

The Concept of Personhood in Governance in Africa: A Case of Yoruba Nigerians

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the Nigerian Yorubas' perspective of the concept of personhood in respect to governance. The paper appraises the Yorubas' belief on the meaning of human being and personhood. The finding of this paper is that the Yoruba people of Nigeria believe that all men who are alive are human beings but it is not all human beings that have the qualities of personhood. This paper therefore critically considers what makes a human being to be regarded as a person. Based on this principle, the paper's finding is that not all those who are at the helm of political leadership are persons, because many of them do not possess the qualities that make them to be regarded as persons. With the adoption of descriptive, case study and causal designs, and second data collection, the paper investigates why many of those in governance in Africa are just mere men, who do not possess what makes human beings to become persons. In the actual fact, this is the reason why Africa remains underdeveloped. This research work therefore is of the perspective that what makes a human being to be a person includes the man's social aspects, moral uprightness and human integrity. Based on this premise, the paper further recommends among others that those who are in governance in Africa, need to work on their moral conduct, integrity and to also improve on their social relations with the people they govern. Conclusively, this paper is of the opinion that before Africa can compete adequately with other continents of the world, leaders in all sphere of life should begin to see their responsibilities beyond the level of their personal and families benefit, but to use their calling and responsibilities as means to serve others and to improve the lots of those they are called to serve.*

Keywords: *Personhood, Governance, Africa, Yoruba.*

I. Introduction

The desire to write this paper came as a result of a discussion with Prof. Akeem Amodu, whose Doctor of Philosophy thesis is on the topic "Dualist Theories of a Person and the Nature of the Mind-Body Problem." His research work carried out an analytico-philosophical appraisal of the Yoruba concept of a person vis-à-vis its response to the traditional mind-body problem. In this regard, the implications of the Yoruba concept of a person for social existence was explored. (Amodu, 2017).

Meanwhile, the Yoruba people are one of the major ethnic groups with over forty million people in total inhabiting the south western and north-central region of Nigeria, as well as southern and central Benin. Dating back to as far as the transatlantic slave trade, which existed between 15th to the 16th centuries, the Yoruba people were said to have migrated to other countries as well, including Cuba, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Jamaica, Grenada, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, and Saint Lucia, Britain, United States of America, among others.

According to Adams (2018), there are reports that civilization already existed in Ile-Ife (the citadel of Yoruba civilization), Nigeria by the 8th century, centuries before the arrival of the British colonial administration. As of today, after numerous political divisions and influences, the Yorubas are the main ethnic group in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States, and they also make up a sizable proportion of Kwara, Kogi and Edo states in Nigeria. In addition, they spread to other African countries such as Egypt, Benin Republic, Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Liberia (Adams: 2018).

The Yoruba have shared a common language and culture for centuries but were probably never a single political unit. They seem to have migrated from the east to their present lands, west of the lower Niger River more than a millennium ago. They eventually became the most urbanized Africans of pre-colonial times (Encyclopedia Britannica: 2021).

Contemporarily, Yorubas are now Christians or Muslims, but aspects of their traditional religion survived. The traditional Yoruba religion has an elaborate hierarchy of deities, including a Supreme Creator and some 400 lesser gods and spirits, most of whom are associated with their own cults and priests. The Yoruba language has an extensive literature of poetry, short stories, myths, and proverbs.

The Yorubas are one of the most traditionally organized people in Africa. According to Watabe (1985), the chieftaincy system in Yorubaland has a segmentary structure composed of wards, quarters, and patrilineal kin groups. The chieftaincy system and age-grades constitute the main political organizations of the town. The chiefs have councils at each level of quarters and wards, ascending to the "town council". The chiefs are ranked in accordance with the rank of the respective segment which they represent, and the senior chief of the lower level (e.g. quarter) becomes the head of the upper level (e.g. ward). Furthermore, before the advent of the British in Yorubaland, Yoruba kingdoms maintained an orderly and unified political system which is still in effect till today. In Yoruba kingdom for example, the Oyo kingdom was made up of a headquarter (i.e., Olu-ilu) and other local towns and villages. However, its political administration consisted of a central level and subordinate units.

