscribe to in this paper) and not impartialism qua impartialism which presupposes equalization. In fact, at no point has Wiredu clearly or tacitly suggested that in looking after oneself and relatives, one should endeavor to do more for strangers in order to ground or support impartialism. Partial behavior may provide a means to an impartial ends based on sympathy/empathy and this is made possible through the maxim of 'charity begins at home' (alluded to by Wiredu himself) cum the principle of permeable boundaries. I will explain what this principle entails towards the end of the paper.

Impartiality qua impartiality as a moral theory blatantly disregards the moral relevance we naturally attach to our special relationships and their attendant obligations. Any reasoning that claims the irrelevance of one's affiliations is obviously making such relationships lose their moral relevance which we normally and naturally attach to them and even our dear Wiredu does not subscribe to such impartialism given his recognition of the African maxim of 'charity begins at home' (Wirdu,1992: p.200).

African Ethics and Partiality

Partial theories in ethics uphold the particularity of relationships as being central in moral consideration and decision-making. 'It is the view that one ought, in principle, to act preferentially towards people in certain types of relationship with one' (Wareham,2017, p.130; Metz,2010, pp.49-58). Partialists are of the view that it is against common sense morality not to recognize and prioritize our special relationships like family and friends in moral considerations and decision-making. It is against this, they problematize impartiality (Molefe,2016, p.114; Wolf,1992, p.243). In relation to the individual, 'family and close relationships unquestionably rank among the greatest goods of life and any conception of morality that is in tension with their maintenance and promotion is unacceptable' (Wolf,1992, p.243).

In his defense of partiality as the defining mark of African ethics, Molefe invokes three aspects of African culture (moral intuitions) to ground his defense. 'These moral intuitions are: 1) the high regard accorded to the family, 2) ancestor veneration and 3) the normative concept of personhood' (Molefe,2016, p.113). I will not provide further explanations to the three moral intuitions which Molefe thinks ground partiality in African ethics, for want of space. I must say, at this juncture, that I do not reject these moral intuitions as characterizing partiality in African ethics since I see them as supporting partiality. However, I do claim that partiality is fundamentally located in personal identity

I am aware of the three dominant theories of identity which are those that favour bodily continuity, mental continuity and continuity of consciousness. However, I do not intend to go into the analysis of these theories. Since personal identity bespeaks of the self as it exists through time, I will look at the nature of the self just from a 'person' perspective. Contrary to Reid's (1959, p.55) claim that the body is separate from the self and as such does not count in understanding of the self, I state that the self, its body, its emotions and the expression of these emotions constitute a robust understanding of the person. She is not just a physical body, she is not just immaterial substance and she is not just consciousness. She is a combination of all these though not necessarily in the same degree. The self, its body, emotions and their expressions are like the two sides of a coin which cannot be separated without damaging the coin. Against this background therefore, personal identity consists in what defines a person ontologically and relationally.

In personal identity such questions as who am I? or who are you? What defines me or what makes me who I am, are asked. The answers given to these questions are what define the content of personal identity. Some scholars have argued that at the root of the characterization of personal identity is sociality or relationality (Mbiti,1969; Menkiti,2004, p.327; Ikuenobe,2006, pp.117-131). Mbiti's popular maxim, 'I am because we are and since we are, therefore, I am' is a classic example. In the same vein, Eze recognizes the relational constitution of personal identity when he opines that 'my subjectivity is in part constituted by other persons with whom I share the social world' (Eze,2008, pp.386-399). Personal identity connotes individuality. Individuality is a world which needs certain structures to make the individual self-sustaining, self-developing and self-realizing. These structures are made possible by relational and other regarding relationships (Ikuenobe,2018, p.188-189; Menkiti,2004, p.327).

There is no autonomy without relationship thus making the line between individuality (autonomy) and sociality very thin. Individuality and relationality are subsets which define identity. Contrary to bodily continuity theory of personal identity which holds the physical body only as that which defines a person's identity, talk about personal identity is broad and multifaceted and extends beyond the limits of one's physical body. This is captured in William James' definition of the 'me'. James (1892) says:

> In its widest possible sense, a man's me is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank accounts. All these things gave him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down not necessarily in the same degree for each thing… but i n the same way for all (p.177).

In the same vein, Belk (1998, p.139-168) captures this idea in his concept of extended self which signifies the identification of one's self not only with one's individual physical and psychological characteristics but also with significant others, groups, or social categories, material objects and places. The significant others are psychologically important to the individual because he/she identifies with them personally experiencing them as part of the self or part of his/her answers to the q

uestion who am I? Although the significant others are separate from the individual, however, it is because they are closely associated or because of their cognitive interchangeability with one's sense of personal identity, that they matter so greatly (Vignoles,2017, p.223).

It is necessary to note at this juncture that the consideration of identity upon which partiality is founded does not support strong/thick sense of partialism in terms of selfishness. By this I mean that strong/thick partialism is synonymous to selfishness defined as being concerned excessively or exclusively, for oneself or one's own advantage, pleasure, or welfare, regardless of others. I hold this claim because self-perfection and self-development does not start and end with the self. A situation where the self is hegemonic in terms of prioritizing its goods alone at the expense or neglect of the larger community, can throw up chaos and security concerns that will hamper the comfort, perfection and development of the self. One's identity is constituted by relationships both proximate and distant though in different degrees with different effects. Proximate relationships may have a more direct and overbearing effects on the constitution of one's identity nonetheless, both relationships are conducive and relevant for self-constitution, perfection and development. Guided by this comprehensive complementary rationality, one ought to factor the interest of all *though this may happen* at different degrees. This is the idea of (moderate) partialism. Against this is a strong/thick partialism that prioritizes the good of the self and proximate ties *alone* at the expense or neglect of larger and wider community which is itself unsupported by the African maxim of 'charity begins at home'. Charity may begin at home but does not end at home.

