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Thesis Topic:
**Dynamics of Social Norms: Pluralistic Ignorance and Risky
Sexual Behaviour in Nigeria.**

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ABSTRACT

Norms are established rules that govern patterns of behaviour and expected behaviour in the society. Norms play and continue to play important roles in the making and sustenance of efficient human social interaction by prescribing and proscribing behaviour in the society. Researchers conceive norms as rules embedded in the social architecture that facilitates coordination and cooperation among agents in the society. Norms can be formal or informal. Formal norms are conceived as structural laws enacted by competent authorities and institutions. These sorts of norms are characterised by positive laws. Consequently, it can be safely argued that the system of formal law is characterised by a structured mechanism of legislation, interpretation, and sanctions. Invariably, therefore, formal norms play a central role in addressing or solving collective action problems among agents.

Social norms or informal norms, on the other hand, are unintentional rules and regulations that evolve from human daily social interactions among members of the society (Bicchieri, Muldoon, and Sontuoso, 2018). Social norms persist to ensure the conformity of agents to maintain certain forms of traditions, customs, and conventions of the society. Social norms exert social pressure for conformity by making “demands on individual agents concerning what they are permitted, forbidden, or required to do” (Brennan et al. 2013: 42). In this sense, the theory of social norm is premised on the fact that the way people feel, think, and behave in interpersonal relationships are sometimes significantly affected by informal norms. We refer herein to certain beliefs that motivate our actions in an interdependent situation where we recognise the legitimacy of others’ expectations. This implies that, for some interdependent behaviours, what others think and expect, matters a lot, and significantly affects what we think, feel and how we prefer to behave (Baric, 1977, Tayler and Bloomfield, 2011). Given the above,

it is obvious that on certain interpersonal action combinations, agents prefer a certain action or behaviour over other possible alternatives, on the condition that others in their reference network (people that matter in one's choices) engage in it, and/or that they believe members of their relevant reference network expect and prefer them to act in a certain way, and they recognise the legitimacy of these expectations (Acemoglu and Jackson, 2014). The theory of Social Norms theorises that human behaviours are sometimes influenced by misperceptions of how members of one's reference network think and act. Pluralistic ignorance is a type of misperception. It refers to a situation where most individuals falsely interpret other peoples' beliefs and expectations about certain salient matters (Shamir and Shamir, 1997). Invariably, therefore, an overestimation or underestimation of problem behaviour in a reference network will cause an increase or decrease in agents' problem behaviours.

HIV awareness in most sub-Saharan countries has increased significantly in the last two decades. Despite the high rate of recorded deaths from infected persons, the availability of condoms and the constant appeal for condom use, risky sexual behaviour is still widespread, and thousands get infected daily. The inescapable question is, why is risky sexual behaviour a persisting phenomenon in the face of life-threatening health concerns? The dynamics of risky sexual behaviour and HIV spread in sub-Saharan Africa has remained a serious concern for researchers. Various research carried out and experiments to fathom the underlying reasons for the persistence of risky behaviour among agents points to various reasons, with no consensus in sight. These reasons include, but are not limited to gender norms (Mantell J, E, Needham S, L, Smit J, A, et al. 2009; Letamo, G. 2007; Harrison, A, Xaba N, & Kunene, P. 2001), behavioural norms and poor negotiation skills (Gonzalez et al., 2008), peer pressure (Rattleff-crain, J, Donald, K, M & Dalton, J 1999), varied types of misperceptions (Letamo, G. 2007; Sano, Y, Antabe, R,

Atuoye, K, N, et al. 2016), and many more. These arguments though convincing and appealing to common sense, in most cases, fail to address or provide a practical reasoning and sound argument for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among young adults and other categories who fall outside these HIV-susceptible populations (leading to hasty generalisation). Obviously, these arguments cannot be inferred as the primary cause of the prevalence of risky sexual behaviour among young adults. The question thus remains, why do risky sexual behaviour persist among agents in HIV infected regions?

Based on the above and as already argued by some researchers, it is evident that certain norms are at work, causing agents to persist in risky sexual behaviour in the face of these life-threatening health risks (Oyefara, 2013). Due to the highly private nature of sexual relation beliefs, it appears easy to infer what the general behaviour is, but difficult to deduce, correctly, the existing normative expectations. We contend here that, second-order normative expectations serve as the backdrop to which community members garner societal approval to persist in risky sexual behaviour, even when this normative expectation might be a misperception.

This research is, therefore, modelled around the question of persisting risky sexual behaviour by critically interrogating the level and degree of expectations as well as the underlying reasons why such unhealthy and harmful behaviour persists. This is premised on the identifiable gap in the literature, that is, the lack of practical definition and operationalisation of pluralistic ignorance owing to a misconception of the second-order normative expectations hinged on established patriarchal gender norms that support this phenomenon. This research set as an objective to determine if there exists a significant correlation between the existing patriarchal gender norm structure evident in Nigeria and the persistence of risky sexual

behaviour among agents, as well as the role played by pluralistic ignorance in the persistence of risky sexual behaviour.

Results from the survey conducted show overwhelming support for our research hypotheses. Firstly, the survey results and analysis show clearly that patriarchal gender norms are responsible for the evolution and sustenance of pluralistic ignorance of empirical and normative expectations of members of the society. Secondly, results of the survey validate the theory that risky sexual behaviour is an established maladaptive social norm that persists among members of the society due to established pluralistic ignorance of members' empirical and normative expectations. Invariably, therefore, this research adeptly responds to the research questions by proffering answers to the question of whether pluralistic ignorance is responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour and why habit prone agents persist in risky sexual behaviour though aware of all the risks and negative externalities associated with such behaviours.

This research consequently attends to the literature gap by critically exploring and investigating the theoretical and empirical understanding of exactly how pluralistic ignorance contributes to the persistence of risky sexual behaviour, a maladaptive social norm in Nigeria. This thesis contributes to the literature by analytically investigating the dynamics of patriarchal gender norms and their fundamental link to the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among young adults as well as diagnosing the correlation between norms and risky sexual behaviour. As a sequel to the above, this research is significant in three ways, firstly, by advancing the concept and theory of Social Norm, providing a dynamic approach to tackling risky sexual behaviour, by providing empirical evidence and data of Social Norms sustaining risky sexual behaviour and

transmission of HIV in Nigeria and finally, by providing empirical data support to strategies of changing enshrined harmful social norms.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RSB- Risky Sexual Behaviour

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

NACA- National Agency for the Control of Aids

FGC- Female Genital Cutting

IGV- Intimate Gender Violence

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study.....	14
1.2 Problem of Study.....	20
1.3 Research Aim and Rationale.....	22
1.4 Organisation of the Thesis.....	24

CHAPTER TWO: THE NATURE AND CONSTITUTION OF CONVENTION

2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2 Nature of Convention.....	30
2.2.1 David Hume and the Idea of Convention.....	31
2.2.2 Lewis' Account of Convention	35
2.3 Equilibrium Selection.....	44
2.4 Mutual Expectation.....	50
2.5 Coordination Devices.....	55
2.5.1 Role and Limitation of Agreement.....	56
2.5.2 Role and Limitation of Salience	58
2.5.3 Role and Limitation of Precedence	63
2.6 Common Knowledge.....	65
2.6.1 Lewis' Account of Common Knowledge.....	66
2.6.2 Michael Chwe's Account of Common Knowledge.....	69
2.7 On Social Accounts of Convention	73

2.7.1	Gilbert's Account.....	73
2.7.2	Ullman Margalit's Account.....	77
2.8	Conclusion.....	80

CHAPTER THREE: DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL NORMS

3.1	Introduction.....	82
3.2	The Nature of Norms	84
3.3	Types of Norms.....	93
3.3.1	Formal Norms.....	94
3.3.1.1	Collective Action Problem	100
3.3.2	Informal Norms.....	104
3.4	Social Norms.....	109
3.4.1	Structural Functionalism.....	111
3.4.2	Social Identity Theory.....	120
3.4.3	Rational Choice and Game Theoretical Approach.....	128
3.4.4	Asymmetric Norms- Hawk -Dove Game.....	139
3.5	Evolutionary Game Theory.....	141
3.5.1	Brian Skyrms	144
3.5.2	Kenneth Binmore	149
3.6	Cristina Bicchieri's Rational Reconstruction.....	152
3.6.1	Collective Practices and Diagnosing Social Norms	158
3.6.2	Sanction: Why do people conform?	165
3.7	Conclusion.....	170

CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM AND GENDER NORMS IN NIGERIA

4.0 Introduction.....172

4.1 Origin and Theory of Patriarchy.....175

4.2 Gender Norms.....182

 4.2.1 Gender Schema and Gender Roles.....184

4.3 What is Misogyny?187

 4.3.1 Kate Manne.....191

 4.3.2 Kimberlé Crenshaw.....199

4.4 Gender: A Social Construction.....203

 4.4.1 Sally Haslanger: Gender as a Social Construct206

4.5 Patriarchal System in Nigeria: Then and Now.....210

4.6 Conclusion.216

CHAPTER FIVE: RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR: THE MISSING LINK

5.0. Introduction	218
5.1 HIV and AIDS: Theories and Statistics.....	220
5.1.1 Symptoms of HIV/AIDS.....	221
5.1.2 Preventing HIV/AIDS.....	222
5.1.3 Why are women most Affected by HIV/AIDS.....	223
5.2 ABC Strategy in Curbing the Spread of HIV/AIDS.....	226
5.2.1 Abstinence.....	227
5.2.2 Being Faithful.....	228
5.2.3 Using Condoms.....	228
5.3 Social Norms: The Role of Misperceptions of Behaviour.....	230
5.3.1 Pluralistic Ignorance.....	232
5.3.2 False Consensus.....	237
5.3.3 False Uniqueness.....	239
5.4 The Power of Perception.....	242
5.5 Dynamics and Theories of HIV Spread in Sub-Saharan Africa.....	243
5.5.1 Gender Norms and Poor Negotiation Skills.....	244
5.5.2 Contextual Life Uncertainties.....	249
5.5.3 Alcohol, Hard Drugs and Peer Pressure.....	254
5.5.4 Sexual Misperception.....	259
5.6 Survey Data Analysis.....	259
5.7 Conclusion.....	294

CHAPTER SIX: ARTICULATING THE ROLE OF NORMS IN SUSTAINING BEHAVIOUR.

6.0 Introduction.....295

6.1 Dynamics of Social Norm: Employing Bicchieri’s Theory296

 6.1.1 Nature of Conformity.....301

 6.1.2 The Role of Emotion in Applying Sanction303

6.2 The Relationship Between Negative Emotions and Social Norms306

6.3 Norm Identification and Norm Conformity.....308

6.4 Persistence of Gender Norms and Misogyny.....313

6.5 Reference Network and Persistence of Behaviour.....318

6.6 Conclusion...323

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.0	Introduction.....	325
7.1	Tools for Norm Change.....	326
7.2.1	Legal Means.....	328
7.2.2	Media Campaigns	333
7.2.3	Economic Incentives.....	337
7.2.4	Deliberations.....	339
7.3	Future Research Trajectory.....	342
7.4	Recommendations and Conclusion.....	345
	Reference.....	350

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background To The Study

Norms play and continue to play important roles in the making and sustenance of efficient human social interaction by prescribing and proscribing behaviour in society. Researchers conceive norms as rules embedded in social architecture that facilitates coordination and cooperation among agents in the society (Bicchieri, Muldoon and Sontuoso, 2018). Norms can be informal or formal. Formal norms are conceived as structural laws enacted by competent authorities and institutions. Formal norms contain “established formal mechanisms of legislation and interpretation” (Brennan et al., 2013: 43). These sorts of norms are characterised by positive laws. According to Platt, “positive law is a command of the sovereign power of the state, formulated and administered by the government of the state, prescribing a course of conduct to one or more subjects of the state” (Platt, 1894: 53). Consequently, it can be safely argued that the system of formal law is characterised by a structured mechanism of legislation, interpretation, and sanctions. Invariably, therefore, formal norms play a central role in addressing or solving collective action problems among agents. While formal norms contain normative attributes and expectations, their effects on individual and interpersonal private relationships are significantly hampered due to their structural and formal nature.

Social norms or informal norms, on the other hand, are unintentional rules and regulations that evolve from human daily social interactions among members of the society (Bicchieri, Muldoon, and Sontuoso, 2018). Social norms persist to ensure the conformity of agents to maintain certain forms of traditions, customs, and conventions of society. Social norms exert social pressure for conformity by making “demands on individual agents concerning what they are permitted, forbidden, or required to do” (Brennan et al., 2013: 42). In this sense, the

theory of social norm is premised on the fact that the way people feel, think, and behave in interpersonal relationships are sometimes significantly affected by informal norms. We refer herein to certain beliefs that motivate our actions in an interdependent situation where we recognise the legitimacy of others' expectations. This implies that, for some interdependent behaviours, what others think and expect, matters a lot, and significantly affects what we think, feel and how we prefer to behave (Baric, 1977; Tayler and Bloomfield, 2011).

It is obvious from the above that on certain interpersonal action combinations, agents prefer a certain action or behaviour over other possible alternatives, on the condition that others in their reference network (people that matter in one's choices) engage in it, and/or that they believe members of their relevant reference network expect and prefer them to act in a certain way, and they recognise the legitimacy of these expectations (Acemoglu and Jackson, 2014; Brennan et al 2013; Bicchieri, 2006, 2017).

The theory of Social Norms theorises that human behaviours are sometimes influenced by misperceptions of how members of our reference network think and act. Pluralistic ignorance is a type of misperception. It refers to a situation where most individuals falsely interpret other peoples' beliefs and expectations about certain salient matters (Shamir and Shamir, 1997). Invariably, therefore, an overestimation or underestimation of problem behaviour in a reference network will cause an increase or decrease in agents' problem behaviours.

HIV awareness in Nigeria has increased significantly in the last three decades. Despite the high rate of recorded deaths from infected persons, the availability of condoms and the constant appeal for condom use, risky sexual behaviour is still widespread, and thousands of

sexually active persons get infected daily. The inescapable question is, why is risky sexual behaviour a persisting phenomenon in the face of ill health, death, and other unfavourable situations?

The dynamics of risky sexual behaviour and HIV spread in Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries have remained a serious concern for researchers. Various research and experiments carried out to fathom the underlying reasons for the persistence of risky behaviour among agents point to various reasons, with no consensus in sight. These reasons include gender norms (Mantell J, E, Needham S, L, Smit J, A, et al. 2009; Letamo, G. 2007; Harrison, A, Xaba N, & Kunene, P. 2001), behavioural norms and poor negotiation skills (Gonzalez et al., 2008), peer pressure and group influence (Rattleff-Crain, J, Donald, K, M & Dalton, J 1999), varied types of misperceptions (Fiaveh, D, Y. 2011; Letamo, G. 2007; Sano, Y, Antabe, R, Atuoye, K, N, et al, 2016), and many more.

Take, for instance, Contextual Uncertainty as a foremost reason for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. According to Andrea Mannberg (2012), contextual uncertainty about individuals' health prospects and future are common features among many HIV-susceptible populations such as refugees, and migratory workers, etc is responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour (in the said category). Unambiguously, he argues that people living in harsh conditions; civil unrest, and poor socio-economic structures such as poverty and low life expectancy index, consider risky sexual behaviour and HIV as a significant threat to life, but less dominant compared to their daily life situations. As convincing as this argument might seem, in my view, it fails to address or provide a practical reasoning and sound argument for the

persistence of risky sexual behaviour among young adults who fall outside this HIV-susceptible population.

Gálvez-Buccollini, Paz-Soldan, Herrera, et al, (2008), on the other hand, argue that pluralistic ignorance regarding expectations about HIV and sexual behaviour are the primary causes of the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among agents. In short, they argue that alcohol consumption and being drunk leads agents to erroneous conclusions about commensurate degrees of risks to be considered and so contribute significantly to risky sexual behaviour: multiple sexual partners and inconsistent condom use. They further argue that agents who have a misconception about expectations of alcohol's effects on sexual performance tend to prefer more risks associated with unprotected sex and thus engage in greater risky sexual behaviours than those who do not have this misperception. This argument appears to appeal to common sense, primarily because when an agent is drunk, he or she seems not to be in full control of his/her reasoning. Notwithstanding, this argument cannot be inferred as the primary cause of the prevalence and persistence of risky sexual behaviour among young adults in Sub-Saharan Africa. The question thus remains, why does risky sexual behaviour persist among agents in HIV-infected regions?

Based on the above and as already argued by some researchers, it is evident that certain norms are at work, causing agents to persist in risky sexual behaviour in the face of these life-threatening health risks (Oyefara, 2013). Due to the highly private nature of sexual relation beliefs, it appears easy to infer what the general behaviour is, but difficult to deduce, correctly, the existing normative expectations. We contend here that, second-order normative expectations

serve as the backdrop to which community members garner societal approval to persist in risky sexual behaviour, even when this normative expectation might be a misperception.

This research is modelled around the question of persisting risky sexual behaviour by critically interrogating the level and degree of expectations as well as the underlying reasons why such unhealthy and harmful behaviour, such as risky sexual behaviour persists. This is premised on the identifiable gap in the literature, that is, the lack of practical definition and operationalisation of pluralistic ignorance owing to a misconception of the second-order normative expectations hinged on established patriarchal gender norms that support this phenomenon. Specifically, we argue here that, patriarchal gender norms, supported by enshrined societal stereotypes, create a situation where men are considered risk-takers and women, significantly submissive to the whims and caprices of their male counterparts.

To this end, women possess personal normative expectation that using a condom is right and good (as it protects against diseases and pregnancy) but relying on the above-misconceived expectation to be submissive to their male counterparts, women are unable to enforce condom use. Women perceive that by challenging their male counterparts and enforcing condom use others will conceive them as arrogant, disrespectful, and bad women. On the other hand, men also satisfy the personal normative belief that using a condom is good and right (as it protects against disease and pregnancy) but persist with risky sexual behaviour because they want to sustain their self-ego as risk-takers, the head of the relationship (family or marriage) and want to be seen by friends as a 'strong man' and not a weakling or less 'a man'.

The objective of this research is to determine if there is a significant correlation between the existing patriarchal gender norm structure evident in Nigeria and the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among agents. Here, we desire to determine if this is responsible for the analysed kind of misperception of agents on the second-order normative expectations compelling agents to persist and support this harmful norm. Specifically, we desire to:

- To identify and operationalise the social norms influencing and perpetuating Pluralistic Ignorance.
- To effectively diagnose the level of conditionality of behaviour, as well as empirical and normative expectations for conformity to risky sexual behaviour.
- To offer a philosophical analysis of the theory of social norms and interrogate the arguments in support of the connection between expectations and conformity to norms.
- To proffer empirically viable recommendations for norm change methods to inform and dispel enshrined pluralistic ignorance perpetuating risky sexual behaviour, thereby providing empirical validation and credence to the social norm theory.

It is important to state right from the outset that this research rests heavily on Cristina Bicchieri's rational reconstruction theory of social norm. According to her, conditionality, preferences, and expectations are the major tools for an efficient categorisation and conceptualisation of norms. She argues that individuals' conditional choices to conform to a social norm are based primarily on two levels of expectations. Bicchieri (2006) conceives these expectations as;

(a) *Empirical expectations*: individuals believe that a sufficiently large subset of the relevant group/population conforms to the norm in situations of type S and either

(b) *Normative expectations*: individuals believe that a sufficiently large subset of the relevant group/population expects them to conform to the norm in situations of type \mathcal{S} ;

or

(b') *Normative expectations with sanctions*: individuals believe that a sufficiently large subset of the relevant group/population expects them to conform to the norm in situations of type \mathcal{S} , prefers them to conform, and may sanction behaviour.

As a sequel to the classification of expectations; empirical and normative, we can easily deduce that norms, on the one hand, function as tools for describing patterns of behaviour, and on the other hand, norms serve the function of expressing a social opinion; prescription or proscription of things we ought to do or not do in the society.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, (HIV) is a chronic sexually transmitted disease. It is a disease that acts by damaging the human immune system rendering the individual immunodeficient and susceptible to other deadly infections and diseases (Pietrangelo and Murrell, 2014). The World Health Organization (WHO) argues that risky sexual behaviours increase the chances of contracting HIV by over 85% while consistent and correct use of latex condoms reduces the chances of contracting the virus by over 85%. Other means of contracting HIV include mother-to-child transmission, transfusion of contaminated blood and/or sharing of contaminated needles, syringes, or sharp instruments.

According to WHO and UNAIDS estimates (2016), a total of 36.7 million people were living with HIV globally. That same year, some 1.8 million people became newly infected. In 2018, UNAIDS estimated a total of 1.9 million people living with HIV in Nigeria, i.e., over 5.1% of the world total. HIV infection in Nigeria has a unique spread, with young people, especially women between 20–27 years old, more vulnerable. Low levels of condom use, especially among mobile populations, the prevalence of polygamy, poverty, low rates of literacy, and approved perceptions of risks among vulnerable groups have contributed to the rapid spread of the HIV epidemic.

This study, therefore, examines the socio-cultural expectations; empirical and normative, of sexual behaviour and the surrounding reasons for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour and its approval status among the active and vulnerable population. It is a truism that more resources have been budgeted for testing and treatment of HIV and very little effort (compared to resources budgeted for testing and treatment) has been put into addressing the root cause of the high rate of infection; that is, risky sexual behaviour. The question this research seeks to address is, why do people, rational beings, aware of the great potential dangers of risky sexual behaviours still engage in such? It is not to take for granted, and as listed above that other socio-cultural factor play a significant role in contributing to the spread of the infection, we argue here that a significant number of these is caused by enshrined harmful social norm in place that has been enforced and reinforced by patriarchal gender norms enshrined in the Nigerian socio-cultural setting. It is important to mention that, while this research does not attempt to change the patriarchal norm in place, it envisages a critical diagnosis and attempt a norm change the harmful social norm that encourages risky sexual behaviours. The theory of social norms has recorded significant successes in recent years. In particular, it has been successful in addressing pluralistic

ignorance of alcohol consumption among teenagers (Prentice and Miller, 1993) and intimate sexual violence (Manji 2018; Uthman, Lawoko, and Moradi, 2009; Jakobsen, 2015; Kishor and Johnson, 2004), child marriage (Bicchieri, Lindemans, and Jiang 2014; Loaiza and Wong, 2012; Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle, and Lee-Rife, 2011; Mikhail, 2002), female genital mutilation (Bicchieri and Marini, 2015; Easton, Monkman, and Miles, 2003; McChesney, 2015) among others.

1.3 Research Objective and Rationale

The intricacies that surround HIV/AIDS pandemic and risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria is indeed complex. Recent research argues that this pandemic is not only a medical problem since it is supported by socio-cultural, economic, and developmental challenges (Oyefala, 2013). To investigate the primary causes of this high rate of HIV transmission meaningfully and efficiently in the country and achieve success, there is a need to introduce sociological and psychological approaches by particularly focusing on the dynamics of human behaviour and expected behaviours. While this fact is generally subscribed to, little theoretical and empirical research has been carried out to effectively checkmate this menace. The above presents us with at least two identifiable relevant gaps. The first identifiable gap in HIV transmission is the lack of the practical definition of patriarchal and gender norms considering their support for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. To this end, approaches in creating awareness and tackling the spread relegate to the background the theoretical and empirical aspects of utilising social norm approaches in shaping their program planning. Secondly, interventions to address health harmful norms concentrate on the effects of this pandemic (HIV infection diagnosis and treatment), rather than the causes (persistent and widespread subscription of risky sexual

behaviour). Consequently, more resources are dedicated to addressing and taking care of victims rather than prevention. The above therefore serves as the research rationale.

The objective of this thesis is, therefore, to address these gaps by; firstly, interrogating critically the conception of social norms, and particularly defining the social norms enhancing risky sexual behaviours in Nigeria and the consequence of hypergeometric HIV transmission. Secondly, by empirically testing the norms enhancing risky sexual behaviour and HIV transmission to ascertain the level of empirical and normative expectations supporting it by enhancing conformity as well as modalities of critical interventions to address the causes of the pandemic.

Among the many recent approaches to social norms and dynamics of changing harmful and maladaptive social norms, Cristina Bicchieri's 'rational reconstruction' using game theoretical approach stands out. Bicchieri's approach has been applied to addressing harmful norms such as female genital cutting (FGC). This thesis, therefore, employs Bicchieri's theory of the dynamics of social norms to diagnose and understand gender and patriarchal social norms in Nigeria and their role in sustaining risky sexual behaviour. It is an established truth that norms do not stand alone. Norms operate and are sustained by other norms. Consequently, this thesis in diagnosing the link between social norms and sustained risky sexual behaviour will attend to the isolation of economic, material, and structural factors of the Nigerian society and their role in sustaining norms that sustain risky sexual behaviour.

This thesis will contribute to scholarship and knowledge advancement in three-fold dimensions. Firstly, it will contribute to scholarship by advancing the concept of social norms by applying its theory to risky sexual behaviour. In addition, this thesis will contribute to scholarship by proffering empirical evidence from the application of the theory of social norms

to risky sexual behaviour clearly showing the web of norms sustaining risky sexual behaviour and transmission of HIV in Nigeria. And thirdly, this thesis will contribute to scholarship by proffering practical specific strategies to change the identified harmful social norms perpetuating risky sexual behaviour thus leading to a healthier society.

1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

Social norms and conventions are ubiquitous in everyday human life and interactions. They are an important source of motivation for actions and reasons for obeying established conventions and regularities. Social norms and social conventions guide human interaction and specify rules for effective exchanges in varied situations. Chapter Two thus opens with an introduction to the idea of Convention. In Chapter Two, conventions will be conceived as established persistent solutions to recurring coordination and cooperation problems. In essence, to avoid coordination failures, agents simply infer expected behaviour and conform to an established convention since it is in their best interest to do so. Consequently, it is therefore sufficient for a simple majority conforming to a convention to ensure persistence, since it is in the best interest of agents to conform to an established convention. For effective coordination and equilibrium selection, coordination devices, common knowledge and mutual expectations are indispensable concepts.

In Chapter Three, the research will move a step further to analyse the dynamics of social norms where we argued that a simple majority of agents conforming to a regularity alone is not sufficient to induce conformity. The necessary combination of normative and empirical expectations, as well as the possibility of sanctions for transgressors, serves as the prerequisite

for conformity to an established social norm. Furthermore, we argued that social norms engender and perpetuate social stability in human social interactions. Norms are a persistent phenomenon in every human social interaction by playing a salient role in prescribing or proscribing behaviours. From this, it can be inferred that norms are extremely complex and that sometimes, those who follow certain societal norms pay a high price for doing so. In this chapter, Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of the dynamics of social norms will be examined with particular attention to the significant role expectations, reference networks and sanctions play to induce conformity and persistence of norms. Bicchieri's rational reconstruction is very important to this research and plays a pivotal role since this research heavily relies on her theory to ground the argument that empirical and normative expectations of one's reference network play a significant role in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour by agents.

Chapter Four answers the question of gender inequality between the binary sexes, the institution of gender norms, and its inherent manifestation in a patriarchal structure sustained by sexist ideology and misogyny. We argued here that, gender norms are institutionalised and internalised standards of behaviour and expected behaviour of the male and female gender in the society. This goes to say that, and as we shall come to appreciate, the patriarchal system of oppression and subjugation institutes gender-specific roles and responsibilities and determines what ought to be masculine and feminine. Misogyny is the 'law enforcement' branch of patriarchy and is often conceived as an entrenched belief system that goes hand in hand with the patriarchal system and sexism. Established gender norms, gender schemas and gender roles imply society instituted gender-specific roles for members of the society in a patriarchal system and allows misogynists to police, enforce and sanction violators of these norms, thereby sustaining the patriarchal system. Chapter Four also focuses on gender stereotypes in the

patriarchal system as well as the patriarchal system structure in Nigeria. This section is key to understanding the various types and forms of oppression, subjugation and mechanism used to maintain the system of women's subjugation, thus enabling the patriarchal system to persist with little or no growing resistance.

HIV/AIDS remains a serious health challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. Interestingly, risky sexual behaviour accounts for about 98% of the transmission of HIV from person to person. Hence, it is an obvious fact that safe sexual practice will significantly reduce its transmission and probably even eradicate the virus. The sad thing, however, is that risky sexual behaviour remains a persistent phenomenon. The Fifth Chapter presents a critical analysis of the dynamics and theories of risky sexual practice and HIV spread in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, this chapter will characterise a deliberate discussion of the role of misperceptions in sustaining human social behaviours, consequently bringing to the fore the indubitable role perception plays in the process of decision-making. Furthermore, this chapter will also comprise a critical analysis of the data obtained from the risky sexual behaviour survey conducted to determine the correlation between patriarchal gender norms and the persistence of risky sexual behaviour, as well as to determine the correlation between pluralistic ignorance and risky sexual behaviour by making a concerted effort to unearth what gender norms, peer effects, and patriarchal norms support risky sexual behaviour.

