

**KANT'S DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS AND IT'S RELEVANCE TO POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.**

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**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF ART (B.A.) HONOURS DEGREE IN
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was originally carried out by **ONOJIOLU JOEL OLAKITAN**, with matriculation number **ART2101134**, and it meets the requirement for an award of Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy.

Dr. Christopher Osawaru
Project Supervisor

Date

Ass. Prof. Wesley. T. Osemwegie
Ag. Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

To God for his love and support through out this journey

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I am most grateful to God Almighty and I return all the glory to Him, the Father of light and giver of all wisdoms for His impartation of knowledge throughout this program.

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ABSTRACT

This work examines how Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics can contribute to Nigeria's political development. Using both analytical and evaluative methods, the study explores Kant's moral theory, centered on duty, universal moral law, and respect for human dignity, as a useful lens for judging political actions beyond selfish or partisan interests. In Nigeria, politics has often been weakened by corruption, misuse of office, and lack of accountability, which continue to slow down true national progress. Through analysis, the research breaks down Kant's ethical principles and, by evaluation, applies them to Nigerian political realities, highlighting how common practices such as electoral malpractice, favoritism, and resource mismanagement cannot be defended as universal principles and therefore fail the test of moral duty. The study argues that if political leaders and institutions embraced responsibility based on duty rather than personal gain, Nigeria could move toward a system built on justice, fairness, and transparency. Kant's ethical framework, therefore, offers not only criticism of current political culture but also a moral guide for meaningful reform.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria's political development is threatened by several factors, including corruption, insecurities, weak institutions, ethics and religion tweak, and economic instability. The current social-political and economic situation is both pathetic and shameful. It's pathetic on the ground that only a few disgruntled politicians and their families are living in affluence, while the rest or majority of her law-abiding citizens are unjustly treated. According to John & Akpaakpan (2018), they are exposed to great poverty, daily starvation, disease and infestations, marginalization, victimization, unemployment, violence and abuses, insecurities, untimely death and other socioeconomic menaces.¹

Corruption is at the basis of the problem of Nigeria ranging from social, religious, moral, cultural, academic, economic, and in fact, in fact, almost in all sectors of human endeavor as a nation. No country in the world is immune from corruption. That notwithstanding, the rate at which corrupt practices thrive in Nigeria is not only alarming but devastating. Polemical nature of this is that the more its talked about, the more intense it becomes. The unimaginable situation in the country ranging from hunger to a high level of poverty among the citizenry, almost all segment of the nation's economy; unrest have all been

¹ John, E. O., & Akpaakpan, I. D. M. (2018). Political Development and the Need for Strong Institution in Nigeria - A Philosophical Assessment. *Ifioke: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4, 37–63.

attributed to the high rate of corruption in the nation. Apart from the dishonesty for instance, as part of corrupt practices, neglects of duty, exploration, injustice and lack of fairness in the country are on the increase on daily basis. By implication, corrupt practices are more of less culture in Nigeria. In the opinion of Uzoigwe & Chukwuma (2021) greed, poor youth empowerment, poverty, and many other things has been identified to some of the cause of corruption in Nigeria.²

Uzoigwe & Chukwuma (2021) further asserts that corruption thrives in Nigeria for so many reasons, the most outstanding of this reason is that some of the people fighting corruption in Nigeria are damned corrupt themselves.³ It's indeed undeniable that no one would like corruption to be accepted and practiced as universal law. According to Kant the moral law forbids anyone to be exploited by man, it's an offense against ends. Highlighting further on this, Omoregbe stated that "This must have influenced human dignity to use a human being simply as an instrument to attain one's ends.

Inyang (n.d.) is of the view that, Kant categorical imperative if established will definitely impact the detachment from selfish interest or pathological tendencies which before sustained as a system of governance and both the leader and the led would that every action will be duty bound and thus a total transformation of the attitude and changes of

² Uzoigwe, E. I. E., & Chukwuma, A. M. (2021). Kant ethical position, and the problem of corruption in Nigeria. *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, 4(2), 71–84.

³ *Ibid*

life in the Nigeria society and African as a whole given citizenry, with this in place democracy will obviously not only thrive but now serve as impulse for action.⁴

Furthermore, Inyang (n.d.) in a bid to compare, asserts that, Kant's notion of human dignity, equality, freedom and justice in the categorical imperative, are connected with the general tenet of democracy.⁵ Kant's categorical imperative if institutionalized will definitely impact additional changes to life in the Nigeria society and Africa as a whole, that every action will have bound and thus a total transformation of the citizenry, with this in place, the political system in Nigeria will obviously not only thrive but have sustained as a system of governance and both the leader and the led would be detached from selfish interest, which before now serves sn impulse for action.

To actualize this, complementarity becomes a necessity, it focuses on the integration of all the various components that constitutes a system with a view to work harmoniously so as to achieve the common good. Once the components of a system function at variance and in a disintegrative manner, the result obviously will be chaos. It is in this sense that we recommend Kant's Deontological ethics as a drive towards harmonizing all political structure or components founded on the categorical imperative. Political system can only work here when each of the diverse unity if the system plays their role from a Deontological perspective.

⁴ Inyang, J. O. (n.d.). Kants Categorical Imperative: A Foundation for Democratic Governance in Africa. *LWATI: A Journal of contemporary Research*, 13(2), 104-206.

⁵ *Ibid*, 113.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

Nigeria's political landscape is plagued by debilitating issues, which includes fragile institution, ethnic and Religious tensions, and also lack of accountability, which hinders its political growth and good governance.

To address these challenges, it's imperative to explore innovative ethical framework that promote stability, accountability, and justice. One potential solution lies in Kantian deontological ethics which prioritizes duty, moral law, and the inherent dignity of individuals and how it can be used to sharpen the political landscape of Nigeria.

Thus, the central aim of this study is understanding the potential role of Kantian ethics in addressing Nigeria's political challenges and promoting sustainable political development. This includes exploring Kant ethical framework in providing actionable solutions for improving more just, fair and inclusive political environment in Nigeria.

1.3 Purpose to the Study

1. To examine the challenges of Nigeria's political Development.
2. To investigate the causes of unstable political structure.
3. To evaluate the role that Kantian ethics can play in the development of Nigeria's political system.
4. To provide policymakers and government officials with a moral framework for promoting political development.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. It will enhance the understanding of Nigeria's political process.
2. It will provide actionable recommendation for policy makers.
3. It will enhance the understanding of Kantian ethics
4. It will inform future research and policy decision making.

1.5 Methodology

Every study employs a method of inquiry, and this is not an exemption. This study adopted an evaluative and critical analysis method.

The method of this research is the evaluative method, evaluative in the sense that it's involves examining a thing carefully, in order to determine its strength and weakness and overall impact. This study also makes use of the analytical method, which entails breaking down of a whole into a components part. In this sense the problem of political development in Nigeria will be evaluated using Kant's Deontological ethics.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Immanuel Kant's deontological ethical theory, particularly its principles of duty, moral law, autonomy, and the categorical imperative. It critically examines how these moral concepts can be applied to political leadership and governance in Nigeria. The research explores the potential of Kantian ethics to address issues such as corruption, abuse of power, lack of accountability, and poor leadership, which have historically hindered Nigeria's political development.

Streaming it's focus to explaining and giving details on Kantian ethics and how it can help in Nigeria's development. It will make use of materials from library, journal, books, especially such that expresses the basic insight of this study, and help promote moral responsibility in leadership and so on.

1.7 Definition of Terms.

Morality: morality is derived from the Latin word "mores" which has to do with the standard of conduct generally accepted within a society as an expression in the morals. According to Ezenwankwor (2013), the distinction made by Lon L. Fuller is a general concept for important ideas and acts of people in the society. It represents the required behavior which is found in the society.⁶

Ethics: Ethics is a systematic approach to understanding, analyzing, and distinguishing matters of right and wrong, good and bad, and admirable and deplorable as they relate to the well-being of and the relationships among sentient beings. Ethics is an active process rather than a static condition, so some ethicists use the expression doing ethics. When people are doing ethics, they need to support their beliefs and assertions with sound reasoning; in other words, even if people believe that ethics is totally subjective, they must be able to justify their positions through logical, theoretically based arguments. Feelings and emotions are a normal part of everyday life and can play a legitimate role in doing ethics. However, people sometimes allow their emotions to overtake good

⁶ Ezenwankwor, J. S. (2013). *Law and Morality: An Appraisal of Hart's Concept of Law*. Enugu: Claretian Communications, 18.

reasoning, and when this happens, it does not provide a good foundation for ethics-related decisions.⁷

Deontological ethics: Gotten from the Greek word "*deon*" meaning "obligation" or "duty" is an approach to ethics that focuses on the rightness or wrongness of actions themselves, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions. Deontological ethics is commonly contrasted with consequentialist or teleological ethical theories, according to which the rightness of an action is determined by its consequences.

Politics: this is gotten from the Greek word "*politika*", it's the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of status or resources.

The Definition of politics raises a very crucial question. This is whether politics is a science or not, Kymlicka (2002) mentioned that politics according to Appadorai is not an exact like physics, chemistry, because the material with which it deals is incapable of being treated in the same exact way.⁸

⁷ Karen, L. R. (2022). *Introduction to Ethics*. Burlington: Jones and Bartlett Learning, 3-30.

