



## THE LAND QUESTION: A PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION OF INDIGENESHIP AND SETTLERSHIP CONCEPTS IN NIGERIA

**Amos Francis Dike, PhD**

[paamosdike@gmail.com](mailto:paamosdike@gmail.com); <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1291-2319>

&

**Michael Enyinwa Okoronkwo, PhD**

National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

[meokoronkwo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:meokoronkwo@noun.edu.ng); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6628-4400>

&

**Dike, Uzoma Amos, PhD**

National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7621-4011>; [udike@noun.edu.ng](mailto:udike@noun.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*While the issue of land ownership and access in Nigeria has long been recognized as a site of historical, political, and socio-cultural contestation, most existing studies approach the problem from legal, anthropological, or political science perspectives, often emphasizing institutional reforms, state policies, or conflict resolution mechanisms. However, fewer studies have undertaken a sustained philosophical inquiry into the normative assumptions that underlie the indigene-settler dichotomy and its ethical implications for citizenship, justice, and national integration. This research fills that critical gap by offering a rigorous philosophical interrogation of the conceptual foundations of indigeneship and settlers as they relate to the land question in Nigeria. Unlike earlier works that primarily describe the effects of land disputes or recommend administrative solutions, this study focuses on the ontological and epistemological dimensions of land-related identity claims. It asks: What are the deeper philosophical presuppositions embedded in the categorization of individuals as “indigenes” or “settlers”? In what ways do these categorizations obscure or distort the principles of justice and equal moral worth? And what ethical framework can reorient land governance toward greater inclusion and equity? Drawing on analytic and hermeneutic philosophical methods, this study critiques exclusionary narratives by examining legal discourses, historical memory, and contemporary policies through the lenses of theories of justice, identity recognition, and communal rights. Its distinctive contribution lies in reframing the land debate not merely as a conflict management issue but as a philosophical and ethical problem that requires normative rethinking. The findings suggest that the indigene-settler dichotomy, when used to determine access to land and rights, is ethically indefensible in a pluralistic society. The study contributes to the literature by arguing for a paradigmatic shift from origin-based entitlement to residence-based citizenship, offering a more just and sustainable framework for coexistence. This normative redirection represents a departure from procedural or policy-based approaches, positioning the study as an important intervention in both the academic discourse and public policy debates surrounding land, identity, and justice in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Land Ownership, Indigeneship, Settlership, Citizenship, National Integration.

### Introduction

The question of land ownership and access in Nigeria continues to dominate debates within policy, legal, and socio-political scholarship due to its complex entanglement with issues of



identity, legitimacy, and justice. Scholars across disciplines, especially political science, law, history, and anthropology, have extensively examined how land serves as a critical site of struggle for power, belonging, and recognition (Okoth-Ogendo, 2008; Ukaegbu, 1975). These studies largely interpret land as both an economic and symbolic resource, whose control reflects entrenched hierarchies of cultural legitimacy and political authority. Most notably, research has explored how colonial and postcolonial state structures have institutionalized differential access to land, deepening marginalization along ethnic and regional lines.

A recurrent motif in this literature is the binary distinction between “indigenes” and “settlers”, a framework often accepted as an analytical given rather than critically interrogated in its normative foundations. Studies by Suberu (2001), Osaghae and Suberu (2005), and Ibrahim (2000), for instance, illuminate how this dichotomy has shaped federalism, electoral politics, and social exclusion in Nigeria. While these works document the socio-political effects of indigeneity laws and settler discrimination, they rarely question the ethical validity or philosophical coherence of these categories themselves. Consequently, the deeper conceptual grammar and ontological violence of indigene-settler classification remain largely unexplored. Furthermore, much of the existing scholarship leans towards policy-driven solutions such as constitutional reform, decentralization, or conflict resolution mechanisms. These approaches, while useful, often operate within the same conceptual framework they seek to reform and thus fall short of addressing the deeper normative contradictions embedded in land governance practices. In this respect, the current literature exhibits a structural blind spot: a failure to subject the very categories of indigeneship and settlers to philosophical scrutiny, and to evaluate them in light of justice, equality, and the moral integrity of citizenship.

This study directly addresses that omission by shifting the focus from institutional analysis to philosophical critique. It is premised on the conviction that the indigene-settler dichotomy, as it currently operates in Nigeria, is not merely a socio-political problem but a fundamentally flawed normative construction. By interrogating the ontological assumptions and epistemological biases that sustain exclusionary claims to land, this research breaks with descriptive or reformist paradigms and inaugurates a new ethical discourse on land, identity, and citizenship in Nigeria.

The core research questions guiding this philosophical intervention are as follows: What metaphysical and normative assumptions underpin the indigene/settler distinction? In what ways does this distinction violate principles of equal moral worth and democratic inclusion? And what ethical framework can ground a more just model of land ownership and access in a plural society? To answer these questions, the study employs both analytic and hermeneutic philosophical methods. The analytic approach facilitates a precise conceptual dissection of terms such as “indigeneship,” “citizenship,” and “national integration,” while the hermeneutic approach enables a critical interpretation of legal texts, historical narratives, and policy frameworks. Together, these methods expose the deep-seated ideological structures that reproduce spatial exclusion and social hierarchies. This research draws theoretically from the works of Rawls (1971) and Sen (2009) on justice, Taylor (1994) on identity and recognition, and Wiredu (1996) on communal rights in African thought, yet it goes beyond them by situating these theories in the specific context of Nigeria's fraught land politics.



The originality of this study lies in its insistence that land-related exclusion in Nigeria cannot be adequately addressed without dismantling the inherited epistemologies that legitimize belonging through ancestry and origin. In this regard, the research critiques the very structure of prevailing discourses on land and identity, exposing their complicity in the reproduction of injustice. It argues for a radical normative reorientation: one that replaces origin-based entitlement with residence-based rights, grounded in shared civic participation and contribution rather than inherited status. This shift is not merely pragmatic; it is ethically imperative. By centering justice, moral equality, and inclusive citizenship, the study contributes to a new scholarship that not only critiques existing frameworks but also lays the foundation for a transformative ethical vision of land governance in Nigeria. It marks a departure from inherited paradigms and opens a space for reimagining citizenship beyond the limitations of ethno-regional particularism.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This study is anchored on the critical interrogation of the *indigeneship-settlership binary* as a philosophical problem that distorts the normative foundations of justice, citizenship, and land governance in Nigeria. Dominant legal and political frameworks tend to treat this binary as a fixed socio-political reality, often rooted in colonial administrative categories and postcolonial identity politics (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). However, this research departs from such functionalist and positivist approaches by problematizing the very concepts of "indigene" and "settler" through a philosophical lens, thereby exposing their ontological instability and ethical indefensibility.

