Journal of Philosophy and Culture
A Journal of the Department of Classics and Philosophy, University of Cape Coast

ACADEMIC JOURNALS
expand your knowledge

Full Length Research Paper

The feasibility of self-reliancism as a foundation for democracy

Usifoh Eric Eromosele

Department of Classics and Philosophy, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana.

In popular discourse, democracy often centres on concepts such as liberty, equality, consent, choice, rule of law, participation, accountability, transparency, etc. This popular rendition, more often than not, excludes the notion of self-reliancism. This study argues that the exclusion of this notion weakens the etymological foundation of democracy as government by the people and undermines the development of an authentic and sustainable democratic culture. Indeed, self-reliancism surmises the reality of the human condition and is fundamental since it complements the meaning of democracy in the discourse of governance. This study is based on the theoretical foundation of personalism, which affirms the unique dignity and interrelationality of the human person. The methodology adopted is dialectical realism, which proposes the need for societies to explore their historical and cultural experiences as the bases for a self-reliancist orientation in comprehending reality. The study seeks to establish the feasibility of self-reliancism as a foundation for democracy.

Key words: Self-reliancism, self-reliance, democracy, dilectical realism, personalism.

INTRODUCTION

Democratic experiments in many societies, especially in Africa, have arguably been unsuccessful because many embrace democratic governance without an efficient culture and structure to sustain the practice of democracy. Some of these societies maintain authoritarian political structures bequeathed by the 'colonial masters', thereby excluding the people from participating in governance. The political elites adopt the colonial legacy of authoritarian and vertical articulation of power projection and socio-political practice, yet they claim democracy is on course. In addition, they persistently engage in "foraging" the economic resources of society, thereby fostering a "culture of poverty" among the people

(Ireoegbu, 2010: 47-48).

It is therefore not surprising that many African states are still grappling with basic developmental issues as reflected in their deplorable socioeconomic conditions, with the majority of their populations surviving on less than one dollar a day. Many societies have surrendered the valuable opportunity of independently charting a path towards purposeful democratic value, having failed to take the self-reliancist democratic path. This path is, of course, not an atavistic nationalism of isolation, or viewing things from the highly subjective perspective of an individualistic vision of reality. To be sure, such atavism is unrealistic in a globalising world, especially in

view of the increasing levels of interdependence among states. Indeed, contemporary international relations and politics make it clear that no nation can successfully adopt the insular Robinson Crusoe solipsist type of existence. Thus, states and organisations are now finding it increasingly necessary to form larger blocks and conglomerates. Self-reliancism, therefore, projects the need for relationships on equal bases and mutual need, as distinct from the current lopsided global socioeconomic inter-state relations.

This is manifest in the June 23rd Brexit referendum in which Britain opted out of what some consider as unfavourable union rather than remain as a disgruntled member. With a narrow victory of 51.9 to 48.1% margin, the twenty-eight member European witnessed a shake-up that resulted from the will of the people to independently chart a path towards societal development. Considering the likely socio-economic and political implications of the British departure, however, many commentators on international politics and diplomacy have expressed doubts about the wisdom of the British action (Friedman, 2016; Jason, 2016; Klaas and Dirsus, 2016).

This paper, through a conceptual analysis of the democratic theory, proposes and justifies the feasibility of self-reliancism as a foundation for democracy. The concept of self-reliancism is a development of the notion of self-reliance by E. K. Ogundowole, in his *Magnus Opus* titled, *Self-reliancism: Philosophy of a New Order.* Ogundowole presents self-reliancism as an attempt towards the realization of the principle of self-reliance. It is an ideology or orientation based on the principle of self-reliance. Self-reliancism is a principle for development which seeks "a completely co-operative society" as the "next stage of human development" (1998: 243). On his part, Aristotle (1962) proposes that "the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best" (Bk. 1, Chap. 2). However, the political order which Aristotle set out to establish endorses a hierarchical societal structure which considers a slave as another property and tool (Bk. 1, Chap. 3), a non-permissible and ethically repugnant view in today's world. The idea of self-reliance reflects in Machiavelli's interest in how a prince can maintain his princedom in his opinion that the prince be allowed to apply any means, relying on the self, to get desired results in his quest to maintain power; "the only sound, sure and enduring methods of defence are those based on your own actions and prowess" (Machiavelli 1999: 79). However, Machiavelli's *The Prince* is flawed for its limited or pessimistic conception of human nature. The principle of self-reliance places value on the human person, views human from a positive dimension and proposes a society that promotes mutual respect among individuals and in inter-state relations.