⁸ Kymlicka, W. (2002). *The Nature, Scope and Limitation of Political Philosophy* (2nd ed.). UK: Oxford University Press, 1–9.

Politics concerns the behavior of groups and individuals in matters that are likely to affect the course of government e.g in voting, in forming, and running political parties, or in exerting influence in other ways of those responsible for the conduct of government.⁹

Development: Development is an all-encompassing word, which is frequently invoked in every discipline, policy dialogue, as well as day to day happening. The term “development” is polysemic, i.e. it has many meanings. It is a term that is capable of giving variety of meanings according to Lord Robbins. Mostly, it refers to positive changes or improvements. Semasinghe (2020) asserts that, over time, understanding of the term “development” has been broadened to cover numerous concepts.¹⁰

The concept of development connotes improvement, progress, growth and positive change. According to Anah (2014), the result of these desirable attributes of development, governments, nongovernmental organizations and even individuals embark on essentially economic ventures which they label as development.¹¹

Underdevelopment: Underdevelopment is more often than not misunderstood as the absence of development. However, there is no society that has not developed in one

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ Semasinghe, W. M. (2020). *Development, What Does it Really Mean? Acta Politica Polonica*, 49, (1), 51–59.

¹¹ Anah, C. I. (2014). Development and Underdevelopment. In *Issues in Social Science*. Owerri: Career Publishers, 1-22.

aspect of life or another. Underdevelopment underscores the fact that development has been uneven within and between hitherto known human societies.¹²

Anah (2014) went further to say that Underdevelopment serves as a tool not only to compare these levels of development but also to critically explore the historical antecedents leading to the favourable or unfavourable conditions that manifest in lower or higher levels of development¹³

Political development: for Elijah (2018), Political development is basically a process that is concerned with the improvement of institutions, attitudes and values that form the political system of a society or nation.¹⁴

Categorical Imperative: The conception of an objective principle, in so far as it is obligatory for a will, is called a command (of reason) and the formula of the command is called an imperative. Now all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. The former represent the practical necessity of a possible action as means of something else that is willed (or at least which one might be possibly will). Kant (1993) show that the categorical imperative will be that represented an action as necessary of itself without references to another end. i.e as objectively necessary.¹⁵

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Elijah, O. J. (2018). Political Development and the Need for a Strong Institution in Nigeria: A Philosophical Assessment. *Ifiok: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4, 37–63. Akwa Ibom.

¹⁵ Kant, I. (1993). Good will, duty, and the categorical imperative. In A. Serafini (Ed.), *Ethics and social concern*, St. Martin's Press, (7), 31–37.

1.8. Literature Review

Victor Ntui (2020) in his article *Kant's Ethical Imperative: A Paradigm for Political Development in the Society* examines Kant's ethical imperative as a framework for fostering sustainable political development in Nigeria. He emphasizes the importance of the Kingdom of Ends in upholding human dignity and promoting moral leadership. Ntui identifies corruption, moral decline, and abuse of power as major barriers to national progress. He presents Kant's principle of treating individuals as ends in themselves as a viable solution. The article advocates for a moral reorientation among political leaders, suggesting that deontological ethics can enhance accountability and responsible governance. Ntui effectively links philosophical concepts with contemporary Nigerian political realities, contributing to applied ethics in African political thought. He further supports the integration of reason and universal moral laws into policy-making, calling for ethically grounded governance based on Kantian duty.¹⁶

Amadi, U.C., Nwinya, S.C., & Ogbu, C.K. (2024) in their article *An Appraisal of Kant's Deontology as a Remedy to Morality Challenges in Nigeria* explores Kant's deontological ethics as a remedy for Nigeria's ongoing moral crisis. They associate duty-based ethics with the cultivation of political discipline and integrity. The paper argues that widespread moral decay underpins ineffective governance in Nigeria. By highlighting Kant's focus on duty and good will, the authors propose a moral corrective

¹⁶ Ntui, V. (2020). Kant's Ethical Imperative: A Paradigm for Political Development in the Society. *Logos: African Journal of Philosophy and Studies*, 3, 90–102.

to current political failures. They advocate leadership training programs grounded in ethical education and present the categorical imperative as a safeguard against corruption. The work blends philosophy, politics, and education, emphasizing the role of ethical theory in national value reorientation. It is especially relevant for promoting civic responsibility and rebuilding public trust through moral reform.¹⁷

Princewell Okwuoha's (2023) paper, *The Ethics of Categorical Imperative and the Struggle for Development in Nigeria* applies Kant's categorical imperative to analyze Nigeria's developmental challenges. He argues that ethical poverty is a fundamental cause of the country's underdevelopment. The article promotes Kantian universality as a guiding principle for lawmaking and leadership. It draws a connection between moral law and justice, emphasizing fairness in governance. Okwuoha warns against political relativism and ethical subjectivity, framing corruption as a direct breach of duty-based ethics. He positions the categorical imperative as a civic moral standard, calling for education, policy, and leadership to reflect deontological values. His contribution enriches African political ethics through a Kantian lens, ultimately urging the adoption of ethical legalism and recognition of equal human worth.¹⁸

¹⁷ Amadi, U. C., Nwinya, S. C., & Ogbu, C. K. (2024). An Appraisal of Kant's Deontology as a Remedy to Morality Challenges in Nigeria. *EBSU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 14(2), 478–503.

¹⁸ Okwuoha, P. (2023). The Ethics of Categorical Imperative and the Struggle for Development in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of African Studies*, 1–10.

Agbude, G.A., Olowookere, E.I., Godwyns-Agbude, J., & Ovia, E (2014) in *The Question of Leadership in Africa: A Kantian Contribution* applies Kant's categorical imperative to address leadership deficiencies in Nigeria. They identify the absence of a moral compass as the core cause of leadership collapse. The study insists that true leadership must be guided by a sense of duty rather than self-interest. Kantian ethics is proposed as a foundation for fostering political accountability and integrity. Central to their argument is the need for leaders to treat citizens as ends in themselves, not as mere instruments of power. The paper emphasizes the urgency of institutional reforms anchored in moral awareness. For leadership to be legitimate, it must adhere to principles that are universally applicable. The study draws a link between ethical conduct and successful democratic governance, advocating for leadership development programs across Africa grounded in moral philosophy. Notably, the work stands out for its regional perspective and philosophical depth.¹⁹

Simon A. Kolawole (2022) in *Kant's Categorical Imperative as a Panacea to the Moral Depravity of the Nigerian Society* examines Nigeria's moral breakdown through the lens of Kant's deontological ethics. He presents the categorical imperative as a potential remedy for the country's social and political dysfunctions. The study critiques the widespread neglect of duty among public officials and underscores the importance of moral legislation rooted in universal ethical principles. Kolawole emphasizes both

¹⁹ Agbude, G. A., Olowookere, E. I., Godwyns-Agbude, J., & Ovia, E. (2014). The Question of Leadership in Africa: A Kantian Contribution. *Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies*, 101–112.

individual and collective responsibility in political leadership. He contextualizes Kant's ideas within Nigeria's challenges of corruption and tribalism, calling for an ethical revival as a foundation for national development. The paper effectively bridges theoretical ethics with practical political concerns, contributing to scholarly discourse on morality and governance in Nigeria. Kolawole also advocates for the integration of Kantian principles into civic education reforms.²⁰

²⁰ Kolawole, S. A. (2022). Kant's Categorical Imperative as a Panacea to the Moral Depravity of the Nigerian Society. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review*, 5(5).

CHAPTER TWO

IMMANUEL KANT'S WORK AND INFLUENCE

2.1 Immanuel Kant's Biography

Immanuel Kant, who was born around 1724 - 1804, is definitely one of the most important European philosophers of modern times. Kant was born, spent his entire life, and also died in Königsberg in East Prussia.

