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# **International Conference on Natural Law and Human Dignity**

(2nd Edition of Natural Law Conferences in Africa)

## **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

T h e m e :

The Application of Natural Law Principles and Methods to Addressing Contemporary Issues affecting Human Dignity in Social, Economic, Political, Legal, and Technological Contexts



OBRA LEGAL



**THE EDUCATION  
COLLABORATIVE**

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## NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN DIGNITY AS BASES FOR PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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### Abstract

**E**nvironmental sustainability, environmental conservation, ecojustice, climate ethics, and other similar terms are now popular phrases amidst the problems of environmental degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the earth crisis. Since the heightened awareness from the 1960s on the state of the environment, many scholars, researchers, advocates, etc have provided a rationale for environmental sustainability or conservation. The humanistic rationale (rooted in the natural law tradition, which is also a strong foundation for human dignity) for environmental preservation is often belittled or not taken seriously by many eco-centrist/bio-centrist environmentalists or researchers. Through hermeneutics and critical analysis, this paper argues that human dignity rooted in natural law can form a valid and vital reason to promote environmental sustainability.

The pragmatic reality is that preserving nature for the genuine and moderate needs of human beings also conserves nature. Conservation of nature for the sake of future generations invariably also guarantees environmental health and sustainability. The reality is that human beings are a vital part of nature. In harming nature, they harm themselves and damage what they need for sustenance. Harming nature negatively impacts human dignity since the environment that humans need to enhance their lives is vitiated. The Stockholm Declaration rightly enunciates in principle one that a quality environment and adequate life conditions are human rights and necessary for enhancing human well-being and dignity. The declaration also states that humans have the responsibility to ensure this suitable environment. One does not necessarily have to be an eco-centrist before such a person can engage in environmental practice. Eco-centrists can and should align with humanistic advocates to conserve the environment. The paper finds that the environmental crisis is real and diversified positions exist on how the environment should be treated. The paper concludes that human dignity rooted in natural law can be used to motivate people to care for the environment. It is also the case that a good and healthy environment enhances human dignity and welfare.

**Keywords:** Natural law, human dignity, environment, sustainability, environmental sustainability, eco-centricism, bio-centricism, ecology.

## PERSONHOOD AND COMMODIFICATION OF HUMANS IN AN AFRICAN SOCIETY: AN ETHICO-ONTOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

In this paper, I examine personhood and commodification of humans as obtained in an African society, namely Yoruba society of Nigeria both in pre-colonial and post-colonial periods with a view to moving beyond sociological and historical analysis to examining personhood and commodification of humans, which are related to slavery, from an ethical and ontological perspective.

I argue that personhood is highly treasured in Yoruba society, irrespective of social and economic status, because a person is accorded dignity being a creature of the Supreme Being, even though humans come through the physical union of both sexes. Slavery was also practised in traditional Yoruba society due to a combination of factors: war, conquest, peonage, economic and political. It was the case that slaves were treated with dignity even within the context of slavery. This was the reason why slaves were not overly abused and any dehumanisation of slaves attracted sanctions.

The post-colonial Yoruba society has abolished slavery formally but societal practices in modern Yoruba society point to the fact that humans are treated, in some cases, as commodities when their persons are violated through forced marriages, domestic help, indecent labour, prostitution within and outside Africa for economic considerations due to the failure of the state. These tendencies smack of treating humans also as gifts because such people whose rights are violated have the status of commodity conferred on them as they lose their autonomy.

Humans who find themselves in the survival quagmire within the post-colonial African societies, based on ethical and ontological considerations, have lost their personhood as they are not different from commodities that can also be exchanged as gifts. I propose that responsible governance and social engineering can restore the dignity of humans within modern African space. The methodology of this discourse is historical, critical, analytical and constructive.

**Keywords:** Personhood, commodification of humans, Yoruba African society, slavery, ethical and ontological analysis

# BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS AND THE WORKER'S HUMAN DIGNITY

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## Abstract

The treatment of employees of business organisations has changed considerably since the days of the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the advent of Scientific Management. Following the principles of Frederick Taylor and later Henry Ford, workers were treated like mere production tools. The Industrial Psychology Movement brought a new focus on the humanity of workers. But the biggest improvement came with the Human Relations Movement, pioneered by Elton Mayo, which recognised the inherent value of human beings and demanded that workers be acknowledged as rational and social beings.

Looking towards the future, we can see two major factors influencing the work of people in organisations: the digital revolution with the rise of Artificial Intelligence, and a growing focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR). The world has become more aware of the fact that business is not only about profit (though profit is very important). Ethics matters. Business is a service to society and is responsible for the economic and human welfare of all its stakeholders, the more vulnerable of which are the staff in periods of limited job opportunities.

This paper examines more particularly the role of Human Resource Management in ensuring that business organisations adopt employment policies and procedures that respect and promote human dignity. Fair remuneration, work hours that enable workers to dedicate the necessary time to family and leisure, freedom from bullying and harassment, and job design that makes room for exercising judgment, are some important examples of such policies and procedures. People management must be based on respect for the rules of ethics. Even if it might lead to some short-term reduction in profit, it is still the best way, in line with Social Exchange Theory, to ensure long-term profitability; thanks to committed employees who do their best for their employer's business to be successful.

**Keywords:** Business organisations, Human Relations Movement, corporate social responsibility, ethics, profits

# TOWARDS ETHICAL TECHNOCRACY: REIMAGINING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AS A DECISION-MAKING TOOL THROUGH THE LENSES OF NATURAL LAW AND UBUNTU

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## Abstract

Humanity is increasingly shifting towards technology government, away from the days when power was based on military prowess and political influence. This transition has been considerably aided by the integration of data-driven approaches into decision-making bodies throughout time. According to Prof. Yuval Noah Harari, there is little that can be done to stop this shift; thus, people should be prepared to accept it. With the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the twenty-first century, the reliance on data has increased to unprecedented levels, with the potential to revolutionise how nations are governed. Ultimately, this may lead to technocracy, in which control is primarily held by technical professionals, notably AI specialists. It has even been prophesied that AI will replace the majority of bureaucrats. In light of these advancements, a critical question arises: when human involvement in decision-making declines, how can the fundamental concepts of morality and ethics based on natural law and Ubuntu be preserved? As a result, this study focuses on the issue of ethical and good governance in the age of artificial intelligence. It accomplishes this by first demonstrating the relationship between natural law, Ubuntu, and ethics. Following that, it examines the evolution of AI and how lawmakers and courts in many countries, particularly in Africa, have responded to regulating AI in the face of diverse legal-ethical quandaries and obstacles. As a result, it seeks to harmonise the jurisprudence of those states with the concepts of natural law and Ubuntu in order to ensure that ethics are promoted in the use of AI in decision-making. Recognising the inevitability of technocracy, the paper urges for strict adherence to ethical norms in the development of AI systems.