Furthermore, the concept of self-reliance and self-reliancism has been postulated, to varying degrees and understandings, as a positive response to the challenge of governance and development confronting societies. In this thread are political philosophers and theorists such as Nyerere (1968), Ogundowole (1988), Momoh (1991), Fotopoulos (1997), Ake (2000), Okeregbe (2016) and Etieyibo (2012).

TOWARDS A THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

Humans desire to be free and their freedom in the political arena reflects in their ability to participate in a political process by the choice that they make concerning their representatives. He thereby consents to the manner in which he is ruled. In this way, man willingly accepts that a people should undertake certain actions on his behalf, irrespective of how well they do it, though doing it well is very important. In this process, the idea of imposition is minimal and this enhances consent.

Moreover, democracy allows for the institutional checks that result from the historical experience of a people on how to manage their affairs. It does not mean that governmental policy in a democracy may not be faulty, since it is a learning process, like life itself. To be sure, errors may occur and indeed do occur, but the people can amend them through peaceful means or processes. There is also the choice of deciding as different situations imply divergent problems. Constant attempts at problem-solving result in improvement of the political system and limits the dangers of leaving governmental reins in the hands of a tyrant:

What may be said, however, to be implied in the adoption of the democratic principle is the conviction that the acceptance of even a bad policy in a democracy (as long as we can work for a change) is preferable to the submission to a tyranny, however, wise or benevolent. Seen in this light, the theory of democracy is not based upon the principle that the majority should rule; rather, the various equalitarian methods of democratic control, such as general elections and representative government, are to be considered as no more than well-tried and, in the presence of a widespread traditional distrust for tyranny, reasonably effective institutional safeguard against tyranny, always open to improvement, and even providing methods for their own improvement (Popper, 1963: 125).

The prospects of the democratic transition process, which affords citizens the regular and constitutional possibility of replacing the government through a peaceful means, reduce the tensions and desire to forcefully overthrow a regime. Democracy avails a society of a non-violent process of transition, with free associations whose existence is guaranteed by law.

Democracy thus requires a vibrant political society or public sphere for it to flourish (Kukah, 1999: 43). A vibrant civil society, in turn, is a function of a self-reliant community for there can be no adequate participation in

the political process, without a consciousness of the self-worth and belief that the individual is capable of taking charge of his own affairs when necessary. The basic needs of existence lie at the very heart of any democratic discourse and practice. These were responsible for the wave of protests that swept across the African continent in the late 1980s and 1990s (Abrahamsen, 2000: 98). Similarly, economic and dehumanising challenges were responsible for the Tunisian 2011 uprising which later spread to Egypt and Libya. The African-Arab revolution involved demands for inclusive democratic regimes and ultimately led to the ouster of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Libya's Muammar Ghadaffi.

A democratic regime should be people-oriented. This is not limited to attempts by governments to satisfy the needs of the people; the government should in fact be by the people. Rulers have legitimate power to rule because citizens give their consent without it being imposed on them: "the underlying idea is self-direction, choosing for yourself, is preferable to having decision made for you, and imposed upon you by another" (Raphael, 1976: 150). The consent that government gets to manage state affairs derives from the people's choice, and making a choice is appropriate for legitimacy because it enhances the individual's belief in his self-worth. Legitimacy is a "social factor favouring democracy" and it is "the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones in society" (Alford and Friendland, 1985: 69). Where the individual is denied the ability to choose from contending alternatives, the value of democracy is eroded. Choice then becomes an indispensable value in democratic regimes.

Thus, in a democracy, there exists a symbiotic relationship between the government and the society: a society accepts a government only because it is legitimate. The sovereignty of the people becomes indispensable in the sense that the people can disapprove of an unpopular government. This rests on the people's ability to freely choose representatives acting on their behalf. It is not a system for an apathetic public, but a system for a vibrant populace who should actively engage the government. However, choice requires some level of security. Democracy cannot function effectively among a hungry people, for others can easily corrupt their freedom of choice.

Before adequate political participation, human basic needs must first be met. This underscores the importance of self-reliancism to any form of governance, democracy inclusive.

To begin with, economic need is man's most fundamental need. Unless man is able to meet this need he cannot exist in the first place. Man must eat before he can do anything else before he can worship, pursue culture or become an economist. When an individual achieves a level of economic well-being such that he can take the basic necessities, particularly his daily food, for granted, the urgency of economic need loses its edge.

