



Assessing the Irrelevance of Relativism in African Philosophy in Contemporary Africa

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on current research that has suggested that Africa is experiencing a moral decline, which has been a fact for several years. The cultural sense of African societies has also been called into doubt in the twentieth century, with many others dismissing its existence and relevance. While society is currently disregarding cultural underpinnings and challenging morality as a reality across groups, relativism is the perspective that morality and knowledge are culturally driven. Similarly, African philosophical ideas such as ubuntu, batho-pele, communalism, and so on, which serve as the cornerstone of African worldviews, have been firmly undermined and ignored by society. The article adopts a qualitative research method, using accredited books, journals, and government publications to achieve the purpose of the study. The study's findings imply that if relativism is abandoned and African philosophy concepts are no longer relevant in society, society will perish. As a result, in the discussion, the study claims that contemporary African society is unrelated to the foundations of relativism and African philosophy, which is not the case. It concludes that to keep relativism relevant in contemporary Africa, there should be a focus on historical relativism as a tool for unity and reconciliation to address potential conflicts and restore harmony among nations.

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INTRODUCTION

Relativism is rooted in the deep understanding that knowledge, truth, and morality are influenced by cultural, societal, or historical contexts, and are not universally absolute. This is to say that these ideas affect one another and are interrelated while at their core there is culture. However, because of the constant fall of cultural ideological acknowledgments leads to the fall of moral etiquettes and this is the center of dysfunctional African states in the contemporary age. The paper aims to highlight that the neglect of culture as part of African philosophy is also noted as the contributor to moral decline in societies. The constant disregard for culture has scholars questioning its existence and relevance hence, the paper intends to fill in the literary gap through a qualitative method of research and place cultural negligence at the center of societal moral decline.

The idea that truth and falsity, right and wrong, standards of reasoning, and justification techniques are products of various conventions and frames of assessment and that their authority is

limited to the environment that gave rise to them is known as relativism.¹ The term "relativism" more precisely describes the beliefs that, at a high level of abstraction, at least some class of things has the attributes they do (e.g., beautiful, morally good, epistemically justified) not simply, but only about a specific framework of assessment (e.g., local cultural norms, individual standards, beauty, morality, epistemology), and that, as a result, the truth of claims attributing these properties holds only once the relevant framework of assessment is specified or supplied.

Following Baghramian, relativism holds that there are no absolute truths, just truths that a particular person or culture happens to believe.² If one believes in relativism, then people believe that different people can have differing opinions on what is moral and immoral. This was the belief of the founding fathers of Relativism in the Western world, Plato and Socrates, as early as the 5th Century B.C.³

Furthermore, Baghramian claims that "belief/relativism begins with the contention that truth, rationality, or justification vary with and depend on cultural, conceptual, or semantic frameworks that underpin them."⁴ Furthermore, and most fundamentally, the relativist believes that there are multiple such frames, each of which provides justification and even truth standards for mutually conflicting judgments and beliefs. There is no comprehensive framework or Archimedean point of reference for adjudicating between conflicting stances and claims; all assessments have only a local validity, and seemingly contradictory allegations may be equally truthful or justified, depending on the standard of assessment."

According to the above explanations, there are manifestations of relativism that explain relativism in a way that makes it easier to have a better perspective. In some ways, the incarnations of relativism are a comprehension of humanity's worldview and civilization. The paper will then be able to recognize that the present African society is disconnected from the roots of relativism and African philosophy, which is not to be the case. Relativism is prevalent among communities whose laws and norms are influenced by their cultural background. Then culture could be defined as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."⁵ Culture, in addition to being acquired and learned, is widely regarded as constructed and thus not 'natural'.⁶ According to Msuya, "It is a quality possessed by individuals and organisations such as public, private, political, social, legal, and cultural dimensions."⁷

The mix of culture and relativism necessitates considering the impact of relativism as an important issue in contemporary Africa, and whether it may help in comprehending different worldviews, particularly African philosophy. Its essence can also play a role in the expression of cultural relativism as a catalyst of relevance.