The framework also employs analytic philosophy to clarify key terms (e.g., "indigeneship," "settlership," "citizenship," "Land Owner") and hermeneutics to interpret historical and legal narratives that sustain exclusionary ideologies (Gadamer, 1975). By synthesizing these approaches, the study advances a *normative shift* from ancestral entitlement to *civic inclusion*, thereby offering a reconceptualization of land governance rooted in ethical pluralism and democratic equality. This study rests on the critical interrogation of four interrelated concepts, indigeneship, settlership, citizenship, and justice, which have been central to the politics of land and belonging in Nigeria. These concepts are often treated as legal or administrative categories, but this work adopts a philosophical approach that foregrounds their ontological instability, epistemic contestability, and normative implications.

#### **a. Indigeneship**

Indigeneship is typically constructed as a historical claim to a territory based on ancestral origins and cultural continuity (Smith, 1999). In the Nigerian context, it has been codified in legal and policy frameworks that confer privileged access to land, education, employment, and political office to those recognized as "indigenes" of a locality (Suberu, 2001). This research critiques indigeneity as a political artifact that essentializes identity and institutionalizes exclusion (Osaghae, 2006). Drawing on Taylor's (1994) theory of recognition, the study argues that grounding belonging in origin rather than participation undermines moral equality and democratic inclusiveness. The concept is thus interrogated as a normative failure that justifies unjust hierarchies under the guise of cultural preservation.

#### **b. Settlership**



Settlership denotes the imposed status of individuals or groups perceived as “non-indigenes” or “strangers,” regardless of their duration of residence or socio-economic contributions. It is a category of exclusion that reinforces permanent outsiderhood (Ibrahim, 2006).

This study challenges the moral legitimacy of settlership by drawing on Young’s (1990) critique of structural inequality. It shows how settlership functions as a mechanism of civic disempowerment, systematically denying individuals access to land rights and political participation. The work builds on Akinola’s (2011) analysis of internal citizenship stratification in Nigeria, but goes further to propose a philosophical basis for residence-based belonging rooted in civic engagement and relational embeddedness.

### **c. Citizenship**

Citizenship, in liberal theory, entails equal membership in a political community with rights, responsibilities, and recognition (Marshall, 1950). In Nigeria, however, citizenship is paradoxically fragmented by local indigene/settler distinctions that negate the constitutional promise of national unity (Ekeh, 1975). This research highlights the internal contradiction between Nigeria’s formal citizenship framework and the actual practices of local exclusion. Drawing from Benhabib’s (2004) argument on *democratic iterations*, it calls for a reimagining of citizenship as practice-based rather than origin-based, anchored in lived contribution, not ethnic inheritance. This reconceptualization aims to restore the integrity of citizenship as a moral and political ideal.

### **d. Justice**

Justice, understood through Rawls’ (1971) *justice as fairness* and Sen’s (2009) *capability approach*, entails the equal moral worth of persons and the dismantling of systemic disadvantages. Justice goes beyond procedural equity to demand the transformation of institutional structures that sustain exclusion. This research positions justice as the normative lens through which land governance and identity politics must be evaluated. It critiques the indigene/settler binary as a violation of distributive and recognitional justice, and offers an ethical model grounded in territorial personhood, a novel concept developed in this study. Territorial personhood holds that residency, participation, and relational embeddedness in a community, not ancestry should confer moral and political legitimacy to land claims.

By conceptually destabilizing indigeneity and settlership and philosophically re-grounding citizenship and justice, this study introduces a normative shift in the land question discourse. It critiques the prevailing literature for reproducing ethno-legal assumptions and offers a new framework, territorial personhood that reimagines land rights through the lens of ethical inclusion and civic presence. This marks a departure from existing scholarship (e.g., Suberu 2001; Egwu 2006) by treating identity categories not as empirical givens, but as moral and political constructions open to normative revision.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts a normative philosophical approach that draws critically from theories of justice, recognition, and identity to interrogate the ethical and ontological foundations of the indigene/settler dichotomy in Nigeria. While prior studies have largely approached this binary through empirical, legalistic, or political science lenses (Suberu, 2001; Egwu, 2006; Osaghae, 2006), this research departs by reframing the dichotomy as a moral-philosophical problem





concerning exclusion, recognition, and structural injustice. This framework draws on three overlapping but underutilized philosophical traditions:

- a. **Theories of Justice and Recognition** – Drawing from Rawls' (1971) concept of *justice as fairness* and Taylor's (1994) theory of *recognition*, the study posits that any system that denies equal moral worth based on ancestry violates the principles of liberal justice and democratic equality. These traditions critique origin-based entitlement as exclusionary and morally arbitrary.
- b. **Communal Rights and African Political Philosophy** – Wiredu's (1996) articulation of *consensual communalism* in traditional African societies is mobilized to argue that land rights, though often collective, must be ethically inclusive, especially in multi-ethnic urban contexts. Communal belonging should be rooted in participation and contribution, not ethnic heritage.
- c. **Territorial Personhood (Original Contribution)** – This study introduces the concept of territorial personhood as a normative innovation. Territorial personhood suggests that individuals develop legitimate moral claims to land and political rights not through ancestral origin but through lived experience, contribution, and relational embeddedness within a community over time. This reframing, challenges static identity categories and foregrounds *residence-based belonging* as ethically superior to inherited territorial claims.

### 1. Rawls' Theory of Justice as Fairness

John Rawls' (1971) *Theory of Justice* provides a foundational lens for assessing the fairness of institutional arrangements. His principles, especially the difference principle and the veil of ignorance, demand that social advantages not be allocated based on morally arbitrary factors such as birth or ethnic origin. This research uses Rawls not to prescribe distributive formulas, as many previous studies do, but to critique the moral illegitimacy of ancestry-based entitlements to land. It argues that the indigene/settler distinction violates Rawlsian fairness by basing political and economic access on inherited identity rather than civic contribution or need. Unlike prior studies that only invoke Rawls in the context of federal resource allocation (e.g., Suberu, 2001), this work applies Rawls to the ontological status of identity itself as a basis for justice.