When Kant was born, East Prussia was still recovering from the severe impacts of war and plague, which had wiped out more than half of its population. He was raised in a devout but poor household. As the fourth of eight children, including five sisters and two brothers, Kant came from humble beginnings. His father, of Scottish descent, worked as a leather strap cutter and often joked that he could never make ends meet, whether at home or in his trade. Kant held deep respect for his kind yet financially struggling father, and as a boy, he reportedly took pleasure in observing his father skillfully craft harnesses. Interestingly, as noted by philosophical psychologist Ben Ami Scharfstein cited by Paul (1990), Kant's own awkwardness with his hands stands in contrast to his father's remarkable manual skill.¹

After studying at the University of Königsberg between 1740 and 1776, Kant spent some time working as a private tutor. He returned to the university in 1755, earned his master's degree, and began teaching. By 1770, he had been appointed as a professor and continued

¹ Paul, S. (1990). *Kant in 90 minutes*. Chicago: Ivar R. Dee. Pp. 9-10.

to deliver lectures on a broad range of subjects, such as mathematics, physics, anthropology, education, and physical geography, which he did until his retirement in 1796. Despite never marrying or leaving East Prussia and adhering to a strict daily routine, Kant was far from isolated. According to Paul, S. (1990), Kant was recognized for his engaging lectures and conversations, he also maintained strong social ties, and he had a great interest for intellectual and Political issue of the day.²

Kant delivered his final lecture in 1796. By then, his faculties were deteriorating, and a somber sadness and depression had replaced his former cheerfulness. Fichte noted that Kant seemed to lecture in a state of drowsiness, occasionally waking abruptly to continue his half-forgotten discussions. Soon, he lost his mental clarity, failing to recognize even close friends, and struggled to complete simple sentences. He gradually slipped into insensibility and passed away on February 12, 1804, having lost his intellectual sharpness. People from all over Germany, along with the entire town of Königsberg, attended his funeral, honoring him even in his old age as the greatest figure in their town. His grave eventually deteriorated and was restored in 1881. In 1924, his remains were relocated to a neoclassical portico near the cathedral. However, in 1950, vandals broke open the sarcophagus, leaving it empty. By then, Königsberg had lost its status as a center of learning, had been devastated by the Red Army, and was incorporated into the Soviet Union, renamed in honor of one of Stalin's henchmen who had died of natural causes. A bronze plaque now adorns the wall of the castle, overlooking the ruins of the city, bearing

² Ibid

these words from the conclusion of *Critique of Practical Reason*: "Two things fill the heart with ever renewed and increasing awe and reverence, the more often and the more steadily we meditate upon them: the starry firmament above and the moral law within. In his assertion, Scruton (2001) showed that it is fortunate for the people of Kaliningrad that they are reminded daily of these two things that they can still admire.³

2.2 Immanuel Kant's Works

Following the discussion on Immanuel Kant's life and intellectual background in the previous section, attention now turns to his major philosophical writings that express his ethical and political theories. As one of the most influential figures in modern philosophy, Kant produced a body of work that continues to shape contemporary thought on morality and governance. His writings, particularly those centered on duty, moral law, human autonomy, and justice, are central to understanding his deontological ethical framework. This section will examine his most notable works, with a focus on those that address moral reasoning and the political principles essential for societal advancement. Kant's various work includes

2.2.1. Critique of Pure Reason

³ Scruton, R. (2001). *Kant, a very Short Introduction*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. Pp. 13-14.

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is a foundational text in modern philosophy, where Kant examines the nature and limits of human knowledge. In this work, he argues that our understanding of the world is not a passive reception of sensory data but is instead shaped by the mind.

Kant introduces a transformative idea, known as the "Copernican Revolution," suggesting that the world conforms to the way our mind structures our experiences, rather than the mind simply adapting to the world. The work is divided into two main parts: the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Logic. In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant argues that space and time are not derived from experience but are inherent, a priori forms of intuition that govern all human perception. The Transcendental Logic is divided further into the Transcendental Analytic, where Kant explores the categories of the mind that shape our understanding of experience, and also the Transcendental Dialectic, which critiques metaphysical assumptions like the existence of the soul or God. Kant's critical philosophy maintains that we can only know phenomena, how the world appears to us, but cannot access noumena, the world as it exists independently of perception. According to Paul & Allen (1998), central to Kant's theory is the concept of synthetic a priori knowledge, which refers to knowledge that is both informative and independent of experience, such as mathematical and scientific principles. This challenges earlier

metaphysical ideas and provides a new framework for understanding the relationship between the mind and the external world.⁴

2.2.2. Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals

Immanuel Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* is a foundational text in moral philosophy where he seeks to establish the supreme principle of morality, known as the categorical imperative. He argues that morality must be grounded in pure reason and not derived from empirical or contingent factors like emotion or consequences. The work opens with a preface in which Kant distinguishes between practical anthropology and a pure metaphysics of morals, emphasizing the need for a non-empirical approach to ethics.

In the first section, Kant explores common moral understanding and introduces the concept of a “good will,” which he claims is the only thing good without qualification. He differentiates actions done in accordance with duty from those done from duty, arguing that only the latter have moral worth. Duty, for Kant, arises from respect for the moral law, not from desire or anticipated outcomes.

The second section is the core of the *Groundwork*, where Kant formally introduces the categorical imperative in three formulations. The first is the Formula of Universal Law: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should

⁴ Paul, G., & Allen, W. W. (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 92 - 200.

become a universal law". The second, the Formula of Humanity, demands that we treat humanity, whether in ourselves or others, always as an end and never merely as a means. The third, the Formula of the Kingdom of Ends, envisions a systematic union of rational beings legislating universal moral laws. These formulations express the idea of autonomy and the self-legislating nature of rational agents. Kant bridges metaphysics and moral experience by addressing the idea of freedom. He contends that the moral law implies the freedom of the will, a necessary presupposition for moral obligation. Kant (2002) asserts that while freedom cannot be empirically proven, it is a necessary postulate of practical reason. The section culminates with the assertion that the "fact of reason" our recognition of the moral law is sufficient to ground moral obligation.⁵

2.2.3. Critique of Practical Reason,

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Practical Reason delves into the foundations of morality, asserting that practical reason, and our capacity to act according to principles, reveals the moral law as an inherent "fact of reason." Kant posits that genuine moral actions arise from freedom and that concepts such as God and immortality, while beyond theoretical proof, are essential assumptions for moral life. Ultimately, the work upholds the authority of moral duty as rooted in rational autonomy.

⁵ Kant, I. (2002). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (M. Gregor, Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 41 - 112.

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (1788) is the second work in his series of three major philosophical texts, forming a central part of his critical philosophy. In these works, Kant examines the cognitive faculties of the human mind, aiming to define and limit their use in a priori reasoning, independent of experience. Each Critique addresses a different domain: the Critique of Pure Reason explores theoretical reason in relation to the natural sciences; the Critique of Practical Reason focuses on moral reasoning and the principles governing human actions; and the Critique of Judgment considers our ability to judge beauty and purpose in both nature and art. While the second Critique can be studied independently, a deeper understanding requires recognizing its place within Kant's broader system, particularly in how it completes his rethinking of speculative metaphysics. Kant addresses a crucial issue that had emerged in the Enlightenment: the need to ground morality in a way that is independent of religious or cultural traditions. He critiques earlier approaches, such as those by Leibniz, who attempted to base ethics on rational metaphysics, and Hume, who connected morality to human nature and experience. Kant argues that the principle of morality is not derived from experience but is rooted in pure practical reason, existing independently of speculative metaphysical doctrines. This principle, according to Kant, not only serves as the foundation for ethics but also provides the basis for a rationally acceptable metaphysics. The second Critique

builds upon the first, and Kant (2002) often draws connections between the two works, making it essential to understand its place within his larger philosophical project.⁶

2.2.4. The Metaphysics of Morals,

Immanuel Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* is a crucial part of his ethical philosophy, consisting of two key works: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Metaphysics of Morals*. In these texts, Kant argues that morality is rooted in a priori principles of reason, rather than in empirical experience or human desires. Central to his ethics is the concept of the categorical imperative, a universal moral law that dictates actions based on duty and reason, regardless of personal preferences or outcomes. For Kant, the moral law reflects human autonomy and rationality. He believes that morality is based on pure practical reason, and individuals have a duty to follow moral laws, independent of the consequences. The categorical imperative requires individuals to act only according to principles they could universalize. Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* addresses both the theoretical justification of this moral law and its practical application, covering issues like justice, rights, duties, and moral responsibility. Through this framework, Kant (1996) aims to provide a rational ethical foundation that is separate from religion, tradition, or experience.⁷

⁶ Kant, I. (2002). *Critique of Pure Reason*. (W. S. Pluhar, Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Pp. xv–xvi.

⁷ Kant, I. (1996). *The Metaphysics of Morals*. (M. J. Gregor, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 10–20

2.2.5. Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science.

Here Kant's explores whether metaphysics can truly be regarded as a science. He criticizes earlier metaphysical theories for making unfounded assertions about subjects such as God, the soul, and the universe areas that lie beyond the scope of human experience and cannot be verified through empirical observation. He starts by differentiating between two types of knowledge: a posteriori knowledge, which is derived from experience, and a priori knowledge, which is independent of experience. Since metaphysics deals with concepts that extend beyond what we can observe, Kant argues that it must rely on a priori knowledge, which alone can offer universal and necessary truths.

A major innovation in Kant's philosophy is his concept of synthetic a priori judgments propositions that extend knowledge while not being self-evident, yet are known without reference to experience. For instance, the mathematical truth $7 + 5 = 12$, is not analytically obvious but is understood a priori. This leads Kant to pose a central question: How are synthetic a priori judgments possible? To answer this, he investigates the nature and limits of human cognition.

Kant maintains that the mind actively shapes how we perceive the world. Rather than passively receiving information, the mind organizes sensory data through innate structures namely, the forms of space and time, and certain conceptual categories like

causality, substance, and unity. As a result, we can only know phenomena how things appear to us not noumena things as they exist independently of our perception. By highlighting these limits to human knowledge, Kant establishes clear boundaries for metaphysical inquiry. Kant (2001) concludes that although speculative metaphysics such as proving God's existence or the soul's immortality is not feasible, a critical metaphysics that examines the preconditions for knowledge and experience is both valid and essential.⁸

2.2.6. Critique of Judgement

Kant opens the Critique of Judgment by examining aesthetic judgment, particularly how we experience and evaluate beauty. He claims that judgments about beauty are subjective because they arise from personal feeling rather than from objective concepts. Yet, these judgments also seem to have universal validity when someone says, “This painting is beautiful,” they’re not just expressing a personal taste, but suggesting that others should agree. Kant refers to this as a subjective universal judgment.

