Popper, Liberal-Communitarianism, Beyond the Politics of Liberalism

Oseni Taiwo Afisi PhD

Department of Philosophy,
Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.
Email: oseni.afisi@lasu.edu.ng

Abstract: Looking beyond the received view of Popper's form of liberalism, according to which Popper's liberalism is informed by altogether individualistic principles, and studying instead or in addition a dimension of Popper's liberalism which is social in nature, I argue that Popper achieves a balanced understanding both of the nature of freedom and what is involved in order to protect freedom. I extend this discussion, in order to consider the theoretical basis upon which societies that are non-liberal in nature can learn important lessons from Popper given the balance in his position on liberal thought. Such non-liberal societies are in their communitarian orientation not on that account untouched by Popper's insights. On the contrary, in arguing that Popper's own philosophy was trending towards a liberal-communitarian one, by emphasising the social dimension of liberalism, and by justifying my arguments with theories of the social character of the self and the social nature of the human consciousness, I show how happily thinkers in non-liberal societies can pick up Popper's insights and usefully work with them. This is in a bid to establish a political philosophy that makes good sense of social and intellectual conditions that is attuned to important strands of intellection, and that nevertheless uses Popper to reconsider the key liberal concepts of justice, rights, freedom and equality. In this connection, I will sketch the perspective of Will Kymlicka (1962-) on liberal-communitarianism which takes cultural membership of individuals to their communities as central. Rather than following Kymlicka in relying upon culture, I defend a position on the inherently social nature of human beings as the basis for a social dimension to the liberal-communitarian political philosophy. The conclusion of this paper is that a liberal-communitarian

philosophy, as a way of thinking beyond the politics of liberalism, can enhance Popper's project of an open society. My thesis is that liberal-communitarianism does not undermine the capacity of individuals for self-actualisation but rather promotes the "I-thou" human social relationships for the progress of society.

Introduction

A general evaluation of Karl Popper's (1902-1994) political liberalism would offer a nuanced assessment of two liberal ideas namely, piecemeal social engineering and his defence of individual freedom. For piecemeal social engineering. Popper preferred social and political reform to be piecemeal. He recommended piecemeal social engineering as a model of how society is to be reformed over against a holistic/Utopian social engineering. Holistic/Utopian social engineering involves large-scale planning and the result often leads to totalitarianism[1].

Regarding Popper's liberal idea of freedom, Popper was concerned about the well-being and freedom of the individual[2]. There are underlying ethical and epistemological principles associated with this idea in the sense that brings out an implicit social element as it interrelates with the explicit strand of individualism in Popper's critical rationalism. These principles can be used to further explain that Popper's idea of freedom is different from the general idea of freedom that most liberals defend. With Popper, there is a social dimension to individual freedom in such a way that the individual performs action without external constraints yet such freedom is exercised with respect to the freedom of others within the social environment[3]. So by a consideration of the social dimension in Popper's political ideology, this paper further develops a new way of thinking of liberal politics towards determining what social policies it would be wisest to adopt in non-liberal societies.

Popper on Freedom

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[1] Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 66-67

[2] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: The High Tide of Prophesy: Hegel Marx, and the Aftermath* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1945), p. 238

[3] Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 331

At the core of most liberal philosophies on freedom is an attempt to discover the conditions under which external constraints upon the individual can be minimised[4]. This liberal view aligns very well with Isaiah Berlin's (1909-1997) concept of negative freedom. Popper did not endorse only the negative concept of freedom. Popper also considered the benefits inherent in positive freedom which emphasizes on the capacity of individuals to author their own values. However, Popper was well understood that it is hardly possible for individuals to author their own values without truly engaging critically with others. This is a communitarian impulse, which reflects the intersubjectivity in rational reflection, and the inevitability of critical appraisal by others of the way we ourselves are in social interaction. In this respect, Popper found a middle ground between the negative and positive concepts of freedom. In fact, Popper's concept of freedom is a balance between negative freedom and positive freedom. It is a balance between elements of individualism and communitarianism. It is a balance which operates at a more sophisticated level than the level of Berlin's article on negative and positive freedom, and that helps to explain why individual freedom is partly a product of the social in Popper. Popper's concept of freedom requires that individuals can act consonantly with values of their own, bearing in mind both the emphasis in this upon the individual, and yet also that individuals cannot author their own values without engaging critically with others. Popper did not close down onto any particular view what a rationally well worked out system of values is like. On the contrary, he roundly emphasised the need for society to be open. Popper's concept of freedom is because of this not any completely positive concept. Criticism is after all a negative tool. That critical reflection with others is necessary if individuals are to act freely in fulfilment of their self-determination, and this leaves open what any person values will upon such reflection turns out to be. Popper requires only that an individual's actions are carried out in consideration of the freedom of others within the social environment. Tolerance is to be extended to every last attitude apart from intolerance. With this submission, Popper's conception of freedom can be termed

