

AN INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION

Organized by the Conversational School of Philosophy

APRIL 6, 2024



Conveners:

Dr. Christiana Idika, University of Erfurt Germany

Dr. Pius Mosima, Leiden University the Netherlands

Speakers:

Prof. Ebere Adimora, Freie University Berlin / University of Nigeria
Nsukka

Prof. Francis Onditi, Riara University Nairobi

Ass. Prof. Ifeoma E. Odinye, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

Dr. Ekefre U. Aniekan, University of Uyo

Dr. Diana Ofana, University of Pretoria SA

Dr. Christiana Idika University of Applied Sciences Mainz

University of Erfurt

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on
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PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Welcome by Dr. Pius Mosima	03:00 – 03:05
Opening Remark by CSP President: Prof. Jonathan Chimakonam	03:05 – 03:15
Introduction to the Colloquium by Dr. Christiana Idika	03:15 – 03:25

First Presentation:

<i>“Homo Humanicus vs. Homo Womanicus: Which Construct Befits Good Against Bad in the Diagnostic and Mitigation of GBV?”</i>	03:25 – 03:55
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Prof. Francis Onditi,
HoD School of International Relations and Diplomacy,
Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya

Question	03:55 – 04:05
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Second Presentation

<i>Interrogating the Intersection of Coloniality and Gender-Based Violence in Africa</i>	04:05 – 04:35
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Dr. Diana Ofana
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Questions	04:35 – 04:45
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Third Presentation:

<i>Unravelling Psychological Harm: Roles in Identifying and Confronting Gender-Based Violence</i>	04:45 – 05:15
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Prof. Dorothy Ebere Adimora
Professor of Educational Psychology UNN
Georg Forster Fellow-Experienced Researcher,
Alexander von Humbolt Foundation,
Freie University Berlin, Germany

Questions	05:15 – 05:25
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BREAK	05:25 – 05:40
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Fourth Presentation:

Is African Ontology Gender Discriminatory?

An Examination of Ibibio Anti-Women Traditional Practices

05:40 – 06:10

Dr. Aniekan Ubong Ekefre

Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts

University of Uyo

Question

06:10 – 06:20

Fifth Presentation

The Politics of Bodily Autonomy, Dignity and

Respect in African Philosophical Conceptualization

06:20 – 06:50

Ass: Prof. Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye,

Ass. Prof. of English Language and Literature

Deputy Director, Center for Gender Studies

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Question

06:50 – 07:00

Sixth Presentation:

Why Gender-Based Violence would not be a Philosophical Issue:

Unveiling the Epistemological Gap and Silence in African Philosophy

07:00 – 7:30

Dr Christiana Idika

Faculty of Social Work and Social Sciences

Catholic University of Applied Science Mainz

Institute of Philosophy, Catholic Theological Faculty,

University of Erfurt.

Questions

07:30 – 07:40

FINAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Closing Remark by

Dr. Pius Mosima

Faculty of Humanities

Institute for Philosophy

Center for Intercultural Philosophy

Leiden University / Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Profile of the Speakers

Francis Onditi is Associate Professor of conflictology & Head of Department (HoD), School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya. An authority on the geography of African conflicts and their evolutionary nature, he is a distinguished research professor at the Institute for Intelligent Systems (IIS), University of Johannesburg, and was awarded the 2019 AISA Fellowship by South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). He was recently ranked among the World's Top 2% scientists/researchers of the year 2022/2023/2024 listed by the Stanford University, USA. Having authored and edited 6 major volumes and over 100 articles and book chapters,

in 2023, he was awarded the Erasmus Mundus Global teaching fellowship at Leipzig University, Germany.

Dr. Diana Dorothy Ebere Adimora is a distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Her career began in 2005 as a school teacher following the completion of her Bachelor's degree. Subsequently, in 2009, after attaining her Master's degree in Educational Psychology, she transitioned to academia and was appointed as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Over the years, she has advanced through the ranks to her current position as a full Professor at the same institution.

In addition to her academic role, Ebere holds the prestigious position of Georg Forster Research Fellow-Experienced Researcher of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, at Margherita von Brentano Zentrum | MvBZ, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, for the period of 2023-2026. Her present area of research centers on Gender-Based-Violence among Female Students, Faculty, and Staff in Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria.

