Negative statecraft and the *Social Worse-offs* in the modern African state: Exploring the concept of political utilitarianism for ethical leadership and governance

Ronald Olufemi Badru*

ABSTRACT

This work makes two fundamental claims. First, the problem of negative statecraft has persisted in Africa, causing a negatively upward shift in the general curve of poverty as well as what John Rawls calls the social worse-offs on the continent. Preliminary research shows that this problem is usually mainly addressed from the social scientific perspective in Africa. Second, the present work normatively reacts to this implicit challenge, from the social sciences, through an ontologically ethical submission that the problem of negative statecraft is largely reducible to the moral deficit of leadership in Africa. Therefore, the work argues that a constitutional emphasis on political utilitarianism, a derivative from normative utilitarianism, largely addresses the problem. Just as normative utilitarianism reduces the rightness or wrongness of human conduct to the extent and intensity of the good produced or failed to produce, to satisfy the greatest number, political utilitarianism also analyzes the performance or non-performance of political leadership in Africa by the extent and intensity of the good produced, or failed to produce, to benefit the greatest number. Ultimately, this normative turn reinvents ethical leadership and governance, making the political leadership more responsible and responsive to the people in the modern African state.

Keywords: Africa, ethics, leadership, political utilitarianism, statecraft, worse-off

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is much support in the scholarly literature to affirm that negative statecraft seems to be a fundamental cause of poverty and underdevelopment of the modern African state (see, for example, Ogeidi 2012), apart from the legacy of past colonialism (see Rodney 1981) and what one could call the covert externalist dimension of neo-colonialism. According to Animashaun (2009: 48), the post-colonial African state occupies pride of place in the public sphere but it has not done much in terms of positive transformation of the material conditions of the people to justify its status. In some concrete cases within the state in Africa, the oil resource has not

been properly managed by political administrators, and this deficit in resource management has brought on a situation in which the resource is now being regarded as a curse, rather than a blessing, to the development of the people (see Olarinmoye 2008). Rather than use the income and wealth of the state in Africa to markedly improve the welfare level of the mass of the people, post-independence African leaders have not only personalized power, they have also privatized the state for the purpose of primitive accumulation, clientelism and repression of all forms of opposition (Abubakar 2004:154). Therefore, there is a plausible empirical claim that all these have substantially contributed to a high level of pauperization of the majority of the people. The noted selfishness foregrounds an unbridgeable gap between the words and the actions of the political leaders in the modern African state. Reactive to the foregoing, this study makes an ontologically normative claim that there should be an enforceable legal instrument against negative statecraft in Africa.[1] This is to consist in a strongly constitutional emphasis on political utilitarianism, a derivative from ethical utilitarianism, which largely addresses the crisis of negative statecraft because it makes modern African leaders to be more responsible and responsive to the people. By being responsible and responsive, we mean that African political leaders ought to serve, as much as administratively possible, and also listen attentively to the will of the people in the process of service. It is a sort of strategy that could be deployed to forge ethical leadership and governance in modern Africa. The central research questions that frame the discussion in this work are: (1) Do administrative policy-making and implementation have any connection with the material conditions of the social worse-offs in the modern African state? (2) Does politics have any normative basis in spite of the realist stringent dichotomy of political facts and normative values? (3) How could ethical leadership and governance be established in the modern African state?

The present discussion consists of seven sections. Following Section I that introduces the discussion and presents the problem statement, Section II focuses on some conceptual clarifications; Section III discusses the problem of negative statecraft with respect to social worse-offs in the modern African state; Section IV examines the justification for ethics in political analysis and practice; Section V applies the concept of political utilitarianism to address the problem of negative statecraft and, thus, achieve ethical leadership and governance in modern Africa; Section VI gives concrete suggestions on how political utilitarianism could be practically fostered within the sphere of administrative leadership of the modern African state; and Section VII summarizes and concludes the discursive exercise.

2. CONCEPTUAL PROLOGUE

This section engages in some conceptual clarification of the principal terms employed in the work, since this exercise would aid our general understandings of the concepts as they appear in the study.

Negative statecraft: Lexically, statecraft is state management or statesmanship, which is leadership, characterized by wisdom, breadth of vision, and regard for the general welfare rather than partisan interests (*Webster's* 1986: 2229). In other words, statecraft is the art of conducting state affairs effectively so as to ensure the existential continuity of the state (Badru 2011a: 50). Derivatively, as coined by Badru (2011a: 50), negative statecraft develops when there is

extensive and systematic misconduct of state affairs in the interest of state leaders, such that the mass of the people becomes apathetic to the existential continuity of the state. In a more popular sense, negative statecraft is administrative mismanagement of the state. The point here is that when there is a persistent mismanagement of the state by the administrative leadership (policy-formulators and policy implementers), the people become detached from the state, which has confined the satisfaction of their common interests to the margins. Thus, the state implosion that results originates from the leadership but not from the people.

Social worse-offs: Originally, the term was made popular in John Rawls' *A theory of justice* (1999 [1971])*,* in the process of explaining the operation of his difference principle of domestic justice, the explanation of which is beyond our present context. In the Rawlsian sense, the term, *social worse-offs*, roughly refers to the socially disadvantaged, and this understanding is largely retained here; though, with a minor qualification not in the Rawlsian rendering that, as used here, the term excludes those whose status as socially disadvantaged is primarily an outcome of their freely made decisions/choices. The conceptual opposite of the term, *social better-offs,* equally roughly refers to the socially advantaged in the stated work.

Although, as stated above, the concept of social worse-offs is used in this work to refer to the socially disadvantaged, it should be noted that the conceptual referent itself is capable of two understandings: (i) those who are socially deprived on account of their slothfulness and un-enterprising nature; and (ii) those who are socially deprived on account of factors beyond their possible control. Our account of social worse-offs in this work applies to the second, rather than the former.

