

Beyond politics of tribe and religion and the question of self-interest in human psychology and anthropology

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Abstract

Politics is about people and how they manage their affairs within a given society. Every society is a reflection of its political experiences and institutions. There is no politics without people; hence people's circumstances, culture and environment affect their choice of politics. The argument, in some quarters, that political activities in Africa are shrouded in traditional identity politics is a biased one. Actually, identity politics has been a significant part of the political and social landscape in the past few decades, as it has been employed by various groups to push for increased recognition of marginalized identities. Although, there is a claim that identity politics can be reductive and lead to polarization, it is not fair to reduce it to only Africa. This work refutes such claims, and argues that ethnic, tribal or religious influences or sentiments have a way of influencing people and the choice of their political system. It is the view of the work that except those who are at the forefront of this accusation are just disciples of Hume and Hegel who were particularly negative about the humanity of Africans generally; having claimed that Africans are not mature enough to think objectively to the point of engaging in politics, there is no reason to reduce identity politics to Africa alone. The politics of defining African identity has traveled a long way, with a total denial of humanity to the Africans by the West. It is therefore imperative to demonstrate that identity politics is not something peculiar to Africans. It is a global practice that is first rooted in human psychology, although unknown to most people. An examination of the ancient Egyptian governmental structure, affected by its cosmogony and anthropology, could serve as a proof in this direction.

Key Words: Politics, tribe, religion, self-interest, psychology, anthropology

Introduction

When some people argue that Africans are not mature enough to think objectively about their affairs, they seem simply to be re-echoing the long-old views of some great thinkers like David Hume and G.W.F. Hegel. These scholars' negative thoughts about the Negro-African appear to have laid such strong basis and foundation, albeit erroneous that serve as foundational principles upon which the Negro-African estimate and evaluation has always been based. History has it that both Hume and Hegel were too negative, and wrote dismissively of Africans to the point of denying them their humanity and the contribution of the entire Negro-Africans to civilization. Although scholars like Masolo (1994), Njoku (2002) and others believe that the Western judgments about Africans have been based on mere cultural bias or prejudice, which gradually grew into a formidable two-pronged historical reality: slavery and slave trade on the one hand, and academic expression on the other hand, it would be right to revisit some of their claims specifically. Eze (1998: 214), for example, cited what many have regarded as the famous footnotes to Hume's essay "*On National Character*" thus:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, or even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them; nor arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present TARTARS, (members of a Turkic people living in Tatarstan and various other parts of Russia and Ukraine. They are the descendants of the Tartars who ruled central Asia in the 14th century) have still something eminent about them...Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen...if nature had not made original distinction betwixt these breeds of men.

It is obvious, though unfortunate too that Hume simply re-echoed the old long views and thinking attributed to Hegel. Recall that Hegel was famous for the saying that the peculiarly African character was difficult to comprehend, for the very reason one must give up the principle, which naturally accompanies all ideas—the category of Universality. In his own words, we read the following:

In Negro life, the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained the realization of any substantial objective existence—for example, God, or Law in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realized his being. Thus the distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet been attained; so that the knowledge of an absolute being, an Other and a Higher than himself, is entirely wanting. Hegel (1956:93).

Noticeably, Hegel's estimation shows that there is an ontological distinction that the Negro is as yet bereft of. According to him, 'he cannot yet go beyond himself—beyond his instinctual behaviour and posit the existence of a being outside of himself.' In other words, a distinction is arrived at through reflection and theoretical conceptualization. But unfortunately, this is what the Negro does not have. It is worrisome, however, in our estimation and evaluation, that great thinkers like Hegel and Hume would descend so low and write out of bias, reducing themselves to the position of armchair anthropologists. Odhiambo (1997) accuses Hegel of following faithfully and firmly the footsteps of scholars and writers of his time in his analysis of Africa as a continent devoid of rationality, a dark continent, a land of childhood.

This is the case as Hegel wrote because of his apparent enthusiasm to relegate Africa from the threshold of world history. As a matter of utmost concern, some scholars took after the Hegelian sentiments as a missionary mandate. One of them Levy-Bruhl (1939) is believed to have queried how an untutored African could know God. It has been reported that he argues that the African mind is prelogical and not conceptual; and while it can accommodate contradiction when subjected to conceptual analysis, it also fails the rigorous test of logic. In his report to the Ethno-Logical Society of London, a Hegelian known as Baker (1867) as quoted by Ray (1972:2) followed his master in asserting that "Without any exception, Africans are without a belief in a Supreme Being, neither have they any form of worship or idolatry, nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened by even a ray of superstition. Their mind is as stagnant as the morass which forms its punny world."