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[4] David Levy "Karl Popper: His Philosophy of Politics", *Modern Age,* (1978), 151-160, p.153

"social freedom"[5] meaning freedom of individuals within an open, critical society. This concept captures both the explicit individual aspect and implicit social or communitarian element that are encapsulated in Popper's philosophy.

Beyond Popper's Liberalism: The Social Dimension

As previously discussed, Popper differed from other liberals because of his insistence on the epistemic value of social conduct among individuals. No doubt, Popper was critical of collectivist ideologies; first, because of their inclination to sacrifice individual freedom and rights, for the good of the whole; second, because of the totalitarian tendencies they portend[6]. Popper's form of liberalism holds that the choice of moral, social, political and scientific values depends entirely on the individual. However, the question of how individuals interact with each other within social and political institutions, scientific community and legal structures in the society[7], he addressed by a recourse to the social process of inter-subjective interaction and mutual criticisms underlying his philosophy of critical rationalism[8].

Although the notion of individualism in Popper is often emphasised, I here also stress the social aspect of his liberal politics. The underlying basic understanding of Popper's political liberalism presupposes that individuals are free to choose their own values and ends, in particular because the choices they make help them towards an individualised understanding of the world they live in. Yet they depend on socially shared dispositions and responses for their ability to live in a social community[9].

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[5] Oseni Taiwo Afisi "On Karl Popper's Liberal Principle of Freedom: The Individual and Social Aspects", *GSTF International Journal of General Philosophy,* 1(2014), 27-33, p. 31

[6] See Karl Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 1974), p.131. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), p.79

[7] Raphael Sassower, *Popper's Legacy: Rethinking Politics, Economics and Science* (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2006), p. 49

[8] Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), p. 241-243

[9] See Karl Popper, "Language and the Mind-Body Problem: A Restatement of Interactionism", Proceedings of the 11th International Congress of *Philosophy*, VII (1953), 101-107, p. 102. Philip Pettit, "Defining and Defending Social Holism" in *Philosophical Explorations: An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action* 1.3 (1998), 169-184, p. 169. Bryan Magee, *Karl Popper* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 64.

The social dimension in Popper's liberal politics can be used to understand the values of the open society establishing meaning within social environments and being ever enhanced by social interactions. This social dimension to liberalism differs essentially from the notion of collectivism of which Popper is critical. The inclusion of a social dimension to liberalism highlights the value of social cohesion where individual will is harmonised with the will-of-others. This dimension foregrounds the emphasis on absolute individualism which does not consider the social dimension of "I-thou" social relations in politics. This inherent value of social relations among individuals is what Philip Pettit (1945-) conceptualises as social holism: the idea that individuals are not entirely free-standing, for, they depend upon one another for the possession of some property that is central to the human being"[10].

Like Popper, Pettit condemns the effect of forcing the societal will on the individual, which collectivism entails. However, while the social aspect of Popper's liberalism is merely implicit, Pettit explicitly argues for the necessity of a social dimension in the fulfilment of individual aspiration. With Pettit's concept of social holism, individualism is not compromised; yet, social relations are recognised as essential for a human being to become an individual personality. The concept of social holism provides no threat to individualism as characterised in Western liberalism in terms of freedom, rights and equality[11]. This argument that there are no threats to individualism in liberal politics at the inclusion of a social dimension, can be established on the grounds that there are certain psychological properties of the individual; such as needs, wants and the desire for self-actualisation; the fulfilment of which is achieved only through the social. These properties of the individual are intertwined with the nature of the human person which is a process, motivated toward a balanced social relationship with the others. This process, therefore, is inclined toward a form of solidarity based on community of interests, goals, objectives and standards. In this way, this process promotes the self-actualisation of the individual that fulfils to an ever compounded extent the individual's capacities for development; at the same time, this process maintains a balance where both individuals and society are mutual beneficiaries.