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopts a qualitative research method to understand and interpret the significance of the issue being examined. This approach explores individual events and aims to understand perceptions and experiences. The paper also uses purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used to identify the material on assessing the irrelevance of relativism in African philosophy in contemporary Africa. Purposeful sampling was used due to its strength in identifying and selecting information-rich literature on culture and relativism. Snowball sampling was used for citation tracking to identify additional papers on the subject. The researcher used the reference list of the material found

¹ Maria Baghramian, "The Virtues of Relativism," in *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, vol. 93 (Oxford University Press, 2019), 247–69.

² Baghramian, "The Virtues of Relativism."

³ Baghramian, "The Virtues of Relativism."

⁴ Baghramian, "The Virtues of Relativism."

⁵ E. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: Gordon Press, 1973), 1.

⁶ I. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 262-263.

⁷ Norah Hashim Msuya, "Concept of Culture Relativism and Women's Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 54, no. 8 (2019): 1149.

to discover more related literature. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were integrated to select books, journal articles, and government documents that address the topic of the paper.

Manifestations of Relativism

Copan's, "True For You, But Not For Me" shows relativism based on an understanding of societies/communities.⁸ Copan thinks that relativism establishes a unique bond with communities that allows for linkages, particularly in culture and worldview. While society is currently forgetting cultural underpinnings and questioning morality as a reality across societies, relativism is the belief that morality and knowledge are culturally driven as a worldview.

- Objective relativism is the concept that beliefs are selective and can only be assumed to be 'true' to them and not to others. According to relativism, no truth is universal, which means that what is true for others cannot be true for them and still be genuine. This is known as cognitive relativism, and it calls into question the fundamental existence of how we know and what we know in our underlying assumptions, as well as the validity of knowing.)
- Religious relativism holds that one religion can be true for one individual or society but not another, and hence religion is broadly or exclusively true. Because one's place of birth impacts how one perceives religion, these beliefs are culturally bound, and religious beliefs are mainly because one's location of birth impacts how one perceives religion- so religious beliefs are simply an accident of birth. For example, if a person grows up in America, he is likely to become a Christian; if he grows up in India, he will become a Hindu; and if he grows up in Saudi Arabia, he will become a Muslim. The argument states that since one's beliefs are the result of historical coincidence, no single religious belief can be universally or objectively true.
- Moral relativism contends that in absolutism, morals and ethics can be right for some and wrong for others, implying that moral relativism is non-inclusive. Because of these distinctions, one cannot presume the correctness and wrongfulness of morality and ethics within a community, and hence morality and ethics do not complement each other. The sensation that prevailed during the actioning of the function (wrong or proper) is where comprehension of wrongness or correctness rests. For example, if stealing or killing during the action is based on feelings, then the action is correct or incorrect depending on the moods/feelings at the time.
- According to cultural relativism, morality varies among cultures and what is morally repugnant in one is not always wrong in another. After that, nobody can claim to be an authority on morality. Science philosopher Michael Ruse is a good example of this viewpoint. Ruse refers to the Indian custom of suttee, which involved burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. This practice was outlawed by the British, who stated that it was "obviously alien to Western norms and morality." We consider the sacrifice of the widow to be morally repugnant. Westerners think that, but according to Ruse, calling a suttee a bad person is inaccurate.

From the understanding of these manifestations, the paper surmises that people are not the same and do not think alike based on their interpretation of these manifestations. The foundation of morality and ethics is based on feelings, emotions, and the overall state of the circumstance. Because it is influenced by culture, worldview, and location, the status quo can be both predictable and unpredictable. Because African events differ significantly from those in India, what Indians consider moral and ethical can be regarded as immoral and unethical by Africans. The fundamental assumption of this concept is supplemented by religion, which is universal but selective when it comes to distinct groups and their cultures. Only belief as a relationship (relativism) is possible.