Political utilitarianism: Since the phrase is a lexical conjugation of politics and a theory in ethics or moral philosophy, we should first conceptually clarify both politics and ethics. Etymologically, the word *politics* derives from two Greek words *polis,* and *techne.* The former means a city-state, while the latter means art, skill, craft, or method (Nwoko 2006:2; Appadorai 1968:3). This initial understanding shows that the concept of politics is expressive of a skilled social exercise; it involves some art or skill on the part of the participant, who deploys the art or skill in the administration of a city or society.[2] Therefore, to reiterate, politics is essentially social in this sense. Broadly, politics may be conceptualized within the realist context, or within what one could call the idealist-normative context. From the realist perspective, deriving from Thucydides, Thrasymachus, through Machiavelli, Hobbes, and down to Schmitt, and Morgenthau, politics expresses the struggling for power of governance of one over the other, and maintaining the power by all means available, devoid of any moralism. According to Adams and Dyson (2007: 39, 42), Machiavelli, in fact, classically articulates the realist position when he contends that politics is simply about getting and keeping power, and that politics is a morally neutral art. Actually, in a personal study of different realist accounts of politics, two central features are signal: (i) emphasis on power (and force), (ii) delinking of politics and morality.

However, from the idealist-normative perspective, politics is concerned with the art of governance, which is grounded in the mix of ideals and moral values, culminating in the service for the greater good of the people.[3] This latter thinking invariably brings us to the normative discipline of ethics. According to Lillie (1948: 1–2), ethics is the normative science of the conduct of human beings living in societies, a science that judges this conduct to be right or

wrong, to be good or bad, or in some other similar way. The most defining characteristic of ethics is that it prescribes a philosophically justified system of norms to morally guide human conduct in society. Thus, one could state the idealist-normative understanding essentially prescribes for, and applies to, a politics that incorporates sound ethical norms and principles of conduct.

Political utilitarianism, as used in the study, is coined from the classical moral utilitarianism in ethics. Moral utilitarianism is a consequentialist (teleological) theory of assessment and evaluation of human conduct in society. It holds that the rightness or wrongness of a human act is a function of the causal (but not non-causal) consequences of the act in relation to the greatest number.[4] By 'causal consequences', we mean the consequences that directly and, in some remote cases, indirectly flow from the act-performance, but not coincidental consequences, that is, consequences that cannot (directly or indirectly; overtly or covertly) be causally attributed to the act-performance, applying appropriate logical reasoning. And, as it is implied, it is a voluntary, but not involuntary human act, that is morally relevant. Thus, an act is morally right if the causal consequences maximally promote the good (which is variously defined) of the greatest number, and it is morally wrong if the opposite is the case. Some complexities may be involved in moral consequentialism (for example, see Stocker 1969), but these need not detain us here, since the focus is more on the political variant, rather than on moral consequentialism; though, the latter might be used to clarify and explore the conceptual contents of the former. Thus, the political variant stands or falls on its own practical merits, but not on the merits or otherwise of its moral basis, the reason being that the focus here is on political utilitarianism but not moral utilitarianism.

The concept of political utilitarianism is not a utopian, a proposal to further a thinking of social governance that obtains only in an ideal world. Rather, it attempts to promote a normatively functional thinking of social governance in a non-ideal world. It recognizes that in a non-ideal world, it is practically impossible to maximize the happiness or well-being of all the people across the board in society. Consider the difference between an altruist, believing in fellow-feeling and an egoist, believing in selfishness, and the promotion of each belief constitutes a well-being to the holder. Obviously, fellow-feeling promotes social cohesion, and a cohesive society is most likely to be progressive than a non-cohesive one. This makes an altruist a right-thinking agent, in this context; while selfishness works against social cohesion, and this makes an egoist a non right-thinking agent, also in this context. Therefore, politically deploying state resources to maximally promote the former, rather than the latter, within the state is a simple instantiation of political utilitarianism. However, later instantiations of political utilitarianism in the study may vary from, and may even be more complex than, the one given. In terms of conceptual content, political utilitarianism involves: (i) a conscientious attempt to create and institute a leadership of right-thinking people, and (ii) that even if a given leadership is not right-thinking people, they are still prodded to maximally promote the happiness or well-being of the greatest number, rather than furthering some parochial interest in the state, through politics. In short, the aim is to deploy politics to positively serve the society, in the maximal sense, rather than to exploit the society. In the final analysis, the focus is the establishment of a responsible and responsive leadership, which is coextensive with ethical leadership and governance.

To achieve the foregoing, political utilitarianism sets two inter-related objectives. The first is two-fold: a conscientious commitment to the restriction of non right-thinking people from

political participation, to begin with, and policy-making and bureaucratic structure in society, on the other hand. The second is a commitment to the sustenance of ethical relationship between the political and the bureaucratic levels of leadership, leading to ethical policy-making and policy implementation in administration. In the present study, right-thinking people are to be broadly understood as ethically minded people, who are morally committed to the promotion of the well-being of the generality of the public, as much as humanly and administratively possible, and non right-thinking people are also broadly understood as unethically minded people, who are not truly interested in the promotion of the well-being of the generality of the public. Perhaps, the best way here to contextually distinguish between the right-thinking and the non right-thinking people is to concretely instantiate the former as honest people, diligent people, trustworthy people of professional competence, and so on. To concretely instantiate the latter, we would note people of shady character, lazy people, and incompetent people, to mention a few.