In addition, at the center, power lay with the Oba (King) and assisted by a handful of chiefs and other political figures in the administration of the kingdom. While the subordinate units, headed by Baales, concentrated only on the administration of the town and villages in the kingdom like the Oba, the Baale, also had a group of chiefs that assisted him in his area of jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the Yoruba political administration shared among all political levels/sections of the kingdom ranging from the highest to the lowest unit unlike the Hausa political system which was highly unified structure that was based on the ultimate principle of "check and balance" which implies that each of the administrative levels can check, challenge or nullify actions of other levels irrespective of their administrative hierarchy.

Based on this premise, this work intends to appraise the Yoruba's perspective to the concept of personhood and how it affects governance in Nigeria. The finding is that, many leaders in Nigeria are just mere human beings but have no quality of personhood. They lack qualities that can make them to be regarded as persons. It is on this perspective that this research recommends among others that the people in governance in Nigeria need new orientation. They need to be transformed and possess human qualities that can enable them to transform the Nigerian society for a rapid development and a society that will be more economically vibrant which will allow the country to be in a better form that will give the same privilege to all citizens.

II. Conceptual Framework

For better understanding of the applications of some terms in this research work, this paper will critically examine the following two concepts. The two concepts are personhood and governance.

Personhood

In Amodu's perspective, (2017) the problem of defining a *person* constitutes one of the problems that have been traditionally addressed by that branch of philosophy referred to as metaphysics. Metaphysics is a field of study that attempts among other tasks, a critical study of existence as a whole. It attempts to arrive by rational means a general picture of the world. It is a field of study that focuses attention upon philosophical issues concerning the nature and structure of the universe in which man lives. It asks, among others, what is ultimately real? What categories or terms are necessary to describe the nature of what is? Is a man basically a body - a being that is entirely explainable in terms of physical properties and processes? Or is there something about man that cannot be defined simply in terms of properties and processes?

Basically, the way that people understand and relate to each other contributes towards the acknowledgement or development and maintenance of personhood. Nevertheless, being an actual person in the first place is important

and determining what or who is a person involves setting boundaries (Baldwin and Capstick, 2007). It is pertinent to note that where someone falls in relation to those boundaries will definitely determine whether such a man/woman is considered a “person” or a “non-person”. According to Alzheimer (2013) for some theorists, particularly ethicists, this means possessing certain capacities. Others would argue that personhood more or less equates with simply being a human being, whereas the role of interaction with others has also been highlighted as the importance of the physical body.

In philosophy, the word “person” may refer to various concepts. According to the “naturalist”, epistemological traditional, from Descartes through Locke and Hume, the term may designate any human (or non-human) agent who (1) possesses continuous consciousness overtime and (2) who is therefore capable of framing representations about the world, formulating plans and acting on them (Taylor, 1985, 97-114). But Charles Taylor’s perspective differs from that of the naturalist. Accordingly, the problem with the naturalist view is that it depends solely on a “performance criterion” to determine what is an agent.

According to another approach to personhood, paradigm case formulation used in Descriptive psychology and developed by Peter Ossorio, involves the four interrelated concepts of one. The Individual person, two, Deliberate Action, three reality and the real world, and four, language or verbal behavior (Wikipedia, 2021). All these four concepts require full articulation for any of them to be fully intelligible. Specifically, a person is an individual whose history is, paradigmatically, a history of Deliberate Action in a Dramaturgical pattern. Deliberate Action is a form of behavior in which a person engages in an Intentional Action, is cognizant of that, and lastly, has chosen to do that. A person is not always engaged in a deliberate action but has the eligibility to do so. A human being is an individual who is both a person and specimen of Homosapiens. Since persons are deliberate actors, they also employ hedonic, prudent, aesthetic and ethical reasons when selecting, choosing or deciding on a course of action. As part of our “social contact” we expect that the typical person can make use of all four of these motivational perspectives. Individual persons will weigh these motives in a manner that reflects their personal characteristics. That life lived in a “dramaturgical” pattern which is to say that people make sense, that their lives have patterns of significance. The paradigm case allows for non-human persons, and “primitive” persons.