In evaluating or judging the actions of a moral agent, consideration must be given to how his/her actions are conducive, first of all, to the perfection of his/her self, then to the well-being of his/her familial and close relationships (the extended self/significant others) and then to the larger community. It is a (moral journey) progression. His/her actions must be in tune with the extended self which is an extension of his/her self. What the above shows is that African ethics is definable in terms of partiality albeit, moderate partialism because of its readiness to acknowledge the being and interests of other extant relationships both proximate and non-proximate. As earlier noted, this position finds support on the popular African moral intuition that says, 'charity begins at home'. The Igbo version of this moral intuition is for me particularly instructive – 'a naesin'ulomarammapuoezi' which literally interpreted means goodness starts from the homestead and reaches outside. Here, 'home' refers to the self, extended self, that is, family and friends while 'outside' means beyond the familial and close relationships and the goods (whatever this means) must *also* reach the 'outsiders' so to speak. Take for instance, if my mother is drowning as well as a stranger and I cannot safe both of them at the same time, it will be against common sense, ethically speaking, to try to save the stranger and leave my mother. The *customary* thing to do is to save my mother. This is partialism but there is nothing thick and thus morally reprehensible about it. But if after saving my mother, I have ample or even slightest opportunity to save the stranger and I call it bluff, then that is thick partialism and thus selfishness and there is no virtue in it.

It is therefore, unacceptable morally speaking (from Igbo/African cultural point in view) to ignore the significance of the 'home' and concentrate on the 'outside' (in moral consideration and decision-making) in the name of equalizing all moral patients. The Igbo saying, 'egbelegbenaadamkpurunatii' attests to this moral unacceptability. *Egbelegbenaadamkpurunatii* literally means 'a tall palm tree whose kernels do not fall at the base of the tree but fall far from the tree'. The kernel of a palm tree should fall at the base of the tree to be benefited FIRST by those at the base of the tree before being accessed by outsiders. This comment is a direct opposite of the moral maxim, 'charity begins at home'. Partiality (of the moderate type) therefore recognizes the virtue of community and relationships (as constituents of personal identity) in which relationship of harmony, cooperation, friendship and solidarity are valued and as such pursued while any moral principle that subverts this is seriously frowned at and as such should be avoided like a plague (Wareham,2017, p.130).

Such moral principle should be avoided like a plague because it amounts to a call for a moral agent to distance herself from who she is and the things that matter to her like friends and family, and occupy a 'moral' point of view. Molefe has rejected this insensitivity and rather argues that African moral theory 'calls a moral agent to be sensitive and responsive to day-to-day issues and challenges so as to develop a particular kind of moral identity steeped in a history characterized by moral victories' (Molefe,2016, p.117). A good person, a moral exemplar should not be bereft of this sensitivity. Wiredu knowingly or unknowingly gives support to the moral intuition of 'charity begins at home'. Wiredu (1992) writes:

> What, then, in its social bearings, is the Akan ideal of personhood? It is the conception of an individual who through mature reflection and steady motivation is able to carve out a reasonably ample livelihood for self, family, and a potentially wide group of kin dependents, besides making substantial contributions to the well-being of society at large. The communalistic orientation of the society in question means that an individual's image will depend rather crucially upon the extent to which his/her actions benefit others than him or herself, not, of course by accident or coincidence but by design. The implied counsel, though, is not one of unrelieved self-denial, for the Akans are well aware that charity further afield must start at home (p.200).

Very obvious from the excerpt above is Wiredu's unwitting endorsement of partiality in which he recognizes the difference between one's special relationships (self and family) and the 'wider groups (society at large). Wiredu also endorses the view that morality starts with one improving his/her own life (self-development), that of his/her family and then that of the society at large. If it is true that our moral journey MUST start at home, as Wiredu said, then we can see how this leads us farther away from impartiality as such. Impartiality strongly/radically understood (impartiality qua impartiality) means equality and this in all fairness, is psychologically impossible, whereas partiality moderately understood presupposes equity. Thus, equality and equity mean two different things. Equality means treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity means treating people differently depending on need.

It will be ethically a wrong action based on harmonization of interest and well-being (in the words of Wiredu) to say for instance, I have the sum of One hundred and twenty thousand naira only and my son's school fees is N100,000.00 and equally my neighbor's son's (who is a stranger) school fees is N100,000.00 and that my neighbor does not have this money, to share this money equally (that is 60-60) between my son and my neighbor's son and then my son fails to write his graduating exam because of my failure to complete the payment of his school fees. Impartiality as such requires me to treat two of them equally regardless of needs but partialism requires that I treat them differently based on need, in this case my son *needs* my attention as his father whose obligation is to take care of him including payment of his school fees for charity ought to begin at home. Wiredu unwittingly supports this (1992, p.200).

In fact, Wiredu's, 'charity further afield must start at home' 'suggests that one owes immediate (MORE) duty to self-development, then to one's family and, if possible, one can benefit a wide group'. According to Molefe (2016, p.105,106) 'partiality as a substantive claim does not entail that we should not help strangers, it is merely asserting that we owe more to those close to us than those who are not'. Further in support of this, Metz states that, "Ubuntu similarly defends the value of partiality – I owe more to family than to non -family- but it also emphasizes the obligation we owe to strangers, simply in virtue of their humanity" (2010, p.89). None of this understanding of partiality (Molefe and Metz) suggests thick partiality in so far as they acknowledge and harmonize the interests of others beyond the boundary of proximate relationships.

So far, I have tried to argue that partiality defines African ethics and I have tried to locate it on personal identity which is constituted by relationality and community. Partiality as used here does not endorse selfishness or moral egoism in that it accommodates the interests of others. I will, in the next section, further show how it does this through the principle of permeable boundary.