The summary above highlights the paper's attempt to analyse relativism from a religious standpoint. Importantly, while there are many different types of relativism, they all share two characteristics. To begin, they all say that something (e.g. moral ideals, beauty, knowledge, taste, or meaning) is relative to some specific framework or viewpoint (e.g. the individual subject, a culture, an

⁸ P. Copan, *True For You, But Not For Me. Overcoming Objections to Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2009).

era, a language, or a conceptual scheme). Second, according to (The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy), they all disagree that any viewpoint is particularly favored over all others.

According to Copan, three factors drive theological relativism but cannot be proven to be morally and ethically correct, which is problematic in adopting relativism.⁹ Religion is the primary source of persuasion. Religion emphasises persuasion through preaching, teaching, and supervision. This function violates human-acceptable conventions and should hence be forbidden. When people are persuaded, they become servants of persuasion, which is morally bad. When it comes to religion, relativism trumps exclusivity.

Furthermore, this restricted concept is religiously founded. Religion claims that anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ must be excluded from religious circles because they are not believers. This is regarded as arrogant and is morally and ethically incorrect. Arrogance is not a feature of humanity, and it violates human rights as well as exploits pleasant connections and feelings. Thus, tolerance must be regarded as a fundamental characteristic that bonds people together despite their flaws. If everyone is accommodating to one another, morally and ethically, they can live in a relativist community setting; but, if this is not realised, relativism is a danger to humanity.¹⁰

Based on these beliefs, Leffel and McCallum write, "Until recently, Christianity was under fire at most universities because it was thought to be unscientific, and thus untrue."¹¹ Today, Christianity is largely rejected just because it claims to be true! Academics are increasingly dismissive of anyone who claims to know any objective or universal truth." To achieve the purpose of this research, the paper must explore culture from an African philosophy perspective to evaluate whether relativism based on culture and worldview is relevant and examine whether cultural relativism is important or analogous to ubuntu.

Culture and African Philosophy

According to Asiegbu, culture is essential for the survival of a society since it pivots, guides, and gives it character.¹² No nation lives without culture, which is the driving force behind every philosophy, including African philosophy. To understand the mind of culture and philosophy, one must consider the community in a given context, its historical past, and its worldview. It will be simple to comprehend the culture if you do this. The lack of comprehension of African culture was the source of the opposition to African thought. Asiegbu makes the following claims in support of his position:

Even when different cultures raise comparable challenges and questions, the ideologies that emerge will differ. The philosophies of the Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and other Greeks evolved as a series of individual critical assessments and interpretations of challenges originating from Greek civilization. The concerns and issues that Greek civilization raised, such as the ultimate origin of existence, resulted in various philosophical discourses from Greek thinkers. The same is true for Christian intellectuals such as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, who operated in a completely different society - Christianity. Similarly, the prevailing culture of World War II enabled the existentialist theories of Jean-Paul Sartre, Jaspers, and Heidegger, much as the contemporary emphasis on science prepared the way for Kant and others. There are no monolithic cultures.¹³

Ubuntu, according to Nussbaum, is the capacity of African culture to communicate empathy, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity to create and maintain a community predicated on justice and mutual aid.¹⁴ Ubuntu is an African Nguni word that describes our shared humanity, our interdependence, and the duty we have to each other because of this deep connection. Ubuntu is the

⁹ Copan, *True For You, But Not For Me. Overcoming Objections to Christian Faith*.

¹⁰ Copan, *True For You, But Not For Me. Overcoming Objections to Christian Faith*, 21-22.

¹¹ Jim Leffel and Dennis McCallum, "The Postmodern Challenge: Facing the Spirit of the Age," *Christian Research Journal* 19 (1996): 34-40.

¹² Martin F Asiegbu, "Contemporary African Philosophy: Emergent Issues and Challenges," *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies* 12 (2016): 1-24.

¹³ Asiegbu, "Contemporary African Philosophy: Emergent Issues and Challenges," 4.

¹⁴ Barbara Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu," *Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 1-12.

understanding that we are inherently motivated to support one another, work together, and act in a way that prioritizes the good of everyone. Ubuntu encourages us to accept and live into the ideas that "Your wealth is your wealth," "Your pain is my pain," and "Your salvation is my salvation."

