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Family Styles, Indigenous Knowledge, and Public Governance in Africa

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Abstract

Extant literature has shown that family is the first point of institutional contact for every individual to acquire knowledge on socio-political and economic

reasoning. However, little or no discussion has been done on understanding how the acquired knowledge and experiences interplay with the broad reactions of individuals within the public governance space. This paper aims to fill the missing gap by providing transmutation influences of family styles and significant values of indigenous knowledge on public governance. In Africa, moral values and social rules are cardinal indices of indigenous knowledge, at first and mostly, acquired from family styles. These indices propel individuals through other societal faces, with the developed traits serving as an inherent guide. Hence, this paper attempts to investigate the congruence problem in Africa's public governance from the perspective of indigenous knowledge within the family context. It interrogates the proclaimed significance of indigenous knowledge against why most examples of bad governance, such as corruption, violent acts, and poor leadership traits, are evident in Africa.

Keywords: *Public Governance, Indigenous Knowledge, Family Style and Development*

Introduction

The family is a symbolic component of any given society. Its formation represents the origin of social structures and strata of society. Its constituents provide the characteristics through which society would be described. The family style in Africa has a multi-cultural discourse. It remains the propelling drive for governance in the respective communities. Interactive styles are obviously rooted within the family system. Masoga (2005) was of the view that every individual would pass through different stages of life, resulting from a combination of factors, but the experiences at these stages determine the personalities, attitudes, and societal perspectives. The raising questions here are: are the needed moral values acquired at any of the stages? Do individuals gain an understanding of social rules at their respective stages? In what context can one put the expected influence of family styles and moral values on the congruence problem of African public governance? Are the traditional values and norms capable of influencing people's orientations towards governance expectations in Africa? The paper seeks to answer the questions by rationalising how family styles groom individuals with upright moral values, while indigenous knowledge accompanies people with an understanding of social rules, thereby guiding their conduct and participation in governance activities.

In lieu of the above debate, this paper attempts to cross-analyse whether there is a direct synergy between problems encountered in governance space within Africa and inherent traits acquired from family

styles and indigenous knowledge. Of course, within the spectrum of life stages, family styles precede indigenous knowledge and what forms the latter is mostly aggregative of or domineering family style(s) within any local community. For instance, Horsthemke (2004) posited concisely that indigenous knowledge is a subject that has been tested over centuries of use in a given community. This is rather an inducement to the fact that a particular style would be firstly noticeable in family about behaviours, relationships, attitudes, or reactions to societal issues. Thereafter, it is being imbibed by others, observed to be dynamic with little or no diminishing effect from one generation to another. It is from the foregoing that people would harness indigenous knowledge about political and socio-economic ways of life in general. Specifically, public governance enlists, in operation, the collective actions of individuals, groups, and communities about the advancement of societal courses towards welfarism. The achievement of governance end-results could simply be interrogated from the styles and knowledge of those who constitute the governance space, thus pre-determining the expected outcomes of public outlook.

Understandably, family styles and indigenous knowledge are mere sociological factors that cannot be alienated from the workings of governance in Africa (Amos, 2013). Our traditional settings greatly exhibit these features. Across traditional cultures in Africa, who becomes the Defence Chief is owing to the warring styles and characters of his family (Loubser, 2005). In the same direction, the indigenous knowledge about war is largely a derivative of the warring styles exhibited by the family with warring traits and characteristics. Nonetheless, this position is not an attempt to affirm that Africans are straight-jacketed, though there are elements of great dynamism in our actions. Men are, of course, known for war; but history would not forget Queen Amina of ZaZZau in the traditional history of Northern Nigeria (Adebayo, 2006). In other instances, those who are not trained in a particular style within the family exhibit resounding knowledge about societal functions. Indigenous knowledge is a major criterion for constituting community elders and chiefs across African communities. However, it is needed in all spheres of life, irrespective of family background or styles, which, of course, should have been synthesised. This allows the community to be visionary, directional, and future-oriented. The framework of governance is all-inclusive, though with diverse views, but 'best' with relative knowledge values and orientations. This paper becomes imperative with a view to establishing the interconnectivity among family styles,

indigenous governance, and governance questions in Africa. Also, little or no discussion exists with regard to how family styles and indigenous knowledge shape the governance, either for good or bad. Hence, this paper intends to fill the missing gap by providing qualitative arguments to establish the influence of family styles and indigenous knowledge on governance status in Africa.

