



Utilitarianism as a Veritable Vehicle for the Promotion of a Just Society

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Abstract

Utilitarianism as an abstract ethical theory holds that good is achieved when the aggregate of pleasure is greater than the aggregate of pain. For the utilitarians, an act is good if it leads to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. A society is said to be just and good when its citizens are happy. A just and happy society is an ideal society. Every citizen desires the ideal society and for this to be achieved, scholars have suggested the application of various ethical theories. This paper, in the same connection, seeks to analyze and articulate the prospects of utilitarianism as a veritable tool for the promotion of a just society. Utilitarianism is sensitive to human nature and human beings do fundamentally desire happiness. The social, economic and political progress of every society must seek the happiness of its citizenry. This essay states that utilitarianism is a fundamental vehicle of transformation in a democratic society. It provides for society the standard with which to measure the progress and prosperity of a State. And as a concept of justice, it ensures equitable distribution of scarce resources to the greatest number of people. This practice is achievable if friendly policies and result-oriented programmes are rolled out for the people by the managers of the State. The State's leadership policies cannot be evidently obeyed if the citizenry and strong followership are not connected. A strong followership is achievable in leadership if the greatest number of the population is protected in line with the afrioxiological concepts of *gidi gidi bu ugwu eze* and *onye aghala nwanneya*.

KEY WORDS: Utilitarianism, Justice, Society, Policy, Happiness.

Introduction

A just society is an ideal society. However, the diversity of human population and its attendant multiplicity of interests has made this ideal difficult to attain. For this reason, various political experiments have

been undertaken towards developing effective policy framework to aid in the attainment of this ideal. One of the most veritable instruments to aid in the attainment of the goal of a just society is utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is an ethical principle which promotes maximization of the greatest good to the greatest majority. It accepts two moral principles: one, principle of equality, and two, principle of utility. On the basis of equality, utilitarianism entertains no binary rather it holds that pain is pain regardless of the individual's social pigmentation. On the basis of utility, utilitarianism urges for balanced consideration of interests or consequences which minimizes pain and maximizes happiness/pleasure. According to Tom Regan "the greatest appeal of utilitarianism rests with uncompromising egalitarianism; everyone's interests count and equally with the interests of everyone else" (43). There are various strands and variants of utilitarianism but with similar goal – that of maximization of the greatest good to the greatest majority.

Utilitarianism has been applied, and has wide implications in social/public policy development and analysis. It also has wide implications for public governance particularly in democratic states. The goal of utilitarianism is justice for the greatest number affected by a social action. What is just is what is good – which is that action whose consequences maximizes pleasure and minimizes pain, and the consideration of which is based on egalitarianism. According to utilitarianism, a just society is that, considered egalitarianly, maximizes pleasures and minimizes pain. Accordingly, a just society is one in which majority of the citizenry are happy.

The Concept of Just Society

What is justice? What does it mean to say a society is just or that it is operating a just constitution/system? Generally, when the question of justice is raised, it is usually a question about organization of a society and how its resources or commonwealth is shared among its citizens. Many philosophers have developed concepts and theories of justice to aid the society achieve this goal. In the Western philosophical tradition, two philosophers in ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle, introduced us to the concept of justice. Plato, in his *Republic*, argues that a just society is that in which every citizen carry out his/her function as assigned to him/her by the society and by the nature of things (142). This means that everyone is rigidly placed in the society to carry out certain duties.

On other hand, Aristotle, in his *The Nicomachean Ethics*, argues that what is just is what is proportionate between two extremes (114). He based his concept of justice on his principle of Golden Mean. Aristotle's conception of justice projects justice as fairness and proportionality. In the oriental philosophical tradition, Confucius had a similar vision of justice as Plato. According to him, a just society is that where there is rectification of names according to one's duty and station (Chunpo & Jialong, 562-3).