### 2. Sen's Capability Approach

Amartya Sen (2009) redefines justice not merely as ideal distribution, but as the removal of "unfreedoms" that prevent individuals from achieving well-being. Justice here involves enhancing real freedoms and participatory agency. The study applies Sen's emphasis on freedom and agency to the settler condition in Nigeria. It critiques how being labelled a "settler" systematically constrains individuals' capabilities to access land, political participation, and social recognition. In contrast to existing uses of Sen in development ethics, this study uses his theory to re-politicize the ethics of identity-based exclusion in land governance. It pushes the capability approach toward a critique of state-sanctioned categories that undermine human dignity.

### 3. Charles Taylor's Theory of Recognition

Taylor (1994) posits that identity is formed dialogically and that denial of recognition is a form of harm. Political structures that institutionalize misrecognition or nonrecognition inflict moral



injury and social fragmentation. This work uses Taylor to critique the ontological violence inherent in labelling long-term residents as “settlers.” Unlike other studies that focus on ethnic accommodation or multiculturalism, this research advances Taylor’s theory by arguing that recognition must shift from heritage-based inclusion to residence-based belonging. It thus reconfigures recognition not merely as cultural validation but as a material right to land, voice, and status in political communities.

#### 4. Iris Marion Young’s Structural Injustice

Young (1990) introduces the concept of structural injustice, harms that result not from individual wrongdoing but from the normal operation of social institutions. She emphasizes relational responsibility for correcting systemic exclusions. This study deploys Young’s framework to show how indigeneity functions as a normative structure of exclusion. It extends her work by localizing structural injustice within African postcolonial legal systems. Whereas other studies tend to analyze ethnic conflict as a clash of interests, this research reframes it as a conflict of moral orders, sustained by structurally unjust categorizations.

#### 5. Wiredu’s Communitarian Ethics

Kwasi Wiredu (1996) defends a non-ethnocentric conception of personhood rooted in participation and communal recognition rather than ethnic origin. His African communitarian ethics emphasize belonging through moral agency. This study innovatively applies Wiredu’s ethics to argue that community membership, and by extension land rights, should be based on civic embeddedness, not ancestry. This African philosophical framework supports the paper’s original concept of “territorial personhood,” which critiques inherited belonging and affirms participatory inclusion.

Unlike existing literature that applies political theory to advocate for federalism or conflict management (Suberu, 2001; Egwu, 2006), this study uses moral and political philosophy to deconstruct the very foundations of identity-based exclusion in land rights. It introduces territorial personhood as a new normative category, proposing a framework where access to land and public goods is grounded in residency, contribution, and civic presence, not inherited ethnicity. This way, this theoretical move marks a significant departure from previous studies and creates a new discourse on justice, identity, and land in plural societies grounded in philosophical ethics rather than in ethno-political calculation.

### **Land Ownership in the Judeo-Christian Concept: A Philosophical Reflection**

The Judeo-Christian worldview presents a foundationally theocentric understanding of land ownership that contrasts sharply with modern notions of absolute private or ancestral claims. In this tradition, land is ultimately not owned by humans but held in trust under divine sovereignty.

The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) is unequivocal in affirming that God is the ultimate owner of the land. Leviticus 25:23 declares: “*The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants.*” This verse captures the central idea that humans are stewards, not proprietors. Land rights are conditional and temporal, granted for use but not as inalienable, hereditary property. The Israelites’ relationship to land is thus covenantal, predicated on obedience and communal responsibility (Wright, 2004).



The biblical land ethic integrates justice and equity. The Jubilee laws (Leviticus 25) mandate the return of land to original families every 50 years, preventing land monopolization and ensuring intergenerational equity (Brueggemann, 1977). Land is distributed not on the basis of conquest or ancestry alone, but within a structure that periodically resets economic imbalance. This vision of distributive justice contradicts systems in which land becomes a means of permanent exclusion based on origin, as seen in Nigeria's indigene-settler dichotomy. The Judeo-Christian tradition contains strong ethical mandates toward foreigners and non-indigenes. Exodus 22:21 instructs: *"Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt."* This principle challenges ethnic exclusivism in land rights. Strangers residing in Israel were to be treated justly, share in the harvest, and, in some cases, receive land inheritance (Ezekiel 47:22-23). The biblical ethic upholds residence and participation over ancestral purity as the basis of inclusion (Deuteronomy 10:19).

In the context of Nigeria's land question, the Judeo-Christian tradition undermines the moral legitimacy of land exclusion based on indigeneship. The concept of land as divine trust implies that no group can claim exclusive, eternal rights based on "first settlement." Moreover, the ethos of hospitality, periodic redistribution, and inclusive belonging challenges the philosophical justifiability of treating "settlers" as second-class citizens. This theological ethic aligns with philosophical theories of justice and recognition (Rawls, Taylor, Sen) that undergird this research, reinforcing the claim that origin-based land entitlement is normatively untenable. Land in the Judeo-Christian view is a gift entrusted to all for mutual flourishing, not a weapon for exclusion. By framing land through the lenses of divine ownership, stewardship, justice, and inclusive community, this tradition offers a robust ethical critique of Nigeria's contemporary land conflicts. It supports this research's call for a residence-based model of land access and citizenship, anchored not in heritage but in participation, presence, and shared moral obligation.

### **Land Ownership in Traditional African Societies: The Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa Contexts**

Land in traditional African thought is not merely an economic resource but a spiritual, ancestral, and communal asset. Across precolonial Nigerian societies, including the Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa, land was deeply embedded in kinship systems, cosmology, and communal identity, shaping both social organization and access to power. However, despite variations, one feature is consistent: land was not privately owned in the Western individualistic sense; rather, it was owned corporately and held in trust for future generations (Okoth-Ogendo, 2008).