Ethical leadership and governance: For Albert (2003: 5), leaders create visions, which they work with followers to realize. They influence, direct, and coordinate others. They induce others to behave in a desired manner. If we accept this, then one could reasonably state that the concept of leadership entails a mix of values and virtues without which the concept is morally empty. Virtue means excellence of conduct, which has been systematically and consistently cultivated over the years, and value means possession of a high level of desirability in nature. Here, desirability may not necessarily be consistent with the economic sense of the word or what is actually desired (the desired), since the human person may actually desire what ought not to be desired. Consider a person who eagerly desires the death of his creditor because he/she does not fancy the idea of debt repayment. In this case, the desired (death of the creditor) is not desirable (ought not to be desired). In the sense adopted here, value has, at least, three conceptual contents: the subject of value, which is the moral agent that is relationally disposed to a value of some sort; the object of value, typifying the focus of value preference; and the rational thinking that occurs, connecting the moral agent with the focus of value preference.

For a leader to be visionary, s/he must value and constantly engage in deep, idealistic thinking. S/he must also, as much as administratively possible, try to merge this idealistic thinking with contextual experience in society. The recognition of the relevance of contextual experience in society in idealistic thinking shows that the proposal has recognised the nature of our non-ideal world. Moreover, s/he must conscientiously cultivate the virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, and fellow-feeling to influence/induce positively, direct a right, and coordinate effectively the available human and non-human resources, to achieve a given set of goals, all without any constant recourse to force. Thus, one could reiterate that, in the right sense of the word, leadership is a deeply normative concept, embracing a mix of values and virtues.

Practically, it must be noted that the concept of force could not be totally divested of leadership; force is conceptually correlative to leadership, and it may occasionally be used to achieve some set objectives, without which these objectives are unachievable at all, or uneasy of achievement. This usually occurs when those to implement policies to achieve these objectives are unwilling to readily act as they should. In this case, force is just like a goad, driving the people concerned into action. It is noteworthy that force is used in the scenario because it is an inherent part of leadership. But, constant recourse to the use of force to achieve set objectives is emblematic of leadership illegitimacy, which in itself is a problem arising from a breach of some moral ideals or

values. From the concept of leadership so conceived, we could affirm that ethical leadership and governance are an extensive and intensive commitment by both political and bureaucratic levels of administration to sound ethical principles and practices in the deployment of state resources to generally develop the society. This ethical commitment is extensive when it systematically covers multifarious dimensions and levels of administrative operation, such as organizations, departments, bodies or councils, which are specifically concerned with governance. It is intensive when it deeply covers each dimension and level involved.

3. NEGATIVE STATECRAFT AND THE SOCIAL WORSE-OFFS IN THE MODERN AFRICAN STATE

There is a growing body of literature supportive of the view that the quality of political leadership and governance in a state, on one hand, and the levels of development of both human and non-human capital in the state, on the other hand, are to a large extent directly proportional to each other. In other words, it could be rationally argued that consistently upward or downward shifts in the curve of quality political leadership and governance substantially, though not absolutely, correlate with rises or falls in the development levels of both human and non-human capital. The correlation is not absolute because some scholars have also plausibly argued in the case of Africa that, apart from the internalist dimension, of which leadership is a primal aspect, there is also an externalist dimension to the underdevelopment of both the human and non-human capital in Africa (see Ayittey 2002: 2–4; Lawal 2006: 637–641). However, the present study focuses on political-bureaucratic leadership as a foundational internalist cause of the underdevelopment of human and non-human capital within the modern African state. To this extent, the study is anchored in what could be called institutional determinism, since there is a claim that the material conditions of the social worse-offs in the modern African state are largely a function of negative statecraft of the leadership, the latter being a fundamental institution of the state.

According to Abdellatif (2003: 2), citing Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General, 'good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development'. However, this good governance is largely lacking in Africa, and there is much scholarly support for this grim conclusion. According to Ihonvbere (2011: 2–3):

> If we take a total look at the African condition today, one reality that we cannot accuse African leaders and policy makers of doing in the last six to seven decades is that they promoted any form of *development*. To be sure, failed policies have "developed" the pockets and bank accounts of a tiny class of political elites and their hangers-on. For the majority of Africans who are suffering from grinding poverty and hopelessness, what has passed for public policy since so-called political independence has been nothing but pain, hunger, marginalization, exploitation, domination, and deliberate impoverishment.

Also, Animashaun (2009: 48) argues that African leaders have failed to steer the continent in a way that positively impacts on the material conditions of the people. Furthermore, he contends that material deprivation is at the root of citizens' retreat from the public sphere controlled by the state in Africa (Animashaun 2009: 52). For Kieh (2009), also thinking about Africa, state failure is a performance-based term referring to 'the inability of a state and its custodians to adequately

address the cultural, economic, political, and the social needs of its citizens'. If state custodians conceptually parallel state leadership, then one could deduce that: (i) the quality of leadership is significantly vital to the material development of the citizens of a state, the reason being that it controls the wealth of the state, which it dispenses to the general society through policy-making and policy implementation, and (ii) the impact of the ways and means of deployment of the wealth of the state by the leadership encompasses as well as reverberates at various dimensions and levels of the state: in the cultural, the economic, the political, and the social dimensions of the life of the citizenry. But, how do the ways and means of deployment of the wealth of the state by the leadership practically connect with the material conditions of the social worse-offs in Africa?

It is very disheartening to note that the processes of policy-making and policy implementation on wealth distribution within the African state are skewed by the political-bureaucratic corruption, directly or indirectly, as well as by bureaucratic incompetence, which may or may not necessarily be connected to corruption. All these have a negative impact on the lives of the people in the modern African state. In the direct sense, it is an empirically incontestable fact that many political leaders in the post-colonial Africa tend to use so much of the state resources for their own personal benefits, be it at the federal, state, or local government levels. Rationally, if those huge resources have been properly channelled or invested, employing appropriate principles of economic justice, a generally buoyant economic environment, inclusive of more job opportunities, would have been created, leading to an appreciably positive change in the level and the intensity of poverty in the state: the level of poverty (that is, whether poverty is high or low) and the intensity of poverty (that is, the degree to which poverty is high or low) on those who are employed, are, at least, lower and lighter, even if they do not derive much from their employment, than on those who are not employed at all.