Furthermore, it investigates the importance of public interaction and participation in defining ethical AI policies and practices, particularly when addressing biases and discrimination caused by AI algorithms. Finally, the report underlines the importance of legislation that prioritise human well-being and rights as AI advances.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, AI systems, ethical technocracy, Natural Law, Ubuntu



# NATURAL LAW, ECOCIDE AND THE RIGHT OF NATURE. THE IMPERATIVE FOR A STRONGER INTERNATIONAL EDICT ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

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## Abstract

**N**ature is intertwined with human existence and if nature dies humans may cease to exist. The right of nature coupled with ecocide has become a passionately debated topic worldwide. This paper aims to raise awareness of the demands that human activity places on nature through the application of natural law and the necessity of taking a comprehensive approach to restoring the environment to ensure continued human life. A global understanding of how to preserve nature has been discussed extensively, but agreement on how to do so has been difficult to achieve. Hence, this study is a further attempt to develop a distinct approach to environmental enforcement through the integration of conventional and natural environmental laws, which would have the same level of significance as basic human rights regulations. This study uses a qualitative content analysis method to examine papers and documents on the subject matter. It concludes that environmental degradation will accelerate until international agreement and broad statutes are reached to stop it. This study complements the perpetual dialogue on how to protect the atmosphere by enacting new rules and enforcing those that already exist, recommending that stiffer laws that would be binding are required urgently to preserve the environment. The investigation will provide policymakers with another perspective to tackle this persistent issue concretely instead of theoretical debates on the matter.

**Keywords:** Ecocide, natural law, environment, preservation, enforcement. degradation, statutes

## HARMONY AND COEXISTENCE: EXPLORING UBUNTU AND NATURAL LAW WITHIN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORKS

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the profound interconnectedness existing between the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu and the principles of natural law. It believes that Ubuntu can be considered a form of natural law that has significantly influenced and shaped traditional African thoughts across various cultures and historical periods. Ubuntu, with its underlying premise of interconnection and communalism encapsulated in the ethos "I am because we are," is seen as an important philosophical framework for creating harmony and coexistence. This study identifies a critical issue: the current lack of harmony and cooperation in African societies and around the world might be ascribed to poor knowledge and application of Ubuntu's key values.

The research contends that natural law principles, which seek fairness and rights for all people derived from nature rather than from societal conceptions, can be more successfully realised by fully integrating Ubuntu into thought and practice. In order to investigate this, the study uses a qualitative research methodology, consulting a range of sources such as philosophical texts, cultural studies, and historical narratives. The goal is to thoroughly examine how Ubuntu can enhance and direct the application of natural law principles in the pursuit of promoting a healthy society. It makes the case that a deeper integration of Ubuntu values into daily life might foster a feeling of shared humanity and social responsibility which, in turn, can combat the pervasive problems of greed and corruption. The study's conclusion goes on to say that Ubuntu, when widely adopted and applied as an embodiment of natural law, has the power to fundamentally alter African societies and beyond. In the end, it contributes to the development of countries like Nigeria by imagining a future where societies are marked by increased harmony, decreased conflict, and a more equitable distribution of resources. This future places an equal emphasis on the welfare of the community and the individual while fostering a more just, compassionate, and sustainable global community.

**Keywords:** Harmony, coexistence, natural law, Ubuntu, African philosophy, African societies

## NATURAL LAW OF CREATIVITY IN SOUND TO SHAPE HUMAN FORMATION

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### Abstract

**W**hat we see and hear are creative because of the power these senses possess. The media employ the affective nature of both to superimpose their intentions on the minds of their audience. Although the visual is more aesthetically appealing, the creative law of nature is hidden in the mystery of sound. This has aroused the interest of people from various disciplines like sociology, acoustics, physiology, psychology, and neurology, to research the psychoacoustic effects of sound on humans. Sound is a subtle element of nature, but creative, whether it is looked at from a scientific perspective or a religious angle. This study attempts to look into the natural law of sound creativity by tracing how sound reaches the brain and how the brain interprets sound to shape human formation. This creativity can be cognitive, behavioural, psychological, emotional, and social for human total well-being. This study seeks to take a holistic approach to psychoanalytically examine the creative power of sound as a natural law.

**Keywords:** Natural law, sound creativity, human formation, acoustics, physiology, psychoacoustic

## EXAMINING FUNDAMENTAL NATURAL LAW AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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### Abstract

In the annals of thought, thinking, moral awareness, self-regeneration and emotions have been known to be the fundamental characteristics that distinguish human beings from sub-human (artificial) creatures. However, in contemporary times, these assumptions have been vigorously challenged by computer scientists. These scientists not only claim that it is not only humans that have these characteristics, but have also gone further to produce artificial creatures (computers, robots) that seem to astonishingly display such lofty and peculiarly human activities like thinking and feeling. This has created the problem of the moral status of Artificial intelligence as humans keep reflecting on the question of whether or not AI can fulfil legal and moral responsibilities. The paper, therefore, critically examines some fundamental natural law cum ethical issues in Artificial intelligence. It seeks to determine how some fundamental natural law and ethical issues such as moral autonomy (agency), moral biases, cyber-terrorism and digital warfare etc. constitute an impediment to human dignity. Using a qualitative research approach, it applies the method of analysis in elucidating relevant terms such as morality, natural law and Artificial Intelligence and the critical method in examining some moral conundrums underpinning the operations of Artificial Intelligence. The paper argues, among other things, that notwithstanding the sophistication of AI, the logicity and efficiency of the operations of machines and robots – products of artificial intelligence – AI cannot acquire the moral, spiritual and metaphysical dimensionalities of the human self which alone could endow it with the volition, self-awareness, self-regeneration, spontaneity of thought and language production characteristic of moral human beings. The paper, submits, therefore, that Artificial intelligence remains incapable of fulfilling all the demands of the law of which natural law consists an integral, foundational part. AI is indeed our brother as Pollock rightly observed, but not at the legal cum moral levels.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, morality, natural law, reflective consciousness, moral autonomy