Methodology

This study relies extensively on secondary data sources. It is a desk/literature review. Its research format is qualitative, using the documentary method of data collection as its instrument of research. The study is predominantly based on information derived from secondary sources. Hence, much of the data was assessed through the review of relevant texts, journals, magazines, newspapers, official publications, historical documents, and the Internet. The data were fittingly utilised for the purpose of this study.

Contextual Analysis of Family Styles

Family is typically the main provider of the essentials for health and life, including affection and love, water, food, clothes, shelter, and cleanliness, all of which are made possible by socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural factors (Degbey, 2012; Amos, 2013). Therefore, it would be hard to ignore family types while addressing important governance issues. Recent concern over public governance has clearly pointed to the people's attitudes and characters as intervening factors. To this end, family styles are the most recognisable sources of attitudes and characters (Addo, 2009). Hence, Sardar (1998) defined family style as a significant source of understanding human attitudes and behaviours in relation to socio-economic and political activities. Additionally, family style can be linked to parenting through social skills and emotional demands (Santrock, 2006). Amos (2013) asserted that most parents pick up parenting techniques from their own parents, some of that they adopt and others which they reject. Therefore, family style may be described as parenting techniques that are passed down from one generation to the next, perpetuating both positive and unpleasant habits.

The context of family style is critical to this discourse. Style continues to be a cultural value that has been transmitted from one parent to the next. On the other hand, culture is a group of people's way of life. It

consists of the customs, traditions, values, and beliefs that people accept without question and pass down from one generation to the next, primarily via communication and imitation (Adinfolu, 2009). Family style is a nucleus of behaviour noticeable in individuals that are either tied by blood or marriage. The family style is traditionally inclined such that when the members do not share a common household, common styles, in the form of attitudes and behaviours, still exist. Amos (2013) categorically maintained that the family style both shapes and influences the events in a larger society. This paper subsists on this sociological assumption. Nevertheless, family style is an integrated and functional unit of society that has, over a very long period, attracted public discourse.

In the African system, family structure is once again seen as having a variety of forms that may help the child grow into a responsible adult. There are methods by which an African parent may raise a child such that the youngster will internalise the cultural values of the country and grow up to be a responsible adult, despite the fact that there are many different parenting techniques. Some of these parenting techniques include storytelling (folktales), customary rituals, and the mother's care, love, and attention (Addo, 2009). One could wonder: are these cultural customs still in style? A child is raised and educated in a family-oriented manner from birth or earlier until they reach maturity (Self-Growth, 2012). Parenting is the act of fulfilling the duties of raising and connecting with children in such a way that the kid is well-equipped to reach his or her full potential as a person (Baumrind, 1967; 1991). This suggests that family style is the process that results from caring for or nurturing a child from birth to maturity and involves the child's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities.

Also, there are three main family settings in Africa that are influenced by parenting styles. These include the authoritative family style, and the permissive family style, the uninvolved family style, Baumrind (1967). Cherry (2012) claims that, in an authoritative home, the kid is expected to adhere to or obey the rigorous guidelines set forth by the parents. Punishment will be meted out for breaking the rules. Typically, it must be done without justification or questions asked since the parents have commanded it. The norms and instructions that their children are expected to abide by are emphasised in authoritative families. However, this family model is far more democratic (Cherry, 2012). This type of family is more responsive and less willing to collaborate and listen. According to Baumrind (1991), these families are invasive and restricting in addition to being pushy.

Santrock (2006) added that parents in liberal families have little expectations of their kids. These parents give their kids a great deal of independence. They don't really reprimand or discipline kids (Baumrind, 1991), and an uninvolved family is one that makes few expectations and communicates little. Despite meeting the kid's requirements, the family rarely develops a close bond with the youngster (Cherry, 2012). Similar to the uninvolved family style, they frequently act indifferently, dismissively, or even entirely neglect their children and make few to no demands of them.