Partiality in African Ethics and COVID-19 Palliatives Regime in Nigeria

The current COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world and the consequent lockdown of the economy of nations and our means of livelihood have caused poverty, hunger and general suffering across the nations of the earth. As a result, life itself, and the joy of it, is threatened. Nigeria appears to be one of the countries hardest hit by this pandemic, not because of the number of infected persons or number of deaths already recorded, but because of the level of poverty in the country – being the poverty capital of the world. This justifies the palliative regime embarked upon by the government at various levels and by well-meaning Nigerians and organizations. The involvement of the government in the palliative regime is well expected after all the protection of life and the bettering of same is the first and most cardinal element of the Social Contract.

Be that as it may, the palliative regime has generated a lot of concerns, controversies, and debates ranging from the adequacy of the palliatives, who qualifies to get the palliatives, who should or should not be involved in the distribution, modalities for distribution. Other concerns bother on the nature of the palliatives in terms of whether it should come in form of money, or food materials and basic medics and protective equipment like face masks, hand sanitizers et cetera. Some of these concerns are trivial while others are germane. Therefore, I shall not busy myself with all the concerns, controversies and debates of the palliative regime. I shall only engage the concerns of who should benefit from the palliatives and how the palliatives should get to them.

The most vulnerable and the poorest of the poor have been identified as those who should benefit from the palliatives. Certainly the poorest of the poor are many given the level of poverty in Nigeria, but the resources to meet the demands of this population are scarce. Be that as it may, efforts must be made to get the poorest of the poor to benefit without making some well-off and others worse-off. Thus, there must be a just distribution of the palliatives. What really matters, in this case, is that all concerned benefit from the palliatives, the starting point or the modality of distribution notwithstanding. But what moral framework is required to achieve this – partiality or impartiality? Since partiality, as I have argued in this work, is the dominant moral thought operational in our (African) ethics, it may not be out of place for the administrators of the palliative regime to apply this moral framework provided the objective of the regime is not defeated which is making sure the poorest of the poor benefit. Therefore, the concern about *starting* from one's ethnic group, or using party affiliations or other familial-based relationships, as have been alleged, in the distribution is irrelevant provided the palliatives and the basic needs to guarantee the well-being of the vulnerable eventually get to all concerned.

To argue that using party affiliation, ethnicity, or other familial-based relationships in the distribution is wrong is beside the point. Our administrators are members of our society caught up with partiality as the defining mark of our ethics and it will be unfair, morally and psychologically impossible to expect them to do otherwise (Williams,1974, p.198). Any moral intuition that asks individuals to sacrifice not only the people and the things that they value but also who they are in the alter of being 'moral' or the equalization of all moral patients is objectionable. The concern should not be about the starting point or the how of the distribution but should be about the availability of the palliatives to those they are meant for. If the modality for distribution starts from one's familial and special relationships (first meeting the interests of special relationships) and goes beyond these relationships by making available the palliatives to all concerned, WITHOUT MAKING SOME WELL-OFF AND OTHERS WORSE-OFF, then there is nothing morally reprehensible about it.

Partiality qua African ethics does not amount to an endorsement of ethical egoism (extreme egoism). Partiality may endorse self-interest but not extreme egoism which is selfishness – there is a difference between self-interest and selfishness (Cottingham,1981, p.83-89). Self-interest presupposes self-preservation and perfection (which is a moral virtue) and the instinct of self-preservation in humans is fundamental and natural. It is the instinct of self-preservation and perfection that made possible the birth of civil society. Preservation of individual life in the state of nature was not guaranteed, thus in other to preserve personal lives and of course (for Locke) also personal property, the people came together and agreed to give the (Leviathan, Sovereign, Generalwill) government the power to HELP THEM PRESERVE THEIR LIVES. This is self-interest, a guided self-interest. Guided self-interest makes it possible for man to overcome the risk of overstepping the boundaries of decency set by positive laws, social conventions, conscience and reason (Agada,2017, p.300). Guided self-interest is relational and other-regarding. It is a morally worthy interest which values sacrifice and limits selfishness.

Be that as it may, as much as the reasons given above in support of partiality (as a defining mark of African ethics) hold, and as much as partiality as an ethical framework is not morally reprehensible, however, our political leaders, in general and administrators of COVID-19 palliatives, in particular, must guard against slipping into strong partialism as this may be counterproductive to the achievement of distributive justice. Indeed, in real life experience, our political leaders at all levels (in Nigeria and most African Countries) do deviate from the ideals of partiality and drift into strong partialism. This is why there is a growing perception that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari or the APC led Federal Government has been largely nepotistic in the appointments of Heads of Military, Paramilitary and other security Agencies at the Federal level.

It must be stated clearly that although partiality, as a care theory, presupposes that one should treat relationships of dependence and inter-dependence as intrinsically significant and prioritize their good and well-being, it does not prescribe that this be done at the expense of others outside the boundaries of proximate relationships. Moral goods or well-being is not limited to one's (self) being or special relationships. Though it stars from there, it (certainly) does not end there – charity may begin at home, but does not end at home. It is moral myopism and parochialism that will make (more often than not our political leaders are guilty of this) a political or COVID-19 palliative administrator to concentrate ONLY on familial and special relationships at the expense of the generality of the community. It is MORALLY REPREHENSIBLE TO MAKE YOUR FAMILIAL AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS WELL-OFF AND OTHERS WORSE-OFF. Partial theory endorses the pursuit of the well-being of our special relationships without leaving others worse-off.