## THE PLIGHT OF WIDOWHOOD IN AFRICA

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### Abstract

In the heart of Africa, widowhood is a secret battle that affects millions of people, particularly women, across its rich cultures and customs. It is estimated that there are approximately 258 million widows in the world's population, with a 9% increase from 2020 to 2025. The plight of widowhood in Africa is so inhumane that it borders on deprivation of human rights and dignity, health problems, absurdity of life, and economic issues. This paper explores the many types of African widows, the unique context of African widowhood, the obstacles that widows encounter, and how the principles of natural law and human dignity might serve to alleviate widowhood issues in African communities. In this paper, widowhood is divided into five categories: childless or childful widow, maleless or maleful widow, suspected or unsuspected widow, undereducated or well-educated widow, and dependent or independent widow. The findings reveal that African widows face a variety of obstacles, such as health issues, social degradation or outcast status, absurdity, economic challenges, unfair treatment, and denial of fundamental rights and dignity. This study investigates how the concepts of natural laws and human dignity, such as freedom, morality, the pursuit of virtue, the principle of justice, and natural rights, might help to expunge the irrational rites and challenges of African widowhood. To end the plight of African widows, this study recommends imbibing and raising awareness of human dignity and rights, critical or careful review of the irrational cultural heritage on African widowhood, communal support for the widow, the need for educated and independent women, and the enforcement of African widowhood laws.

**Keywords:** Plight, widowhood, natural laws, human dignity

## ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN JOURNALISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

In today's evolving media landscape, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies alongside traditional journalistic practices raises ethical considerations centred on the preservation of human dignity. This paper conducts a comparative analysis of the ethical dimensions inherent in the utilisation of both human intelligence and artificial intelligence within the field of journalism. It examines key ethical principles such as respect, responsibility, values, bias, avoidance of harm, transparency, and the preservation of journalistic integrity through the lens of human dignity to clarify the ethical implications of human decision-making processes versus AI-driven technologies in news reporting and dissemination. Furthermore, the paper explores how the humanisation of social issues, such as poverty, may be uniquely approached through the lens of human dignity, where human intuition, empathy, and context play pivotal roles, aspects that AI may not capture. Utilising Aquinas's Natural Law Theory as a framework, this comparative analysis seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between human and artificial intelligence in journalism. Moreover, the study aims to enrich the discourse on responsible and ethical journalism in the digital age by highlighting the importance of considering human dignity in ethical decision-making and ensuring that advancements in AI technology align with the fundamental principles of human dignity and rights.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, ethics, human dignity, human intelligence, journalism

# THE INTERSECTION OF NATURAL LAW AND UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY: TOWARDS A HOLISTIC LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN AFRICA

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## Abstract

This paper explores the intricate relationship between natural law principles and Ubuntu philosophy within the context of the African legal systems. Ubuntu, often described as a worldview emphasising interconnectedness, communalism, and human dignity, has significant implications for legal theory and practice in Africa. Drawing upon both ancient African wisdom and contemporary legal scholarship, this paper argues that Ubuntu provides a unique foundation for understanding and applying natural law principles within African jurisprudence. Through an examination of historical precedents such as African traditional justice and contemporary legal developments as exhibited in most of Africa's Bills of Rights or Fundamental Rights, it demonstrates how Ubuntu can enrich legal discourse, promote justice, and foster human flourishing. At the heart of Ubuntu philosophy lies a profound understanding of human nature, morality, and the nature of justice aims at the restoration of relationship, which resonates strongly with classical conceptions of natural law. In this paper, we delve into the nexus between natural law and Ubuntu philosophy, seeking to elucidate their complementarity and explore their implications for theoretical and practical legal development in Africa. Through a multidisciplinary approach that draws upon philosophy, anthropology, and legal studies, we aim to shed light on how Ubuntu can enrich our understanding of natural law and contribute to the development of a more holistic legal framework in Africa. Natural law, rooted in classical Western thought, posits the existence of universal moral principles discernible through reason and inherent in the natural order. In contrast, Ubuntu philosophy emerges from diverse African cultural traditions, emphasising relationality, empathy, and interconnectedness. Despite their distinct origins, natural law and Ubuntu share fundamental affinities that merit exploration. Both traditions affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every human being, albeit through different conceptual frameworks. Moreover, both natural law and Ubuntu philosophy aspire towards a vision of justice rooted in the pursuit of the common good and the flourishing of all members of society.

**Keywords:** African legal systems; communalism; justice; natural law; Ubuntu philosophy

## THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

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### Abstract

The most important thing we humans have is life and all that human life entails. Memory, understanding and free will are powers that raise us far above this world of matter, mathematics, and artificial things and point to some Being – far beyond our realm to prove that man has an immortal soul. That “What is, is” and “What is not, is not”; these are the first of all the principles which place our reasoning safe on solid ground. The brain is physical – the mind is not. We know that what is wrong cannot be right, as total darkness means the lack of light, and man’s death means the end of life on Earth. And that is why we need the natural law so that each one can know the path to choose at every moment of their lives, “*Ab ortu ad mortem*” – from start till death! The natural law protects our dignity by stating what is right and what is wrong and guiding all to lead a virtuous life by which we reach eternal happiness, which lies beyond the reach of Planet Earth. Prudence, justice, courage and self-control (as ancient Greek philosophers prescribed) should be the virtues we acquire in life much more important than mere worldly goods which fade and perish at the final call! Of much more value than our Facebook “likes” or even Hall of Fame or Nobel Prize. Augustine said our hearts are made for God and will not rest until they rest in Him! Each of us is willed and loved and needed by those who came before and those to come. But first of all by God who made us all (including those who think we just evolved! The third millennium is still quite young. It is the moment to begin again with goodness, truth and beauty well defined; to shun the ugly lies that now deface the world, our present home, our planet Earth.

**Keywords:** Human dignity, memory, understanding, free will, happiness, goodness, truth, beauty



## SURROGACY: AN INDIGNITY TO THE CHILD AND WOMEN

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### Abstract

**M**arriage has various ends, one of which is the procreation and education of children. For most couples, procreation is important since it is a veritable means to perpetuate their family line. However, amidst natural infidelity, medical difficulty in getting pregnant, artificial infertility in the case of same-sex persons, and other ignoble reasons or lifestyle choices for not wanting to carry a child, surrogacy has arisen as an apparent solution to help parents fulfil their wish of having children. Surrogacy is gradually being accepted globally, but amidst its recorded successes in making couples parents, it has been fraught with various political, legal, ethical, medical, economic, and international law issues. Globally, it has been reckoned as a multi-billion-dollar industry, with recorded cases of abuse, exploitation, and emotional trauma, necessitating various countries strictly regulating it. In Nigeria, surrogacy is not legally acknowledged, as no written law expressly regulates or prohibits it and there are several IVF/fertility clinics that offer these surrogacy services. Although inclined to argue for the abolition of surrogacy in Nigeria, that is not the crux of this paper. In this article, while recognising the importance of having children, the paper will analyse if having children is a “right” that must be exercised at all costs and through whatever means, thereby adopting the mantra that *the end justifies the means*. The paper will also analyse whether surrogacy is good and in tandem with the dignity of the child, women (“gestational carrier”, “womb carrier” and the “intended parent), and society at large. Lastly, relying on the Child’s Right Act and “Principles for the protection of the rights of the child born through surrogacy” (Verona principles), the article will analyse whose right is preeminent—the right of a parent to have a child or the right of a child to be born properly and which is in the best interest of the child.

