**Wanted: a moral foundation for a multireligious society like Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

**Objective:** In the multi-religious Nigerian society, attempts by any group to legitimise religious doctrines or assert political hegemony on the state create tensions and latent socio-economic disharmonies that often manifest in wider interreligious conflicts. Hence, the objective was to examine the need for a moral foundation through unravelling the key Nigerian multi-religious problems, and to extend a theory, which can offer a foundation for an acceptable concept of morality.
**Methods:** Ethical inquiry and conceptual analysis were used here. We went through the key problems in order to unravel the unethical reasons harbouring them. Then we suggested an inclusive concept that can ensure result-oriented obligations.
**Findings:** A concept that seems acceptable to the diverse beliefs in Nigeria was created. Working with a systematic condition that brings liberalism and communism together, the concept aims to remove these socio-economic problems that have bedevilled the nation since 1960 independence. There exists historical evidence to show that the adoption of an ethical fundament (for example, in Europe and North America) checks inter-religious conflicts.

**Key words**: Morality, Acceptability, Multi-religious society, Ideology.

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

The ideologization of any of the Nigerian belief systems as a normative framework by any group in such a multi-religious society creates tensions and socio-economic disharmony, which often aggravate to interreligious conflicts. Some scholars are worried that with Nigeria's strategic size and position in Africa, this setting threatens national and regional security. Against this background arises the need to device an acceptable moral foundation that can, at least, enable citizens to coexist meaningfully for the common good, as an objective.


**1A:  Background - the key Nigerian multi-religious problems**

To begin with our first aim of unpacking the key problems confronting the Nigerian society, we discover that, on the trail of the resurgence of religion, there occur progressive interreligious conflicts, the hallmarks of which are the competing attempts to enforce moral codes by means of secular law.[1] Conflicts develop by a steady progression (existing case points) punctuated by specific event, which may make matters worse. Power difference produces latent conflict. As in most stable societies, there exist a lot of latent conflicts in the Nigerian society, but the indication is that, based on the lack of adequate national mechanism to tackle the existing problems, the step from latent to manifest conflict is inevitable. The factors sourcing or fabricate the Nigerian interreligious conflicts are left unchecked; there are less functional changes between groups, which can diffuse perceived conflict. With due consideration of these intractable conflicts, it is evident that the ethos of conflicts compromises the Nigerian culture, way of life or memory, and also the synergy for achieving national projects. Sterkens, C. and Anthony have examined the role of principal agents of religious socialization as elucidated by Bajzek and Milanesi (2006, 72-83), which are the family, the peer group, the religious community, the educated community and the mass media.  In the multi-religious Nigerian society, all the five agents have pro-religious effects. Seen from a social psychological perspective, this establishment of an identity for both individuals and groups has the potential to lead to religiocentrism and ethnocentrism.  In this paradigm, religion can foster violence merely because of intolerance, inclusive and exclusive truth claims between groups (Sterkens, 2001). Considering a list of progressive conflicts that occurred between 1999 and 2008,[2] in 1999 alone, regional, ethnic and religious fighting continued in several regions of Nigeria, claiming over 1,000 lives. Nowadays it is about Boko Haram as well as the threats certain ethnic groups.

To elaborate, the Nigerian multi-religious composition is largely made up of Christians and Muslims, apart from other members of the public. Among the other members of the public is also the African Traditional Religion (ATR), even though the number of people who are still practicing this traditional religion exclusively is generally on the decline.[3] Through affiliations such as the Islamic brotherhoods and Christian Church fellowships, the Protestant churches, Roman Catholic, Islam or the local Nigerian religious groups provide their members with regional and national organizations. Does this point to the fact that some of the religious conflicts are touched from outside? Fundamentalist Christians from other parts of the world, like Europe and North America, are seen to be fully engaged. Christ for All Nations (CFAN) leader, Reinhard Bonke, spreads the message that Christianity is better than Islam.[4] In Northern Nigeria, the Islamic leaders say that the introduction of Shari'a law is not meant for Christians, but the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) calls that a cheap agenda. The Ja'amutu Tajidmul Islami of Zakzaky that does social work in Nigeria simultaneously spreads Islamic agendas. It does not matter

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[1]  Jenkins, P., *The next Christendom: the coming of global Christianity*, Oxford university Press, 2002, p.13

[2] http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/ACR-Nigeria.html

[3] Middleton, J., *Encyclopaedia of Africa, south of Sahara*, Vol. 3, Charles Scribner's sons, 1997, p. 320.