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[10] Philip Pettit, "Defining and Defending Social Holism" (1998), 169-184, p. 170

[11] Michael Esfeld, *Holism in Philosophy of Mind and Philosophy of Physics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), p.43

The analysis on the social dimension to Popper's politics can be further strengthened and justified based on the argument concerning the social nature of the human mind. The capacity of the individual mind both to abstract physical and mental states and to empathise with other people is itself profoundly social in how it is realised and in what it is for it to be fulfilled. Any individual's mental capacity itself reflects the social nature of the human mind, for mental capacity is shaped, and normally functions, in continuous interaction with other people[12]. The capacity of the human mind to cognise consciousness and make individual choices is dependent on the capacity of others also to make choices. This dependence on others has implications for social interactions among people, and this ultimately implies that "thought in the ordinary human form is essentially a social activity"[13]. In this general sense, the human mind is a social mind. It exists rightly at the level of individuals but it functions optimally at the level of social interaction among people. This is the assumption that Pettit termed the "common mind" whose contents and functions are 'common' to the extent that if one individual is 'minded' this entails that others are 'minded' too; there can be no mind in this common sense, without there being a society of minds[14].

There are three basic assumptions generated from the arguments above: first is the position that individual self-determination is of utmost importance in the sense that individual basic rights and liberties are inviolable; second is the argument that social interactions in terms of "I-thou" relations are necessary to what constitutes a human being (in respect of how humans are ontologically dependent on others to constitute a social community); third is the argument that since there is no threat to individualism in the spirit of what Popper's liberal arguments uphold a social context of liberalism is plausible in the sense that it aligns well with communitarian, ethical, political ideology of being.

On the above showing, we can talk of Popper's form of liberalism as possessing an essential social dimension that is consistent with those features of freedom, rights and

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[12] Hari Riitta and Miiamaaria V. Kujala, "Brain Basis of Human Social Interaction: From Concepts to Brain Imaging" in *Physiological Reviews 89* (2009), 453-479, p. 342

[13] Philip Pettit, *The Common Mind: An Essay on Psychology, Society and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1993), p.342

[14] Ibid, p.342

equality at the centre of the *Open Society.* This further establishes that Popper's liberal politics entails both individualist and social aspects. I maintain that this then brings into the discourse of Popper's liberalism a new way of thinking that addresses the socio-political concerns of non-liberal societies; to the extent that the social is harmonised with the individual in contemporary political philosophy. Communitarianism seems, to me, the most impressive political philosophy which addresses those non-liberal concerns, and often reveals itself in relations to community, social relations and culture. The social dimension that is fundamental to communitarianism when harmonised with liberal individualism would give us a liberal-communitarian order. Such a liberal-communitarian philosophy would consider social relations as a condition necessary to understand the nature of social explanation and bring about a good political standing for non-liberal societies; yet, would be far from compromising individualism. It would, however, in part, differ from the liberal view about the nature of community and culture that is associated with Will Kymlicka (1962-) which, no doubt, has a commitment to the individual but takes the cultural membership of every individual to be central.

Differentiating the Social Dimension from the Cultural

The arguments above seek to establish grounds for a social dimension to liberalism and how liberalism can be harmonised with communitarianism in a sense that allows the values of Popper's open society to be achieved. From this account, a justification of why Popper's liberalism is also accompanied by the social, owing to the inherent social nature of human beings, is established.

In spite of the above consideration, many accounts such as the one by Kymlicka provide an alternative underpinning through cultural membership of individuals. To detail Kymlicka's position on culture as a justification for liberal-communitarianism is crucial for this study. I discuss the implications of his position for political philosophy in order to argue that culture narrows but at the same time strengthens the potentiality of extending liberalism to societies that are non-liberal. A liberal-communitarianism is possible that speaks well (and in spirit quite as Popper might himself speak) to the needs of these societies. At the same time my discussion is meant to complement Kymlicka's, and by use of Popper, to show a better way. Kymlicka's account about

culture gives the impression that culture is an all-purpose condition without saying what grounds that generates this condition. This is different from my own arguments on the social dimension to politics which justifies in a somewhat Popperian way the position of liberal-communitarianism, by using the conception of the inherent social nature of human beings.

Kymlicka's argument emphasises culture as a basis for political alignment within a multicultural society. His argument for incorporating cultural membership into the liberal framework is that cultural membership provides the social context within which liberal self-understandings of agency and individual autonomy may be developed[15]. Kymlicka is specifically interested to develop a comprehensive Western liberal philosophy that would deal with the issues of cultural diversity within a society that is multicultural. He is interested to develop a theory of cultural pluralism that approaches "the challenge of multiculturalism" from a Western liberal perspective[16]. His interests lie in the way liberals ought to respond to non-Western national groups and ethnic minorities[17].