Nevertheless, the primacy remains. The fact that one is not constantly preoccupied with, and motivated by, economic needs, shows that the needs are being met; it does not show that they are not of primary importance (Ake, 1981: 1).

This economic need implies not necessarily a luxurious lifestyle but recognition of the fact that economic poverty stimulates political apathy and limits one's access to the sound education that is expected to impact positively on governance. It bears noting that democracy flourished in Athens with the economic prosperity recorded in that ancient city. However, satisfying our basic needs does not imply a wholesale alienation of our being from others. The desire for development bears no premise on a commitment to the repudiation of what is yours. Development is not the desire and possession of goods that another produces. It involves essentially a people's ability to creatively manipulate the resources of their environment to provide what they require. This will be difficult to achieve in a system where the elites view justice in the Thrasymachean sense, according to which justice is in the interest of the stronger and where the principle of self-reliance is not effective. According to Ake (2001: 17-18), the principle of economic self-reliance will be more difficult still in a country in which justice is the interest of the stronger. But this is precisely the principle we need most, not only to resolve the national question, but also to address the bane of Africa generally and Nigeria in particular, namely our insistence on consuming without producing.

A dependent society cannot really be democratic because democracy is people's government. When another provides for you, your capacity to freedom and self-determination is limited. While we affirm the fact of the difficulty or impossibility of material self-sufficiency in a globalising world, societies still need to strive towards the attainment of the principles of self-reliance. It is then that a society can freely engage in a self-determined and authentic democratic culture.

The need for self-rule remains critical. Thus, obedience to the laws we make for ourselves is different from laws imposed on us by others. Irrespective of how free the slave of a liberal master may be, in comparison with the limitations of an authoritarian master, she is still a slave because she is "subject to the will of another, she is still not her own master" (Swift, 2006: 66). Self-reliancism, therefore, emphasises the necessity of self-rule, autonomy, non-domination, and self-imposed laws rather than another doing it for you.

UNDERSTANDING SELF-RELIANCE

Literarily, self-reliance means relying on the self. The self here may be an individual, a community or a state. Self-reliance, as a concept and in the context of the state, refers to the extent of independence in determining a developmental path. Self-reliance further implies the

ability of a state not only to move or propel the economy of a state to a level it desires, but also the ability to independently chart a path towards the attainment of the "desired state" (Egbon, 1995: 2). Mao Tse-tung perceives self-reliance as regeneration through our own efforts "tzuli kong Sheng". Mao consistently emphasised that "the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history and that the masses have boundless creative power" (cited in Ikoku, 1980: 35). Self-reliance generally means a people's right and ability to set goals and their realisation through their own efforts and resources (*ibid.*).

Self-reliance, in effect, connotes the optimal utilisation of a people's ingenuity and reduction of the level of dependence on external forces in the attempt to better a people's condition. It is thus an agency and catalyst for economic recovery and development, since it increases a people's capacity for technological problem-solving (Egbon, 1995: 2). Seen as a commitment to a home-grown solution to the problems confronting a people, self-reliance involves the initiation of ideas and strategic plans by a people to address the developmental and other challenges confronting them. It is the rejection of total dependence on foreign bodies and agencies for solutions to a people's problems. It is the realisation that the best way to improve your condition is to independently decide and work out means towards set objectives. In the words of Toyo (1994: 26), it is "the right to one's own trial and error and self-development. It is the right to learn to swim by swimming".

Self-reliance is the expression of the freedom of choice in determining a path to follow. The human person regards himself as free and this makes him responsible for his actions. His freedom is seen in his ability to carry out his desires within a range of alternatives without external hindrance or influence. He therefore resents obstacles to effective choices, especially when these obstacles are as a result of other's free action (Okolo, 1993: 10). Man's freedom and independence imply self-determination, the freedom to be one's master.

Self-reliance means a calculated or deliberate policy formulation to free a society from the challenges of development. In a society that is monoculture, self-reliance will mean coming up with policies aimed at uncoupling such society from dependence on a monoculture economy, namely, diversifying production "as imports of food, raw and intermediate materials, on a single block for its finance capital and technology…" (Okigbo, 1993: 32). It means the optimal utilisation of local resources to reduce dependence on external factors to the minimum (*ibid.*). The idea of self-reliance is not new. It has always been a normal form of existence wherever the human person finds himself, as every society is confronted by one problem or another. Self-reliance loosely represents that attempt to find solution to these challenges. According to Ikoku (1980: 36), "the idea of local self-reliance in the sense of a community

relying on its own forces is also as old as humanity itself because it was the normal form of existence".