The truth that must not be denied by anyone is that all of these great thinkers wrote out of bias and prejudices. They believed that theoretical and religious knowledge must be accompanied by certain literary or tutorial awareness; hence Africa was denied all of these. Since Levy-Bruhl denied Africans the possibility of theistic knowledge without Western education and Baker also denied them the possibility of the endowment of such knowledge at all or its corruption by nature or chance, what happens where such a possibility is admitted in the form of such imputed epithets as 'fetishism,' 'animism,' and 'nature worship'? This is a question they were yet to answer. However, Burton (1864:199) was apt to summarize their positions thus:

The Negro is still at the crude down of faith-fetishism and he has barely advanced to idolatry...He has never grasped the ideas of a personal Deity, a duty in life, a moral code, or the shame of lying. He rarely believes in a future state of

rewards and punishment, which, whether true or not, are infallible indices of human progress.

So by way of analysis, the truth remains that the intellectual exchange between Western discourse and the African responses, whether in politics, economy, or human affairs have always largely been built around this issue. In other words, such racial perception laid a serious foundation for what is known and called traditional identity politics in Africa that is shrouded with tribal and religious sentiments.

It is against this backdrop therefore, that we regard such talk like 'African politics is shrouded in traditional identity politics' as an offshoot of this historical politics of calumny. Again, we must not forget that not everyone is ready to accept the conclusion of these individuals about Africa because this is a battle of whose idea should be responsible to depict the individual's role and impact in shaping and controlling of one's identity and destiny. Some scholars have claimed that the Western thinkers who spoke too negatively about African humanity were out for something. Njoku (1993; 2002), for example, believes that from their perspective, it is obvious that the first missionary outreach in Black Africa was conceived as a venture to rescue souls from the devil and for God; hence their position. But how true this claim is remains a matter of concern as we proceed in this paper to find out how the ancient Egyptian government was structured.

Ancient Egyptian Government Structure: Analysis and Concern

Ancient Egyptian religion was deeply affected by political changes and vice versa. Ancient Egypt has been universally acclaimed as being the cradle of modern culture and civilization. Thus despite the mist of antiquity and deliberate obscurantism in certain quarters, more details have continued to come to light regarding the wisdom and learning that the modern world has gained from her via the Ionians. It is against this backdrop that an analysis of its governmental structure is in order so as to x-ray the influence of cosmogony and anthropology in their operations. According to Otega (2001), a review of the classical Egyptian government structure shows the time when the apparatus of governance was developed to a high quality that it was copied by other civilizations. Such a period dates back to 2,000 BC; one thousand two hundred years after the Delta and Upper kingdoms were amalgamated as one state.

Referring to this period, McKeon (1941) argued that it was a time when a certain Pharaoh Sesosris—the reigning Pharaoh who was probably the brain behind the idea—laid it down as a law that the structure of government be divided into three: rulers, soldiers, and artisans and husbandmen. According to him, this was the case until the coming of monotheism in 1350 BC and in the 18th dynasty when the role of the king became more clearly defined. Thus Pharaoh became the godly shepherd sent by one God. And this came to be how the ancient Egyptian government started and developed in structure to a peak aped by philosophers. Politically, Egypt was a polytheistic theocracy in the Old Kingdom. The pharaohs ruled as God's agents. "Economic energy and

material resources in considerable amounts were squandered in providing elaborate tombs and in maintaining a costly ecclesiastical system” (Burns, 33). The unification of Egypt under the Old Kingdom led to the political consolidation and fusion of deities. All guardian divinities were merged into the almighty sun god *Re* or *Ra*. After the establishment of Theban dynasty, the deity was renamed Amon or Amon-Re after the god of Thebes. Gods with agro-vegetative potency were merged into a new deity called Osiris – the god of the Nile. “The most important deities in Egypt’s religion and cosmology were the sun god *Re* (or Ammon) and the Nile spirits Isis, her husband-consort Osiris, and their son, the falcon-god Horus” (Sherman and Salisbury, 17).