The moral intuition of 'charity begins at home' must guide our partialist political leaders and COVID-19 palliatives administrators. 'charity begins at home' accommodates the extant maxims like: *ugbogurumiarammiaranwunye dim* (let the pumpkin grow for me and also grow for my co-wife), *emenwakaemereibeya obi adiyamma* (literally means what is good for the goose is also good for the gander). Charity begins at home recognizes and promotes the Principle of Permeable Boundaries (PPB). PPB validates the fact that there exists a boundary between those within the circle of special relationship and those outside of them. But the principle also states that the 'boundary(s) in question is permeable which allows the extension of Ubuntu to those who would ordinarily be considered 'outsiders'

(Molefe,2016, p.113; Ramose,2003, p.330). Molefe (2016) further captures this very succinctly when he writes that:

> A moral agent must be recognized that she is not only her own person and a member of a family; moreover, she is also a member of different communities: her tribe, nations, country, continent and the world. It is for this reason that her moral sensibility and sensitivity must be as wide as the world. Simply put, though she has immediate duty to herself and family, all things equal, she also has duty to the community at large (p.114).

The above excerpt and extant African maxims reject nepotistic tendencies and practices as unethical. Mogobe Ramose who is arguably one of the most prominent expounders of African moral beliefs, as the true son of Africa, better argues for the above claim when he opines that criticisms on the basis of nepotism are legitimate since no single family or community has the right to subsistence by way of denying the same right to others. Corroborating Ramose's thought on this, Wareham writes, "I assume that moral systems that endorse corrupt and nepotistic practices should be avoided if possible, since this endorsement results in a morality that will conflict with the considered judgment of many, if not most, Africans and non-Africans. It is thus unlikely to bring about reasonable moral agreement which is a key aim of moral theory" (Wareham,2017, p.137).

Therefore, our political leaders and COVID-19 palliatives administrators, in distributing public goods and COVID-19 palliatives, may start, if they so wish, from their special relationships (that is the vulnerable amongst them) but must go beyond this boundary to the general community/country if their actions must be adjudged just. They must neither concentrate ONLY on their special relationships nor make them well-off and others worse-off. In the same view, the church founder/General overseer may start from the members of his/her church who are the vulnerable but must go beyond this boundary to the general public (if he/she has the resources to do so). The argument that the church does not have any obligation towards non-members is faulty. The argument is always that the offerings and tithes to be used by the church to do this is contributed only by members of the church unlike the government which uses the tax payer's money. However, against this mentality, I argue that the church is not an Island. It exists within the community. The government uses tax payer's (who are not members of the church) money to provide security, road networks and other enabling environment which the church enjoys. Therefore, the church, as part of their corporate social responsibility, must give back to the society.

Given the above submission, it is clear then that for the diversion, for instance, of the resources (palliatives) meant for the generality of the public to the benefit of one's familial and special relationships ONLY, amounts to strong partialism which is an example of extreme egoism (and this is against the partiality I have espoused in this work) and this is selfishness. Thaddaeus Metz considers this exploitative and thus unjust in that it entails using an unfriendly and discordant means in respecting the friendly relations of which one is a part of (Wareham,2017, p.134; Metz,2002, pp.335-356). And treating the generality of the community, the nation or the poorest of the poor in an unfriendly and discordant means is unethical and capable of fanning the embers of disharmony, disunity and clamor for separation and self-determination on a large scale.

Conclusion

In this work, I defended the view that partiality defines African ethics however, I do not support strong partialism due to its proclivity to moral myopism and parochialism which in turn discourages development and encourages disharmony and disunity. In promoting the principle of permeable boundaries, I claim that the African moral intuition of charity begins at home encourages and promotes the dispensing of moral goods NOT ONLY to members of one's special relationships, but also to the generality of the community thereby increasing general happiness which impartial theories moderately conceived and understood purportedly aim at.

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POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Political corruption is endemic, institutionalized, and like COVID-19, it has become pandemic or widespread in Nigeria. Its pervasive prevalence underpins and reinforces other ills that challenge the very basis of national prosperity and development such as poverty, poor healthcare system, poor service delivery, and infrastructural decay. In fact, it is the core of the many devastating ills plaguing good governance and crippling the nation's effort towards achieving greatness. From the issue of outright looting and or embezzlement of public funds to diversion and mismanagement of government treasury, ethnicity or tribalism in the distribution of national goods, etc., the emergence of the novel coronavirus in Nigeria has further exposed the deepening systemic nature of political corruption in the country. This unfortunate situation spanned the three tiers of government even in the ongoing struggle to contain and combat the ravaging coronavirus pandemic. This paper, therefore, examines political corruption in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences in Nigeria. It exposes the massive and rising wave of political corruption, lies, deceit, intrigues, and unnecessary politicization in the management and containment of the *virus in Nigeria. In the final analysis, the paper concludes by recommending an urgent national ethical rebirth among the leaders and citizens of the country, as well as the strengthening of the institutions and organizations charged with the responsibility of fighting and checkmating political corrupt practices in order to effectively reduce the scourge to the barest minimum in the country.*

Keywords: Political corruption, coronavirus pandemic, governance, deceit, ethical rebirth.

Introduction

Coronavirus is a novel contagious virus straining global health and threatening human life and survival. It is exponentially spreading and ravaging humanity *englobo* and has humbled all nations of the world, both developed and underdeveloped, big and small, rich and poor, including the so-called technologically advanced countries. The disease, which is said to affect the lungs, causes a respiratory illness with symptoms like cold, throat infection, cough, fever, and in critical cases, difficulty in breathing. Its origin is traced to Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in November 2019.The novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) was officially declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on February 12, 2020, and a pandemic on March 30, 2020. Since then there are observable cases of the virus in almost all the countries and continents of the world, except in the cold and iced continent of Antarctica. Other six continents of the world, from Africa to Australia, South America to North America, Asia to Europe, are having the boiling toil and colossal effect of the virus. There is no doubt therefore that:

> We live in uncharted times. The world's most powerful nations have been brought to their knees. Both the learned and the lay have fallen ill and died. Neither the mighty nor the weak has been spared. Dead bodies have become a common scene in some of the world's most celebrated cities, while celebrities have been forced to keep indoors. The leisure class and the working class have similarly been quarantined (Obeng-Odoom, 2020, p.4).