In the Sixth Chapter, the researcher proceeded to critically analyse, articulate, and apply Cristina Bicchieri's theory of social norms as a sequel to our analysis of the nature and dynamics of social norms in Chapter Three. This analysis provided a better understanding of the results of the survey data of Chapter Five, as well as a better understanding of the propensity and nature of conformity and the unrivalled role emotions play in the persistence of maladaptive behaviour

among members of a “communal society.” Furthermore, as a sequel to the analysis of patriarchy and the practice of misogyny in most human societies and as practised in Nigeria, we proceeded in this chapter, to juxtapose the knowledge and understanding of the analysis from the risky sexual behaviour survey with established gender norms, gender roles, reference groups and gender schemas.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion of the dissertation. Herein, the researcher presented the key contributions of this dissertation to scholarship by first articulating and introducing pluralistic ignorance in sexual relations and its role in sustaining risky sexual behaviour among community members particularly as evident from the survey conducted. In line with Bicchieri’s (2016) tools for norm change (that is, educational and media campaigns, legislative, economic interventions, and group deliberations), the researcher proceeded to enumerate the obvious challenges that might be encountered particularly in changing enshrined risky sexual behaviour norm enforced by established pluralistic ignorance and patriarchal gender norms. One thing that should be stated clearly here is that, without targeted policies backed by political will, it would be a herculean task to induce enduring norm change. This chapter and dissertation conclude with the presentation of possible further research trajectories, clearly articulated recommendations for effective norm, and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE AND CONSTITUTION OF CONVENTION

“If an agent were completely confident in his expectations that the others would do their part of a certain proper coordination equilibrium, he would have a decisive reason to do his own part”

(Lewis, 1969: 25)

2.1 Introduction

Humans’ daily social interactions are characterised by social conventions. Social conventions guide human interaction and specify rules for effective exchanges in varied situations. Often, the questions of what social conventions are, their nature, how they are formed, and how they are sustained are neglected. In this chapter, we provide a foundational clarification of the entire discourse of rules that guide social interactions, how they are formed and how they are sustained. This chapter begins with an introduction to the origin and institution of Convention to the academic literature by David Hume and as critically developed by David Lewis. Hume’s account is relevant here because it provides us with the introductory account of Convention as a necessary foundation for understanding David Lewis’ account. The subsequent sections of this chapter shall be a developed discussion of relevant points emanating from Hume and Lewis’ accounts of convention.

In the second section, I shall discuss the fundamental role played by mutual expectation in the formation of convention; the coordination of agents in arriving at desired and consensual equilibrium by using the coordination devices of agreement, salience, and precedence. At the end of this section, we shall provide an answer to the question: is agreement, salience, and

precedence sufficient coordination devices for the acquisition of a reliable system of concordant mutual expectation and effective equilibrium selection?

It is indisputable that knowledge of the existence of a convention plays a significant role in sustaining a convention. To this end, the third section will focus on *Common Knowledge*. As shall become evident subsequently, Lewis was particularly interested in the process through which conventions are sustained. While it remains significantly unclear how common knowledge forms convention¹, common knowledge is indispensable in the sustenance of convention. Lewis argues that agreement, salience, and precedence though relevant and possible sources of mutual expectation, are weaker versions. For him, common knowledge is a consistent source of higher-order expectations. What is common knowledge and how do we arrive at it? Herein, I shall interrogate various accounts of common knowledge paying particular interest on their merits and limitations.

The final section of this chapter will be a necessary exposition of alternative accounts of Convention and how they differ and relate to each other. Herein, we shall discuss Margaret Gilbert and Edna Ullmann-Margalit's accounts of Social Convention and Social Norms, respectively. One point worthy of note right from the outset is that, while Lewis' account is generally considered individualistic, Gilbert and Ullmann-Margalit's accounts are social in nature, and are considered as social conventions, dealing with social institutions of a larger group and members. The section on social accounts of Convention will suffice as the conclusion of this chapter.

¹ Conceived as unclear in this since owing to the circular argument generated in support of common knowledge as the source of convention. If common knowledge generates conventions, conventions will, in turn, be required to support the theory of common knowledge.

2.2 The Nature of Conventions

‘Conventions’ are conceived and enshrined unwritten rules emanating from human interactions that significantly influence human behaviour. In societies where an established convention exists, such behavioural rules are followed and expected to be followed. The central challenge faced in the analyses of the concept -Convention- is how regularities of action; individual and group, differ from ‘convention’. I shall return to Convention shortly. Before then, let me briefly discuss what coordination games are and what it means for agents to coordinate.

Human daily social interactions present situations of interdependent and intertwined preferences and choices. Some such situations require the convergence of actions rather than competition. In a coordination game, agents’ interests may be aligned to an extent such that agents are interested in deciding harmoniously with the course of action of the other(s).² Agents faced with such an interdependent decision-making situation seek the best strategy to arrive at the coordination equilibrium. As we shall see, a *pure coordination*³ game is characterised by more than one strict Nash equilibrium. Two problems can immediately be deduced: first, how to coordinate on equilibrium, and the secondly, is how to coordinate efficiently. The consequence of not consensually deciding and effectively coordinating results in disequilibrium (Biblaiser, 1993). A distinctive feature of coordination games is that, unlike many other strategic games, coordination games do not depend on conflicts among players. Cooper (1999) avows that coordination games rest on fundamental ideas of expectations, trust, assurance, and confidence. Little wonder coordination failures arise from evident “self-fulfilling pessimistic belief” (Cooper

² As we shall see, one distinct characteristic feature of coordination problems is that they provide unique intuitions into the workings and sustenance of social order. Agents' preference is to choose action matching the choice of the other from the multiple strategies. Without intrinsic reason, agents must act considering primarily the expectations of the action of one another.

³ See Thomas Schelling, 1960, David Lewis, 1969.

1999: viii). In a bid to avoid coordination failures, agents mutually coordinate or align their interests and actions to attain a Pareto optimal⁴ outcome, which in turn, is beneficial to all agents.

2.2.1 David Hume and the Idea of Convention

David Hume provided the first systematic analysis of ‘convention’ in his *Treatise of Human Nature*.⁵ He conceived that humans are condemned by nature to a life filled with “numberless wants and necessities” amidst slender means and must relieve such necessities” (Hume, 1740/2008). Consequently, Hume established a system characterised by the stability of possessions in the face of competition for scarce goods and resources. For Hume,

This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention entered into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods and leave everyone in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry. By this means, everyone knows what he may safely possess; and the passions are restrained in their partial and contradictory motions. (Hume, 1740/2008: 285)

Though Hume’s particular interest was in the origin and sustenance of property rights and justice, he conceives Convention as a stable pattern of acting in which passions are restrained

⁴ Pareto optimal or Pareto efficient (synonymous and can be used interchangeably) refers to a strategic situation whereby it is impossible to increase the utility maximization payoff of agents without making others worse off in the process. On the flip side, Pareto inefficient is a situation where a change in strategic action can increase the utility payoff of agents without making any agent worse off. Put differently, Pareto optimal is a situation where no other feasible action combination Pareto dominates a strategic interaction. Agents prefer it best compared to any other possible action combination. Pareto inefficient/inferior on the other hand, is a recognized feasible action combination that though is a recognized equilibrium, is Pareto dominated by at least one feasible action combination. Also, Pareto inefficient action combination presents a possible improvement scenario, often through negotiation, to arrive at the Pareto efficient action combination.

⁵ Hume, David, 1740/2008.

thus ensuring coordination. Coordination, in this sense, would avail everyone a peaceful enjoyment of self-acquired fortune. Furthermore, Hume states,

When therefore men have had experience enough to observe, that whatever may be the consequence of any single act of justice, performed by a single person, yet the whole system of actions, concurred in by the whole society, is infinitely advantageous to the whole, and to every part; it is not long before justice and property take place. Every member of society is sensible of this interest: Everyone expresses this sense to his fellows, along with the resolution he has taken of squaring his actions by it, on condition that others will do the same. No more is requisite to induce any one of them to perform an act of justice, who has the first opportunity. This becomes an example to others. And thus, justice establishes itself by a kind of Convention or agreement; that is, by a sense of interest, supposed to be common to all, and where every single act is performed expecting that others will perform in like manner. (Hume, 1740/2008: 290)

We can infer Hume's whole framework for the purpose of the nature and composition of the Convention from the foregoing excerpt. First off, the outcome of a convention results in a broad benefit for everyone. It specifically states that if a convention exists, each participant's unique acts will be advantageous to all. Participants will need to coordinate their actions to do this because a single participant's lack of coordination results in a disadvantage for everyone. Common knowledge is a key component of Hume's theory of convention. Most convention attendees are conscious of their interest in the event; they freely state their willingness and desire "of squaring their acts" provided that other attendees also have an interest in doing so. Hence, participant *A*, is aware of such a convention *C*, participant *A* is also aware that others are aware

of convention *C*. She is, however, determined to act as required on the condition that others do the same. In addition, Hume's framework of the nature of the Convention assumes conditional preferences. This fact is hinged on the fact that agents desire to act in a certain way on the condition that other agents will choose a particular action. As we shall see, conditional preference plays a crucial role in the sustenance of Convention among agents.

We can also recognize the crucial roles that expectation, precedence, and belief play in Hume's formulation. According to Hume, the presence of prior instances of comparable events for participants to view is enough to encourage compliance to the Convention. Experience suffices in two different ways. First, prior experience or precedence is sufficient for participants to understand their own required course of action as well as what is expected of them from other participants. In addition, it is sufficient for participants to develop the fundamental, necessary assumption that other participants will abide by the convention. These listed requirements are sufficient for a participant to have a strong incentive to comply.

Another critical feature of Hume's notion of Convention is that conventions are not promises and do not rely on promises for conformity; for him, promises "arise from human convention" (Hume 1740/2008: 286). Accordingly, conventions are foundational, a product of the rational interaction of human beings, which depends on reciprocity for its force (Latsis, 2009: 4). The role of reciprocity in Hume's theory of Convention models an excellent and stable social order evolved by individual rational agents. Such an enshrined convention has little or no need for an explicit government fiat, promise, and covenant. Another underlying feature of Convention for Hume is the central role played by '*interest*'. He states,

When this common sense of **interest** (emphasis mine) is mutually expressed, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may

properly enough be called a convention or agreement betwixt us, though without the interposition of a promise; since the actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are performed upon the supposition, that something is to be performed on the other part. (Hume, 1740: 286)

‘Interest’ in Humean understanding is a body of shared coordinated and mutually expressed behavioural tendencies, demonstratively supporting the notion that Convention is fundamental to human society (Latsis, 2009). When the interest in a mutually beneficial behaviour is expressed, it becomes *ceteris paribus*, a convention, since it becomes a proper behavioural tendency perpetuated by reference. While Hume used the notion of Convention to address coordination failures⁶ of society on justice and property rights, his theory has been significantly developed over the years. Hume illustrated this idea of Convention, with particular attention to the features as developed above, with a simple coordination example; “two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other” (Hume 1740/2008: 286). The above is a coordination situation where mutual interests align- row towards an end. To advance and progress towards their required goal or achieve the desired outcome, both rowers need to row with a certain degree of rhythm and pace, sufficiently believing that the other will do her part. Failure to align their actions dashes the interests of both rowers. Hence, without outright promise, contract, or central government authority, the Humean notion of Convention institutes Pareto optimal choice for agents of a convention.

⁶ Coordination failures are common phenomena and a term associated with Pareto efficiency. Coordination failures prevail due to strategic uncertainty and agents are unable to arrive at an equilibrium, Pareto optimal choice. (Cf, Russell Cooper, 2009).

2.2.2 David Lewis Account of Convention

David Lewis, for his part, evolved an original account of Convention. His ideas on convention trace back to David Hume alongside significant inspiration from Thomas Schelling's *The Strategy of Conflict*.⁷ By fusing the Humean theory of justice and property rights with Thomas Schelling's games of coordination, David Lewis developed a highly ground-breaking game-theoretical account of Convention. In the introduction to *Convention: A Philosophical Study*,⁸ Lewis profoundly acknowledges the sources of his inspiration. He states,

My theory of Convention had its source in the theory of games of pure coordination- a neglected branch of the general theory of games of von Neumann and Morgenstern, very different in method and content from their successful and better-known theory of games of pure conflict. Coordination games have been studied by Thomas C. Schelling, and it is he who supplied me with the makings of an answer to Quine and White...Yet, in the end, the theory of games is scaffolding, I can rest my analysis of Convention without it. The result is a theory along the lines of Hume's, in his discussion of the origin of justice and property. (Lewis, 1969: 3).

David Lewis was, thus, the first to rigorously interrogate the *Humean* notion of 'convention' using the game-theoretical framework. His analysis commences with a critical interrogation of coordination games. In *Convention: A Philosophical Study*, David Lewis elucidates an account of Convention that has remained significantly influential in the analysis of convention since 1969. In this seminal work, David Lewis analysed and conceived conventions

⁷ Schelling, Thomas, 1960.

⁸ Lewis, David, 1969.

as an established behavioural recurrent equilibrium of actions by individuals as a solution to coordination problems (Jamieson, 1975). Lewis's account of convention acquires momentum from coordination games. He evolved a concept of convention that does not require agreement but by agents simply tacitly coordinating their actions and beliefs towards mutual benefit (Hansen, 2009: 92-93). As previously discussed, coordination problems are distinguished by more than one equilibrium point; that is, a problem with more than one possible course of action available to agents for mutual benefit.

The point of departure of Lewis' investigation of the concept convention was the analysis of some intuitive examples of coordination problems. Some of the coordination problems from the eleven examples of coordination problems in *Convention* are as follows. These problems for Lewis -as we shall see- are solved by convention.

The first coordination problem details how individuals whose primary desire is to meet at a specific place need to decide. To meet, they must figure out where the other will go since it matters less where they meet, so far as they meet. Hence, agent *A* tries to figure out where agent *B* will go and to go there. Agent *B* does the same. The choice of both agents is modelled along with the expectations of the choice of the other. If both succeed, the outcome is desirable for both. Two individuals got cut off while talking on the phone. Both have the desire; to restore the connection. To restore the connection, agent *A* must wait while agent *B* calls back or agent *B* waits while agent *A* calls back. If they both call back simultaneously or both wait, the connection is never restored. Hence, each must choose an action based on the expectation of the choice of the other.

Consequently, if *A* waits, *B* must call back. If *B* waits, *A* must call back. The third example features an example gotten from Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* of two rowers

desirous of getting to their destination. To achieve their goal, they must both row the boat in a systematic manner considering the expectation and actions of the other.

While driving on the same winding two-lane road, agents must choose to either drive in the left lane or the right. Agents consequently drive in the left lane if all or most of the others do the same and in the right road lane if all or most others do the same. Hence, agents must drive according to the expectations they have about others. Some campers desire to get firewood to make a fire to keep warm. Their interests align since they all want to get firewood. They must hence each choose a direction to go differently from everyone else, without which one loses going in the same direction as others and find no firewood since the direction is covered. Each camper must thus choose a direction according to his expectations about the others.

And lastly, the stag-hunt example is derived from Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inégalité*. Some hunters in the wilderness desire the participation of all for a rewarding hunt- Stag. If they hunt together, they can catch a Stag and eat well. On the contrary, separately hunting (at least one deserting the hunt), he will catch a rabbit, and each eats poorly. Hence, they must either all stick to the hunt for stag or individually hunt for rabbits. If one deserts, other hunters will go hungry, except they also hunt for rabbits. Each hunter must then choose to stay with the stag hunt or abandon the hunt, aligning his expectations about the action of others.

The first three examples are coordination problems involving only two agents. The other three examples are problems involving more than two agents. For Lewis, one crucial feature of these examples of coordination problems is the fact that the agents –two or more- must choose a course of action from the available alternative actions. The agents all make their choices independently, but their decisions are interdependent. Hence, each must decide what to do according to his “expectations about what the others will do” (Lewis, 1969: 8).

Analysing the above coordination problems, Lewis conceived that some of the action combinations of the agents are coordination equilibria. Nash equilibrium simply put, is a proposed solution to any strategic simultaneous game by individuals where no player gains more utility payoff by unilaterally altering or deviating from a said strategy. According to Osborne and Rubinstein(1994), a strict Nash equilibrium is “an action profile \mathbf{a}^* with the property that no players i can do better by choosing an action \mathbf{a}_i different from \mathbf{a}_i^* , given that every other player j adhere to \mathbf{a}_j^* .”⁹ To put it another way, a Nash equilibrium relates to a situation where there is no motivation for one party to unilaterally depart from a coordinating plan.¹⁰ The proviso “unilaterally” is central to our understanding of equilibrium selection primarily because the non-unilateral deviations can profit everyone provided agents coordinate and settle on a Pareto-inefficient equilibrium. Based on the above conception of Nash Equilibrium, we can immediately identify the intrinsic characteristic of Nash equilibrium. Firstly, Nash equilibrium features a situation where no agent is advantaged through increasing payoff by simply unilaterally deviating from it. In effect, Nash equilibrium features a strategic situation where agents immediately decrease their profit by unilaterally abandoning the strategy. In any case, Nash equilibrium is the steady state since it solves a strategic problem and serves as agents’ preference in maintaining payoff.¹¹

David Lewis conceives coordination equilibrium as a combination in which no one would have been better off had anyone agent alone acted otherwise, either himself or someone else. For Lewis, coordination problems are problems characterised by more than one

⁹ See Osborne and Rubinstein, 1994.

¹⁰ Cf. For a more detailed analysis of a strict equilibrium refer to James Friedman in James Friedman (ed), 1993. 7

¹¹ Rescorla, Michael, "Convention", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/convention/>>.

coordination strict Nash equilibria.¹² David Lewis built ingeniously systematic reasoning, intuitively elucidating the process through which an equilibrium point is achieved and how conventions can be sustained, though not necessarily particular about their origin (Sillari, 2005). How can a coordinative equilibrium be reached?

Let us take, for instance, the first coordination problem. Two friends who desire to meet must coordinate their actions to ensure they encounter. Agent *A* goes to the place she expects agent *B* to go. If agent *B* does the same, then they are likely to meet. We can represent the situation with the following 2-by-2 symmetric matrix once we assign payoffs to the agents for each possible outcome of their interactions.

	Station	Park
Station	1,1	0,0
Park	0,0	1,1

Table: 2.1

In the above matrix, agents, row chooser and column chooser (agent *A* and *B*, respectively), have two places where they might coordinate and meet each other. Either they both go to the station, or both go to the park. The equilibria are the two combinations *<Station, Station>* and *<Park, Park>*. These are equilibria because agent *A* prefers *<Station, Station>* to *<Park, Station>* and agent *B* prefers *<Station, Station>* to *<Station, Park>*. Similarly, agent *A* prefers *<Park, Park>* to *<Station, Park>*, and agent *B* prefers *<Park, Park>* to *<Park, Station>*. *<Station, Station>* and *<Park, Park>* are recognised equilibria; agents *A* and *B* are indifferent between these insofar

¹² David Lewis, 1969, *ibid.*

as they both choose either equilibrium point. The agents' preference is, thus, to successfully coordinate their actions or risk a coordination failure, which leaves everyone worst off.

In the above symmetric game, we are confronted with a unique situation. Herein, agents coordinate by simply aligning their preferences and choice. In this situation, agents prefer to choose between the same action equilibrium. It is worth noting that this is not always the case. A different equilibrium combination exists where agents perform radically different actions to coordinate efficiently. Lewis elaborates on this point more succinctly when he writes,

There seems to be a difference between equilibrium combinations in which every agent does the same action and equilibrium combinations in which agents do different actions. This difference is spurious, however. We say that the agents do the same action if they do actions of the same kind, particular actions falling under a common description. But actions can be described in any number of ways, of which none has any compelling claim to primacy. For any combination actions, and *a fortiori* for any equilibrium combination of actions, there is some way of describing the agents' alternative actions so that exactly those alternative actions in the given combination fall under a common description. Any combination, equilibrium or not, is a combination of actions of the same kind (a kind that excludes all the agents' alternative actions). Whether it can be called a combination in which every agent does the same action depends merely on the naturalness of that classification (Lewis, 1969: 10-11).

To model this second equilibrium example with different action combinations, we refer to the second coordination problem discussed above. Two agents were on the phone talking, and suddenly they got cut off. To get reconnected, which is the desire of both, if agent *A* calls back,

agent *B* must wait. If agent *B* calls back, agent *A* must wait. Let us call this the symmetric Telephone tag payoff matrix.

	Call back	Wait
Call back	0,0	1,1
Wait	1,1	0,0

Table: 2.2

For agents to coordinate, they must follow the same strategic action in the first coordination problem. The contrary is evident in the second coordination problem. Here, we are presented with a situation where agents must follow radically different coordinated strategies. For Lewis, however, the "difference is spurious", because the relevant course of action is that which produces an equilibrium (Lewis, 1969: 14). For Lewis, therefore, a coordination problem is "a situation of an interdependent decision in which coincidence of interest predominates and in which there are two or more proper coordination equilibria" (Ibid, 24).

Based on the list of coordination problems enumerated, one inevitable question relates to how to solve these problems. Central to Lewis' account is the role played by concordant mutual expectations about the actions of other agents. Mutual expectations are acquired by empathic relations of putting ourselves in the other fellow's shoes to the best of our ability. Take, for instance, the coordination problem involving agents who desire to meet with two options of either station or park (let us take agents *A* and *B*). If agent *A* acquires some reason to expect *B* to expect that agent *A* to expect *B* to go to the station, then agent *A* has reason to expect *B* to go to

the station, hence go to the station herself. How will agent *A* first acquire this reason to believe? For Lewis, we can rely on coordination devices such as agreement and salience.¹³

Interestingly, the replication of *A*'s expectation of *B*'s expectation of *A* is not a practical deliberation or interaction between agents. Instead, it is a situation where “one person works out the consequences of his belief about the world” (Lewis, 1969: 32). I suppose that to get to the 3rd and 4th, and above levels of higher-order expectations, a significant, if not an impossible level of reasoning is required. The system of mutual expectations can grow indefinitely. Such an infinitary higher-order level of expectations raises significant limitations and difficulties. Very few agents can go above the second level of expectations in making a single decision. With the prevalence of precedence, agents can infer from past experiences where they reached an equilibrium and tend to replicate their previous action combination immediately.

Acting on the inferences of precedent experience, agents solve future coordination problems through “*shared acquaintance*”. However, an agent must not rely on precedence and shared acquaintance from an analogous or exact past coordination situation to ensure effective coordination. In this way, shared acquaintance translates to *the regularity* that governs future behaviours in the face of coordination problems. It follows that “once the process gets started, we have a metastable self-perpetuating system of preferences, expectations, and actions capable of persisting indefinitely” (Lewis, 1969: 42).

Lewis conceives Convention as arbitrary. They develop as such because for every Convention; there must exist an alternative regularity that could have been the persisting

¹³ Explicit agreement between agents is only possible in the case of the possibility of communication between them. In a situation where communication is impossible or outrageously costly, agents must rely on other, tacit-coordination devices to ensure compliance. Salience plays a key role in making agents choose a course of action among the identified equilibria. A particular kind of salience is that of precedence. We shall discuss these in detail under the section on equilibrium and coordination devices.

Convention. A non-arbitrary convention would not satisfy his definition's logic since no alternative exists. Consequently, nonconformity or failure to conform to an existing convention could only be a strategic error since we conform because it is the best available course of action. For David Lewis, a convention is,

A regularity R in the behaviour of members of a population P when they are agents in a recurrent situation S is a convention if and only if it is true that, and it is common knowledge in P that, in any instance of S among members of P ,

1. Everyone conforms to R ,
2. Everyone expects everyone else to conform to R ,
3. Everyone has approximately the same preferences regarding all possible combinations of actions.
4. Everyone prefers that everyone conforms to R , on condition that at least all but one conform to R ,
5. Everyone would prefer that everyone conform to R' , on condition that at least all but one conform to R' where R' is some possible regularity in the behaviour of members of P in S , such that no one in any instance of S among members of P could conform both to R' and to R .

The above definition appears too rigid compelling Lewis to redefine and modify his definition to accommodate some level of “coordination failures” and exceptions to coordination problems. A concluding definition of Convention, according to Lewis is;

A regularity R in the behaviour of members of a population P when they are agents in a recurrent situation S is a convention if and only if it is true that, and it is common knowledge in P that, in any instance of S among members of P ,

1. Almost everyone conforms to R ;
2. Almost everyone expects everyone else to conform to R ;
3. Almost everyone has approximately the same preferences regarding all possible combinations of actions;
4. Almost everyone prefers that anyone more conform to R ; on condition that almost everyone conform to R ;
5. Almost everyone would prefer that anyone more conform to R' , on condition that almost everyone conform to R' ,

Where R' is some possible regularity in the behaviour of members of P in S , such that almost no one in almost any instance of S among members of P could conform both to R' and to R .

2.3 Equilibrium Selection

Several relevant human social interactions suffer from coordination issues. In analysing the coordination problems generating stable Convention, Lewis defined Convention as a valuable solution to a recurrent coordination problem. It must be noted that recurrent issues of a compelling past experiential inference on coordination equilibrium must not always be analogous for effective coordination. Arriving at a possible and plausible condition is central to the conceptualisation of Convention by Hume and Lewis. In both accounts, agents arrive at this desired and necessary equilibrium through the instrumentality of a sufficient degree of belief by the system of expectations (Vanderschraaf, 1999; Hansen, 2009; Biblaiser, 1993; Latsis, 2009).

In a coordination game, agents' actions, preferences, and interests coordinate seamlessly to obtain maximum utility payoff. Every coordination problem, therefore, has more than one Nash equilibrium. In any strategic game, agents are often determined to maximise utility payoffs. In this way, agents opt for a strategic response that corresponds to the actions of other agents.

Notwithstanding the understanding that agents in strategic relations are rational individuals¹⁴, recent studies and experiments in economics and behavioural psychology so far point to a contradiction of this theory. In these experiments, and, using the Ultimatum game, results show and often contradict the standard theory of rationality (Thaler, 1988). A simple example of this ultimatum game goes thus. \$10 is available to agents *A* and *B* for distribution, assuming they can agree on how to share it. It is a one-shot game. Agent *A* makes a one-time offer to agent *B*, who must accept or reject it. Hence, agent *A* can offer between \$0 - \$10. If *B* accepts the offer, they share the sum as agreed. In the case that *B* rejects the offer, both get nothing. In the standard economic theory of rationality, anything is better than nothing, so *B* should accept any offer.

In the same way, *A* should keep more and offer very little since *B* is expected, as a rational agent, to accept any offer. Notwithstanding these assumptions, experiments contradict this as some agents sometimes reject offers to punish others. It implies that other emotional factors play a crucial role in preference order, such as benevolence, fairness, etc.¹⁵ Therefore, experiments can easily show that humans cannot always have a consistent and coherent ordering of their preferences. Considering the above, can we always arrive at Nash equilibrium and Pareto

¹⁴ Rationality is understood herein as the quality of a normal agent whose beliefs always conform to individual reasons to believe as well as one's actions and reasons for actions. This implies that the preferences of an ideally rational agent must always satisfy the conditions of coherence and consistency. This ordering condition should not violate the rules of asymmetry, connectedness, and transitivity. For more details, see Michael Resnik, 1987; Itzhak Gilboa, 2010.

¹⁵ For more details on this, see; Gale et al, 1995; Telser, 1995; Thaler, 1988; Guala, 2006.

optimal choices? Should we scrap these theories since humans sometimes make contradictory choices related to transitivity, asymmetric and connected preferences?

In *Convention*, Lewis identified coordination games as problems with several possible alternatives. These alternative combinations of actions are available to agents to choose. The equilibrium point for Lewis is, therefore, the combination of the agents' choice: "each agent has done as well as he can, given the actions of the other agents" (Lewis, 1969: 8).

Lewis' conception of equilibrium is in total harmony with the classical definition of equilibrium as 'best reply correspondence' since no one agent regrets his choice of action due to a lack of foreknowledge after learning the course of action of the others (Lewis, 1969).

In addition to the above, Osborne and Rubinstein (1994) capture the idea of a strict Nash equilibrium as a persistent state of play. This is so because, as rational agents, they hold and rightly so, possess correct requisite expectations about the rationality and behavioural disposition of other agents. Considering this, agents identify Nash equilibrium with the strategic course of action where no player can sufficiently profit oneself by deviating from a strategic action given the cause of action of others (Osborne and Rubinstein, 1994: 15).

The underlying characteristic of such a strategic game is that agents conceive themselves as rational agents in a strategic game with other rational agents. Nash equilibrium is reliably conceived to persist as the best reply to all best replies to itself (Canning, 1992: 884). Specific strategic interactions produce situations with more than one Nash equilibrium and situations with Pareto optimal and Pareto inefficient equilibria. Such interactions are defined as exhibiting multiple '*Pareto ranked equilibrium*' (Cooper, 1999). So, conventions are conceived as a

particular recurrent equilibrium action combination of coordination games. Let us consider the following examples of strategic problems.

Example 1: **Coordination Problem**

Two friends wish to go out together and thus must agree on a single course of action: go bowling or go to the cinema. The agents have a mutual interest; they both go bowling and thus prefer the bowling equilibrium. They can still go to the cinema, which is also an equilibrium but, in this case, an inferior or suboptimal equilibrium. Hence, both choose bowling or choose the cinema; in each case, they both coordinate their actions. The strict Nash equilibrium here is – **bowling, bowling, or cinema, cinema.**

	Bowling	Cinema
Bowling	2,2	0,0
Cinema	0,0	1,1

Table: 2.3

Example 2: **Driving Game.**

Two drivers are driving on a two-winding road. They both have a mutual interest: they coordinate their actions and avoid colliding. To achieve this, they must decide to drive and swerve to the right or swerve to the left. The Nash equilibria points here are; **right-right** or **left-left**. It matters less to both drivers if they go right or left, if they coordinate their actions and so strive to choose an action that

coincides with the other driver's action. The strict Nash equilibrium here in- **right, right and left, left.**

	Right	Left
Right	1,1	0,0
Left	0,0	1,1

Table: 2.4

Example 3: Prisoner’s Dilemma.

Prisoner Dilemma involves two agents’ that have been arrested by the police. Evidently, there is no sufficient information or evidence to convict both suspects (except one or both agents confess- defect). The police investigators are of this situation, and therefore require at least one agent to testify/confess that the other agent is guilty. In this case, testifying against the other is to defect and not testifying is to cooperate. Interesting, if both agents cooperate, both serve a lighter sentence (since the police have insufficient evidence to convict them).