#### **i. Igbo Conception of Land Ownership**

Among the Igbo people, land (*ala*) holds a central and sacrosanct place in the cultural, spiritual, and socio-political life of the community. It is not merely a physical asset or economic resource but is deeply embedded in cosmology and identity. Land is personified and deified as *Ala*, the Earth Goddess, who governs morality, fertility, and communal wellbeing. This sacred character of land means that ownership and use are governed not only by social norms but also by spiritual mandates (Uchendu, 1965; Ogbukagu, 1976). Ownership of land resides collectively in the *Umunna*, the extended patrilineal kin group. Individuals are not seen as owners in the Western legalistic sense but rather as stewards or custodians. They hold consultant rights, meaning they may use and benefit from the land, but they do not have the authority to sell or alienate it permanently (Uchendu, 1965). This communal tenure system underscores the understanding that land is an ancestral heritage, not private capital.



Inheritance practices are strictly patrilineal and matrilineal as the case may be, with land typically passed from father to sons. Women usually gain access to land through their relationships with male kin, either as daughters, wives, or mothers. This arrangement reflects broader gender norms in traditional Igbo society, where women's access to resources is mediated through their position within the male-dominated lineage system. Individual land rights are conditional and revocable, grounded in one's membership in the *umunna* and continued productive use of the land. The notion of commodifying land, treating it as a saleable good, is foreign to traditional Igbo cosmology. Land may be leased temporarily, but permanent alienation through sale is culturally and spiritually suspect. The sale or permanent transfer of land to outsiders (*ndi obia*) is strongly discouraged and often resisted. Such alienation is viewed as a betrayal of the ancestors and a rupture in the sacred bond between the community and the land. As Obi (1963) observes, alienating land to non-kin not only severs ancestral ties but also poses a threat to the social fabric and cohesion of the community. This worldview continues to shape contemporary land politics in Igbo society. The reluctance to grant full land rights to "settlers" or non-indigenes stems not merely from economic interests or xenophobia but from a deeply rooted cosmological and moral order. Land is more than a territory; it is the bedrock of identity, spirituality, and intergenerational continuity.

## **ii. Yoruba Conception of Land Ownership**

In traditional Yoruba society, the concept of land ownership is both communal and hierarchical, reflecting a structured sociopolitical system that balances ancestral heritage with evolving economic needs. While similar to other African societies in affirming communal tenure, Yoruba landholding practices are distinguished by a more stratified administrative structure. Land is regarded as a sacred trust, vested not in individuals but in leaders, *Oba* (king) or *Baale* (village head), who hold it in trust for the lineage or community (Lloyd, 1962; Aderibigbe, 1990).

Unlike the Igbo, whose land tenure is more lineage-based and rigid, the Yoruba system introduces a blend of ritual authority, administrative hierarchy, and pragmatic flexibility. Customary law governs land rights, which are embedded within the moral, religious, and historical memory of the community. Land distribution within Yoruba communities is typically managed by lineage heads known as *mogaji*. These elders allocate land to family members based on a combination of need, seniority, productivity, and loyalty to the family lineage. This system maintains internal equity while also ensuring that land remains within the family structure, thus preserving ancestral claims and communal integrity (Aderibigbe, 1990).

A critical concept in Yoruba customary tenure is the "tenure of first settlement", the principle that the group or family that first cleared and settled a given area possesses *original customary rights* to that land. This principle undergirds indigenous claims and legitimizes authority over land, even where no formal title exists. Over time, such foundational claims are recognized and codified through rituals, oral histories, and community endorsement (Lloyd, 1962). Yoruba land law, particularly in more urbanized and commercialized regions, has shown a marked adaptability. Over time, especially with the advent of colonial legal systems and urban expansion, Yoruba communities developed greater openness to leasing, pledging, and even selling land, often with the consent of the *Oba*, *Baale*, or *mogaji*. This fluidity has allowed Yoruba societies to better accommodate economic migration, urban development, and inter-





ethnic integration (Awolalu & Dopamu, 1979). This relative openness in land transactions contrasts with more restrictive customs in other Nigerian ethnic groups and explains the relatively inclusive economic attitudes Yoruba communities often extend to migrants and settlers. While political exclusion and indigene-settler tensions may persist, especially in electoral or chieftaincy matters, land access has historically been a more flexible and negotiable aspect of Yoruba customary practice.

### **iii. Hausa Conception of Land Ownership**

In Northern Nigeria, particularly among the Hausa-Fulani groups, land tenure is deeply shaped by the dual influences of Islamic jurisprudence (Shari'a) and the feudal administrative system established under the Sokoto Caliphate. The 1804 Sokoto Jihad, led by Usman dan Fodio, was not only a religious reform movement but also a radical restructuring of political authority and land control. Following the jihad, all land was declared to belong to the Caliphate, to be held in trust by the Emirs as spiritual and political custodians (Paden, 1973). This move transformed the pre-jihad landholding practices into a system where theocratic legitimacy and political hierarchy governed access to land. The Emirate system institutionalized land as a public trust, managed in accordance with Islamic legal principles and administered through a centralized, often hereditary leadership.

Land within this framework could be allocated for various purposes, most notably for farming (*gandu*) or residence. Allocations were often granted as royal favors or religious endowments (*waqf*), a practice rooted in Islamic tradition whereby land was permanently set aside for religious or charitable use (Hill, 1972). This system privileged religious institutions, loyal elites, and scholars, reinforcing the integration of land control with religious and political status. While individuals could possess and use land, especially through generational occupation or cultivation, they could not claim absolute, alienable ownership. The ultimate right to land resided with the Emir or District Head, who could reallocate or revoke land based on administrative discretion or religious mandate (Hill, 1972; Paden, 1973). This created a form of tenure that was secure but conditional, subject to political allegiance, religious conformity, and community standing. Access to land was also governed by Islamic ethical principles, particularly those emphasizing hospitality (*karimci*) and the welfare of the ummah (Muslim community). In theory, these values promoted inclusive access for Muslims, regardless of ethnic origin. However, in practice, non-Muslim minorities, such as indigenous non-Islamized groups in the Middle Belt faced systemic exclusion or were granted inferior access, especially under colonial indirect rule that preserved Emirate authority (Ostien, 2007). Thus, religious identity became a determinant of land access, embedding both spiritual and socio-political stratification into land tenure.