In terms of how family style affects children, several studies have produced a number of results. According to Cherry (2012), an authoritarian parenting style typically produces children that are competent and obedient but score relatively low in happiness, social skills, and self-esteem. On the other hand, Maccoby (1992) said that families with strict rules produce children who are capable, joyful, and successful. Additionally, a permissive home environment produces kids who are less in control of their emotions, whereas an uninvolved family environment produces kids who lack self-control, low self-esteem, and high levels of incompetence. There are some differences in family structure (Cherry, 2012). The variants for difference include ethnicity, temperament, parental history, degree of education, socioeconomic standing, size of the family, and religion. Of these, culture will be utilized to explain why there are certain family structure similarities in Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia.

According to Adinlofu (2009), the extended family guarantees child reproduction and provides for the early care and education of children. The same family system, according to Degbey (2012:2), "defines social and moral standards, defends both material and spiritual customs and traditions, and provides a range of role models paving the path for maturity". According to Degbey (2012), the dominance of the elderly has a significant amount of social power over people, particularly young people. The emphasis on "family structures" makes sense since, as many of you have noted, family, or kinship, if you prefer the terminology of anthropologists, has been and continues to be a crucial component of the entire African social structure, beyond the variation we can see throughout the continent.

Indigenous Knowledge: Its Key Indices

The term "indigenous" in an international context is typically perceived by Europeans to be synonymous with or related to the terms "traditional," "aboriginal," "vernacular," "African," "Black," and "native American" (Loubser, 2005: 76). The term "indigenous" refers to a particular group of people who have lived in a certain region for many generations. They have a comprehensive body of knowledge and abilities that make up their meaning, belief systems, livelihood structures, and expression and set them apart from other groups, which they hold, put into practice, and safeguard (Dondolo, 2005: 112; Hoppers, 2005; Nel, 2005; Masoga, 2005). The fundamental tenet of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) is that they "inform and link to all realms of life and the environment" (Nel, 2008:5). But today's politics of indigenousness and identity are such that people have a variety of overlapping identities that are influenced by their sociocultural background, current political and economic dynamics, and other factors.

The dynamics of AIKS function at the empirical level and the cognitive level, which are intertwined. The ecological, technological, architectural, and socio-cultural worlds are the essential components of AIKS (Mutema, 2003). Ecology, biodiversity, soil, agriculture, medicine, and pharmaceuticals all fall within the natural sphere. The second realm, which relates to technology and architecture, includes all the arts and crafts, including metallurgy, textiles, basketry, food processing, construction, etc. The sociocultural realm of life includes topics like social welfare, government, dispute resolution, art, music, etc. (Hoppers, 2005).

All of these methods and skills are employed in a traditional atmosphere and context. Songs, dances, and costumes are among the talents, which are also in sync with the environment. The interconnection and relationships between social, biological, cultural, physical, and spiritual phenomena are emphasised by AIKS. Of course, this is in opposition to the mechanical view of reality, which promotes a cruel attitude towards nature (Capra, 1988: 226). In actuality, despite AIKS being contextually and culturally bound, all indigenous tribes across the globe are united by their respect for all forms of life, in contrast to the modern separation of humans from their environment. As a result, a cosmology or worldview is tied to the link between indigenous knowledge, its owners, and the technologies and tools employed for its application. The idea of AIKS also defines a cognitive framework for

conceptualising ideas and perceptions of both nature and civilisation (Nel, 2005). The co-evolution of the spiritual, natural, and human realms is the main subject of Native American cosmology (Hoppers, 2005: 4).

In contrast to the scientific knowledge that is typically referred to as "modern" knowledge, the phrase "indigenous knowledge" is used to characterise the knowledge systems produced by a society (Mutema, 2003). In many rural areas, decisions are made at the grassroots level based on indigenous knowledge. It is important for the culture in which it develops as well as for scientists and planners working to make rural areas more livable. By incorporating indigenous knowledge into climate change policy, effective adaptation options that are affordable, participatory, and sustainable may be created (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) provides the following definition: local and indigenous knowledge refers to the comprehensions, skills, and beliefs developed by societies with an extensive historical description of interacting with their natural environment. Rural and indigenous people can make decisions about essential aspects of everyday life with the assistance of local knowledge. A complex cultural system depends on knowledge that encompasses classification systems, languages, resource-use traditions, social interactions, rituality, and spirituality.

Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and traditional knowledge all refer to knowledge systems that are ingrained in local, indigenous, or regional cultures' cultural traditions. Traditional knowledge includes information on such topics as celestial navigation, ethnobotany, ecological knowledge, midwifery, traditional medicine, ethno astronomy, the climate, and other topics (Kazemi, Shahvali, & Zarafshani, 2003). It also includes information on traditional technologies of subsistence (such as tools and techniques for hunting or agriculture). These types of knowledge, which are essential for life and subsistence, are often derived from a build-up of empirical observation and from contact with the environment (Hoppers, 2005). Traditional wisdom has frequently been passed down verbally through the centuries. Stories, tales, folklore, rituals, songs, and laws all serve as vehicles for the expression of some traditional knowledge types. Other types of conventional knowledge are communicated in various ways.

Indigenous and local groups frequently lack robust knowledge ownership traditions that approximate contemporary private property rights. Many have established traditions of guardianship over knowledge, and customary law may set forth duties that go along with the use of

information as well as provide guidelines for who may utilise various types of knowledge at particular times and locations (Dondolo, 2005; Hoppers, 2005; Nel, 2005; Masoga, 2005). According to an indigenous viewpoint, information that has been inappropriately used or misappropriated can be disrespectful to customs and have a negative impact on one's bodily and spiritual health. Indigenous and local groups contend that respect and consideration should be shown when others use their traditional knowledge. However, detractors of "traditional knowledge" view such calls for "respect" as an effort to keep unsupported ideas from going through the same level of examination as other knowledge claims.

Public Governance in a Post-Colonial Context: A Discourse

Public governance comprises "processes of ruling over a social system (family, tribe, formal or informal association, a territory or between territories), whether carried out by the government of a state, by a market, or by a network, and whether through the rules, norms, power, or language of an organised society" (Hossen & Anwar, 2011:9). According to Gyekye (1996:5), it has to do with "the processes of interaction and decision-making among the players concerned in a collective problem that contribute to the establishment, reinforcement, or replication of social norms and institutions." It might be explained simply as the political interactions that take place within and outside of official institutions.

The organisation, maintenance, control, and accountability of laws, customs, and behaviours are referred to as public governance (Adeyeye, 2016; Maverick, 2017). An organisation's internal regulations and external ties with business partners both influence the level of formality. Governance may, therefore, take on a wide range of forms, be driven in a wide range of ways, and result in a wide range of results (Zardar, 1998; Hountondji, 2002). A firm or non-profit may be managed by a limited board of directors and have more specialised goals, in contrast to a government that operates as a democracy where citizens elect representatives and the common good is the goal.

Public governance is not a brand-new idea. It predates human civilisation. Simply expressed, it refers to both the decision-making process and the method through which choices are carried out (Hossen & Anwar, 2011). With the inclusion of the cultural realms, the process becomes more public-focused. Therefore, using political influence to

oversee a national issue is public governance. Public governance is now viewed as a reflection of the state's function as a development agent for a nation and its political system. Corporate governance, international governance, national governance, and municipal governance are just a few of the scenarios where public governance may be applied (Lamidi, 2018). Despite the fact that its significance is widely acknowledged, theorists and practitioners do not agree on how to define it. Even yet, there is no generally acknowledged

Public governance can be carried out in one of three ways: top-down methods that primarily involve governments and the state bureaucracy; networks involving public-private partnerships (PPP) or with the assistance of community organisations; and the utilisation of social market mechanisms. Other elements of public administration include participation, consensus-building, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and compliance with the law (Shah & Shah, 2006; Khan, 2006; Lamidi & Ajayi, 2019). It makes sure that there is little corruption, that minorities' perspectives are taken into account, and that the voices of the most vulnerable people in society are heard while making decisions. It also responds to the requirements of society, both now and in the future. According to the Commission of the European Communities' white paper, public governance should have coherence, proportionality, openness, effectiveness, participation, and accountability (Moahi, 2007).

Congruence Problems in Africa's Public Governance

This section aims to highlight how common governance issues are among African nations. Public governance issues in Africa are as dynamic as the continent's culture, system of government, and populace. According to studies, military interference in public governance in African states continues to be a problem that is somewhat solvable. There are too many more issues to name them all. However, this study uses the perspective of public choices and policy change for the sake of clarity and applicability. With a little modification, the paradigm proposed by Grindle and Thomas can be helpful for comprehending the complicated problems raised when talking about public governance, public administration, and public sector reform. According to Grindle and Thomas' approach, there are three main congruence issues with public governance: the environmental background, the conditions surrounding agenda-setting, and the features of policy.