In the Old Kingdom the solar faith, which was the worship of *Re* dominated the religious sphere. It was the official state religion with the presumed power to grant immortality both to the state and to the citizenry. As the guardian spirit, *Re* was worshipped as the embodiment of righteousness, justice, truth and the defender of the moral order. The solar faith did not give any spiritual or material blessings to individuals, it was not the religion of the peasantry, except that their welfare was the responsibility of the state. The most popular of all the gods was *Horus*. It was the kings who worshiped Horus, who first unified Egypt in the first and second dynasty, and end of the fourth millennium B.C. This was achieved through the transformation of tribal gods into the sun-god.

Ancient Egyptian religion was deeply affected by political changes. Thus, there was either a new emphasis, or accretion and syncretism dictated by political exigency. When the capital was relocated to Memphis, in the third dynasty that is, 3000 B.C., the official state god became *Ptah* of Memphis. The religious horizon changed in 2700 B.C., when the fifth dynasty came to power with the capital in the city of On (Heliopolis), the god *Aten* (Ra) became supreme god. In the eleventh and twelfth dynasties (2100-1800), the capital city relocated again to Thebes with *Amon* as the head of the pantheon, enjoying popularity and official support comparable to the former supreme god – *Ra* (*Amon-Ra*). In the seventh century B.C., and during the 26th Sais dynasty, Sais goddess *Neith*, which probably had a Libyan origin, was worshiped as the supreme deity in ancient Egypt.

Egyptian Cosmogony

It is on record that with several forms of cosmogony, Egyptians had several gods involved in the work of creation. For example, Onyewuenyi (1993) believes that there were the Ennead in the Helio-politan and the Memphite systems and Ogdoad in the Hermopolitan systems. The common feature of these cosmogonies is that one god emerged as supreme, initiating the work of creation. According to him, Ptah was recognized as a double principle’ of both intellectual and physical creation, though not accorded the respect of the sole god in the strict sense of the word. On the whole, Ennead was seen as participating in the process of creation. But one particular trait of Ptah that is very important and along which Aristotle evolved his theory of the ‘unmoved mover’ is that

which relates creation to the processes of thought and speech without Ptah himself being affected. The process of unifying Egypt which was a political decision impacted seriously on Egyptian pantheons as some deities gained worshipers outside their initial and known territories. Some functionaries were elevated as patrons of vital human activities. The god of Hermopolis, *Thot* (an ibis), was made the patron of scribes and scholars, *Anubis* of Sint - god of the afterlife, *Sekhmet* of Latopolis - the goddess of war, and *Min* of Copta - the god of foreigners, et cetera. The gods were also identified with cosmic phenomena, *Aten-Ra*, *Horus*, *Osiris*, *Amon*, *Anher*, *Sebek* and *Munt* were variously connected with the sun; *Thot*, *Isis*, *Khons*, to the moon; *Hathor* and *Nut*, to the sky; while *Min* and *Geb* to the earth.

Egyptian Anthropology

Egyptian analysis of man has come down to us in the form of threefold division. In the first place, there is Zed—the body; which serves as the material mold within which dwells Ra; the mind, the thinking principle, which like the body, though on a higher plane, is perishable; and thirdly, Ka, the immortal principle called the soul. According to Olela (1981), this is the highest of all the three levels. The Ka is the commander in chief of the whole person. It is the intellectual principle whose main work is to contemplate the immutable good life and wisdom found only among the gods. The list of gods found in the tomb of Thutmose III shows that Egyptian polytheistic *cultus* had up to seven hundred and forty deities. The gods are portrayed in a marital relationship with the goddess who bore them a son, which resulted in the formation of a divine triad, where the father was not always a chief, but also plays the role of prince consort, and the principal deity functioned as the goddess. The chief gods dwelt in a secluded temple, the priests worshipped, awoke the gods each morning with a song, bathed, dressed and fed them. The priests acted as representatives of the pharaoh, who was regarded as a living god – the son of the sun god- Ra (492). The Egyptian governmental structure developed along this division, to be aped by ancient Egyptian thinkers and philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.