**Keywords:** Surrogacy, couples, procreation, rights, Verona principles, IVF, fertility

## UPHOLDING WORKERS' RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS: ALIGNING NATURAL LAW PRINCIPLES WITH LABOUR LAWS FOR NON-STANDARD WORKERS IN KENYA

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### Abstract

The Kenyan Labour Laws predominantly focus on standard employment relationships, leaving non-standard workers in precarious working conditions. The reality is that the Kenyan workforce also encompasses temporary workers, part-time workers, workers in triangular employment relationships and those in disguised employment; all of which are deviations from standard employment. The crux of this paper is to assess the constitutional fair labour practices right under Article 41 through the lens of natural law. This paper emphasises the fundamental entitlements such as safe working conditions, human dignity, freedom from discrimination, and the right to collectively bargain for non-standard workers. In so doing, it assesses the natural law entitlements of the same rights, regardless of the classification of the workers.

Central to this exploration is the recognition of inherent dignity and rights for all individuals, which forms part of the principles of natural law. This paper examines the lacuna in labour laws that leave non-standard workers vulnerable to exploitation, inadequate working conditions, and limited access to collective bargaining. In turn, it proposes legislative and policy reforms aimed at protecting all workers regardless of the classification. It goes ahead to argue for a recognition of non-standard workers and the protection of all workers in Kenya. It asserts that aligning these laws with natural law principles is imperative to effectively uphold the rights and protections of non-standard workers.

Additionally, the paper explores the role of stakeholders such as trade unions, government agencies, and employers in implementing and enforcing these reforms to ensure comprehensive protection of workers' rights. It also discusses challenges and potential barriers to reform implementation, such as resistance from employers or lack of awareness among non-standard workers about their rights. The paper concludes by emphasising the importance of aligning labour laws in Kenya with natural law principles to strengthen protections and uphold the rights of non-standard workers. It advocates for a holistic approach that prioritises dignity, fairness, and inclusivity in the labour market.

**Keywords:** Workers' rights and protection, natural law, labour, Kenya, employers, dignity

## DHARMA: THE CRUX OF HUMAN DIGNITY IN INDIAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

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### Abstract

**D**harma is a universal cosmic reality that defines the path to living a good life in the traditional Indian society. It is the moral perspective of the worldview of the Indian Religions that imposes moral obligations and spiritual discipline on every individual by their very nature of being human. This natural principle is the foundation on which rests all the components of human dignity without which human existence lacks meaning. There is a substantial number of studies that have established the significance of 'dharma' in the making of laws, ethical principles, and the determination of rights and duties, but there is a dearth of study on 'dharma' as the foundation of human dignity. Therefore, this work elucidates the quintessence of 'dharma' in defining human dignity from the religious teachings of Indian Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as well as its significance in determining the right cause of actions and civility that dignify a person in the Indian society. This study adopts content analyses in exploring selected commentaries on the authoritative texts and existing scholarly works on the concept of 'dharma' from diverse perspectives and understandings from the ancient Indian traditional thoughts to the contemporary meaning as its main source of information.

To underscore the point that 'dharma' is the bedrock of the call for human dignity in Indian traditional society, this study will reflect the understanding and connotations of 'dharma' in the Indian Indigenous Religions, showing their areas of divergence and convergence as it relates to the established codes of conduct in these religions that give meaning to human life. It will further capture evidence of recourse to the principles of 'dharma' in the enactment of the articles of civil rights, duties, and privileges in the Indian traditional society up to the modern period. The knowledge conveyed in this study significant in inculcating the right sense of value for human life around the world, realising that what dignifies a human is within the grasp of humanity and it is benevolently imposed by nature as a moral duty for the good of human earthly existence.

**Keywords:** Dharma, human dignity, India, Indian traditional society, principles

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE NATURAL LAW IN THE BRITISH, AMERICAN, AND NIGERIAN TRADITION OF STATECRAFT

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### Abstract

This paper aims to examine the influence of the natural law doctrine in forming a tradition of statecraft that produced the modern democratic state, that is, a democratic state committed to the formulation of just laws and policies and has regard for the rule of law, fundamental human rights, political accountability, and the common good. In support of the above, this paper considers the relative impact the natural law had in forming the British, American, and Nigerian traditions of statecraft towards the formation of their respective democratic state. The point is to show how, on the one hand, commitment to natural law has influenced the political evolution and sustenance of Britain and the United States of America into viable and prosperous democratic states. And how, on the other hand, the lip service, inconsistent and ambivalent attitude to the natural law has, as a consequence, led Nigeria to the verge of becoming a failed state, although Nigeria inherited its political and legal traditions from Britain and America. In light of the above, this paper will be preoccupied with the ideas of political, legal, and moral theorists as with statesmen and women.

This paper not only proposes solutions to the Nigerian predicament but also holds brief for the natural law as the guiding light to wise statecraft, particularly in constructing a viable, prosperous, and peaceful democratic state. The argument will be made that the universal relevance of the natural law stems from the fact that its moral precepts are transcultural because they are founded on human nature and therefore, provide a moral framework for resolving complex problems, including those stemming from multiethnic and multi-religious societies like Nigeria. The paper adopts the causal (in the Aristotelian sense) analytic and historical methodology.

**Keywords:** Natural law, statecraft, democratic state, moral, framework, historical methodology

## EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURE, CIVILISATION, AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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### Abstract

The pursuit of women's rights is anchored in the broader context of human rights, with a central focus on human dignity as the inherent and inalienable worth of every individual. Human rights, rooted in human dignity, emanate from natural law principles that transcend cultural boundaries and customs. This interplay underscores how universal human rights standards are influenced by cultural contexts and societal development. Civilisation represents stages of cultural and social progress, while culture encompasses specific traditions, values, beliefs, and practices. The advancement of women's rights within this framework demands the recognition and elimination of legal, social, and economic barriers. It involves challenging negative cultural norms and engaging in political struggles to safeguard women's rights and combat violations. The global discourse on women's rights emphasises fundamental principles such as equality, autonomy, dignity, and social justice. However, it is crucial to examine how these principles intersect with diverse cultural specificities that shape women's experiences. Culture, as a lived experience, embodies oppression and privilege for women. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing policies and practices that elevate the status of women. Hence, this research delves into the intricate relationship between culture, civilisation, and the quest for gender equality. It proposes a critical analysis to explore how culture, civilisation, and human dignity intersect in the pursuit of women's rights as human rights. The intrinsic connection between human dignity, natural law, and social justice in advancing the rights and dignity of women is investigated.