[4] Van der Aa, G., *Nigeria: mensen, politiek, economie, cultuur, milieu,* Den Haag: Novib, 2002, p. 30.

much if conflicts are touched from outside. This is due to the fact that the level of assistance varies or is shaped by the nature of African society, its type of leadership or diplomatic risks involved in the activities of external Muslim groups. For instance, in 1986, President Babangida, as a Muslim president, has tried to include Nigeria among the Organisation of Islamic Conference, OIC.[5]

Nigeria appears to be a hotbed for World Christian and Muslim summits. In fact, Abuja has hosted the controversial 1989 Islamic conference. From his viewpoint of Abuja 1989 conference, John Chesworth alludes to both the extensive Christian and Muslim agendas of evangelisation and dawah (respectively) as potential signs of "a clash of Monotheisms."[6] Based on the conference's theme and the communiqué issued after the conference, Chesworth's summary is that "Muslim expansion in Africa is a challenge to Christendom world-wide."[7]  How then can such conferences or dialogues forestall potential conflicts in Nigeria? I hope to come back to this question later in chapter 2.

In general, the key problems are rooted in poor philosophy of leadership, educational system, accountability, unethical constitution, ideologisation and identity politics, all of which nurture impunitive and fundamentalist agenda. Among them identity politics deals the hardest blow, since it ideologically bolsters the non-separation of religion and state with a serious constitutional laxity. In referring to the specific products of the Nigerian system, Cyril Obi says that the 1986 Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) ethnicity interface has given rise to the popular character of the Ogoni movement.[8] Tracing the control of oil as one of the defining factors in the Nigerian civil war (1967-70), he says that after the war the minority of the Niger Delta took on the identity of oil minorities, and ever since, this identity has become a critical label of politics.[9] What is very paramount about identity politics is the fact it draws attention to oppositional movements, and in this way marks a transition away from the previous moment of unified, national-popular projects.[10]

Our analysis is that the factors giving rise to the conflicts are lubricated by diverse or lack of obligations for the common good. These factors look for bases on the people's religious affiliations, having made their way up to the government hierarchy, through the differences that are connected with economic status and social class. In other words, they originate from the socio-economic disharmony created by the intermingling of politics and religion, within the labyrinth of social interactions devoid of an inclusive ethical foundation.

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[5] Nyang, S., "Islamic revivalisation in West Africa: historical perspectives and recent development" in: Olupona, J. and Nyang, eds., *Religious plurality in Africa*: *essays in honour of John S. Mbiti*, Berlin, etc: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993, p. 263.
[6] Chesworth, J., "Challenges to the next Christendom: Islam in Africa" in: Wijsen, F. and Schreiter, *Global Christianity: contested claims*, eds., Rodopi b.v Amsterdam, 2007, p. 117.
[7] Ibid, p. 129.
[8] Obi, C., The changing forms of identity politics in Nigeria under economic adjustment: the case of the oil minority movement of the Niger Delta. Nordiska research resort no. 119, 2001, p. 50. The Ogonis are a minority group in the Niger Delta region, which is located in the south east of Nigeria.
[9] ibid, pp. 24-25.
[10] Hale, C., Cultural politics of identity in Latin America, in: Annual Review Anthropology, 1997. p. 567.

**Chapter 2: Universal ethic's orientation to peace and stability**

Before searching for solution, it is good to assess the Nigerian efforts to tackle the multifarious problems, which often result in interreligious conflicts. Nkwume Ogoko says that Nigerians' religiosity is an unquestionable factum, adding that Nigerians worship the Supreme Being with blood stream and fibre of their being.[11] This buttresses the fact that in Nigeria the so-called resurgence of religion thrives (Jenkins). But interestingly, Ogoko has something positive about Pentecostals when it comes to the public sphere. "For them there is no authentic faith in Jesus Christ without authentic morality."[12] Going further to relate what he terms as the Pentecostal fundamentalist act (like distribution of uncharitable, malicious and destructive tracts), Ogoko adds that the Pentecostals are recognised for their ability to influence public morality. An example has been given as the TV programme lasting from October 18 2004 till May 2005. In it, millions of Nigerians could follow an interactive discussion on issues of public accountability and governance seeking socio-economic and political contribution towards the Nigerian corruptive governance. Claims, oil, counter-claims and minority cases are at the base of Nigerian identity politics (see Obi).