Confucius posits that in a society everyone is rigidly placed to perform one duty or the other; justice involves performing these duties as attached to you. In the African philosophical tradition, concept of justice was also projected as rigid and theological. The doctrine of justice in Africa is embedded in the theory of force. In the African philosophical view, justice consists in harmonizing various entities into a harmonious whole (Francis, 186-7; Ijiomah, 123-4; Unah, 82-3). According to the theory of force, every being has its place in the social-ontological scheme and duties attached to it (Ekei, 201-9). Justice involves performing one's duty; injustice means abandoning one's station. Now the problem with this view of justice, with the exception of Aristotle's, is that it is too rigid and mechanical. Citizens are viewed as merely means to an end – the end being the State. The rigidity of the system means that there is little or no room for liberty and creativity.

Another set of concepts of justice we consider is that of John Rawls and Robert Nozick. Rawls and Nozick represent contemporary conception of a just society. In his seminal book, *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls defines justice as fairness. This conception is presented in his two principles of justice thus:

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.

Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all. (Theory, 53)

These principles were later revised in Rawls last published work as follows:

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- (a) Each person has same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all; and
- (b) Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle). (Restatement, 42-3)

Deriving from the principles above, it is obvious that Rawls's concept of a just society consists in the guarantee of equality of rights and liberty for all as well as in creating social conditions in which the least advantaged in the society can derive the greatest benefit in the society he/she belongs. On the other hand, Robert Nozick advances a different concept of justice in his monumental book *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. According to him, a just society is that where every citizen is entitled to his holding. Nozick maintains that "principle of distributive justice would say simply that a distribution is just if everyone is entitled to the holdings they possess under the distribution" (151). A just holding is derived either from one's labour or from inheritance/donation. Injustice consists in denying people these holdings or taking part of their holding to help another person (Nozick, 167-8). There is however problem with the two conceptions. While Nozick's concept of justice will lead to total liquidation of social justice which in turn will stifle the system with conflicts and insecurity in the long run, Rawls's concept of justice will lead to the breeding of many social dependents that will weigh down the system. Let us now analyze utilitarianism to see how its alternative vision of a just society may serve human interest maximally.

Utilitarianism: A Brief Historical Survey

Utilitarianism developed principally from the works of Bentham and Mill. The theory can also be traced to the works of Aristippus (435-350 B. C.), Aristotle (384-322 BC), Epicurus (341-270 B. C.), David Hume (1711-1776), Epictetus (55-135) Richard Cumberland (1631-1718), John Gay (1699-1745), Anthony Ashley Cooper da Shaftesbury (1671-1713), and Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746).

Aristippus is said to have been a contemporary of Plato, who lived in Cyrene. Aristippus argued that humanity should be deducted to the pursuit of pleasure as intense as possible for a life without pleasure is unworthy (Driver, 1). He averred that pleasure is obtained by controlling situations and other people and using it to advance one's interest. Aristotle, on his part, argued that happiness is the highest good, which human and non human animals are naturally conditioned to seek. He further argued that happiness consist in pleasure-seeking and intellectuality. That happiness is activity in accordance with virtue. According to Aristotle, moral virtue is derived from the mean between two extremes, for instance, between actions A and B (114). Epicurus is perhaps the most popular ethical hedonist. According to Rosenstand, Epicurus defined pleasure is the goal of life/living; and as derived from satisfied desires (43). The desires are of three kinds:

- i. Those that are natural and must be satisfied for one to have a pleasant life (such as the desire for food and shelter).
- ii. Those that, through natural, need not necessarily be satisfied for pleasant life (including, for example, desire for sexual gratification).
- iii. Those that are neither natural nor necessary to satisfy (such as the desire for wealth or fame).
- iv.

Pleasure is best achieved by neglecting the third kind of desire and satisfying only desires of the first kind, and perhaps that of the second kind when indulging in it does not lead to pain. Epicurus also argued that pain should be avoided as much as possible.