Influence from cosmogony

Perceptibly, both Egyptian cosmogony and anthropology played important roles in the shaping of the ancient Egyptian government. For example, we saw how in the 18th Dynasty, Pharaoh Akhenaton established monotheism. This Absolute Ruler theory was not only effective as a theological principle but when Akhenaton applied this to himself, it made him not only a descendant of the gods but an absolute ruler of mankind and therefore infallible. Again, ancient Egypt was a theocratic state governed by priests with the Pharaoh himself as both a priest and god. It was said of Pharaoh that he was not of these parts, that the gods had sent him to shepherd men and he would return to them after he had accomplished his task. However, the idea of Pharaoh going back to heaven placed upon him the obligation of bringing the principle of Maat to bear on his art of governance.

Apart from living a virtuous life himself, it was also necessary for him to practice fair play, level-headedness, righteousness, and mercy. When at a certain stage in history the High priest proclaimed through a revelation that ordinary persons too could go to heaven and might even become gods if they led good lives, morality and the practice of justice came into full force. But to do this, one needed the gnosis of the Mystery System. This, of course, is the genesis of insistence on knowledge as means of being virtuous and liberating one's soul for heaven. This was to be emphasized later by Greek pupils of the Egyptian Mystery System like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Influence from Anthropology

The analysis of man also had the effect on the structure of the ancient Egyptian government. For example, as Pharaoh was regarded as Ka—the soul of the state—, his duties were to own, control, defend, cherish, nurture, shelter, and enlarge the population ably aided by a college of priests. Otega (2001) also admits that like the Ka, he was the shepherd of the people and his staff of office was a crook, and like the Ka, he lived in the body of the state but was not one of its members and would leave for heaven to reign with the gods if he ruled justly. Also, the warriors—the Ra of Society—devoted themselves not only to their major task of defending the state but would also to pursue knowledge in various fields.

Lastly, the body of society—the Zed—was composed of men of various breeding. It was not composed of domestic servants alone as some writers maintain. A large part of this group was mainly husbandmen hunters and artisans but a certain portion was composed of highly professional men who were medical doctors, architects, surveyors etc. In the *Laws* and *The Republic*, Plato speaks of this distribution of functions in a state following the Egyptian anthropology and structure of government. Ancient Egypt promoted a civilization that projected the religious beliefs of the rulers and the stability of the state. The state religion of Egypt was in the form of theocratic polytheism – a state ruled by the gods, Believing that the deities had planned their country's future from the beginning, the Egyptians thought of their society as sacred. Egyptians were taught that the king, as god on earth, embodied the state. When the gods came together, there is always fusion, or merging of cults in line with the theological speculations of the priests.

Influence on Plato

There is no doubt that both Plato and Aristotle had their influence on the ancient Egyptian cosmogony and anthropology. In Plato's *Republic*, for instance, it is made clear that Plato was born around 438 and 348 of golden blood. Like his fellow Ionians, the Mystery System Schools of Ancient Egypt heavily influenced him. That his Academy was often the object of attack and the fact that Plato himself was accused of corrupting the young with foreign ideas add up to support the fact that most of what he taught in his academy could not have been Hellenic. An analysis of his political philosophy has shown many trait of Egyptian philosophy.

Plato's Anthropology

Plato's view of man was grounded solidly in Egyptian psychology or anthropology. For instance, he divided the soul into three parts typical of the Egyptian division. These include the rational part, the charioteer of a man whose main function was to guide and bring other parts under control; the spirited part corresponding to man's higher emotions and the appetitive standing for man's sensual desires. The Egyptian analysis saw this as the Ka, the Ra, and Zed respectively. Again, like the Egyptians, Plato also divided the state into a three-tier system (an idea which was foreign to the whole of Europe); as this was grounded firmly on his analysis of man. The first of this three-fold division was the guardian, shepherds of the state. They were to be austere and ascetic as the Egyptian ruling class. Next to the guardians are warriors, the *epi kouroi*; the military arm that offered their physical force for the defense of the state. The *epi kouroi*, auxiliaries was a technical term for trained professional bodyguards of a monarch as distinct from professional fighting force. Moreover, Plato did not give them the name of professional; soldiers of the Greek democracies. The term "Misthotoi" was derived from the bodyguards of Pharaoh but only translated it into Greek. The last tier is the 'demiurge.' This term refers technically to civilian population independent of economic status. This had within it professional men and women and the whole of the workforce. Since the other two classes were denied marriage and the accumulation of wealth, Plato contended that the demiourgoi alone should own property.