In Nigeria as in the rest of the world, lives are lost, businesses and sources of livelihood and survival are crushed. Schools and universities, libraries, markets, recreation centers, and even places of worship are under lock and keys. Certainly, there is a huge loss of income. Within March to May 2020, the price of crude oil has fallen below $22 per barrel – the lowest since 2003. Humans who once had and enjoyed freedom especially to move about are now restricted and "locked down" like domestic animals by the government. In Rivers State of Nigeria lockdown appears to be the strategy of the government to punish any local government area and community that does not comply with the sit-at-home order and social distancing measures of the government to combat the virus.

Political leaders and managers are under enormous pressure as they

> must decide what to keep open, what to close, workers to keep, and who and when to retrench. The fear and panic come less from the risk of infection and more from the growing reality of its fall out (Lenore, 2020, p.2).

"We have not chosen confinement, but we can choose how to adapt and respond… Confinement can thus help us to re-organize our priorities, now and in the future" (Esteve, et al. 2020, p.8). Nevertheless, there is suffering and misery all over the world; humanity and human ways of doing things are no longer the same. There is a new economic and social reality as a result of the pandemic. More still, there is the fear of the unknown, including the apparent fear that the world is coming to an end. "The certainty of the past has been broken. *An Age of Uncertainty* … is upon us"(Obeng-Odoom 2020, p.4). According to Peters,

> COVID-19 marks the return of a very old – and familiar – enemy. Throughout history, nothing has killed more human beings than the viruses, bacteria, and parasites that cause disease. Not natural disasters like earthquakes or volcanoes, not war – not even close (2020, p.12).

As bad as this situation, many unscrupulous and corrupt individuals, governments, and countries seem to be benefiting from it. It has become a potent avenue for political office holders and corrupt officials in Nigeria to enrich themselves by stealing, embezzling, and crassly flouting the rational, legal, moral values and principles of a modern and democratic state. This is called political corruption and Nigeria is one of those climes where this form of corruption is endemic especially in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. In this period of global health and economic crises, there are extraordinary revelations of systemic political corruption in Nigeria. Millions of Naira have been siphoned, squandered, and would likely not be accounted for even at the end of the fight against coronavirus and its eventual fading away in the country. This unfortunate situation spanned the three tiers of government even in the ongoing struggle to contain and combat the ravaging pandemic. This paper, therefore, examines political corruption in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. It exposes the massive and rising wave of political corruption, lies, deceit, intrigues, and unnecessary politicization in the management and containment of the virus in the country.

Political Corruption: A Definitional Dilemma

Corruption is a disease, a cancer that eats into the cultural, political, and economic fabric of society, and destroys the functioning of the vital organ (Amundsen1991, p.1). It shares so many similarities with coronavirus; both are symptomatic and virally infectious. Corruption is both a symptom and a consequence of poverty in as much as it is virally infectious in poor societies. It breeds poverty while poverty conversely aids corruption to flourish and survive. Corruption has become institutionalized and assaulted every facet of the country's political and socio-economic life (Aiyede2006, p. 38). It is so pervasive and ravenous that it became the major explanation or reason for all military coups and takeover in the country. It is the instrument of regime legitimation and stability (Gboyega 2005, p.3). Corruption has been differently defined. The simplest but popular definition of corruption is the one adopted by the World Bank, which holds that corruption is "the abuse of public power for private benefit" (Fagbadedo2007, p.29). Lipset and Lenz defined corruption as an "effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means – private gain at public expense" (2000, p.18). Nigeria presents a veritable case study of corruption in general and political corruption in particular.

Political corruption is a segment of the general idea of corruption. Like the general notion of corruption, the general understanding of the meaning, nature, and scope of political corruption has become dilemmatic. It is difficult to articulate an uncontestable definition of it. For one thing, any definition of political corruption must first and foremost grapple with the meaning of politics and what constitutes the political, because these understandings invariably affect and influence the very meaning of political corruption. In other words, the understanding of political corruption may vary according to the nature of the political system in operation. For instance, the nature and form of political corruption in a democratic system of government may turn out not to be so in non-democratic systems of government. Therefore, any definition of political corruption will at best provide a starting point for identifying and analyzing different strands of political corruption because there exist different forms of political corruption with a wide range of characteristics. The understanding of politics and the political is that it is an activity that takes place in the public sphere among certain individuals known as political gladiators or actors. This public sphere is, nevertheless, the sphere where political corruption takes place.

Political corruption can therefore be said to occur when government officials use the positions they occupy or government machinery or instruments of power to engender illegitimate gains for themselves, family members, tribes, or their cronies. This definition is very narrow because it does not adequately cover other important aspects of political corruption. Political corruption also includes the circumvention of the law, the misuse of public authority by political decision-makers. Amundsen puts it thus:

> Political corruption is when laws and regulations are more or less systematically abused by the ruler, side-stopped, ignored, or even tailored to fit their interests. Political corruption is a deviation from the rational-legal values and principles of the modern state, and the basic problem is the weak accountability between the governors and the governed (1991, p.3).

Political corruption extends further to include the repression of political opponents, controlling of citizens by force, and forcefully restricting their movements and activities as well as the exercise of undue or excessive force and brutality of the citizens in the name of enforcing government restriction orders, and other civil rights violations. It is a manifest authoritarian action of a governor in complete disregard for the rule of law. Again, Amundsen writes:

> Political corruption is one of the basic modes of operation of authoritarian regimes. It is one of the mechanisms through which the authoritarian power-holders enrich themselves. Here, corruption is rarely a disease that the responsible politicians are eager to avoid, it is a deliberate, wanted and applied practice; it is one of the ruler's modes of enrichment and economic control (1991, p.4).