Marumo posits that ubuntu is an old African idea that has existed and has held African and African societies together.¹⁵ As a result, in Africa, the concept of nation-building under the cover of a rainbow country was essential in the transition from apartheid to a new dawn of democracy. In complementing this, Marumo argues that a relativist relationship is more than a person-to-person relationship.¹⁶ A relationship can also exist with one's surroundings, such as the earth and the environment. That is why, in African philosophy, the Earth is viewed as a mother who provides life and on which life is dependent. Because of that relativistic element, the earth's interaction is culturally bound.

Waghid, supports the notion of interconnectedness in Africanism, and that "African philosophy is a discourse in which people's understanding, organisation, and enactment of their cultural experiences are made sense."¹⁷ That is, African philosophy is a discourse that provides a credible account of how people's cultural ways of being are enacted." Furthermore, Waghid noted that the culture embedded in African philosophy is crucial to community survival and, as previously stated, it improves morality and ethical behavior.¹⁸ This is shown in "African philosophy is a way of justifying people's cultural, social, political, economic, and religious practices." As a result, the cultural justification might be linked to what it means to be scientific, and if African cultures are described and justifications for particular ways of being are presented, it is fair to speak of a justification of practices that involve African cultural experiences." That is why Ubuntu is associated with culture and African philosophy.

Despite this, there has been a long road to acceptance of African philosophy in the form of its culturalism, worldview, and ubuntu of the twentieth century. According to Tempels, Rubbens and King, establishing the concept was not enough; the refusal to accept was also an impediment.¹⁹ Asiegbu added to Temple by stating that

African philosophy is a matter of identity with far-reaching implications. Thus, when African philosophers address questions of African identity, whose identity is, among other things, one of the problems of current concern to Africans, they are philosophising from within their culture. It is restrictive to consider African philosophy as a purely cultural preoccupation; a concern simply with Africa's cultural heritage. More than just a cultural issue, there is a modernity difficulty. With the difficulties he must confront and address, an African philosopher has few options. The normal African situation raises questions, proposes problems, and creates difficulties that can be philosophised about.²⁰

The preceding discourses demonstrate how African philosophy and culture are inextricably linked entities that shape African morality and ethnicity. Furthermore, they emphasise that culture is the primary component of African philosophy and guides one's worldview. Given this, it is apparent that culture is relative to African thinking.

Culture and Relativism

Morality and culture are intertwined. The relationship is founded on the specific community's practices and norms, as well as how they are viewed and practiced. They act as pillars and compasses in some communities, as well as a source of wisdom on how to deal with community matters. Tilley introduces

¹⁵ Phemelo Olefile Marumo, "A Dialogue between African Philosophy and Missio Dei: Koinonia and Ubuntu" (2013).

¹⁶ Marumo, "A Dialogue between African Philosophy and Missio Dei: Koinonia and Ubuntu."

¹⁷ Yusef Waghid, "Knowledge (s), Culture and African Philosophy: An Introduction," *Knowledge Cultures* 4, no. 04 (2016): 11–17, 12.

¹⁸ Waghid, "Knowledge (s), Culture and African Philosophy: An Introduction."

¹⁹ Placide Tempels, A Rubbens, and Colin King, *Bantu Philosophy* (Présence africaine Paris, 1959).

²⁰ Asiegbu, "Contemporary African Philosophy: Emergent Issues and Challenges," 4.

the concept of "Agent Relativism and Appraiser Relativism," which highlights how culture and morality can clash and shift viewpoints, as well as the repercussions of this.²¹