The development of man and society creates needs. As society develops, man's needs expose him to others who also find the need for association necessary. Such interaction breeds cultural interpenetration, which is not a problem in itself. Where lies the problem then? It is manifest in the desire of a group's attempt to dominate another, believing erroneously that its culture and cultural outcome (that is, products, beliefs, structures, etc.) are superior to those of others. The feeling of superiority of a group to others results in the desire to impose a group's way of doing things over that of another:

If a community or people accepts the indispensability and superiority of the "goods" "(and bads)" of another culture, then the values, beliefs, customs, structures, etc., of that community become an anachronism and are simply moth-balled into history by the invading culture. Self-reliance died its first death in this manner (Ikoku, 1980: 36-37).

Thus, self-reliance is a struggle against the forces of subjugation in any form. It is a psychological, cultural and political endeavour towards freedom. It is synonymous with the saying that who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. Because he feels it, he is in a better position to strive towards eliminating the problem. Self-reliance is the right and ability to set one's goal and map out ways towards overcoming problems by one's effort and using one's factors (Ikoku, 1980: 37). Self-reliance is autonomy of decision-making after proper identification of the problems confronting a people. For Nyerere (1967: 519), "independence means self-reliance" and this can only be brought about by the people, since the people's creative energy is essential in the effort to achieve development.

Self-reliance, however, is not a rejection of collaboration with others; neither is it self-sufficiency. Rather, that interaction that the realities of a globalising world makes necessary is the result of people's free choice and not an imposition from outside. It is, therefore, a society's fundamental responsibility to control the destiny of her people.

SELF-RELIANCISM AS A FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Self-reliancism surmises the reality of the human condition as a self-determining factor. It affirms that others cannot be a functional template for one's existence because man is free to act and is therefore responsible for his action or inaction. A fundamental logic of democracy that is anchored on a self-reliancist principle is that the self, the person, of necessity exists before the society. The state is there to promote and protect the 'good' of the human person. Invariably, the self is required as a subsisting reality, a fundamental

anchor upon which any political order should rest. Can we imagine a democracy without the human person as the subsisting and personifying foundational element involved? Without doubt, humankind is the foundation and purpose of political life (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, p. 207: 384). Man is, in fact should remain, the "principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, No.1881, 2008).

As a free possibility that is perpetually changing and adjusting to new situations, the self is the "propelling life-force in the human that encompasses the socio-cultural material and immaterial, spiritual possibilities, immediate and remote such that its absence reduces the significance, the actuality, and the essence of the human" (Ogundowole, 2007: 24). The self here is the definitive essence of the human person, from whom the concept of self-reliancism as a philosophy, or the principle of self-reliance, is derived.

Self-reliance depicts the person's primordial identity, his effort at transforming his conditions to suit his needs. It is the positive orientation that "brought forth human ingenuity, creativity and innovation and the gradual, but systematic unfoldment of human inner power, his potentiality, self-discovery and the unrelenting progress in the realm of noosphere in the world" (ibid. p.20). Self-reliance, invariably, establishes the reality of self-knowledge, an epistemological foundation for man's existential exploitation (positively construed) of nature and society.

In sum, self-reliance is the rejection of a dependency orientation which reinforces a vertical relationship between persons and communities. Self-reliance pursues a path of independence that strives towards self-affirmation. Self-reliance, therefore, is part of the reality of the nature of the human person in uncovering the riddles which limit his potential in his attempt and drive towards self-actualisation.

Unlike self-reliance, however, self-reliancism represents the philosophical articulation of ideas emanating from the notion of self-reliance. The notion of self-reliance, which contains aspects of self-reliancism, is fundamental to an adequate comprehension of self-reliancism. Self-reliancism, as propounded by Ogundowole, is a principle, a philosophy teased out of the concept of self-reliance. Self-reliance is a popular term in developmental studies depicting the need for internal development of resources for optimal societal utilisation.

