

Review of: "Honorific Conception of Philosophy and Exclusionism in Nigeria"

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The article is an interesting read. It makes an interesting argument about the prime place of philosophy in human understanding of their social self (and relations) and how this influences exclusion – or exclusionism – in Africa taking Nigeria as a case study. The paper drew on some literature and secondary sources and depends on critical thinking and analysis method for its analysis. One of the strengths of the article is the placement, perhaps correctly so, of exclusion in Enlightenment philosophy, which resulted in the de-humanization of non-Western people and their colonization. This, the authors capture, as a history that influenced and continues to influence Africa's present. At the same time, the authors argue that exclusion is not exclusive to Europe - or European philosophy - as certain Africans practiced and adopted exclusionism before and after their encounter with European colonialism. As the authors show, citing Jonathan Taylor, "many countries in Africa,..., continue to struggle with the challenges of deep and historic fractionalization and exclusions of diverse social, political, and religious groups. ...for African nations under European colonial yoke, such distinctions existed on the bases of race (White vs. Black), ideas of civilizations, ('civilized vs. 'natives') and power (i.e., colonized vs colonizers, and metropolises vs. colonies). Strikingly, he [Taylor] also noted that these distinctions also existed between ethnic and religious native African communities as well". With this evidence they point out how colonial historical rule and African postcolonial official practices after define social self in contemporary Africa and reproduce exclusionism on the continent. This, they argue, is applicable in Nigeria. There is exclusionism in Nigeria, particularly during the conduct of the 2023 general elections, where people were excluded on the basis of ethnic, religious, political party and other cleavages.

The argument appears fascinating. However, there are areas that need improvement. I will identify these areas of concerns below.

First, there appears to be a contradiction in the authors' argument that exclusionism is natural on the one hand and the claim that it is a decision of certain people (or unnatural) on the other hand. On the first page (abstract) of the paper, the authors claim that: "exclusionism is part of *human nature* and this arises in the quest for power and control, to identify oneself as superior and the 'other' human being as inferior". In their introduction, however, they say: "exclusion... was a decision, not something that people have always believed, and it was a decision based not on a reasoned argument, but rather on polemical considerations involving the pro-Kantian faction in European philosophy, as well as views about race that are both scientifically unsound and morally heinous". If something is natural, it is not a choice and a decision. If something is up to people to decide, it is not natural, however. In order to reconcile this contradiction, the authors need to rethink these positions. One way to do so is to conceive exclusionism – in its theoretical and empirical usage – as a form of human social, rather than natural, creation.

Secondly, it is unclear what area of philosophy - or even research in general - the article seeks to contribute to and what contribution the paper seeks to make. This is important because, the argument about Western philosophers' conception of the non-Western (African) as incapable of philosophizing is not new. However, what is the new thing that the authors seek to add to our understanding of this position? An option would be to emphasize the empirical contribution of the article. I believe this is plausible since the authors drew on the recently concluded elections in Nigeria to make their case.

Thirdly, how the authors connect theory and practice can be strengthened. It would be worthwhile to ask and to know if the position of the Enlightenment Age affected human relationships in Africa and in Nigeria the same way that exclusion occurred during the just concluded 2023 elections. The authors seem to make this argument and conclusion. However, the two events and experiences cannot be said to be actually the same. While the colonial arrangement and its system of exclusionary rule was quite forceful, giving no room for the participation of a majority of the people, with clear underlying philosophical backing, exclusion during the election can be seen as the demonstration of the desperation of Nigeria's politicians. Exclusion is not on a large scale and does not affect the majority of voters. In the case of the former, a whole population is denied rights and privileges. In the case of the latter, people have the rights to vote and participate but are systematically prevented from exercising that their suffrage. This does not mean that such exclusion is not important. Rather, it is not on the same scale as the colonial exclusion. Consequently, to what extent is the claim of the article to prove that ethnic exclusionism can be related to Western philosophers' exclusion of Africans? When the authors claim that: "Ethnic exclusionism is so high in Nigeria and it is of no difference from that of Hegel, Kant and the rest who attempted to exclude Africans and other non-western philosophies from humanity and the universal history of philosophy". Therefore, the authors need to show more rigorously how these two eras differ from each other and how exclusions, which play out in the two eras, overlap.

Furthermore, it is unclear what the authors mean in this sentence: "It is worth noting that Franz Fanon, Carothas, Gobineau and Montesquieu all excluded Africans and other non-westerners from the kingdom of humanity because they lacked reason and in the place of reason had passion". Perhaps this is the case for the other three philosophers, this is not the case for Fanon who in fact wrote texts that highlight the de-humanisation of the non-Western people by Westerners. The authors need to check out some of Fanon's work on this point. The final point is to pay some attention to language use, punctuations and grammar.