This fusion of religious and political authority over land created a system that was hierarchical yet negotiable. Land tenure in Hausa-Fulani society combined structured control with clientelist flexibility, allowing elites to reward loyalty, consolidate power, and enforce social order, all under the legitimizing cover of Islam.



### Comparative Analysis and Philosophical Implications

S/	Feature	Igbo	Yoruba	Hausa-Fulani
1	Ownership Model	Lineage-based (umunna)	Kinship Oba/traditional ruler	+ Emirate/state-controlled
2	Alienability of Land	Restricted, sacred	Increasingly fluid, marketized	Religious authority-bound
3	Attitude to Outsiders	Cautious, exclusionary	Pragmatic, economically inclusive	Conditional on religion/politics
4	Basis of Belonging	Ancestral descent	Founding lineage/residence	Loyalty to Emir/Islamic identity

These systems reveal a continuum from rigid ancestral entitlement (Igbo), through inclusive pragmatism (Yoruba), to religious-state mediation (Hausa-Fulani). Across all, however, land is not merely a material asset; it is a source of identity, legitimacy, and spiritual continuity. This helps explain the depth of resentment or exclusion settlers may face: their presence is seen not just as economic encroachment but as symbolic dislocation of ancestral, spiritual, or political orders.

Grounding land access in identity, whether ethnic, religious, or ancestral traditional systems, laid the conceptual groundwork for the indigene-settler binary. Yet, in a postcolonial, pluralistic Nigeria, these frameworks now clash with constitutional ideals of equal citizenship. This study thus critiques the uncritical transplantation of ancestral land logics into modern statecraft without reconfiguring them through philosophical ethics and democratic theory. Traditional African land tenure systems among the Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa reflect communitarian, identity-based frameworks that shaped belonging and exclusion. However, in contemporary Nigeria, these systems have mutated into tools of exclusion and marginalization, often manipulated by political elites. This research calls for a re-evaluation of land ethics, drawing from, but transcending, these traditional foundations to articulate a just, inclusive framework grounded in residence, contribution, and shared moral agency, rather than primordial claims.

### Land Ownership and the Land Use Act 1978 (LFN 2004): A Legal-Philosophical Appraisal

The Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978, codified under the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004, remains the most far-reaching legal framework for land administration in Nigeria. Enacted by the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Act aimed to resolve the complex and often discriminatory landscape of land tenure in Nigeria by harmonizing diverse landholding systems, customary, Islamic, and colonial under a unified statutory regime. Yet, despite its reformist intentions, the LUA has generated deep legal contradictions and ethical dilemmas, particularly in relation to indigeneity, citizenship, and land justice. Before the enactment of the Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978, Nigeria's land tenure systems were pluralistic, hierarchical, and regionally differentiated, reflecting a blend of precolonial customary laws,



Islamic jurisprudence, and colonial legal frameworks. This fragmented legal landscape fostered inequality in access, legal uncertainty, and tenure insecurity, particularly for migrants, women, and non-indigenous populations.

In southern Nigeria, land was largely governed by customary law, where ownership was vested in lineages (umunna or idile) or extended families, often under the authority of traditional rulers or lineage heads. Rights to land were communal, allocated to members based on ancestry, seniority, or family contribution. While such systems promoted social cohesion within homogeneous communities, they systematically excluded non-indigenes, women, and other marginalized groups (Fabiya, 2004; Nwosu, 1987).

In northern Nigeria, particularly among the Hausa-Fulani, land tenure was influenced by Islamic law (Shari'a) and the emirate system. Following the Sokoto Jihad of 1804, land was treated as the property of the Islamic state, administered by emirs and district heads as custodians for the community. While Islamic land law permitted individual usufruct rights, ownership remained subject to public interest and the moral responsibilities of the ummah (Paden, 1973; Hill, 1972).

Colonial rule further complicated land relations. The British administration introduced laws such as the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1918, the Native Lands Ordinance of 1916, and the Public Lands Acquisition Act, which asserted state authority over land and enabled the expropriation of land for colonial economic and infrastructural projects. These laws often disregarded indigenous systems, privileging capitalist commodification and European settler interests (Olujimi & Bello, 2009; Ekpu, 2005). By the post-independence era, Nigeria faced a land governance crisis, characterized by:

- a. Conflicting tenure systems,
- b. Discriminatory land access policies,
- c. An absence of legal clarity for development and investment.

To address these challenges, the military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo promulgated the Land Use Decree No. 6 of 1978, which was later entrenched in Section 315 of the 1979 Constitution and reaffirmed in the 1999 Constitution (as the Land Use Act, LFN 2004). The stated objectives of the Act were threefold:

- a. To democratize access to land by removing barriers based on ancestry, class, or customary privilege.
- b. To centralize land administration under the state, thereby reducing the influence of traditional, religious, or private elites.
- c. To facilitate national development through efficient access to land for urban planning, industrial expansion, and infrastructure (Omotola, 1984; Udo, 1990).

However, while the LUA introduced a legal uniformity, it did so without fully accounting for the social, spiritual, and cultural dimensions of land. As scholars have noted, it represents a technocratic solution to a socially embedded problem, replacing community-based authority with state trusteeship, often with politically problematic outcomes (Omeje, 2009; Abioye, 2012).



The Land Use Act (1978) establishes a public trusteeship model, where land is not held as private property in the classical liberal sense, but rather as a public trust administered by the state for the benefit of all citizens.

**a. State Vesting of Land (Section 1)**

All land within a state's geographical boundaries (except federal land or land under federal control) is vested in the Governor of the State, who holds it in trust for the people. This provision abolished the freehold tenure system and consolidated all land rights under state authority.

**b. Right of Occupancy**

The LUA replaces the concept of absolute ownership with a "right of occupancy", which provides users with rights to possess and use land, but not to own it outright.

- I. Statutory Right of Occupancy: Granted by the state governor for land located in urban areas.
- II. Customary Right of Occupancy: Granted by local governments for land in rural areas, often based on customary usage.

These rights can be revoked or modified by the state, reinforcing state supremacy over land.

**c. Governor's Consent (Section 22)**

All transfers, mortgages, or alienations of a right of occupancy require the written consent of the state governor. This provision was intended to prevent land speculation, ensure public oversight, and curb unauthorized land sales. However, it has been widely criticized for creating bureaucratic bottlenecks, opportunities for corruption, and inequality in access (Abioye, 2012).