Meanwhile, another school of thought believes that personhood may differ according to the stage of life. Accordingly, Ketwood and Broden (1992, 275), “In an ethical sense, personhood is attributed even to the newborn infant. In an empirical sense, personhood emerges in a context” Kitwood (1997) in another perspective argues that there were two aspects to the person (i.e., the adapted self and the experiential self). The adapted self and the experiential self-represent two different ways of being. The former is described as “highly and tightly socialized, particularly in relation to the performing of given roles” Kitwood (1997:15) further states that the latter arises out of simply being with people within a context of equality and mutual respect and attention. On the basis of this fact, the experiential self may persist throughout life until death provided that the right conditions are provided. Kitwood further concludes that the I-Thou form of relating provides the ideal framework for preserving and enhancing this aspect of personhood.

Being a “person” can be interpreted to mean the fundamental philosophical and sociological position of a human being, with value, intelligence, a history and present. Lawrence (2007, 555) therefore adds that the challenge in demerit is to continue to seek for and not to dismiss that person.

The pertinent question to ask at this point is that “At what point does an individual become a person, metaphysically and morally? There has never been a consensus on this. While some would say at conception, some prefer an embryo or fetus, others would say at birth or shortly before, while some believe during infancy or as the infant becomes a young child. But it might be difficult to point to one moment in time when an individual went from non-person, and perhaps there is room here for the concept of partial personhood (Health Ethics 2021).

Moreover, Gabriel-Petit (2021) gives 13 human qualities that a person should develop to make the society to become a healthy one. The human qualities are as follows:

- Be Empathetic: Having empathy enables a person to focus on someone else’s needs, struggles, and feelings. It requires that you open your heart to them and put their needs before your own.

- Be instructive: Having instruction is being open to the mysterious works of your own mind- seeing what is or what might be clearly in your mind's eye.
- Be creative: The source of creativity is your imagination. When creating, you synthesize all of the ideas that you have taken in from myriad sources and, magically, all of those inputs fall into place, forming a cohesive whole. The organizations of the future will increasingly depend on the creativity of their members to survive.
- Be life-long learner: In a field that is as broad and fast-changing, it is important that you keep learning throughout your career. The more you learn, the more you can contribute in the workplace and the more likely you will advance in your career.
- Be a good listener: Listening well is the key to effective communication. Focusing on both what people say and how they say it ensures that accurately receive the messages people communicate to you so being a good listener will set you above your peers who don't listen well.
- Be persuasive: Your confidence in yourself and your ideas will help you to persuade others, as well your ability to make your case logically use storytelling to provide supporting evidence. Abraham Lincoln once said "If you wish to win a man over to your ideas, first make him your friend".
- Be passionate: With passion, your work ceases to feel like work. Love your work and you will have the motivation to continually hone your skills and expand your arrears of competency, as you must forever do in this field. When you work with passion, you can reach your full potential.
- Be responsible and kind: It's essential that you do your best to meet your obligations to your colleagues. If you promise to do something, you should try very hard to fulfill that promise. But do not overcommit yourself. If you have a hard time saying no to people, you are likely to set yourself up for failure. Being kind to one another makes the workplace a happy place to be, smooths the team's interactions, and helps everyone to be highly productive.
- Be honest and have integrity: Honesty stands for being truthful, straightforward and open with people. People with personal integrity always try to do the right thing, regardless of whether anyone would ever know they have done it. Honestly people always have a strong moral compass. It takes courage to do the right thing whatever the consequences. Integrity is vital in leaders. Your honesty and integrity will engender trust in others.
- Be Courageous: Having courage gives you the tenacity to work through issues and disagreements without compromising your principles. Courage enables a person to speak out and make his opinion without being afraid. A person must have the courage of his convictions.
- Be Self-Aware: This stands for knowing what your strengths and weaknesses are and acknowledging what you have yet to learn. This requires mindfulness and deep reflection on your thoughts, your emotions, your motives in your interactions with. To be self-aware calls for admitting one's mistake without fear.
- Be wholehearted: This is the quality that allows you to embrace all of the other virtuous human qualities that have previously been described. Wholehearted living is about engaging one's life from a place of worthiness. This is living a life that has been defined by courage, compassion, and connection.