Influence on Aristotle

Aristotle, the stragerite born of blue blood, an author of over 400 books, has been a subject of suspicion in recent times as regards the background of his knowledge. His political philosophy betrays Egyptian awareness. According to Onyewuenyi (1993:9), Aristotle himself confesses that "Egypt witnessed the antiquity of all these things, for the Egyptians are known to be of all people the most ancient and they have laws and a regular constitution existing from time immemorial. We could therefore make the best use of what has already been discovered and try to supply defects." This quotation proves so many facts. Firstly, it shows that learning, government, and constitution were first established in Egypt. Secondly, even at the time of Aristotle, Egypt was still the most civilized nation in the world. Thirdly, Aristotle himself studied 'these things' and wished to pass them to the Hellenic world. Fourthly Aristotle 'made use of what' had "already been discovered' and fifthly, he improved on his sources. The fact that he was aware of Egyptian political thought is strengthened by the point that he recommended in his 'constitution' that the state be divided into ruler and subject classes since that was what was still in existence in Egypt.

Quoting Taylor (1920:1292), he testifies that "It is now a recent discovery of political philosophers that the state ought to be divided into classes and that the warriors should be separated from the husbandmen. The system has continued in Egypt... to this day, and was established, says by a law of

Sesostri in Egypt.” It is evident therefore that the division, separation, and the development of constitution, which Aristotle carried out, followed the Egyptian pattern. Ancient Egypt thought that it was within this three-fold structure of the government that the state could adequately answer the question of social justice and equality enjoined by God, whom Pharaoh was his shepherd.

Aristotle placed much emphasis on the family. He saw the family as a natural creation and as such an avenue where man could develop some of his natural endowments through socialization. Besides, he (Aristotle) thought that family provided man with that root that is basic to his nature without which he would be an abstract figure. The family, according to him, is a place for true companionship and therefore a microcosm of a genuine society. Since different families would come together to form a village and a collection of villages formed a state, the family was both the spring and nucleus of society. It was therefore a natural creation that could not be easily abolished as Plato did. The state itself derived its legitimacy through the nature of the family. If the family is a natural creation, then the state could be nothing less since it is an amalgam of families. Ancient Egypt viewed both the state and the family as a creation of the Ennead, that is, the creation of nature. In summary, Aristotle attributed qualities that ancient Egyptians attributed to the Ptah alone to the Unmoved Mover such as creating through thought and speech, and perfection. Among the Egyptians, Ptah was the creator of the Ennead. In Aristotle’s metaphysics, the Unmoved Mover created the world through the process of speech and thought but has nothing to do with it. Both Aristotle and Egyptians equated the Unmoved Mover and the Ptah with God.

Influence on Modern Thinkers

The Platonic and Aristotelian political ideas have exercised a lot of influence on modern thinkers and states. No matter what, no one has been able to exorcise the state of the demons of injustice, which both Plato and Aristotle sought to rid the state of. Plato influenced utopian thinkers like Zeno, Augustine, Sir Thomas Moore, John Locke Karl Marx, etc. In their attempts to answer the question of justice in the Polis raised by Plato in *The Republic*, these men favor one class against the other.

Aristotle has also his influence on men like Aquinas, Montesquieu, and Hobbes, etc. The influence of Plato and Aristotle on this category of modern thinkers is two-fold; the way these thinkers looked at the apparatus of power and class issues in society. Plato and Aristotle saw no difference between the apparatus of power and class problems in society because their major concern was on how the state could promote social justice. It is this latter aspect, the class issue, geared towards promoting social justice in the state that became instrumental to the evolution of socialism, communism and, capitalism. Interpreters of Plato and Aristotle have come up with various theories or ideologies on what should be the relationship among the basic social strata in the state. Usually, those who toed the Republic’s line are

either socialist or communists and those who followed Aristotle are mainly capitalists.