As a counter position, some critics may argue that the position implies that all job opportunities should be created by the state. They may contend further that this is not administratively possible in the non-ideal world of ours, and that if some people are not government employed, then they should fashion out a way to be successfully self-employed. This position lacks much merit, though, given the fact of difference between being self-employed and being successfully self-employed: the two are obviously mutually exclusive. Doubtless, it is easy to claim that people should try to be successfully self-employed, if they are not government-employed. But, a critical analysis shows that this is difficult to be so; though, it is not totally ruled out if the element of luck (an undeniable fact of life) is considered. But, we are not reasonably supposed to always base our life prospects on luck, which is not equally distributed among human beings. The logic is that for a person to be successfully self-employed, s/he needs at least a composite of two important resources: (i) the mental-epistemic resources, and (ii) the economic resources. By mental-epistemic resources, we mean the ability to appropriately and effectively deploy the human mind to reflectively engage with the environment, coming up with cogent ideas as knowledge in relation to what a human person has to do to make a successful living, within the bounds of law and morality, and how to effectively/efficiently do it so as not to fail. By economic resources, we mean either enough personal money-capital at hand, or availability of funding opportunities elsewhere. Social experience tells us, if we are intelligent enough to discern, that the former requires a high level of mental capacity, which, unfortunately, is unequally distributed

among human beings. Assuming one has money, but with no coherently cogent ideas as the knowledge base in appropriately deploying the money in the volatile business environment, failure quickly results. In such a case, should such an unfortunate person be deprived of a job by the State due to a factor that is largely beyond his/her freely made decision/choice?

On the latter point, the explanation is that a person could raise money-capital, either from his/her personal savings or from external sources to start a business. The interrogative is: how could an unemployed person have an appreciable level of savings on which to draw, assuming s/he has any savings in the first instance? If s/he wants to source money-capital from the commercial banks, s/he has to contend with a host of unfavourable conditions, such as the unavailability of collateral (due to his/her initial background); corrupt bank managers, who want a guarantee of a given percentage before money is released; the uncomplementary lending rates; the due date of repayment that may not be encouraging to the would-be borrower, and so on. All the foregoing makes external sourcing of funds for business, to be self-employed, an unlikely enterprise for a social worse-off in the modern African state. In addition, s/he has to battle with the forces of inflation and deflation in the economy,[5] the forces that impact negatively on the value of the liquidity for business start-up and operation, assuming this liquidity is accessible in the first instance. All these obviously undermine the operation of one of the fundamental principles of economic justice, *the principle of participation* or *the input principle*, which states that economic justice demands that every rational person should be given as much opportunity as possible to participate in economic activities to make his/her living and that the right to property (and access to the means of acquiring and possessing property) must be extended to all, but not to a privileged few.

The two other principles of economic justice are *the principle of distribution, output* or *the out-take principle* and *the principle of limitation* or *the harmony principle.* The former has two parts. The first part of the second principle states that what a person takes out of the economy must be a function of his/her input (distribution for the virtue of desert justice), and the second part of the second principle states that there should be adequate economic provision for the needy in society (distribution for the virtue of charity). The latter principle attempts to address the excesses of the two earlier principles: the excess of exclusion from economic participation and the excess of exploitation from economic investment (see Kelso & Adler 1958). Looking intently at the scenario painted above, the second principle of economic justice is also violated in the sense that a person who has been systemically schemed out of economic participation, in the first instance, would have nothing to offer for investment from which to expect any future out-take. Moreover, the third principle of economic justice is also infracted by virtue of the violation of the first two principles: there is no economic harmony where some people, because of their unfortunate social status, are denied economic participation and, therefore, future out-take from the economy, while some socially fortunate others are not so denied.

All the challenges identified may be inconsequential to an already established wealthy business man/woman, who is highly politically connected. Unfortunately, the number of people of this class of social better-offs is disproportionate to a sea of people within the class of social worse-offs. By the way, connection to those in authority is not a right reason for economic empowerment in a state, the reason being that political connection is a morally irrelevant factor. Now, assuming a person has ideas, but with no liquidity back-up, how could s/he bring the ideas to the level of

praxis to make a successful living in the economic sense, within the bounds of law and morality? And, we must note that all the challenges noted above could be duly addressed through good policy formulation and implementation by the State.

Yet on the policy-making and implementation levels, the leadership in the modern African State has contributed extensively to a high level and intensity of poverty. Perhaps, a signal case in Nigeria was the hike in the pump price of fuel due to the partial removal of the oil subsidy in early January 2012, on largely spurious claims of: (i) the inability of the Nigerian economy to sustain it, and (ii) the proceeds from the removal would be employed to provide some more basic infrastructural facilities and to reinvent the decayed ones in the country. Economic knowledge reveals that oil, in a mono-product (oil) economy of Nigeria, is a macro product. A macro product in the economic sense is that whose pricing greatly influences the pricing of other products and even services. Thus, such an increase in the price of it has a propensity to increase the pricing level of other goods and services in the economy. Resultantly, people with low incomes (and these are in the majority in Nigeria) would be further consigned and confined to the marginal level in the economic sense, given that the value of their liquidity would be negatively affected. This is in addition to some small-scale firms that would be forced to downsize their staff strength because of the former's inability to meet the rising cost of production. As Badru *et al*. (2013: 71) have noted, the problem and the attendant huge economic loss, in terms of large-scale economic inactivity (strike action by the labour in Nigeria), which accompanied various protests to reverse the uncomplementary economic decision by the State, could have been largely averted if the leadership had frontally confronted and investigated the moral rot of the main actors in the Nigerian oil industry, in the first instance. On the noted occasion, we practically saw how a bad policy and its implementation negatively impacted on the lives of millions of Nigerians. Presently, this somewhat belated investigation is on, and it has revealed a host of morally bankrupt but powerful oil marketers (*Vanguard*, July 25, 2012: 1, 5; *The Nation*, July 31, 2012:1,2). It remains to be seen whether or not these people would be properly prosecuted, given their political connection and financial clout.