For Shaftesbury, the moral good or virtuousness of any individual is proportional to person's impact on the system of which he or she is a part. He argued that it is in the interest of everyone to work towards the general good, failure of which is actually the failure to promote his own happiness (Driver, 1). Shaftesbury further argued that any creature described as morally worthy or virtuous must have the notion or inclination of a public interest. Hutcheson, in his 'An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil' argued that:

In comparing the moral qualities of action ... we are led by our sense of virtue to judge thus; that in equal degrees of happiness, expected to proceed from action, the virtue is in proportion to

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the number of persons of to whom the happiness shall extend (and here the dignity, or moral importance of persons, may compensate numbers); and, in equal numbers, the virtue is quantity of the happiness or natural good; or that the virtue is in a compound ratio, of good, and number of enjoyers So that that action is best, which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers (quoted in Driver, 1).

Hutcheson was committed to maximization of happiness. A virtuous action is that which procures happiness to the greatest number of persons. The worth of action is calculated in terms of quality of the consequences it holds quantitatively. Hutcheson's utilitarianism seems to have a deontological bent as it restates that "the dignity, or moral importance of persons, may compensate [for] numbers". That is to say, we have a duty to others on account of their moral importance, personhood or fundamental dignity to place premium on their considered happiness over that of others whose happiness may be affected by the action. This means that the utilitarian consideration is based on the hierarchical relationship of the individuals in the society. For instance, a king may rank more in Hutcheson's utilitarian consideration than a citizen, a man over a woman and a human over a non-human depending on the cultural and moral nuances of the society.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill are credited as the two main proponents of Utilitarianism. Bentham and Mill philosophies were concern with legal and social-political reforms in the society. According to Julia Driver, their fundamental motivation was to see unjust, corrupt laws and social practices changed (1). A law or public policy was wrong or bad, if by Utilitarian analysis, it lack elements of utility, and tends to lead to unhappiness or misery without any compensating happiness.

Bentham held that human actions are generally governed by pleasure and pain. He argued that concepts of good, ought, right are only meaningful when interpreted in pleasurable terms. Bentham developed the principle of utility to guide private and public actions. According to principle of utility, an action is right, good or ought if it is the best alternative action which produces the greatest net utility, in terms of happiness, to the greatest majority. In other words, morally just actions

are those, after due weighing and consideration, are adjudged to produce the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people. A bad, wrong and unjust act is that which does merely the opposite. A right and good action, whether it is public policy or personal decision, is the best possible action considered from the array of other alternatives.

In his understanding, the principle that should guide action is the consequences which the action would bring. To evaluate the “pleasurability” or pain of an act, Bentham developed Hedonist calculus as a guide. An act is good or right if and only if, when calculated quantitatively, is found to produce the greatest pleasure to the greatest number of people. For instance, Act “P” makes me and five other persons happy. Conversely, Acts “Q” makes me and two other people happy. Therefore, Act “P” is adjudged as morally right course of action. Represented symbolically thus:

$$P > Q$$

$$Q < p$$

$$\therefore P$$

It is important to note that, unlike Hutcheson deontological Utilitarianism, Bentham’s principle of utility is egalitarian without bias to fundamental dignity or moral/social status. Everyone is counted equally under Bentham’s Hedonic calculus. In addition to the requirement of equality, Bentham required five other criteria to be considered when applying the Hedonic calculus. According to him, five other elements required to calculate the greatest amount of happiness include the net amount of pleasure extent or happiness, its intensity, its duration, its fruitfulness and the likelihood of any act to produce it (Mackinnon, 33). An action that produces short-term pain may be accepted if and only if the pleasure that follows would outweigh the pain in terms of integrity, duration, certainty and general approval.

Mill, on the other hand, agreed with most of Bentham’s arguments. Mill’s admiration and acceptance of utilitarianism is on the basis that by nature it does not single out anyone for preferential treatment to the extent that on the conflict regarding his own happiness and that of others the utilitarian principle requires him “to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator” (Moore & Bruder, 243). As we have note earlier utilitarian value of an action is not based on the

subjective definition of happiness by an individual but on the objective definition of happiness by a vast majority. The standard objective, purpose, aims and goal of utilitarianism is not merely attainment of personal happiness but the good of society considered together.