**Keywords:** Human rights, women's dignity, cultural norms, gender equality, social justice

## EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN WORK AND HUMAN DIGNITY: THE ROLE OF EMPATHY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AT THE WORKPLACE

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### Abstract

This paper establishes the relationship between human dignity vis-a-vis human work and the quality of empathy at the workplace. It argues that to ensure that human dignity is protected and given due recognition, human beings should be treated with respect. Work is an inalienable aspect of human life. It is intrinsically linked to the personal, professional, social and transcendental dimensions of human existence. The dignity of work is rooted in the idea that every job has value and contributes to the common good, and every worker deserves to be treated with respect and to have their rights protected. Thus, possessing the right emotional skills at the workplace is necessary for the fulfilment of the individual in his contribution to the common good. With a focus on the emotion of empathy, the paper argues that the quality of being sensitive to the unique perspectives, ideologies and understanding towards colleagues is not only fundamental to building personal relationships but is also recognised as a cornerstone of organisational success and employee well-being. The paper investigates the critical role that empathy plays in fostering positive human relationships in the workplace, by enhancing communication, collaboration, and overall organisational culture. Through conceptual analysis and an in-depth review of literatures relevant to the study, the paper demonstrates that empathy, which is a foundation of treating others with compassion and acceptance, contributes to increased employee satisfaction and improved performance in the workplace. The study explores the emotive quality of empathy as a powerful tool in the workplace, essential for fostering strong human connections amidst the challenges bedevilling the contemporary work environment. The paper submits to the transformative impact of empathy in building supportive, inclusive and productive work environments. It recommends that deploying the emotion of empathy at the workplace improves the professional life and well-being of the individual.

**Keywords:** Empathy, human relationships, human dignity, collaboration, workplace balance

# PATIENTS' CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS TO BLOOD TRANSFUSION IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF NATURAL RIGHTS

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## Abstract

Constitutional and legal safeguards exist for the guarantee and protection of natural rights. These rights include the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to dignity of human person as well as the right to private and family life, among others. However, in the exercise of the right to conscience and religion in refusal of blood transfusion, there abound misconceptions in the general perception. Therefore, this paper aims to clarify the legal provisions in Nigeria for the enforcement of the natural rights of freedom of religion, right to dignity of the human person and right to privacy, in conscientious refusal of blood transfusion and make recommendations for improvement. To achieve this, we will examine the theory of natural law and its components of human dignity, self-determination and freedom of religion, in relation to the right of consent to a medical procedure in blood management. We will also the scriptural basis for conscientious objection to blood transfusion and consider instances of conscientious refusal of blood transfusion in the light of the legal regime on religious freedom as well as the right of self-determination, autonomy and human dignity. This paper appraises both international and domestic legal frameworks on the principles of respect for the patients' right to freedom of religion and conscience, and the right to bodily self-determination and human dignity, in relation to the patients' choice of appropriate medical procedure involving the need for blood. References are made to foreign authorities to highlight lessons to be learned and applied in Nigeria. The work adopted the doctrinal and analytical research approaches. It reveals that in their exercise of the right to freedom of religion in conscientious objection to blood transfusion, individuals have faced stigmatisation and even outright rejection. This work recommends greater awareness through advocacy, improved religious tolerance, focused legislative intervention, and a more radical judicial approach.

**Keywords:** Blood transfusion, human dignity, self-determination, conscientious objection, religious tolerance, stigmatisation

## NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES: BETWEEN SIGNIFICANT CRISIS AND MANIPULATION

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### Abstract

Natural law refers to all the prerogatives that are granted to every human being, without distinction of race, religion or culture to act fully in liberty in life without being confronted with situations that will hinder this freedom. It therefore protects the dignity of human beings throughout ages, eras and generations. It is based on the principles of non-violability, justice, inalienability, etc. Throughout history, the use of natural law, as opposed to civil or political rights, has allowed men to access to fundamental freedoms, which had been confiscated long time ago. We can mention the proclamation in 1789, the Declaration of the Human Rights and Citizens, and in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So, from Samuel Pufendorf to Hans Kelsen via Hugo Grotius, Emmanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and Jürgen Habermas, we find, despite a few exceptions, an almost unanimous definition of natural law linked with human dignity. However, today, even if natural law serves as a valid reason for the preservation of human dignity, it seems difficult to have a unanimous definition and conception of it. Based on human dignity, States or associations of our days defend some minorities' rights, which they judge as parts of "natural" rights. From the right to sexual orientation to the right to abortion through the defence of transhumanism and others, several human rights organisations defend these rights, which, far from achieving unanimity as required by the principles of natural law, stimulate controversies depending on continents, countries, cultures. Which means that today, we would be tempted to speak of a distortion of natural law due to its several conceptions and manipulations of its meaning. This paper aims to revisit the question of natural law in reaction to its distortions in contemporary time, to re-assert its meaning and origin while taking into cognisance the principles of ordered pluralism and differentiated pluralism.

**Keywords:** Dignity, natural law, differentiated universalism, manipulations, transhumanism



# OSTRACISM, SOCIAL ORDER AND UN-CRIMINAL CRIMES IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES: EFFECTIVENESS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGE AND IMPACT ON HUMAN DIGNITY

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## Abstract

Since creation, human societies have devised diverse strategies to maintain social order and curtail negative activities that are stimulated more often by the base instincts of man. Values, norms, and more emerged to guide the activities, behaviours, and way of life of diverse societies. One such practice is ostracism, which entails causing a member of society who has committed a certain grievous offence to be isolated from others for a given period. Defined as being ignored and excluded, the temporal framework of ostracism proposes that individuals feel the pain of ostracism, which threatens their need for belonging and esteem. This punitive measure mandates that the ostracised person will not be allowed to trade with people from his community within the local markets, visit neighbours, or attend communal events like marriage or burial ceremonies or community meetings. In cases of grave danger to life, no one is permitted to heed a call from the person so ostracised. Incidentally, this punishment is extended to the entire household in the case of a man but is restricted to the woman in the case of a woman. It is believed that this practice goes against the social nature of man and thus infringes on human dignity.