Environmental context: this refers to the institutional and organisational framework governing the relationship between the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary, as well as the domestic and international social and economic situations (Haralambos, 2000). To understand how governing elites see their duties and responsibilities in this setting, it is also possible to map out how they are formed and reproduced. To capture the multiple ways in which the elite may be distinguished for the sake of political study, the function of elites must go beyond a basic class analysis. In this sense, governance refers to how the governing elites view their place in society and their responsibility to it. This is an issue with institutionalised involvement, consultation, and accountability mechanisms as well as attitudes (Aminuzzaman & Sharmin, 2006). The main issue at this level is how well the institutional and organisational frameworks are in place to support effective and democratic governance in terms of interactions between society and the state. Formally, the constitution outlines these relationships and translates them into numerous legal and regulatory rules. In actuality, these relationships have to do with how democracy and good governance are really put into effect in daily life (Rahman, 2016).

Circumstances that may cause ruling elites to see issues as either normal or a crisis condition are referred to as agenda-setting circumstances. These circumstances may also depend on how the ruling elite perceives the environmental backdrop (Pike, 2010). The persistence of natural disasters like drought and floods, as well as general concerns about the fact that the majority of people in a given country are mired in poverty or scraping by in underemployment conditions, are all situations that should be viewed as crises but may be taken as neither. This is an interesting observation. In these situations, according to Pierre (2000), if such issues are not given the priority they require, the problem may be less with the capability or effectiveness of the public administration than with the utter collapse of governance and the responsibility of the ruling class to the general population. While the regular politics as usual approach is often characterised by concern for six micro-political and bureaucratic connections, a crisis scenario is typically dominated by macro-politics and the formation of strategic policies (Thomas and Grindle, 1991). At this stage, the issue is how far states can go from routine methods of formulating and implementing policies to more strategic ones that can advance the promotion of sustainable human development, which remains elusive for African nations and their administrations.

Theoretical Reflections

According to the Family Systems Theory, a family may be better understood by looking at it as a full system. This one system is made up of a complicated network of interconnected pieces, subsystems, and family members, each of which serves a specific role (Hammond, Cheney, & Pearsey, 2015). The Family Systems Theory also emphasises boundaries (such as who is a member of the system), equilibrium (such as how the system tries to return to its initial condition when faced with stresses or crises), and bidirectional communication (e.g., a change with one member will impact at least one other member and hence impact the whole system).

The underlying premise of this theory is that families are capable of self-reflection and conscious goal-setting. When a family system recognises that a certain family pattern is dysfunctional and establishes new procedures that meet the family's objectives, change can take place. One significant shift that a family system may decide to undertake or be compelled to make is resettlement. We must look at the family system's structure and internal dynamics in order to evaluate patterns of adjustment in families that have immigrated to a new nation. For instance, one study gathered information from parents and their kids who had moved to the US from Vietnam and Cambodia in order to evaluate the contribution of family dynamics to conflicts over cultural values. Researchers discovered that cultural conflicts increased adolescent behavioural issues through increased parent-child conflict, which was connected to decreased parent-child bonding (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008). This shows a particular resettlement-related family pattern that is best understood at the family system level.

Family systems theory, in relation to indigenous knowledge, turns the emphasis away from the parent-child dyad and onto the family as a social system (Watson, 2012). A family is thought of as a social system with its own traits, norms, roles, communication styles, and power structure above and beyond the individual (Hammond, Cheney, & Pearsey, 2015). A family also includes subsystems within this social system architecture, such as parent-child, sibling, marriage, and co-parenting subsystems. Family members are viewed as interconnected, impacting one another and other subsystems both directly and indirectly (e.g., a child may indirectly influence the husband-wife dyad by directly influencing the behavior of either parent). Family interactions are sometimes considered to be transactional. In other words, rather than being unidirectional,

relationships between parents and children are bidirectional, and causation is circular rather than linear. The family's microsystem is also perceived as being a part of bigger systems, with interactions taking place both inside and across these different levels (Hollee, McGinnis, & Wright, 2023).