Ebere's professional engagements are diverse and impactful. Noteworthy among these are her roles as a part-time lecturer at the Spiritan School of Philosophy Isieniu, Eha-Alumona, Enugu State, Nigeria (2015-2019). Her administrative roles include serving as the Director of the University Advancement Centre, Vice Chancellor's Office, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2018-2019), and membership in various university committees. Acting Director, Curriculum Development and Instructional Materials Centre (CUDIMAC) 2015, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2018), and Acting Head of the Department of Educational Foundations (2022). She has also contributed significantly as a Visiting Scholar/Researcher at Stellenbosch University, South Africa (2021); postdoctoral research fellow at the European Scientific Institute (ESI), University of La Laguna, Spain (2021-2022); and a Guest Lecturer at Universitas Kristen Indonesia (2022). Moreover, her expertise was sought as a Short-term Visiting Researcher at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, in October 2022.

She is the author of about 55 journal articles in reputable international journals indexed by Thomson Reuters, Scopus, SCImago, or SNIP and serves as a reviewer and editorial board member for esteemed journals, and engages in postgraduate examination both internally and externally.

Ebere's research interests span a wide spectrum, including gender and sexuality, students' learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and psychological interventions for effective teaching and learning across different educational levels and learning styles. She has conducted extensive research in areas such as gender-based violence, motivation of teachers and students, management of work-related stress among educators, comprehension strategies for diverse learners, and mental health issues affecting children, among others. Her commitment to addressing societal challenges is evident in her efforts to manage gender-based violence and support individuals with HIV/AIDS, particularly in educational settings.

Ebere is a member of several professional bodies, including the American Psychological Association (APA), the Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), the Nigeria Council of Educational Psychologists (NCEP), and the Chartered Institute of Educational Practitioners

(CIEP). Furthermore, she is the Founding/Chief Executive Director of the Moremi Psycho-Socio-Economic Foundation (MOPSEF)-mopsefnigeria.org, a nonprofit organization saddled with the responsibilities of women's empowerment, advocacy against gender-based violence, promotion of human rights, facilitating access to education, protecting mental health, and fostering sustainable livelihoods for girls, women, children, and the underprivileged.

Diana Ekor Ofana holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Pretoria South Africa. My PhD research topic titled is An Afro-Communitarian Conception of Gender: Interrogating Gender Inequality Within African Philosophy. My research deploys the framework of decoloniality to interrogate the issue of gender opposition that culminates in gender inequality. I argue that the logic underlying a given society's thought system informs the social orientation of its members. Comparatively I examine Western and African thought and demonstrates the influence of Western bivalent logic on the latter, implicating structural lopsidedness as a colonial legacy that reinforces gender inequality in contemporary African thought. Engaging the extant literature, I identify the Ezumezu logic, a truth glut trivalent system, as a suitable, non-exclusivist logic on the framework of which a novel Afro-communitarian structure of gender relations (Complementary Personhood) that relationally demonstrates how seemingly opposed variables, like male and female genders, manifesting as unique contexts can transcend both contradiction and marginal lopsidedness to achieve complementation. I double as a Research Associate at the Decoloniality Research Group at the university of Pretoria, South Africa; and a member of the elite Conversational Society of Philosophy (CSP), Calabar, Nigeria.

Research Interests: My research interests are and not limited to African Philosophy, African logic, decolonial gender studies, African and applied ethics, social and political philosophy, Conversational philosophy, AI ethics, and intercultural philosophy.

Aniekan Ubong Ekefre Ph.D, is a lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Uyo. She had her Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Calabar; followed by her Masters and Doctorate degrees from the University of Uyo, Uyo – Nigeria where she currently teaches. Her PhD research titled William James' Polytheism and Deities in Ibibio Belief System: An Ontological Examination of Ekpo-Nkawo was a groundbreaking attempt at philosophically interrogating gender biases in the administration of taboos that are believed to check marital infidelity in the traditional space of the Ibibio life-world from the perspective of African ontology. Dr. Ekefre's teaching and research interests include Metaphysics, Feminism and philosophy of Gender, African Philosophy, Logic, and Comparative/intercultural philosophy. Her articles, revolving around these subjects have been published in peer-reviewed journals both locally and internationally. She also has many book chapters which have been published in many edited books to her credit. Apart from her research, as a testimony of her excellent work in teaching and community service, she was very recently awarded the most outstanding lecturer in her Faculty by the Faculty of Arts Students Association (FASA) of the University of Uyo in the 2022/2023 academic session. Dr. Ekefre is the founder and President of Neogenesis Foundation, a non-governmental organization devoted to practically tackling all forms of gender-based violence and especially violence against women. She is an advocate of equity in gender relations. Dr. Ekefre is a member of some

professional bodies including Association of Philosophy Professionals of Nigeria and is happily married.