- Consider a society where, at the age of two, the firstborn child in each household is burned alive. This norm did not just appear; it developed and persists because of the belief that the only way to reduce the frequency of plagues is to burn the firstborn son of every household. Despite the great suffering that this habit causes, its adherents view it as a necessary evil. Imagine for a moment that a member of this society dedicates her life to studying diseases and finds that the occurrence of plagues is unaffected by the burning of firstborn infants. This person should disregard her findings as unrelated to the ethics of burning firstborn children, according to agent relativism. The standards of the agent's culture dictate what is right or wrong, not where those standards came from or why they are the way they are. Agent relativism holds that it doesn't matter if breaking the norms is morally just or wrong—it could be that the norms are the result of misunderstandings about the implications of what they require. Agent relativism makes the absurd premise that this. Correcting misconceptions about the practice's effects is significant to later discussions about the practice's morality if a moral evaluation of the practice is founded on false information about those effects.
- A second implication of agent relativism is that we can settle ethical disagreements by polling or determining the local norm. This is ridiculous. For example, if we discover two Alaskans debating about whether it is appropriate for them to go herring fishing, telling them that such fishing conforms to their cultural norms is pointless. They are aware of this; their disagreement is about something else.
- A third concern is that agent relativism undermines the concept of moral improvement. Consider a culture in which the norms prescribe racial prejudice, and a member of that culture strives to reform it by peacefully challenging the oppressive norms and persuading others to do the same. If agent relativism is correct, this individual is not a reformer, but an offender, because his actions contradict the standards of his society.

The main issue is clear that the ideal moral reformer advances the cause of morality by confronting deeply entrenched practices based on agent relativism; to criticise such a cause of morality is to do exactly the opposite. After considering that there exist discrepancies between culture and morality, the paper's thought is directed at how then is doctrine/relativism becomes non/relevant under these prevailing circumstances. The issue that becomes evident is that morality is based on laws ethics is based on culture and culture is based on worldview and worldview can only be experienced through humanity. The main question which becomes clear is: What role does the relevancy of relativism play? And that brings the paper to that aspect.

Leerssen rethinks culture as a social construct.²² "For centuries, reflections on culture have been the core business, the very definition, of the humanities; so central and fundamental, perhaps, that meta-reflections on the meaning of that concept, along with the meaning of beauty, humanity, or life itself, have been left to philosophers." Meetings with emerging empirical sciences forced the humanities to look in the mirror." This mirror reflects people and the practice of culture, as well as its roots and integration into a community's perspective. This means that culture is a phenomenon that aids in the pursuit of morality and ethical behavior for the benefit of the community and its welfare, particularly when it comes to raising children and executing rituals and practices.

As a result, Leerssen verifies that "culture will be marked as much by the re-emergence of old, dormant practices as by the arrival of new ones."²³ Cultural history emerges as a progressively expanding repertoire rather than as a consecutive replacement. Even abandoned cultural practices (for example, witchcraft in secularised industrialised cultures) leave vestiges of cultural memories and might be resurrected; and the old is just supplanted, never completely eradicated."

²¹ John J Tilley, "Cultural Relativism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2000): 511-513.

²² Joep Leerssen, "Culture, Humanities, Evolution: The Complexity of Meaning-Making over Time," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 376, no. 1828 (2021): 20200043.

²³ Leerssen, "Culture, Humanities, Evolution: The Complexity of Meaning-Making over Time."

Osterman agrees that “when we are dealing with people from another culture, the cultural aspect is taken as a hindrance to understanding, as something that makes it difficult for us to see what people mean.”²⁴ There is suddenly something that distorts our perception, weird conventions, and moral norms that make it harder for us to see the thought processes that we would recognise so clearly if they were not embedded in so much “context.”

Based on the foregoing, the paper contends that cultural norms can exist only between people and their specific communities. Different cultures do not imply that one culture is superior to another. It simply indicates that there is a difference in how the culture subject question is interpreted and executed. These variations can be considerable or little; in most circumstances, the difference is negligible, that is, the places of interaction between the two civilizations play a significant influence in the development of the worldviews and cultures. The requirement is that culture be viewed from the perspective of the community, not from the perspective of other civilizations. Thus, culture can play an integral part in moral challenges and consequences for ethics.

Non/Relevance of Relativism to African Philosophy in Contemporary Africa

As previously established in this study, culture, and worldview coexist with African philosophical thought. The importance of relativism is not as obvious as one may believe. This is because relativism applies only to relationships and not to essential moral and ethical issues. This link raises the question of whether it is still applicable, for example, in modern Africa. The other aspect which applies to this paper is whether African philosophy was there as a renowned phenomenon which can be successfully articulated as an acceptable worldview or culture.