In this, Kymlicka seeks to align with liberalism a form of extreme communitarianism which emphasises culture rather than the moderate form of communitarianism that I advocate quite because of the way in which it stresses social relations. Kymlicka articulates a form of liberal-communitarianism which exemplifies the importance of cultural membership to the exercise of individual freedom and choice. However, Taylor has criticised Kymlicka's focus on individual freedom as bolstered by cultural membership as being too individualistic and so insufficiently communitarian. Taylor's criticism is that in spite of Kymlicka's articulation of the need to entrench an integral and undamaged cultural language with which one can define and pursue his or her conception of the good life, Kymlicka's focus is the need to guarantee individual choices, and not with the survival of the various cultures[18]. Taylor offers a perspective

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[15] Kumar A. Peetush, "Kymlicka, Multiculturalism, and Non-Western Nations: The Problem with Liberalism". *Public Affairs Quarterly* 17.4 (Oct., 2003), 291-318, p. 299

[16] Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1995), p.2,9

[17] Kumar A. Peetush, "Kymlicka, Multiculturalism, and Non-Western Nations (October 2003), p.291

[18] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition". Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of *Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1994. 26-73, p. 40,58

on liberal-communitarianism that is deeply rooted in the substantive content of cultures themselves[19].

Taylor's perspective is not without its own theoretical issues and concerns[20]. Acknowledging it, but also setting it to one side, I want to consider Kymlicka further, and to discuss a number of issues that are problematic about Kymlicka's conception of cultural membership. First is the usage of the term 'culture' for bridging the liberal-communitarian challenge of individual autonomy and community belongingness. Kymlicka seems to have considered culture to include consistently known behaviours and attitudes which a certain people exhibit often within a certain geographical realm. These behaviours and attitudes of a people are seen in terms of how the people classifies its experiences and how its members communicate these experiences socially. However, Kymlicka fails to acknowledge the cultural complexities that are involved within heterogeneous populations with very many different social outlooks, tribal diversities and, often times, ethnic incompatibilities. The idea of cultural membership which Kymlicka proposes is fraught with issues of ethnicity, tribalism and nationalistic rivalry. With issues such as these, there is the tendency for the state to witness political instability, economic depression and social disintegration. This is why I maintain here that the term 'culture' is not suitable for addressing the challenge of a liberal-communitarian political philosophy. This indicates that Kymlicka's approach does not adequately address the current contemporary liberalism-versus-communitarianism debates as it relates to cultural issues such as the questions of conservatism and the rights of internal minorities, for instance, women, children and sexual minorities.

Although Kymlicka develops a liberal theory of minority rights originally for Western democracies and its attendant multiculturalism, he wishes also to see if such a Western model of minority rights would be acceptable within a society that is strongly communitarian. He makes a distinction between two group rights, namely external protection, that is, the need for minorities to have certain protections against the exercise of majority power, and internal restrictions, that is, the conception that individual members of the minority group should not be restricted in their freedom to

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[19] John Francis Burke. "Reconciling Cultural Diversity with a Democratic Community: *Mestizaje* as Opposed to the Usual Suspects". *Citizenship Studies* 3.1. (1999), 119-140, p.123

[20] see John Francis Burke, (1999)

question and revise group tradition and practices. In both cases, Kymlicka's submission is that liberal theory of minority rights requires equality between groups (external protection) and freedom within groups (internal restriction)[21]. It is with this conception of minority rights that Kymlicka articulates his liberal view as it relates to the issue of rights for cultural communities. He contends, however, at the same time, that liberalism deals with issues such as the value of individual liberty as well as the issue of cultural membership within a multicultural society. Liberalism addresses issues concerning cultural and minority rights. Kymlicka avers that culture is very important both to the development of internal minorities within a multicultural society as well as for individual self-reflection. Thus, culture reflects the basis of the liberal framework that Kymlicka provides as grounds for communitarianism.