He explains that the sense of beauty comes from a harmonious interaction between the imagination and the understanding. When observing something beautiful, our mental faculties engage in a free and balanced way, creating a feeling of pleasure that doesn’t depend on any specific concept or purpose. This is why aesthetic judgments can’t be

⁸ Kant, I. (2001). *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*. (J. W. E, Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. Pp. 7–102.

proven or disproven like scientific claims, but they go beyond mere personal likes or dislikes. Kant also makes a distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. Beauty involves order, symmetry, and pleasing form. The sublime, on the other hand, is linked to vastness, power, and things that surpass our sensory capacity like towering mountains or a violent storm. Such experiences challenge the imagination but still connect with reason, showing the strength of our rational nature in the face of overwhelming natural forces.

In the second part of the book, Kant turns to teleological judgment, which deals with how we perceive purpose in nature. We often view natural structures like organisms as if they were designed with an end goal in mind. Although Kant doesn't claim that nature actually operates according to purposes (as religious or intelligent design views might suggest), he argues that thinking this way is a useful heuristic, which has to do with necessary tool for understanding complex natural systems, especially in biology.

Ultimately, Kant aims to demonstrate that the faculty of judgment acts as a vital connection between the realms of nature and freedom that is, between the mechanistic laws of science and the ethical realm of free moral action. For Kant (1987) it is through the appreciation of beauty and the sublime, individuals can sense a unity between these two worlds, paving the way for a deeper understanding of human existence and moral purpose.⁹

⁹ Kant, I. (1987). *Critique of Judgment*. (S. P. Werner, Ed.). India: Hackett Publishing Company. Pp. 97 - 290.

2.2.7. Religion within the Limit of Reason Alone

Immanuel Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, is a key work in his moral philosophy, where he applies his critical framework to religious thought. Rather than relying on divine revelation or church doctrine, Kant argues that true religion must be grounded in human reason and moral law. Kant's central claim in this work is that religion should be understood as a moral system, and that any legitimate religious belief must align with the principles of reason. He distinguishes between historical religions, which includes, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc. which are based on scriptures, rituals, and traditions, and rational religion, which is based on the moral law accessible to all rational beings. Kant argues that the essence of religion lies in the moral improvement of the individual. He sees moral law (as expressed in his earlier works through the Categorical Imperative) as the true voice of God within us. According to Kant, what matters is not religious observance or external practices, but the inner moral disposition, what he calls the "good will."

A major theme in the book is the struggle between good and evil in human nature. Kant introduces the idea of radical evil, the tendency within every person to prioritize self-interest over moral duty. However, he maintains that human beings also have the capacity for moral regeneration, a free and conscious decision to place duty above inclination, which Kant sees as the true meaning of "conversion" or spiritual rebirth. Kant also reinterprets central Christian concepts, such as: Jesus Christ: He presents Christ

symbolically as the ideal of moral perfection, what humanity should strive toward, rather than as a divine being in a supernatural sense. Grace, salvation, and sin: These are treated not as mystical events, but as moral ideas that reflect a person's inner struggle and growth toward virtue.

Importantly, Kant insists that any religious belief or institution must be subject to the authority of reason. If a religious teaching contradicts morality, it must be rejected. Thus, true religion is moral religion, and anything added to it by tradition or revelation must pass the test of rational moral judgment. In essence, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* seeks to rationalize faith, placing ethics at the heart of religious life. For Kant (1987) it bridges moral philosophy and his views on human spirituality, emphasizing autonomy, moral responsibility, and the supremacy of practical reason.¹⁰

2.3. Immanuel Kant's Influence

Philosophy especially in its moral and political branches plays a crucial role in establishing the values and principles that guide societal organization. Ethical theories serve as important tools for assessing human actions, governmental policies, and institutional frameworks, often contributing to the evolution of legal and political systems. One of the most influential figures in modern moral philosophy is Immanuel Kant, an 18th-century German thinker whose ideas have left a lasting mark on ethics, politics, and jurisprudence. His duty-based moral theory, rooted in rationality and the notion of

¹⁰ Kant, I. *Religion within the Limit of Reason Alone*. (T. M. G. & H. H. H, Eds.). New York: Harper Touchbooks. Pp. 3 - 114.

obligation, provides a powerful lens through which both individual and state behavior can be examined. Before exploring the specific ways in which Kant's philosophy has influenced thought and practice, it is essential to consider the general scope of his contributions and how they continue to resonate in contemporary intellectual and political arenas.

One of the most influential aspects of Kant's philosophy, as Scruton discusses, is his moral theory centered on the categorical imperative. Scruton (1982) explains how this principle acting only on maxims that can be willed as universal laws provided a new framework for ethical decision-making, emphasizing duty over consequences.¹¹

This deontological approach had far reaching implications, shaping modern debates on human rights, justice, and legal responsibility. According to Scruton (1982), Kant's insistence that individuals should be treated as ends in themselves and never merely as means established a moral foundation that continues to inform legal systems and human rights discourse today.¹²

Scruton (1982) also delves into Kant's political philosophy, particularly his vision of a rational, lawful society based on individual freedom and moral responsibility. In his later political writings, especially in "Perpetual Peace," Kant advocated for a federation of free states governed by the rule of law, foreshadowing ideas that would influence institutions

¹¹ Scruton, R. (1982). *Kant*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 77–89.

¹² *Ibid.*,

like the United Nations and the European Union. Scruton highlights how these political ideals were grounded in Kant's broader moral philosophy, showing a direct link between ethical autonomy and political freedom. Thus, Kant's influence extends beyond abstract philosophy into the concrete structures of democratic governance and international law.¹³

In addition, Scruton outlines how Kant revolutionized metaphysics and epistemology by proposing that the human mind actively structures experience. This "Copernican revolution" in philosophy shifted the focus from the external world to the conditions under which we perceive it. As Scruton (1982) notes, this had a lasting influence not only on subsequent philosophers like Hegel and Schopenhauer but also on entire schools of thought such as German Idealism and modern analytic philosophy. Kant's ideas laid the groundwork for future philosophical inquiries into knowledge, perception, and reality.¹⁴

Ultimately, Scruton (1982) presents Kant as a thinker whose influence is both broad and deep reaching into ethics, politics, epistemology, and aesthetics. His insistence on the primacy of reason, the dignity of the individual, and the universality of moral law continues to shape philosophical and political discourse around the world.¹⁵

2.4. Kant's Deontological Ethics: Meaning and Perspectives.

Kant's deontological ethics, as presented in both his original writings and scholarly interpretations, is a moral theory that prioritizes duty, rationality, and the inherent

¹³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴ Scruton, R. (2001). *Kant: A Very Short Introduction*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 112 - 128

¹⁵ *Ibid.*,

morality of actions regardless of their consequences. In this view, the moral worth of an action lies not in the outcome it produces but in the intention behind it and whether it conforms to a universal moral law. The central concept in Kant's ethics is the categorical imperative, a principle that commands universally and unconditionally, unlike hypothetical imperatives which depend on personal desires or ends. Kant defines it famously as: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." This emphasizes moral consistency, if it would be wrong for everyone to do an action, then it is wrong for anyone to do it.

Kant holds that humans, as rational beings, are capable of recognizing moral law through reason alone. Therefore, moral action is not based on emotions, consequences, or divine command but rather on pure rationality. Acting morally means acting out of respect for the moral law, not for any external reward or outcome. This is why for Kant (1998) ethics is described as deontological from the Greek word *deon*, meaning "duty." For Kant, doing one's duty for the sake of duty itself is the essence of moral behavior. This ethical stance stands in direct contrast to consequentialist theories like utilitarianism, where the ends can justify the means.¹⁶

Kant also insists on the inherent dignity of human beings, maintaining that people should always be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means to an end. This concept underpins modern human rights discourse and has been instrumental in shaping legal and

¹⁶ Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (M. Gregor, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 397–401.

political thought. It emphasizes the equal moral worth of all individuals and the importance of respecting their autonomy. Scruton also outlines how Kant sought to establish a foundation for morality rooted in the rational nature of human beings. He presents Kant's ethics as a response to the relativism and emotionalism of other moral theories, showing how the categorical imperative offers a universal and objective standard for right and wrong. Scruton (1982) explains that for Kant, the moral law is not imposed from the outside but is the law that rational beings give to themselves, highlighting Kant's emphasis on autonomy.¹⁷

Scruton (1982) also addresses common criticisms of Kant's theory, such as its perceived rigidity or its potential for conflict between duties, but maintains that Kant's ethical system remains one of the most powerful frameworks for understanding moral responsibility and justice. The book does not just outline the mechanics of Kant's theory but also situates it within the broader philosophical tradition, showing how it has influenced everything from legal systems to contemporary debates in moral philosophy.¹⁸

Kant's three formulations of the categorical imperative, although expressed differently, all share the same central idea of moral duty based on reason and respect for people. The first formulation, called the Formula of Universal Law, says that we should act only on rules that we can imagine everyone else following too. This means asking if our action would work if everyone did it. For example, if everyone lied, trust would break down,

¹⁷ Scruton, R. (1982). *Kant*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 67–77.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

and lying itself wouldn't work anymore. So, actions that can't be followed by everyone are wrong according to this formulation.