African philosophy, according to the work of Kwasi Wiredu, was never widely accepted in educational or philosophical circles.²⁵ African Studies has become a prominent aspect of academic life in Africa, with Africans now holding positions of leadership. Certain African fields advanced quickly, such as African history and literature, where there were early indications of creative brilliance. The situation was a little more ambiguous in African thought. Unlike the fields described above, African philosophy was rarely found in academic philosophy departments. If post-independence African philosophers did not begin with a blank slate (*tabular rasa*), it was because some relevant texts were available in anthropology departments and those concerned with religious studies.

Wiredu is supported by Katrin Flikschuh, Professor of Modern Political Theory, Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science, “Ironically, one of the fathers of modern African philosophy was the Belgian missionary, Placide Temples.”²⁶ Temples wrote *Bantu Philosophy* in 1945 while working in the Congo. In it, he outlined what he claimed to be the intellectual worldview (!) of the Bantu, referring to sub-Saharan peoples in general. Temples' perspective was as radical as it was reactionary: radically, he asserted that 'the Bantu' had a philosophy and could reason - a fresh idea in the colonial environment. Simultaneously, the temple maintained that the Bantu were not reflectively aware of their philosophical convictions, and therefore they had to have these set out to them by Temples himself – this would have been much more in line with colonial policy.”

This discovery demonstrates that African philosophy is ingrained in African intellect and comprehension. How Africans conduct their own culture, characteristics of the worldview and morals, as well as ethics that play an essential part, suggests the philosophy may have had another name that was meaningful to them before labeling it African philosophy. Based on humanity and Africanism, the paper can use them as founder names.

The foregoing is an allusion to what Anke Graness²⁷ culled from various scholars to demonstrate the strengths and flaws of African philosophy by referencing to

²⁴ Tove Österman, “Cultural Relativism and Understanding Difference,” *Language & Communication* 80 (September 2021): 133, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2021.06.004>.

²⁵ K. Wiredu, “Introduction: African Philosophy in Our Time,” in *A Companion to African Philosophy.*, ed. Kwasi Wiredu (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006), 3.

²⁶ Wiredu, “Introduction: African Philosophy in Our Time”; K. Flikschuh, “The Importance of Contemporary African Philosophy: Western Philosophy Is Far from Universal,” *IAI News* (Institute of Arts and Ideas), 2018, 32. <https://iai.tv/articles/what-you-should-know-about-contemporary-african-philosophy-auid-1047>.

²⁷ Anke Graness, “African Philosophy,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Relativism* (Routledge, 2019), 29–37,24. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351052306-4>.

According to Mbiti, African philosophy consists of fundamental ideas and ideals that all Africans embrace. According to Mbiti, "Africans are notoriously religious" (Mbiti 1969, 1), and religion is intricately linked to every essential aspect of African culture. Mbiti coined a well-known maxim to represent the universal African value of relationality, which is central to the African understanding of what it means to be human: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (1969, 108-109). Furthermore, his concept of "African time" sparked debate, as he asserts that African languages often lack a vocabulary for the distant future. Mbiti attempts to demonstrate, through examinations of African languages, that the African concept of "future" encompasses a period no longer than two years, a claim that was strongly rejected by numerous African philosophers.²⁸ For many critics, such theories unwittingly justify the alleged difference between Europeans and Africans stated by earlier European anthropologists. Nevertheless, such relativistic, ontological theories exert a strong influence in African philosophical debates even today.²⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ibhawoh argues that cultural relativism should be addressed to alleviate the problem that communities are facing.³⁰ In Africa, morals and ethics are important. Instead of viewing it as a source of division, it must be viewed as a source of conciliation and cohesiveness. Human rights issues that can be manipulated by variables such as relativism will be resolved as a result. Countries must analyse their cultural background and develop contact points that could eliminate tyranny, gender-based violence, and oppression of the poor by aligning themselves with cultural diversity. This will make cultural relativism relevant in modern Africa.