But, why could one argue that the rationale offered for the partial removal of oil subsidy in early January 2012, by the leadership, was spurious? First, it is on record that, during the eight-year administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007), the pump price of fuel in Nigeria was upwardly reviewed more than five times (a sort of conservative estimate), and on each occasion, one of the basic claims was that the proceeds of the hike would be expended to reinvent decayed infrastructural facilities in Nigeria. However, observant Nigerians later practically saw that the increased State revenue was rather channelled more towards servicing political corruption. If not, then we need some reliable statistics on all the infrastructural facilities that were actually refurbished, how they were refurbished, and their status before the refurbishment then in Nigeria, using the proceeds of the hike in the pump price of petrol. In fact, we also need to know the present status of the infrastructural facilities now so as to be sure they were properly turned around then, assuming this turning around actually occurred, in the initial instance. Without this statistically grounded, requisite information, one could rationally aver that the State has not been accountable enough to the citizenry.

Second, this is related to the last conclusion. The federal executive has not been transparent enough in the running of the economy of Nigeria so that intelligent Nigerians could critically

and constructively investigate and see if the State's economy could not truly sustain the subsidy on the fuel, if the economy of the State were to be managed by morally minded, professionally competent people.

At the bureaucratic or policy implementation level of administration, nepotism and mediocrity have largely replaced meritocracy in official appointments, leading to a high level of inefficiency in policy implementation and, ultimately, poor service delivery to the common people. It has been argued that the extent to which a state can be said to be an enabling state or failing or failed state largely depends on the competence and efficiency of its administrative institutions (Olaopa 2009: 147). Still with the bureaucratic level of administration, Lynch (2004: 44–45) contends that if the institution of government hires the correct employees and trains them correctly for their jobs, then the work of government is performed at a higher level of proficiency and taxpayers get more for their 'investment' in civilization that we call taxes. If those public servants manage the budget correctly, the allocated resources provide the public with services that maximize the social and economic outcome for the betterment of the whole community. This conclusion reasonably applies, especially, to the policy implementation level of administration: people benefit more within a state where good policies are not only pronounced but are equally implemented, and this invariably makes the policy implementation level very significant in administration. In Nigeria, experience shows that we are rarely short of people who would make and implement good policies; what we are sorely in need of is how to get these people into right offices to make and implement good policies.

4. ETHICS IN POLITICS: PROVIDING A JUSTIFICATORY ARGUMENT

The task here is justificatory of ethical thinking in political analysis and practice, the reason being that it is unscholarly to just foist normative thinking on politics in the present study, without first showing the foundational status of philosophy generally, and ethics particularly, in politics; though, this is usually less considered in contemporary politics, which is largely enmeshed in realist thinking.

As noted above, Odimegwu (2008: 93) has observed that many will not easily recognize the philosophical foundations of politics. For him, many will indeed find the thought unacceptable and absurd. The practical sphere in which politics is apparently located in exclusivity is too far removed from the abstract and remote world of philosophy to allow for such connection as the said foundations would warrant. Likewise, Cassirer (1979: 219) notes that, for the majority of men, philosophy is too abstract and speculative to have 'anything to do with our actual world, with our political and social life'. It is also often said that while politics deals with facts, philosophy deals with values, and there is no possible way to derive a fact from a value (see Moore 1903). Obviously, this is a reflection of the popular is/ought dichotomy in social scientific thinking.

However, this realist position is defective. Dealing with the last counter-claim first, it could be reasonably asserted that '*ought* implies *is*'. To say that X is Y implies that X has the ability, feature, or property of Y. This relationship also holds in the converse on some, but not on all, occasions. The reason why it holds on some, but not on all, occasions is simple: Y may have ten specific features, and X may have twenty specific features, ten of which are found in Y, and ten

of which are not found in Y. In this case, while X may be Y in the absolute sense, Y may only be X in the relative sense, that is, Y's being X is relative to the ten features it shares with X, but Y cannot be X on account of the ten other features, which X has, but which are not found in Y.

On account of the analysis above, it would be a lexico-semantic fallacy not to affirm the claim that '*ought* implies *is*' logically follows. No rational person would say a quadriplegic is a power-lifter; s/he just cannot; s/he does not have the ability, feature, property of a power-lifter, such as unaided movement and lifting power. Now, if X has the ability, feature, or property of Y, it is rational to state that X ought to empirically live up to the expectation of being Y. When we say this, we mean that: (i) living up to the expectation of being Y is morally commendable in itself; (ii) a good moral agent would strive to achieve this, and (iii) since X has the ability, feature, or property of Y, s/he ought to live up to the expectation of being Y, if s/he is to be taken as a good moral agent. Whether X actually lives up to Y is immaterial; it is not every property we have that we actually exhibit in practice. Therefore, this does not mean that we ought not to exhibit it because we have not exhibited it; neither does it mean that we cannot exhibit it because we have not exhibited it. This lexico-semantic reasoning (reasoning in the meaning of words) shows that there is a close lexical connection among *is*, *can* and *ought;* though, it is popularly argued that the former (*is* and *can*) belong to the realm of facts, while the latter (*ought*) belongs to the realm of values. The reasoning here sits well with the position that any adequate theory of morality (ethics) takes into consideration the relevant facts about human nature and human behaviour (that is, the psychology involved); though, some disciplinary purists do not want the overlap of the two disciplines (see Boss 2001: 190). If this is accepted, then it is unclear where the seemingly watertight dichotomy between *ought* and *is* emerges.