For that standard is not agent's own greater happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether ... utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefitted by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned were a sheer deduction from their benefit. (Mill, 46)

Although Mill inherited much of the claims of Bentham, he nevertheless differed from him in a number of ways. One of the stark departures from Bentham version of utilitarianism is in the area of nature of happiness or pleasure. Unlike Bentham equalization of pleasures, Mill markedly argued that some pleasures or happiness inherently rank higher than others, and are to be preferred over pleasures of inferior quality. He argued that, "It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valued than others" (Mill, 45).

This is the difference between Bentham and Mill that while the former considered only the quantity of pleasure or happiness as the determinant of moral good, the latter considered both the quantity and quality of the pleasure or happiness produced by a course of action. For Mill, some pleasures are intrinsically better than others. To determine the degree of quality of one pleasure over another, Mill advocated a scale of preference. He stated thus:

What makes one pleasure more valuable than another... of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of two is, by those who are completely acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it,

even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (Mill, 45)

Mill's own example of the higher pleasure is pleasure derived from intellectual exercises such as reading, writing, research, etc. In our time, following Mill's analysis and descriptions, what will certainly qualify for higher or better pleasures are pleasures derived from the fundamental human rights such as rights to freedom, life and dignity. Offered to choose between sexual abstinence attached with right to human dignity and sexual exuberance attached without rights to human dignity, most people would go for the former. Thus human dignity seems to have intrinsic higher quality over sexual catharsis. It should be recalled that Hutcheson also prized dignity of persons as having intrinsically overriding value over qualitative pleasures. To this end, utilitarian act must not merely have quantitative superior value but must also have intrinsic higher qualitative value. Accordingly, a course of action that is best is the one that satisfies the most preferences by either order of importance or sheer strength of its intrinsic value.

Since Bentham and Mill, utilitarianism has influenced a wide and deep range of philosophers, including Henry Sedgwick (1838-1990), G. E. Moore (1873-1953), and Peter Singer, who has contributed through various critiques to the development of the philosophy. Moreover, utilitarianism has become a very influential policy tool, particularly in democratic societies. In addition, pragmatism has, directly and indirectly, drawn its inspiration from the utilitarian principle of utility. The Benthamic question – "What use is it?" – has become a cornerstone of pragmatism and policy development. Presently, utilitarianism has served as a key tool in environmental ethics.

Rule and Act Utilitarianism

There are two strands of utilitarianism – act and rule utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism is associated with Bentham's version of utilitarianism while rule utilitarianism is associated with Mill's version. Rule utilitarianism

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seems to have been developed as a response to criticisms against Bentham's. However, the two strands of utilitarianism are alike in that they both require us to produce the greatest happiness to the greatest majority. They differ in terms of the processes and practice of attaining utilitarian objective. In other words, they are similar in ends but differ in means.

Act utilitarianism states we ought to consider the consequences of each act separately. Rule utilitarianism states that we ought to consider the consequences of the act performed as a general practices. (Mackinnon, 39)

Act utilitarianism considers the utility of an act within its individual context; rule utilitarianism considers the utility of general rule which governs series of actions. Rule utilitarianism urges us to focus on the consequences of a type of act rather than the single act itself. Under rule utilitarianism, we may ask: what if this type of act becomes the rule? In other word, is the act sustainable? How would the act impacts on posterity if it becomes the rule?

Rule utilitarian differs by rather encouraging that before a moral decision is taken, we should reflect on whether useful consequences would be derived from such actions and on the basis of that, it should be adopted... This leaves open the possibility that a particular right actions may not maximize benefit... then, to find what is morally right or wrong we need to find which action would be permitted by a moral system. (Ekwealo, 11)

On the other hand, act utilitarianism merely focuses on the immediacy; it does not define happiness in the long term, that is, in terms of sustainability or system building. Act utilitarianism also leaves out posterity in calculating or counting the greatest number affected by a course of action. So with rule utilitarianism, some of the fundamental limitations associated with act utilitarianism seem to have been addressed. It is worthy of note that rule utilitarianism has been strengthened in Kant's categorical imperative – which urges we should

act only in a manner that we intend our action to become a universal law (Kant, 47).