III. The Concept of Governance

In the perspective of Gianluca (2007), governance is knowing the direction to be taken and ensuring that the ship is constantly on course in that direction. As an act of steering a people's development, government is about processes not ends. According to the institute of governance, governance comprises the institutions, processes and conventions in a society which determines how power is exercised, how important decisions affecting society are made and how various interests are recorded in a place in such decisions (Institute of Governance, 2002). Furthermore, the Commission Global Governance sees governance as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. It

includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions, either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interests (Weiss, 1995).

Furthermore, Glanluca (2007) believes that good governance attributes include: participations, transparency, judicious allocation of resources to address the collective problems confronting society, accountability, the rule of law, effectiveness, equality and strategic vision. Bad governance is also seen as the personalization of power, lack of human rights, endemic corruption and unelected and unaccountable government. Likewise, Shabbis and Maguire (2002) argue also that to enable one to know whether the governance of a country is good or bad depends on the degree to which its institutions and processes are transparent and accountable to the people and allow them to participate in decisions that affect their lives. It is also the degree to which the private sector and organizations of the civil society are free and able to participate.

Meanwhile, in a report of the United Nations, good governance which sustains governance promotes equity and equality of treatment to all based on the concept of non-discrimination. The political sector should be able to develop resources and methods of governance. The report also specifies that there should be gender balance within the people of a country in order to strengthen indigenous mechanisms and to ensure efficient and effective use of resources.

Based on the aforementioned, the concept of governance can be defined as the proper management of a regime. Governance is basically concerned with how rules or structures affect political action and the prospect of solving given societal problems (Hyden and Bratton, 1992). Furthermore, governance also means more than just sustenance of the regime, but it also means the capability to stand the test of situations where regime changes are needed to meet new demands or deal with new problems and challenges of the society. Likewise, governance in Bello-Imam's (1997) perspective, is understood as the mechanisms whereby an institution/organization (be it the family, nation-state or elements of it) incorporates the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work-including the capacity to mediate among these interests. When they enter into conflict and the means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it through its mission mandate and the application of its resources in pursuit of its goal. Further to this, the nature of governance, be it good or bad, is obviously determined at a more general and higher level, by the essential characteristics of the government that is in place, whether it is democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian.

Meanwhile, what makes a governance good or bad depends on the measurement and evaluation of performance. Before a governance can be judged to be good, there should be a constant reduction of the absolute cost of governance in terms of administrative expenses to enable the governments to have more funds for the provision of goods and services for people they govern. Moreover, the reasons for the success stories in countries like China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan are explained. It is believed that they were all committed to development with clarity of vision and goals among others. These countries consistently implemented growth oriented and market-friendly policies with some differences in the policy options and in their sequencing. Another factor was the great importance they attached to the mobilization and utilization of human resources with particular attention to investments in education (Adamolekun, 2011).