Also, if critically and constructively examined, one could aver that political thinking could not be devoid of value thinking. In a politically practical activity of election, X votes for Y, instead of Z; some value preference is involved: X feels that Y has some value that Z lacks, or that Y is materially valuable than Z. The foregoing holds true, whether 'value' is loosely used in the sense of 'the desired', or strictly used in the sense of 'the desirable' (see Badru, 2012: 78-79). It also holds true whether value is used in the instrumental sense or intrinsic sense: X may have voted for Y because the former feels that the latter could be easily manipulated to satisfy some selfish ends of the former later; or, X may have voted for Y because the former feels that the latter has some inherent interesting features that qualify the latter for the political position. In one way or another, we could see the expression of value preference.

Moreover, the theoretical and practical correlation of value consideration with political thinking also manifests in policy-making and policy implementation, the two basic levels of governmental operation. Given the fact of scarcity of resources – personal or institutional – relative to the demand for them, the government of a state must almost always decide among a set of policy options. The policy it actually decides upon and ultimately implements at any time is a function of value consideration and preference. The policy might have been made and implemented based on its value to the policy-makers or to the mass of the intended beneficiaries; either way, there is a value consideration and preference. In short, the point is that in the decision on who gets what, when, and how, some value considerations are inherently involved.

The first counter-claim could also be dismissed. According to Appadorai (1968: 9–10), quoting Lord Acton, if the great question for politics is to discover not what governments prescribe, but

what they ought to prescribe, the connection between ethics and politics is clear, for on every political issue the question may be raised whether it is right or wrong. Furthermore, laws or the commands of the State are obeyed with a greater readiness if they are in keeping with the moral ideas of the community; if they are far ahead of those ideas, they may be difficult to enforce (Appadorai 1968: 10). To further show the moral basis of politics, Peikoff (1993: 350), reflecting on Ayn Rand's philosophic thought, states:

> Politics rests on ethics (and thus on metaphysics and epistemology); it is an application of ethics to social questions. Politics is a conclusion drawn from all the fundamentals of a philosophic system; it is not the system's start or any kind of primary.

Furthermore, Jinadu (2012: 2) makes an equally strong claim in contending that politics, which is really about public policy, is pre-eminently applied ethics or moral philosophy in the public sphere; and that the moral or ethical environment in which politics is pursued can make all the difference to whether or not it is directed to serve the public interest. Moreover, Avner de Shalit (2004: 812) has contended that the most common arguments against politicians and their decisions are about the immorality of their decisions. Consequently, the scholar pointedly asks what these claims are if not philosophical reflections about and within politics. Additionally, one could state that the argument is largely put beyond any political realist because the fact/value distinction (or gap) most fundamentally fails to appreciate that the perception of anything as a 'fact' may itself involve value judgments, as may be the selection of particular facts among many as the essential ones (see Blackburn 2005: 129). And, so also, is a political realist who doggedly argues that political inquiry should be value-neutral in contrast to a political idealist who states it should not be, since the former is implicitly advancing a value that s/he wants others to accept as such. Therefore, if we agree with Peikoff (1993), Jinadu (2012), Avner de Shalit (2004) and Blackburn (2005), then we should conclude that any political realism that detaches ethical foundation from political superstructure is inherently anti-politics, since it is an attempt to divest politics of its basis.

Having argued thus, the significant question that follows is: how could political utilitarianism be applied in the present study to address the problem of negative statecraft in the modern African state?

5. THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL UTILITARIANISM, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE AND THE MODERN AFRICAN STATE

In the earlier exercise on conceptual clarification, we noted that the end-point of the concept of political utilitarianism is to bring about ethical leadership and governance. We shall now make an attempt to fully show how the concept addresses the problem of negative statecraft in Nigeria, a paradigm of the modern African State, making the leadership more responsible and responsive to the people.

From the outset, we should note that the practical realization of the aim and substance of the concept of political utilitarianism involves a systematic process. The trajectory of the realization

exercise is shown within the three-tier federal structure of Nigeria. Precisely, the specific stages involved would now be discussed.

The local government level (Stage I): Local government chairmen as well as local government councillors in each of the states of the federation should, on a quarterly basis, conduct press conferences within their specific localities, disclosing to the mass of the people in the local areas involved, their revenues and allocations for the previous months and how and where they have deployed the revenues and allocations. All their claims should be supported with sufficient facts and figures, and the people of the localities involved should be accorded the necessary opportunity to verify these claims.

The state government level (Stage II): At the state level, all governors should fashion out practical ways to account for their allocations from the federal purse on a quarterly basis. Accountability here is a systematic process. It entails, among others, that the state governors should devise effective ways to properly and publicly disclose, on quarterly basis, how much they have received within a given period under review, how and when these allocations have been deployed in order to provide concrete programmes of service to the people. All their claims should be adequately supported by adequate facts and figures. Moreover, people should be given adequate opportunity to verify the truth of their claims.

The federal government level (Stage III): At the federal level, each minister must report to the executive president, with accurate facts and figures, on quarterly basis, what concrete projects his/her ministry has executed within the period under review, how they have been executed, how much has been expended on each projects as well as where they have been executed. They must also sufficiently inform the Executive on other projects lined up for execution, where they are to be executed, the projected outlay of the projects involved, and when they are to be executed. If the projects are not completed within the expected time-frame, there should be concrete explanations on the challenges delaying the completion of the projects.

Furthermore, the Executive, in conjunction with the Legislature, is required to give adequate account of the political and economic administration of Nigeria to all the citizens, on quarterly basis. This is a matter of necessity, not of choice. It is a matter of necessity because there is a tacit political contract, using the language of Mills (1997: 9–10), between the government of Nigeria and the citizens, that stipulates that the continued political obligation of the people to the government of Nigeria is coextensive with the responsibility and responsiveness of the government to the people.