Self-reliancism begins from the self since the individual realises himself within the essence of a culture. In the same vein, people collectively realise themselves within the totality of their culture. Self-reliancism is thus the philosophical expression of the concept of self-reliance. The emphasis here is the philosophy, the principle, in contradistinction to particular societal experiences. Simply put, self-reliancism presents an attitude in man which urges him to proffer solutions to the problems

confronting him without depending totally on another, because the best person to address one's problem is oneself. Therefore, self-reliancism refers to the extent of a state's independence in determining its developmental path. This, however, does not eliminate the prospect and need for cooperation with others or offering assistance where necessary; it simply means that a society takes such a decision of its volition. Further, such cooperative endeavour should not be exploitative but one providing mutual benefit to the parties concerned.

Self-reliancism represents autonomy of action; it is not self-sufficiency. It is also not similar to Emerson's "aloof anarchism" or self-reliant individualism which repudiates "any common morality or scheme of formal social organization" (cited in Shook, 2009: 648). One's independent lifestyle, for Emerson, "is authorized by one's own true nature, in pure state beyond mere good and evil; people are naturally divine and live best as self-reliant creators in aloof anarchy" (ibid. p.649).

Self-reliancism, on the other hand, emphasises intersubjective social relations, not selfishness. Here, personal interest is harmonised with the collective societal interest. It is a problem solving ideological postulate which provides for ways of overcoming the developmental challenges of new states in particular. It ultimately seeks to develop autonomous individuals and societies in the sense of independently cognising and proffering solutions to identified problems. It is in this sense that self-reliancism is in tandem with the idea of 'globalisation'. Autonomy is not a rejection of globalisation and the inter-state relations which follow from man's social personhood, and such inter-mingling should reflect ethical values for the common good of humanity. This underscores this paper's conception of man as a social being with a task to resolve problems associated with his advancement.

Self-reliancism presents the self as a conscious and purposeful creative subject in political philosophy. The reality of man as the subject and goal of political life is not to be confused with isolationism or social iconoclasm since we recognise the social identity of man; hence, the postulation of a cooperative and harmonious world order that respects persons and does not subvert the aspirations of societies.

Self-reliancism is a philosophy of development; it is humanistic in its ethical perspective and presents an epistemological reasoning that cognizes a social system in relation to the milieu which engenders it. It emphasises the indispensability of a sound theoretical base towards realising practical, purposeful action. This is in agreement with Balogun's (2014: 33) position that until our theoretical framework is strong, we cannot mobilize strategies toward the realization of goals. In order for Africa to launch itself into the path of freedom and development, philosophers must not shirk this theoretical obligation.

Self-reliancism is thus recommended as a basic

principle, an ideological orientation of a people in their quest for the realisation of an authentic democratic culture.

THE FEASIBILITY OF SELF-RELIANCISM AS A FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY

The feasibility of self-reliancism as fundamental to democracy requires examining concrete socio-economic conditions without losing sight of the reality of self-reliancism as a political philosophy that incorporates principles from the political thought of philosophers down the ages. The feasibility of self-reliancism presents a situational analysis of the view that democracy, ultimately, is a contingent reality that depicts the politics of the local. The use of 'local' points to the fact that democracy is a political value that directly impacts on the lives of the people it should serve. Despite adopting a universalist thesis of democracy, Falaiye (2012: 35) is hard put to deny the reality of its local flavour: "Indeed, there is always room for such local flavours without tampering with the pristine notions of democracy". In localising democracy, however, we need not indigenise everything in what may approximate a negative embodiment of society's existential condition, but to situate established and workable processes to an environment.

One of the most fundamental responsibilities of a state is to maintain peace for societal development. This is why Hobbes perceives peace as the essential reason for the surrender of liberty to the Leviathan who should guarantee the safety of life and property of all for commodious living. It is imperative for the state to promote adequate security for peaceful socio-economic existence. State institutions should therefore work together to promote peace. In making laws, legislators should seek the interest of the public. The recently enacted law in Nigeria, for instance, prohibiting same sex union is a pointer to the fact that a society is better positioned to appreciate what is required for the common good. The thinking of many in Nigeria, as reflected in the legislation, is that such a union portends ominous moral/cultural decay for the society.

Societies currently face the challenge of how to maintain peace, considering the myriad of problems threatening her peoples' peaceful coexistence. Without doubt, the Fulani herdsmen's conflict with farmers both in Nigerian and Ghanaian communities and the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, among others, are hampering the society's developmental prospects, for development is impossible where there is no peace. In the same vein, the prospects for development in a society cannot be devoid of the need for good governance which finds expression in democracy. Thus, it is imperative that government policies take cognisance of the people.