Second is the issue of internal minorities within cultural communities. This issue is culturally specific and it often poses a challenge to egalitarian liberals and multicultural theorists as regards how to promote rights and equality within minority groups. Both egalitarian liberal advocates of multiculturalism and strict communitarian defenders of culture usually aim at a more inclusive approach to rights and equality, except for the challenge of an acceptable standard for minority rights. The dilemma is how to justify the standard of rights and equality for minority groups, for instance, for a society which extends special protection and accommodation to patriarchal cultural communities, within a liberal egalitarian society that sees gender equality as a fundamental value[22]. For Kymlicka, the rights of internal minorities or 'group-specific' rights are in line with liberal framework of justice, equality and individual rights. Kymlicka argues that minority groups, especially national minorities such as the Canadian Quebecois or the New Zealand Maori deserve special rights from their states by nature of the uniqueness of their history, common culture, common language, ability to govern themselves through indigenous institutions, and most especially their cultural group's original presence when the land or state was founded[23].

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[21] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), p. 152

[22] Song, Sarah. "Multiculturalism". *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward N. Zalta. Winter 2010 Edition. Reference online 2 May 2013
< http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/multiculturalism/ >.

[23] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), p. 70

Third, the "cultural" factor which Kymlicka uses at the centre of his thesis casts a shadow of doubt on his distinctions of the two kinds of group rights. His original intension was to ensure that the rights of minority groups to retain their cultural membership remain strong within a multicultural society. However, with the modification of his initial conception of culture from "a people" or "a nation" or "a group" to that of "societal culture", which he conceives as being typically associated with national groups[24], this conception becomes too nationalistic in nature, suggesting that a people need to identify with an ethnic nationality or tribe to be able to survive politically. Indeed, this might not be right as a matter of fact. For one thing, the minority cultural rights that Kymlicka advocates become eroded as the internal minorities lose their cultural identity at the expense of societal culture. Moreover, this conception seems inappropriate within a multicultural society which is expected to recognise minority cultures and rights as the case may be.

Above all, with Kymlicka's emphasis upon cultural membership comes the difficulty of identifying how liberals can (or ought to) accommodate the demands of indigenous communities to be able to organise themselves according to their more communal self-understandings[25]. The difficulty here is how liberals can accommodate a people who desire the freedom to be able to live and organise themselves according to their own self-understandings and in some ways counter-liberal cultural views of life. The argument is that there are deep cultural differences even among communitarian societies, and that Kymlicka's concept of cultural membership and his distinction of internal restrictions from external protections of group minority rights fail to address the situations (a) where the prevalent ethical and political values are communitarian but the people are not alike in their communitarianism; and (b) where the level of individual freedom that some minority group is willing to grant is on its face counter-liberal, just as is the extent of the minority group members' dedication to the community to which they belong.

In spite of the above criticisms, what Kymlicka offers is a significant and commendable attempt to align a sophisticated form of liberalism with the issue of rights for minority

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[24] Ibid, p. 75-76

[25] Kumar A. Peetush, "Kymlicka, Multiculturalism, and Non-Western Nations (October 2003), p.298

and cultural community. He has challenged the assumed conception that liberalism, with its emphasis on individual autonomy, cannot be linked with the values of community belongingness. More importantly, the liberal account he provides explicitly expresses a commitment to individual liberty which is bolstered by cultural membership and community rights. He is one of the most recent pioneers to provide justifications for bridging the divide between liberal individualism and political communitarianism.

Liberal-Communitarianism: A New way of Thinking

The contention between the politics of individual rights and freedom, and the politics of the common good has always centred on attempts to strengthen arguments of one against the other. This is the heart of the debate between liberalism and communitarianism. Rawls, and, more specifically for this purpose, Popper are liberals who favour individualism over collectivist ideologies such as extreme communitarianism. Communitarians, such as Taylor, MacIntyre, Sandel and Walzer, argue in defence of shared cultural values, traditions and norms that are said to ensure community belongingness in politics. Communitarians advocate the entrenchment of a cultural community as a foundation for political community and as a basis for political rights.

The response to the question of why both liberals and communitarians need always be in conflict with one another informs the philosophical justification of this paper on liberal-communitarian philosophy. The arguments supporting how this new combined liberal-communitarian thinking can be realised as a sustainable political philosophy begin by my recognising the implicit social dimension to liberal politics. The uniqueness of this new thinking is that it is rooted in the social nature of human beings and the social dimension this brings into politics. At the same time, this liberal-communitarian ideology exemplifies a new thinking in political philosophy which seeks to address, in a new light, those normative concepts of freedom, rights, justice and equality in line with contemporary political realities.