Finding a solution may require deeply assessing issues such as the African philosophy, interreligious dialogue, tolerance, or lessons from global ethics. For instance "the principle of religious liberty and equality forms no political problem in Europe."[13] In how far are the universalistic standards (or the issue of Western originated principles) obstacles to the Nigerians' acceptance of our envisaged more-inclusive moral concept? Should it be viewed as a Western-originated principle?[14]

In the stride for peace and stability, a national ethic is not detached from its global context; and sacrifice, generosity and goodwill are its concomitants. Therefore a basic ethical requirement for any nation is the creation of effective program where people can coexist harmoniously. In Nigeria specifically, Matthew Kukah ranks among the outspoken few who have been expressing point blank concerns about the limits of interreligious dialogues. In contributing ideas towards managing Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, Kukah notes "it is citizenship anchored with other supporting institutions that offers the only viable platform for meaningful dialogue."[15] The absence of strong policy frameworks in states to guarantee efficient delivery of fruits of good governance makes dialogue a futile exercise; a hungry man is an angry man.[16] Kukah says that he is not cynical about such dialogue, but does not believe in it.

While evaluating the present situation in African societies as a breeding ground of seeds of conflict, Wijsen affirms that African scholars of religion have failed to see tensions and cultural contradictions that could lead to serious problems under globalisation. Here, ideologies, communitarian spirit and neighbourly love are not enough.[17] He asserts that unity is presupposed in "African philosophy" (a concept he claims to be usually collective, shared and uniform to a particular group). "The myth of unity leads to an emphasis on harmony, ultimately to repression and dictatorial regimes."[18] Commenting on

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[11] Ogoko, N., *Dialogue on justification: a model for ecumenical dialogue among the churches in Nigeria?,* Berlin: Lit, 2007, p. 507.

[12] Ibid, p. 556.

[13] Ellian, A., Monotheism as a political problem: political Islam and the attack on religious equality and freedom, in: *Dissidents and community*, number 145, Telos, 2008, p. 88.

[14] Kukah agrees that education can help address some misinterpretations by scholars who continue to use West and Christianity synonymously in relation to African history.

[15] Kukah, M., "Managing Christian-Muslim relationship in Africa," in: Falola T., *Christianity and social change in Africa: essays in honor of J.D.Y. Peel*, ed., CAP: Durham, North Carolina, 2005, p. 402.

[16] Ibid, p. 408.

[17] Wijsen, F., *Seeds of conflict in a haven of peace: from religious to interreligious studies in Africa*, Rodopi Amsterdam, 2007, p. 9.

[18] Ibid, p. 89.

the proposals for Africans to ensure the rich treasures of African communalism (vis-à-vis the cultural heritage, the law-making and law-enforcement),[19] Wijsen thinks that the question depends on whether such claims have any empirical evidence.[20] A similar presumption says, "African ethics treats the dignity of the human person as including the dignity of the entire creation, so that the cosmic dimension is one of its basic components."[21]

Referring to Western-originated principles or the tensions between ethical universalism and cultural particularism,[22] Tarimo has a more specific suggestion. Tracing African problem between ethical universalism and cultural particularism, he calls for "concrete universalism,"[23] which has bases on the historical experience of moral agent. This is to refer to a moral value created in a concrete culture, and embraced by others, thus achieving inclusiveness and universality. Here, I reemphasise that what is at stake specifically in the Nigerian context is a structural foundation for reaching the common good in the society.

Moreover Küng stresses on the importance of ethics in building peace and stability. He says that without morality, or universally binding ethical norms, nations risk the danger of maneuvering themselves into a crisis, which can lead to national collapse - economic, social and political disintegrations.[24] With respect to the negative impacts of the intermix of religious doctrines and politics in a society, Küng refers to Kant's idea of a moral autonomy of making use of one's understanding,[25] which continues to receive wide support (as a preferable model) by philosophical and theological ethicists. We argue that an obstacle to Nigeria's adoption of a universally valid fundament should not be Afrocentrism. However, similar to previous comments from scholars like Tarimo, we do well here if the moral value has bearing on the cultural or multi-religious life of the people.