The democratic project stretches the autonomy of the human person, being a development of the self towards the realisation of the need for self-determination. Regrettably, however, access to political and economic rights in society is increasingly shrinking, as the majority lack the political will and material power to meaningfully influence the political process. It is indeed a truism that inconsistent government policies impact negatively on society.

Individual and societal autonomy is therefore an indispensable criterion in the development of societies. Such autonomy within democracy is essential for sustainable development, as the self-reliancist democratic foundation projects the value of the self in democracy. Sustainable democracy is possible because the citizen consents to being ruled; this accords him the dignity of responsible personhood. The system qualifies him as capable of contributing positively to the transformation of society, thus projecting the need for participatory democracy.

Since democracy is essentially about politics that should affect the well-being of a people, the concentration of enormous political authority and economic power in executive arm of government is clearly not in the interest of state/regional and local/ district governments. It obviously distances government from the people when there is a huge central government that decides for local/district authorities in financial appropriation and other issues such as security. Regional autonomy is essential to the development of local/district communities because some societies are too large for the federal/central government to administer all items on the exclusive and concurrent legislative lists.

What relationship, then, exists between self-reliancism and democracy and why should self-reliancism be a foundation for democracy? Clearly, the identification of the self and the eventual articulation of the principle of self-reliance is a development in political philosophy. The self unmistakably points to none other than the human person as the subject and goal of political culture. Self-reliancism as a foundation for democracy fundamentally theorises on the role of the human person in shaping the discourse of democracy.

Democratic reality reveals that the idea of self-reliance inheres in its ideal conceptualisation as government by the people. A conceptual analysis of the phrase "by the people" points to a self-reliancist democratic consciousness which, though not theorised, is an essential element that needs further elucidation. A person or society's survival should not depend on another. It is like ambition that cannot be given to you by another. You determine and work hard to achieve your developmental vision. This is why at every stage of the human condition there is a choice to be made from available options.

Choice is fundamental to self-reliancism and is the most distinguishing criterion that sets democracy apart from other governmental values. Just as societies must prioritise their objectives to determine what projects to

embark upon for the common good, democratic choice is always open to individuals as well. Choice is a defining quality in democracy. Other associated benefits of good governance can be provided by undemocratic regimes, but such regimes limit or deny your choice in the process. On its part, a democratic regime must necessarily be one that guarantees citizens a choice between contending alternatives; otherwise, it is not a democracy. Choice, thus, becomes a fundamental subsisting reality in democracy and it is made by the human person, the self, who is the subject of self-reliancism.

However, to choose implies that humankind is free and freedom commits the human person to being responsible. Human freedom also commits the person to being a self-determining subject capable of taking decisions, as this is part of the inherent build-up of the human person: "Every person is by nature capable of determining his or her aims" (Wojtyla, 1981: 26-27). One's self-determination sets him or her apart from other beings. The freewill or freedom to act enables the person to determine what he or she wants. Societies, through the self-reliancist democratic orientation, are enjoined to autonomously determine what suits them because it is naturally difficult for another to comprehend one's problem better than the affected agent. Human existence and the democratic society reveal the inevitability of freedom: man is a free moral and existential agent. The choice we make in every existent condition points to the fact of human freedom which enables us to actively participate in political life.

CONCLUSION

Democratic governance requires people's participation either directly (Athenian model) or indirectly (through consent or choice made after prioritising available alternatives). It is recognised as that which best approximates the idea of justice (Usifoh, 1999: 128). It "should be the mode of governance that will favour the realization of the good life for all humans" (Olu-Owolabi, 2011: 23). Other governmental values leave one without a choice, thereby undermining the dignity of the human person. The articulation of the value of the human person and the indispensable role he or she plays in political life recommends the principle of self-reliancism as a foundation for democracy.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