But in Nigeria, the reasons for the continuous backwardness and maladministration, persistent crisis and recent phenomenon of failing states are due in large part of poor leadership, leaders that are not committed to the development of the societies, and lack of honesty and commitment to democracy. Adamolekun (2011) believes that the trouble of Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. It is also believed that semi literacy, lack of reading culture, non-intellectual pursuits, thoroughly inadequate educational background and enthronement of wealth as a determinant of social standing and the subsequent inordinate pursuit of it and of other mundane items are those factors that deprive our Nigerian leaders the ability to read with understanding. The constitution of Nigeria, which is laden as it is, with difficult and perplexing concepts, or the books on constitutional law, political science and sociology where the knowledge of these concepts can be found; and knowing that he cannot understand them, he would have no inclination or disposition to buy the books or to read them, and this contributed to the Nigeria leadership under performance and inefficiency in governance. For Nigeria governance to bring out the necessary and expected result, it must govern in such a way that will not

only protect the political, economic, social and environmental interests of the present, but also protect the political, economic, social and environmental interests of the future generations. In Addition, not only cognizance of present economic, political, social and environmental needs should the governments keep in mind and protect, but also be mindful of such needs for the future generation.

IV. Nigeria Yorubas' Perspective to Personhood in Governance

To start with, Platonic and Christian teachings assert that the human person is a unity of the separable entities of body and soul, and that the soul is intrinsic to human life. For Plato, it was clear that the essence of a human being transcends its physical substrate, both in physical life and after death (White: 2013). Meanwhile, the distance further believes that the three components that form a man are body, soul and spirit. Each of these components of man has its functions that can make such a man to become a person.

In the Yoruba's perspective, there are a lot of differences between a human being and a person. The Yorubas are at home to an extent with the Christians perspective that a human being composes body, soul and spirit but have an addition to these components. The Yorubas believe that a human being is more than that, there is always the social aspect of man which makes him to become complete. A human being has the social aspect of obligations to perform to his community and this will be found in his moral upbringing and upright living.

The moral sense of personhood denotes individual beings who are moral agents. Moral agents in behavior that can be evaluated as moral or immoral, as morally right or wrong, as morally permissible or morally impermissible. Their acts are blameworthy or praiseworthy. It makes them morally responsible for their intentional actions (Center for Health Ethics: 2020). The major avenue to assess this moral in a human being is his/her social relations with others. Therefore, to the Yorubas, man is referred to as a social being. The Yorubas believe in communal relationship, no man can live in isolation.

Based on the above premise, the Yorubas believe that not all human beings can be regarded as persons. A child who is yet to know what is good from bad is not yet a person. A person who is mentally derailed is not a person. Likewise, a drunkard who after drinking alcohol begins to misbehave cannot be regarded as a person. A human being's social behavior and interactions with others are the basis for regarding such a man as either a person or a mere man. The Yoruba as pointed out in a discussion with Prof. Akeem Amodu, (2021) believe that there is no difference between some men and animals because they do not have good social orientation. A man who picks up a cutlass or gun and begins to inflict injuries on others without any just cause is just a mere man to the Yorubas. The bandits, the religious fundamentalists, kidnappers in Nigeria are mere men to the Yorubas because they have no good social relations with the people around them.

Kayode, Oyejide and Soyole (2008) believe that an important element of government is the measurement and evaluation of performance. Assessment is largely a matter of judgement and cannot escape the colouration of partisan values and ideas. Nevertheless, the citizenry, which is the electorate and the target of the various programmes, can always provide a fair assessment of a regime. Based on this factor, Kayode and others believe that it is imperative that the citizenry possess a participant political culture and, possibly, make every effort to improve the quality of its inputs to public policy. It is on this note and factor that the Yorubas in Nigeria assess a public office holder in Nigeria on whether is a person or a mere man.

A public office holder is believed to be in the office for the good of the entire society and not to amass wealth for himself and his family and friends. The Yoruba believe that a person who is a public office holder will use the public resources for the good of the society and not for personal ambitions. A governor or president who uses his office to amass public wealth for himself and his family is not valued socially and just a little more than an animal.