There is a state of unrestrained political corruption known as Kleptocracy in Nigeria. Kleptocracy literally means “rule by thieves”. It is a government with corrupt leaders or politicians (Kleptocrats) who use the position they occupy to exploit the state for personal aggrandizement. They use their positions to pass laws that will enrich them and their people. All these constitute the meaning of political corruption.

Political Corruption and Coronavirus Pandemic in Nigeria

Political corruption is endemic and pandemic in Nigeria. In fact, Nigeria represents an extreme, endemic, and high level of political corruption. It is a huge challenge in the country especially in governance and legitimacy of leadership. It is a challenge to the achievement of a solution to poverty, disease, and development tragedy in the country. It has seriously impeded the growth and effective utilization of resources not only in Nigeria but in the whole continent of Africa (Egbue2006, p. 84). The point is that political corruption causes the malfunctioning of the political society; it impairs integrity, virtue and moral principle (Odumakin 2010, p.34). Consequently, it will be eradicated from its root as people would begin to think less of themselves and more of others and the political community in general. It is synonymous with moral decay, uncleanness, want of character, and value deterioration which not only debases but also destroys a nation's integrity, innovations, democratic structures and development (Kuta 2010, p.36).There is a nexus between corruption and coronavirus; they are characteristically alike. According to Amundsen,

> Corruption is found almost everywhere, but it is stubbornly entrenched in the poor countries of sub-Saharan African, it is widespread in Latin America, it is deep-rooted in many of the newly industrialized countries, and it is reaching alarming proportions in several of the Post-communist countries (1991, p.1).

A comparative reflection of the above will reveal a co-causal relationship between corruption and coronavirus, especially in the current scheme of global infection. While it is true that like corruption, coronavirus is found everywhere, it is untrue that it is stubbornly entrenched in Africa. Currently, coronavirus infection statistics reveals that Africa has fewer recorded cases compared to continents like North America: the United States, which is the epicenter of the virus in the world; transcontinental country like Spain; Europe: the United Kingdom and Italy, which rank second, and that of Asia: Russia, China, and India that rank third most coronavirus infected continents of the world. The hot climatic temperature of Africa and the fact that Africans are used to malaria infection may be the saving grace for them. Coronavirus has similar symptoms with malaria. However, in this global health emergency, the philosophy of viruses and pandemic, which is anchored on universal ethics of care is important in our relationship with others. Peters was right when he argued:

> The philosophy of pandemic is truly a philosophy of all peoples. It reflects not only the human significance of pestilence and plague, or the rise of modern viruses like COVID-19 that show the transition across species but also themes of individual/ community-self-interest and collective responsibility (2020, p.13).

He goes further to state that:

The philosophy of viruses and pandemic is often conceived of as an ethics of self-isolation and of the human effects of social

> isolation, as well as its community breaches. Such a philosophy may also be seen as an ethics of care for those infected, a duty of treatment (2020, p.13).

At this point let us examine the prevalence of political corruption in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. Let us examine the manifestations of political intrigues, falsehood, and deceit as well as conspiracies and contradictions that surround COVID-19 in Nigeria. Let us also reflect on issues surrounding relief funds, donations, and allocation as well as the distribution of palliatives to the vulnerable and poorest of the poor in the country.

Political Intrigues, Falsehood and Coronavirus Pandemic

When matters become political in Nigeria nobody seems to be taken seriously because there will be intrigues, lies, falsehood and deception. This is not different even with the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. The churches are not left out with their false and deceptive predictions about the end of the virus, which never came to pass. Obeng-Odoom writes that "Coronavirus brought increasing faith in prediction and precision which have become the new economic religion" (2020, p.5). The emergence of the virus in Nigeria opened up more spaces for "immoral" and anti-political attitudes in the country, especially in the identification, management, and containment of the virus. Onajite, in an Online Publication: *The Witness* quotes the Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello of saying that the spread of coronavirus in Nigeria is

“Political, full of lies and an avenue for political office holders and corrupt officials to embezzle and steal the nation’s resources”. This, no doubt, constitutes part of the challenges confronting the containment of the virus. This issue bothers heavily on the inaccuracy of data or the figure of those who are infected. Accurate provision of statistical data and figure is necessary not only for the management of those infected but most importantly, for containing and combating the virus. This issue is fundamentally challenging in view of the fact that the figure of infected persons in the country seems to either be over-blotted or underestimated. There is no reliable and accurate documentation of the figures or numbers of individuals infected with the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, it is said that the pandemic is yet without a curative vaccine, yet hundreds of people have been “treated” and discharged. All these have further exposed the deepening systemic nature of political corruption in Nigeria. There is a massive and rising wave of political corruption, lies, deceit, intrigues, and unnecessary politicization in the management and containment of coronavirus in Nigeria.

In some states, there is a mass burial of dead people, yet the citizens are misinformed and misled by their governments that the virus is non-existent whereas hundreds of lives are lost on a daily basis. Some citizens are still in doubt about the existence of the virus in Nigeria; they believe Black people cannot have it. An example of such a State is Kano in Northern Nigeria where the government claimed that the deaths in the state are not coronavirus related but preferred to call it “mysterious deaths”. The consequence later turned grave as it was later ascertained it is coronavirus with alarming cases of infected people and deaths. While some state governments are concealing the number of cases in their states, others are over-bloating theirs to attract donations and financial aids from individuals, agencies, and the federal government. On the part of the citizens, it is disturbing that some individuals conceal their status. They prefer to die rather than present themselves for a test. Some of those who are tested positive are reported to have escaped from the treatment or isolation centres because of the lack of adequate attention.