The police investigator therefore puts this before both agents:

If you confess and testify that the other is guilty (to defect), you will be set free, and the other agent will be imprisoned for 5 years; unless the other agent testifies that you are guilty. If he confesses, both of you will be imprisoned for 3 years. If

no agent confesses (both agents cooperate), both agents will serve 1 year in prison. But if you refuse to confess and the other agent confesses, you will spend 5 years in prison.

	Cooperate	Defect
Cooperate	1,1	0,5
Defect	5,0	3,3

Table: 2.5

Based on the above examples, it is evident that *confess, confess* in the Prisoner's Dilemma is a strict Nash equilibrium. With the significant presence of incentive, confessing for a rational agent (and egoistic agent) is the best reply-correspondence to any possible option or action by the other agent(s). The other example of going out to *bowl or* the *cinema* presents a slightly different scenario of a coordination problem where both agents prefer one equilibrium to the other. This scenario introduces '*Pareto optimal*' and '*Pareto inferior*' options. *Cinema* coordination equilibrium presents a Pareto inferior equilibrium primarily because both agents can benefit more from engaging in the Pareto improvement process by opting for *bowling, bowling* action combination, which has a more significant utility payoff. This example also presents, a dominated game. Since *bowling-bowling* is a Pareto optimal coordination equilibrium, it dominates the game with a better payoff than any other possible action combination.

Finally, the third example presents a perfect symmetric game where agents have two strict coordination equilibriums and must coordinate their actions to avoid coordination failures and zero utility payoff by colliding. *Right-Right*, and *Left-Left* are both strict coordination

equilibrium, and it is of mutual interest for both agents to make the best reply corresponding to the action of the other. If she swerves left, I choose left; if she swerves right, I choose right.

2.4 Mutual Expectations

The assortment of equilibrium deduced from the above examples is the hallmark of coordination problems. This is caused by '*strategic uncertainty*'.¹⁶ Simply put, coordination problems are situations of strategic uncertainty where agents must choose a course of action according to their expectations about other agents' possible choice of action. As stated before, coordination problems are interdependent problems. Invariably, one way to conform to an established convention is through agents' expectations of other agents' behaviour. How do agents come about such a system of concordant mutual expectations?

While we argued that Hume's conception of convention and the origin availed the first version of mutual expectation in selecting an equilibrium, Peter Vanderschraaf (1999), avowed that Hume could not substantially and satisfactorily present an account of the process through which expectations of coordination and cooperation could emerge.¹⁷ However, the idea of expectation could be deduced from Hume's account of the convention, particularly the unavoidable process of identifying transgressors and precedent. Sadly, Hume left this aspect undeveloped. As he puts it,

¹⁶ We noted earlier, the multiplicity of equilibrium is a basic characteristic of coordination games. It is so because agents are confronted with strategic uncertainty over the actions of other agents. To successfully predict the expected action, agents must rely on precedence, which is at this point, a valuable tool for equilibrium selection. For more details, see Cooper, 1999; Crawford, 1997.

¹⁷ As well as the problem associated with equilibrium selection.

“On the contrary, this experience above us still more, that the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows and gives us a confidence of the future regularly of their conduct; and it is only the expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded” (Hume, 2008: 286).

Presenting a more systematic account of convention, David Lewis (1969) addresses these limitations- equilibrium selection and mutual expectation. Lewis argues that through concordant mutual expectations, agents faced with a specific problem can successfully coordinate and arrive at a strict coordination equilibrium. Each agent, being rational, with the reliable premise that other agents are also rational, will confidently do her part of the coordination equilibrium and expect the other to do her part.¹⁸ The above relationship is empathic. For Lewis, this sets up the process through which mutual expectation is gained/acquired. The agent is consequently required to replicate the other agent's practical reasoning by putting oneself in the other agent's shoes as best as possible. Coordination can be achieved if the premises are correct, and thus agents have sufficient reason to form suitable concordant mutual expectations.

In this instance, if agent *A* acquires reliable reason to expect that agent *B* expects that agent *A* goes bowling, then agent *A* would have sufficient reason to expect that agent *B* will go bowling and so goes bowling too. Agent *A* assumes that agent *B* is a reasonable thinker who can properly comprehend the Pareto optimal status of choosing bowling over movies. Also, agent *A* knows that going out to bowl gives both maximum utility payoff and that agent *B* knows this

¹⁸ Are agents always confident of the expected best reply correspondence of other agents? In the spirit of contradictory results from experiments, economists are somewhat sceptical about exaggerated rationality assumptions; in any case, theorizing on “boundedly rational economic behaviour” has received very little attention from experimentalists (Selten, 1990). See also, Wachbroit, 1987.

fact. Interestingly, if the premise of this reasoning is correct, then agents successfully coordinate their actions.

Many experiments have been conducted to explain expectations and the evolution of behaviour in coordination and cooperation problems (See: Croson and Johnston, 2000).¹⁹ The underlying question remains, do normative expectations have autonomous effects on behaviour and choice of course of action? Engel and Kurschilgen (2013), show unequivocally from experimental deductions to indicate that normative expectations are a precious tool in determining behaviour. According to the authors, normative expectations, and legal framing regarding cooperation on certain goods with and without sanctions increase cooperation substantially as normative expectations and behavioural patterns coevolve. In the absence of sanctions, legal framing has no additional beneficial effect in realigning individual action and social well-being. In particular, when faced with a social dilemma²⁰, experimental subjects, through expectation, can identify what is expected of them and so coordinate. This suggests that expectations help to identify possible solutions and equilibrium to any similar coordination problem faced by agents, with or without sanctions. Yet, it should be mentioned that Lewis (1969: 22) adduced that weaker expectations are easily formed compared to more substantial expectations. In any case, mutual confidence in concordant expectation is necessary for equilibrium coordination if we act based on the other's possible action.

¹⁹ Croson and Johnson (2000), argued extensively that uncertainty of entitlements and incomplete information significantly affect the expected agents' choice equilibrium in legal bargaining for ownership entitlements. For them, expectations- in this case, normative expectations- play a pivotal role in conditioning behaviour of agents and subsequent choice since agents have incomplete information to engage in the bargaining process and so must rely on expectation which consequently serves as an incentive for action in such situations.

²⁰ Social dilemma is a collective action problem. It is a situation characterized by a conflict of interest between collective and personal interests where individuals stand to benefit from the preference of selfish action alternative. The equilibrium point arrived at by all agents choosing this action strategy is Pareto inefficient which gives chance for a Pareto improvement. Mutual expectation plays a central role in helping agents settle for the best action combination, in this case, the Pareto optimal alternative. See further details in Chapter Three.

So far, I have assumed and maintained that simple expectation is sufficient to arrive at a coordination equilibrium. Yet, according to Lewis, the simple regularity of human behaviour is not a convention, even though they satisfy having more than one equilibrium point. For Lewis and as critically discussed by Sugden (2000), conventions tend to become norms because the regularities are characterized by "strict Nash equilibrium and a strict mutual benefit equilibrium" (Sugden 2000: 109). Similarly, they can be understood in terms of a *tacit agreement*.

Since conventions tend to become norms, they become regularities characterized by conformity as a matter of *ought*.²¹ In this sense, Sugden argues that Lewis conceives such regularities that people's beliefs ought to conform to "normative believes that people in our society, in fact hold." (Sugden, 2000: 109). But while conventions can become norms, they are not norms just yet. Consequently, Lewis argued, one may go ahead to do what is expected if she reasonably expects the other to do her part. Therefore, *A* will go bowl if she reasonably believes and expects *B* to go bowl. The above satisfies the empirical expectation criteria of a convention.

The above presumption of what one may reasonably expect, Sugden calls *Lewis' Presumptive Reason*. Sugden's interpretation of Lewis's conception of 'reasonable' is a term that grounds empirical expectations. The point here is that presumptive reason uses the phrase "other things being equal"; one should consider the preferences of others. On this point, we may inquire if one ought to take account of the preferences of others. Sugden argues that *A*'s expectation of *B* is simply a product of *A*'s observation of the kinds of activities people like *B* usually do. This being the case, *B* consequently cannot and should not be held liable for *A*'s

²¹ By conceiving regularities as a matter of 'ought', Sugden implies a normative characterization of regularities that people believe others believe they ought to act in a certain way. Notwithstanding this fact, I believe Lewis responds to this conception of ought in a rather subtle manner that even though an 'ought' exists, agents' go-ahead to do their part reasonably believing that others will do theirs.

arrival or possession of such expectations. Notwithstanding this possible deniability of responsibility, “other people’s actions, merely by virtue of their falling into a predictable pattern, have imposed some obligation on me to conform to that pattern” (Sugden, 2000: 112).

Expectations, in this sense, assume several things. First, it considers that there is an interaction between agents. It also believes agents acquire expectations through experience and rely on focal points to set up the system of concordant ‘mutual’ expectations. If this is true, we cannot reliably argue that conventions emerge through solving coordination games, as claimed by Lewis. Sugden's arguments leave us with an understanding of an existing convention of expectation, forming other conventions, a circular argument. Is this what Lewis had in mind? For Lewis, replicating another agent's reasoning process, the attempt to replicate the attempt of the other agent to replicate my reasoning, gives us higher-order expectations. Whenever I replicate a piece of your practical reasoning, my second-order expectations about matters of fact, together with my first-order expectation about your preferences and your rationality, justify me in forming a first-order expectation about your activities in the case of problems of interdependent decision. Some of the required second-order expectations must be about my action (Lewis, 1969: 28).

An $(n+1)^{\text{th}}$ -order expectation is reformed to solve interdependent decision-making coordination problems successfully.²² In considering this fact, Lewis argued that higher orders of expectations emphasize the independent justification possessed by the agent, which firmly confirmed his choice of action.

²² An $(n+1)$ th-order expectation about $(n \geq 1)$ is an ordering expectation about someone else’s n th-order expectation about it.

How do agents acquire reason to expect? For Lewis, they can do this by agreement. Besides agreement or in a situation where communication is not feasible or impossible, agents can successfully coordinate through reliance on salience. Further, he argues that salience can provide a necessary and suitable system of concordant mutual expectation. By having suitable acquaintance with analogous past-solved instances, precedence can also be considered a reliable tool to coordinate a salient action. Considering this, we can reliably gain concordant mutual expectation through the instrumentality of these coordination devices: agreement, salience, and precedence.

2.5 Coordination Devices

In the previous section, coordination equilibrium was analysed and put forward that many equilibria are caused primarily by ‘*strategic uncertainties*’²³ entertained by agents. To arrive at an equilibrium, agents must choose an action based on acquired expectations of what others will do. How do agents acquire knowledge about the future actions of other agents? Put differently, how do rational agents acquire reliable expectation to assist them in coordinating their actions at the ‘best’ equilibrium point that guarantees better payoff and consequently avoid coordination failures?

²³ Two kinds of strategic uncertainties abound; the first uncertainty pertains to uncertainty about the *formulation* of the required belief about the correct possible action of other agents while the second pertains to uncertainty about the rational *choice of action*.

2.5.1 Role and Limitation of Agreement

As a sequel from the above on concordant mutual expectation, we discussed that mutual expectations, the mental process of first and higher-order expectations of agents about an action, are necessary and sufficient criteria for agents to effectively predict the actions of other agents and thus arrive at coordination equilibrium. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume, in analysing the origin of Justice and property rights, conceives convention and agreement as the same thing. He states, "and this may properly enough be called convention or agreement betwixt us" (Hume, 2008: 286). However, the distinction between contract and agreement is unclear, but agreement and convention incur a certain degree of obligation for participants to ensure conformity to the rules of property and justice. Put simply, a convention is a recurrent solution or enduring selection of strict coordination equilibrium that can be arrived at through agreement. Without promises, agents merely discuss what it would mean and arrive at a mutual decision to stick to the mutually beneficial coordination equilibrium.

Consequently, an agreement is the first possible means of acquiring this system of concordant mutual expectation of the first and higher-order expectation about an action. An agreement is a joint decision between agents to take a particular future course of action. Faced with numerous circumstances of coordination problems, where agents' interests align and whose desire is to coordinate, David Lewis (1969) argues that by agreement, agents can acquire a relevant source of expectation and subsequent selection of coordination equilibrium.

We can affirm that agreement is a valuable means of resolving coordination problems. An agreement is a source of concordant expectations. But agreement presupposes communication between agents, enabling them to discuss and analyse the coordination problems

and settle on a beneficial coordination equilibrium that all agents must accented to leading up to a particular action. David Lewis acknowledges this fact and the significance of agreement; however, he desired to institute an account of a convention that explicitly shows a rational process through which rational agents would adopt and conform to an enshrined convention without tacit agreement (Latsis, Larquier, and Bessis, 2010). Agents **A** and **B** desire to meet; they can communicate, discuss, and analyse their options and consequently agree that they henceforth meet at the park at noon every Wednesday. With such an agreement, agent **A** acquires reliable and relevant belief to expect that **B** will show up and acknowledges that **B** will expect her to show up and thus show up. The coordination problem is solved. Agreement is a source of expectation and solves coordination problems.

Lest I forget, it is worthy of mention at this point that Lewis' intent in *Convention: A Philosophical Study* was to liberate convention from the shackles and notion that it emerged from an explicit agreement.²⁴ Agreement is not always possible since it requires communication between all agents. Considering this, agreement as a source of mutual expectation sufficing as the origin and incentive to keep conforming to an enshrined convention appears grossly inadequate (David Lewis, 1969: 35; Andrei Marmor, 2009, 20). According to David Lewis, based on Thomas Schelling's experiments, agents can coordinate their actions without communication by strictly understanding the coordination problem at hand. In addition, many coordination problems we face are situations where communication is simply impossible or where communication cost grossly outweighs our improved chance of coordination (Lewis, 1969: 35). For instance, a situation where a state with a population of 3 million desires to

²⁴ Lewis' account of convention is a response to WVO Quine's idea of language as convention. His point is to state that convention cannot be a product of agreement since this would mean there was a time, we all came together to agree on concept and language.

coordinate on a single course of action. How do they agree on a particular course of action? How do they discuss, analyse, and agree on a single decision? Arguing in the same light, Andrei Marmor states that while simple agreements can easily solve many coordination problems involving a very small number of agents, conventions or social rules emerge as solutions to recurrent coordination problems in the light of many agents involved is simply impossible to solve by agreement (Marmor, 2009: 20).

Considering the preceding points, it is evident that agreement between agents provides agents with the required source of expectation to know and consequently choose a coordination equilibrium.²⁵ Agreement is grossly limited since it is practically unattainable for many agents. Again, if agents agree and can solve the coordination problem, how do they solve future novel coordination problems? By coming together again and incurring similar communication costs? This invariably implies that we need other coordination devices to provide agents with reliable and relevant expectations as agreement proves to be limited to a small number of agents.

2.5.2 Role and Limitation of Salience

The system of mutual expectation can be achieved through several coordination devices. We discussed that this could be achieved through agreement. Notwithstanding this fact, we also discussed that agreement is grossly inadequate and limited in the face of a larger population and the sustenance of convention. Salience herein is another standard coordination device that could help agents achieve concordant mutual expectations. Thomas Schelling's *The Strategy of Conflict* (1960) provides a more robust debate on focal points for coordination problems that attract the

²⁵ Agreement however has some limitations and criticism. In particular, agreement is criticized using the byzantine general's problem as well as the email game.

attention of non-rational agents.²⁶ The idea of salience or focal point to solve coordination problems was also employed in research by conducted by Mehta, Starmer, and Sugden (1994), involving 20 pure coordination games played by 120 students.

The Strategy of Conflict (1960) is an influential book in which coordination games and focal points (salience) are introduced. Schelling presents a series of experiments of pure coordination problems and introduces salience as a solution to agents solving such games. The experiments and results and subsequent experiments carried out by Mehta, Starmer, and Sugden (1994b) indicate reliably that agents rely on focal points to coordinate their behaviour. The results showed explicitly that focal points of words, pictures, and other meaningful indicators significantly enable agents to recognize required coordination equilibria much more than random play. In this way, equilibrium arrived at in these choices constitutes focal points to all agents' benefit. While focal points are systematically argued to enable agents to coordinate their choices and consequently arrive at a Pareto-efficient equilibrium, David Lewis presents salience more as a coordination device or tool that provides agents with raw data in building a system of concordant mutual expectation.

David Lewis (1969) argues that salience is simply a choice that stands out as conspicuous or unique, so much so that it is noticeable by agents. The crucial question is, how can we explain mutual expectation and coordination by salience?

The subjects might all tend to pick the salient action combination as the last resort when they have no stronger ground for an alternative choice. Or they might expect each other to have that tendency, and act accordingly, or they might expect

²⁶ Non-rational agents in Thomas Schelling (1960) refers to individuals who make decisions in certain situations whereby one possess unsatisfactory reasons for a specific choice for A rather than B, because one necessarily must make a choice.

each other to expect each other to have that tendency and act accordingly, and so on. Or--more likely--there might be a mixture of these. Their first- and higher-order expectations of a tendency to pick the salient as the last resort would be a system of concordant expectations capable of producing coordination at the salient equilibrium. If their expectations did produce coordination, it would not matter whether anyone really would have picked the salient as the last resort. For each would have had a good reason for his choice, so his choice would not have been the last resort. Thus, even in -novel coordination problem- which is an extreme case-, the agents can sometimes obtain the concordant expectations they need without communicating (Lewis, 1969: 35-36).

Based on the preceding, it is sufficient to state that focal points or salience assist agents in making decisions among available options, focusing on the possibility that stands out as distinct and noticeable. As a last resort, saliency as a coordination device draws agents' attention to that action option when they have no reliable ground or sufficient reason to make an alternative. In this sense, the saliency of a particular action alternative can produce a system of concordant mutual expectation for agents; whose identification solves the coordination problem, Pareto-efficient choice, and saliency equilibrium. We can also infer from the above that mixed signals or tags can help agents identify one alternative as salient rather than another.

Agreement between agents in this way can also serve as a tag to identify an alternative as salient, conspicuous, and unique rather than another action alternative. Specifically, salience plays two distinct though related functions in Lewis' account. That is, how conventions originate and evolve and how they are sustained in each society. Considering this, we can argue that

salience plays a pivotal role in Lewis's account of convention, so much so that his account of convention rests heavily on it. This fact has attracted numerous criticisms.²⁷

Mehta, Starmer, and Sugden (1994), argue that salience, rather than a single item, is characterized by three different 'levels': primary, secondary and Schelling's salience.²⁸ This distinction is important because, in my view, while Lewis conceives salience as one, Mehta, Starmer and Sugden conceive salience under three categories. Primary salience for them is where agents are nonrational; without much critical interrogation, agents deduce from focal points of pictures and pointers to identify required action combinations. For the second level of salience, agents act to maximize utility but expect the other player to be nonrational (Mehta, Starmer and Sugden, 1994). Significant among the many criticisms of Lewis' account of convention relying significantly on salience are Margaret Gilbert and Brian Skyrms. Brian Skyrms²⁹ defines salience specifically as a psychological property of an agent without a specific rational framework. The idea of the psychological property of salience by Skyrms is a sceptical approach to David Lewis' account of salience. In addressing and responding to an utterly symmetric signalling system, Skyrms argues that no signalling system can be a focal point or stand out from the other (Cubitt and Sugden, 2003; Brian Skyrms, 2004).

David Lewis argues mutual expectation is a self-rational reconstruction of reality to discern other agents' possible course of action. If this is the case, then Skyrms is right to claim salience is a psychological property by giving an evolutionary account of symmetry breaking,

²⁷ While the distinction between these is fascinating, we shall not delve into the analysis since our interest here is to show how the choice that stands out to be conspicuous and or unique so much so that it is obviously or noticeable by agents. The indispensable question is, how can we explain mutual expectation and coordination by salience?

²⁸ The system of mutual expectation can be arrived at by agents to enable them to arrive at a coordination equilibrium. For analysis of Primary, Secondary and Schelling Saliency, see Mehta, Starmer, and Sugden, 1994a, b.

²⁹ See Brian Skyrms, 2004.

which “naturalizes” salience. This fact has already been illustrated by Schelling's examples in *The Theory of Conflict*. Salience is undoubtedly a subjective trait of the individual agent, which rests on agents' psychological framework of action since they operate and depend on imagination rather than rational structure. This being the case, saliency tags might not be saliency for all agents in a specific coordination game. For instance, saliency for agent *A*, might not always and necessarily be saliency for agent *B*. More specifically, while white might be salient for agent *A*, black might be salient for agent *B*. This way, agents *A* and *B* in a coordination problem will not arrive at coordination equilibrium using salience as a coordination device.

In her critical submission on salience as playing a significant role in coordination problems, Margaret Gilbert put forward a question. In Gilbert (1989), she asks, how precisely does salience facilitate the successful coordination of action in a coordination problem?³⁰ In responding to this question, Gilbert argues that salience is insufficient and thus cannot guarantee or provide sufficient reason for action. For her, "salience, in general, maybe a psychological matter, in the sense that what is salient depends on who is involved. Whether or not this is so, there remains the question of whether salience, once it is present will generate a reason for action for rational agents as such, other things been equal".³¹ Following this understating of salience, we can immediately see the limitation of using salience as a source of mutual expectation for an equilibrium selection.³² Furthermore, as evident in Schelling's games, salience is culturally dependent.³³ By arguing that salience is culturally dependent, we imply that cultural

³⁰ Refer to Margaret Gilbert, 1989.

³¹ Ibid, p 64.

³² Others argue that salience provides an epistemic reason in a non-deductive fashion and not a practical reason. This point further reduces the viability of salience as a reliable device for effective equilibrium selection. See Bicchieri, 1995; Sillari, 2005.

³³ See Bardley, Mehta, Starmer, and Sugden, 2010.

determinants of salience are constant and cross-cultural coordination would be more or less challenging to sustain.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, for Lewis, salience, an alternative course of action that stands out and is conspicuous, can draw the attention of agents, giving them a substantial clue. Consequently, producing a reliable and relevant system of concordant mutual expectation. Salience might be identified through agreement or some form of tag or cue. Furthermore, Lewis emphasises salience as a viable coordination tool to help the evolution and sustenance of convention in each society over time.

2.5.3 Role and Limitation of Precedence

In Lewis' account of convention, a reliable belief of agents' behaviour is essential to arriving at coordination equilibrium. The above in turn, arrived at through a system of mutual expectation. In sustaining convention, Lewis argues agents can rely on precedent as a reliable source of a sufficient degree of belief. Aside from agreement and salience, another standard coordination device is precedence. What is precedence? Precedence as a coordination device is based on a past analogous coordination equilibrium reached by agents. Faced with a similar problem, though not necessarily entirely identical, agents can rely on this experience to infer a possible course of action in the future. For Lewis, it is insignificant the coordination device used to arrive at the previous coordination equilibrium; agents can repeat what they did to come at it before. In his words, “given exactly the same problem again, perhaps each of us will repeat what he did before. If so, we will reach the same solution. If you and I met yesterday- by luck, by

agreement, by salience, or however- and today we find we must meet again, we might both go back to yesterday's meeting place, each hoping to find the other there.” (Lewis, 1969: 36).

The above point might be misleading. In the above sense, precedence might be conceived as a different and unique coordination device. This is not necessarily so. Lewis argues that “precedent is merely the source of one important kind of salience: conspicuous uniqueness of equilibrium because we reached it last time” (Ibid, p 36). Lewis elucidates that precedence is a solid and vital kind of salience because we often rely on experience and repeat successful actions “if we have no strong reason to do otherwise”. It is unlikely that we might be confronted with the exact problem as in the past. Past experiences might differ from the present situation. Notwithstanding, we can draw on our knowledge of the experience of resolving subsequent problems.

From the preceding, we can immediately draw and identify evident limitations to precedence as a coordination device and source of concordant mutual expectation. Agents using precedence coordination devices might be moved by different or alternate analogies of precedent problems and solutions. In this way, they might deduce ambiguous precedence leading to ambiguity in saliency. Ambiguous precedence does not help such agents solve the problem at hand. For instance, Samuel and Mary desire to meet. Without the possibility of communication. Samuel's precedent solutions with other agents solved the problem by going to the park.

On the contrary, Mary solved her precedent problem by going to the station. While solving their problems from precedent experiences, it is essential to state that both Mary and Samuel will acquire contradictory and ambiguous saliency. The above shows that precedence needs to be an experience with the same agent or agent from the same social background and experience. Even though sometimes agents can effectively coordinate with agents they have

never interacted with, they share a common understanding of precedent by belonging to the same social group. David Lewis also presented ambiguous precedence where the caller called back for agent A, while the other called back for agent B. Faced with this new coordination problem, they inevitably acquire ambiguous precedence and saliency.

The preceding is a problem and limitation of precedence as a coordination device. Notwithstanding this fact, Lewis argues that precedents are often unambiguous in practice. Consequently, more precedents are better than one. The more precedents of coordination equilibria arrived at, the better the agents can deduce the similarities and differences of the new coordination problem. Sillari (2005), argues that salience might rightfully be claimed to be a “coordination device for originating convention, whereas precedence is the coordination device involved in their perpetuation” (Sillari, 2005: 381)

2.6 Common Knowledge

In the previous sections, we argued that agents faced with novel coordination problems with aligned interests desire to solve the issue by simply arriving at a coordination equilibrium. To achieve coordination equilibrium, agents must be able to select the correct action combination where they coordinate and obtain Pareto-efficient equilibrium.³⁴ This is possible only if agents acquire the requisite system of concordant mutual expectations. The question is, how do agents reach this system necessary for action coordination? What are the sources of these expectations? Following David Lewis' line of thought, I argued that agents could achieve this through the

³⁴ Based on our earlier conception of Pareto optimality, if agents coordinate successfully, agents arrive at a Pareto efficiently point by precedent. However, if they end up on the Pareto inefficient equilibrium, they can also get stuck there by virtue of precedent.

coordination devices of agreement, precedence, or salience. Though riddled with limitations, these coordination devices serve as sources of a system of concordant expectations for agents: to produce first and higher-order mutual expectations. For these coordination devices to be effective in providing expectations, Common Knowledge is indispensable.

2.6.1 Lewis' Account of Common Knowledge

The notion of common knowledge was first introduced in his *Convention: A philosophical Study*, 1969. Lewis used common knowledge to imply the system of concordant mutual expectation “that others have certain expectations, that others expect others to have certain expectations, and so on (Lewis, 1969: 52). For Lewis, **K** is common knowledge in a population **P** if a state of affairs **A** holds such that;

1. Everyone in **P** has reason to believe that **A** holds.
2. **A** indicates to everyone in **P** that everyone in **P** has reason to believe that **A** holds.
3. **A** indicates to everyone in **P** that **K**.

In his analysis of common knowledge, Lewis's primary intent was to institute a foundation through which agents can acquire the source of first and higher-order expectations conceived as reliable indicators. To this end, he argues that agreement, salience, and precedence provide agents with first and higher-order expectations. Although all these –agreement, salience, and precedence- are the basis for common knowledge, they are of a weaker origin. Interestingly, Lewis used the term common knowledge to refer to expectations regarding beliefs; reasons to

believe rather than knowledge itself.³⁵ To this end, he argues that the term common knowledge was unfortunate.

The state of affairs **A**, informs members of the population **P** with the requisite information and data to form relevant expectations of high order expectations regarding members of **P**. Therefore, members of the population **P** need to create other higher-order expectations using “mutual ascriptions of some common inductive standards, and background information, rationality, mutual ascription of rationality, and so on” (Ibid: 56-57). More specifically, the state of affairs, **A** that informed members of population **P** with the requisite information, is the basis for common knowledge of the state of affairs **A** in population **P**. For instance (using Lewis' example), drivers in the United States have hitherto driven on the right. All members of the population of drivers in the United States believe this is so. The fact indicates to all of them that all of them have reason to believe that drivers in the United States have hitherto driven on the right and that drivers in the United States will tend to drive on the right henceforth. Drivers in the United States will henceforth drive on the right since they conceive this knowledge to be common knowledge, giving them a reason to believe that the state of affairs **A** holds in the population **P**. Little wonder then, Lewis elucidates the fact that agreement, salience, and precedence are,

“[B]asis for common knowledge that everyone will do his part of a coordination equilibrium, and, in particular, past conformity to a convention is a basis for common knowledge of a tendency to go on conforming. Consider a convention regularity **R** in a population **P**, everyone in **P** has reason to believe that members of **P** have conformed to **R** in the past indicates to everyone in **P** that everyone in **P**

³⁵ For further analysis on this point, see Sillari, 2005; Cubitt and Sugden, 2003.

has reason to believe that members of **P** have conformed to **R** in the past. And the fact that members of **P** have conformed to **R** in the past indicates to everyone in **P** that they will tend to do so in the future as well” (Ibid: 57-58).

Lewis claims that common knowledge can be inferred from the above, as a state of affairs **A** that is known to everyone in a given population **P**; so everyone in **P** knows that the state of affairs **A** holds. Therefore, a regularity in the past that is common knowledge will, all things considered, be a regularity in the future.

Margaret Gilbert (1989) sharply criticises this line of reasoning. For her, in Lewis's account of convention, rationality, precedence of regularity, and coordination equilibria are not sufficient criteria for regularity and conformity. For her, according to precedence, common knowledge culminates in an infinite regress which prevents agents from definite action. According to her, precedence gives agent **A** reason to act based on the idea that agent **B** will do his part. This is only possible if agent **A** knows that agent **B** will do so, agent **A** knows that agent **B** knows that agent **A** knows that agent **B** will do so and so on ad infinitum.³⁶ Therefore, each level of common knowledge justifies the level above without practically ever justifying that others will do their part and thus failing to justify coordination.