At this point, some critics may argue that the Performance Agreement of the present Executive President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, has taken full care of the recommendation. This position is, however, fundamentally flawed. First, the Performance Agreement is restrictive in two basic respects: (i) it is between the ministers and the executive; it is to make the ministers accountable to the executive. However, it does not address the issue of lack of communication of financial discipline and responsibility on the part of the executive, himself, to the people. This is contrary to the spirit of the political contract given earlier. The Executive must not only act; he must sufficiently let the people know that he is acting, how he is acting, and that he is acting fairly; (ii) the Performance Agreement does not extend to both the state and the local government levels.

This is a systemic deficit in public policy in Nigeria. This undermines adequate responsibility and responsiveness of political office holders at the state and the local government levels, thereby working contrarily to the spirit of political utilitarianism that is advanced in this study. Second, this Performance Agreement lacks constitutional backing; it is a directive from the executive to his cabinet ministers. In short, there is no specific legislation that concretely supports the operation of the Performance Agreement. How could it be extensively effective without this constitutional backing? The response is negative.

Moreover, and as a matter of priority, those people to be elected into political offices and those to be appointed as commissioners and ministers in the modern African state should be of proven integrity and tested professional excellence. And, once they are in public office, people should give them as much of freedom as possible to operate, as long as they operate within the confines of morality and law. These should not be compromised and thus sacrificed, as it is being done at present, on the altar of morally and professionally irrelevant criteria, unless we prefer a bleak administrative future, which in the final analysis, causes mismanagement of resources and subsequent pauperization of the mass of the people in the modern African state. To this extent, there should be a systemically continuous professional and probity test for selected/appointed bureaucratic officials in the modern African state. This is the internal mechanism of political utilitarianism, which ensures its practical effectiveness within the bureaucracy.

Furthermore, there should be a sustainable ethical practice between the bureaucratic and the political levels of administration. For (Badru 2011b), a sustainable ethical practice in administration is a systemically intensive administrative relationship between the bureaucratic and the political groups within a state, founded on sound ethical norms and principles. A sustainable ethical practice, within the present context, specifies that the bureaucratic level of administration should be ethically minded in the supply of data to the political level of administration for policy making, while the political level should also be ethically minded in the way it influences the bureaucratic level in the implementation of the policies made. In the final analysis, all the foregoing processes and activities should be practically conducted in such a way that leads to the maximization of happiness of the greater number of people in society.

6. THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL UTILITARIANISM, THE CHALLENGE OF FEASIBILITY, AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MODERN AFRICAN STATE

The central thematic concern in the previous section was how ethical leadership and governance in the modern African state could be brought about by adopting the concept of political utilitarianism. But, there is still a significant gap to be bridged. As laudable as the concept of political utilitarianism is in practically ensuring a responsible and responsive leadership and governance in Africa, the most fundamental challenge facing the proposal is that of social feasibility. The whole proposal may remain at the abstract level, in spite of the blueprint discussed in the previous section, if there is no constitutional framework of support. To this extent, it is advanced in this study that there should be a clause that clearly entrenches the concept of political utilitarianism, the practical contents of which have been articulated above, in the constitution of the modern African state, and this should be done by the legislative arm of government. If a

constitution is to be understood as the ultimate body of legal rules and regulations of the state, as the final legal institution that protects and serves the interests of the people, then it should be structured to contain the necessary and sufficient provisions by which the leadership could better realize the valued service to the people. And, these provisions may not be effective if they are not in the form of entrenched clauses, the form that guarantees against their being easily over-ridden by any political leadership in the state. For example, there is at present not any mention in the constitution of Nigeria (see *The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria*), even under the *Fifth Schedule: Code of Conduct for Public Officers*, in which it is unmistakably stated and entrenched that political leaders who fail to use the resources of the State to maximally develop the human and non-human capital should be constitutionally barred in future from seeking re-election or sponsoring candidates for elections into public offices. It is this gross constitutional failing that has so far permitted morally bankrupt previous political administrators in Nigeria to seek re-election into public offices, so long as they have not obviously run foul of the regulations of the national electoral body, such as being bankruptcy (financially), being a a foreigner, an ex-convict, or a known criminal. The noted constitutional failing has also allowed serving political administrators in Nigeria to be more corrupt and profligate than their predecessors in office, rather than use the resources of the State to socio-economically develop the people.

There are calls for constitutional amendment/review in Nigeria. If the constitution is to be truly amended/reviewed in the interests of Nigerians, then the National Assembly should ensure that one of the fundamental steps is to clearly state and entrench political utilitarianism in the Nigerian constitution. Furthermore, specific punishment, such as being barred from future re-election, and sponsoring candidates for elections, among others, should be prescribed for political leaders who violate the entrenched clause. If this morally laudable constitutional step is conscientiously pursued, it would substantially prevent morally bankrupt past political leaders from seeking re-election or sponsoring candidates for elections into public offices in Nigeria as well as compel serving political leaders to be more responsible and responsive to the people. Ultimately, the culture of ethical leadership and governance would be developed and sustained in the modern African state.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this study, we have advanced the concept of political utilitarianism to address the deficit of ethical leadership and governance in the domestic politics of the modern African state. In the course of the study, we first explored and deplored the prevalence of negative statecraft in Africa, before making a rational justification for the whole idea of interrogating politics with ethics. Furthermore, we made a systematic attempt to unravel the conceptual contents of our proposal as well as amply showed how the proposal would fare in practice. Moreover, we contended that the feasibility challenge of the proposal would be duly addressed if the concept of political utilitarianism could be entrenched in the constitution of the modern African state, using Nigeria as a paradigm. The argument was that the constitutional backing would provide the solid basis for the practical effectiveness of the concept of political utilitarianism in the process of enthroning responsible and responsive leaders, which ultimately develop and sustain the culture of ethical leadership and governance in the modern African state.