**d. Revocation Powers (Section 28)**

The Governor has the authority to revoke a right of occupancy for reasons deemed to be in the public interest, such as for infrastructural development, security, or economic planning. Compensation is limited to the unexhausted improvements (e.g., buildings or crops) on the land, not the land itself. This provision has led to numerous cases of forced displacement and land injustice, particularly among rural farmers and urban informal settlers (Udu, 2011).

**Critical Reflection**

While the LUA was envisioned as an egalitarian reform, its implementation has reinforced structural inequalities. It replaced communal exclusion with state-driven exclusion, often mediated by ethno-political interests. Its centralization of power in the office of the governor, combined with vague definitions of "public interest," has made the LUA susceptible to abuse, patronage politics, and land-grabbing (Omeje, 2009; Olawoye, 2014).

Furthermore, the Act does not challenge the indigene-settler binary, nor does it provide legal protections for long-term residents who are denied access due to ethnic origin. As a result, it fails to realize the ideal of equal citizenship, instead reinforcing Nigeria's deep-seated territorial and identity-based inequalities.

**Philosophical and Ethical Critique of the Land Use Act (LUA)**





The Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978, though framed as a legal instrument for equity and national development, is fundamentally shaped by legal centralism, the assumption that state authority can override customary norms and historically embedded practices of land ownership. However, this approach neglects the cultural, existential, and moral significance of land in Nigerian societies.

As Omeje (2009) argues, land in Nigeria is not merely a physical asset; it is a symbolic and relational good, intimately tied to identity, ancestry, spirituality, and communal belonging. The LUA's attempt to bureaucratize land access effectively severs these social and moral linkages, imposing a technocratic model on deeply normative terrain.

Despite its universalist language, the LUA has failed to dismantle the persistence of the Indigene-Settler dichotomy and divide. Though all land is legally vested in the state "in trust for the people," access to land remains mediated through ethno-political and customary logics. State and local governments continue to embed indigeneity into land allocation policies, systematically privileging "natives" over "settlers", even where the latter have lived in the same locality for generations (Suberu, 2001). This results in a dual structure: formal equality under the law, and informal exclusion in practice. The result is a denial of recognition, which Charles Taylor (1994) identifies as a core form of injustice. According to Taylor, recognition is not merely a courtesy; it is a vital human need, and its absence is a form of symbolic violence that undermines the self-worth and social standing of those excluded.

The LUA centralizes land governance in the office of the state governor, or centralization of power and political discretion, whose consent is required for any meaningful land transaction (Section 22). As Abioye (2012) shows, this provision has enabled partisan manipulation, clientelism, and ethnic favoritism. Governors have broad discretionary powers to approve, revoke, or allocate land, often in alignment with political allegiances rather than principles of justice or equal access. This centralization of discretion without accountability raises serious ethical concerns. It conflicts with John Rawls' (1971) conception of justice as fairness, which emphasizes equality of opportunity, institutional impartiality, and the priority of the least advantaged. Under the LUA, the lack of procedural safeguards or normative constraints renders land allocation vulnerable to abuse and unjust exclusion.

Another philosophical flaw lies in the LUA's reduction of land to an economic commodity and bureaucratic asset, neglecting its relational, spiritual, and ontological meanings, especially within indigenous worldviews. In many African cosmologies, land is not simply property, but a sacred trust passed down from ancestors, sustaining community identity and intergenerational continuity (Okoth-Ogendo, 1999). By failing to account for these dimensions, the LUA imposes a Western, liberal-individualist property regime onto societies that operate under communitarian and normative frameworks. This cultural dissonance has not only limited the LUA's effectiveness but has also led to a moral alienation of communities from the legal order, a condition that Amartya Sen (2009) would describe as a failure of capability and inclusion.

#### d. Ethical Blind Spots: Justice, Citizenship, and Recognition

The LUA does not articulate a coherent theory of justice, citizenship, or recognition. It leaves unresolved fundamental normative questions such as:

- a. Who qualifies as a rightful land beneficiary in a multiethnic democracy?



- b. Can long-term residence substitute for ancestral claims in land access?
- c. What ethical principles should undergird access to a shared national resource like land?

In the absence of clear normative answers, exclusion is disguised as neutrality, and inequity becomes institutionalized. As Sen (2009) and Taylor (1994) insist, justice is not only a matter of fair distribution (redistributive justice) but also of acknowledging people's identities, contributions, and humanity (recognition justice). Any legal regime that fails to achieve both dimensions risks reinforcing rather than remedying injustice.

### **Impact on the Indigene-Settler Controversy**

Though the LUA ostensibly removes land from the realm of ancestral entitlement, it has deepened the indigene-settler divide in practice. It has failed to introduce residence-based rights or prohibit discrimination in land allocation based on ethnicity or origin. Consequently:

- a. State governments continue to use indigeneity as a criterion for issuing land titles, Certificates of Occupancy, and development permits (Ubhenin, 2013; Suberu, 2001).
- b. Settlers, often ethnic minorities or internal migrants, may be excluded from land access, regardless of their contributions or length of residence (Fourchard, 2011).
- c. Customary authorities, particularly in rural areas, retain de facto power to restrict land access to "outsiders," even when such exclusion contradicts national citizenship norms (Amanor & Ubink, 2008).

The contradiction between formal citizenship and territorial belonging in Nigeria undermines the constitutional promise of equal rights for all, revealing a deeper normative crisis at the heart of the land question. As Taylor (1994) argues, the denial of recognition within a community constitutes a profound moral and political harm. The Land Use Act (LUA), by failing to institutionalize recognition or establish residence-based rights, masks these injustices beneath a technocratic façade. Thus, the land question transcends legal or administrative concerns, demanding a philosophical interrogation of the indigeneship-settlership dynamic and the contested moral foundations of identity, belonging, and justice that shape land access and ownership.