Notwithstanding this criticism, it is worthy of note that common knowledge plays a significant role in Lewis' definition of convention. It plays an important role by providing agents with the ability to gain mutual acquaintance or expectation and effectively coordinate due to common knowledge. We can certainly say that Lewis' definition of convention comprises the definition of common knowledge, regulating one's behaviour, a system of expectation and a

³⁶ For an in-depth analysis on this, see Margaret Gilbert, 1989.

system of preferences. To reiterate Lewis's last point and definition of convention, we restate his definition of convention thus.

A regularity R in the behaviour of members of a population P when they are agents in a recurrent situation S is a convention if and only if it is true that, and it is **common knowledge** in P that, in any instance of S among members of P ,

1. Almost Everyone conforms to R ;
2. Almost Everyone expects everyone else to conform to R ;
3. Almost everyone has approximately the same preferences regarding all possible combinations of actions;
4. Almost everyone prefers that any one more conform to R ; on condition that almost everyone conform to R ;
5. Almost everyone would prefer that any one more conform to R' , on condition that almost everyone conform to R' ,

Where R' is some possible regularity in the behaviour of members of P in S , such that almost no one in almost any instance of S among members of P could conform both to R' and to R .

2.6.2 Michael Chwe's Account of Common Knowledge

Chwe's account of common knowledge is contained in his book *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge*.³⁷ It is an innovative book in which Chwe exclusively discussed and analysed his submissions on the essential connection between rationality and

³⁷ See Michael Suk-Young Chwe, 2001.

ritual. Herein, Chwe addressed the idea of common knowledge by critically distinguishing it from the mere sharing of information. Like Schelling and Lewis, Chwe analysed non-market interactions between agents hinged on coordination of independent decisions. More specifically, using myriads of examples, Chwe investigated how networks and institutions affect and influence coordination by mediating information flows. Coordination requires common knowledge and conscious awareness to influence agents' intended decisions. In this sense, common knowledge requires that a thing be known to all agents involved, that everybody knows that everybody knows it and so on.

Conscious awareness and influence on intended behaviour concerning common knowledge could be understood as the flip side of pluralistic ignorance.³⁸ To drive home this point, let us take the case of the legitimate rebellion regarding the decreasing size of loaves of bread in Egypt.³⁹ While the emerging difference in the loaves was subtle and gradual, this was noticed by members of the society, yet no one was certain they were mistaken or not. Even if it is accurate and one is sure the loaves are shrinking, no one was sure this fact is noticed by all and not the case that a single individual was noticing its shrinkage alone. Members fear the risk of being taken for a fool should she complain alone, in which case any public claim becomes too costly. For Chwe, “each person could notice that their own loaf was smaller and tasted different but be unsure about how many other people also noticed it” (Chew, 2001:11). Chwe argues that the presence of common knowledge could disperse this sort of pluralistic ignorance. Common knowledge of others' knowledge of the state of affairs and plans helps resolve coordinating problems. Herein, Chwe set out to address why higher-order knowledge is necessary and valuable and why agents must know that others know what everybody's inclinations are.

³⁸ For a critical analysis of Pluralistic Ignorance, see Timur, 1997; Duque, 2017; Leaf, 2000.

³⁹ See Chwe (2001: 10-11) for more elaborate analysis.

More importantly for Chwe, common knowledge- the higher knowledge of agents that other agents know what everybody's inclinations are- is useful primarily because it makes them more likely to respect authorities. Using a series of examples, Chwe argued that common knowledge is necessary for coordinating public activities. The absence of common knowledge would make these public activities different. In any case, if common knowledge is not important at the start of a relationship, it is nonetheless crucial when the relationship must last. To this end, Chwe argued that common knowledge is not limited to mere knowledge that a particular message was received but included the presence or existence of a system of shared symbols allowing agents to know how other agents understood the message (Ibid: 7).

Furthermore, communication and historical precedence are the sources of Chwe's conception of common knowledge. Because common knowledge is very important, it is something people fight over, such as "censorship to crack down on public communications" (Ibid: 7). More specifically, Chwe makes argues that individuals can be sure that everyone perceives a specific state of affairs through the general spreading of an element in everyday life. Communication through advertising campaigns and media, in general, produces common knowledge. Secondly, repetition can also serve as a basis for assurance about common knowledge and the perception of others. Consequently, common knowledge is an essential part of what a public ritual does.

Chwe's analysis of coordination problems was developed in view of pioneering a robust application of communication as a core problem of social sciences. In this way, a significant part of this book was dedicated to answering how shared knowledge can be grounded in social communication. "Successful communication sometimes is not simply a matter of whether a given message is received. It also depends on whether people are aware that other people also

reason it” (Ibid, 9). In his exposition of common knowledge, ritual is another critical concept discussed by Chwe. Ritual, for him, is the public repetition of formulas characterized by shared activations such as dance and songs. In conclusion, Chwe makes a ground-breaking attempt to resolve the mystery of how individuals process information leading them to choose between a cooperative equilibrium among alternatives and explain why individuals choose sub-optimal alternatives while abandoning optimal ones. The answer to these mysteries lies in how we process and interpret inferred information.

2.7 On Social Accounts of Convention

So far, I have succeeded in addressing Hume and Lewis' convention account and the various concepts necessary for adequate comprehension of Convention. In the previous sections, I discussed the question of mutual expectation and equilibrium selection. This point is central to the understanding of how conventions come about. As we now understand, equilibrium selection is also central to evolutionary game theorists. Both rational choice and evolutionary game theorists tried to address this point from different angles. While rational choice theorists submit that we can arrive at coordination equilibrium through the instrumentality of a system of concordant mutual expectation aided by coordination devices and common knowledge, evolutionary game theorists propose that this is reached through replicator dynamics. Which of these theories is correct? I think this is the wrong question to ask. It is a wrong question to the extent that both theories appear to contain some truth and are not without limitations.

My point here is not to pursue these theories to their logical conclusions. Indeed, this will derail and take me far from my purpose. My primary purpose here is to critically interrogate

the underlying theories addressing the questions of how conventions, norms, and sanctions that support them come about. What aids these sanctions, norms, and conventions to perpetuate over time even where they appear grossly ineffective? At this point, I shall focus on discussing two accounts of social convention and social norms sustaining stable social interactions. These accounts of social conventions are Ullmann-Margalit and Margaret Gilbert's accounts.

2.7.1 Margaret Gilbert's Account

Margaret Gilbert is a British-born philosopher. She has made substantial founding contributions to analytic philosophy. Herein, I set out to introduce her account of convention. It is essential to mention right from the outset that Gilbert's account of convention was born out of her detailed critique of Lewis' account of convention, and in particular, her conception of social convention. Notwithstanding, her account is not and should not be considered a variant of Lewis' account. The first point of departure in these accounts is that Gilbert conceives Lewis' account of convention as more or less an individualistic account of convention. This point differs from hers in that she conceives social convention as a *group fiat* based on common knowledge⁴⁰ to willingly accept and promote this fiat as a basis for action (Rescorla, 2009). On the Contrary, Lewis' account of convention is individualistic to the extent that personal commitments and expectations, as well as human disposition and inclination to act, are based on individual human

⁴⁰. Common knowledge and awareness of each other's preferences and strict rationality relating to a given situation *S*.

beings.⁴¹ Gilbert argues that individuals who come together to promote this common fiat form a “plural subject” and regard themselves as “we” with a common belief and purpose of action.

Social convention for her is “our convention” (Gilbert, 2008). Conventions to this end may be ascribed to two or more individuals. Like our discussion of coordination devices, Gilbert argues that a convention between two or more people may come about through an agreement. In Gilbert’s account, two or more individuals conceive a convention as “our convention”. This implies that Lewis’ conditions for a convention are insufficient since it lacks normative colouration. “Our convention”, for her, means an application of an appropriate “ought criterion” (Gilbert, 2008: 9). Hence, individuals in a convention ought to conform, all things considered equal. This “ought” criterion is thus a sufficient reason for conformity since ‘ought’ is evident to all parties involved. She calls this rationality of action of conformity *reason-responsiveness* (Gilbert, 2008).

Lewis’ definition of convention states that “almost everyone conforms”. This point might be misleading. Further critical interrogation, however, would make it obvious. As we can quickly realize, while almost everyone conforms to it, it is also possible that no one regards themselves as responsible for enforcing conformity. It might as well also be a regularity or convention. Being responsible for its enforcement can only be if such individuals regard themselves in a *social fiat* or as a plural subject as conceived by Margaret. For this point, Gilbert introduces two other criteria: the collectivity criterion and the offence criterion.

⁴¹ Rescorla (2019), conceives this point of Gilbert as the Ontological account and point of divergent between Lewis’ account and Gilbert’s account of Convention. See Gilbert, 2008 for details.

Gilbert's account of Social Convention can expressly be understood as a convention free of Lewis' three central conditions of "conformity," expectations, "and" coordination problem structure (Gilbert, 2008: 11).

A social convention is that of a jointly accepted principle of action, a group fiat with respect to how one is to act in certain situations... conventions on this account are essentially collectivity-involving: a population that develops a convention in this sense becomes by that very fact a collectivity. Further, each party to the convention will accept that each one personally ought to conform, other things being equal, where the "ought" is understood to be based on the fact that together they jointly accept the principle.⁴²

Social convention, for her, is a non-individualist account of convention but a holist account that involves a *jointly accepted fiat*.⁴³ A joint commitment is not a personal or a conjunction type of commitment. It is a commitment created by two or more individuals in which none of the agents involved has the unilateral power to cancel the commitment. Individuals in a joint commitment are condemned to promote and see to the fulfilment of the commitment. Through common knowledge, each must commit to all, her willingness, readiness, and availability to commit to the commitment. Based on this understanding, she defines convention as social rules that apply to a group of people, families, discussion groups, and sports teams, who generally accept, jointly, this fiat. Based on joint commitment, she argues that:

A population **P** has a convention of conformity to some regularity in behaviour **R** in situations of type **S** if and only if the members of **P** are jointly committed to

⁴² Gilbert, 1989: 377.

⁴³ Gilbert, 1990: 16; 1989: 377.

accept as a body, with respect to themselves, the fiat: **R** is to be conformed to (Gilbert, 2008: 12).

As co-creators of a joint commitment, one ought to conform to it. This point is necessary to elaborate on her criterion of offence. When one fails or threatens not to conform to a jointly agreed commitment or fiat, in this sense, she argues, she has been unable to give to others what she owed them. They consequently reserve the right to demand "conformity if non-conformity is threatened and to rebuke him for non-conformity (Ibid: 14). We can understand Gilbert's point of referring to sanctions and punishment to demand and enforce and enforce conformity. Furthermore, Gilbert's (1990), normative collectivity criterion strengthens this point. For her, agents conceive themselves as a party to the joint commitment, believe they ought to conform to it and expect that others who are co-creators of the joint commitment also ought to conform.

To this end, it is everybody's responsibility to conform, expect and enforce conformity by other agents. Finally, Gilbert's account departs from Lewis' account on conformity and expectation conditions. For Lewis, almost everyone conforms to the convention and expects almost everyone to conform. Gilbert abandons this conformity and expectation condition as she argues that based on common knowledge of the reason-responsiveness of the parties involved. This, for her, will make almost everybody conform and expect others to conform primarily because agents are bound to comply with this fiat. This point appears somewhat confusing. I shall, however, not take up this point in order not to deviate from the primary purpose.

It is, however, unclear to me how Gilbert intends to explain how certain types of conventions come about. While it is obvious that social conventions are social rules, I conceive Gilbert's social convention to imply social norms rather than convention. Firstly, it is difficult to

argue that social conventions evolved from the agreement.⁴⁴ It is also unclear, at least to me, how a convention such as a language, which I was never a party to or consulted during its formation, will necessarily require my conformity. And that I am also responsible for enforcing conformity. And finally, Gilbert argued that her joint acceptance holistic account of a convention is that none of the parties involved can unilaterally cancel the commitment. This point appears to, in a significant way, imply that once a social convention commences or that a particular equilibrium is reached, it is impossible to modify, change or cancel. It may be cancelled, modified, or changed if and only if all the parties involved come to an agreement again.

2.7.2 Ullman-Margalit's Account

As a sequel to Margaret Gilbert's account of social convention, we saw that she argued extensively for a holistic account of joint acceptance. She argued for a social convention theory that satisfies collectivity and offence criteria. In my submission, I argued that Gilbert's account of social convention tends more towards an established norm, a social rule of a society that is either prescriptive or proscriptive, a joint commitment that almost everyone conforms to and expects almost everyone to conform to-reason-responsiveness. The offence criterion invokes the responsibility of parties of Gilbert's social convention to ensure and enforce conformity, which we argued implied sanctions or punishment.

Herein, I turn to Ullmann-Margalit's account of convention. Ullmann-Margalit was a Jerusalem-born Philosopher who contributed immensely to research on the borderlines of game

⁴⁴ This is not to take for granted that she clearly stated that for her and Lewis, conventions are not necessarily related to coordination problems and product of agreement. It seems unclear how certain conventions such as language, driving on the right side of the road, Yoruba form of greeting the elderly emerged from an agreement.

theory, decision theory and the emergence and evolution of norms. Our exposition of her submissions will primarily be deduced from her publication, *The Emergence of Norms*.⁴⁵ Ullmann-Margalit presents an exciting exposition of norm generation in this impressive and critical read that has proved essentially relevant to philosophers, social scientists, economists, anthropologists, political scientists, and lawyers. To begin with, she conceives social norms as “a prescribed guide for conduct or action which is generally complied with by the members of a society” (Ullmann-Margalit, 1977: 12). Given this first rough definition of social norms, we can easily understand that norms are social institutions and occupy a vast spectrum and variety of situations and contexts. Social norms emerge, endure, and pass away.

She uses three basic form games, and using the game theoretical framework, she presents her arguments and examines their potential as norm generators in *The Emergence of Norms*. The first game form used by her was the famous Prisoner's Dilemma. Ullmann-Margalit's analysis shows clearly that a Prisoner Dilemma (ibid: 19-73) type game generates a Prisoner Dilemma type norm. This type of game, involving a large population, tends to create a unique Prisoner Dilemma norm. In the case of public good, for instance. For all public goods commodities, Ullmann-Margalit considers it under a generalized Prisoner Dilemma structured situation (Hardin, 1980). Each citizen in this situation has the temptation to keep their contribution and consequently be a free rider. However, she has shown that if it is in each citizen's interest to pay his contribution for the said public good and that each citizen is somehow coerced and possibly followed by legal sanction, we shall have substantial conformity. This is a Prisoner dilemma norm type. An example of this prisoner dilemma norm type is used to enforce conformity for payment of taxes.

⁴⁵ See Ullmann-Margalit, 1977.

The second type of game analysed by Ullmann-Margalit is "coordination games". As conceived earlier, coordination games are characterized by the near-perfect alignment of individual interests with at least two coordination equilibria. It matters less to agents what they should act precisely since their primary interest is coordinating their actions. An example of such coordination situations includes driving on a particular side of the road. Such coordination norms emerge which are ethically neutral that states: drive on the x^{th} side of the road. Under coordination games and norms, rationality is considered insufficient to induce conformity.

Finally, Ullmann-Margalit considers "norms of partiality". Norms of partiality involve inequality—a situation of two equilibria points. At one equilibrium point, it favours agent **A**. At the second equilibrium point, it favours agent **B**. Ullmann-Margalit uses this norm to model a two-class social structure: the rulers and the ruled. To maintain the equilibrium favouring the rulers, they institute and promulgate a partiality norm that prevents the threat of the alternative equilibrium.

Given Ullmann-Margalit's (1990), conception of norms, it is obvious that it includes all norms, formal and informal. To this end, there are various ways that norms can be altered. We imply here that norms might be changed or revised by alteration. This might come about in two ways: a change in the pattern of conformity or an alteration in behavioural regularity. In conclusion, Ullmann-Margalit argues extensively that social norms have proved beyond a reasonable doubt to be the best means of ensuring and enforcing conformity to strategic situations such as the Prisoner's Dilemma. To coordination problems, which are solutions to recurrent coordination problems and for maintaining *status quo* in the case of unequal social situations. Norms are more effective and achieve required results compared to force for example.

This is so conceived because when members of society internalize norms, these norms are conformed to out of some inner conviction and not out of fear of sanctions or punishment.

2.8 Conclusion

Chapter Two contains an in-depth discussion of convention and emphasising the fact that conventions are conceived as established persistent solutions to recurring coordination and cooperation problems. The above conception rests on the fact that conventions are in place to avoid coordination failures by providing agents the leverage to infer expected behaviour based on agreement, salience, and precedence coordination devices. The understanding of convention suggests that it is in the best interest of agents to conform to an established convention. Therefore, simple majority conforming to a convention can ensure the persistence of an established convention. As a sequel, for effective coordination and equilibrium selection, coordination devices, common knowledge and mutual expectations are indispensable concepts.

Knowledge of the existence of a convention plays a significant role in sustaining a convention. What is common knowledge and how do we arrive at it? In the above, we conceived common knowledge to be the state knowing that dispels all forms of ignorance. To this end, common knowledge is a state of affairs **A** that is known to everyone in a given population **P**; so, everyone in **P** knows that the state of affairs **A** holds. Common knowledge is therefore a consistent source of higher-order expectations. This understanding of Common knowledge is further supported by Margaret Gilbert's theory of a fiat. A fiat which is a joint commitment created by two or more individuals in which none of the agents involved has the unilateral power

to cancel the commitment. Through common knowledge, each must commit to all, her willingness, readiness, and availability to commit to the commitment.

Chapter Two therefore, interrogates the role played by mutual expectation in the formation of Convention; the coordination of agents in arriving at desired and consensual equilibrium by using the coordination devices of agreement, salience, and precedence. This culminates in the idea of common knowledge which dispels all forms of misperceptions and ignorance. This is a very crucial point as it creates a necessary background for our discussion in the subsequent chapters particularly as it relates gender dominance, misperception, and pluralistic ignorance.

CHAPTER THREE: DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL NORMS

“Much of the discussion about the power norms have to affect behaviour arises from a confusion about what is meant by ‘norm.’ A norm can be formal or informal, personal or collective, descriptive of what most people do, or prescriptive of behaviour” (Bicchieri 2006: 1).

3.1 Introduction

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. This is a popular phrase attributed to St. Ambrose. This phrase serves as an ‘advisory demand’ to tourists and visitors to immerse themselves and adapt to the customs, traditions, and conventions of the people of a certain place and behave like them. Social norms play a significant role in the society because it is built into the social architecture and facilitate effective human social interactions. Little wonder scholars argue that social norms are powerful enough to influence and direct human actions. Notwithstanding this fact, there is no consensus in the literature on the exact conception of social norms.

In this chapter, we shall take a step further to analyse the dynamics of social norms. Herein, a simple majority of agents conforming to a regularity alone is not a sufficient reason to induce conformity, but the necessary complementarity of normative expectation since violation of such norms are usually accompanied by sanctions. When driving, for instance, one is expected to respect traffic rules to avoid colliding with other road users. This is an example of a convention. Norms against littering in public places and against skipping the queue are, on the other hand, examples of social norms because violations of these norms are sometimes sanctioned.

Norms occupy a very important and necessary part of human society. They engender and perpetuate stability and are ubiquitous in every social setting. Norms are a persistent phenomenon in every human social interaction by playing a salient role in prescribing or proscribing behaviours. It can be deduced from this that, norms are highly complex and sometimes, adherents of certain societal norms incur substantial costs in conforming to these norms. Being a complex concept, the understanding of norms can be both common and technical.⁴⁶ We shall herein investigate the technical/academic constructs and conceptions of norms. I should state right from the outset that, seeking a consensus of the conception of norms is almost impossible.⁴⁷ Investigations into the literature of norms cuts across various disciplines, these include disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics, law, philosophy, and political science. This fact reveals the inescapable differences of methodology and research questions in approaching the conceptualizations of norms we shall come across.

We shall, therefore, begin this chapter by unearthing the nature of norms. This involves addressing the question of what norms are, the types and theories of norms, and unravelling intricacies surrounding why norms have so much power, making agents incur substantial costs to conform to them. It is necessary to state here that in this first section of this chapter, we shall interrogate the similarities and differences between formal and informal norms. This division is necessary to offer us a background and reasons why the subsequent sections of this chapter will focus on the informal types of norms. The next section is a necessary and interesting critical interrogation of three theories of social norms (informal norms). This includes structural

⁴⁶ Common conception of norm conceives norms as an acceptable standard of behaviour that most people in a certain place with. This definition of norm is termed common because it lacks, as we will see shortly, most of the key characteristics of what differentiates a behavioural regularity and a social norm.

⁴⁷ Impossible because as we shall come to appreciate, authors, owing to their disciplines and methodological expertise conceive norms differently. This gives room for conceptual disagreement making it impossible to have consensus in the conceptualization of norms.

functionalism, social identity theory, rational choice theory and a game-theoretical approach to social norms. The analysis of these approaches to norms in the above order provides us with the requisite framework to interrogate the evolutionary game-theoretical approach of Skyrms and Binmore as contrarian views.

The final section of this chapter is an interrogation of Cristina Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of the dynamics of social norms and the significant role expectations, reference network and sanctions play to induce conformity and persistence of norms. Bicchieri's rational reconstruction is very important to this research and plays a pivotal role since this research heavily relies on her theory to ground the argument that empirical and normative expectations of one's reference network play a significant role in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour by agents in certain environments and suffice as the conclusion of this chapter.

3.2 The Nature of Norms

What are norms? To begin with, the Cambridge online dictionary defines norm as "an accepted standard or a way of behaving or doing things that most people agree with". The second definition therein conceives norm "as a situation or type of behaviour that is expected and considered to be typical". We can deduce some points from these conceptions. First, a norm is either a way of behaving or simply a behaviour. Secondly, a norm is a regularity that is considered typical and accepted by most people. The question to ask is, will any behaviour or accepted behaviour and regularity qualify as a norm? A better way to frame this question would

be, is a convention⁴⁸ the same as a norm?⁴⁹ In the previous chapter, we conceived convention as a regularity that almost everyone conforms to and expects everyone else to also conform. This implies that convention is a regularity because people want to coordinate with others and avoid miscoordination. Considering this and owing to the question of this project, can we convincingly argue that risky sexual behaviour is a convention? Would there be miscoordination in perpetuating risky sexual behaviour where contracting diseases and pregnancy stare perpetrators in the face? This is highly unlikely. To this end, we can safely argue that the Cambridge definition of norms, therefore, is unable to function effectively to provide us with a workable definition of norms considering the research question.

Owing to the above definition of norms provided by the Cambridge online dictionary, we immediately realise that the meaning of norm is much more complex than ordinarily conceived. To begin with, Morris (1956) conceives norms as the “generally accepted, sanctioned prescriptions for, or prohibitions against others’ behaviour, belief, or feeling or else...Norms must be shared prescriptions and apply to others... Norms always include Sanctions.” (Morris 1956: 610)

Morris’s conception of a norm is similar to the definition put forward by the Cambridge dictionary. Notwithstanding, in addition to an accepted standard of behaviour and regularity, Morris presents us with additional salient characteristics for effectively analysing the concept. For him, for norms to be so conceived, it must be a regularity of behaviour that is generally

⁴⁸ In the previous chapter, we defined a convention as a regularity of behaviour in the population that is a solution to a recurrent coordination problem.

⁴⁹ In Chapter 2.2, we argued that while conventions can become norms, there is a significant difference between convention and norms. In the literature of convention and norms, sometimes, they are used interchangeably (Gilbert, 1989, 2008). Others such as Southwood and Eriksson put forward two theses account: Convention as norms and norms as convention thesis (Southwood and Eriksson, 2011). We shall return to this debate subsequently.

accepted and be a shared phenomenon.⁵⁰ Generally accepted and shared phenomena here immediately bring to the fore our earlier discussion on Common Knowledge.⁵¹ In addition, norms must always be associated with or accompanied by sanctions. This implies that norms must either be prescriptive or proscriptive. It would, therefore, appear that owing to this point of norms as being a shared phenomenon, norms and conventions indeed share significant similarities. The question is, can they be used interchangeably? It is important not to lose sight of the purpose of this section, which is, to unearth the meaning and nature of norms and situate this in the light of risky sexual behaviour. The question to ask at this point then is, will Morris' conception of norms as generally accepted sanction prescriptions aid us in understanding risky sexual behaviour as a norm? This seems highly unlikely for one simple reason, the negative externalities associated with risky sexual behaviour is enormous.

Similar to Morris' definition, Broom and Selznick conceive norms as a characteristic of every human society that specifies behaviours that are considered appropriate or inappropriate where individuals are either rewarded or punished. Consequently, "norms are blueprints for behaviour, setting limits within which individuals may seek alternative ways to achieve their goals" (Broom and Selznick 1963: 68). As blueprints, Broom and Selznick conceive norms as a pattern or design that can be followed by members of a given society to ensure societal stability. The immediate problem faced with conceiving norms as blueprints are that norms in this sense serve as a guide, therefore, it can be argued that norms are devoid of local normative content.

⁵⁰ David Lewis (1969), argued that shared acquaintance emanates from precedence as a coordination device. Even though its knowledge of such regularity must not necessarily be obtained from an exact past coordination situation by the same agents, such regularity governs future behaviours in the face of coordination problems. Invariably, shared acquaintance or phenomenon that is generally accepted begins the process of convention that becomes an indefinitely persisting self-perpetuating system of preferences and expectations (Lewis, 1969).

⁵¹ Refer to Chapter 2.4 for an in-depth analysis of Common knowledge. Here, we argued that convention must be such that it is known by almost everyone, which in turn helps agents to acquire second and higher order expectations to solve coordination problems.

Reward and punishment for conformity and violation of norms would have little content or force in Broom and Selznick's definition.

In a similar vein, Harry Johnson (1960) also conceives norm as a pattern. For him, however, "a norm is an abstract pattern, held in the mind, that sets certain limits for behaviour. An 'operative' norm is not merely entertained in the mind but is considered worthy of following in actual behaviour; thus, one feels that one *ought* to conform to it. This feeling means that one 'accepts' the norm" (Johnson 1960: 8). While Johnson (1960), and Broom and Selznick (1963), definitions of norm are similar, Johnson on his part introduced the normative component, so much so that members of a community with a norm, accept it as a norm and have the feeling that they *ought* to conform to it. The question that begs for an immediate response here is whether members of the community also feel the need to ensure compliance by punishing or rewarding violation and conformity to these operative norms. In addition, Johnson also introduced the component of internalization of norms; for him, a norm is an abstract pattern held in the mind.⁵² In this way, individuals consequently build internal support for conformity to uphold certain common values and shared principles of behaving and thus feel they ought to conform to certain norms, from within. This, therefore, answers the question earlier raised. While individuals feel they ought to comply with certain shared behavioural principles, external sanctions are essentially not present since the need for conformity is psychologically internalized.

Note that, a crucial feature of the definition of norms, owing to our established conception of conformity is missing in the above definitions. This is the place of expectation. For Bierstedt (1963: 222), a norm is a "standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in

⁵² As we shall see shortly, internalization is a socialization theory of social norms which significantly theorizes that individuals internalize common values, through the development of psychological need to uphold certain shared principles. This theory argues that external sanctions play little or no role in eliciting conformity. Instead, individuals conform to 'appropriate' behaviour to avoid the feeling of pain, shame, or guilt.

which we participate. It is a societal expectation. It is a standard to which we are expected to conform whether we actually do so or not". Bierstedt's definition is practically important primarily because it captures certain salient features of norms that are important for the purpose of this work. To begin with, a norm for Bierstedt is a rule that regulates social situations engaged in by individuals. This implies that certain rules do not affect nor apply to individuals who do not participate in certain group social activities.

Based on the above conceptions of norms, we can proceed to conceive norms as the unique attributes of a society. Hence, norms are not universal.⁵³ Bierstedt (1963) also conceives norms as "societal expectations". We can then successfully argue that norms are characterized by societal expectations. That is, almost everyone conforms to these rules and expect almost everyone to conform to them. This conception of norm is therefore closely linked to David Lewis' (1969:78), final definition of convention. What is obvious in the conception of convention is that a convention is regularity of behaviour, while norms, on the other hand, are rules and standards of behaviour. It is obvious however that both norms and conventions as already analysed, rely on societal expectations for conformity. Furthermore, as conceived by Southwood and Eriksson (2011), norms possess a certain kind of normativity that is generally accepted by a significant proportion of members of a group. This normativity criterion is what Bierstedt (1963), refers to as "ought" and what Morris (1956), referred to as "sanctioned prescriptions".

The above conceptions of norms are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of norms. Before we proceed, however, it is important to say that philosophers approach this discourse from a slightly different perspective. The philosophical approach to norms conceives

⁵³ Universal here implies that every society has its unique sets of norms. It however does not in any way imply that norms are universal; norms found in one place applies universally.

norms as action strategies and solutions to action problems; that is, either Nash equilibrium of coordination games or cooperative equilibria of cooperation games (Lewis, 1969; Ullman-Margalit, 1977; Vanderschraaf, 1995). Considering this, norms are behaviours characterized by self-fulfilling expectations that rest on central principles of beliefs and common knowledge.⁵⁴

Young, for example, conceives norms as “an equilibrium behaviour in a game played repeatedly by many different individuals in a society where the behaviour is known to be customary” (Young, 2003: 390). This conception of a norm as equilibrium takes a step further to argue that norms are behaviours or regularity of behaviour, in addition, a norm must be an equilibrium point of a strategic interaction.