The Nexus of Psychology and Anthropology with Identity Politics

Students of psychology and anthropology always argue that prejudices and bias are natural aspects of human nature. They claim too that everyone has prejudices and preferences that are reinforced by stories and narratives that they hear. According to them, prejudice is a function of the environment in which one lives and socializes and the level of exposure that one has. All across the world, different ethnicities are subjects of popular stereotypes whether it is the notion that Africans are blacks and without reason or soul or that white people are cunning, etc; these are stereotypes, and of course, by the very nature of stereotypes, wide generalization are most likely to be false and unlikely to hold up to any kind of empirical test. But they are the narratives that people have woven about other tribes and in fact, people of other religions. Sometimes these stories are repeated so many times that they are soon accepted as facts. And when we accept these stories as facts about other people and people of other ethnicities and people of other religions, whom we have never met, behaved, or interacted space shape our judgment about them even before they have spoken. Politics, for example, in its nature tends to be already divisive. Partisan democratic competition compels us to align ourselves with the camps that most reflect our ideals and aspirations.

In divest societies, democratic competition is intensified by the social-cultural cleavages that exist in society. This is true of any heterogeneous society or democracy. According to Taylor (2023), identity politics is and has been an inescapable part of democratic societies and how they function. This is true in democracies such as South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, and the United States. Political leaders therefore seek to mobilize society around particular kinds of values, ethnicities, religions, and racial, social or cultural identities that promote or advance their specific interests or concerns. This, they often do without due regard to the interests and concern of other religious, ethnicities and social communities. Since there is no one without identity and a tribe, Developmental Psychologist Erik Erikson, argues that the formation of identity was one of the critical and interesting conflicts that one encounters in the world as he or she grows up.

Erikson articulates that, developing a sense of identity is very important during the teenage years of anyone, even though the formation and growth of identity are not confined only to youthful age alone. Instead, Erikson points out that identity shifts and changes throughout one’s lifetime as he or she confronts new challenges and tackles different life experiences. For Taylor, like the formation of individual or personal identities, group identity formation also involves the development of very strong commitments to the preservation of that identity, or a shared solidarity with members of such identity or ethnic, religious, or racial community. These shared experiences, relationships, beliefs, values, and memories of a

particular identity group are unique to itself, and therefore subjective and relative to other groups. Commitments to identity preservation and perhaps dominance evolve, often involuntarily. Tribalism is the attitude and practice of harboring such a strong feeling of loyalty or bonds to one's tribe that one excludes or even demonizes those 'others' who do not belong to that group".

For Nwaigbo (2005), it prompts one to have a positive attitude towards those who are connected to him or her through kinship, family, and clan, and it de facto (directly or indirectly) alienates one from people of other tribes who are not related to him or her by blood, kinship, family or clan. Once again, Azikiwe (1964: 11) says that "Every human being is a member of one particular tribe. Within that tribe, customs, and traditions are established to guide, direct and control the beliefs, attitudes, and habits of its members. Failure to comply with the collective will tantamount to an act of disloyalty which may be punishable with severe penalties. Obedience to the tribe is thus inculcated in the tribes-folk from childhood." According to him, in history, tribes that came into contact with each other had discovered a way of living conterminously. In some cases, they preserved their identity. In other cases, they amalgamated to produce offspring, which evolved into a new prototype.

No matter what may be the nature of the development of these tribes, the aim has been always to create a society where there is a reign of law and order. Cleavages to identity or location (where one comes from) are highly intensified when it is most likely that one has encountered different experiences and persons, which begin to challenge one's notion of self, location, or belonging in society. Ethnicity is related to tribe. It is a social group or category of the population set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture. It is the outcome of the establishment of social boundaries, and a boundary marker that separates one group of people from another, which is done through the establishment of taboos on social interaction, especially intermarriage, and by the selection of markers of ethnic identity to distinguish the group from others in the arena. Ethnicity thus is an expression of group consciousness.

Psychological Egoism and Identity Politics

The debate on the role of reason over passion in human affairs has been a long one indeed. Although not many are prepared to accept that reason takes the upper hand, some those insist that passion rather than reason lead the way. And that reason's role is very insignificant. Thomas Hobbes (1981) is famous for his theory of psychological egoism; which according to him, is a situation whereby everyone is driven by self-interest. Hobbes believes that human beings have voluntary motions or passions which are instigated or initiated by endeavors--small movements of the brain. An endeavor is an appetite or desire when it is a movement toward something but it is an aversion when it is refraining from something. Some motions (animal motions) are caused by an external force that impacts on the senses, and this, in turn causes external movement in terms of

pleasure (motion towards) or pain (aversion towards) something. Desires and aversions translate into love and hate; that is motion towards what one loves (pleasure) and retreating from what one hates (aversion).