The second formulation, called the Formula of Humanity or the Formula of Ends, focuses on the value of each person. It says we should treat people as ends in themselves, not as tools to achieve our own goals. This idea shows how Kant values human dignity and autonomy, meaning we should not use others for our benefit, even if the result seems good.

The third formulation, called the Formula of Autonomy or the Kingdom of Ends, suggests that each person should act as if they are making the rules of morality for everyone. This means seeing oneself not just as following moral laws, but as a part of creating them, working together with others in a society where everyone is treated equally. This formulation emphasizes that moral laws should come from our rational will and be accepted by everyone.

Together, these formulations strengthen Kant's idea that morality is based on reason, not on what happens as a result of our actions or our personal desires. Every action should be guided by duty and universal principles, focusing on respect, fairness, and consistency in how we treat others.

CHAPTER THREE
KANT'S DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN
NIGERIA.

3.1. Immanuel Kant's Moral Philosophy

Kant was said to have been dumbfounded about the fact that human are aware of the existence of moral law. He was also said to have believe that moral law does exist, and this moral law is derivable through reasoning. And for him moral rules does exist and they are equally binding, and that moral laws are being known without a single reference to any consequences. According to Bowie (2001), Kant's says, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing aspiration and awe.... the starry heavens about me and the moral law within me...."¹ Then there comes a very important question which is what kind of statement did Kant think moral law are?

In Kant's word, "Statement of knowledge can be a priori, which has to do with knowledge without reference or that which is prior to experience". An example of a priori knowledge would be $1 + 1 = 2$. One doesn't need experience to know that when you add 1's together, you will get 2. An example of a posteriori knowledge is " the squirrel is behind the tree", one can only know whether this is true by looking to confirm it, and this looking that leads to confirmation is experience.

¹ Bowie, R. A. (2001). *Ethical studies*. United Kingdom: Nelson Thornes Ltd, p. 55.

Another distinction can be made here which has to do with the fact that knowledge may be analytic. This analytic implies that the predicate may say something about the subject, for instance let's look at the statement " All unmarried men are bachelors" here we can see that the statement need no further fact from an external source, there is no need to go round checking mainly because it's necessarily true, true by it's own authority, the apriori example $1 + 1 = 2$, also needs no further information apart from the sum itself, It can be called a priori analytic.

Bowie (2001) also knowledge maybe synthetic. It may require an empirical test which include observation measurement or experiments. The statement Jack is a butler isn't necessarily to because we need an external information that claims that he is a butler. There's not internal link to the word "Jack" and "Butler". So the fact that he is Jack, does not necessary mean that he is a Butler, because not all Jack are Butler, or even the worse cases, no Jack might even be a butler. Synthetic statement maybe true or false. The statement "Jack is a butler is also a posteriori, as it's knowable after experience. Therefore we call it 'a posteriori synthetic'.²

Kant was said to have believe that statement of facts are either 'a priori analytic', such as 'jack is a butler'. Moral judgement, however, belong to a different category. We can't prove what people should be looking, so moral judgement must be 'a priori'. Moral knowledge is gained by pure reason and not true sense experience. However statement as

² *Ibid*, 55

moral judgement may be right or wrong, they are also synthetic, so moral statements are called 'a priori synthetic'. Bowie (2001) further posits that ethical statements are a priori synthetic = knowable true reason not sensation or experience, and may or may not be true.³

Similarly, Kant in Bowie (2001), argues that ethics requires a metaphysics of morals. Moral judgments concern how things ought to be, not just how they are. Since experience can only tell us what is, it cannot determine what we ought to do. Moral requirements, then, must also be known a priori, and like in physics, they must be synthetic a priori if they are to be valid at all.⁴

In *The Groundwork*, Kant aims to establish the foundation of this metaphysics of morals by identifying its most basic principle, the categorical imperative. This principle holds that we are morally obligated to act only according to maxims that can be universalized, that is, reasons for action that any rational being could will as a universal law. Bowie (2001) believes that not all actions meet this test; thus, the categorical imperative sets real constraints on what is morally permissible.⁵

Though *The Groundwork* introduces this supreme moral principle, it is only the starting point. Kant further developed his moral philosophy in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, where he explored concrete duties in detail from personal matters like friendship and self-care to public issues like justice, war, and revolution.

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁵ *Ibid.*,

Ultimately, Kant(1998) shows that if morality is to be rational and universally binding, it must rest on synthetic a priori principles, just as natural science does. Ethics, therefore, is not merely a matter of opinion or emotion but of reason and principle.⁶

3.1.1 Hypothetical and Categorical Imperatives

In practical reasoning, Kant distinguishes between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. Hypothetical imperatives are conditional commands that take the form of “If... then...” statements, such as, “If you want to stay, be polite.” They are valid insofar as they follow the logical principle that whoever wills an end must also will the means to that end. This principle is analytic, meaning its truth is derived solely from the meaning of the concepts involved. However, despite their validity, hypothetical imperatives are never objective; they apply only to individuals who adopt the relevant ends. Even the so-called “counsels of prudence,” which advise on actions that promote happiness, fall into this category. Although all humans naturally seek happiness, such imperatives lack necessity and are based on contingent desires. Therefore, they do not amount to genuine moral duties, as moral duty presupposes action contrary to inclination. In this respect, Kant (1998) shows that hypothetical imperatives express heteronomy, the subjection of

⁶ Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (M. Gregor, Trans.; C. M. Korsgaard, Intro.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. vii - xv.

the will to something external, such as desire or inclination, and do not qualify as moral imperatives.⁷

Categorical imperatives helps us to know which action are obligatory and also which actions are forbidden, here it does tell us what to do. "All imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically, if the action will be good simply as a means of something else then the imperative is hypothetical but if the action is represented as good in itself then imperative is categorical".

Kant argued that morality is prescriptive it does prescribe moral behavior. Once you are aware of immoral requirements your awareness is a reason for doing something. Moral statement are said to be categorical in that they do prescribe action in respective of the results it brings.

A categorical imperative differ from an hypothetical imperative which doesn't prescribe all demand any action. Hypothetical imperative are conditional. If I want x, I must do y'. If I want to lose weight I want to go on a diet. If you want a sandwich open the fridge. These various impurities are not more. According to Kant (1998) the only moral imperatives were categorical: I ought to do such and such. For example, I ought to tell the truth. This makes no reference to desire or needs.⁸

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

By contrast, categorical imperatives command unconditionally. They are not contingent on any particular desire or goal and do not rely on an “if.” Instead, they apply universally and necessarily. For example, the imperative “You ought to shut the door” does not depend on any specific interest; it expresses an obligation grounded in reason itself. A command becomes genuinely categorical only if the reason for obeying it lies in the action’s inherent rationality, not in some external outcome. Kant holds that true moral imperatives must take this categorical form. If morality is to have genuine authority, it cannot be conditional upon personal motives, but must instead spring from reason alone.

However, this raises a critical question: how are categorical imperatives possible? Unlike hypothetical imperatives, which are analytic and derive their authority from an agent’s ends, categorical imperatives are synthetic a priori: they are not derived from experience, yet they apply universally and necessarily. They must be founded entirely in reason, without recourse to empirical considerations such as human desires or inclinations. Thus, Kant critiques all moral systems of his time that based ethics on human nature or happiness, arguing that they fail to explain how objective moral obligations, synthetic a priori truths are possible.

Kant also introduces the categorical imperative as the supreme principle of morality. Although he claims there is fundamentally only one categorical imperative, he presents it in several formulations, each highlighting different aspects of the same rational law. For

Kant (1998), the most well-known of these is: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."⁹

To derive this principle, Kant argues that one must abstract from all personal desires, interests, and empirical conditions. From this standpoint—the perspective of a purely rational being, or what he calls the “intelligible world”—the only justifiable principles are those that can be universally applied. A maxim (a personal principle or motive) becomes morally permissible only if it can be willed as a universal law for all rational beings.

Kant (1998) further asserts that the second key formulation of the categorical imperative is: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means."¹⁰

Here, Kant emphasizes that rational beings have intrinsic worth. Autonomy—the capacity to legislate moral law for oneself makes each person an end in themselves. Thus, moral law requires that we respect others’ rationality and never use them solely as instruments for our own purposes. This formulation forms the foundation of the modern concept of rights, distinguishing persons (who possess moral worth) from things (which do not).

⁹ Kant, *Op. Cit.*, p.429

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The third formulation of the categorical imperative is according to Kant (1998): "So act as if you were through your maxims a legislating member in a universal kingdom of ends"¹¹

This version presents a vision of a moral community governed by universal laws freely adopted by rational agents. Each person acts not only as a subject who obeys the moral law but also as a sovereign who legislates it. In this "kingdom of ends," all individuals are treated with equal dignity, and laws are valid only if they respect the autonomy of all rational beings.