According to Ewelu, *Universalism, Relativism, and Intercultural Philosophy* contends that dialogue is transforming and humanizing, therefore intercultural philosophy is a call for openness and tolerance to the other because nobody has it all.³¹ Something is encouraged, persuaded, and pursued by intercultural philosophy. It encourages each culture to contribute to global thought. It persuades each philosophy to accept other philosophies so that the general philosophy might be enriched. As a result, Ewelu became convinced that intercultural philosophy seeks oneness without conformity. It leads to the realisation that both European philosophical pride (Hegel and Heidegger) and the Japanese intellectual movement known as *Nihonjinron*, which supports the uniqueness and incommunicability of Japanese philosophy, are incorrect. Such an approach promotes unjustified pride, a lack of openness to discourse, and intellectual dogmatism. To provide a clearer response to the question, language is the key. This is because each culture will contribute more to the wealth of world philosophy if it brings forward its philosophy in its language which is the essential element of the culture.

Lakatos presents a crucial human rights consideration that involves culture.³² He contends that cultural relativism seems enticing in two or more ways at first glance. It contends that everyone has an equal right to respect and that, since culture is a part of an individual's identity, respect for that person's culture is a part of that right. Freeman counters that it is contradictory to say that we should respect all cultures when certain cultures do not value all cultures. He continues by saying that societies that support violations of human rights are not deserving of our respect just because they are societies.

According to the above discourses, cultural relativism may only be relevant to contemporary Africa if the following aspects are addressed. The element of human rights stands out as the component that gives each culture dignity. Subsequently, different cultures are recognised, superiority is abolished, and other cultures are classified as inferior. The incorporation of culture into Ubuntu and African philosophy places culture prominently in Africans' vision of the world. This, in turn, helps the

²⁸ D. M. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 111-119.

²⁹ Ferdinand Mutaawe Kasozi, *Introduction to an African Philosophy: The Ntu'ology of the Baganda* (Freiburg: Alber Verlag, 2011).

³⁰ Bonny Ibhawoh, "Cultural Relativism and Human Rights: Reconsidering the Africanist Discourse," *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 19, no. 1 (2001): 43-62, 61.

³¹ Benjamin Ewelu, "Intercultural Philosophy – A Quest for Unity in Diversity: What Can African Languages Contribute?," in *Universalism, Relativism, and Intercultural Philosophy, Nigerian Philosophical Studies IV*, ed. Joseph C. Achike Agbakoba and Anthony C. Ajah (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2016), 16.

³² Istvan Lakatos, "Thoughts on Universalism versus Cultural Relativism, with Special Attention to Women's Rights," *Pecs J. Int'l & Eur. L.*, 2018, 6.

relativist culture to seek contact points that can be used to curb cultural clashes and bring their relevance to bear.

What the study seeks to demonstrate is that irrelevancy can be identified whenever the dominance of one culture over another is promoted and disadvantages the principle of human rights of an individual and the community. This irrelevance should be avoided at all costs, and communities should repeal laws and regulations that advocate for the betterment of one over the other. What needs to occur is that civilizations in their private realm become aware of and appreciate each other.

CONCLUSION

As the study closes, it draws on the thought that to keep relativism relevant in contemporary Africa, one needs to concentrate on the use of historical relativism as an object that may either bring cohesion or accelerate cultural separation. Importantly, relativism in culture should be used as an approach to reconciliation to overcome potential disparities. The study agrees with those who promote relativity between cultures as a solution to conflicts and the restoration of harmony among nations. Merwe gives meaning to the above in that

more and more people are participating in and encountering more than one of their society's distinct ethnic and sociocultural styles of existence. Despite their embeddedness in diverse ethnic and social patterns of living, intercultural dialogue and multicultural integration are conceivable and occur in their daily lives. Part of this cultural mingling is the fact of cultural variations in particular ideas, attitudes, and practices. In times of disagreement, no civilization-transcendent set of standards could be deployed to judge the opposing perspectives or legitimise the unbiased legitimacy of any particular position.³³

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