Focusing on the geographical context of traditional Igbo society and leveraging focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, this study seeks to interrogate this punitive measure and the difference in severity in relation to the gender of the offender and confirm whether ostracism impinges on human dignity. More importantly, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of this practice in light of the recent boom in digital technology and the emergence of diverse social networking sites. These platforms allow the punished to privately communicate with any member of society who sympathises with their situation and is willing to engage for as long as they wish. The results obtained will be coded into Nvivo and analysed to identify patterns of thoughts and viewpoints among the participants.

**Keywords:** Ostracism, anti-social behaviours; human dignity; social isolation; social order; social networking sites

## LEVERAGING INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS AND COLLABORATION TO BUILD AN ETHICAL CAMPUS

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### Abstract

Academic institutions worldwide are responsible for the holistic development of citizens capable of contributing to societal progress. However, many educational institutions in Africa face challenges in integrating ethics and integrity into their curricula and culture due to increasing student numbers, limited resources, and a focus on core competencies over ethical behaviour. This paper explores the critical role of institutional policy, student government, and educational programmes in fostering an ethical culture and campus environment. Key questions addressed include: Who is responsible for establishing an ethical culture? Why do students engage in honest or dishonest behaviours? How can institutions effectively promote ethical conduct and discourage misconduct?

Using a descriptive case series, the paper addresses these questions. Curated cases examine the role of institutional policies in selected institutions in Botswana, Ghana, and Rwanda in fostering a culture of ethics and responsibility for society's progress in the campus community. Case studies from Ashesi University, Kibi Presbyterian College of Education in Ghana, and Riara University in Kenya illustrate how student governments have championed ethical culture on campuses. Additionally, educational program development for students, staff, and faculty is explored through the unique adoption of initiatives such as Giving Voice to Values Africa, Kepler Success Week, and other community engagement programs at Cavendish University Uganda and Strathmore University.

The paper concludes by recommending strategies for identifying gaps in fostering campus ethical culture and fostering collective solutions to address these gaps. By focusing on cases that have addressed the three key areas—institutional policies, student government, and educational programs—the paper emphasises their unique impact on building the ethical campus culture. It finds that the nexus of these three areas and adopting a collaborative approach are crucial in building a sustainable ethical campus culture.

**Keywords:** Humankind, ethics, integrity, honour code, institutional policies, student government, educational programmes.

# NATURAL LAW AND THE COMMON GOOD: ADDRESSING FRAGMENTATION AND INDIVIDUALISM IN POSTMODERN SOCIETY

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## Abstract

The notion of common good faces myriads of challenges in today's post-modern society. The hallmarks of postmodernism such as fragmentation, individualism and relativism to a very large extent undermine the traditional and objective understandings of shared ethical values and collective welfare, posing threats to social cohesion and justice. In this connection, the question arises: How can natural law theory provide a basis for addressing fragmentation and promoting the common good in postmodern society? This paper aims to address this problem by critically and comparatively examining the convergence of natural law and common good in relation to postmodern thoughts. In particular, by critically evaluating the postmodern critiques of the common good vis-à-vis the rational foundations of natural law, it seeks to systematically investigate whether and how the principles of natural law can affirm the importance of community, solidarity, and cooperation in promoting the well-being of individuals and society as a whole, in the reality of challenges of postmodernism. This discussion becomes crucial in view of a deeper and better understanding of the common good in the light of the natural law in postmodern society which would not only engineer a shared purpose among humans but would also promote the flourishing of humanity.

**Keywords:** Natural law, common good, individualism, postmodernism

## IMMERSIVE LEARNING AT THE MUSEUM: USING ARTWORKS TO LEARN ABOUT JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY

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### Abstract

Experiential learning, championed by scholars like John Dewey, Paulo Freire, William James, and David Kolb, is a powerful educational method. However, existing literature predominantly emphasises scientific and practical experiences, neglecting the potential of art objects. This research explores the use of Object-Based Learning (OBL) sessions with artworks as visible representations of abstract concepts such as natural law and human dignity, aiming to provide a more lasting and effective learning experience. Traditional classroom teaching of concepts like natural law and human dignity often lacks immersive and experiential elements that can deeply resonate with learners. By integrating art into the learning process, we aim to create lasting and impactful educational experiences. Our study examines the impact of OBL sessions on socially significant concepts like justice and human dignity, drawing on experiences from ongoing sessions at the Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art. This research presents insights gathered from students and educators involved in these sessions, exploring their perspectives on the effectiveness and impact of OBL in fostering deeper comprehension and appreciation of complex ideas. Ultimately, this research sheds light on how Object-Based Learning can enrich education and promote a nuanced understanding of fundamental societal principles.

**Keywords:** Object-Based Learning, Human Dignity, justice, experiential learning

## APPLICATION OF NATURAL LAW IN BUSINESS ETHICS

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### Abstract

The literal definition of natural law states it as a body of uniform and moral principles measured as the basis for all human conduct. Investigatively, natural law is a theory in ethics and philosophy which posits that human beings are to be valued, it is therefore a common understanding to demonstrate a good attitude and proper reasoning in daily dealing with persons.

Natural law maintains that the rules guiding right and wrong are inherent in people, it is a choice. The society can only emphasise what is already present in us. Natural law is an unwavering perception in the field of ethics, especially in business. Decisions are taken not just on the grounds of ethics, but also based on moral philosophy. Ethics births morality and presupposes that there is a law common to man, even though the circumstances vary among persons, the general principles are consistent. Recognising the distinction between fact, law and right, people very often do what is wrong while knowing what is right. The ability to discern right or wrong is an inherent course in every human being, a choice or reluctance is often on display as to what should be operational.

Natural law plays and corroborates with ethics, it is not a process of fact reasoning, but rather in the face of the underlying universal principles, how should one act. It leans towards binding decisions and duties rather than discretionary decisions and policies. Natural law while working with ethics, does not analyse, it applies the principle of practical reasoning. Basically, ethics is worn as a thinking cap before a submission to natural law. This theory is highly related to deontological ethics that focuses on acting in accordance with duty regardless of the consequences.

## REEVALUATING AI CODE OF CONDUCT PRINCIPLES IN HEALTHCARE THROUGH THE LENS OF *DIGNITAS INFINITA*: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

On the 8th of April 2024, two documents were released by two vastly different bodies. One titled *Dignitas Infinita* was a declaration of the dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith on Human Dignity. The other was developed under the auspices of the Steering Committee of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) and was released as an AI Code of Conduct Principles and Commitments Discussion Draft titled ‘Artificial Intelligence in Health, Health Care, and Biomedical Science’. The auspicious release of both documents on the same day calls attention to the growing need to promote human dignity in healthcare in an age of rapid technological growth.