In Kant's *Moral Intuitions and Common Morality*, Kant believes that all these formulations of the categorical imperative are unified by the concept of autonomy the capacity of rational agents to govern themselves according to reason. He also maintains that his theory supports and systematizes our everyday moral intuitions, much like how the principles of the understanding underpin scientific knowledge. His ethics aims to rationally justify the moral beliefs shared across cultures and individuals, drawing inspiration from the British moralists like Shaftesbury, who argued that moral principles are universally agreeable to rational minds.

Kant identifies several intuitive aspects of common morality that his theory explains:

1. The Content of Morality: Moral rules demand that we respect others and ourselves, avoid making exceptions in our own favor, and recognize the equal

¹¹ *Ibid.*

moral standing of all individuals. The second formulation of the categorical imperative supports specific prohibitions such as those against murder, theft, deception, and coercion as well as the duty to respect others' rights and to adopt an impartial perspective in moral judgment.

2. The Authority of Morality: According to Kant, moral obligations do not compete with desires or personal interests; they override them. Moral duty presents itself as a command we feel compelled to obey, even when we wish to act otherwise. This explains why moral obligations feel binding: they are rooted in reason and autonomy, not in inclination or external threats. For instance, Kant (1998) asserts that if someone were promised the satisfaction of a powerful desire at the cost of performing a morally heinous act (such as betraying a friend or killing an innocent person), the moral law's authority would still outweigh the temptation.¹²

3.1.2 Kant's Deontological Ethics

Deontology is a prominent ethical theory derived from the Greek terms *deon* (meaning "duty") and *logos* (meaning "science" or "study"). It belongs to the family of normative moral theories concerned with identifying which actions are morally obligatory, permissible, or forbidden. Unlike consequentialist approaches, which evaluate the morality of actions based on their outcomes, deontological ethics also asserts that certain actions are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their consequences.

¹² *Ibid.*

Immanuel Kant stands as a central figure in the development of deontological ethics. For Kant, morality is rooted not in the ends an action achieves but in the adherence to moral rules or principles that possess intrinsic worth. These principles are not subject to calculation or utility; rather, they are to be followed as universal moral laws. In this framework, moral agents are bound by duties that must be discharged irrespective of potential outcomes.

Deontologists argue that moral norms guide not only what we ought to do but also place limits on what we must never do, even if violating such norms might yield better results overall. For instance, Udayakumar & Babu (2021) posits that one is not morally permitted to perform a wrong act even to prevent multiple other wrongs. Thus, deontological ethics emphasizes that the "right" takes precedence over the "good."¹³

Deontological ethics is concerned with actions undertaken because they are inherently right, not merely because they lead to desirable outcomes. Such actions are viewed as universally binding, necessary, unconditional, and absolute. The word deontology comes from the Greek term *deon*, meaning “duty” or “what ought to be done.” This ethical framework is grounded in the idea that individuals have an inherent obligation to act in accordance with moral principles, regardless of the consequences. In this view, Scruton

¹³ Udayakumar, L., & Babu, S. S. (2021). Immanuel Kant’s Deontology Theory. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)*, 8(2), 235–243.

(2001) opines that morality arises from a sense of duty to follow objective moral laws applicable to all rational beings.¹⁴

Unlike teleological ethics, which justifies actions based on their intended goals or outcomes, deontology insists that the morality of an action lies in its adherence to duty. The Greek root *telos*, meaning “end” or “goal,” underscores this contrast. Similarly, consequentialism evaluates actions based on the results they produce, but deontology rejects this by asserting that right actions must be done for their own sake. Kant’s moral philosophy is firmly deontological. Scruton (2001) argued that “Kant’s ethical theory is not dependent upon any empirical factors such as consequences... For him, the notion of rightness of actions is grounded a priori in reason¹⁵. Thus, for Scruton (2001), Kant holds a deontological view of ethics.” This means Kant believed that moral actions are motivated by duty alone, without regard for external benefits or its consequences, an idea which he famously summarized as “duty for duty’s sake”.¹⁶

Deontology assesses the morality of actions based on their adherence to duty-bound principles, not on the benefits they produce. According to Scruton (1982), moral conduct, under this view, involves acting rightly for the sake of duty itself, guided by universal ethical laws.¹⁷

¹⁴ Scruton, R. (2001). *Kant: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 85 - 95.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹⁷ Scruton, *Op. Cit.*

Kantian ethics is fundamentally rooted in the idea of universal rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, right to privacy, and freedom of choice. Kant held that the only thing that is unqualifiedly good is a good will. Unlike things that are good merely as means to an end, a good will is intrinsically good, good in itself, independent of consequences or circumstances.

Despite its rigorous moral demands, deontology allows a degree of flexibility. For example, one is not required to sacrifice their entire wellbeing to fulfill a moral duty; the principle must be applied in a balanced way that considers the moral law alongside individual dignity and reason.

One branch of deontological theory, agent-centered deontology places emphasis on the moral agent's principles and motivations. According to this view, the morality of an act depends on the maxims from which the agent acts. This idea also traces its roots back to Kant, who insisted that moral agents must act out of duty and not for the sake of achieving desirable consequences.

However, deontological ethics is not without criticism. One key objection is that it can lead to moral absolutism, offering no room for exceptions even when rigid adherence to a moral law may seem harmful or counterintuitive. Critics argue that such rigidity may conflict with practical moral decision-making and socially accepted behaviors. For example, always telling the truth, even when a lie might save a life, can seem morally counterproductive.

Moreover, moral relativists argue that morality is not always universal; different societies may uphold different moral codes, making it difficult to apply a single standard universally. Even so, deontological ethics remains a strong framework for moral reasoning, providing clear principles that emphasize the importance of human dignity, duty, and the intrinsic worth of moral action. This for Scruton (1982), encourages decision-making based not on convenience or outcome but on what is ethically right.¹⁸

Also, while deontology, especially in its Kantian form, offers an uncompromising commitment to duty and moral law, it also recognizes the autonomy of moral agents and their responsibility to act with integrity in a morally ordered world.

3.2 Political Development and it's challenges In Nigeria

The phrase political development combines two distinct concepts politics and development each of which is independently complex and laden with theoretical implications. When juxtaposed, a critical question arises as to whether their conjunction yields a meaningful and analytically useful construct. Indeed, a survey of the relevant literature reveals that the term is employed variably by different authors, each assigning it unique interpretations aligned with specific ideological or disciplinary perspectives. This inconsistency for Arnopoulos (1995) underscores the necessity for conceptual clarification.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹ Arnopoulos, P. (1995). *Defining Political Development*. Toronto: Guernica Editions, pp. 1-17.

Arnopoulos, P. (1995) went further to argue that while political development remains an elusive and contested construct, the endeavor to define and clarify it is indispensable. It is only through rigorous conceptual analysis that scholars and practitioners alike can engage in informed dialogue and contribute to the advancement of political thought and practice.²⁰

While talking about political development, we can't talk about it and ignore the major elements like government, governance etc. Here we can see that the idea of government according to Aliyu (2013) is "the structure and processes through which rules or policies are authoritatively determined for society as a whole " which means that things like decision-making institution and many other things make up the society as a whole. So from this we can say that the governmental position bring about authority all the use or exercise of power.²¹

Aliyu, (2013) asserts that, in politics there is what referred to as the governor and the governed which is what Micheal Foucault calls binary power. In qualities as you can see government do exist so it have to help sustain the well-being of the people in the state this function can be said to be very crucial to the idea of government such that even

²⁰ *Ibid.*,

²¹ Aliyu, A. B. (2013). Government and the Nature of Governance. In O. A. Oyeshile & F. Offor (Eds.), *Ethics, Governance and Social Order in Africa: Essays in Honour of Godwin S. Sogolo*. Ibadan: Zenith BookHouse. pp. 87-93.

where a conflict seems to have evolved due to some private and inner actions which tense to lead to a negative public consequences.²²

Aliyu (2013) further posits that, Governance can be understood as the workers of government generally their impact on the governed, their manner of operation".²³ Governors can also be viewed as the process which absolute the relationship and political nuances between and the policy maker and citizen. Although Power is at the core of politics, but it's not something that can be seen, nor that which could just be grasped like the way a monkey grasp a banana.

Okoosi-Simbine, (2008) sees political development in Nigeria as the transformation and strengthening of the political system to enhance democratic governance, institutional efficiency, civic participation, and social justice. He further asserts that, since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria's political trajectory has been shaped by colonial legacies, military interventions, civil conflict, and ethnic and religious diversity.²⁴

Despite adopting democratic structures, Nigeria faces persistent challenges such as electoral malpractice, weak institutions, corruption, insecurity, and the marginalization of minority groups. These factors hinder the consolidation of democratic values and the rule of law. Nonetheless, recent constitutional reforms, civil society activism, and increasing youth participation show prospects for improved political accountability and governance.

²² *Ibid.*,

²³ *Ibid.*,

²⁴ Okoosi-Simbine, A. T. (2008). Understanding the Dynamics of Youth Political Apathy in Nigeria. *Journal of African Elections*, 7(1), 55–76.