Utilitarianism: Some Criticisms

Critics have pointed out a number of problems which may limit or undermined the theoretical aspect of utilitarianism but we want to limit ourselves to only three. The first one we consider is that raised by raised by Bernard Williams regarding a sort of dilemma the utilitarian principle may likely encounter with the ethic of personal integrity. In his essay, *A Critique of Utilitarianism*, Williams presented two dilemmas: (1) George is a married jobless PhD student who had searched for job for so long, and has just been offered a job in an “unethical” facility, and has been pressured to take the job to save his family of needless sufferings; and (2), Jim is a botanist on exploration of South American wilderness, upon which he stumbled on a Pedro who was about to kill twenty Indians who protested government policy so as to as deterrence to other protesters, but as a traditional mark of honour Jim is offered to kill one of the twenty men and free nineteen others otherwise Pedro himself would kill all of them himself, meanwhile the victims are begging Jim to accept the offer (124-5).

Williams avers that if a utilitarian is asked to advise George and Jim, he would obviously urge them both to accept the offers. He now argues that such a possible or obvious answer by the utilitarian renders the value of integrity as unintelligible (Williams, 125). He maintains that besides pursuit of happiness, people are often motivated by personal integrity based on certain ethical or moral commitment. To bypass this point in the process of ethical decision is to relegate an important value that a moral decision is based. In addition, as a corollary, we think, in the case of Jim, accepting to kill one Indian to free nineteen others would amount to using a person as a means to some end – a violation of Kant’s categorical imperative that persons should always be treated as end never merely as means (Kant, 47).

The second criticism we look at is that of E. F. Carritt, that the utilitarian notion of justice lacks historical context, namely: it does not take account of past merit in distribution of resources (504). On the account of some desert, we can ask: Do the greatest number of people really deserve to be happy against the least number of people in a given context? The third criticism we consider is held by Bertrand Russell.

According to that objection, the claim that pleasure is the criterion of good because everybody always strives towards pleasure is somewhat fallacious. Mill's argument is that: pleasure is the only thing desired, therefore it is the only thing desirable. He supported his argument with the syllogism that the only things visible are things seen; and the only things audible are things heard; therefore, in like manner, the only thing desirable are things desired by people (Mill, 377). In questioning the validity of the reasoning, Bertrand Russell argues, contrary to Mill, that "a thing is 'visible' if it can be seen, but 'desirable' if it ought to be desired;... We cannot infer what is desirable from what is desired" (744).

The Possibility of a Utilitarian Community as a Just Society

Despite all the criticisms, the utilitarianism formula of creating the greatest happiness to the greatest majority still remains a veritable tool for policy-making and social engineering towards social justice. Utilitarianism views a just society as that which creates the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. Utilitarianism is sensitive to the human nature. As Lawhead rightly notes, the fundamental goal of human beings is that we want to be happy (447). This feature is so fundamental to existence that we exploit all available means towards attaining happiness. Hence, what utilitarianism is doing is to aid us realize our individual and collective ideal. Bentham maintained that the State should always act to remove disabilities thereby advancing the welfare of the citizenry. Utilitarianism supplies a framework with which State's actions can be judged. According to Appadorai:

The basic idea of utilitarianism... is simply this: all actions must be judged by their results, by their fruitfulness in pleasure and this pleasure must find actual expression in the lives and in the experience of definite individuals. (43)

The State's claims to social, economic and political progress must be summed up in the happiness of its citizenry. For instance, a State cannot rightly claim superlative economic growth or quantum leap in social progress if the majority of her citizenry live in poverty or are undergoing other forms of agony. Such a claim would be regarded as absurd, under utilitarianism, because the State cannot coherently claim economic prosperity without commensurate evidence in the welfare of the

greatest number of its citizenry. Therefore, utilitarianism provides us with the standard with which to measure the progress and prosperity of a state – which, of course, is the sum total of the happiness of its citizenry