Furthermore, governance to the Yorubas is a means of finding solutions to the problems confronting the entire society. Therefore, those who are at the helm of political affairs are expected to be impartial, non-sentimental and objective in the disposition of the societal resources. The government officials are to this extent expected to be socially upright. Those who amassed wealth for their own selfish ambitions could be seen to have been mentally derailed. The fact is that an individual who loses a large amount of brain functioning, cannot be regarded as a person. Therefore, anyone who just begins to steal the huge amounts of public resources for his

own selfish ends is no more with his senses. That is why it is not possible to see the concepts of human being and person to mean exactly the same thing.

The Yorubas believe that those who are in politics owe their subjects important obligations, such as duty not to harm them, to manipulate their records and not to deny them of their civic and fundamental human rights. It is their responsibility to see to their welfare and to secure their safety.

It is on this note that one cannot but conclude that in the assessment of governance in the contemporary Nigeria, many of the politicians and public office holders are just human beings but not persons. For example, the recent wedding of President Muhammadu Buhari son with the daughter of the Emir of Binchi in Kano state demonstrated the nature of governance in Nigeria. While people are living in abject poverty in Nigeria, yet the president went ahead to squander Billions of Nigeria to host guests for the wedding. Likewise, the way many of the guests competed with each other in the use of private jets showed that many of the political leaders in Nigeria are not persons but just mere men and women. According to the Yorubas' perspective, the governing class members are majorly human beings and are far from being persons.

Meanwhile, on the part of the governed, any electorate that collects bribes whether in cash or kind, before voting for a candidate during elections cannot be regarded as a person because he/she has traded off his future for a temporary enjoyment of today. In another dimension, any citizen who lends support to the people in government to defraud the nation is just a mere man and not a person. Moreover, all those who are in the habit of vandalizing public infrastructure like electrical poles, oil pipelines, are trading off the interests of future generations for their own selfish interests. Likewise, those teachers in higher institutions who sleep with students before giving marks are morally bankrupt. Also, all civil servants who are using their offices and positions to exploit people before performing their official assignment should be regarded as men and women without integrity. To this extent, they should all be regarded as mere men because they have no integrity and are under the influence of moral decadence which disqualifies them from being persons.

Conclusively, a person has feelings for the welfare and safety of others while a human being cares less for others. It is worthy of note that competing metaphysical concepts of the personhood of individuals will have differing concrete practical applications and associated results, and will lend themselves to comparative analysis. This analysis begins with two fundamental assertions: that personhood is a distinctly human state within the natural order, intrinsic to human life, and independent of the status of the human being- an assertion of existential personhood- and the antithetical position that personhood is a conditional state dependent upon circumstance, perception, cognition, or social diction an assertion of relational personhood. In existential thought characteristics of human personhood are innate and are to be discovered. For relational theorists, the characteristics of human personhood are to be defined by the society (White, 2013).

V. Recommendation

The African continent, without doubt, is suffering from good governance and this is the major factor for its continuous underdevelopment. Odoh (2011, 41) believes that the continuous backwardness of Nigeria came as a result of the fact that the right people with the fear of God are not in politics that is why the country is still in a political jungle where everything seems to be right and nothing ever seems to be wrong. Odoh (2011, 66) further analyses what makes a governance good. The scholar believes that governance is said to be good when it is free from abuse, greed and corruption. When it embraces the rule of law, transparency and accountability in the administration and management of the country's affairs.

Furthermore, in the same way, Edemhanria argues that good governance "implies the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources in the interest of the majority of the citizens' ". Likewise, good governance reflects on the capacity of the government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions in line with the relevant laws that are applicable for the benefit of the people.

Therefore, for the African continent in general and Nigeria in particular to be transformed and begin to witness a real form of development technological advancement and sustainable development and governance, the following factors must be seriously and logically addressed.