The pathway to the land question begins with colonial disruption. British colonial authorities imposed land ordinances, such as the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1917, that expropriated land from indigenous communities and introduced legal pluralism, separating "customary" from "public" land (Okoth-Ogendo, 1999). These colonial policies institutionalized ethnic boundaries, transforming fluid patterns of migration and coexistence into rigid categories of "natives" and "strangers." Post-independence, Nigeria's embrace of ethno-regional federalism further entrenched the indigene-settler divide. The constitutionally undefined concept of "indigene" became the basis for access to public resources, employment, education, and crucially, land allocation. This marked the transformation of ethnic identity into political capital, where land became a primary expression of ethnic territoriality (Suberu, 2001). Land thus evolved into a symbol of political belonging, such that exclusion from land equated to exclusion from the moral and civic fabric of the Nigerian state. The 1978 Land Use Act (LUA) was conceived as a technocratic reform to depersonalize land ownership and ensure equal access. Yet, as Omeje (2009) and Abioye (2012) argue, it failed to dismantle structural exclusions. Rather than neutralizing ethnic land politics, the LUA inadvertently strengthened



state and customary gatekeeping mechanisms, empowering governors and traditional authorities to act in ethno-political interest. This failure illustrates what Charles Taylor (1994) calls "misrecognition", a refusal to acknowledge the identity and claims of individuals or communities who do not fit the hegemonic definition of "indigenes." The LUA imposed a centralized, bureaucratic model without attending to the relational and symbolic significance of land in Nigerian society.

A philosophical pathway to the land question must account for land as more than property; it must consider land as an existential good, a foundation of identity and recognition. The indigene-settler debate is not merely about who owns land, but who belongs, and under what moral framework that belonging is justified. This speaks to Amartya Sen's (2009) notion of capability justice: access to land determines people's freedom to function, to participate fully in civic life, and to build a future. Excluding long-term residents from land access not only violates distributive justice but also denies the capabilities essential to human dignity. To meaningfully address the land question in Nigeria, a multi-layered philosophical pathway must be pursued, one that integrates the following:

- a. Justice as fairness (Rawls, 1971): Equal opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of ethnic origin, to access and use land.
- b. Recognition of identity and history (Taylor, 1994): Acknowledging the lived experiences and contributions of settlers and migrants.
- c. Capabilities for human flourishing (Sen, 2009): Ensuring land access empowers individuals and communities to live with dignity.

This approach requires reimagining the LUA and land governance not merely as legal instruments, but as moral architectures that shape who is seen, heard, and valued in the national community.

## **Findings**

This study reveals that the Nigerian land question is not merely a legal or administrative issue, but fundamentally a philosophical and ethical problem concerning justice, recognition, identity, and belonging. The concept of land, often viewed in state policy as a neutral asset, is instead shown to be deeply embedded in socio-cultural meanings and political structures that privilege "indigenes" over "settlers." The following are the key findings:

### **1. Indigeneship as a Political Technology of Exclusion**

The category of "indigene" in Nigeria functions as a political gatekeeping mechanism that legitimizes territorial claims, land access, and resource allocation. Although not explicitly defined in the Nigerian Constitution, its operational use in land administration and social policy leads to systemic marginalization of internal migrants and settlers, regardless of their residency or contribution. Customary land tenure systems, especially in southern Nigeria, institutionalize land as family or communal property, accessible primarily to those with ancestral ties. Islamic and emirate-based tenure in the north likewise privileges religious and ethnic affiliation, often to the detriment of non-Muslim or "outsider" groups. The implication is that the normative foundations of indigeneity contradict the constitutional promise of equal citizenship, reducing national belonging to ethnic ancestry.



## **2. The Land Use Act (1978): A Technocratic Masking of Injustice**

Though intended to democratize land access, the Land Use Act (LUA) centralizes control in state governors without a guiding ethical framework. It retains customary and political discretion, fails to override indigene-based land claims, and does not establish residency-based rights. Key sections (1, 22, 28) entrench exclusionary practices through bureaucratic and politicized controls. The implication is that the LUA promotes formal equality while perpetuating substantive injustice.

## **3. Lack of Philosophical Foundations in Land Governance**

Nigeria's land regime lacks a normative vision grounded in justice, recognition, or citizenship. It does not address who qualifies as a rightful landholder in a plural society, or whether ancestry, residence, or civic contribution should guide land rights. Drawing on Rawls (justice as fairness), Taylor (recognition theory), and Sen (capability ethics), the study finds that land policy overlooks moral obligations to inclusion, identity, and dignity. The implication is that without ethical grounding, legal reforms like the LUA remain normatively empty and socially ineffective.

## **4. Land as Cultural and Existential Good**

In Nigerian communities, land is more than property; it is a symbol of identity, ancestral continuity, and political belonging. Exclusion from land equates to exclusion from civic life. State policies that reduce land to economic terms fail to capture its cultural and moral significance. The implication is that Land governance must acknowledge land's symbolic and existential value or risk deepening conflict.

## **5. Indigene-Settler Divide as Democratic Violation**

The indigene-settler dichotomy undermines democratic equality by denying long-term residents land rights based on ethnic origin. Settlers are often excluded from land titles and decision-making, while customary authorities reinforce exclusion through unregulated power. The implication is that a democracy cannot thrive if territorial belonging is tied to ancestry rather than shared civic identity.

## **Toward a Just and Inclusive Land Regime**

To resolve Nigeria's land crisis and its entanglement with identity politics, a philosophical reimaging of the LUA is required, one that centres on justice, recognition, and inclusion. A morally sound land regime must:

- I. Prioritize ethnicity, ancestry, or origin over residence, contribution, and mere democratic citizenship
- II. Acknowledge the plural meanings of land, as economic asset, cultural heritage, spiritual inheritance, and communal resource.
- III. Embed ethical frameworks such as:
  - a. Rawls' theory of justice (1971), which promotes fair equality of opportunity and institutional impartiality;
  - b. Taylor's theory of recognition (1994), which demands respect for cultural and communal identity;





- c. Sen's capability approach (2009), which stresses freedom, opportunity, and human flourishing.

Legal reform, however, is not enough. What is needed is an ethical transformation of land governance, a shift from viewing land as a state-controlled commodity to understanding it as a common good foundational to social solidarity and national cohesion. The Land Use Act of 1978, as codified in the LFN 2004, was an ambitious attempt to systematize and democratize land access in Nigeria. However, its technocratic logic, centralized control, and moral silence have rendered it inadequate for resolving the deeper issues of identity-based exclusion, territorial injustice, and citizenship inequality that characterize the indigene-settler divide. A philosophical interrogation and reconstitution of the LUA is not only desirable but necessary for building a more just, inclusive, and cohesive Nigerian polity.