This paper takes a critical look at the principles and codes of conduct proposed by the NAM team in its bid to curtail the potential for AI to disrupt and transform human interactions in healthcare. The code commitments suggested by the NAM paper include the following: 1. Focus: Protect and advance human health and human connection as the primary aims. 2. Benefits: Ensure equitable distribution of benefits and risks for all. 3. Involvement: Engage people as partners with the agency in every stage of the life cycle. 4. Workforce well-being: Renew the moral well-being and sense of shared purpose in the healthcare workforce. 5. Monitoring: Monitor and openly and comprehensibly share methods and evidence of AI’s performance and impact on health and safety. 6. Innovation: Innovate, adopt, collaboratively learn, continuously improve, and advance the standard of clinical practice.

The above commitments are in keeping with the *Dignitas Infinita* proposition for growing the awareness of the centrality of human dignity as a foundation for human rights and duties. This paper studies the theoretical convergence of both papers. It provides some practical guidelines that go beyond the theoretical alignment between the codes of conduct of NAM and the Natural Law principles of the Vatican document. The paper concretises the guidelines so that practitioners and researchers can continuously promote a workspace that is person-centred and respectful of the Natural Law Principles.

**Keywords:** *Dignitas Infinita*, AI, natural law, healthcare, human dignity

## HUMANITY MATTERS: AI BIAS AND THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

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### Abstract

**R**ecent Artificial Intelligence (AI) breakthroughs have huge transformative impacts on social, political and economic realities with significant risks to human lives and the world. These risks include hampered information integrity, catastrophic cyber weaponisation, loss of control, and worsening historical bias risks. This paper focuses on the risk of AI exacerbating historical discrimination. How can we make AI systems protect fundamental human rights? What values must be entrenched in the AI system to promote social justice? Leveraging the Thomistic notion of the common good, particularly its concrete ideals of human dignity and natural law, this paper, employing scoping review methodology and discourse analysis, argues that AI systems ought to be designed, developed, deployed, fine-tuned consistently with respect for natural law and the dignity of its efficient cause, humans. It is important that governments and public and private actors team up to measure rights-impacting assessment of AI systems and funds, and carry out AI audits for bias detection and mitigation of undesirable real-world impacts of AI systems. We must be mindful and thoughtful about what we build to help technology better serve humanity.

**Keywords:** AI, risks, Thomas Aquinas, human dignity, natural law

## ART AND THE POLITICS OF SELF: EXPLORING HUMAN NATURE AND SOCIETAL POLITICKING IN OMOLIGHO UIDENTA, CHUMA ANAGBADO AND CHIMA UCHAY'S WORKS AT THE YSMA COLLECTION

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### **Abstract**

The role of art as a political instrument for societal change and discourse has long been acknowledged within the realm of art history. Artists frequently utilise their craft to provoke political thought and critique prevailing power structures. However, beyond mere opposition to the political establishment, certain artworks offer a nuanced exploration of the human condition and its relationship with the prevailing culture of its time. This paper delves into the complex interplay between human nature and social influences as portrayed in selected works from the YSMA collection. Through these works, this analysis investigates how societal stimuli shape individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and actions. Specifically, the examination focuses on three thematic dimensions: the encroachment of modern culture on traditional norms, divergent interpretations of the dignity of labour, and the impact of consumerism on identity formation. By scrutinising these artworks, this paper aims to illuminate how societal contexts mould human perspectives on existential issues, thereby contributing to broader discussions on the politics of the human person within contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Dignity of labour, societal politicking, modernism



# ‘MANAGED BY MUMMY’: STRATEGIES FOR SAFEGUARDING THE DIGNITY OF NIGERIAN CHILDREN IN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCING

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## Abstract

In recent years, social media influencer culture has attained such a commercial peak that ethical concerns about the exploitation of audiences and the influencers themselves have pushed their way to the forefront, particularly in relation to children. ‘Managed by Mummy’ has become a familiar tag on social media accounts created for the purpose or in the hopes of turning children into kidfluencers. These accounts are not based on the marketing of children’s unique talents but of their personas and childhood experiences, or *sharenting* (sharing parenting), in hopes of attracting popularity and brand engagement. However, a trend has emerged, early Euro-American kidfluencers are expressing the psychological effects of the digital personas their parents created for them, especially in terms of privacy violations, financial exploitation and identity crisis.

While sharenting to create kidfluencers is relatively new in Nigeria, the precedents in experience raise concerns about the ways Nigerian children online may find themselves reduced to commodities for consumption and exploited for profit at their own risk. By employing content analysis and engaging experienced Nigerian child rights activists in focus group discussions, this paper will explore two popular Nigerian kidfluencer accounts to identify and describe potential threats to the personal safety and dignity of the children while proposing strategies and media policies, specific to Nigeria’s sociocultural context, which can help safeguard present and future kidfluencers from excesses/oversights of parent-managers, brands and content consumers.

**Keywords:** Managed by mummy, kidfluencer, sharenting, child rights, strategies, dignity

# HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE BURDEN OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: THE ONTOLOGICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND LEGAL IMPERATIVES

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the ethical burdens of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), as it relates to human dignity. Humanity is living through an unprecedentedly fast-paced technological revolution driven by AI. And unlike in the past, three industrial revolutions in which human beings dictated the pace and dynamism of change, in the present 4IR, AI is at the forefront of the revolution dictating the pace and partly making the rules. This raises serious concerns for the overall well-being of the human person because of AI's lack of insight, morality, and understanding of the true nature of the human person as an incarnate spirit. This makes any AI-based decision about the human person, potentially problematic. In light of the foregoing, this paper aims to reinforce the need for philosophers, theologians, ethicists, and legal scholars to proactively engage in discourse and action with tech professionals behind the AI technologies to ensure that the fledging AI-based technologies are imbued with the right idea of the nature of human beings as well as an understanding of human dignity in its ontological and theological foundations. The paper is structured in three parts. The first part delves into the idea of human dignity with emphasis on its ontological, theological, and legal foundations. The second part is a discourse on Artificial intelligence and the 4IR, the prospects and challenges involved. The paper concludes in the third part with a highlight of some philosophical and legal imperatives that must guide the conceptual engineering, fabrication, and deployment of AI-based technologies, to better protect human dignity in our time.