Furthermore, on the issue of a well-ordered society, Rawls and Habermas are still among the school of thought still following the Hegelian-Kantian discussion.[26] In fact, Stiltner has examined Rawls' contribution towards tackling moral problems in a multi-religious society. He regards all of John Rawls' works as describing how the society can be just, well ordered and stable.[27] The principle of toleration[28] ranks high in Rawls' theory. Rawls' question concerns the possibility for those of faith, as well as the non-religious (secular), to endorse a constitutional regime even when their comprehensive doctrines may not prosper under it, and indeed may decline[29] His answer lies in the step that must be taken by holders of both secular and comprehensive doctrines. "Except by endorsing a reasonable constitutional democracy, there is no other way fairly to ensure the liberty of its adherents consistent with the equal

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[19] Eboh, S., *African communalism: the way to social harmony and peaceful coexistence*, Frankfurt am Main, London: Verlag fur Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2004, p. 219.

[20] *Seeds of conflict in a haven of peace -*, p. 14.

[21] Bujo, B., *Foundations of an African ethic: beyond the universal claims of Western morality,* Crossword Pub. Co. NY, 2000, pp. 1-2.

[22] Tarimo, A., *Human rights, cultural differences and the church in Africa*, Morogoro: Salvatorian Inst. of Philosophy and Theology, 2004, pp. 23-70.

[23]*Human rights, cultural differences and the church in Africa*, pp. 24, 28.

[24] Küng, H., *Global responsibility: in search of a new world ethic*, Crossword: New York, 1991, p. 25.

[25] Ibid, p. 38.

[26] The Kantian-Hegelian discussion is understood as an articulation of a general philosophical problem (from what is the phenomenon of society).

[27] *Religion and the common good,* p. 49.

[28] Rawls aims to specify how far liberal peoples can tolerate non-liberals. To tolerate means not only refraining from exercising political sanctions (military, economic or diplomatic) to make people change their ways; it also implies recognising the non-liberal societies as equal participating members in good standing of the society of peoples, with certain rights and obligations, among which is the duty of civility requiring them to extend to other peoples public reasons befitting to the society of peoples for their actions (see Rawls, J., *The Law of Peoples* with "The idea of public reason revisited," p. 59.

[29]Ibid, pp. 149.

liberties of other reasonable free and equal citizens."[30] This step helps maintain equal basic rights and hopes. Commenting on Rawls' project, Habermas has asserted that Rawls was aware of the immeasurable "fact of pluralism". "He did posterity a great service in thinking at an early date about the political role of religion."[31]

Küng acknowledges one of the foremost works on reason where Kant has emphasized the difference between freedom and human reason. If humans defend their autonomy, they will succeed to establish an ethics of reason. For Kant, his categorical imperative provides the basis for a universally applicable ethics.[32] Obviously, despite his critical approach and deep commitments to thoughts, he has not discarded the traditional themes of god such as soul, immorality, morality and intelligibility. With appreciation of the accomplishment of modern science, Kant and his neo-school of German idealism have tried to secure a continuity in the inherited values of Occidental philosophy, like truth, morality and religion, which were then under attack from empiricism and its products, such as scepticism, materialism and utilitarianism.[33] It was to save these concepts that he differentiated between theoretical, practical and aesthetic faculties of reason. Very interesting that on the issue of God, Kant rejects Leibniz's ontological argument that proves god's existence solely by logic.

Even though his theory remains a breakthrough in the area of traditional dichotomies, critiques trail Kant's argument. His formula of universal law is deemed empty,[34] in other words, it is believed that its excess generosity would certify immoral maxims.[35] Habermas alludes to Kant's idea of reason as having a mere formal character of unity. By differentiating between the qualities of practical reason,[36] faculty of judgment, and theoretical cognition, he bases each on a foundation of its own.[37] An example of a mere formal character of universal reason is made evident by its exclusion (in praxis) of the poor, mentally disturbed, women, strangers and colonial peoples. In the end, what the enlightenment has referred to as universal reason only gives room to a certain form of rationality.