Undoubtedly, significant insights can be drawn from Kymlicka and other communitarians, such as Taylor, in this liberal-communitarian philosophical stance, particularly their arguments that strengthen the importance of community values to

in the achievement of individual self-determination. However, this paper draws more on the individual and social aspects of Popper's liberalism for providing inspiration, though implicit, for the establishment of a liberal-communitarian philosophy. More explicitly relevant is Pettit's concept of social holism which lays emphasis on the "I-thou" level of human relations and interactions as the basis for ensuring political rights, freedom and justices. In all of this, what the liberal-communitarian philosophy seeks is a synthesis of two contentious political philosophies. Therefore, the demand of a social dimension to both the politics of liberalism and communitarianism needs to be clearly illustrated to support these contentions.

The first contention is that Popper's form of liberalism is a strand which constitutes both individual and social aspects. This is remarkably different from all other forms of liberal ideologies that portray a philosophy of individualism which emphasises individual autonomy. The social elements in Popper are derived from the inherent principles of inter-subjectivity in his critical rationalism which creates the basis for linkage with other non-liberal ideologies that emphasise social and community togetherness.

For liberals, other than Popper, the focus is with individual freedom in terms of protection from external constraints. These liberals see the primacy of individualism as embodying values whose essence hammers out the "principle of self-interest" or "I do what I want" or "I do what I think is best for my self-interests". This is the central element of most liberal philosophy, and is in line with Ayn Rand's (1905-1982) objectivism which sees objective moral judgement as the pursuit of one's rational self-interest[26].

The liberal conception of rights and freedom considers that the capacity of the individual to determine what is rational as well as the ability of the individual to pursue self-interest are constitutive of objective moral behaviour. This conception stands in conflict with valuing social relations in such a way as embraces the idea that the individual's interests and accomplishments flourish with others within a social

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[26] Robert Abele, "Individualism and the Failures of Liberalism in America". Centre for Research on Globalisation. 2012. Reference online, 11 April 2013. http://www.globalresearch.ca/individualism-and-the-failures-of-liberalism-in-america/5313830.

community. Thus, the thesis on the social dimension, which is an aspect of Popper's form of liberalism, views such a liberal stance of absolute individuality without recourse to the values inherent in the social as merely a conceptual abstraction. In order words, the concept of individualism which is detached from the importance of social and community values and instead adheres to individual self-actualisation is rightly considered as an abstraction that has no connection to the real world. The following thought experiment may help to describe such abstraction more clearly.

Suppose, for example, that I am an individual whose orientation about life is to be self-independent and rational about all things that I do, and that I have had the misfortune to find myself on an island alone with two others after the plane we were in crashed into the sea. Without similar experience of living in the wild, there is no guarantee of my survival; either by social interaction with the two others or by living alone according to the capacity of my rational objectivity. It is in this circumstance possible that I will die. Quite possibly however my chances for survival are better if I seek social interaction with the two others. By no means must the individualist live alone in order to be rational. Furthermore, the individualist may choose to cooperate for the purposes not only of his own survival but also for the purposes of mutual survival, taking into account that if everyone survives, then he also does. This is consistent with commitment to selfish individualism. These all are valid notions. However, suppose that the freewill that I possess to choose whether or not to interact with the two others is at the same time sufficient for my self-survival; or suppose, oppositely, that my capacity to survive on the island or even in the larger civilised society does not lie in my being individualistic. In the understanding that interacting with others need not be enough to undermine my individuality- it becomes implausible in every sense of reasoning to continue to lay hold unto my lifelong orientation about individualism, whereas my individualism is not threatened, but I need others to be able to fulfil my capacity for self-interested goals.

What the above scenario clearly expounds is that the individualists could chose to cooperate or not, but their survival may necessarily require cooperation and social interaction. The necessity for cooperation becomes more evident with the argument that each individual might have individual capacities which were necessary for survival but not sufficient unless combined with the abilities of the others.

With this point noted, individualism then becomes a merely conceptual abstraction in both normative and theoretical thinking when it ignores the values of the inherent social nature of human beings and the social character of our minds. This social dimension underpins the factors determining why humans usually find the need to form political organisations, socio-cultural groups and even political communities. Relying only on such abstraction, which fails to adequately represent the social conditions under which individual self-determination gains meaning may be a source of incoherence in the liberal theory of individual liberty.

In this connection, and in agreement with the inherent social element in Popper's liberalism, it can be argued that the fulfilment of an individual's self-desire is primarily dependent on the social conditions of a given community; that is, a community sets the conditions within which we can pursue effective action. However, this requirement does not undermine individuality; it only promotes the "I-thou" relations among people.