**Keywords:** Human dignity, artificial intelligence, fourth industrial revolution, ethics and morality, imperatives

# AN EXAMINATION OF THE APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: NIGERIA AS A CASE STUDY

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## Abstract

**H**uman dignity is the fundamental concept of the global human rights regime<sup>1</sup>, ‘the ultimate value that gives coherence to human rights’<sup>2</sup>. The 1996 International Human Rights Covenants proclaim ‘these rights derive from inherent dignity of the human person’<sup>3</sup>. This paper discusses the question of the normative domains of human dignity, human rights and social justice. The paper explores the meanings of human dignity and analyses the various ways in which human rights depend on, articulate and attempt to realise the dignity and worth of the human person. Furthermore, since human rights are regarded as the ‘foundation of justice in the world’<sup>4</sup>, many of the international and domestic human rights instruments lay significant emphasis on social justice<sup>5</sup>.

Accordingly, the paper examines the question: Can human rights bring social justice? This paper attempts to answer this question, using Nigeria as a case study. The paper finds that it is difficult to apply a human rights approach to social justice in practice. It further discloses that despite the ample provisions on socio-economic rights under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in Chapter II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), most of these rights are hardly, enforced or exercised by Nigerians. The paper explains the difficulties in applying these rights, and also make recommendations on how with the application of the human rights approach, the social justice envisaged in Chapter II of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 Constitution can be achieved.

**Keywords:** Human dignity, human rights, social justice, socio-economic rights, Nigeria

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<sup>1</sup> Donnelly, J (2009) “Agenda for Human Rights” 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UDHR, Joseph Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver, USA, 3

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Hibbert, N (2017), Human Rights and Social Justice” Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI), 2

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

## THE UK RELOCATION OF REFUGEES TO RWANDA SCHEME: LESSONS FROM HISTORY AND ETHICAL APPRAISAL

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### **Abstract**

The British and Rwandan governments have since April 2022 been engaged in dialogue aimed at relocating some refugees from Britain to Rwanda. Although controversial, the proposal resonates well with the British Parliament and the Paul Kagame regime, resulting in the agreement – "Asylum Partnership to Strengthen Shared International Commitments on the Protection of Refugees and Migrants". Critics have raised questions about its appropriateness within the framework of international law. However, this study presents critical ethical and historical perspectives within the broader context of humanism. History is replete with cases of relocation of unwanted persons by states, which the study contends provide lessons about possible unintended consequences of the UK-Rwanda scheme, and raises questions about the ethical acuity of such a forced relocation. Accordingly, insight is drawn from the trajectories of the Liberian, Sierra Leonean and Haitian experience, for instance. The study adopts the qualitative research method with emphasis on historical and philosophical analysis. Documentary evidence provided primary information on the subject matter, supplemented by data obtained from secondary sources such as newspapers, magazines, books and related articles available on the internet. The study concludes that the scheme undermines the lessons of history; the rights, freedom of choice, consent, and dignity of the refugees in question; and amounts to sacrificing helpless humans on the altar of national interest and mundane interstate politics.

**Keywords:** Relocation, refugees, asylum, migrants, the UK, Rwanda, scheme

## NATURAL LAW AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: ARE INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC RIGHTS UNALIENABLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

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### **Abstract**

The theory of natural law has been applied to theories of ethics, politics, civil law, and religious morality. These domains are interesting and may have direct or indirect impact on economies and socio-economic interplays of societies and nations. They are, however, not exhaustive and do not directly gauge the connection between natural law and the unfettered rights of individuals to legitimate pursuits of economic fortune, especially in impoverished societies. Anchored on the common political creed expressed by the founders of the USA in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, this study examines the barriers to the economic rights of individuals in developing countries. Using Nigeria as a case in point, the study tracks the access or lack thereof to economic participation of approximately 70% of the country's population. In the context of developing nations, are the rights of the powerless guaranteed and unalienable? The implications of the current economic state of the materially poor are identified, and the importance of the theory of natural law in this discourse is located.

**Keywords:** Natural law, economic rights, politics, ethics, civil law, religious morality

## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF UNAUTHORISED ARTISANAL MINING ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ALONGSIDE EFFORTS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IN GHANA

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### Abstract

This study investigates the health consequences of unauthorised artisanal mining, known as "galamsey," on women and children in Ghana, with a focus on access to safe drinking water. Climate change, exacerbated by illegal mining activities, has led to significant environmental degradation, including deforestation and water contamination with toxins such as lead, arsenic, and mercury. These pollutants pose severe health risks, including skin conditions, cancers, and congenital disabilities, particularly affecting women and children. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to assess the impact of galamsey on health and water quality in ten selected communities within the Tarkwa-Nsuaem municipality in the Western region of Ghana. Data will be gathered through purposive sampling and surveys, with water samples analysed by the University of Cape Coast's College of Health and Allied Sciences. The project aims to mitigate these health impacts through several initiatives: treating contaminated water using biochar technology, educating communities about the dangers of polluted water, and reclaiming degraded lands by planting trees. This research is expected to benefit the local community by reducing health risks, promoting sustainable practices, and improving livelihoods. The outcomes will also provide valuable insights for the national and international mining sectors, advancing knowledge in water pollution prevention, climate change mitigation, and post-mining optimisation.

**Keywords:** Health consequences, artisanal mining, women, children, water

## REVAMPING HUMAN RIGHT TO LIFE THROUGH EFFECTIVE PENALTY FOR OFFENCE OF MURDER: SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA PERSPECTIVE

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### **Abstract**

**M**urder rates in South Africa and Nigeria have remained alarmingly high, it constitutes a violation of indigenes' human rights to life and jeopardises their constitutional rights immeasurably, prompting a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing legal frameworks for punishing offenders. This paper examines the prescribed penalty for the offence of murder in both countries and analyses the use of effective penalties as a deterrent strategy for the offence of murder. It considers the rationale behind the widespread agitation for more effective punishment in murder cases in South Africa and Nigeria and explores public opinion, juristic initiatives and relevant international frameworks, as well as primary and secondary sources of law and relevant internet materials in advocating for reforms within the criminal justice systems of both countries.

**Keywords:** Murder rates, right to life; effective penalty; deterrent strategy, legal frameworks







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The concept of natural law has been a fundamental aspect of philosophical and legal discourse over the centuries, providing a framework for understanding and guiding human behaviour and conduct in private and public life. Human dignity, the inherent and inalienable worth of every human being, is a foundational principle in global ethical and legal frameworks.

As contemporary society grapples with complex ethical, professional, social, economic, political, legal, and technological problems, it is imperative to critically reflect on the relevance and application of natural law principles and methods in addressing these problems to better protect human dignity in our time.



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