The Transmutation Influence of Family Styles and Indigenous Knowledge on Public Governance in Africa

This section seeks to establish how the tenets of family styles manifest in aspects of public governance in Africa. It also argues that family styles are influenced by indigenous knowledge, and since people are products of both, that will influence public governance practices. Three major family styles have been contextualised, namely, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved family styles. It becomes imperative to bring to the fore the understanding of how these styles could influence the advancement of the key aspects of public governance, namely: democracy and respect for human rights; the improvement of open, accountable, national, and local government; the strengthening of the rule of law, including accessible and fair legal and judicial systems; the encouragement of independent media and the dissemination of information; anti-corruption initiatives; and efforts to cut back on excessive military spending (Hossen & Anwar, 2011). In essence, public governance may be used to manage a variety of resources at the corporate, national, municipal, and international levels.

Family style is a conditional trait of the dispositions of the people towards public governance. For example, an authoritarian family style would clearly set individuals in the power corridor to protect fundamental human rights with constitutional provisions (Cherry, 2012). The argument for this condition can be further strengthened either through positivism or negativism. Public office holders with this family style would always want to place a high premium on setting rules and standards that are expected to be followed by the people. Rewards would also be put in place for those who adhere strictly to the set rules and standards, while sanctions are defined for deviants or erring members of the public. The authoritarian family style can, by inference, facilitate reinforcement of the rule of law, strengthening of public transparency and accountability, as well as promotion of local democracy (Degbey, 2012). However, this family style does not guarantee public acceptance of the set rules and standards. Poor acceptability could be a result of diverse

political and socio-economic factors with little or no connection to the rule objectives and standard accomplishments. Nevertheless, what matters is that the family style of the public officeholder has the capacity to influence public governance in terms of setting rules and standards. In this regard, public compliance would enhance some of the aspects of public governance under executive leadership with an authoritarian family style.

Also, the permissive family style of public office holders stresses fewer civic engagements between the government and the people. This is simply because the style makes few demands from the children, thus instilling less discipline. This style is mostly found among the public office holders who leveraged hereditary arrangements for the position of public authority. A public office holder with this style may likely lack an understanding of how citizens can be tasked with civic responsibilities that can aid in the smooth running of the governance operation. Unlike the authoritarian family style, there is a weak discipline system in both the leadership attributes and citizens' perceptions. In Ghana, just like other African countries, Emegwali (2003) argued that this family style is unfriendly with public governance because active discharge of governmental functions is abating due to the permissive style of family upbringing, while the reactions of the citizens are less active owing to poor stringent and punitive measures by the public office-holders. However, the permissive family style may be found useful and receptive by the citizens of post-conflict countries in Africa such as Rwanda, Somalia, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, just to mention a few (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003; Zeleza, 2004; Wallner, 2005; Adinfolu, 2009; and Amos, 2013). The nature of post-conflict conditions would not necessarily require the government to be too demanding from the citizenry. Thus, citizens are permitted to be relatively free from some tasking civic responsibilities. Citizens would, against all odds, adjudge this type of public office holder to be friendly and peaceful, but most times, this judgement is at the detriment of public governance. Nevertheless, the permissive family style is still of great value to some aspects of public governance, specifically fair and accessible legal and judicial systems; the promotion of independent media, and the dissemination of information.

In addition, public office holders with an uninvolved family style are bound to lack experiences right from childhood on how to create and demand responsibilities. The non-involvement is a strong confirmation of the apolitical and apathetic characteristics of public office holders with

family traits (Selemi & Kincheloe, 1999; Wallner, 2005). More often, public governance suffers when the leaders find it difficult to establish little communication with the people. This family trait in a leader will be a clog in the wheel of governance operations. It is simply because public officeholders with an uninvolved family style may likely lack the capacity and knowledge to manage and convert the available resources for the use of the people (Zeleza, 2006). However, taking initiatives against anti-corruption, as a major cankerworm, becomes almost implausible. Notably, AIKS is continuously gathering more momentum in the African socio-political space and discourse in academic contexts. Nevertheless, the system is yet to be holistically embraced as either independent or complementary sources of knowledge (Amos, 2013).