Dr. Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye is an Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. She is the Deputy Director of the newly established *Centre for Gender Studies* at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. She graduated with B.A(First-Class Honours) in 2006. She spent years doing a postgraduate course (M.A) in Chinese Philosophy (Culture, Literature) at Renmin University, Beijing, China and Xiamen University of China from (2008-2012). She has M.A (2014) and Ph.D (2019) from the department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Dr. Odinye is a highly motivated and research-focused lecturer with a good background in Literature, Gender Studies, Cultural/Black Studies, Psychological and Media Studies. Her PhD Dissertation was on “Violence and the Girl-Child in Selected African Fiction” which investigated fictional representations of childhood abuse—traumatic girl-child experiences that inhibit physical and emotional growth leading to revolutionary traits and mental disturbances such as anxiety, depression, repression, assertiveness, neurosis and death. She has published articles on gender-based violence, culture, hysteria, traumatic memory, cognitive and linguistic fragmentation from literary and critical perspectives. She has served in different academic/administrative positions as a Director, Coordinator, Chairperson, Editor, Postgraduate Supervisor, local and International Examiner. She is also a Creative Writer with published poems and novels.

Christiana Calice Ngozi Idika (PhD) is a lecturer at the Catholic University Mainz, a researcher at the University of Erfurt, Germany, and a visiting lecturer at the Center for Migration Studies Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Nigeria. She is a member of the Young Researchers group: Theology, Tradition and Transformation Research; Benedictine Academy, Salzburg, Austria. A member of the Decolonial Research Group and Research Associate University of Pretoria, South Africa. She holds a doctorate in social, moral and political philosophy. She has a Masters in International Peace and Security Studies from the United Nations University San Jose Costa Rica, a Postgraduate Diploma in Intercultural Communication from the University of Salzburg, Austria, a diploma in Adult Education, from the University of Education Karlsruhe, a Bachelors in Philosophy from Imo State University Nigeria. Christiana Idika has taught at various universities in Germany.

She is a philosopher, theologian, and a conflict manager by qualification and profession She is an Expert Consultant for Refugees and Asylum with Caritas in the State of NRW, Germany. Christiana Idika was a member of the forum for UN Reform 2008; 2-times NGO-Representative to UN-DPI/NGO conference in 2008 (Paris), 2011(Bonn) and 1-time NGO-Representative to Diaspora Ministerial Conference 2013 (Geneva). Christiana is a 2-Time award winner for best Young Researchers Essays in Germany. The author *Internormative Hermeneutics for Social Justice*, published in English; journal articles, and book contributions in German Language.

ABSTRACTS

Homo Humanicus vs. Homo Womanicus: Which Construct Befits Good Against Bad in the Diagnostic and Mitigation of GBV?

Prof. Francis Onditi,

Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya

The untruth about capitalism of gender-based violence (GBV) lies in its absolutism about *good* and *evil*. The truism in the western conceptualization of GBV/ and or gender equality is in its self-refuting. The Eurocentric version of truth construct the world of GBV with one eye closed to the duality of gender as a criterion for truth and knowledge. The problem is that although this lens acknowledges that one gender is disadvantaged, this world is meant to provide an explanatory experience of both men and women. In the natural attitude formulation of reality, things that may appear to affect both men and women may not yield conclusions as to how things actually are. But, why should we take this (capitalism) seemingly unreasonable framework as a criterion for truth and knowledge? Can the western explanation of GBV provide adequate diagnosis and mitigation against GBV in an African context? My perspective refuses to support this absolutism melanosis. Simply put, it is nonsensical. The challenge is that people with melanosis may never know that they have the condition, as it does not cause any symptoms. Capitalism has swamped the society into dogmatic believe in the absolutism of GBV, yet is outrightly false. My sense of the world of GBV is that nature is part of human and human is nature. If human is part of nature, then, nature is '*homo humanicus*', and because women are part of nature, nature is '*homo womanicus*.' Therefore, for us to have a holistic truth about GBV we must drop the reductionist view of nature- *Homo Womanicus* and begin the journey of developing an antithesis-*Homo Humanicus*.

Interrogating the Intersection of Coloniality and Gender-Based Violence in Africa

Dr. Diana Ofana University of Pretoria, South Africa

In this paper I analyze the logic that connects colonialism and gender-based violence in Africa through a critical examination of existing literature on coloniality and gender-based violence. I will highlight the historical and cultural roots of gender-based violence in colonialism, and its impact on social and political dynamics in post-colonial Africa societies. By using a decolonial framework, I show why alternative decolonial understanding of gender relations would address gender-based violence in Africa. A decolonial approach to Understanding gender relations will unveil the complex interplay between colonialism and gender-based violence and provide decolonial logical insights for promoting gender equality and human rights in Africa.