His account of moral faith and argument is termed to be an effort by him to transgress, in the name of moral use of reason, the very limits he had set to the theoretical use of reason in the first *Critique* (of the pretensions of pure theoretical reason). In the second *Critique* on practical reason, even though practical reason postulates belief, again Kant has omitted the idea of revelation, a phenomenon of most religions.

## 2.2 Moral conceptualisation - a "community of revelations"

We come to the second aim of this project, which is to devise an acceptable ethical concept. How "practical reason" can be applied in the Nigerian public square. For our moral conceptualization, we are proposing a middle path between reason and revelation - whenever legitimization of religious doctrines is the rule, reason is vulnerable to unethical captivation, in this case by groups. Even though the Kantian

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[30] *The Law of Peoples* with "The idea of public reason revisited," p. 151.

[31] Habermas, J., "Religion in the public sphere", in: European Journal of philosophy, Blackwell/Oxford, 2006, p. 20.

[32] *Interculturality: a challenge to the mission of the church*, p. 55.

[33] Hirschberger, J., *Geschichte der Philosophie, Neuzeit und Gegenwart*, 11th. ed., Freiburg/Breisgau: Herder, 1981, pp. 267-70.

[34] *Kant*, p. 286

[35] http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/L108SECT5?ssid=741190407&n=1#   There is the argument that in deriving all principles of duty from categorical imperatives, Kant has failed to show that there are contradictions in the adoption of rational beings the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct.

[36] Habermas distinguishes between theoretical and practical discourse – the former entering on the argumentation about opposing claims, while the other aims at a consensus about normative action

[37] Wagligora, M., "K.C. Bhattacharyas Konzept der philosophie," in: Mall and Lohmar, eds., *Philosophische Grundlagen der Interkulturalitat,* p. 218.

concept of freedom has been criticised for abstractness and excluding the possibility of developing necessary criteria for social institution, the Kantian discussion[38] has been viewed as a major philosophical question. In attempting to generate an acceptable moral foundation for the Nigerian multi-religious society, one question must be confronted, which is that there has to be an explanation of an evil act. How can moral evil, then, be explained? For this purpose, we are compelled to redefine Kant's freedom, faith and morality.

With regards to Kant's problem of freedom (the issue of autonomy), we have to realize firstly that freedom cannot happen in isolation; it happens in a "system" which conditions it,[39] even while it is unconditional.[40] Human beings relate in these equal unconditionalities, or may refuse at times; and by refusing, one performs a non-authentic act or moral evil. Sin is a misuse of human freedom. For Graham, the fact "that morality stands in some relation to action can hardly be gainsaid."[41]

The concept of revelation occurs in all the religions mentioned in the Nigerian multi-religious society. The principle of unity of religions refers to the fact that all the great founders of various religions derive their source from God. It restates the hypothesis that all the great systems that have been established by them are part of a single divine plan directed by God.[42]

How can this paradigm try to resolve the "aporia" problem (explaining moral evil)? With the idea of revelation, we realize that we can fail in our "oughtness" or intrinsic obligation of freedom; we can only do it in a systematic condition (or conditionally). This inability or doubt ("aporia") that we always have can only be resolved with the presupposition of God; which is a more authentic use of freedom and morality. Hence, the theory of revelation under a systematic condition is essential and can only be perceived by man as a historic event (without proof of God's existence). Envisaging the idea of an "absolute freedom" (idea of God), which is able to reshape the systematic conditions in a way that the aim of morality finally is achievable, resolves the 'aporia" problem. Reason alone is insufficient. Graham examines practical reasoning as it relates to the social world, and says that morality, as the supreme source of practical reasoning, has a preeminence to question practical reason.[43]

This implies that the revelational idea apparent in the religious experience of the Nigerian multi-religious traditions - so evident in most religions - can provide certain mutuality in the society. Taking Christianity as an example, through the freedom that he exercised as a relational being, Jesus Christ did the Father's will while on earth. His love manifests itself in both desiring that his adherents respond to it appropriately and allowing them to willfully make that decision without his coercing them. Hence, they can accept or deny that love, and when they do the latter they pave way for the "structures of sin" or the corruption of the whole creation.