Coronavirus in Nigeria: Contradictions and Conspiracies

The novel coronavirus pandemic is shrouded with a lot of contradictions, misinformation, and conspiracy theories. One such issue that explains the situation is the fire outbreak at the office of the Accountant General of the Federation on April 8, 2020. With this inferno, there were some conjectures here and there in the country. One of such conjectures is that the fire outbreak was a pretext for the perpetrators to steal from the Covid-19 relief funds and donations, and to destroy its official documents and records. This insinuation may not be wrong especially with the experience of the "snake swallowed money" saga. However, while it is true that a section of the Accountant General's office was engulfed by fire, the Finance Minister, Ms. ZainabShamsuna Ahmed debunked the allegation that the Federal Government of Nigeria lost COVID-19 donations to the fire incident.

Whether this is true or not, the novel coronavirus pandemic has further exposed the level of political corruption in Nigeria. It has also exposed how unlawful and undemocratic our society and leaders are. Rule of law for instance is one of the defining lineaments of a democratic society or government, therefore it is a contradiction to claim that a government is democratic when there is no strict adherence to rule of law. The entrenchment of the rule of law enhances the re-ordering of politics and strengthens democratic experimentation. The significance of this rests on the fact that even with the institution of democracy in the country, Nigeria seems to function as though there is no law in existence. The country seems to be lawless and lawlessness seems to be lawful in the hands of the top political class, the rich and powerful; and the law courts seem to be afraid of dispensing justice despite their role to ensure that justice is done. Law is politically constitutive. In modern Nigeria, where politics has been given a distinctive form, practice, and content, where the political actors have created a realm in which the politics of power and interests is subordinate to the politics of norm, the place of law in politics will provide the basis for a solution since law structures and conditions politics to checkmate and constrain political actions.

One example of contradiction is the unlawful and undemocratic tendencies and actions of the Executive Governor of Rivers State who by executive fiat directed and personally supervised the demolition of a private property allegedly used for commercial purposes. The governor alleged that the said demolished property – a hotel was used for unlawful purposes and secondly, that the hotel opened for business in defiance to the lockdown order issued by the State Government for the containment and management of the spread of coronavirus pandemic in the state, and other sundry crimes. The manifest action of the governor which can best be described as unlawful and undemocratic is a contradiction to the principles and tenets of a democratic system of government that the country claims to practice. One would have expected that in a genuinely democratic system, the place or role of the law court cannot be underestimated rather than an arbitrary show of force and dictatorship by the Governor, a lawyer, and life bencher in the law profession in Nigeria. What a contradiction! The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) is very clear when it states that an accused is deemed innocent until he is proven and declared guilty by a competent court of law.

Again, despite the nation-wide inter-state lockdown, a measure legally instituted by the Federal Government to contain the spread of the ravaging pandemic in the country, some governors especially in the Northern part of the country are frustrating and sabotaging this effort by dispersing the *almajiris* in their states to other states, especially the Southern states of the country. The *almajiris* are young boys from the northern part of Nigeria who seek Islamic knowledge. They are mostly known for begging as a means of livelihood for themselves and their parents. They are loaded like essential commodities or disposal items, if you like, into tankers built for conveying petroleum products or trucks used to convey foodstuffs, building materials, and livestock to beat lockdown regulations and enforcement. The rationale for this move at this point in the global health crisis is still not very clear; although some people are sensing some security challenges that may arise thereof. This situation no doubt calls for worry as some of these children are tested positive for coronavirus. Besides being sabotage, the dispersal of these children in their numbers is a conspiracy. It is political corruption. The height of this conspiracy is that high-ranking politicians and law enforcement agents aid and abet this migration thereby undermining the security and public health of the citizens of other states by exposing them to the high risk of contaminating the virus.

Distribution of Palliatives to the Vulnerable

The distribution of government palliatives to the poor and needy in the society is witnessing intractable corrupt practices whereby relief materials like money, food items, etc. are diverted and converted into personal use by some members of the so-called coronavirus palliative committee. The federal, state, and local government levels are immersed in this unwholesome tendency. There is no equity and fairness in the distribution of palliatives across the country. It is discriminatively based on political party, religious affiliation, and ethnicity. Nigeria is already known for politics of ethnicity, favoritism or cronyism in everything, but the emergence of coronavirus provides more fertile ground for it to flourish. This is political corruption; for according to Amundsen:

> Favoritism or cronyism is to grant offices or benefits to friends and relatives, regardless of merit. In the political sphere, favoritism is the penchant of state officials and politicians, who have access to state resources and the power to decide upon the distribution of these, to give preferential treatment to certain people when distributing resources (1991, p.14).

like Oyo and Ogun, there is an allegation that the Federal Government distributed expired bags of rice not good for consumption to the citizens of those states. Two trucks of 1800 bags of rice which Oyo State Government described as "weevil-infested" rice were returned and abandoned at the gate of the Nigeria Customs Service. COVID-19 palliative distribution in Nigeria is a scam widely referred to as "COVID-419" by Nigerians. It is sectional bigotry, for instance, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development Ms. Sadiya Umar-Farouk insensitively said that "There are no poor people in the South", a claim she made in defense of why the palliatives particularly the twenty thousand Naira Conditional Cash Transfer to the country's poorest of the poor and most vulnerable people were not extended to the Southern part of the country. The Minister also claimed that over 2.6 million households have so far benefited within ten days of distribution. The lack of accountability and transparency in the modality used for the selection and distribution of these palliatives has left Nigerians in absolute bewilderment, shock, and panic and thus necessitates why many individuals and groups are questioning the process. Just as Obeng-Odoom observed, and rightly, so that "The foundations of the COVID-19 pandemic, arising inequality and social stratification, risk becoming endemic, hidden by thick debris of shock and panic" (2020, p.4).