Unraveling Psychological Harm: Roles in Recognizing and Confronting Gender-based Violence

Prof. Dr. Ebere ADIMORA

Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany & University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive global issue with profound psychological implications for individuals and societies. This study explores GBV, various types, impacts, some cases in Nigeria, legal frameworks, identification, reporting, and supporting mechanisms, and examination of the intricate psychological dimensions related to GBV. Some theories were explored to clearly understand, recognize, and confront this complex phenomenon. Drawing upon insights from ecological systems theory, feminist theory, social learning theory, cognitive-behavioral theory, trauma theory and attachment theory, how these theoretical perspectives illuminate the underlying dynamics contributing to GBV were examined. The legal framework addressing GBV and the intersectional lens were also explored to analyze the intersecting influences of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, among others on experiences of violence. Furthermore, the psychological harms associated with GBV on the victims were explored. By clarifying these psychological mechanisms, we aim to inform more effective strategies for recognition, intervention, and prevention of GBV, ultimately striving towards creating a safer, more equitable and inclusive societies for all individuals.

Is African Ontology Gender Discriminatory? An Examination of Ibibio Anti-women Traditional Practices

Aniekan Ubong Ekefre PhD, University of Uyo, Uyo Nigeria

This paper “Is African Ontology Gender Discriminatory? An Examination of Ibibio Anti-women Traditional Practices” attempts to answer the question: is there an exclusive articulation of gender-based violence in African Philosophy from an ontological point of view? Ontology as a branch of metaphysics which deals with first principles is also called first philosophy. As first philosophy, it concerns itself with the nature of reality of realities. African ontology articulates the nature of African reality, questions about African reality and transcends the world with a view to solving perennial African problems that confronts their existence. This work examines not just the uniqueness of Ibibio culture, but also some Ibibio anti-women traditional practices as well as the influence of African ontology on gender in order to respond to the question of whether African ontology is gender discriminatory. This study makes a case for the wide acceptance of African feminist ontology in philosophy as a foundation to eliminating unequally valued functions to the roles of sexes that can lead to gender inequality and gender-based violence in any given socio-cultural setting.

The Politics of Bodily Autonomy, Dignity and Respect in African Philosophical Conceptualizations

Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

This study explores bodily autonomy as an unforced choice which has been grossly undermined and violated within gender dynamics. The discussion in this paper has employed Patriarchal Philosophy, Masculinism, Ubuntu Philosophy, Afrocentric Feminism, African Religio-Cultural Beliefs, Reconciliation and Restorative Justice; Intersectionality and Indigenous Knowledge within critical African Philosophical conceptualizations in examining rape (sexual abuse), battery (domestic violence), body/ego shaming (verbal violence), child/forced marriage, female genital mutilation, male child syndrome (gender roles/stereotype), sexual autonomy and forced sterilization (health autonomy) as the infringement of bodily autonomy influenced by sociocultural norms, diverse gender ideologies and individual ego. This paper has perceived an exclusive articulation and inadequate accounts of violated bodily autonomy wrapped around masculinities and queerness within African philosophical conceptualizations. This is evident in current anthropological crisis and manifestations of gender-based violence in Africa. Notably, the interplay of ‘exclusivity’ and ‘unspeakability’ could result to disillusionment, psychic split, extreme negative reactions or death. This study therefore postulates the implementation of “interconnectedness and humanity to others” in Ubuntu African philosophy as a model in interpreting gender lines, liberation, empowerment and social change.

Why Gender-Based Violence would not be a Philosophical Issue: Unveiling the Epistemological Gap and Silence in African Philosophy

Dr Christiana Idika

Catholic University of Applied Science Mainz / University of Erfurt.

In this paper, I attempt to uncover, by peeling away layers, margins and blindspots that constitute inconsistencies and epistemological gap in African philosophical theorizing of reality. Epistemological gap in this sense, is more than epistemic injustice. Rather, African philosophical humanism, that is, African philosophical understanding of what it means to be human and the resulting relationship to reality is surely an intellectual Art rather than a social reality that embodies mutual recognition, where the recognizer and recognized are drawn into that moment of mutual necessity constituting the life of the whole, or unity of reality, through the recognizing process. I claim that the highlight on relationship, and complementarity in African philosophy of reality focuses on the recognizer-recognized relationship in which case, difference and diversity are connected as missing links, and which are complementary to each

other. However, it needs to pay attention to the recognizing process that makes constitution of complementaries possible. Shaped by its historicity and search for identity, or born out of frustration (Chimakonam 2015), African philosophy reduces Gender-Based Violence to social political issues, instead of apprehending it as a dissonance to the primary understanding of being human in African context.



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