As a sequel to the definitions of norms so far analysed, two important points can be deduced. Firstly, we should mention that norms are directly related to the behaviours of agents in the society. What however remains a contentious point by conceiving norms as behaviour is to effectively distinguish whether norms are essentially what people do generally or whether norms are what people should do (Cialdini et al. 1990). And I might also add, maybe norms are both. The second important point regarding the definition of a norm that immediately follows from above is the local normativity context of norms. In this sense, we argue that norms contain an important attribute, the “ought” criterion which serves as a compelling element for agents in a society. In this sense, almost everyone accepts a particular action regularity or behaviour, recognizes, accepts, and submits to the legitimacy of such behavioural claim. If a norm lacks this legitimacy component, it ought not to be considered as a norm, since norms are obeyed because they are perceived as legitimate.

⁵⁴ In Chapter Two, we argued that common knowledge has some problems and so cannot reliably be conceived as a tool necessary in solving coordination problems. For more details, refer to Gilbert (1990 and 1989), on common knowledge and Skyrms (2004), on evolutionary game theory.

Contemplating the above, Brennan et al. (2013:29) argue rather convincingly that norms are characterized by normative attitudes evident in a group. To this end, they posit that ‘a normative principle **P** is a norm within a group **G** if and only if:

- i. A significant proportion of members of **G** have **P**-corresponding normative attitudes;
and
- ii. A significant proportion of the members of **G** know that a significant proportion of the members of **G** have **P**-corresponding normative attitudes.

The above definition of norm rests heavily on the normative principle of norms. To begin with, for a norm to exist, this principle must be legitimate and thus accepted as such by a significant proportion of the population. Consider for example the rule in many Islam dominated societies that require women to wear headscarves, Saudi Arabia for example. A significant proportion of the population accepts this principle as a norm, a significant proportion of the population also disapproves of women not complying with this injunctive rule. Therefore, we can authoritatively conclude that Saudi Arabia has a normative attitude towards the use of headscarves. And this rule is common knowledge.

For Sherif (1936), norms refer more succinctly to common ideas and standards subscribed to by agents which guides individual responses in established groups and societies. Similarly, Ullman-Margalit (1977: 12), conceives norms as “a prescribed guide for social conduct or action which is generally complied with by the members of a society.” Humans’ daily social relations and interactions are characterized by norms that they accept and make legitimate, thereby compelling individuals to conform to them. We can safely argue that agents are willing and desirous of conforming to legitimate norms on the condition, obvious or inferred, that others will also comply.

Sherif (1936), and Ullman-Margalit's (1977), accounts of social norms and social conventions present us with social preferences that support the understanding of norms as tools for solving collective action problems. That is, norms are institutions of the society that serves the society by maintaining social stability. Interestingly, groups are made up of self-interested individuals who rely on costs and benefits margins to engage in collective actions. So, if private costs are higher than group benefits, nobody will be willing to attempt the promotion of group courses through collective action. One inevitable function of established norms is therefore to ensure compliance to collective action courses which benefits all on the principle of “the more the merrier” (Olson, 1965). Olson (1965), divides group types into small groups, intermediate and large groups. These groups all have different structures and so contain different workable norms for successful group or collective action.⁵⁵

It is important to reiterate the point that, there is a lack of consensus in the literature on the exact definition of norms and the inherent characteristics of types of norms as well as how these norms differ (Gibbs, 1965; Interis, 2011). Some identify and classify norms as descriptive by enumerating *what people do*, while others argue in favour of the conception of norms as *what people ought to do*, that is, injunctive norms (Interis, 2011). These socially shared beliefs and expectations about behaviours considered as “*what people ought to do*” is the consistent distinctive characteristic of informal norms.⁵⁶ Others following in Sumner’s (1965) earlier categorization of norms, classify norms into folkways, Mores, Taboo, and Laws. We shall however not engage in this sort of individual typology of norms as conceived above. Rather, we shall group norms into two broad categories- formal and informal, which is in tandem with

⁵⁵ For collective action group related norms and behavioural expectations, see: Sherif, 1936; Hardin, 1982, Olson, 1965 and Schutz and Sandy, 2011.

⁵⁶ See Posner, 1997; Fehr and Gächter, 2000.

Brennan et al. (2013), and Eric Posner (2000), submissions. One obvious criticism this sort of approach will face is the setback of accommodating different kinds of norms in one basket. Notwithstanding the validity of this criticism, the categorization of norms into formal and informal will provide us with a valid and sound analysis by providing us with the sort of framework necessary to arrive at the desired conclusion of this research.

The fundamental point to note is, norms are rules and regulations about behaviour and expected behaviour of agents. These rules must be accepted and seen as legitimate. Also, for sustained conformity, agents must be convinced that others will also conform to the norm. Take for example the conformity to tax remittance. It is common knowledge that agents in a society should always and promptly pay their taxes. Agents recognize the legitimacy of this norm, and they are convinced that other agents will comply. In addition, agents also feel the normative pressure, as a matter of ought to pay their tax. This can correctly be argued to be a collective action, a formal norm. In essence, notwithstanding the level or source of a norm, conformity is strengthened by lower-level interpersonal interaction of agents and assurances of substantial population conformity. This point can also be strengthened by the normative pressure on traffic rule violation, and a host of others.

Consequently, judging from the conception of norms, we can divide norms into two broad categories: formal and informal norms. While formal norms are constituted by legal injunctions put forward by competent authorities such as governments and established institutions, informal norms are characterized by, exist, and are enforced in less formal settings constituting interpersonal social interactions. These norms are usually unwritten and unplanned.

Both formal and informal norms are characterized by normative expectations and in both cases, violations are sanctioned.⁵⁷ In the case of formal norms, sanctions are clearly and formally stipulated. In this case, a clearly stipulated degree of sanction for violation and degree of punishment is stipulated when such norms are enacted, as well as the level of reward for conformity. Violations of informal norms, on the other hand, attract informal sanctions such as ostracism, ought right condemnation or expulsion from group associations and so on. Most times, conformity to informal norms is rewarded with public praise and admiration. We shall now discuss these two types of norms: Formal Norms and Informal Norms more in-depth.

3.3 Types of Norms

In the previous section, we put forward and critically interrogated various definitions of norms. We argued that while a number of these definitions overlap, there exists no consensus in conceptual understanding of norms as well as a lack of agreement in the classification or typology of norms. Attributes of norms generally vary since various disciplines interrogate norms from several different methodological viewpoints. It is not our intention here to attempt to reconcile these definitions or provide a unique conceptual definition of norm, nor to dabble into the debate of the lack of agreement in the classificatory scheme of norms. Instead, we desire to classify and effectively analyse norms in these broad frameworks: Formal and Informal.⁵⁸

But before delving into the formal and informal classification of norms, we should state here that norms and values are deeply connected. Values are those ideas of what is conceived as

⁵⁷ For further details on complementarity and conflict of formal and informal norms, see Fiori, 2018.

⁵⁸ See Brennan et al. 2013; Fiori, 2018; Pejovich, 1999; Chavance, 2008.

good, desirable, or bad by groups and individuals. In the above conceptualization of norms, we conceived norms as routine behaviours or expected behaviours. Hence, norms are the reflections of values held by a group. For example, students in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria stand up as soon as a teacher enters the classroom. The behaviour of standing up is the norm and the act of standing up signifies and reflects the value of respect accorded teachers. This point is necessary primarily because, all human groups adhere to different definite sorts of norms, which differ from one society to another, affecting different sorts of situations. As the specified group shared expectations, norms reflect the standards and values of a specific society. That is, the ideas of what is desirable, preferred, good or bad behaviour within a given group, is strictly embedded in the value system of a group, and enforced by existing norms. In addition, these group shared expectations can either be formally or informally constituted and violations can also be formally or informally sanctioned.

3.3.1 Formal Norms

In the previous section, we focused primarily on the general notion of the conception of norms. We concluded that a consensual conception of norm, as well as an agreement in the classification of norm, was unrealistic due to the ambiguous nature of norm primarily due to the many different methodological approaches to analysing norms. Here, we turn our focus to formal norms.

As a sequel from our definition of norms, we argued that formal norms belong more specifically to norms of the macro-level of the society; that is, laws enacted by competent states and authorities. But before we go any further, let us consider a scenario of a state with no law or

norm, no government of any sort. No doubt people will be organized in some way and put forward some sort of stability and order. According to Eric Posner, (2000: 3), this sort of order established by members of a society without strictly instituted laws or regulations would be hinged on simple routine conformity to “social norms and the collective infliction of sanctions on those who violate them”. He further argues, in a state with no formal law or government of any sort,

“People would cooperate frequently. They would keep and rely on promises, refrain from injuring their neighbours, contribute effort to public-spirited projects, make gifts to the poor, render assistance to those in danger, and join marches and rallies. But it is also the case that people would sometimes breach promises and cause injury. They would discriminate against people who, through no fault of their own, have become walking symbols of practices that a group reject. They would have disputes, sometimes violent disputes. Feuds would arise and might never end. The community might split into factions. The order, with all its benefits, would come at a cost. Robust in times of peace, it would reveal its precariousness at moments of crisis.” (Posner, 2000: 3).

The above excerpt brings to the fore the obvious role formal norms play in society by fostering effective relations and stable interactions. While agents might be able to maintain order and refrain from injuring neighbours for a while, there would be no prescriptive norms to address breaches of promises, disputes, and violence. The lack of institution of formal norm and enactment of shared expectations would sooner or later result in a ‘state of nature’⁵⁹. It is in the

⁵⁹ State of nature here conceived is the hypothetical pre-society state that operated based on the principle of the strong against the weak. In such hypothetical state, there are no rights, expectations, or considerations, what Hobbes calls “every man against every man”. See Hobbes, 1651.

light of this that David Hume first argued and presented a systematic analysis of ‘convention’, a stable state entered by “members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods and leave everyone in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry” (Hume, 1740/2008: 285). This stable state entered by members of the society would then protect them from killing each other, protect members of the state from breaching promises, and protect the state from total loss of law and order and be submerged in chaos.

Formal norms are demonstrated by positive laws. Positive laws serve the valuable function of making members of society accountable to each other. According to Platt, “a positive law is a command of the sovereign power of the state, formulated and administered by the government of the state, prescribing a course of conduct to one or more subjects of the state” (Platt, 1894:53). As a sequel to this definition, we can safely argue that positive laws, unlike natural laws, are man-made laws specifically enacted by a competent authority.⁶⁰ For Wolff, an “authority is the right to command and correlatively, the right to be obeyed. It must be distinguished from power, which is the ability to compel compliance, either through the use or the threat of force” (Wolff, 1970: 4). This is not to say that authority cannot be used for other things; as well as to compel and ensure compliance. It only goes to say that authority is legitimate and the use of force in this sense, is also legitimate. Positive law understanding from this is the authority of established institutions of the state to prescribe a course of conduct and reserve the right to compel individuals to conform to enacted principles of action.

⁶⁰ A competent authority in this sense is any institution within a state that possess legitimate powers to enact specific commands specifying behavioural requirements and expected behaviour for agents; religious, educational, political institutions.

Recall that conditional preferences for conformity according to David Lewis (1969) play a fundamental role to enable agents to effectively coordinate, the same applies to positive laws. Under positive law and economics, there is a valid assumption that agents are always confronted with conditional preferences and as egoistic individuals, agents are bound to focus on the principle of cost and benefit to always satisfy their egoistic preferences. As validly argued by Posner (2000), completely moved by egoism, agents would, therefore, be moved to steal, kill, or murder others, lie, and commit fraud in the absence of positive law. Fortunately, this is not always the case.⁶¹ Notwithstanding, as previously argued, without positive law, soon, crime, reckless driving, murder, stealing, and chaos would become the order of the day. Hence, formal norms that are mostly conceived as exogenous forces are enacted to “deter socially costly but privately beneficial behaviour or put differently, to solve collective action problems that arise among citizens” (Posner, 2000: 4).

Consequently, we can analyse some examples of formal norms such as the law on intellectual property. This law enables authors and inventors full and exclusive rights to their original work, properties, and investments against pirates and imitators. Environmental law enforces the deterrence to various kinds of pollution by prescribing measures for collective goods such as clean water, air, and soil. We also have other formal laws such as immigration laws that regulate the indiscriminate migration of persons, goods, and services from one place to another. Other laws might include bankruptcy law, the law against trafficking in persons, laws against child abuse, human rights laws, the law of freedom of speech, and so on. These laws are formal laws, instituted and enacted to regulate human excesses, manipulation, and unhealthy use of others, to mediate between individuals and between organizations whenever disputes and

⁶¹ It was already argued in chapter two that, sometimes, agents are moved by other factors such as benevolence, altruism, fairness and so on, and not always being egoistic or following the principle of cost and benefit.

misunderstandings arise. Evidently, therefore, formal norms are usually documented to allow free access to the content of these laws, while the degree of sanctions and rewards are common knowledge.⁶²

Formal norms contain “established formal mechanisms of legislation and interpretation” (Brennan et al. 2013: 43). This formal legislation and mechanism might differ from one society to another, yet they operate in a similar way. Hart (1961) distinguishes two kinds of rules, primary and secondary rules. According to Hart, primary rules are characterized by rules that adjoint agents to perform or refrain from certain actions. Secondary rules on the other hand, “specify the ways in which the primary rules may be conclusively ascertained, introduced, eliminated, varied, and the fact of their violation conclusively determined” (Hart, 1961: 94).⁶³ Our conception of formal norms here fits perfectly with Hart’s (1961) conception of secondary rules as against primary rules.⁶⁴ Contrary to norms that are sufficient for smooth adjudication in “primitive societies”, advanced societies supplement these primitive rules with secondary rules; that is, formal law or positive law. Secondary rules in Hart’s view, supplement Primary rules to ensure legitimacy, uniformity, and effectiveness. As succinctly reconstructed by Brennan et al. (2013: 42)

“These may include rules that lay down criteria for a principle’s counting as a norm of the relevant kind (rules of recognition); rules that empower agents to

⁶² This is however not to say that some informal norms are not written down. To make a distinction between formal and informal norms on that basis would be trivial. This is because some informal norms such as norms on etiquette are sometimes written down, yet they are still informal.

⁶³ Hart conceives rules as those commands that are only spoken of and imposed as obligatory when the society demands and is insistent on conformity in the face of great threat to violation or deviation. In this sense, primary rules specify expectations of behaviour such as refrain from certain kinds of behaviours or engage in certain behaviours such as charity. Interestingly, there exist “primitive societies” operating with primary rules alone. For details: see Hart (1961: 90 ff).

⁶⁴ See Hart (1961), for an elaborate analysis of Primary and Secondary rules

create new norms and modify existing norms (rules of change); and rules that empower agents to apply and interpret the rules (rules of adjudication)".

We conceived previously that formal norms are written down, and formally enacted, with an established formal mechanism of legislation and interpretation. In addition to this, formal norms are enacted simultaneously with the system of authorized agents as interpreters of the norms who consequently legislate and interpret the norms to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and errors, particularly while sanctioning violators. While legal systems are not perfect or error-free, recognized formal norms are usually enacted with a stipulated degree of sanction that is commensurate with the level of violation. What is crucial to note here is, for formal norms, the institution or state assumes responsibility to find violators, try them and measure out corresponding sanctions. Formal sanctions are therefore not carried out by private individuals.

Formal norms like informal norms are characterized by a cluster of normative expectations and attributes. In his work, Gibbs (1965: 589), presents three types of attributes that are central to understanding formal norms. These attributes include collective evaluation of behaviour in terms of what it ought to be; collective expectation as to what behaviour will be and third, the specific reactions to behaviour including attempts to apply sanctions or otherwise induce a particular kind of conduct. According to Gibbs, collective evaluation refers to the group's shared values and believes that group members ought to behave in a certain way and not others. This collective evaluation signifies a group shared value to classify certain behaviours as good, desirable, or bad. Members who identify themselves as part of such groups will almost always desire to evaluate behaviours from this collective standpoint. This attribute plays a

significant role in sustaining conformity to legitimate formal norms by providing members with the basis for the classification and evaluation of behaviours.

Collective expectations refer to the normative attributes of how individuals expect others to behave. In this sense, we refer to the predictability of actions and what individuals will do. For example, we expect that all (or almost) drivers in Rome will respect traffic rules. This thus is a normative collective expectation that tends to predict what others will or will not do, giving us the necessary framework for collective evaluation of these behaviours.⁶⁵ The third attribute, “particular response to behaviour” refers to the sanctions meted out for violation or reward for conformity to a particular norm. I should mention here that, the particular response to any behaviour is derived from the collective expectation and collective evaluation attributes already discussed. Hence, if we expect drivers in Rome to obey traffic regulations, then we will at the same time, possess negative evaluations of violators and positive evaluations of conformists. We must understand however that, a sanction is any attempt to enforce conformity, the administration of penalties, and fines.

3.3.1.1 Collective Action Problems

Collective action problems are problems characterized by social dilemmas. Social dilemma type situations are situations where agents are stuck in an action combination equilibrium that produces Pareto-inefficient utility for all agents. This is sometimes argued to be

⁶⁵ Collective expectation plays a significant role in ensuring and sustaining conformity to certain regularities or norms. Agents’ legitimate expectation of other agents’ behaviour is sometimes sufficient to induce conformity. Expectation, empirical and normative essentially conditions agent’s preferences in both coordination and cooperation problems. These normative expectations can be first order, second order normative expectation and higher. See Lewis 1969; Bicchieri 2006, 2016; Sugden 1998, 2000; Engel and Kurschilgen 2013.

like or the same as the problem faced in prisoners' dilemma (Elster, 1985). However, others argue that equating collective action problems only with a prisoner's dilemma significantly restricts collective action problems (Taylor, 1987). To this end, Taylor (1987: 18), defines collective action problem as a problem that "exists where rational individual action can lead to a strictly Pareto-inferior outcome, that is, an outcome which is strictly less preferred by every individual than at least one other outcome".

Traditional economic theories argue that humans always conditionally conceive their alternative preferences. This means that humans are self-interested agents who utilize cost-and-benefit choice models in structuring their preferences in every collective action situation. Hence, humans evaluate the private cost of engaging in a group project, the resulting benefits as well as the possibility of being caught if one would freeride. Consequently, self-interested agents will always freeride in group actions with higher personal costs and a high probability of easy freeride (Congleton, 2015: 218). The question is, how do we make collective action work successfully in the face of high freeriding tendencies? In prisoner dilemma situations, self-centred agents always arrive at a Pareto-inefficient outcome combination by always defecting or freeriding. One way to ensure conformity is the institution of norms backed by commensurate sanctions.⁶⁶

Holzinger (2003), however, argues that collective rationality and dilemmas are not the only problems that generate and culminate in collective action problems. For her, we can extend the concept of collective action problems to accommodate other sorts of situations. Against this background, Holzinger (2003,) argues that collective action,

⁶⁶ The understanding of norms as solutions to collective action problems can also be deduced from Brennan et al. 2013. Here they presented norms as having the function of holding agents responsible and accountable to each other by adhering to certain principles. Also see Ullman-Margalit 1977; Bicchieri 2017.

“[R]efers to the joint actions of a number of individuals which aim to achieve and distribute some gain through co-ordination or co-operation. The strategic constellations of actors can be such that they lead to difficulties in achieving the goals of collective action. All difficulties that arise in the pursuit of these goals and that are a consequence of strategic interaction will be called "collective action problems". This definition is not restricted to problems of inefficient outcomes, but includes, for example, problems of co-ordination, and inequality or instability of the collective outcome.” (Holzinger, 2003: 2-3)

Notwithstanding Holzinger’s definition of collective action, I should mention here that 2-by-2 matrix games have been demonstrated to clearly and effectively model collective action problems revealing a significant amount of information to help solve these problems. In the tragedy of the commons and the Prisoner’s dilemma type situations, for example, the individual is better off not contributing to any collective group project and defecting each time, no matter what others do.⁶⁷

Consider an example of two agents: agent A and agent B. These two agents had a business transaction and signed a contract, a contract to supply certain goods, let us conceive agent A is the supplier and agent B the buyer. After agent A supplied the goods to agent B, agent B refused to pay for the goods delivered. The question is, why should both agents cooperate? Why should either agent A or agent B honour the terms of the contract? Usually, agents will cooperate because the state has established contract norms to serve as a deterrent and sanction those who violate such contracts. Hence, agents are compelled to cooperate to avoid negative

⁶⁷ The prisoner dilemma and tragedy of the commons are the two most referenced examples of collective action problem. For details, see Axelrod 1984; Hardin, 1968; Taylor, 1987.

externalities. We can represent the above agent interaction with the following 2-by-2 symmetric matrix once we assign payoffs to the agents for each possible outcome of their interaction.

		Agent B	
		Cooperate	Defect
Agent A	Cooperate	10,10	0,10
	Defect	10,0	5,5

Table. 2.2 No Sanctions

		Agent B	
		Cooperate	Defect
Agent A	Cooperate	10,10	-3, 7
	Defect	7,-3	-5,-5

Table. 2.3 With Sanctions

Based on the above matrix, it is therefore obvious that the presence of sanctions motivates agents to cooperate and obtain the Pareto-optimal equilibrium since lack of

cooperation or defection leaves defectors worse off.⁶⁸ Sanctions, therefore, stabilize relationships and interactions, as well as solve cooperation problems by moving agents from Pareto-inefficient equilibrium to Pareto-optimal equilibrium.⁶⁹ Formal norms are therefore responsible for solving such problems emanating from human social interaction regarding cooperation and public goods.

3.3.2 Informal Norms

In the previous section on formal norms, we offered an account of norms exemplified by positive law. Such norms are structured, organized, enacted, and characterized by a formal mechanism of legislation and interpretation. Here, we turn to informal norms. However, before we proceed, it is important to state right from the outset that, the lines between formal and informal norms can sometimes get blurred. It is not always characterized by a clear-cut level of distinction. The reason is not farfetched. Both formal and informal norms function in the society by fostering expectations of agents to enable effective coordination and stability in and of the society. Both norms are also characterized by sanctions. There is a great deal of commonality between formal norms and informal norms. It is characterized by a two-way structure, so much so that it is nearly impossible to say if it is a top-down development of norms or a bottom-up. That is, it is nearly impossible to say if formal norms develop before informal norms or informal norms before formal norms.

⁶⁸ See Holzinger 2003; Elster, 1989; Oliver, 1993; Ostrom, 2000 for other formal theories of collective actions and self-interest.

⁶⁹ This fact should however not be misunderstood. Sanctions are not the only reasons why people conform or uphold promises. Sometimes, agents care more about future benefits, and so prefer to keep their promises to have good standing, social acceptability, and more businesses in the future. Also, consider why some people adhere to certain norms like putting on seatbelts, speed limits, norms against littering, and so on. Sometimes, agents care significantly about good reputation which in turn sustains conformity. Also, we should mention the place of internalization of expected behaviour as argued by social psychologists. See Shaw & Campbell 1962; Hoffman, 1977.

Informal norms are, simply put, social norms.⁷⁰ Like formal norms, informal norms prescribe and proscribe behaviours, specifying what is acceptable and those that are prohibited in human social interaction in groups and societies. Retracing our argument of Hart's distinction of primary and secondary rules, we can safely argue that primary rules are informal norms, just as secondary rules are formal norms. Hart's prominent distinction of the primary and secondary rules is important here to elaborate on our conception of informal norms. He argues,

“It is, of course, possible to imagine a society without a legislature, courts, or officials of any kind. Indeed, there are many studies of primitive communities which not only claim that this possibility is realized but depict in detail the life of a society where the only means of social control is that general attitude of the group towards its own standard modes of behaviour in terms of which we have characterized rules of obligation. A social structure of this kind is often referred to as a ‘custom’; but we shall not use this term, because it often implies that the customary rules are very old and supported with less social pressure than other rules” (Hart, 1961: 91).

Based on the above, it is obvious that informal norms are an important kind of social structure characterized by rules of obligation, like other rules (formal norms). They can also be referred to as ‘customs’, notwithstanding, they are also supported by social pressure for conformity just like other rules. Informal norms exert social pressure for conformity by making “demands on individual agents concerning what they are permitted, forbidden, and required to

⁷⁰ Fiori (2018: 199) argues that social norms are informal norms. In his view, it is conceived as such because it refers to those rules that are “not promulgated by legal authority”, notwithstanding, they tend to influence behaviour. While this is the same point here, the reason of promulgation alone seems highly insufficient as we shall see consequently.

do” (Brennan et al. 2013: 42). Therefore, informal norms stipulate and enforce the repetition of similar common behaviours and habitual practices among agents of a group or society. Consequently, we can define an informal norm as the repository of unintentional norms produced from informal human social interaction that pertains to collective evaluation and collective expectations about what we ought to do, what others expect us to do, and what we expect from the society.

Ostensibly, informal norms, unlike formal norms, are not characterized by the formal mechanisms of legislation and interpretation nor are they characterized by the formal mechanisms of enforcement like an official authority.⁷¹ As Brennan et al. (2013: 43) aptly capture, “it is purely a case of those who are subject to the rules doing it by and for themselves”. This transforms informal norms into a ‘mystery’, sometimes characterized by a greater conformity force compared to formal norms. Put differently, sometimes, agents conform to harmful informal norms, even when such practices are prohibited by formal norms. Informal norms do not involve legal sanctions, instead, are characterized by consistent sanctioning of violators carried out informally, which include disapproval, ostracism, condemnation, shame, ridicule, sarcasm, criticism, and so on.

Since informal norms have no formal mechanism for legislation, interpretation, and official authority for enforcement (like the courts and police that characterize the formal norms), the responsibility for enforcing conformity to informal norms rests entirely on individual members of the group or society. This responsibility is the responsibility of all agents who are a party to the rules and norms upheld by the group. By implication, it is a “shared responsibility to disapprove of those who have violated non-formal norms, even if the violations have not affected

⁷¹ Also see Fiori, S. 2018; Pejovich, S. 1999.

us directly” (Brennan et al. 2013:46). It is necessary to mention here that, ‘shared responsibility’ only pertains to a group that shares certain norms, this is in fact, the reference network.⁷² A reference network would vary in size, depending on the type of norm. While some norms are characterized by family or friendship size reference networks (such as drinking, smoking), other norms are characterized by a larger group size reference network (such as wearing headscarves in Saudi Arabia). What is important here is, the collective evaluation and collective expectation of the reference network which serves as a strong incentive for conformity to certain norms.

Brennan et al. (2013) and Thibaut and Kelley (1959), argue in a similar way, conceive that informal norms perform a specified function in the society. While norms hold agents of a group or society responsible to each other, they also function to coordinate the expectations of agents in social interactions to arrive at a Pareto-optimal equilibrium and enable effective cooperation among agents. In repeated social interactions, informal norms also function to reduce social costs or reduce negative externalities. We observed earlier that, sanctions play a pivotal role in sustaining norms. This fact is captured in Elster’s definition of norm. To Elster (1985), “norm-guided behaviour is supported by the threat of social sanctions that make it rational to obey the norms”. Similarly, this also resonates with Axelrod’s (1986) definition that “a norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way.” Sanctions for informal norms are carried out by individual members who are a party to the norm. This implies that sometimes, individuals who witness violations might incur some degree of costs while sanctioning violations. Negative sanctions for informal norms must, therefore, be unpleasant to violators

⁷² We conceived earlier that; normative expectations play a significant role in motivating conformity. But this is not the expectation of anybody or anyone, it is the normative expectation of those who really matter to an individual, those who agents recognize the legitimacy of their expectations. These are the individuals who belong to one’s reference network. For details on reference network, see Bicchieri, 2016.

which must also be a sanction based on an actual violation. If not, such sanctions would be conceived as revenge or an act of hostility.⁷³

Judging from North (1990: 46), we can safely argue that informal norms mostly fall within the framework of formal norms, and sometimes function as an enforcement mechanism to induce compliance to formal norms.⁷⁴ For example, a reckless driver who flagrantly disregards traffic rules experiences some degree of criticism, shaming, sarcasm, and disapproval from fellow agents who witness his reckless driving and decide to obey traffic rules. Traffic rules are formal norms, and informal sanctions function to enforce conformity. In addition, formal norms provide legal backing for some informal norms to thrive. Sometimes, some informal norms fall outside the legal framework, yet they flourish due to local normative expectations. Some of these informal norms are categorized as harmful norms, for example, female genital mutilation, open defecation, intimate gender violence and so on. Compliance with this norm is informal, even though it is proscribed by formal legislation, agents conform to these norms due to local normative evaluation, expectations, and sanctions.

Furthermore, informal norms correspond to Williamson's (2000) Level 1 model of stratified social institutions. Williamson argues that this first level of stratification is characterized by informal institutions of customs, traditions, norms, and religion. These informal institutions are formed mainly spontaneously and they "change very slow on the order of centuries or millennia" (Williamson, 2000: 596). It should be noted however, W.G Sumner

⁷³ We argued here that conformity to social norms is not always in the best interest of agents, that is, agents might benefit more from defecting. The sanction which is punishment or a penalty for the actual violation of certain societal norms must be unpleasant enough to induce conformity, and not as revenge or a form of hostility. For more on sanctions, see Coleman, 1990; Axelrod, 1986; Gilbert, 1990.

⁷⁴ North (1999) alludes to a significant relationship between formal norm and informal norm which can be traced to the development and how formal norms replace informal norms. Notwithstanding, since not all informal norms are replaced, both formal and informal norms coexist and persist to complement each other to increase effectiveness.

(1907) was the first to analyse and classify informal norms or social organization into folkways and mores.

Folkways are behavioural regularities that are shared by group members. Folkways are therefore group shared enshrined and enforced regularities that are important for social acceptance but not as much of moral significance. Folkways are ‘customs’ that have been practised by generations and the young learn and internalize them by ‘tradition, imitation, and authority’. Folkways are characterized by sanctions.