A consortium of anti-corruption organizations under the *Upright for Nigeria Stand against Corruption*, which includes: *Action Aid Nigeria*, *Centre for Democracy and Development*, *Centre for Communication and Social Impact,* as well as the *Coalition of Niger Delta Agitators*, have demanded that the government of Nigeria should t of COVID-19 palliatives beneficiaries. The Coalition of Niger Delta Agitator to be precise has alleged unprecedented marginalization in the distribution of palliatives by the federal government of Nigeria to cushion the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. According to Duku in *Vanguard Online*"The distribution of palliatives by the federal government so far to cushion the effects to the pandemic leaves much to be desired. The exercise as currently handled by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development is smirked with irregularities, discrimination, and clear lack of transparency." The people of the Northern part of Nigeria, Duku argues, enjoy the preference of the Federal Government in the distribution of palliatives unlike their counterparts in the Niger Delta region who have been sidelined, marginalized, and shortchanged. The Ministry charged with the responsibility of distributing these palliatives has therefore become a conduit pipe for siphoning money and relief materials for a selected region of the country.

A group known as *Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project* (SERAP) has equally asked the Federal Government and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to make available details of how funds and private sector's donations to the most vulnerable people in the country were spent. According to the group in *Vanguard Online* "We are seriously concerned that millions of the country's poorest and most vulnerable people have not benefited from the announced palliatives, donations, cash payments, cash transfers, and other benefits." In the Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated April 4, 2020, and signed by the Deputy Director of SERAP, KolawoleOluwadare, the organization notes that "Providing the information would help to address the concerns of many Nigerians regarding allegations of corruption and politicization in the distribution of benefits, improve public trust, and enhance the integrity of the entire process and moods of distribution of reliefs/ benefits to those Nigerians." It is worth clarifying that all that SERAP is seeking for is nothing but a thorough and transparent investigation of allegations of corruption in the distribution of relief funds and materials for COVID-19 and the politicization of the process. However, with the prevailing "Nigerian Factor" as experienced in almost everything aspect of the country, it is quite understandable why the Federal Government and its agencies that are charged with the investigation and prosecution of corruption and its related offenses may remain silent. One shining act of bold selfless leadership at the top, such as unambiguous refusal to be corrupt or tolerate corruption at the fountain of authority will radiate powerful sensations of well-being and pride through every nerve and artery of national life (Achebe 1983, p.17).

Federal Government Relief Funds and its Allocation

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria received donations of billions of Naira and other relief materials from private individuals, organizations, companies, agencies, and corporate bodies and countries. It also received donations from foreign organizations and countries like the European Union, Jack Ma Foundation, Bill Gates Foundation, and China. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), a total of 25.8 billion Naira has so far been donated by 107 Nigerian companies and notable individuals as relief funds to combat coronavirus in Nigeria. It is on record that the

Nigerian private sector donates more than most other African countries in the fight against COVID-19. European Union alone contributed 21 billion Naira to the implementation of a coordinated COVID-19 response in Nigeria. Nigerian government received ventilators, diagnostic reagents, and general personal protective equipment from organizations and prominent individuals. But so far, the public is only informed about 10 billion Naira released to Lagos state – the epicenter of the novel virus in Nigeria and 5 billion Naira allocated to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). These allocations, particularly the former, have triggered serious quest or clamor by other State Governors who insist on their share of the money. This agitation gives rise to the amusing indiscriminate and unprecedented upsurge or increase in the figure of alleged coronavirus infected persons across many states, with the aim of attracting the Federal Government's attention for their share of the money. This means that the figures of coronavirus infected persons in the country is politicized, over-bloated or hyped and therefore not genuinely reflecting the number of infected persons in the country. It, therefore, makes the whole situation appear like "a child's play" or a joke, and thus responsible for the reason why most people still question the existence of coronavirus in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The basic thesis or argument of this paper is that the emergence of the novel coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria has further exposed the widespread and systemic nature of political corruption in Nigeria. There are numerous instances of corruption in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, especially in the distribution of palliatives to the vulnerable people. Political corruption is really endemic in Nigeria; it is an outcome of a collapsed ethical value. The collapsed ethical values in the country require an urgent national ethical rebirth among the leaders and citizens to effectively reduce the scourge of political corruption to the barest minimum. This can be achieved through the institution of a National Ethical Rebirth programme which will be made compulsory in the educational system at all levels in the country. The content of this programme will, unlike the already existing ones like *Citizenship Education*, be richly designed to inculcate morals and the cultures of rule of law, transparency, accountability, and probity. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) will have to be effective to be part of this policy programme. It is glad to know that recently the ICPC and NOA are considering a similar proposal which they call *National Policy on Ethics and Integrity for Nigeria*. However, it must be mentioned that Nigeria is not lacking in policies in the fight against corruption, but what is lacking is the political will to enforce these policies. Therefore, the government must rise to its responsibilities, strengthen and empower the institutions and organizations charged with the responsibilities of fighting and checkmating political corrupt practices in the country by guaranteeing financial autonomy or independence for them. These institutions, which include the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the Legislature, and the Judiciary have not lived up to the expectation overtime in the fight against corruption in the country. The government must also ensure that stiffer penalties are meted out to those who are convicted of political corruption, while effort must be made to re-order or re-organize politics in the country to eliminate the evils of ethnicity, 'god-fatherism', etc.

In conclusion, the ongoing global pandemic must remind us that there are an inseparable co-causal and co-evolution between human beings and nature. Therefore, the Ethics of Care must be extended to one another as well as to non-humans, including animal species and ecosystems in other to reduce the possibility of future pandemics that may result from closer contact between humans and other species (Esteve 2020, p.8). Nigerians must focus on the Ethics of Care at this period of the global crisis and redefine their lives and relationships with others. Such re-orientation must include the individual and collective resolution to do what is morally right and more essential to our development challenges, like the provision of good health care facilities in the country. Ethics of care are values of wellbeing and solidarity to all. This is the time to show solidarity and profound humanism such as love, care, generosity, and mutual connection. For, coronavirus according to Sean Illing, is not an outlier; it is part of our interconnected viral age which we must adapt to.

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