Abrahamsen R (2000). Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa. London: Zed Books.
Ake C (1981). A Political Economy of Africa. New York: Longman Inc.
Ake C (2000). The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa. Dakar: CODESRIA.
Ake C (2001). Democracy and development in Africa. Brookings institution Press.
Alford RR, Friendland R (1985). Powers of theory: Capitalism, the state, and democracy. Cambridge University Press.
Aristotle (1962). The Politics. Trans with an introduction by TA Sinclair. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Balogun OA (2014). Philosophy in an African Culture: A Light in Darkness. Available at: https://oouagoiwoye.edu.ng/inaugural_lectures/Philosophy%20in%20an%20African%20Culture%20A%20Light%20in%20Darkness.pdf
Egbon PC (1995). The Nigerian Economy and Self-reliance: A Critical Analysis: In: Iyoha FE, Chizea BU, Akpotor SA (eds.), Self-reliance, Politics and Administration in Nigeria. Department of Political Science, Edo State University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.
Etieyibo E (2012). Ontological Presuppositions in Marcus Garvey's and Malcolm X' Philosophies of Black Liberation. In: Okeregbe A, Jegede SB, Ogunkoya D (eds.), A Study in African Socio-Political Philosophy. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
Falaiye OA (2012). A Philosopher Interrogates African Polis: How Can We Get It Right. University of Lagos Inaugural Lecture Series. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Muyiwa_Falaiye/publication/282184323_A_Philosopher_Interrogates_African_Polis_How_Can_We_Get_it_Right/links/560d0e5b08aec71cb48fa950/A-Philosopher-Interrogates-African-Polis-How-Can-We-Get-it-Right
Fotopoulos T (1997). Towards an inclusive democracy: The crisis of the growth economy and the need for a new liberatory project. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Friedman U (2016). Should the Brexit Vote Have Happened at All?. Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/06/brexit-vote-referendum-democracy/488654/
Ikoku EA (1980). Self-Reliance, Africa's Survival. Fourth Dimention Publishing Company Limited.
Ireoegbu PE (2010). Active Poverty as Elusive Culture in African Political Environment: Implications for the Vulnerable Population in Nigeria. Journal of Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele, Ekpoma. Unpublished
Jason B (2016). Are Referenda Like Brexit a Disgrace to Democracy. Available at: https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/06/brexit-vote-referendum-democracy/488654/&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwjD54irwMLeAhXRzYUKHZkQBAYQFggFMAA&client=internal-uds-cse&cx=011155507021793277500:q1wrtf3mvmu&usg=AOvVaw08PHmU3kDR7glYWgkH-CAI
Klaas B, Dirsus M (2016). The Isolationist Catastrophe of 'Brexit. Los Angeles Times, June 23. Available at: http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-klaas-dirsus-leave-victory-in-britain-20160623-snap-story.html
Kukah HM (1999). Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
Machiavelli N (1999). The Prince. London: Penguin Books.
Momoh CS (1991). Philosophy of a New Past and an Old Future. Auchi: African Philosophy Projects Publications. Available at: https://philpapers.org/rec/MOMPOA
Nyerere JK (1967). Freedom and Socialism. London: Oxford University Press.
Nyerere JK (1968). Ujamaa-essays on socialism (Vol. 359). Oxford University Press, USA.
Ogundowole EK (2007). Inexhaustibility of self-reliance. Lagos: University of Lagos.
Ogundowole EK 1988). Self-reliancism: Philosophy of a new order. Ikeja: John West Publications.
Okeregbe A (2016). The African predicament and a case for Singer's Samaritanism': an existentialist interpretation. Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy Culture and Religions 5(2):19-36.
Okigbo FN (1993). Essays in Public Philosophy of Development. Vol. 4. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Co. Ltd.
Okolo CB (1993). African Social and Political Philosophy. Selected Essays. Nsukka: Fulladul Publishing Co.
Olu-Owolabi KA (2011). My People Perish for lack of Philosophy.

Inaugural Lecture, University of Ibadan, 11th August.

Popper KR (1963). The Open Society and its Enemies. The Spell of Plato. Vol. 1. New York: Harper Torchstone Books.

Raphael DD (1976). Problems of Political Philosophy. London: Macmillan.

Shook JR (2009). Comparative political philosophy: categorizing political philosophies using twelve archetypes. Metaphilosophy 40(5):633-655.

Swift A (2006). Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians. Cambridge: Polity Press. Available at: http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/54292/

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2008). Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa. Available at: https://allafrica.com/stories/200804040567.html

Toyo E (1994). Crisis and Democracy in Nigeria: Comments on the Transition from the Babangida Regime. Department of Economics, University of Calabar.

Usifoh EE (1999). Representative Democracy? Why Not Benevolent Dictatorship?" In: Falaiye M (ed.) Africa's Political Stability: Ideas, Values and Questions. Panaf Publishers.

Wojtyla K (1981). Love and Responsibility, trans. H. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981), 41.