Political development must transcend the mechanical repetition of electoral rituals or the consolidation of administrative institutions. It must instead be directed toward the cultivation of a just, equitable, and genuinely participatory political order. Despite Nigeria's abundant resources, Ntyil (2020) says the country remains entangled in systemic failures that raise deeper philosophical questions about authority, justice, and collective identity.²⁵

The nation's colonial legacy instituted a political framework grounded in division and control rather than unity and self-determination. This historical distortion continues to haunt contemporary governance, eroding the legitimacy of institutions and alienating citizens from the state. Furthermore, ethnic and religious identities, rather than fostering pluralism, are often weaponized, leading to exclusion, antagonism, and fragmented national consciousness.

These dynamics are not merely political, they are moral. When politics ceases to promote the common good and instead amplifies division and exploitation, it violates the ethical foundation of political community. Corruption, in this sense, is not only a failure of governance; it is a profound moral breach that undermines trust and erodes public conscience. Institutions tasked with curbing such misconduct are themselves often compromised, further entrenching a culture of impunity.

²⁵ Ntyil, V. M. (2020). Kant's Deontological Ethics and Its Relevance to Political Development in the Society. *Albertine Journal of Philosophy*, 4, 71–76.

Elections, intended as expressions of popular sovereignty, have become spectacles of fraud and coercion. This raises a critical philosophical issue about legitimacy: Can a regime that ascends to power through morally defective means possess true authority? Without electoral integrity, democracy degenerates into a hollow performance devoid of authentic representation.

The remnants of authoritarianism, inherited from decades of military rule, continue to distort political behavior. Even in civilian governments, the logic of command and domination persists, suffocating democratic engagement and diminishing civic autonomy. This authoritarian hangover is further exacerbated by widespread insecurity, which not only threatens lives but also undermines the very basis of the social contract. A state that fails to protect its citizens forfeits its moral right to rule.

Nigeria's youth, despite being the demographic majority, remain politically marginalized. This exclusion represents a contradiction at the heart of any democratic claim. A political system that silences the voices of its most vibrant and numerous citizens cannot lay claim to democratic legitimacy. Beyond politics, this is a philosophical indictment of a system that ignores the principles of inclusion, equality, and generational justice.

Poverty, too, functions as a mechanism of political disenfranchisement. It reduces citizens to mere instruments of political transaction, votes are purchased, allegiance is rented, and political agency is commodified. This situation reflects a grave ethical violation, where human dignity is sacrificed on the altar of material desperation.

Legal and constitutional ambiguity further frustrate efforts at reform. A constitution is meant to embody the principles of justice, order, and the common good. When it is riddled with contradictions and fails to resolve the tensions between different levels of government, it becomes a source of conflict rather than a framework for harmony.

The challenges that beset Nigeria's political development are ultimately moral and philosophical in nature. They call for more than institutional adjustments or legal reforms, they demand a reawakening of ethical consciousness and a reconfiguration of our collective values. In Kant (2002) opinion, it is only when politics is subordinated to morality, and when public life is governed by duty, justice, and reason, can we begin to construct a truly democratic and humane society.²⁶

In Kant (2002) view, true political development requires not only free and fair elections but also a culture of respect for human rights, political tolerance, an independent judiciary, and robust checks and balances. So therefore, the entrenchment of deontological ethical values, like justice, fairness, and duty could provide the moral framework for Nigeria's political elites and institutions to act in the national interest.²⁷

3.3 Kant De-Ontological Ethics and Nigeria Political Development.

At the heart of his Kant moral theory are the concepts of duty, the categorical imperative, and the rational autonomy of individuals. His philosophy emphasizes acting according to

²⁶ Kant, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 44–46.

²⁷ *Ibid.*,

maxims that can be willed as universal laws, a principle that does help guides moral reasoning and behavior.

In Nigeria, where political conduct is often shaped by corruption, self-interest, and a disregard for ethical norms, Kant's insistence on moral duty can provide a much-needed corrective. He maintains that political decisions must conform to moral laws, rather than being guided by convenience or utilitarian outcomes. According to Kant, morality must always precede politics. Whenever the two appear to clash, it usually signals the intrusion of private interests overriding ethical judgment.

Kant believed that truly moral actions stem from rational commitment to do what is right, not from emotional inclination or anticipated rewards. This sharply contrasts with the Nigerian political culture, where decisions are frequently made based on what benefits a select few. Kant's theory demands a higher standard—one grounded in the inherent dignity of persons and a universal moral order.

There is also an emphasizes that ethics is a prescriptive discipline, offering norms for how human beings ought to live. This implies that politics must operate within moral boundaries and be accountable to ethical standards. Ethics serves as a compass for evaluating political leadership and ensuring that public service aligns with justice and integrity. Kant's ethical vision reinforces the necessity of unwavering moral principles, even when confronted with political pressure or temptation.

Applying Kantian ethics to Nigeria requires a national reawakening to the importance of duty, moral law, and respect for human dignity. This for Kant (2002) challenges the dominant culture of corruption and calls for actions that are justified not by their effects but by their moral worth. Only by grounding its politics in such ethical foundations can Nigeria hope to rebuild a just and functional political order.²⁸

Kant maintains that there exists no essential dichotomy between politics and morality. The two are not merely compatible, they are interdependent. Political actions, if they are to be legitimate, must be grounded in moral principles. Where a conflict is perceived, it is often an invention of political actors motivated by self-interest rather than any genuine incompatibility. As Kant articulates, politics without moral orientation is directionless, and its entanglements are resolved only when morality assumes its rightful guiding role.

The political culture in Nigeria, however, largely treats ethics as an inconvenience or an obstruction. Political engagement is widely seen as a game of manipulation and brute survival, played without ethical boundaries. This perception has rendered politics in Nigeria a realm bereft of normative rules and guided more by power and personal gain than by principles of justice and moral duty.

Kant's moral framework, with its emphasis on goodwill, duty for its own sake, the categorical imperative, and the autonomy of rational agents, offers a compelling ethical foundation for reconstituting the Nigerian political structure. His insistence on treating

²⁸ *Ibid.*,

humanity as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end speaks directly to the endemic exploitation in Nigerian political practice. The argument here is not simply that Nigeria needs ethics, but that it needs a robust, principled, and universalist ethical system, precisely the kind offered by Kantian deontology.

From the lens of this critique, it becomes reasonable to view Nigeria's political degeneration as a manifestation of moral deficiency. One could characterize it as a form of ethical paralysis, a condition where the very notion of moral responsibility is eroded. This is echoed in the reflections of some scholars who argue that the collapse of ethical consciousness has left the nation without a compass. In such a moral void, Kant (2002) says humans lose their dignity and are driven by impulses that strip them of their humanity.²⁹

Ethics, properly understood, is not a mere intellectual pursuit; it is the normative science of right conduct, the discipline that instructs human beings on how they ought to live. It judges actions not by their outcomes, but by their inherent worth, and it demands that individuals govern themselves by principles that could be universalized without contradiction. It is, therefore, not optional in political life, it is essential.

Moreover, ethics addresses fundamental questions that speak to both personal and collective life: Should one act deceitfully? Should public office be used for personal gain? Can violence ever serve the common good? These are not abstract inquiries but urgent

²⁹ *Ibid.*,

moral dilemmas embedded in the Nigerian context—corruption, vote-buying, academic fraud, and political violence are not just legal or institutional failures; they are moral crises.

Such questions require not only reflection but an unwavering commitment to moral principles. Ethics provides the philosophical infrastructure needed to deliberate on these issues, to distinguish between what is permissible and what is condemnable. Through the cultivation of moral reasoning, citizens are empowered to challenge injustice, resist manipulation, and insist on accountability.

In essence, ethics is the guardian of human dignity and the custodian of social order. As such, this article endeavors to apply Kant's moral philosophy to expose the moral bankruptcy and ethical decay in Nigeria's polity. Political progress, if it is to be meaningful, must be clothed in the garments of morality. It is this moral garment, structured by duty, guided by reason, and justified by universal principles, that Kantian ethics can provide.

3.4 The Relevance of Kant's Ethics in Contemporary Nigerian Politics

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy, particularly his deontological ethics, offers a profound framework for interrogating the moral foundations of political action. At its core, Kantian ethics emphasizes duty, universal moral laws, and the intrinsic worth of rational beings. It posits that moral actions must be performed not out of expediency or consequence but from a sense of obligation to the moral law as dictated by reason Kant.

For Kant (2002), the guiding principle of this ethical framework is the categorical imperative, which commands that one ought to act only according to maxims that can be willed as universal laws.³⁰

When applied to contemporary Nigerian politics, Kant's ethics illuminates both a critique and a challenge. Nigeria's political landscape is frequently marred by moral inconsistencies: corruption, tribalism, electoral manipulation, self-interest, and a general disregard for the rule of law. These actions are often motivated by consequences—wealth, power, or survival rather than a principled commitment to what ought to be done. Kant would categorize such political behavior as heteronomous, driven by external incentives rather than by the moral autonomy of rational will.

The relevance of Kant's deontology in this context lies in its insistence on universal moral standards that transcend personal interest or political gain. If Nigerian political actors were to adopt Kant (2002) first formulation of the categorical imperative, "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law"³¹ then policies and decisions would be made from a standpoint of moral consistency, justice, and integrity. This would mean that actions such as electoral rigging, nepotism, or embezzlement, which cannot be universally willed without undermining the political system, would be rejected outright.