NOTES

* Institut Francais de Recherche en Afrique, *IFRA-Nigeria*, Lead City University, Saints Peter & Paul Major Seminary, Ibadan, Nigeria, femmydamak@gmail.com; femmydamak@yahoo. com

ENDNOTES

1. The author thanks the first reviewer whose suggestion has sharpened the focus here.
2. The two have been contextually used to mean the same thing. This does not mean they are conceptually identical.
3. This is a personal understanding of the idealist-normative account of politics.
4. This is also a personal understanding of the term.
5. The author thanks the first reviewer for the suggestion of the idea here.

REFERENCES

Abdellatif, A.M. 2003. Good governance and its relationship to democracy and economic development. Workshop IV. Democracy, Economic Development, and Culture. GF3/ WS/IV-3/S1: 1–27.

Abubakar, D. 2004. Leadership and the challenge of rebuilding a nation. In A.B. Agbaje, Larry Diamond, and Ebere Onwudiwe (eds.), *Nigeria's struggle for democracy and good governance: A Festschrift for Oyeleye Oyediran*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Adams, I. and Dyson, R.W. 2007. Nicolo Machiavelli (1469–1527). IN Adams, I. and Dyson, R.W., Fifty Major Political Thinkers, 35–43. London and New York: Routledge

Albert, I.O. 2003. *Mainstreaming positive leadership in conflict transformation in Nigeria*. Ikorodu, Lagos: Centre for Social Science Research and Development.

Animashaun, M.A. 2009. State failure, crisis of governance and disengagement from the state in Africa. *Africa Development* XXXIV(3 & 4): 47–63.

Appadorai, A. 1968. *The substance of politics*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ayittey, G. 2002. Sustainable development: Promoting progress or perpetuating poverty? Edited by Julian Morris. London: Profile Books.

Badru, R.O., Eegunlusi, T.R.E. and Adewunmi, A.O. 2013. Philosophical Thinking and the Concept of Security in the Contemporary African Society, Contemporary Journal of African Studies (formerly Research Review) 1(1): 55–78.

Badru, R.O. 2012. Traditional value system and contemporary significance in Nigeria: Building a cohesive ethno-plural nation with the moral resource of *communal* trust. *Journal on African Philosophy* 5: 77–86.

Badru, R.O. 2011a. The ontology of political decisionism, negative statecraft, and the Nigerian State: Exploring moral altruism in politics. *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Politics, Philosophy, Critical Theory, Culture, and the Arts* 156: 47–60.

Badru, R.O. 2011b. *Building a sustainable ethical practice between appointed and elected public officials for improved development performance*. Unpublished manuscript.

Blackburn, S. 2005. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boss, J.A. 2001. *Ethics for life: A text with readings,* 2nd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Cassirer, E. 1979. Symbol, myth, and culture, edited by D.P. Verene. London: Yale University Press.

De-Shalit, A. 2004. Political philosophy and empowering citizens. *Political Studies* 52: 802–818.

Ihonvbere, J.O. 2011. *Reinventing Africa for the challenges of the twenty-first century. CBAAC Occasional Monograph No. 23*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.

Jinadu, L.A. 2012. Whither Nigeria? Directions for future development. In Ladipo Adamoleku and Adele Jinadu (eds.), Whither Nigeria? Directions for future development, 1–26. Ibadan: Caligata Publishing Company Ltd.

Kelso, L.O. and Adler, M.J. 1958. *The capitalist manifesto.* New York: Random House.

Kieh, G.K. 2000. State failure, state collapse, and state reconstitution: Conceptual and theoretical issues. A paper presented at the international conference on Beyond State Failure and Collapse: Making the State Relevant in Africa, at Monrovia, Liberia, 16th–19th March.

Lawal, G. 2006. The normative impediments to African development: Internalist and Externalist interpretations. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences Research* 9(3): 637–641.

Lillie, W. 1948. *An introduction to ethics.* London: Methuen.

Lynch, T.D. 2004. Virtue ethics, public administration, and telos. *Global Virtue Ethics Review* 5(4): 32–49.

Mills, C.W. 1997. *The racial contract.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Moore, G.E. 1903. *Principia ethica.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nwoko, M.I. 2006. Basic world political theories, 2nd edition, edited by F.O.C. Njoku. Bremen, Deutshland: Katholische Gemeinde.

Odimegwu, I. 2008. Philosophic foundations of politics. Anambra, Nigeria: Lumos Nig. Ltd.

Ogbeidi, M.M. 2012. Political leadership and corruption in Nigeria since 1960: A socio-economic analysis. *Journal of Nigeria Studies* 1(2): 1–25.

Olarinmoye, O.O. 2008. Politics does matter: The Nigerian state and oil (resource) curse. *Africa Development* XXXIII(3): 21–34.

Olaopa, T. 2009. *Public administration and civil service reforms in Nigeria*. Ibadan: University Press.

Peikoff, L. 1993. *Objectivism: The philosophy of Ayn Rand.* New York: Meridian.

Rawls, J. 1999. *A theory of justice,* Revised edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rodney, W. 1981. *How Europe underdeveloped Africa.* Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.

Stocker, M. 1969. Consequentialism and its complexities. American Philosophical Quarterly 6(4): 276 -289.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1999. Lagos, Nigeria: The Federal Government Press.

The Nation, *Subsidy Fraud Trial: Ali's Son Seeks Variation of Bail Terms*, Tuesday, July 31, 2012, vol.7, no. 2203.

Vanguard, *Fuel Subsidy Scam: Bamanga Tukur's Son, 11 Others Charged*, Wednesday, July 25, 2012, vol.23, no. 61673.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language. 1986. Philip Babcock Gove, (ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.