In a summary, on the condition that God exists, our moral efforts are decisively not meaningless. We exhibit the "nature of man" (in our daily lives), we may backslide in achieving universal love ("aporia" problem), but with faith we are allowed to represent it "symbolically". Furthermore, to recognize the freedom of others in worldly conditions implies acting in a manner that does not violate, develop or

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[38] In the Kant-Hegelian discussion, which is continued by scholars like Habermas and Rawls, Hegel says that the moral subject is the subject principally free; and hence exerts the chance to ask philosophical questions. This possibility is realizable only within the conception of institutional order, and this Hegel developed with the title of ethical life. Hel feels his concept of ethical life is better than Kant's concept of freedom, which Hegel says excludes the possibility of developing the necessary criteria for social institutions.

[39] This calls for the conditional structure of ethics. See the paradigms of ethics after 2.1.8

[40] Hüebenthal, C., Article 1, Radboud university Nijmegen, 2008, p.1,

[41] Practical reasoning in a social world -, p. 169.

[42] http://info.bahai.org/article-1-4-0-4.html

[43] Graham, K., *Practical reasoning in a social world: how we act together*, Cambridge Univ. press, 2002, p. 167

sometimes promote the agency.[44] We refer to this moral foundation as a "community of revelations" (CR). It is a fundament that works on a systematic condition of the community; any member of the community can decisively look back at the historical experience of God. This is done through the revelational experience. The religious can contribute in discovering the sense and purpose of our existence. They can also help in responding to the quest for explanation, prediction and utilization. The existence of God is, though, not proven, and this emphasis takes the non-religious people into consideration.

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[44] Huebenthal, C., Article 1, Radboud university Nijmegen, p. 6.

**Chapter 3: CR, systematization and the key problems**

How can the "community of revelations" contribute to the solution of the Nigerian multi-religious problems? The next task is to find a logical economical system that can be sourced by the common good objective of the CR. Economically, we should argue for a creative innovation on policy design where far-reaching changes are rooted in the local productive power. Maintenance of existing projects should be based on a technology that is somewhat indigenous, and not costly as to be dependent, for example, on foreign materials. The type of government here should be one with very accountable officials having the interest of the society at heart - call it philanthropic. It requires leaders with a philosophy of government.

One possible way forward for an economic development often involves government intervention to build capital market, especially by using ICT to the macro level, and this is typical of an Asian economic model. Even after dealing with Confucius (especially in the 20th c), China's political system remains based on secular Confucian ethics acquired about two millennia, and is more rational, that is, less encumbered by religious authority. If government sets up these opportunities, citizens can be empowered to fend for themselves. In most progressive economies, the middle class is the driving force, and government does not suppress it. Another possible economic model requires a more systematic order, and that is what we examine next by looking at *The community of rights* by Alan Gewirth.

**3.1 Bridging communitarian, individual rights and identity politics**

Regarding the aims and objectives of *The community of rights* Gewirth says that it is the argument concerning the moral justification of economic and social policies and institutions, especially in their contribution towards relieving human suffering. It refers to the constitution of such policies and institutions, as embodied in the state or political society. The first aim is to show that rights and community, far from being antithetical to one another, have a mutual support-relationship. This first aim is ancillary to the second, which is to develop in some detail how this relation can serve to fulfil the economic and social rights of the most deprived members of the society and hence pave the way for economic and political equality.[45]

For Gewirth, his project is a broader or more rigorous Kantian foundation of the (ethical) systematic conditioning of the communal structure, with specifics on economics and social problems. It offers a symbolic outlook of how rights could be prioritized, and how one's interest may not conflict with the rights of another. It has a normative principle, the application of which can be universal. In a given community, there are two main concepts that are interconnected in a unity - morality and the common good. They are very dependent on one another as are rights and community. It is by moral fundaments that humans are evaluated, and certain solutions proposed. To show how the root causes of afflictions can be exchanged for a greater effective equalization of human rights[46] for instance, Gewirth works out a system of "economic biography" and "economic constitution"[47] Ethics searches to provide the path for mutual understanding in a community (see chap. 2). Gewirth's systematic condition contains what it entails for any agent, and it takes effect in a principle of equal and universal human rights known as the PGC[48]. Each person is both the subject or right holder and also the respondent or duty bearer - call it

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[45] Gewirth, A., *The community of rights*, Chicago univ. press, 1996, p. 1.
[46] Ibid, p. xiii
[47] The two sequences are fully explained in the last five chapters of *The community of rights.*
[48] PGC refers to the principle of generic consistency. *The community of rights*, p. xiv

Paleto optimality condition.[49] The objects of these rights, or in other words what they are rights to, are freedom and well being, and these are necessary conditions of action.