³⁰ *Ibid.*,

³¹ *Ibid.*,

Furthermore, Kant's insistence on treating humanity, both in oneself and in others, "always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means" Kant speaks directly to the crisis of human dignity in Nigeria's socio-political structure. Exploiting citizens for political expediency, inciting violence for electoral victories, or weaponizing poverty for vote-buying violates this imperative. Thus, Kant (2002) offers a moral lens through which to rethink political legitimacy, governance, and civic responsibility in Nigeria.³²

However, there are limitations to Kantian ethics when applied to Nigerian political realities. First, the rigidity of Kant's deontology may fail to account for the complexities and contingencies of political life in a postcolonial, economically stratified society. In contexts where moral decisions are entangled with survival, Kant's strict rejection of consequences may appear detached from the lived realities of many Nigerians. For instance, a politician faced with choosing between enforcing moral law and responding to urgent ethnic or economic pressures might find Kant's framework insufficiently flexible.

Second, Kant assumes that all rational agents have access to the moral law through reason. Yet, in Nigeria, widespread illiteracy, poverty, and institutional decay may undermine the capacity for autonomous moral deliberation. Structural challenges such as failed education systems, political patronage networks, and weak enforcement of law hinder the cultivation of a moral polity envisioned by Kant.

³² *Ibid.*,

Moreover, Kant's ethics operates within a framework of individual morality, but the Nigerian context demands an ethical theory that accommodates communal and relational responsibilities, core to African ethical systems such as Ubuntu. Kant (2002) focus on individual autonomy may therefore need to be supplemented with more context-sensitive, community-oriented paradigms that reflect African moral traditions.³³

While Kantian ethics provides a compelling normative model for political action grounded in moral duty, universality and human dignity, its successful application in Nigeria requires a nuanced engagement that considers the socio-political peculiarities of the Nigerian state. It is not enough to invoke duty for its own sake; the moral regeneration of Nigerian politics must involve both principled frameworks like Kant's and contextually relevant strategies for cultivating political virtue and institutional reform

³³ *Ibid.*,

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Evaluation

Kant's deontological ethics are concern about actions, and not the consequences it's brings, although it is not our duty to do what we are unable to do, since for Kant the fact that something ought to be done by us, implies that such thing could be possible. And even though Kant rejects theological arguments, his ethical view are tilted towards God's existence and immortality, in his view of Kant (1998) "summum bonum", which does seek ultimate end, a state in which human virtue and happiness are together. Categorical imperatives is also one of the cores of his teaching, he made assertion to the fact that we know what action are obligatory and what action are not.¹

Approaching Nigeria political philosophy through the lens of Kant deontological ethics, it's clear that Nigeria leaders have failed in their hypothetical imperatives' duties. There also seems to be no governmental policy or projects that just benefit a politician and its associates, but instead, it's benefits all the structures in governmental power, including, the federal, state and local, making only those at the ground roots suffer. According to

¹ Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (M. Gregor, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oghujah (2018), this will result in the social, political and economic woes in which the people are forced to endure.²

Corruption begins when any member of the political officials of government tries to act selfishly, ignoring their duty to serve the public. And every political officials are important mainly because they all entered into an agreement with the public, the masses, which is the social contract. And when any public servants act out of duty, there won't be anything like the term "corruption", but it's sad that most of those public servants are in lack of the "goodwill", which mainly has to do with putting public gain above personal gain. This corruption is also evident in our day-to-day life, for example that of Nigeria, the corruption of awarding contract has led to some various issues and challenges that are being faced by the countries. Because of this so - called corruption, Nigeria are now in great need for better road, electricity and services. But corruption works against all this mainly because the people in charge awards the various contracts based on bribery, and also based on the percentage that will be awarded to them. And as a result of this, Oghujah (2018) believes that the masses and the citizens suffers more, while the bribery gotten are being wasted on expensive and useless things.³

The corruption of the country is also evident in the ongoing issues and lack of accountability in Nigeria's government, despite they covering themselves up, with the

² Oghujah, C. I. (2018). Kant's Deontological Ethics and the Paucity of Goodwill of Nigeria's Political Class. *Sapientia: Journal of Philosophy*, 9, 109–113.

³ *Ibid.*,

fact that they are trying to recover stolen funds. The EFCC Chairman was said to have claimed that they recovered more stolen money in 11 months than the previous 12 years, thanks to political will. Some various significant individuals who occupied and once occupied public office are said to have been investigated, and one of which is, Col. Sambo Dasuki, who was said to have been linked to a corrupted arms funds, which was estimated to be about \$2.1 billion. Other corruption cases includes that of the NNPC issues, termed the "Maritime scandal, NNPC issues, Mainagate issue" remained unsolved, while those accused lives lavishly. Oghujah (2018) asserts that past leader like General Babangida and Sani Abacha were linked to massive theft, with little justice served.⁴

Under previous president Obasanjo, huge sum of money was said to have been spent on Abuja stadium, but lo and behold, there's little or nothing to show for it. Billions of government money are hidden away, without any sense of accountability. The root of these various problems still remain the same, which is "a lack of goodwill among government and public officials, who enrich themselves at the expense of the ordinary citizens. Despite the various recovery efforts, Oghujah (2018) still believes that corruption remains widespread and unchecked, causing huge losses for the country and also the people living residing there.⁵

The invasion of the residences of several Supreme Court and Court of Appeal judges by DSS operatives, alongside the allegations of large sums of money being uncovered and

⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁵ *Ibid.*,

discovered, is deeply troubling. Should these claims hold true, they reinforce the public's long-held doubts about the integrity of justice delivery within both the Bar and the Bench. It is indeed distressing when a judge, entrusted with upholding justice, abandons goodwill and accepts bribes to manipulate judgments in favor of the highest bidder. Similarly, the gruesome killings of innocent farmers and residents across communities in Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Enugu, Edo, and other southern states by armed Fulani herdsmen, and the indifferent reaction of the Presidency and the Inspector General of Police, clearly expose the absence of political goodwill among the nation's leaders. When acts of terrorism are trivialized as nothing more than "communal clashes," it signals a dangerous future where further needless bloodshed becomes inevitable. For Oghujah (2018), it appears that society has become accustomed to a disturbing lack of goodwill in both political leadership and social life.⁶

Various problems of corruption and bribery are said to have emerged, because of the various problems of corruption and bribery affecting Nigerian, which includes the misconduct of the judges who uphold justice, while doing illegal things beneath the surface, also the killings of farmers and innocent people around venue, allocation of money without any concrete and practical evidences on what such money is used for, various preceding presidents stealing money without them accounting for it, and worst, also spending such money lavishly.

⁶ *Ibid.*,

These various things affect the life of the citizen in general, till the extent that's many people now see "travelling out" as the only way in which one can live a better life. These various problems have led to people being scared, a concrete example are those farmers which the herdsmen are said to have been killing and disturbing endlessly. Also, the idea to trust has also been ruled out, because most people in the country now have zero percent trust in the law or the government. Ordinary citizens bear the brunt of all this failure of government, through poverty, suffering, lack of social amenities, and so on.

It's now very clear and evident that even those who are supposed to be working to bring about fairness in the country are nothing but superficial in the aspect that they are shallow, they seems to be working outside, but inside they aren't doing any work. Corruption on the other hand still persist because our political leaders still prioritizes personal gain to public gain. And even though the money stolen is being returned, the absence of moral and political will, among government officials will still have no concrete changes.

4.2. Conclusion.

Nigeria politics has been stained with corruption, bad governance, insecurity, which is rooted in the lack of goodwill among political leaders and political officials. Although laws and institutions are put in place, but since the principle of accountability is not being taken seriously, the law and institutions are nothing but just a cover. Kantian ethics teaches us that the justice of a thing, shouldn't just be based on the outcome of a thing, but on its integrity and intention. Therefore, bring about goodwill and ethical

responsibility among Nigeria's leadership is mandatory and essential for growth, and sustainable development, justice and restoring the public trust. Oghujah (2018) is of the view that it is only through personal and moral conviction can Nigeria overcome the various crises it has, and achieve meaningful progress.⁷

Kantian ethics is said to need its own non-consequentialist model of rationality, the one that has a consequence driven model of one "acting to produce the best outcomes", which belongs to the consequentialist essentially. Without adopting this model, deontological ethics might never be popular, especially in developing nations like Nigeria. Also, essentially the motive behind an action too must also be put into consideration when judging such an action, not just the action, so it can still possess the unique features that makes it deontological, and it's also crucial for judging the morality of an agent. In governance, goodwill is mandatory, because it will help public officials to foster genuine development and accountability in society.

In Eze (2021) view and perspective, credible government is not independent, mainly because it's influenced by external factors, like political goodwill. Goodwill on the other hand isn't just self-executing, but instead it must be cultivated. And the earlier our

⁷ *Ibid.*,

political leaders recognizes this, the earlier our chances if transforming Nigeria for the better.⁸

⁸ Eze, J. I. (2021). The relevance of Kantian ethics to political leadership in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12(1), 45–60.,

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