Mores on the other hand are moral and ethical standards of behaviour. Unlike folkways, mores require strict conformity because they define what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, and violations are considered very offensive by those who uphold such mores. Mores are important both for social acceptability and are morally significant. Consequently, mores are more coercive compared to folkways

3.4 Social Norms

Social norms as we can now authoritatively say, are the informal norms that are formed and developed unconsciously in the society. Interestingly, while this is a ‘generally’ subscribed framework of the conception of norms, social norms remain a highly debated concept. As previously captured, this lack of consensus is partly because of the significant interest of researchers from different fields who approach social norms from different points of view, different research questions, and different views of the research enterprise (Bicchieri et al. 2018). Specifically, sociologists and anthropologists generally approach social norms from a functionalist perspective addressing the issue of how social norms function to incentivize and

motivate people to behave in different situations and cultures. Economists, on the other hand, interrogate social norms to provide factual explanations on how norms function and motivate behaviours relating to market interactions (Bicchieri et al. 2018).

The above lack of consensus, difference in research questions from different academic disciplines and different interests of these various enterprises, give rise to different ‘valid theories’⁷⁵ of social norms. These theories, therefore, capture the contemporary debates on social norms as well as the relationship between norms, conformity, and sanctions. Social norms conceived as simple regularities that rely on compliance based on one’s self-interests (such as conventions) are less puzzling. This is so because conformity to such norms is in the agent’s best interest to conform: such as putting on seatbelts, driving on a specific side of the road. The sort of regularity to norms that is of utmost interest to this research are those social norms characterized by the self-utility maximization framework. Obeying such norms are not always of immediate benefit to the agent and so sometimes, requires sanctions for violators, hence addressing the utility maximization level of the agent.

The primary goal of this section is to critically examine the various social norms ideas. I’ll start by discussing structural functionalism. This theory contends that the only way to comprehend and analyse norms is in the context of the social and cultural levels in which they are present. Norms serve the purpose of keeping outsiders out and upstarts down in a restricted community, according to Bourdieu (1979), for instance. Functionalism is frequently criticised for its post hoc defence of the existence and survival of standards (Bicchieri et al. 2018). The second theory to be discussed is social identity theory.

⁷⁵ We ascribe the term valid to these theories of social norms since they are all attempts to understand motivation for human action and conformity to rules from unique research interest and goals, hence, they all have their strengths and limitations as theories.

Social identity theory was formulated by two social psychologists, Henri Tajfel and John Turner. Social identity theory conceives that an individual's behaviour and dispositions are based on group membership(s) individuals categorize themselves to belong to (Ellemers, 2017). Social identity theory faces similar limitations as structural functionalism. While functionalism lays more emphasis on the function of norms as the primary criterion for categorization and definition, social identity theory, on the other hand, argues that the entirety of an individual is explained and defined in relation to one's group memberships. The third theory to be discussed is the Rational choice and Game theoretical approach to the study of norms. According to this theory, individual actions are not always considered and taken in isolation. Hence, individuals are not always concerned about self-interests or self-utility maximization, but that individual activities depends significantly on the activities and beliefs of community members.

The critical distinction of these theories or perspectives of social norms, expectations, conformity, and sanctions is necessary. It is important to do this to provide us with comprehensive data and a framework to understand these theories and effectively apply the theories, which is the main purpose of this study.

3.4.1 Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism is a theory or school of thought in sociology and anthropology.⁷⁶ This theory institutes a framework that sees society as a complex system constituted by parts working together to promote and sustain social stability. These constituent parts include norms,

⁷⁶ For Talcott Parsons, functionalism is not a specific school of thought, but rather a methodological development of social sciences (Bourricaud 1981: 94). However, we shall conceive functionalism as a theory in line with Durkheim, Spencer, and Turner's ideas of functionalism as a theory.

customs, traditions, and institutions. Herbert Spencer while contextually defending functionalism compared the society to the human body as a whole and the constituent parts of the body corresponding to organs of the society that work in harmony for the proper functioning of the body (Urry, 2000: 23). Functionalism is said to have been inspired by the ideas of Emile Durkheim. Particularly in his theory of organic solidarity and the quest for “social facts”. In his analyses of “social facts”, Durkheim states, “manners of acting, thinking, and feeling are external to the individual, which is invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him” (Durkheim, 1895: 49-50).

Two main points characterize Durkheim’s conception of social facts; externality and coercive power. Laws and duties are external. Consequently, individuals conform to certain duties and obligations that are external to oneself and one’s actions. These obligations that condition individual behaviours possess coercive power by virtue of it being imposed upon the individual, even when these laws conform to individual sentiments and feelings. He adds,

“If purely moral rules are at stake, the public conscience restricts any act which infringes them by the surveillance it exercises over the conduct of citizens and by the special punishments it has at its disposal. In other cases, the constraint is less violent; nevertheless, it does not cease to exist. If I do not conform to ordinary conventions, if in my mode of dress, I pay no heed to what is customary in my country and in my social class, the laughter I provoke, the social distance at which I am kept, produce, even though in a more mitigated form, the same results as any real penalty” (Durkheim, 1895: 51).

Based on the excerpt, Durkheim (1895) makes a compelling argument in favour of why conventions exist and persist. Evidently, members of the community would conform to avoid

being laughed upon and to avoid ostracism to simple regularity such as dress code. In his view, these social sanctions invoked by violating ordinary conventions, possess the same results as any real penalty. This point is in tandem with the argument we put forward in this essay. Members of the society always recognise the legitimacy of societal expectation and evaluation, which is sufficient to induce conformity and for informal norms to persist. If an individual attends a funeral with a beautiful and colourful dress in some cultures in Nigeria, the individual is sanctioned with condemning looks, insults and possibly, outright condemnation. He or she is considered unwelcomed and not part of the community for being insensitive and ‘insulting’ the dead.

Functionalism is characterized by heavy use of analogies; organic and mechanistic. Analysis in this theory is usually characterized by two important parts, critical observation of repetition of behaviour (structures) and definition of attributed functions. The functionalist approach assumes that all social systems; primitive and advanced can be identified and specified. Hence, all social systems and social phenomena, including social norms, have specified functions in the larger society. For Giddens,

“Functionalist thought, from Comte onwards, has looked particularly towards biology as the science providing the closest and most compatible model for social science. Biology has been taken to provide a guide to conceptualizing the structure and the function of social systems and to analysing processes of evolution via mechanisms of adaptation ... functionalism strongly emphasises the pre-eminence of the social world over its individual parts (i.e., its constituent actors, human subjects)” (Giddens, 1984: 88).

The dynamics of social norms have received significant attention in the last few decades. Much of the social science literature on norms tries to unearth the reasons behind behaviour and the underlying conditions for conformity to social norms.⁷⁷ McAdams and Rasmusen for example, argued that one striking distinction of norms from convention is that norms are supported by normative attitudes acquired at a young age. When internalized, they serve as motivation for action. Where such normative attributes are absent or lacking, we classify such as ‘convention’ (McAdams and Rasmusen, 2007). Norms play a significant role in the development and sustenance of social order in the society. Little wonder a significant number of the literature on norms emphasized the functions and roles norms perform in the society as the primary or only way to understand social norms. The primary question to ask is, what are these functions?

Herbert Spencer is considered the first true functionalist. Spencer applied the theory of natural selection to the structure of the society. We should state here that a significant portion of Spencer’s functionalist theories were popularised by Durkheim whose theories were culled from Spencer’s ‘Principles of Sociology’. Spencer argues in his works that, every society is faced with problems of coordination, production, and control of goods, services, and ideas. These they must endeavour to solve. The primary function of institutions in the society is, therefore, that of regulation, operation, and distribution. The problem generated by a growing population creates the need for the creation of new forms of institutions, such as the division of labour. The division of labour as a solution offers a differentiation of structures with specialized functions. Norms function in the society, according to Spencer, by enabling development and specialization in a complex populated social system and thus transforming a simple state to a more complex one

⁷⁷ The influences of social norms on behaviour occupies the core of the social science literature on norms. For example, Binmore (1998) considered individuals as an artefact of their upbringing. By implication, preferences and normative expectations are unconsciously acquired at a younger age, hence modelling, and motivating behaviour in a specific way. Also see McAdams and Rasmusen, 2007; Tyler, 1990.

characterized by the stability of roles, coordination and effective distribution of goods, services, and ideas.

Talcott Parsons was an American sociologist who is best known for his ideas on structural functionalism and social action. He was said to have been heavily influenced by Weber and Durkheim. Parsons defined norm as “a verbal description of a concrete course of action thus regarded as desirable, combined with an injunction to make certain future actions conform to this course” (Parsons, 1937:75). In his social action theory, Parsons conceives individual choice of action as one among alternatives, hence a “social system is made up of the actions of individuals” (Parsons and Shills ,1976: 190). Accordingly, social interaction among individuals is characterized by alternative choices that are influenced and constrained by physical and social factors (Craib, 1992).

Parsons held that every individual has two primary expectations: one’s expectation of the other and reaction to one’s behaviour. These expectations are derived from the accepted values and norms of the society (Parsons, 1961). As he emphasized, these accepted values and norms producing these expectations are sufficient to ensure consistent behavioural repetition of choice of action in human social interactions. Consequently, these norms and expectations become institutionalized and entrenched. Roles are therefore created. For him, these roles which individuals consequently come to identify with, mould individual needs and preferences which enable the ‘proper’ selection of choices among alternatives. These roles complement each other in fulfilling societal functions (Parsons, 1961:41). The key point to note here is, norms enable roles to have a functional status that assists the society in its proper operation and to run smoothly. If these roles are understood and everyone knows and performs his/her roles as

expected, consistently, according to Parsons, we shall have a society free of conflict and in perfect equilibrium. The question is, how do we acquire knowledge of these roles and norms?

Through socialization, knowledge of norms and values, roles, and expectations are passed from one generation to the next. For Parsons, socialization is the societal mechanism for transferring norms and values of the society to new members of the society. This process usually commences at birth/infancy. The peak of the socialization process is what Parsons calls ‘perfect socialization’. According to Parsons, this is the stage whereby these norms and values, roles, and expectations are completely internalized and become part of the individual’s personality (Ritzer, 1983). At this point, individuals’ choices and preferences conform to societal expectations. Internalized norms⁷⁸ and values, therefore, serve as sufficient motivation and incentive for conformity to shared norms and values. At the level of ‘perfect socialization’ external sanctions play little or no role in eliciting conformity (Bicchieri et al. 2018).

Based on Spencer and Parsons above, it is obvious that population growth distorts the balance of a primitive society. Chaos and conflict would be the order in the society, except certain rights and duties/responsibilities evolve to ensure stability in the society. With this comes the need for division of labour and specialization as conceived by Spencer. Through repetition and regularity of behaviour, roles and norms develop to avoid conflicts and for the smooth running of the society. An example of such stable functioning of norms can be found in Akerlof’s (1976) analysis of the dynamics of norms that regulate land use and the role of indicators in shaping society.

⁷⁸ Parsons’ view of internalization is emphatic. He argues that when functions and roles are internalized, shared value and expectations are consistently met, seamlessly. Does this theory explain conformity to norms in its entirety? Certainly not. Bicchieri et al. (2018) submits that at best, internalization theory could suffice as an explanation for moral norms but not a theory of social norms. See also Shaw and Campbell, 1962; Hoffman, M. L. 1977.

Using the sharecropping example, Akerlof (1976) showed unequivocally how the society settles for Pareto-inefficient equilibrium rather than Pareto-optimal due to insufficient information. These norms once arrived and entrenched, remain stable over time. In the sense of land use between landlords and tenants, for example, the landlord pays the tenant wages, and the produce and crops all belong to the landlord who then sells and keeps all the profit. While this is Pareto-inefficient, both landlord and tenant accept this as a norm, and each performs his/her functions to ensure the smooth running of the society. According to Akerlof (1976: 600), “the indicators by which men judge each other may warp their values and distribute their goals”. In any case, norms are an efficient means of shaping the society by curtailing conflict and maintaining effective interaction between community members to achieve a perfect ‘equilibrium’.

In Licht (2008), we see a similar argument regarding the function of norms. For him, social norms should be analysed as an interdependent system rather than in isolation as it has mostly been analysed. This conclusion is hinged on the premise that evident from experiments conducted by Tyler (1990), and Lind et al. (1994), fairness, neutrality, and honesty play a significant function in allowing individuals to uphold legal injunctions. This is to say, social norms play a significant role in social stability, fair perception of justice, and dispute resolution. Hence, social norms avail for individuals’ relevant incentives for ‘law-abidingness’ and legal injunction compliance. In respect of their function in facilitating the above, Licht (2008) argues that theories of social norms should be incorporated into strict legal discourse.

Similarly, Brennan, Eriksson, Goodin, and Southwood (2013) argue that norms have the function of making individuals accountable to respect and conform to shared principles of social action. Conceived as such, we can thus easily and effectively distinguish between regularities of

action with the function of holding individuals accountable and mere social practices. One striking characteristic of such norms is normativity. Brennan et al. (2013: 36) argue that the accountability function of norms would still be an effective distinguishing feature of norms in a situation where norms “facilitating coordination and/or cooperation are in question.” In fact, they argue,

“If norms do not principally serve a coordination- or cooperation-facilitating function, then what kind of function do they serve? We suggest that their core function is to make us accountable to one another. Being accountable to one another is quite different from possessing the kind of reliable information about how other individuals will act that is an essential ingredient in effective coordination. What accountability involves is others having a recognized right or entitlement to determine how one is to behave. When we become accountable to one another, we effect a normatively significant modification in our relations with each other. It is not that we have information about what others will do. Rather, we are in a position to hold one another to account and to demand and expect things of one another” (Brennan et al. 2013: 36).

For Brennan et al. (2013), the accountability function might not effectively guarantee cooperation and coordination, but it can help facilitate them. Accountability here presents individuals with rights and duties; to demand conformity and duty to perform a task because others expect us to act in a certain way. Hence, entitlement plays a significant role in this context to serve as an incentive for conformity and sanctions in case of violations. Brennan et al.’s (2013) account of norm presents a distinctive feature of norm, where “social meaning arises from expectations, and we can place on each other for compliance” (Bicchieri et al. 2018).

Functionalist explanation of norms has come under serious criticism in the last decades questioning its credibility in proffering a sound explanation for the presence of norms. For Elster (1989), the attribution or analysis of norms based on the function they perform is significantly inadequate since these functions tell us very little of how these norms emerge. Hence, even when norms tend to fulfil certain social functions, they cannot be explained solely in this regard. Elster (1989:107) argues that “in the absence of mechanism linking the benefit to the emergence or perpetuation of norms we cannot know if they obtain by accident”. Another criticism of the functionalist conception of norms is that functionalists equate ‘human needs’ to ‘societal needs’. That is, society has the same needs as a human person, and these must be met. Little wonder functionalists constantly present a series of parallel biological and mechanical analogies in their analysis of norms. This is not entirely accurate since social phenomenon does not fall in the same pond as biological and mechanical analogies.

According to Giddins (1993), the most practical way to conceive a functionalist explanation is to conceive it as the rewriting of the historical accounts of individual human actions and consequences. Similarly, Bicchieri et al. (2018) posit that indeed analysis of the dynamics of norms could be performed without necessary reference to the function it performs, hence, the function of a norm is more of a post hoc explanation for the presence of norms, and nothing more. If this were not the case, then how do we explain the presence and persistence of harmful and discriminatory norms?

3.4.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was first developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. This theory was developed along the borderlines of social psychology conceiving individual identity as a ‘collective entity’.⁷⁹ In an interview conducted by Azuka Nzegwu with a notable Professor of African Sagacity, Frederick Ochieng’-Odhiambo, when asked “Tell us who you are”, Frederick Ochieng’-Odhiambo responds, and I quote: “I am a Kenyan by nationality belonging to the Luo ethnic group. More specifically, I come from Sikinga K’Ondiek in Simuru Sub-location, Ugenya Location, Siaya District. My given name at birth is Ochieng’.”

In general, when confronted with such a question, individuals typically enumerate the plethora of self-views, featuring ingroup identification, social category, and group activities. Professor Frederick is no exception. In his response, we see him first and foremost identifying himself as a Kenyan, and then goes further to identify with members of Siaya district. Logically, we can deduce that Frederick views himself as a bona fide member of these groups, from where he deduces his self-identity. This self-view and self-identity would give Frederick legitimate and sufficient reason to behave as members of the groups he identifies with behave.

Social identity theory evolved riding on the criticism and limitations of the structural-functional conception of social norms due to its post hoc definition and total reliance on the functions of norms. Social identity theory conceives that an individual’s behaviour and dispositions are based on group membership(s) individuals categorize themselves to belong to (Ellemers, 2017). To begin with, Tajfel defines social identity as “the individual’s knowledge

⁷⁹ As a collective entity, the identity of an individual is perceived and in fact is made up of the plethora of groups and social associations an individual belongs to. In essence, the individual is defined or evaluated based on the conceived attributes of the group and generative roles he performs as a member of the group. See Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Hogg and Ridgeway, 2003; Hogg, 2003.

that he belongs to certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership” (Tajfel 1972: 31). Knowledge of one’s association with a group and her behavioural expectations consequently forms the group spirit that binds members and evolves what we might call a ‘group mind’.⁸⁰ In this sense, individuals obtain their sense of worth, identity and beingness from the various social structural identifications. Two important questions need to be addressed right from the outset; how large must a group be to produce group identity and is mere knowledge of group attribute sufficient?

According to Turner, “two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or, which is nearly the same thing, perceive themselves to be members of the same category” (Turner 1982: 15). Similarly, Tajfel and Turner conceive a group “as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership in it” (Tajfel and Turner 2004: 376). Individuals who perceive themselves as members of the same group category do not merely possess knowledge of the specific attributes of a group, they conceive themselves as worthy members who belong to the group. Consequently, “social identity and group belongingness are inextricably linked in this sense” (Hogg et al. 2004: 7). While one might have accidentally or coincidentally belonged to a group, this sort of belongingness and sense of identity emanates from conscious belongingness, hence serving as a constitutive part of who individuals are (Bicchieri et al. 2018).

⁸⁰ A ‘group mind’ in this sense implies the result of creating a bond in a group through association and interaction. This group mind makes it possible for members to form a ‘group fiat’ that all members are expected to uphold and enforce which makes collective action plausible, possible, and recommended. See McDougall 1921 on ‘group spirit’ and Gilbert (2008) on ‘group fiat’.

Social identity theory holds that human social structure is divided into various social categories. These social categories evolve from the abstraction of certain characteristics of members of the group (Turner, 1985). These categories include specific categories like gender, age grades, nationality, religious associations and so on (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). The existence of social categories in every human society begs the assumption that human beings and society exist in a perpetual sort of interrelationship. By implication, social category does not exist in isolation and thus, precedes human beings because individuals are born into such social categories (Hogg and Abrams, 1998). For example, the social category of one's nationality, one's sex and religious affiliation, as well as race.

Social categorization is a central idea in the analysis of social identity theory. Social categorization is the process through which the social world around us is systematically classified to enable effective human social action. It is hence a cognitive tool. This cognitive self-schema provides agents with the relevant system of self-reference, self-perception and consequently define the individual's role and expected behaviour in the society (Tajfel and Turner, 2004; Turner et al. 1987; Bicchieri et al. 2018). We should mention here that, self-concept comprises personal identity and social identity. While social identity encompasses a particular salient group classification, personal identity encompasses personal characterizations such as personal abilities, psychological traits, bodily attributes and so on. As Ashforth and Mael succinctly capture it, "social identification is, therefore, the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 21). This strengthens the conception that individuals conceive themselves primarily as members of a relevant group, rather than as unique, isolated individuals. But identification does more than allow individuals to conceive themselves as such, it also provides individuals with the psychological, cognitive, and

comparative framework to conceive oneself as good or bad, better, or worse, similar, or different in comparison to ingroup members and, also with members of other groups. In clear terms, what we are saying here is that what individuals think of themselves, the social category they conceive themselves to belong to, as well as their constant social relation, significantly informs the action combination they eventually choose.

The important point is that the groups to which people belong, whether by assignment or by choice, will be massively significant in determining their life experiences. It is now only a small step to recognize that groups have a profound impact on individuals' identity. That is, people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others (whether members of the same group—ingroup— or of different groups—outgroup), is largely determined by the groups to which they feel they belong (Hogg and Abrams, 1998: 2).

The above excerpt from Hogg and Abrams (1998), captures succinctly the crust of social identity. According to the social identity theorists, to understand behaviour and the underlying reasons for conforming or violating any sort of social norm is to understand an individual's conception of the self. This is because, for them, understanding people's concept of themselves is what supports group membership and conformity to norms, and intergroup and intragroup behaviours. Based on our understanding of social identity theory so far analysed, it is safe to

infer that, specifically, social identity theory posits that individual preferences are always structured to align with the social group's individuals identify with.⁸¹

In our analysis of David Lewis' (1969) definition of convention in chapter two, we saw that for regularity of behaviour to be considered a convention, "almost everyone has approximately the same preferences regarding all possible combinations of action". Combining the premise of individuals having the same preferences with Sugden's (2000), conception of 'presumptive reason', we witness the enthronement of empirical expectation. We also conceived in chapter two that, all things being considered, agents should consider the preference and behaviours of others in ordering their own choices and preferences. The question left unanswered is whether agents ought to always consider the preferences of others and why agents should consistently consider the choices of others in making their own decisions. This gap appears to have been bridged by social identity theory.

For Tajfel and Turner (2004), one's identification with a particular group which conditions the agent's perception of values, and self-definition of motives and desires are the fundamental features of social identity theory. Informed by this fact, individuals always desire to behave in accordance with group behaviour and the belief that the group expects certain uniform behaviour from members. This belief is further validated by group evaluation, group expectation, and group sanctioning as already conceived. It should not be confused that the above in any way imply that the totality of individual behaviour is conditioned by group evaluation, group expectation, and fear of sanctions. This is because according to Turner et al. (1987) "self-

⁸¹ We argued that social identity is personal identity derived from perceive social group membership. This implies that, once an individual identifies with a group, the individual internalizes the intergroup and intergroup norms of social groups and orders self-preferences to align with groups social evaluation and group expectations (see Benjamin et al. 2010).

categorization” is essentially characterized by the inevitable interplay between personal identity and social identity.⁸²

For Tajfel (1978) social identity is

“That part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978: 63).

Based on the above excerpt, Tajfel explicitly conceives social identity as the identity of an individual obtained from his knowledge and association with a group as the basis for perceiving oneself as strictly “intertwined with the fate of the group” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989: 21). This implies that the agent perceives himself or herself as constantly fulfilling certain roles owing to an agent’s unique life membership of various social categories and acquired identities. These social identities are thus seen to be incorporated by agents and exemplified in daily social and personal interactions (Stets and Burke, 2000). Incorporation and identification with roles, therefore, define agents, at least in part, specifically because agents define themselves in terms of a social referent or social category. While this is so conceived, self-definition or association with a group or category does not necessarily imply acceptance of the attitudes and values of the said group or category (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

As a sequel to the above discussion, it is hence safe to infer that social identity and self-categorization plays a specific function, to make group behaviour possible and consistent. Group

⁸² Personal identity and social identity are greatly interconnected and in fact, are mutually exclusive. The conceptual distinction of these identities is less categorical and sometimes blurred by high level of interconnectedness. Personal identity refers in part to agent’s self-description and self-identification in respect to abilities, desires, passions, personality and so on. While both personal and social identity make up the identity of an individual, as a result, personal identity or social identity may become salient depending on the situation or trigger. See Vignoles, 2018; Bicchieri et al. 2018.

behaviour is possible because individuals conceive and categorize themselves as members of certain groups (Ellemers, 2017). This implies the successful integration of the agent's self-categorization and social identification with the groups an agent identifies with, the group members' evaluation and the group's behavioural expectations of these behaviours. At this level of self-categorization and identification, individuals perceive themselves in terms of possessing certain characteristics of these groups. Consequently, agents become disposed to behave in the exact way they believe and expect other group members to behave. Interestingly, sometimes, the said beliefs are wrong, mistaken, erroneous, underestimated or overestimated; that is, misperceptions. Sometimes, an agent's behaviour is greatly influenced by misperceptions of how members of a self-categorized group think and act.⁸³

Among these misperceptions is pluralistic ignorance. Pluralistic ignorance is the situation where an established norm is privately rejected by a majority, yet publicly supported thereby persisting due to incorrect believe that most others endorse such behaviour. The term was coined by Floyd Allport, a social psychologist (O'Gorman, 1986). For Shamir and Shamir (1997), pluralistic ignorance refers to a situation where most individuals falsely interpret other peoples' beliefs and expectations about certain salient matters which in turn, informs and ensures consistency in individual social behaviour. An overestimation of specific problem behaviour in one's reference network will cause an agent to increase one's problem behaviour, while an underestimation of problem behaviour in one's reference network will cause us the agent to decrease one's problem behaviour.

⁸³ This group of self-categorised members refers strictly to groups individuals recognise the legitimacy of their expectations. See Bicchieri, 2006 and 2016 on "reference network".

Pluralistic Ignorance has been extensively studied in recent years within different social and behavioural studies and experiments.⁸⁴ In many documented results obtained from experiments conducted, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that individuals consistently suppress their beliefs and resolve to conform to the views publicly expressed by a majority (Hedstrom and Bearman, 2009). This implies that when confronted with conditional action decisions, agents infer cues from the behaviour and preferences of others. Sometimes, however, the reality is, in fact, different as the majority who publicly uphold, endorse, and enforce a norm, only pretend to recommend the norm since they disapprove of these practices in private. The question, however, remains, why is risky sexual behaviour a persisting phenomenon though disadvantageous and harmful? Put differently, why do agents prefer to conform to what the majority do, when in fact, conforming to such descriptive or injunctive norm is significantly disadvantageous, harmful, and dangerous? Does it mean that by self-categorising and social identification, agents become completely immersed in the group that they no longer possess the right and freedom to do otherwise?

According to Cialdini et al. (1991), it's crucial to examine and separate the two categories of norms—descriptive and injunctive—to comprehend social behaviour in the context of interpersonal relationships. Even though both norms produce behavioural regularities, descriptive norms differ from injunctive norms in terms of what initiates and maintains them. In contrast to violations of descriptive norms, which are only regarded as weird, injunctive norm violations are viewed as wrong, nasty, and disgusting and are thus authoritatively condemned with social punishments. Given the foregoing, agents prefer to imitate others by acting in a way

⁸⁴ Social norm and pluralistic ignorance will be discussed extensively in chapter five. For studies conducted on pluralistic ignorance, see Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Manji 2018; Wenzel 2005; Prentice and Miller 1993; Monin and Norton, 2003.

that is similar to what others do. Examples include putting on black clothes to a funeral or putting on a red dress on Valentine's Day. For injunctive norms, however, the primary goal of the agent is not to imitate or coordinate, but to avoid sanction, avoid condemnation, seek social approval, or aim for social harmony. These, therefore, inform individual choices (Cialdini et al. 1991).

According to Cialdini et al. (1991), it's crucial to examine and separate the two categories of norms—descriptive and injunctive—in order to comprehend social behaviour in the context of interpersonal relationships. Despite the fact that both norms produce behavioural regularities, descriptive norms differ from injunctive norms in terms of what initiates and maintains them. In contrast to violations of descriptive norms, which are only regarded as weird, injunctive norm violations are viewed as wrong, nasty, and disgusting and are thus authoritatively condemned with social punishments. Given the foregoing, agents prefer to imitate others by acting in a way that is similar to what others do. While functionalism lays more emphasis on the function of norms as the primary criterion for categorization and definition, social identity theory, on the other hand, argues that the entirety of an individual is explained and defined by one's group memberships.

3.4.3 Rational Choice and Game Theoretical Approach

Economists and rational choice theorists have for decades been puzzled and concerned with the question of why egoistic, self-centred rational agents consciously and consistently follow certain societal rules even when the costs outweigh their benefits. The attempt to analyse these behavioural exigencies and integrate their findings with economic models birth the rational

choice and game-theoretical approach of social norms. Earlier in this chapter, we defined norm as a recurring behaviour in society that is supported by the presence of social sanctions (Elster, 1989). Elsewhere, we conceived norms as accepted prescriptions and prohibitions that apply to the beliefs, feelings, and behaviour of group members that are enforced by sanctions (Morris 1956).

Based on the above, one thing stands out, for the rational choice approach to norms, social norms are behavioural strategies of members of the society that are upheld by sanctions. Invariably, agents comply since it is the best available strategic response to situations and serves as a tool for payoff or utility maximization (Thibaut and Kelly, 1959). At this point, let us begin by re-analysing Lewis' conception of convention. In Chapter Two, we argued that convention according to Lewis is a persistent solution to a recurring coordination problem. Consequently, when faced with a problem, agents rely on expectations to arrive at an equilibrium.⁸⁵ We also argued that once an equilibrium is reached, it becomes persistent since it remains in the best interest of the agents not to deviate from the said equilibrium. In essence, we imply here that similar to the idea of convention as discussed in chapter three, a game-theoretical account of social norms posits that a norm is an equilibrium point of a strategic interaction such that each agents' strategy is the best reply correspondence to others' strategies.

As already captured, for cooperation game/problems, the interests of agents align which in turn, facilitates coordination and effective equilibrium selection. For coordination games, however, the fact that almost everyone conforms to the norms and the expectations therein is not

⁸⁵ In Chapter Three, we discussed the concept of Nash equilibrium as the strategic reply of an agent to others in an action combination that is the best reply in which no agent can profit oneself sufficiently by deviating from an action strategy given the cause of action of others. At this equilibrium point, no agent has the required incentive to deviate. Also see Osborne and Rubinstein, 1994; Harsanyi and Selten, 1988; Van Damme, 1983.

sufficient to induce compliance. Since social norms are not always in the best and immediate interest of agents, agents are tempted, and rightly so, to deviate from the social norm if unmonitored. Following Thomas Schelling (1969, 1978), Edna Ullmann-Margalit (1977), Robert Sugden (1986), Cristina Bicchieri (1993, 2006, 2016), analysis of social norms, we understand that game-theoretical approach to social norms enables us to understand how norms emerge, persist and are in force even when such norms are not accompanied by sanctions.