This section has shown how the three contextualised family styles could influence the actions and responsibilities of office holders in the discharge of public governance. However, it appears inherent that family styles have some traits that could aid in some aspects of governance. More remarkably, authoritarian family style has great potential in aiding the discharge of some aspects of public governance in Africa. Pragmatically, these styles are sometimes exhibited in the course of action at the disposal of indigenous people across African culture. Of importance to this debate is that AIKS would have enabled an average young person in Africa to have mixed-breed, mixed-actions, and mixed-thought family styles. Such that if a family is permissive in style, the existing benefits of authoritarian family style would just be acquired through AIKS. Thus, a potential leader would host integrated family styles that are found fitting and useful for public governance. This underscores the critical reason for Africa's development.

Challenges Facing the Usefulness of African Indigenous Knowledge in Public Governance in Africa

In Africa, the indigenous knowledge system is a mechanism for socialisation. It is, however, a common saying that no community can develop beyond its level of knowledge. Similarly, governance would become a seamless exercise if adequate knowledge of the social contract was guided by traditional norms and values. However, the use of AIKS suffers major setback, which fall into three categories: (1) purported ethnicisation; (2) epistemological, conceptual, and methodological concerns; (3) restoration and safeguarding of AIKS.

Purported Ethnicisation Issue

Ethnicity has not always produced a pattern of identification or been historically unique. According to historical evidence, the word "ethnicity" comes from the Greek political category "echnos" (Lentz, 1995:304). Ethnos was still used to refer to uniform groupings, such as troops or animals, and had no associations with language, culture, or history (ibid.). Later, Aristotle used the term for segmentary communities that were both Greek and non-Greek, "as opposed to polis; the Greek urban polity" (ibid.). Since the advent of Christianity, the Greek word ethnos has come to mean "heathen," together with its synonyms, "uncivilised" and "barbarous" (Eriksen, 1993). Only until the Ottoman Islamic Empire was unified in the 15th century did the Greek Orthodox use the term "ethnos" to "self-identify." Finally, during the Greek nationalist movement in the 19th century, the phrase started to refer to a "we group" with a shared culture and history.

Both historians and anthropologists believe that pre-colonial Africans did not live in tribes or ethnic groupings with clearly defined borders, and that the main features of such pre-colonial civilizations were *"mobility, overlapping networks, multiple group membership, and flexible, context-dependent drawing of boundaries"* (Loubser, 2005: 77).

The idea of "individual" identity with its collective matching (cultural and linguistic) component of a unique group limited to certain locations was first consciously established during the European colonial control of Africa (Masoga, 2005). The approach of "divide and rule" was put into practice through administrative institutions and policies that included land redistribution, commercialisation of land, censuses, zonation of resource usage, and other techniques (Brown, 2007). For instance, kin groupings and communities were further separated into many ethnicities when the political borders of African nations were created. Therefore, rivalry and conflict between these groups were brought about by the division of land and resources, the separation of people, and restrictions on access to formerly unrestricted resources. The conflicting factions could only be reconciled (and still are) via the standards of wisdom, morality, health, and collectivism ingrained in AIKS.

Epistemological, Conceptual, and Methodological Concerns

Indigenous people's knowledge is mostly based on their spiritual and mental impressions. Critics of the AIKS claim that it is "knowledge that

involves incomplete…or at worst, a questionable understanding or conception of knowledge" (Amos, 2013:10). Additionally, it has been asserted that there are three different categories of knowledge, including factual information, practical knowledge, and knowledge of things and people gained through personal experience. AIKS projects might be cautiously connected with the "knowledge type." However, the same source disputes this, arguing that African indigenous knowledge conceptually fails to distinguish between practical knowledge and factual knowledge and treats both as interdependent (Lentz, 1995). Additionally, it was noted that although AIKSs are said to be inclusive of all kinds of beliefs, they do not provide references to reality or justifications; as a result, their status is seen as one of bare assumption or opinion, if not as carriers of superstitions and divination.

Researchers and theorists who study indigenous knowledge systems (Cresswell, 1998; Selami & Kincheloe, 1999; Hountondji, 2002; Horsthemke, 2004; Hoppers, 2005; Loubser, 2005; Amos, 2013) have come under fire for what has been called a vague and escapist analysis of terms like epistemology and cosmology in an indigenous knowledge context. They have been challenged to offer an alternative that is more practical and comprehensive. Unexpectedly, the same source of criticism expressed their concern with the Western knowledge quest and desire to destroy nature and to tune its inferiorisation and subordination of indigenous abilities and insights to their manipulation for profit. Contrary to past criticism, this assertion implies a claim that African indigenous knowledge systems are not only capable of operating and providing, but that their effectiveness is also generally recognised. According to some analyses, the African Indigenous System cannot serve as a valid source of knowledge for the advancement of science because their way of thinking is intuitive (rather than analytical), their truth and rationality are influenced by local circumstances and culture, and their taxonomies emphasise the ontological and biological differences between different cognition systems (Nel, 2005).