The important element deducible from the hypothetical three persons' island above is that survival on the island depends on the social relations among crash survivors; not on a person's particular culture or on any individual's self-interest. It is the social interaction among the three that may ensure their survival. From this inference, the inherent social aspect of Popper's liberalism is seen to underpin the emergence of a coherent liberal concept that derives support from both the nature of the social character of the self and the social nature of human consciousness. This revised conception promotes a significant degree of inter-subjectivity. The essence of inter-subjectivity here lays emphasis on the intrinsic social nature of the self. Inter-subjectivity in social relations among people stresses that the individual's experience or consciousness is a product of social interaction with others. Inter-subjectivity, seen in this way, relates to subjective (the self) experiences and to how those experiences inherently transcend the individual's sphere of solipsism through the sphere interpersonal relations. This is in the sense that the social nature of the self enables an

intermingling of ideas among people which results in the provision of an enabling environment where freedom and other self-desires can attain fulfilment[27].

On the second contention, the ontological or metaphysical claims about the social nature of the self, and the normative claims about the value of community make intelligible the idea that the self cannot exist outside the context of community, as the consciousness of the self is constituted by its interaction, interconnectedness and interrelationship with others. This is also very true about the social evolution of language.

In his article "Language and The Mind-Body problem: A Restatement of Interactionism", Popper further buttressed the essence of the necessity of social interaction by arguing against the possibility of a physicalistic causal theory of the human language[28]. To Popper, any causal physicalistic theory of human language is a theory of two lower functions of language: the descriptive and argumentative[29]. These two can be found in animal languages. However, the theory of the higher function of language is the argumentative and critical. It is with this higher function of language that man is attributed.

With the argumentative and critical higher function of language, Popper remarked that the so-called problem of other minds is solved. Since a physicalistic causal theory of higher function of human language is impossible we must attribute mental states to humans. According to Popper, if we talk to people and argue with them, then we "cannot but attribute to them intentions, and this means, mental states"[30]. In arguing with people it becomes evident that other minds exist. We do not argue with a thermometer or a machine[31]. So if other minds exist and we argue with them, clearly language is a social affair. Therefore, a doubt cast upon the existence of other minds, become a self-contradiction when it is formulated in a language[32].

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[27] Isaac Ukpokolo, "Between Group Mind and Common Good: Interrogating the African Socio-Political Condition" *Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology* 8.2 (2011), 235-252, p. 240

[28] Popper, "Language and the Mind-Body Problem: A Restatement of Interactionism" (1953), p. 293

[29] Ibid, p. 295

[30] Ibid, p. 297

[31] Ibid, p.296

[32] Ibid, p.297

So, the existence of other minds in Popper's theory of Language and Interactionism further demonstrates the implicit but necessary social and communitarian elements in his philosophy. Thus, the contending social aspects of Popper's politics of liberalism is consistent with the communitarian argument on the nature of the self in relation to the community, which is about how the existence of the community mirrors the consciousness of the self. In that respect, we cannot meaningfully talk of an individual without the consciousness of other individuals in the community. Thus, once we admit the consciousness of an individual self we have to admit the existence of other consciousness. The individual is immaterial; its consciousness is meaningless unless it is enhanced by its interconnection with others. The self-community relation is mutually inclusive and logically symmetrical because both have necessary relations to each other. Both constitute parallel elements, each corresponding to the other. For every individual being there is a correspondence, a parallel in the community. The self and the community exist by an interaction, a social interaction that promotes a social order.

The socio-ontological explanation of communitarianism above defeats liberal philosophy's commitment to an abstract individualism that bears no connection to the community. It faults liberals' dedication to individual freedom over community freedom and to individual rights over common good. Communitarians criticise liberals for their universalising logic of individual rights and individual freedom that have undermined family and social ties in civil society by rendering superfluous obligations to communities, by actively discouraging private efforts to help others[33]. Communitarians further berate liberals for their libertarian stance on individual freedom which encourages the erosion of social responsibilities and valued forms of communal life[34]. Communitarians, most often, reproach liberals, for instance, for unregulated free-market capitalism which tends to undermine the family, disrupts

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[33] Daniel Bell, "Communitarianism". *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, e*d. Edward N. Zalta. Spring 2012 Edition. Reference online 12 March 2013. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/communitarianism/

[34] Ibid

local communities and corrupts the political process, instead of enhancing communal benefits[35].