The importance of norms in society cannot be downplayed as norms stipulate, shape, and govern individual conducts and obligations, thus constructing and sustaining social order. Social norms are hence defined as equilibrium points of any strategic interaction. It should be mentioned here that, this only applies to situations with multiple equilibria. By multiple equilibria, we mean games that have more than one possible point of coordination or cooperation. Take, for instance, wearing a headscarf by the female population in Saudi Arabia. This situation has two equilibria points; either the society settles in favour of putting on headscarf or not. Also, in a game of coordination, people can decide to queue in line to enter the bus at a station or rush and push their way in. Similarly, people can decide to drive on the left or the right side of the road. This implies that, while multiple equilibria by itself do not necessarily qualify for a regularity to be considered as a norm, it presents us with great insight to strategic action correspondence where no agent can gain by unilaterally deviating from the equilibrium action combination. We can represent the above agent interaction with the following 2-by-2 symmetric matrix.

Agent B

	Queue	Rush
Agent A Queue	1,1	0,0
Rush	0,0	1,1

Table. Station Choice

Agent B

	Headscarf	No Headscarf
Agent A Headscarf	1,1	0,0
No Headscarf	0,0	1,1

Table. Headscarf Choice

Agent B

	Right Side	Left Side
Agent A Right Side	0,0	1,1
Left Side	1,1	0,0

Table: Driving Strategic Interaction

Based on the above 2-by-2 symmetric matrix, we can immediately conclude that rational action is primarily associated with strategic action-outcome and as soon as an equilibrium action combination is achieved, agents have little or no incentive to deviate. This invariably implies that an equilibrium point is a possible norm. The question then is, how and why do societies settle for one norm over the other(s) and why would such equilibrium (norm) persist over time? As earlier conceived, not all strategic interactions with multiple equilibrium points can be considered as norms.⁸⁶ Broadly speaking, social norms are held in place by certain enforcement mechanisms. While it is obvious that an agent will conform to a coordination norm of driving on the left side of the road to avoid colliding with other road users, social norms are usually sustained by the sanction mechanism in place to punish violators; threat or actual punishment (Sugden, 1986; Coleman, 1990).

Social norms are sustained by a variety of possible mechanisms. These mechanisms include internalization⁸⁷, social association⁸⁸ or coordination and thirdly, the degree of social expectation, that is, the threat of societal sanctions. Haven substantially discussed structural functionalism and social identity theory in the previous sections, which represents internalization and social association respectively, we turn here to discuss the third mechanism, social expectation.

⁸⁶ According to Young (2007), some equilibrium points can best be considered as 'idiosyncratic equilibrium' rather than an equilibrium as a norm. In this sense, while the said game contains more than one equilibrium points and no agent can benefit from unilaterally deviation, the equilibrium is not a norm. See Young, 2007: 4.

⁸⁷ Internalization is considered a mechanism that sustains norms. This is considered the hallmark of structural functionalism. Under this, we argued that agents feel the need to conform to norms owing to shared behavioural principles as a matter of ought, because conformity to the said norm has been psychologically internalized. Internalized norms in this sense, are sufficient motivation for action. See McAdams and Rasmusen, 2007; Parsons, 1937; Ritzer, 1983; Hoffman, 1977; Shaw and Campbell, 1962.

⁸⁸ Under social identity theory, we argued that agents conceive their behaviour and disposition to act based on the perceived group membership they categorize themselves to belong to. Essentially, what sustains a norm in this case, is self-identification with a group. See Ellemers, 2017; Tajfel, 1972; Turner, 1982; Hogg et al. 2004.

Recall that in chapter one, we argued that Lewis' conception of convention rests heavily on mutual expectation for effective equilibrium selection. We argued that for Lewis, 'almost everyone expects almost everyone to conform' is sufficient to induce conformity to an established convention. Lewis (1969), conceived that through concordant mutual expectations, agents can know the required action combination and through coordination with other rational agents, arrive at strict coordination equilibrium. One's expectation of others' expectations of one's behaviour significantly affects one's preferences and resulting choices. Expectation simply put, is the mental replication of the reasoning of other's practical reasoning. This process of the replication of expectation and mental process gives us first, second and higher-order expectations which are necessary for effective equilibrium selection⁸⁹, and in this case, sustaining conformity to an established norm.

How do agents come to possess valid and sound expectations? Riddled with limitations, Lewis' response using coordination devices and common knowledge has been highly criticized as a valid mechanism to acquire the requisite degree of expectations. The question of whether coordination devices and common knowledge are necessary for shared acquaintance remains highly contentious. Notwithstanding, however, herein, we assume that Lewis' prescriptive reason is indeed obvious and expectation; first, second and higher-order expectations, can accurately be acquired. This expectation is also sufficient to induce conformity to the regularity of behaviour.

Brennan et al. (2013:29) define norms as clusters of normative attitudes evident in a group. According to them, 'a normative principle *P* is a norm within a group *G* if and only if;

- i. A significant proportion of members of *G* have *P*-corresponding normative attitudes;
- and

⁸⁹ See Lewis, 1969:28. Also see Pepitone, 1976; Schwartz, 1977.

- ii. A significant proportion of the members of **G** know that a significant proportion of the members of **G** have **P**-corresponding normative attitudes.

In the above conception of norm, the authors conceive **P**-corresponding normative attributes as the belief, judgements, or other cognitive states that accurately and appropriately ‘reflect the content and normative force of **P**’. In addition, normative attitudes then include at least (a) normative beliefs, judgements, and other cognitive states (b) normative expectations (c) reactive attitudes and positions to have such attitudes and (d) any other attitudes that entail **a**, **b** or **c**” (Brennan et al. 2013: 29). What is important to note from the above is that conditions (i) and (ii) do not require all the members of the population of **G** to have the **P**-corresponding normative attitudes, but a substantial number of members of the said population.⁹⁰

Based on the discussion so far, one salient point emphasized by the game-theoretical account of social norms is that of its normative composition. We noted above that for sustained conformity to norms, the combined presence of empirical and normative expectation is required. The presence of these two, make for a sufficient reason for agents to conform to an established norm. Before we proceed, we should add here that, conformity to norms is always conditional on the level or degree of these expectations (Sugden, 2000). According to McAdams and Rasmusen (2000), norms can be defined as those behavioural regularities that are constantly been supported by normative attitudes. Unlike convention, norms according to them, are supported and persist due to normative attitudes such as shame and guilt. Invariably, while the empirical expectation is

⁹⁰ This idea of substantial number of a population is very important to note primarily because, like in the case of Convention (Lewis, 1969), everyone cannot always conform to a societal norm or convention. By substantial or almost everyone conforming, induced by expectation from almost everyone or substantial number of the population, is hence sufficient to induce conformity to a behavioural regularity.

sufficient for conformity to convention⁹¹, a combination of empirical and normative expectations is required as an essential incentive for compliance with social norms. As previously conceived, social norms are not always in the interest of the agent. In this case, why should an agent consider the expectations of others in complying with a social norm that is not in one's interest?

Presumptive Reason carries the strong suggestion that another person's reasonable expectation that I satisfy his preferences is in itself a presumptive moral reason for me to satisfy those preferences. Notice that the other person's expectation about me maybe grounded solely on his observations of what people like me usually do; I may have no personal responsibility for his having that expectation. In effect, other people's actions, merely by virtue of their falling into a predictable pattern, have imposed some obligation on me to conform to that pattern (Sugden, 2000: 112).

This sort of obligation, even though cannot be said to be a general moral principle, imposes some degree of "ought for conformity" to agents' behavioural regularity. This level of normative expectation becomes legitimate expectation more and more as a matter of natural human psychology. Following this pattern of reasoning, Sugden (2000), presents what he calls the "Resentment Hypothesis" which is nothing more than a reformation of Lewis' Presumptive reasoning.

Consider any population P within which individuals repeatedly engage in some interaction I . Let i and j be any two individuals from P who are engaging in I . Let

⁹¹ In the previous chapter, we affirmed that convention is sustained because agents desire to coordinate with others to avoid coordination failures. By implication, what others do, that is empirical expectation, is in fact, a sufficient incentive to induce conformity to an established norm. this is explicitly contained in Lewis' definition of Convention. See Lewis, 1969: 29.

x and y be alternative actions open to person i in this situation; whichever action i performs will, after the event, be common knowledge between i and j . Suppose that, within P , it is common knowledge that people in i 's position normally do x rather than y ; thus, it is also common knowledge that j has good reason to form the empirical expectation that i will do x and not y . Finally, suppose that it is common knowledge that people in j 's position normally prefer that people in i 's position do x rather than y . Then, i 's doing y will tend to induce in j a sense of resentment towards i . Further, i 's awareness of this tendency will induce in i a sense of aversion towards doing y (Sugden, 2000:114).

Resentment in the above context refers strictly to the sentiment, feeling, the sensation of frustration; anger and hostility by an agent emanating and compounded by the experience of disappointment, directed towards another agent who is judged to have caused this feeling of frustration. Usually, this feeling of resentment originates from the normative code and agents feel justifiably wronged by others. What this implies is, this feeling of resentment serves to possess requisite motivating power for an agent to strive to meet other people's expectations of them. It is important to state here that, according to Sugden, this Resentment Hypothesis should be conceived more as a sufficient condition for conformity rather than a necessary condition. This means that, while this resentment is a sufficient source of relevant expectation for conformity, it is not a necessary criterion for conformity. To effectively drive home this point, let us consider the following exact example:

Suppose I am told that in American restaurants, diners almost always leave tips of at least 15%. Then, when I go to an American restaurant, I know that the waiter expects me to give him a 15% tip. It is not in my interest to meet this expectation,

but I still feel some force motivating me to do so. I may be able to resist this force, but not with any degree of panache: if I fail to leave a tip, it will be with unease and embarrassment. This motivating force is clearly tied in with the existence of the expectation; I do not feel any more altruistic to waiters than I do to shop assistants, but since shop assistants do not expect tips, I feel no motivation to tip them (Sugden, 2000: 114-115).

The above is a clear and indeed compelling example of the power of normative expectation. While the agent is not forced to give the waiter the ‘required’ 15% tip and since it is clearly not in his best interest, he might be able to resist the force and eventually not give the tip. But as stated, this will not go without the agent concerned feeling some degree of shame, embarrassment, self-disappointment, and maybe some degree of regrets. Normative beliefs that are in this case the bases of normative expectations are therefore characterized by Sugden’s Resentment Hypothesis. Interestingly, this implies that “person *i* comes to resent acts by any other person *j* which frustrate the expectations of any third person *k*. Such generalized expectations and associated resentments can be interpreted as social norms” (Sugden, 2000: 115). Normative expectations are in Sugden’s view, some special kind of empirical expectation that satisfy the conditions of the Resentment Hypothesis so much so that they possess sufficient motivating power for agents to act in conformity with it (Sugden, 1986, 2000).

Notice that, so far, we have argued that several things motivate agents to conform to established social norms: the fear of perceived or actual punishment, the desire to please others, or by agents recognizing the legitimacy of the normative expectations of others. As succinctly argued by Paternotte and Grose (2013), the desire to please others, the recognition and acceptance of the expectation of others emanate from the agents’ conscious desire and become a

sufficient reason for agents to modify their preferences and conform to established norms. Similarly, Engel and Kurschilgen (2013), also suggest using experiments that normative expectations are extremely valuable tools in determining behaviour in society. For them, regarding normative expectations and legal framing, cooperation on certain goods with and without sanctions indicates substantially and unequivocally that cooperation increases substantially as normative expectations and behavioural patterns coevolve.

In the absence of sanctions, legal framing does not have any additional beneficial effect in realigning individual action and social well-being. Yet, in the presence of sanctions, the legal frame is crucial for the effectiveness of sanctions (Engel and Kurschilgen, 2013). Categorical put, normative expectations are directly tied to behavioural patterns of agents in the society, with or without sanctions. However, without sanctions, behavioural patterns are not governed by legal framing but by established norms enforced by normative expectations. The central point here is that agents continue to engage in risky sexual behaviour regardless of the presence of 'automatic', perceived, or actual punishment of infection. Based on the game-theoretical framework of normative expectation, we can reasonably argue that since sexual behaviour is more of conscious action, agents conform to the maladaptive norm consciously either to please others or because they recognize and accept the legitimacy of the normative expectations of the relevant others. Notwithstanding this, before we proceed any further, we shall present the evolutionary analysis for the emergence and sustenance of norms and return to the game-theoretical, and rational reconstruction of Cristina Bicchieri.

3.4.4 Asymmetric Norms- Hawk-Dove Game

In Chapter Two, we conceived that conventions and norms are recognized patterns of behaviour that are expected and are self-enforcing. Members of the society conform to expectations and conventions because they expect everyone else to conform, everyone expects everyone to conform and everyone conforms because everyone else conforms.⁹² Conventions, according to Young (1993), do not have to be symmetric. In section 2.2.2, we presented 2-by-2 symmetric matrix to show payoffs to agents in solving a coordination problem. It is important to state here that since convention need not be symmetric, in certain asymmetric situations, agents are faced with bargaining problems with strategic possible outcomes of interactions.

In a typical combat between two male animals of the same species, the winner gains mates, dominance rights, desirable territory, or other advantages that will tend toward transmitting its genes to future generations at higher frequencies than the loser's genes. Consequently, one might expect that natural selection would develop maximally effective weapons and fighting styles for a "total war" strategy of battles between males to the death. But instead, intraspecific conflicts are usually of a "limited war" type, involving inefficient weapons or ritualized tactics that seldom cause serious injury to either contestant (Smith and Price, 1973: 15).

The above excerpt from Smith and Price (1973) captures a typical structure of struggle and strategy employed in "wars" to ensure dominance rights, or other advantages. Nash equilibrium, as previously defined, is a strategic point of interaction that assures utility pay out

⁹² The fact that everyone conforms to established regularity of behaviour implies that this expectation is common knowledge to everyone.

where no actor gains by unilaterally deviating from a plan. Given the foregoing, the pertinent question to address here is, what leads people in building a social network when pairwise interaction is essentially competitive or interests clash?

Bargaining is a model in game theory where individuals in a game are confronted with conflicting interests. There are several options for resolving this conflict and choosing between them can lead to other conflicts of interest. Our comprehension of frequency-dependent contexts of animal behaviour is based on the Hawk-Dove game, which was introduced into evolutionary theory (Berninghaus et al., 2012). This theoretical study established the framework for comprehending behavioural diversity in general and shown that violence can remain adaptively constrained in animal groups. Like many other game theory models, the Hawk-Dove game is used to predict how participants in paired interactions would behave as well as the circumstances in which they will act. Therefore, the strategy assumes that people who use the hawk strategy will be aggressive and want exclusive access to the resource, whereas people who use the dove strategy will be non-aggressive and accept sharing the resource with the other competitors.

	Hawk	Dove
Hawk	$(V-C)/2, (V-C)/2$	$V, 0$
Park	$0, V$	$V/2, V/2$

Table: Hawk Dove Game Matrix

Three Nash equilibria are admissible in the Hawk-Dove game: one symmetric mixed equilibrium and two asymmetric pure equilibria. The reward for the hawkish player is significantly larger than that of the dovish opponent, hence all conflicts are avoided in the pure equilibria (this is a situation where one agent plays hawk and the other dove). In contrast, both players in the symmetric mixed equilibrium receive the same anticipated benefit, but this payoff is very low because there is a positive likelihood that a dispute between two hawks would occur (Desjardins, and Dubois, 2015). This conclusion also holds if the players are allowed to communicate prior to the game, e.g., if they are allowed to threaten each other before choosing their moves. The modern applications of the Hawk-Dove game include the bargaining and negotiation processes.⁹³

The Hawk-Dove game matrix presents a different structure and result from the symmetric matrix presented above. In the symmetric matrix and equilibrium points, agents have little or no incentive to deviate. The hawk-dove asymmetric matrix, however, presents one symmetric mixed equilibrium and two asymmetric pure equilibria. As we shall see in Chapter Five and Six, certain behavioural regularities such as sexual relationship, is modelled in this way, involving constant battle, negotiation, and conflict of interest. It is noteworthy that for asymmetric interactions, customary behavioural regularities are expected, everyone is aware of the prevailing expected behavioural regularity⁹⁴ and prefers to conform to this behavioural regularity given that others follow the behaviour expected of them (Young, 1993).

⁹³ See Binmore, Samuelson, and Young (2003) for extended discussion of evolutionary equilibrium selection in bargaining.

⁹⁴ Hence this is a common knowledge. See for more details.

3.5.1 Evolutionary Game Theory

Recall that in Chapter two, we made a concerted effort to effectively analyse strategically, the questions of how agents come about the relevant level of mutual expectations, and through common knowledge, arrive at Pareto efficient equilibrium for coordination and cooperation games. The questions faced are, can the coordination devices (agreement, salience, and precedence) and common knowledge avail agents the relevant level of expectations to enable them to coordinate and select efficient equilibrium out of alternative equilibria points? How will agents arrive at a specific Nash equilibrium out of the many possible equilibria points in any strategic game? Conceived limitations of the above rational choice responses and theories have instituted a shift to an evolutionary game-theoretical solution to explaining the evolution of convention, norms, and certain strategic behavioural propensities.

R.A Fisher is considered the first to have developed and utilized evolutionary game theory. This is contained in his attempt to approximately explain the equality of sex in mammals in the book *The Genetic Theory of Natural Selection* (1930). With the popularization of strategic evolutionary theories of 1980, evolutionary game theory has evolved as a standard tool of interpretation in economics and other social science disciplines as well as in philosophy. Zachary Ernst defines evolutionary game theory as a theory that is “understood as a tool in the descriptive project of explaining the historical origins of certain behavioural propensity” (Ernst, 2005).

Evolutionary game theory stretches and covers a variety of models. Among this model is the conception of evolutionary game theory as the tool to describe the adaptation of players to specific behaviour throughout the games (Samuelson, 2002). Alexander (2002) argues that evolutionary game theory is of significant interest to social scientists for three main reasons.

Relevant and most significant for our course is the conception and treatment of evolution not particularly as biological evolution but as cultural evolution and changes in beliefs and norms. To this end, Samuelson (2002) argues that social sciences' conception of evolutionary game theory evolves the dynamics of cultural processes of individuals learning in a repeated game that "provides coordination device that brings beliefs into line with behaviour, providing the second requirement for Nash equilibrium" (Samuelson, 2002: 48). Furthermore, Samuelson (2002), offers a rather convincing argument necessitating the shift from rational game theory to evolutionary game theory. For him, this shift was necessitated by the idealized utilization of games in rational game theory as less appropriate, leaving the stage for a more practical conception of games as a common approximation of actual interaction.⁹⁵

Evolutionary game theory, therefore, argues to bridge the gap created by rational game theoretical models that seemingly distance their games from real-world explanations with a theory that is practical and explains strictly with plausible models, human behaviour in real-world situations, without the idealized models of rational game theory. Among these descriptive projects is the work of Brian Skyrms.⁹⁶ Ernst (2005), argues that Skyrms' work is purely descriptive and devoid of "normative questions or conceptual questions concerning issues of fairness, justice, and the social contract generally". The question we seek to address here is, what is Brian Skyrms' descriptive evolutionary game theory?

⁹⁵ Several experimental results support this argument; a strong conception of rationality and conception that humans are strictly rational in their daily selection of action combination does not mirror or effectively describe the real behaviour of human subjects. For details on this, refer to arguments and problems of hyper-rational agents. See Askari, G, Gordji M. E and De la sen, M. 2019.

⁹⁶ For details on his theories on Evolutionary Game Theory, see Brian Skyrms (1996, 2004) and Bob Sugden (2004) for a contrarian view.

3.5.1.1 Brian Skyrms's Accounts

Skyrms' philosophical evolutionary game theory should be understood in light of a descriptive project. Skyrms evolutionary theory strategically fills the gap created by the rational choice tradition.⁹⁷ Evolutionary game theory, being a fusion of game theory and evolutionary dynamics, scrutinizes the dynamics of cultural evolution with a particular interest in how these dynamics play a significant role in arriving at an equilibrium. The dynamics of cultural evolution imply that it does not strictly respect perfect rationality as well as never arrives at equilibrium (Skyrms, 2017).

In his book, *Evolution of the Social Contract*, Skyrms explains an alternative account of human behavioural inclination towards fairness, justice, and cooperation. It is interesting to note that, laboratory experiments conducted by game theorists of a one-time prisoner's dilemma and ultimatum game reveal a puzzling result.⁹⁸ The results indicate overwhelmingly that agents are not always induced to act based on payoff utility maximization level of expectation as they are oftentimes moved to act based on certain emotional inclinations. This so-called 'irrationality' contained in these experimental results show the need for alternative explanations to human 'irrational' inclination to cooperation, fairness, and justice. Skyrms, in this book, tried to explain the evolution of cooperation, fairness, and justice or their inclinations using the theory of natural selection.

⁹⁷ Ernst (2005) argues that the rational choice tradition claimed to address the normative question of fairness and justice; to this end, their purely rational project has failed to install strict morality based on rational considerations. Despite the commendable projects and agreements by John Rawls (1972) and David Gauthier (1986), rational choice theories leave the self-interested individual far from being just and fair. This gap is thus argued to be filled by descriptive evolutionary project.

⁹⁸ This is regarded as a puzzling result for rational game theorists since it reveals that if utility is measured strictly in a certain way, then the results show human actions as essentially irrational.

In doing so, he equates human behavioural disposition with a sense of fairness and justice. This behavioural disposition evolves through what he calls a “positive correlation”⁹⁹ between individuals. Defectors in a one-shot prisoner dilemma game would always do better than co-operators. However, when there are a likelihood and strong tendency for like to pair with like, co-operators do better than defectors. He states,

There are two complementary ways to look at this result. One is to focus on the game played within the haystacks, the prisoner's dilemma. From this point of view, the key fact is that after one generation the dynamics induce perfect correlation of types – co-operators only meet co-operators and defectors only meet defectors. Then, of course, co-operators can flourish, because it is a defining characteristic of the prisoner's dilemma that co-operators do better against themselves than defectors do against defectors. The temporary advantage of being able to defect against co-operators is gone after the initial interaction because it removes potential victims from successive generations in the haystack (Skyrms, 2004: 8).

A positive correlation is therefore created in local clustering and interactions as well as favours those strategies that are proved locally successful. Invariably, a positive correlation is never externally imposed, but “an unavoidable consequence of dynamics of local interactions (Skyrms, 2004: 29). If there is a positive correlation and like meets like, Skyrms adds, then the positive correlation will produce a perfect correlation where “co-operators would take over and that would be the end of the story” (Skyrms, 2017: 1091). But this is not the case. Endogenous correlations are not perfect correlations, and the story gets complicated when interactions are

⁹⁹ Correlation is conceived as central to the theory of evolution of cooperation, social structure, and collective action. Solutions to the prisoner's dilemma apply to kin selection, reference network, group selection, reciprocity, and others to induce correlation. See Vanderschraaf 2001; Skyrms, 2004, 1994; Bicchieri 2006, 2016.

modelled in a bigger game interaction scenario. The *Stag Hunt* example is an ideal structure of a bigger game.

The stag-hunt is a game replicated in many presentations. It was first presented by Rousseau in *Discours Sur L'inéegalité*. In this hunt, if at least one hunter abandons the hunt for a rabbit, others are worse off, except, of course, they also abandon the hunt. Hence, stick to the hunt if everyone sticks to it, and defect if others defect. The crucial point to note here is that hunting hare by agents returns a better payoff. On the other hand, hunting stag would return a higher payoff if and only if other agents hunt stag as well since it is impossible to hunt stag alone. Here, *stag, stag* is Pareto-dominant and efficient while *hare, hare* is risk dominant yet Pareto inefficient.¹⁰⁰ Similar to our previous analysis, in the stag hunt game, two equilibria emerge (*Cooperate, Cooperate*) and (*Defect, Defect*).¹⁰¹ *Cooperate, Cooperate* is a Pareto optimal equilibrium, an equilibrium where social contract abounds. The problem faced here is how to move from defect, defect equilibrium, that is, a state of nature, which is inefficient to a better one. Skyrms argues that this can be achieved through correlation where agents can trust those they associate with.

		Agent B	
		Stag	Hare
Agent A	Stag	5,5	0,0
	Hare	0,0	2,2

Table. Stag Hunt

¹⁰⁰ See the description and analysis of pareto efficient and inefficient equilibrium selection above.

¹⁰¹ See section two of this chapter for details on equilibrium selection.

Equilibrium selection: stable equilibrium, is affected by the dynamical strategies of pairing affected by the proportions of the population. This is relevant because each pure strategy is correlated so much so to affect the dynamical equilibrium in the replicator dynamics.¹⁰² Replicator dynamics has emerged as a plausible explanation of the dynamics of cultural evolution. Skyrms (1999), argues that replicator dynamics is the natural place to begin an investigation of dynamic models of cultural evolution. Skyrms (1994) presents fascinating examples of correlation in an evolution game, where time is strictly measured in discrete periods. Affected by dynamics of co-operators and defectors in a population, where almost all are either defectors or co-operators, replication is the function of the population. For instance, in a population of almost all co-operators, all defectors are paired with co-operators and co-operators with co-operators. An entire population of co-operators emerges as a stable replicator dynamic. This is said to be stable in the first stage of pairing.



Individuals start out by interacting at random but gradually learn to interact more with those with whom they have had good experiences. What generates these experiences? In this example, the interaction is playing the Stag Hunt game with the payoffs from that game driving the evolution of the network structure. Payoffs may lead individuals to modify their social network, but they may also lead them to modify their strategies in the Stag Hunt game. Thus, we have a co-evolution social structure and strategy. There is a structural modification dynamic and there is a strategy revision dynamic. The outcome will depend on the interaction of these two

¹⁰² Replicator Dynamics was first introduced to the literature by Taylor and Jonker (1978). For details, see P. Taylor and L. Jonker, 1978. "Evolutionarily Stable Strategies and Game Dynamics," *Mathematical Biosciences*, 40: 145–156.

dynamic processes. It turns out that their relative speeds make all the difference. With frozen social structure, Stag Hunters may be locked into interactions with Hare Hunters. Then they give up attempts at cooperation and convert to Hare Hunting themselves. With a rapidly evolving social structure, Stag Hunters learn to associate with each other and prosper. Then, Hare Hunters gradually convert to Stag Hunting. (Skyrms, 2017: 1097)

With positive correlation and replicator dynamical evolution, Skyrms succeeded in overcoming the obvious limitations associated with the rational choice theory of equilibrium selection using the system of mutual expectations, coordination devices, and common knowledge. For him, affected by the function of the population proportion, agents easily modify their strategic response or simply revise it. Interactions among agents and positive correlations push toward the crystallization of a frozen social structure that is said to persist over time when co-operators give up trying to cooperate and begin to defect since cooperation leaves them worse off. Put differently, the cost of cooperation at this point, ought to outweigh the benefits, so they abandon cooperation for defection. While simple game results are easily analysed, complex games- which is the assemblage of several smaller games and interactions within a larger game- reveal situations of multiple norms or rules applying to the same situation, consequently giving varied, sometimes contradictory results. This hence successfully answers the evolution of convention and social norms; showing that norms evolve to govern certain classes of the situation and that they may sometimes overlap.

3.5.1.2 Kenneth Binmore's Account

Kenneth Binmore is considered one of the founders of the theory of bargaining. He has contributed significantly to the foundations of experimental economics and evolutionary game theory. Herein, I set out to introduce his contribution to evolutionary game theory. Like Skyrms, Binmore also confronted the question of the origin of fairness, justice, and social contract. How do norms of fairness and justice emerge? The most significant and relevant question for Binmore was not what is good or what is right, but how these rules and norm's function, and how they are sustained. He states, "if one wishes to study such rules, it does not help to ask how they serve the 'good'. One must ask instead how and why they survive" (Binmore, 1994: 11). Like the evolution of food-sharing by vampire bats,¹⁰³ where they evolve to regurgitating and sharing of blood to fellow roostmates who aren't relatives but based on reciprocity, human evolution of moral theories, according to Binmore, can also be explained in terms of social evolution. Binmore's thesis of evolutionary game theory is a strategic re-working of social contract theory.¹⁰⁴

In game theory, as mentioned before, social contract and state of nature are both stable equilibria. Evolutionary game theory in this sense seeks to present an alternative explanation of the procedure to arrive at an optimal equilibrium using natural selection.¹⁰⁵ To begin with, Binmore also rejects the rational choice theory standard foundation that human behaviours are governed by normative standards of rationality (Binmore, 1994: 20). Binmore and other evolutionary game theorists support the naturalization of game theory. Binmore departs from

¹⁰³ Binmore, 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Social Contract theory is an old tradition in philosophy, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke and recently John Rawls and David Gauthier. It is a theory that purports to say that human society; moral and political, is a result of some form of contract or agreement between members of the society.

¹⁰⁵ See Skyrms, 2017.

Skyrms' conceived kind of reductionism of preferences to fitness.¹⁰⁶ For him, human preferences are a product of social procedure rather than any fixed biological processes. His theory converges with rational theorists in that, surprisingly, he affirms the preference interpretation of utility by arguing that evolution selects formal properties of preference (Binmore, 1994).