African indigenous knowledge system research is acknowledged as fitting within the general scientific method with regard to technique. However, their approaches are not taken into consideration. The field methods currently used by researchers are primarily based on western methodology, with indigenous procedures integrated when necessary through participatory rural appraisal, semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, and/or group focused interviews, as well as, to some extent, data interpretation (Kazemi et al. 2003: 25). Given the AIKS's entire

socio-economic and spiritual components, its techniques of finding, knowing, and experimentation are essentially communal, and the medium of transmission is oral and collaborative (Emeagwali, 2003). Therefore, it may be necessary to apply them in addition to the accepted scientific procedures; moreover, the diachronic experimental approach using Indigenous knowledge may cause logistical difficulties.

There is no question that the majority (if not all) of the problems listed above are only a few of the disastrous effects of colonialism's carefully planned policies to destroy, erase, and relabel the rich heritage of Africa and its indigenous knowledge system in order to replace them with conceptualisations that are cognitive and theoretical, as is evident in the hegemony of the West (Nel, 2005).

Restoration and safeguarding of AIKS

It was previously established that the oppressive colonial political and ideological apparatuses consistently imposed coercive and consensual policies on their African subjects, causing total subjection of the populace and the displacement of their belief systems as well as systems of knowledge (Dondolo, 2005). The policies of relocation and displacement intended to seize the land and its abundant resources worsened the alienation of African communities, leading to the loss of their knowledge systems, which were intricately linked and heavily dependent on the very lands and environments that were taken from them.

Therefore, one of the formidable tasks facing decision-makers and scholars today is the restoration of the indigenous knowledge of Africa. The protection of indigenous resources and knowledge associated with them from (what I refer to as) "legalised" piracy, which is authorized and carried out by national and international (pharmaceutical, medical cosmetic) corporations and their affiliated research institutions, presents another significant challenge (Horsthemke, 2004; Nel, 2005). Unfortunately, it frequently happens that, under the guise of development programmes, bilateral agreements between failing African governments and transnational corporations cover intellectual property theft and the unauthorised use of resources (Moahi, 2007: 5).

The preservation of indigenous knowledge systems in Africa from internet abuses, the knowledge economy, and economic globalisation, which have far-reaching consequences for depriving local populations of their knowledge systems, resources, and goods, is another connected

concern. As there is a propensity to disregard unrecorded and "unscientific" information, cultural globalisation is also contributing to the deterioration and eventual eradication of the indigenous knowledge systems of Africa.

Concluding Remarks

The transmutation influence of family styles and the confronting challenges of AIKS remain the underlying reasons for the congruence problem in African public governance. Most times, the attitudes of public office holders are consequential effects of their family styles and indigenous knowledge garnered through the socialisation stages. This paper has identified major family styles with influence on public governance in Africa. Also, inhibiting factors of indigenous knowledge were enlisted and explained, which underline the extent to which the usefulness of the knowledge has been cut short within the public space in Africa. What, therefore, seems essential is a sociological dissection of public office holders in Africa with a view to informing and guiding them on the possible influence of their family styles and indigenous knowledge on governance outputs. This might further lead to the probing of other components of social life vis-à-vis its effects on public governance in Africa.

This paper establishes the fact that the development of leadership characteristics is traceable to family styles and indigenous knowledge. Put simply, the ways and manners in which a public office holder may likely rule remain a function of styles and knowledge acquired from the family and society at large. It is the difference in family styles and knowledge conception that influence both domestic and external socio-economic and political conditions within the ecology of public governance in Africa. Also, agenda setting in public governance suffers setbacks due to the styles, perceptions, and knowledge of the public office holders. Family interference is a major influence on policy characteristics within the public space. This paper calls for a renaissance in the discourse of AIKS in public governance with a view to strengthening the cultural traits needed in the discharge of governance responsibilities in society.

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