Communitarian aspirations regarding the relevance of the community in the self-fulfilment and determination of individuals have appeal. In fact, communitarian arguments for community belongingness find favour among those who argue that the group mind (community) is essential for the actualisation of the necessary social conditions for groups as well as individuals to meet their needs and foster the common good[36], it raises concerns over the costs to the basic civil and political liberty of each individual in the group. The concern that communitarianism may descend down the trail of totalitarianism that Popper's political philosophy attempts to resist is a significant challenge. The possibility of such a slide toward totalitarianism comes when "some group of individuals or community leaders attempts to super-impose their own personal feelings and ideas and disregard those of the group or of other members"[37].

In all of this, the politics of liberal-communitarianism underscores a new thinking in political philosophy which accords a more essential social dimension to liberal politics. The liberal-communitarian order would have a bearing on the benefits of economic efficiency in private enterprise and would abate the tendency toward totalitarianism by the degree of openness and accountability that liberalism represents while at the same time drawing on the communitarian ideal of social cohesion which is indispensable to personal development and societal reforms. It is a socio-political order that ensures that both the individual and the community are mutually involved in the process of societal development. This socio-political order is then fortified in its readiness to address the issue of freedom and equal basic rights in such a way that can put a stop to political and economic inequalities in the society. This is imperative in keeping with those features of freedom, rights and equality that Popper describes in his *Open Society*, and is meant to help realise greater openness of society.

At the political level, liberal-communitarianism is to be seen in terms of entrenching the common spirit in social and political organisation as well as strengthening popular participation in policy formulation and state management. With popular participation

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[35] Ibid

[36] Isaac Ukpokolo, "Between Group Mind and Common Good", (2011), p.238

[37] Ibid, p.238

citizens are able to directly express their views on the political, social, economic and environmental issues affecting them. Jürgen Habermas' (1929-) idea of the public sphere is relevant in this regard since as "... the vehicle of public opinion it puts the state in touch with the needs of society"[38]. Most importantly, popular participation in politics does not compromise the critical attitude in politics that Popper describes, rather it enriches it. Popular participation in politics in terms of discursive democracy is critical in its orientation to establish power structures, including those that operate beneath the constitutional surface of the liberal state as it encourages citizen participation in public decision-making, and strengthens commitment of government officials to public accountability[39].

Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with the prospects for a liberal-communitarian philosophy with aims and objectives that enhance Popper's project of the open society – to the effect that this liberal-communitarianism does not undermine both the capacity of individuals to self-determination and the progress of the community that enhances human relationships. It is with this suggestion that I talk of liberal-communitarianism as another way of expressing the desire to enhance the socio-political nature of human relationships across the plurality and difference of our ways of being, self-understandings, cultures and traditions.

The discussion of liberal-communitarianism as a political philosophy engages us directly with all the particularities of human experience within contemporary socio-political order. In other words, it presents the truth of the present socio-political reality where the question of what kinds of politics other than liberalism is possible where it is apparent that liberalism has failed, and where communitarianism offered as an alternative may not be appropriate to a political culture which so greatly celebrates individualism. It is based on these factors that I have tried to talk of liberal-communitarianism not merely as a conceptual abstraction but as practicable new

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[38] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. By Thomas Burger (Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), p.31

[39] John Dryzek, Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 2

thinking in political philosophy, of those notions of freedom, right and equality. Although these notions are commonly seen as essentially linked to individualism within liberal thought, they must also be considered in terms of enhanced relationship towards others in the community.

Looking at those peculiar notions of freedom, right, and equality as they are seen in the general liberal project, I have attempted to consider these notions also within the sphere of enhanced social and community togetherness. This differs essentially from the approach that ultimately grounds freedom, right and equality only upon individualism. The significance of considering these notions, even though they are individualistic in nature, is to reappraise them in a manner that brings to fore the essential elements of the individual and the social in Popper's critical rationalism. A detailed analysis of each of these notions as they apply in the liberal-communitarian philosophy is not the focus in this paper. However, it is important to have mentioned them as they are the essential features of achieving the open society.

In conclusion, the explicit individual and implicit social elements in Popper's critical rationalism require that the communitarian essence, often neglected in Popper's philosophy, is developed. This is what this paper seeks to achieve in a way that ensures that Popper's liberal politics is no longer seen as inconsistent with notions of the common good and enhanced community values for the well-being of individuals. Most importantly, Popper's idea of the social in science and in politics, and his arguments about the social evolution of language that relates to the existence of other minds in his interactionism does seem to me in many ways telling about the communitarian essence of his philosophy. This social essence in Popper motivates my argument about the prospects for a liberal-communitarian philosophy with aims and objectives that enhance his project of the open society.