### Conclusion

The land question reflects the ethical architecture of Nigeria's democracy. Who controls land? Who is granted access? Who is excluded? These questions are moral indicators of inclusion, recognition, and justice. The pathway to resolving the land question, therefore, lies in philosophical clarity and ethical reform, a shift from technocratic governance to a justice-centred land regime that reconciles indigeneity and citizenship, heritage and equality.

This study has demonstrated that the *land question* in Nigeria cannot be resolved through administrative reform or legal proceduralism alone. At its core lies a deeper normative failure, a reliance on the morally arbitrary categories of *indigene* and *settler* to determine access to land, belonging, and citizenship. By interrogating the ontological and ethical underpinnings of these terms, this research has shown that such identity-based classifications distort principles of justice, recognition, and equal moral worth.

Drawing from Rawlsian fairness, Taylor's politics of recognition, and Sen's capability ethics, the study argues that any sustainable resolution must move beyond ethnic origin as the basis for land rights toward a residency-based model of inclusive citizenship. Land must be seen not merely as a commodity or administrative unit, but as a moral common, central to democratic life and human dignity.

In conclusion, addressing Nigeria's land question requires a philosophical reconstruction, one that displaces exclusionary narratives and grounds land governance in ethical principles of equity, inclusion, and shared national identity. Only through such a shift can Nigeria begin to resolve the longstanding tensions between history, identity, and justice.

### References

- Abioye, F. T. (2012). *Governor's Consent under the Nigerian Land Use Act and the Problem of Inequality*. Nigerian Journal of Legal Studies.
- Aderibigbe, A. B. (1990). *Land Tenure in Yoruba History*. Ibadan University Press.
- Akinola, A. O. (2011). *Nigerian State and the Crisis of Indigene-Settler Dichotomy: A Negation of the Culture of Citizenship*. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 3(2), 556–576.
- Akinola, A. O. (2011). *Citizenship and political conflict in Nigeria: Insights from indigene/settler dichotomy*. *Journal of African Policy Studies*, 17(2), 27–44.



- Awolalu, J. O., & Dopamu, P. A. (1979). *West African Traditional Religion*. Onibonoje Press.
- Brueggemann, W. (1977). *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. Fortress Press.
- Bauckham, R. (1995). *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation*. Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Benhabib, S. (2004). *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dike, Amos Francis *Church, Society and Globalization: Issues of Concern*, Jos: Challenge Publishers, 2015.
- Okoronkwo, Michael Enyinwa & Dike, Amos Francis (2025). "The Dilemma of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Reality" (Accepted for Volume 9 June 2025) in *Wukari International Studies Journal* (WISSJ), 9(1).
- Dike, Amos Francis (2025). "Gender-Based Violence: The Role of Indigenous Spirituality in Shaping Gender Relations in Africa" In *African Journal of Religion, Philosophy and Culture* (AJRPC), 7(2).
- Dike, Amos Francis (2025). "Hick's Philosophical Panacea to the Pluralistic Ethnic Question in Nigerian Society" In *Nnadiabube Journal of Philosophy* (NJP), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. 8(1).
- Dike, Amos Francis (2024). "Hick's "Accident of Birth:" Philosophical Answer to Nigerian Religio-Ethnic Pluralistic Question" In *African Journal of Religion, Philosophy and Culture* (AJRPC), ISSN 2534-7636 (Print) ISSN 2634-7644 (Online), Vol. 1.
- Ekeh, P. (1975). *Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17(1), 91–112.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and Method*. Sheed and Ward.
- Hill, P. (1972). *Rural Hausa: A Village and a Setting*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ibrahim, J. (2006). *The politics of settler/indigene conflicts in Africa: The case of the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt in Nigeria*. In Berman et al. (Eds.), *Identity, Culture and Politics*.
- Ibrahim, J. (2000). *The Transformation of Ethno-Regional Identities in Nigeria*. In Jega, A. (Ed.), *Identity Transformation and Politics in Nigeria*.
- Lloyd, P. C. (1962). *Yoruba Land Law*. Oxford University Press.
- Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mott, S. C. (1982). *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. Oxford University Press.
- Obi, S. N. (1963). *The Customary Law Manual of Eastern Nigeria*. Government Printer.
- Ogbukagu, I. K. (1976). *Traditional Igbo Beliefs and Practices*. Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Okoronkwo, Michael Enyinwa Dike, Amos Francis & Dike, Uzoma Amos (2025). Secularism and Re-Emergence of Africa: Perspectives on the Nigerian Socio-Political and Economic Re-Birth, *Amamihe Journal of Applied Philosophy* (Department of Philosophy, Imo State University), 23(4) ISSN Print: 1597-0779; ISSN Online: 3043-5269. Pp. 35-51.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H. W. O. (2008). *The Tragic African Commons: A Century of Expropriation, Suppression and Subversion*. University of Nairobi Law Journal.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H. W. O. (2008). *The Tragic African Commons: A Century of Expropriation, Suppression and Subversion*. University of Nairobi Law Journal.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H. W. O. (1999). *Land Policy Development in East Africa: A Survey of Recent Trends*.
- Omeje, K. (2009). *Understanding Conflict and Peacebuilding in Nigeria*. Africa World Press.



- Osaghae, E. (2006). *Ethnicity and the state in Africa*. Africa Spectrum, 39(1), 5–30.
- Osaghae, E. E., & Suberu, R. T. (2005). *A History of Identities, Violence, and Stability in Nigeria*. Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), Working Paper No. 6.
- Paden, J. N. (1973). *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. University of California Press.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The Idea of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.
- Suberu, R. T. (2001). *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Taylor, C. (1994). *The Politics of Recognition*. In *Multiculturalism*, edited by Amy Gutmann. Princeton University Press.
- Sen, A. (2009). *The Idea of Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1994). *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton University Press.
- Uchendu, V. C. (1965). *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ukaegbu, A. O. (1975). *The Ownership and Control of Oil in Nigeria: Between Legality and Legitimacy*. *African Affairs*, 74(296), 218–234.
- Wiredu, K. (1996). *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Indiana University Press.
- Wright, C. J. H. (2004). *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. InterVarsity Press.