- First, the leadership should be transparent with honesty to enable the general populace to be carried along with the government policies.
- Second, the leadership should sincerely discourage corruption. Any public office holder who is caught in the wheel of corruption should be dealt with according to the law of the land.
- Third, there is a need to take accountability seriously in the land. All public office holders beginning from the president and state governors and all people under them should be called to give account of all their deeds while in office to discourage corruption, misappropriation of public funds and maladministration.
- Fourth, favouritism and sentiment should be discouraged. All people should be treated according to merit and not on the basis of religion, tribe, and social connections against what is being operated now in Nigeria.

On the parts of the people, Yoruba leaders such as (Obas, Chiefs and community leaders) should shun bribery and corruption. They should not corrupt themselves with the political leaders. The more they have intermarriages with the political class, the more corrupt both classes will be. The Yoruba leadership should be vocal and be brave to defend their subjects. Their primary concern should be the interest of the people they lead; therefore, it would be for the good of their subjects to always seek for good governance rather than seeking for their own selfishness from the corrupt politicians.

In the same way, the Yoruba communities should always probe critically the social relationship of the aspiring public office holders before they voted for them. If they critically investigated their social upbringing and all that are associated with them before they are voted in, it would be easier for them to sort out wheat from thorns.

Moreover, the Yoruba leaders and their subjects should discourage the political office contenders from giving bribes during elections. Once they receive bribes of any form, it will be difficult to challenge them after they have been voted in for any wrongdoing.

In addition, the electorate should not think twice to vote out corrupt, and unproductive public office holders from their offices if found that they have not been effective, morally corrupt, in the course of discharging their official duties.

Finally, the political class should note that the generally, contemporary electorates are becoming enlightened on political matters every day. Therefore, it is advisable for them to do more for the electorates in the allocation of the public resources, and to put in place good governance if actually they want to go far in politics.

Conclusion

The Yorubas in Nigeria are known for their peculiarity in culture, language and tradition. As earlier stated, the Yorubas are one of the most traditionally organized people in Africa. There is always a reason for whatever a Yoruba man does. The Yorubas often base their actions on their traditions and culture. The Yorubas' belief on personhood is quite different from many of the ethnic of the world. For example, according to American law, a person is recognized by law as such, not because they are human. The Federal law of America states that the concept of legal personhood is formalized by statute to include "every infant member of the species homo sapiens who is born at any stage of development" (Wikipedia: 2021). Similarly, a political movement in the United State" seeks to define the beginning of human personhood as starting from the movement of fertilization with the result being that abortion as well as forms of birth control that act to deprive the human embryo of necessary sustenance in implantation, could come illegal (Basset: 2011).

The Yorubas' perspective captures this fact of this discourse than that of the United States. To the Yorubas by nature, all people are human beings, but not all humans are persons. Your morality and social relations determine whether you are a person or not.

This paper has therefore proved that a person according to the Yorubas perspective is someone who is interested in the welfare of others around him. A person to the Yorubas adds value to his environment and contributes meaningfully to the progress of his community. A person is more concerned about the welfare of

others. In other words, a person thinks and behaves rightly and he has a good mentally uprightness. This means an old man who now behaves like a child, who has lost his memory and being taught and teleguided by a child is no more a person but a human being. In essence, any man whose behaviour is not acceptable to the normal standard of the society cannot be regarded as a person but a mere man.

Finally, therefore, for the Nigerians who are in governance, for the people to see them as persons, must change their perspective towards governance. They must be seen adding value to the lives of the people. This paper is of the opinion that in Nigeria there are more humans than persons in governance. The only way to transform Nigeria and to bring a rapid development, peace and harmony, employment, economic development and many others is that the political class should endeavour to be morally upright, to shun corruption, to be transparent, to do away with favouritism and nepotism and to be accountable to the people who elected them into their public offices. It is by doing so that Nigeria as a nation can compete adequately with other advanced countries of the world.

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