Hobbes, therefore, argues that self-preservation exists and leads to a situation where might is right. Recall that Hobbes lived at a time when widespread warfare raged throughout Europe. It was the wars of religion in the sixteenth century and the Thirty space in the seventeenth that was particularly bloody. Hobbes was also a witness to a great upheaval in English political life, where parliamentary armies rose against, and overthrew Charles I. Given this background, the idea that life without a strong central authority would result in a 'war of all against all' was not difficult for him to imagine. Hence Hobbes set out to unravel what he termed the fundamental cause of conflict and violence in human society. Hobbes was both a mechanist and a materialist. By this, he believed that natural phenomena were made up (only) of physical elements that functioned according to deterministic laws of cause and effect. For him, human beings were not exempted from this law. Nor were their voluntary actions. Hence he argues that voluntary movement (what he called 'animal space caused by external impact of some force on the senses proceeding to internal motions that are either helped (pleasure) or hindered (pain) issuing eventually (or not) in external movement. Hobbes' insistence that animal motion was caused by external factors led him to the conclusion that humans are fundamentally selfish. He called this principle of action in man (self-interest) the principle of psychological egoism, which is a descriptive claim that space matter of psychological fact, the fundamental motive for all human beings is self-interest.

Hobbes does not think a man can live without going after what pleases him. For him, in the fact that, although people sometimes appear to act to serve the interest of others or take others concern into account, their ultimate aim is to advance their own interest, treating the satisfaction of others' needs as purely instrumental in the final accomplishment of their goals. Given these inevitable conflicts of desires among individuals, Hobbes believed there would be constant violence and danger, for all would do what they could to accomplish their goals and naturally encounter others of equal power doing the same, against every man. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, for instance, Hume (1975) argues that self-interest or utility is what motivates human action. Later in his *Enquires*, he discerns a principle in human nature called sympathy or fellow feeling, still a principle of utility whose expression is moderated by general rules invented by the social convention for its end.

Against this background, Hume sustains that the ultimate end and justification of all law is the achievement of the good of mankind as a whole. Acts come to be done under general rules because of the general interest that is sought within the convention. With the general rules a stability of possession is achieved for "peaceable enjoyment and safety of possession." The virtue that attempts to maintain all this is justice which is,

for Hume, a product of convention, for the public has found its utility. Thus, Hume draws our attention to a general scheme within which we must relate and make sense out of particular just acts. Adherence to the law is simply an invention of the society not proved under Hume's idea of reason, but as Hume observes, it brings some order/peace. Concepts such as 'law' are signs invented to facilitate communication to curb the rough adages of a utility principle in human beings which Hume calls 'sympathy.'

Sympathy is Hume's scheme is a source of action that expresses a social concordance or fellow feeling among a group. People are bound together in the same sentiment in their interactions: individuals get involved in the joys and sorrows of one another. According to Hume, sympathy is heavily sentimental in its expression as a natural principle; hence society invents general rules for that individuals can converse at the same level and understand themselves for the public good. Bentham (1982) took over the utility principle which Hume had mooted. According to him, mankind is under two masters: namely, pleasure and pain. We determine what to do in the light of these masters. People act to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. And Bentham believes that this way of humans is rational, and it comes into law. He defines utility as that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question. Bentham further believes that this principle goes beyond affecting only the action of a private individual but affects every measure of government. In other words, it includes every action whatsoever. The Benthamite principle takes seriously the interest of the community. The community is a fictitious body composed of individuals called its members. Thus the interest of the community will always determine the direction of events as they play out.

Conclusion

In this work, we attempted to demonstrate the tribal and religious nature of politics in general. This was achieved through the analysis of some of the assumptions of some notable Western thinkers—Hume and Hegel among others as it concerns Africa and its politics; the structure of ancient Egyptian government (its cosmogony and anthropology), and the relationship between identity politics and psychological egoism. Finding out that these assumptions were erroneously championed, and full of prejudices and biases targeted to discrediting African identity and politics, the paper moved on to establish the thesis that identity politics is universal as it exists wherever humans exist too. This means that all politics is by nature tribal and religious. This thesis is predicated upon the fact that man by nature is a self-interested being whose activities, in one way or the other, directly or indirectly, is done and carried out in line with the principle of self-interest serving in him as the determinant of good and bad action.

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