CR affirms the relationship between rights and community (no dogmas or communitarian myth), focusing on how the relationship can help the most-deprived members of the society. With due consideration of the inter-religious conflicts and other social disharmonies, one of the main tasks of the government is to focus on even provision basic needs, infrastructures and help build up economic prospect for the people. CR as an elastic system has the solidarity of the people as the resource for creativity, inclusion as well as the obedience of laws. Through the inclusive micro and macro-socialisation, national stability can be restored.

Between Gewirth's project and our CR, there are similarities but there is a variation in the source of mutuality for ethical management. A systematic condition - which we have earlier described as a necessary support to the moral foundation, "community of revelations" also draws a great amount of mutuality from the latter (CR). The CR can also be applied in any society for a just development, and thus the more specific economic and social rights whose effectuation would enhance the situation of severe deprivation in a particular society. Again, it should be noted that, contrary to Gewirth's morality base on human action,[50] CR is evoked from the revelational idea so evident in the variety of religions in Nigeria to nurture the kind of mutuality needed in grounding the systematic condition. The religious can fall back in a historical reflection of their moral obligations. This foundation promises to be more acceptable in the Nigerian multi-religious setting.


### 3.2 Summary

In a general summary, key problems exist in the composition of the Nigerian multi-religious society, and hence the local and global concerns or calls for an ethical solution to these problems (Chesworth, Wijsen, Jenkins). They match our findings from the key socio-economic problems, implying that mere inter-religious summit agenda does not go far enough in addressing the issues. A good focus on the instability and enormous suffering caused by the effects of the key multi-religious problems necessitates an inclusive foundation to channel the available goods and services abiding in the country (Kukah, Ogoko); otherwise they become more competitive and exploited. To give room to ideologies in the guise of divine agencies breeds identity politics (Obi).

Moral problem in a heterogeneous society exists everywhere, but in most advanced societies, part of the basic problem has been resolved long ago. Many European countries have specific concordant (agreements) that regulate the relationship between the Church and the state (Amaladoss). The US has an institutional separation of the Church and the state. A systematic or universal path for harmony reduces national instability (Küng, Amaladoss). In terms of African philosophy, Wijsen has a point by asserting that African scholars have failed to figure out such obstacles to stability.

Critics of communitarianism have asserted that communitarians argue naively and contrary to the historical evidence surrounding communitarianism. They say that some historical societies have not met the criteria of community, which communitarians themselves have advocated.[51] Furthermore, communitarians are accused of overlooking the ways in which their ideal communities have often remained bastions of privilege for the powerful, for Africa's "big men", and agents for the oppression of

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[49] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_efficiency
[50] *The community of rights*, p. 13. Gewirth argues that all moralities or moral precepts deal, directly or indirectly, with actions; and this foundation is the human action.
[51] Kirkpatrick, G., *The ethics of community,* Blackwell, 2001, p. 88.

the marginalized. They point out that often times, communalistic background can arise whenever any religion is used as a rallying point by certain group of people in political struggle.[52] On the other hand, communitarianism remains the major alternative to the political philosophy of liberalism. Started essentially as a critique of liberalism, it subsequently has developed into a philosophy of its own.[53] The communitarian argument includes the idea that the might of free choice of liberalism is an empty one.