Another major prospect of utilitarianism is its capacity to mitigate conflicting ideals or policies. As Russell rightly argues, ethical framework is invaluable tool for conflict resolution (744). Utilitarian ethics supplies us the criterion with which to distinguish good and bad social policies or political goals; thereby affording us the means with which to promote good governance in the polity. For utilitarianism, good policies are those which promote good governance and human rights – since good governance and human rights promote happiness of the citizenry. Good and bad policies are not too difficult to distinguish since a good policy is that which has the capacity to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people and bad policy is that which is capable of creating the greatest pain for the greatest majority of people. Lawhead notes:

People's happiness is something concrete and identifiable, utilitarianism gives us a definitive method for making moral decisions and adjudicating moral conflicts. If we are in doubt as to what our moral obligations are, we simply calculate the amount of human happiness produced by one action or another. (447)

This applies at the level of individuals, groups and State institutions. Utilitarianism supplies the citizens the yardstick to judge the actions of the State. If the State policy increases pain and does not improve the living conditions of the people then it is not a good policy. Furthermore, Mill's classification of pleasure into "higher" and "lower" also serves as a framework upon which conflict of good or policies are decided. Apart from describing "higher pleasures" as intrinsically better, Mill argues that a better policy can be identified by determining the greatest number individual subscriptions to it. According to Mill;

Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it. That is the more desirable pleasures.(46)

In deciding the preference, Mill insisted that it must be based on informal belief. The people must not decide on the basis of propaganda but belief on the basis of experience and education. Mill insisted that the people must have experienced both policies, that is, they must have sufficient knowledge of the array of the possible policies from which to choose. On the basis of this: "The action that is best is the one that satisfies the most preferences, either in themselves or according to their strength or their order of importance" (Mackinnon, 39). This means that utilitarianism promotes democratic principles and practice as means of attaining human happiness.

Democracy corresponds with the utilitarian principles of equality and liberty. For in a liberal democratic practice, a citizen is entitled to one vote by which he use to decide his most preferred choice. On the level of State institutions, the policy-maker or statesman must ask himself: of the array of policy options available to me, how must I choose a better policy over array of competing policies? He must ask himself: who will be affected if I choose Policy A over competing Policies B, C, D, E and F? How much each individual would be affected and how would they be affected (in terms of satisfaction and frustration); what number of people will benefit by the policy? Thus, the various competing interests of the diversity of the citizenry are carefully balanced to produce the best and just result.

Conclusion

The attainment of human happiness should be the overriding objective of any leadership policy so to be and constituted. A strong leadership base can be anchored on an ethical platform of utilitarianism which promotes the happiness of the led. When a leader leads well, its leadership commands a strong followership akin to the afrioxiological principles of *onye aghala nwanneya, biri ka mbiri* and *gidi gidi bu ugwu eze*. The above which when translated means – the concept of brotherhood and the strength of a king lies on his people and live let live – are reflective of qualitative democratic leadership. The afrioxiological principles of *onye aghala nwanneya, biri ka mbiri* and *gidi gidi bu ugwu eze* also find affinital expression in the Annang aphorisms – *Obong idehe iton* and *udim ade ide Okuku* both of which translate to mean "the strength of a leaders lies in the happiness of his followers". Ephraim Ikegbu, Sunday Duru and Samuel Ndem ably discovered the importance of building a formidable leadership structure on unity of purpose. People

can only unite or come together to cooperate in an atmosphere of happiness which can be realisable through a leadership ethical principle of utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism appears capable of ushering in a just society. Although it does not accommodate the whole members of the society, but it creates room for the promotion and protection of the greatest number of the population which democracy seeks to achieve which is also in tandem with Africa's indigenous form of democracy. Ikegbu, Duru and Ndem argue that:

Political freedom in Africa can be realised and strengthened if Africans recognise the potency of the socialist and communalist system of leadership that were akin to their existence before the colonial contraption. The system recognized strength in unity and also valued every human person. It is this unity that made its agrarian lifestyle to blossom to the extent that other nations of the world have to journey to Africa for raw materials.

This paper sees the principle of utilitarianism as capable of interlocking with the *onye aghala nwanneya, biri ka mbiri* and *gidi gidi bu ugwu eze* principles to produce a just society in Africa, where human happiness and solidarity is guaranteed.

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