The paradigm of the CR has a research methodology, not myth, and is different from divisive ideologies. CR varies with the non-cognitive treasures of African communitarian life (Eboh), or the communal and dignified treatment of human person by "African ethics (Bujo). Here lies the strength of this moral concept, which has a historical experience of a moral agent - liberalism and religion, in this case, compliment each other. Since liberalism is argued to lead to moral degradation or emptiness (Kirpatrick), the religious retain their faith mostly to sanitize the society in time of need for social values. Religion has goods, and can play a worthy role in peoples' lives. There have been cases where religious group have prayed for national healing in Nigeria, and people seemingly have felt relieved by these prayers.[54] It is our viewpoint that an inclusive ethical foundation checks inter-religious conflicts. While no leader or religious group is expected to impose a religious doctrine on other groups, with the focus on the "goods" of a religion, the religious do well to constantly sanitize the society through moral guidance. We speak mostly of the historical experience of moral agent as a relative to divine agency. In choosing a middle path, CR is also built on the criticisms levelled against communitarianism, while also ensuring that contextual ethical liberalism helps to mobilize and back the obedience of law. Therefore, combining two paradigms, this project generally suits Northern or Southern hemisphere.

It is the strength of this project that, in generating an acceptable moral foundation or order (Rawls) for the multi-religious Nigerian society, we have concretely (Tarimo) taken into consideration all the religious and non-religious members of the society (see the composition of the Nigerian multi-religious society). There is a historical relevance in redefining Kant's freedom, faith and morality - envisaging the idea of an "absolute freedom" (idea of God), which is able to reshape the "systematic conditions" in a way that the aim of morality is finally achievable resolves the "aporia" problem. Do we already have this systematic condition? Yes. The Asian model or Gewirth's systematic condition- project can be applied with the "community of revelations." CR appeals to all members of the community in so far as it attempts to address the key Nigerian multi-religious problems.

The aim of the "community of revelations" should be understood by the citizens of a multi-religious society like Nigeria, because the system of achieving the goals is much more rigorous than a mere relationship. Strict rules are necessarily not only for the high officials (the "big men"), but also for the poor. The benefit is that there is the possibility of a stable community where all the members have obligations to one another and can work for a better development of the nation. CR is not a force to live in a monolithic culture, but an attempt to live in divergent focus of pluralism. The background focus is on Nigeria but the concept can be used anywhere.

The weakness of this project is that, though it has the potential to counter poor leadership and identity politics, there might be an initial obstacle coming from powerful beneficiaries of the current situation - "African big men." However, Nigerians should be motivated to adopt this new incentive framework for a brighter socio-economical development. Being a new concept, extra preparation has to be done; experts of the CR model can play a leading role, especially in arguing for it in the already existing Nigerian democratic horizon.

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[52] Amaladoss M. *Making harmony: living a pluralistic world*, Chennai: IDCR, Delhi: ISPCK, 2003, p. 21.

[53] *The ethics of community*, p. 85.

[54] We suggest that more research works need to be done in this field in order to determine the empirical value of such claims.

**Further recommendation**

Nigerian academicians should constantly theorise the structure of harmonious coexistence between the people. With a theoretical framework, scholars must continue to investigate the concept of religion and state premises in the context of ethical management of the societal structures.

**Chapter 4: Conclusion**

In this project, we have unpacked the key Nigerian multi-religious problems, and consequently devised a "community of revelation" as an acceptable moral foundation in an attempt to tackle the problems at the root. The problems are related to leadership philosophy, ideologisation, unethical constitution, educational system, accountability and identity politics. In general, we have considered the various aspects of disharmony that take root in the socio-economic networks as catalysts to "manifest" inter-religious conflicts. Specifically, we have considered the ingratiation, religious-based patronage or the preferential manner by which justice has been done to the immeasurable goods that the citizens need. Consistent with scholars' concerns is the fact that up till now the full-blown negative effects of this rivalry between religious groups include conflicts and the wanton negligence of the "common good" ideal.

A foundational moral concept has the benefit of facilitating any (inter-religious) governance and dialogues in a given multi-religious society, based on the fact that a normative principle of correlation, like CR, is already at work. To extend the concept of moral agency to public organisations or governmental circles is to understand that the organisations can only be moral when they exist to serve the public good, or serve a morally justified act.

The argument is that with this concept, which promises to be acceptable to the secular and non-secular members of the society, a fundamental attempt is made to solve the key Nigerian multi-religious problems. With the place Nigeria occupies in Africa, this project has links to national and regional peace and stability.

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