Lewis (1969: 42) argued that once a practice of preference selection is started, it can persist indefinitely. Preferences and choices are directly linked. Hence, an individual will always choose what she prefers. Choices consequently reveal individual preferences. Under the rational choice theory, it is obvious that the consistency of preferences and choice is important. The inconsistency of preferences and choice selection is often penalized. This point is further explored by Binmore in his evolutionary game theory. For him, we do not necessarily need to be aware of the process of social evolution, what is important is the fact that social evolution will select that behaviour or behavioural disposition which maximizes something. For Binmore, consistency of preference selection is important. He states,

...consistency an important characteristic of a decision-maker cannot be lightly rejected. Inconsistent people will necessarily sometimes be wrong and hence will be at a disadvantage compared to those who are always right. And evolution will not be kind to memes that inhibit their own replication. (Binmore, 1994: 27)

Binmore also delved into addressing the *free-rider* argument that has occupied moral and political philosophy for many centuries. The free-rider argument is easily captured using the well-known Prisoner's dilemma. The Prisoner's Dilemma presents a situation where agents can either cooperate (C) or free ride. The Prisoners' incentive here is to defect. Defecting or free

¹⁰⁶ See Vanderschraaf, 1999.

riding is a unique strategy for agents, it is also the best strategic response for each agent. The consequence of this unique best strategy for agents, 'rational agents', is the resultant (D, D) or free-ride, free-ride –Strict Nash Equilibrium- even though they would both have been better off cooperating. The question addressed is, why should members of the society follow a given norm, such as justice?

This Prisoners' Dilemma example has significantly thrown the rationality of social cooperation to doubt.¹⁰⁷ While others argue for the solution -of Prisoners' Dilemma and explaining social cooperation- by submitting a single strategy as a solution (Such as Axelrod's tit-for-tat solution), Binmore argues we should not focus or rely on any single explanation as capable of explaining cooperation in such a continuously repeated Prisoner's Dilemma. He argued that no single strategy can be the correct explanation. Binmore further argues that people might employ several coexisting strategies in repeated interactions, which for him, best answers the question of social cooperation. Consequently, a strategic explanation of cooperation by using a one-shot Prisoner Dilemma put forward by philosophers and rational game theorists amounts to giving "a wrong analysis of the wrong game."¹⁰⁸ He argues that this unique equilibrium selection problem created by a repeated Prisoner's Dilemma can only be solved using evolutionary game theory.

The contemporary conception of Social Contract theory tends towards a theory of an assemblage of norms usually backed by sanctions. In a society where such a contract exists, the society explained by tit-for-tat, agents are prone to free ride at the slightest opportunity. In this case, sanctions or punishments serve as enforcements for social cooperation. The right question to pose here is, does punishment and sanction meet the assumptions of mutual aid and mutual

¹⁰⁷ See Vanderschraaf, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ Binmore, 1994: 174

cooperation? Highly unlikely. In addition, as mentioned earlier, Binmore argued that tit-for-tat as a single strategic response is unlikely to provide a holistic explanation for social cooperation.

Responding to the limitation of Hawk and Dove correlation strategy where Dove cannot retaliate, Binmore argued in the lines of an *overlapping generation model*.¹⁰⁹ He argued that agents can maintain and sustain the equilibrium of mutual cooperation without the necessary instrumentality of punishment and sanctions. For him, each agent during her lifetime is assumed to have a successor and a predecessor. Binmore's theory of overlapping generation model presents a solution to and answers the question of how mutual cooperation can evolve and be sustained in a repeated game. Mutual cooperation equilibrium is a conformist strategy where successors only cooperate if and only if their predecessors were conformists and defect perpetually, if and only if their predecessors were defectors.

3.6 Cristina Bicchieri's Rational Reconstruction

Bicchieri is a Professor of Social Thought and Comparative Ethics. She is a foremost philosopher of rational choice and a renowned figure in behavioural ethics. Bicchieri (2016). *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms* and Bicchieri (2006). *The Grammar of Society. The Nature and Dynamics of Social*, herein, remain our two-primary points of reference in interrogating Bicchieri's rational reconstruction.

Earlier, we argued that Convention is fundamental to human societies and that it is a regularity or recurrent behaviour of members of a society that is common knowledge. Also, we argued that social norm, on the other hand, is a persistent recurrent behaviour of members of the

¹⁰⁹ For details, see Binmore, 1994; also see Kandori, 1992.

society sustained by consistent self-fulfilling expectations- empirical and normative and sanctions.¹¹⁰ As we shall come to appreciate, Bicchieri's "rational reconstruction" provides us distinctive features of norms to effectively distinguish social norms from personal norms and conventions.

Bicchieri's (2006) 'rational reconstruction' of social norms is a theory of norms that maintains the understanding that emotions and sanctions are essential to the existence and persistence of norms, yet not entirely dependent on them. Bicchieri (2006) provides a clear distinction between social norms and other forms of collective practices. For her, social norms are informal norms that are public and shared, sustained and enforced by informal sanctions that range from gossip to ostracism or dishonour for violators (Bicchieri, 2006: 8). Furthermore, social norms are either prescriptive or proscriptive and they are considered conditional behaviours hinged on expectations about the behaviours and/or feelings and/or beliefs of others.¹¹¹ As a result of these distinctive features of social norms, they are considered distinct from other collective behaviours such as customs, conventions, legal and moral rules. According to her, conditionality, preferences, and expectations (empirical and normative) are the major tools for an efficient categorization and conceptualization of norms. She argues that individuals' conditional choices to conform to a social norm are based primarily on two levels of expectations. Bicchieri (2006) presents a structured definition of social norm thus,

¹¹⁰ This understanding of norms as self-fulfilling expectations is of significance to this study because it presents us with a template of how certain harmful norms, in this case, risky sexual behaviour evolves and persist.

¹¹¹ Social norms are considered conditional and relational behaviours as well as based on social expectations. It should be noted that these features of social norms are absent (or less pronounced) in other collective practices. Because social norms are relational and involve normative expectations, established social norms are often very difficult to change or modify.

Let R be a behavioural rule for situations of type S , where S can be represented as a mixed-motive game. We say that R is a social norm in a population P if there exists a sufficiently large subset $P_{cf} \subseteq P$ such that, for each individual $i \in P_{cf}$:

1. Contingency: i knows that a rule R exists and applies to situations of type S ;
2. Conditional preference: i prefers to conform to R in situations of type S on the condition that:

2 (a) Empirical expectations: i believes that a sufficiently large subset of P conforms to R in situations of type S ; and either

2 (b) Normative expectations: i believes that a sufficiently large subset of P expects i to conform to R in situations of type S ;

Or

2 (b¹) Normative expectations with sanctions: i believes that a sufficiently large subset of P expects i to conform to R in situations of type S , prefers i to conform, and may sanction behaviour.

Based on Bicchieri's conceptualization of social norms, several features become obvious. To begin with, for any rule to be considered a social norm, it must be contingent that individuals in the society or community are aware that such a norm exist and that it applies to specific situations (Common Knowledge). Secondly, individual preference to conform to these norms must be backed by expectations -empirical and normative. Thus, we can easily deduce that norms, on the one hand, function as tools for describing patterns of behaviour and on the other

hand, serve the function of expressing a social opinion, prescription, or proscription of things we ought to do or not do in the society.¹¹²

Bicchieri further argues that universal conformity is not always achievable, however, deviance to norms is tolerated based on the kind of norm and the level of negative implication to the society that harbours the norms. Notwithstanding, it is important to note that conformity to a norm is always conditional. For Bicchieri, conformity to a norm is always based on one's expectations of what members of the relevant reference network group expect.¹¹³

Condition 2(a), the *empirical expectations* condition, says that expectations of conformity matter. I take them to be empirical expectations, in the sense that one expects people to follow R in situations of type S because one has observed them to do just that over a long period of time. If the present situation is of type S, one can reasonably infer that, *ceteris paribus*, people will conform to R as they always did in the past. Notice that the fulfilment of Condition 2(a) entails that a social norm is practiced (or is believed to be practiced) in a given population (which

¹¹² Based on this, social norms are not universal norms. These norms often apply to certain population who recognise and conform to norms in situations of type *S*. We should also mention that some rules can apply to a given population even when it is not followed by members of the population *P*. This is to say that even among conditional followers of norms, deviance is to be expected and opportunistic self-interested individuals will always violate the rules whenever it conflicts with immediate self-interests. What is however clear is that rule one (contingency rule), implies the collective awareness nature of the existence of norms, that is, all members of the population *P*, are aware of the existence of a norm that specifically applies to behavioural situations of type *S*. It is also on the premise of rule one that expectations are form as well as basis for sanctions.

¹¹³ We argued previously that Reference network plays a fundamental role in the sustenance of social norms by creating enabling environment and emotions of expectations to matter. It is important to note that reference network are individuals and groups who share similar beliefs, history and norms. This may include small groups like family, friends, colleagues, or be a large group like a community, town, city, religion, or ethnic group or even a country. Reference network thus play a pivotal role in Bicchieri's theory since she conceives it to be significant enough to make agents modify or engage in certain behaviours to satisfy empirical and normative expectations as well as crucial in the dynamics of changing a maladaptive norm. For more details see Bicchieri, 2017.

may be as small as a group comprising a few members or as large as a nation); otherwise, there would not be empirical expectations. (Bicchieri 2006: 13)

Bicchieri's definition of social norm as conceived above and condition 2(a) is therefore in tandem with Lewis' definition of convention where agents reasonably expecting the other to act accordingly, may go ahead to do what is expected. Similarly, Bicchieri's conception of empirical expectation resonates with Sugden's argument of *Presumptive Reason*. Sugden's interpretation of Presumptive reason grounds empirical expectations, such that "other things being equal", agents should always consider the preferences of others. Consequently, Sugden argues that *A*'s expectation of *B* is simply a product of *A*'s observation of the kinds of activities people like *B* usually do. The empirical expectation is formed, according to Bicchieri simply by the fact that individuals expect a certain rule to be followed by members of a population because such a rule has been observed to persist in the said population over a long period. Sugden conceives this as an obligation for conformity to an established pattern simply because these are consistent behaviour of people in a population which consequently turns into a predictable pattern, thus, agents are obliged to conform. This is an empirical expectation (Sugden 2000, 112). Based on these, people mostly conform to norms that they reasonably believe applies to a situation type *S*, consequently, conform to the rule *R*, as they have always done in the past.¹¹⁴

Conditions 2 (b) and 2 (b') tell us that people may have different reasons for conditionally preferring to follow a norm. Condition 2(b), the normative expectations condition, says that expectations are believed to be reciprocal. That

¹¹⁴ Empirical expectations are sometimes formed by observing the consequence of actions and believes rather than by directly observing conformity behaviour. In this sense, empirical expectation as a criterion for the existence and persistence of social norm rests heavily on past events or precedence. Precedence is based on past analogous situations and rules followed by agents in a community. Faced with a similar situation, agents can rely on this experience to infer on a possible rule or behaviour in the future. Also see Chapter 3.5.3

is, not only do I expect others to conform, but I also believe they expect me to conform. What sort of belief is this? On the one hand, it might just be an empirical belief. If I have consistently followed R in situations of type S in the past, people may reasonably infer that, *ceteris paribus*, I will do the same in the future, and that is what I believe. On the other hand, it might be a normative belief: I believe a sufficiently large number of people think that I have an obligation to conform to R in the appropriate circumstances. For some individuals, the fulfilment of Conditions 2(a) and 2(b) is sufficient to induce a preference for conformity. That is, such individuals recognize the legitimacy of others' expectations and feel an obligation to fulfil them. For others, the possibility of sanctions is crucial to induce a preference for conformity. Condition 2(b) says that I believe that those who expect me to conform also prefer me to conform, and might be prepared to sanction my behaviour when they can observe it. Sanctions may be positive or negative. The possibility of sanctions may motivate some individuals to follow a norm, either out of fear of punishment or because of a desire to please and thus be rewarded. For others, sanctions are irrelevant, and a normative expectation is all they need.

Condition 2 (a) as we have seen, is based on the premise that agents in a population P , have observed over time that a specific rule R apply to certain situation type S . Thus, they expect people in the said population to follow this rule whenever faced with situation type S . This criterion alone is considered insufficient for a rule to be considered a social norm. If this is so considered, it would be impossible to distinguish between a social norm and an established convention. Bicchieri consequently introduced a second condition, Condition 2 (b) and 2 (b').

Normative expectation according to Bicchieri, is key in effectively distinguishing between social norms and other forms of collective practices. This is to say while the empirical expectation is sufficient for conformity and sustaining conventions, social norms require normative expectations (and/with sanctions) in addition to empirical expectation for conformity.

3.6.1 Collective Practices: Descriptive Norms and Social Norms

Social norms and social conventions provide and support individuals in persistently solving collective action problems.¹¹⁵ These practices are considered central to supporting effective social coordination by stipulating and conditioning the decision-making process of agents to choose one action instead of another.¹¹⁶ Earlier, we conceived convention as foundational laws that are a product of rational interaction between human beings which often rests on reciprocity for its force. Since conventions are primarily aimed at sustaining effective and efficient coordination and cooperation, as well as achieving Pareto optimal equilibria, conventions are sustained by common knowledge and mutual expectations.¹¹⁷ According to Bicchieri (2006), conventions are a kind of descriptive norms that have become stable over time. Consequently, Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of social norms is aimed at providing a reliable framework to effectively identify and distinguish social norms from other social constructs and

¹¹⁵ In Chapter 4.3.1, we discussed that collective action problems are problems characterized by social dilemmas where agents find themselves in an action situation S , that produces pareto-inefficient utility for all agents. We upheld that conception that the presence of established norms is fundamental to solving collective action problems by holding agents responsible and accountable to each other by adhering to certain principles of actions.

¹¹⁶ It is important to mention that Holzinger (2003), argued that in addition to rationality, sustained and persistent dilemmas, other joint action of individuals aimed at coordination or cooperation can generate collective action problems. Thus, we can extend the concept of collective action problems to accommodate a variety of behaviours and expected behaviours relating to cooperation and coordination between agents.

¹¹⁷ Convention was extensively discussed in Chapter Two.

behaviour.¹¹⁸ Broadly speaking, collective behaviours can vaguely be streamlined and classified into a descriptive or a social norm. We should mention right from the outset, these collective behaviours, either descriptive norms or social norms, can only be distinguished by investigating the expectations and motives of agents.

The question then is, what are descriptive norms and how do they differ from social norms? Humans engage in daily behavioural regularities, from daybreak to sunset, from dress codes, rules of etiquette, driving rules, signalling systems, staying in line to access banking services and so on. As earlier mentioned, what distinguishes a social norm from a descriptive norm, or a mere convention is the preferences, expectations, and motives of agents.¹¹⁹ Consequently, Bicchieri (2006) conceived descriptive norm as a behavioural regularity such that individuals prefer to conform to it on the condition that they believe that most people in their reference network conform to it.

Conditions for a Descriptive Norm to Exist Let R be a behavioural rule for situations of type S , where S is a coordination game.

We say that R is a descriptive norm in a population P if there exists a sufficiently large subset $P_{cf} \subseteq P$ such that, for each individual $i \in P_{cf}$,

1. Contingency: i knows that a rule R exists and applies to situations of type S ;
2. Conditional preference: i prefers to conform to R in situations of type S on the condition that:

¹¹⁸ For emphasis, we should mention here that norms are not universal and there is nothing intrinsic in a particular behaviour to qualify it as a social norm or a descriptive norm. The point should be clear, all human groups adhere to different definite sorts of norms, which differ from one society to another, affecting different sorts of situations. As specified group shared expectations, norms reflect the standards and values of a specific society.

¹¹⁹ This point is germane and mentioned for emphasis. Bicchieri introduces these concepts to provide a clear tool for distinguishing one from the other. Obviously, understanding the conditional preferences of agents, their expectations, both normative and empirical as well as their behavioural motives, helps policy makers to develop specific contents to engender behavioural change. See Bicchieri (2006: 29).

- (a) Empirical expectations: *i* believes that a sufficiently large subset of *P* conforms to *R* in situations of type *S*.

A few points can immediately be deduced from Bicchieri's definition or conception of descriptive norms. First, a descriptive norm is not a shared custom (brushing one's teeth in the morning and evening). This is because, irrespective of what most people do, agents will continue to brush their teeth because they consider them healthy and hygienic. Consequently, a descriptive norm is not a shared custom because these are independently motivated behavioural regularities not caused by expectations nor conditional preference but a simple similarity of actions. Also, descriptive norms are not social norms. As a sequel to our definition of social norms above, we can immediately deduce that while social norms require conditional preference and both empirical and normative expectations, descriptive norms are hinged on conditional preferences and empirical expectations alone.

We do not feel any group pressure to conform, nor do we believe that others expect us to comply with what appears to be a collective behaviour. Deviation from the 'norm' is not punished, nor is compliance overtly approved. For example, if I decide – alone among my friends and co-workers – not to invest my retirement money in stocks, I do not expect to be blamed or ostracized. At worst, they will think I am overly cautious. A crucial feature of descriptive norms is thus that they entail unilateral expectations. Though we may have come to expect others to follow a regular behavioural pattern, we do not feel any social pressure to conform. That is, Conditions 1, 2, and 2(a) apply but Conditions 2(b) and 2(b') do not. In most cases of descriptive norms, there

simply are no reciprocal expectations: We do not believe others care about our choices or expect us to follow any particular behaviour (Bicchieri 2006: 30).

In Chapter Two, we argued that conventions are the regularity of behaviours that persist to ensure societal stability, to avoid miscoordination, and avoid Pareto inferior equilibrium points. In essence, conformity to a convention is persistently based on agents' self-interest (driving rules for example). This evidently makes convention a type of descriptive norm since people prefer to conform to the regularity if most people (not necessarily those in one's reference network) conform to the perceived regularity. Shared customs, on the other hand, are independently motivated behaviours that are a regularity, simply based on similarity. Descriptive norm as captured in the excerpt above is a regularity of behaviour based on conditional preference and the fact that most people in one's reference network conform to the regularity. Thus, conditions 1, 2, and 2(a) apply.¹²⁰

Social norms require conditions 1, 2, 2 (a), 2(b) and 2 (b¹) to be met. This implies that for social norms, reciprocal expectations of both normative and empirical are in place as well as agents believe others care about their choices and expect them to conform. While in descriptive norms, simple expectations are sufficient for conformity, for social norms, normative expectations with the possibility of further inducement (sanction) for conformity might be implemented to help ensure conformity. For example, when agents queue up at the train station to purchase a ticket, everyone remains in line till it is his or her turn, everyone expects everyone

¹²⁰ As earlier mentioned, the fact that most Nigerians brush their teeth every day, has essentially no impact on my decision to brush my teeth every morning. As a sequel to our definition, we dub this a shared custom. For certain occasion such as weddings, funerals and birthday parties, certain local dress codes are recommended and expected. For example, a wedding party in Nigeria usually has a prescribed dress code. To attend such an occasion, invited guests ask what the expected dress code is. Attending such an important occasion dressed differently, will signal miscoordination and the feeling of embarrassment (self). In this case, I wish to wear what I expect others to wear, even if I would not be judged negatively for dressing differently. Here, we have a descriptive norm.

to patiently remain inline (empirical expectations). In addition, all those in line believe that others believe they *ought* to wait in line till it is their turn. Anyone who violates this rule is compelled to conform by negative sanctions which vary but may include being reprimanded, delayed even more than required, or outrightly denied the ticket.

We should reiterate here that, the first operational tool to differentiate a social norm from other forms of collective practices is that social norms can only be attributed to behaviours that have conditional preferences. Consequently, all other actions or behaviours that are unconditional such as moral preference, legal preference, or self-regarding are ruled out (Bicchieri 2006: 1; Bicchieri et al. 2014). As already mentioned, for conditional actions to be dubbed social norms, a combination of empirical and normative expectations must be in place. We should however specifically mention that these expectations must be the expectations of those who matter and thus play a significant role in one's decision-making process and matter in one's choices, that is, one's *reference network*.

Not all social expectations matter for social norms. When a father's preferences about his daughter's marriage are conditional on his expectations about what others do and think, he does not care about what people do and think in other countries, cities, or far away villages. He will care about what specific people do or think, namely those who belong to his reference network. The reference network of the father in our example might include other families in his village, the village elders, religious leaders, and perhaps also relatives in distant villages. Who exactly belongs to people's reference network is an empirical question? Second, it will seldom be the case that everybody in one's reference network will behave and think in the same way on every issue. But it is enough that many

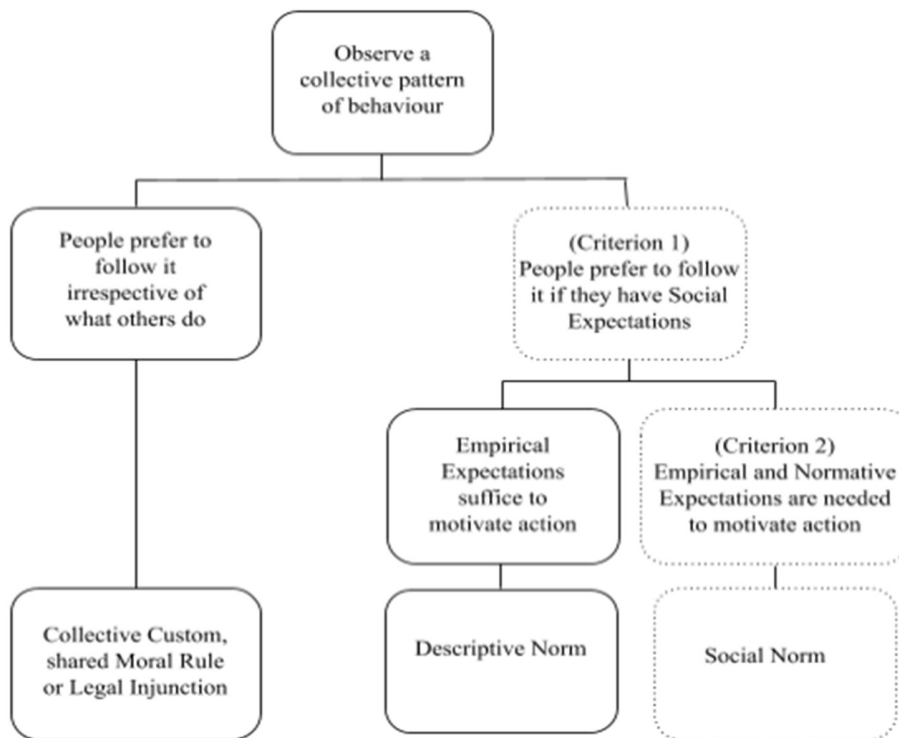
people behave or think in a similar way for people to be influenced. Exactly how much collective conformity is necessary to influence one's behaviour is again an empirical question, but it is easy to think of social norms as being based on expectations about at least a majority (Bicchieri et al. 2014: 4)

Collective practices are therefore classified based on conditionality (conditional or unconditional preferences), expectations (empirical or normative), and reference networks. It is worthy of note that what is a descriptive norm in one location or among a group of people, might be an established social norm in another group. Similarly, what is an entrenched social norm in one group might be a mere convention in another group. It is thus no doubt that Bicchieri's rational reconstruction offers numerous theoretical advantages. Right from the outset, this reconstruction provides a theory and definition of a social norm that is practical and can easily be operationalized by experimentally testing the presence or absence of an entrenched social norm by assessing the presence of second-order normative belief and expectation about specific prevalent behaviour (Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010).

Bicchieri et al. (2014) employed this strategy to theoretically analyse Child-Marriage and thus dispel any ignorance or misconceptions obtained by mere observation of a recurrent collective practice and consequently conceiving it as an entrenched social norm. According to Bicchieri et al. (2014), without empirically testing a collective practice like child marriage, we will never know for certain "what is the nature of the practice, because we do not know why people endorse it (Bicchieri et al. 2014:4). A collective practice such as child marriage, has the potential of being a mere moral response, an established custom, a descriptive norm, or a social norm. Consequently, knowing exactly what it is and why people persist in such behaviour, and

identifying the reference network that supports such practice is crucial to proper identification and naming, and effective change of a maladaptive norm when necessary.¹²¹

Bicchieri's Model for Diagnosing Collective Behaviours



(Source: C. Bicchieri, Social Norms, Social Change. Penn-UNICEF Lecture, July 2012, through Bicchieri 2017:41, figure 1.2. 'Diagnostic Process of Identifying Collective Behaviours')

¹²¹ The implication of this should be clear and obvious. Since 'all' collective social practices can be a social norm, a moral response, an established custom or a descriptive norm, we thus rely on Bicchieri's reconstruction which offers us a straightforward and pragmatic way to identify and differentiate one from another. This is particularly important since the method and strategy to changing social norm is obviously different to changing a descriptive norm or a mere moral response or custom. In Chapter six, we shall therefore employ Bicchieri's strategy of asking agents about the motivation of their behaviour and second-order expectations to test the validity or not of a social norm associated with risky sexual behaviour. This part takes cue from other collective practices such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, alcohol college drinking and others.

3.6.2 Sanction: Why do people conform?

Earlier, we conceived that some entrenched norms are supported by actual sanction or the threat of it, thus serving as an incentive for conformity (Elster, 1985). Norm-guided behaviour and associated sanctions are executed by individuals who subscribe to these norms. Similarly, sanctions accrue value when they are been expected by receiving agents and associated only with normative behaviours.¹²² Little wonder some subscribe to the definition that “a norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way” (Axelrod, 1986).¹²³

In Chapters Two and Three, we argued that rules and norms are established to ensure effective cooperation and coordination as well as effect and sustain proper coexistence among community members. Norms, therefore, serve to constrain individual and community excesses by discouraging acts that though immediately beneficial to the transgressor, are inestimably dangerous to community members.¹²⁴ As a result, norms are always associated with the temptation to violate and defect. To make norms effective and enduring, social sanctions are

¹²² In Bicchieri’s definition of social norms, we argued that in addition to conditional sanctions, social norms must also be associated by empirical and normative sanctions. Condition 2 (b’) talks about normative expectation with sanction. If a norm exists and condition 2 (b) is not sufficient for conformity, sanctions, or the threat of it, might be applied to ensure conformity. While it might be beneficial act without any form of external psychological pressure, the presence of an entrenched norm (with or without sanction) helps agents to behave in a socially accepted/approved manner to avoid consequential sanctions by transgressing.

¹²³ From our earlier interrogation of social norm, it is obvious that conformity to social norms is not always in the best interest of agents who uphold these norms, that is, defecting is almost always more beneficial than conformity. For example, an entrenched norm on child marriage. A loving and caring parent might not want to give out their child at a tender age for marriage. Parents might prefer to send their little baby to school, learn a trade and become self-sufficient. This act considered a transgression, is beneficial to the parents, the little girl and to the community. However, parents might prefer in the long run, conform to the established social norm, and give out their little daughter for early marriage for fear of associated sanction for violation. Associated social sanction can be outright ostracism, being totally cut off from their ancestral home, the only society they have known all their lives and subsequently considered outcasts.

¹²⁴ Open defecation is a clear example of an act that appear immediately beneficial to perpetrator, but has significant negative consequences for community members, hygiene, and environmental challenges.

established and enforced to ensure the sustainability of norms, without which norms easily fall apart (Bicchieri, 2016).

Bicchieri's definition of norm, and in particular condition 2 (b) and 2 (b') normatively require us to conform to norms, but in addition, they keep agents bound by social norm honest and faithful to and encourage conformity to norms either because of established sanctions and/or that expectations are considered legitimate and conformity normal and preferred. For the avoidance of doubt, let us reiterate here that norms can either be positive or negative, depending on the type of norm, level of legitimacy of the norm and approval. It is, therefore, safe to argue that in addition to conditions 1, 2, 2(a), 2(b) and 2(b') of a norm being met, another way to validate the presence of an established norm is testing whether a recurrent community behaviour elicits or triggers an associated negative sanction; condemnation or punishment (Bicchieri, 2016: 74).

In Chapter Two, we argued that conventions may emerge and become established either through agreement, salience, or precedence.¹²⁵ Similarly, norms do evolve and persist out of agreement, salience, and precedence.¹²⁶ Norms, as well as associated sanctions, can emerge by simple agreement. Community members can also rely on salience to arrive at an entrenched norm. Precedence however serves two purposes, on the one hand, precedence functions in the onset in creating a norm, and on the other hand, ensure the sustainability of a norm by making it survive through monitoring and sanctions. This is to say, community members rely on precedent

¹²⁵ See Chapter 3.5. Herein, we termed agreement, salience, and precedence coordination devices because they help agents to coordinate, appropriately guess action combination expected of them for effective coordination.

¹²⁶ In Chapter two, we defined precedence as Precedence as a device for effective coordination that is based on a past coordination equilibrium reached by agents. Whenever agents are in the future faced with a similar problem, they simply rely on this experience to infer on a possible course of action.

acts to infer what is expected in the future. Also, they rely on past sanctions to evaluate the degree of sanction required for specific transgression.¹²⁷

Another very important attribute of sanction is the openness and accessibility of social norms by all participants consequently making monitoring of transgression and appropriate sanctions to deter further public or secret violations. In this way, monitoring and sanctioning activities are said to be effective ways of reinforcing and sustaining entrenched norms, without which established norms easily disintegrate starting from secret violation to public abandonment of a norm and subsequent establishment of a maladaptive norm. It should be noted however that monitoring and sanctioning activities can only be attributed to legitimate norms (established norms that participants subscribe to). Legitimate norms attract legitimate normative expectations, expectations of sanctions or punishment for violation. Regarding legitimate norms, normative expectation, monitoring, and sanctions are considered legitimate and expected. However, because these are already considered legitimate, normative expectations may trigger conformity to entrenched norms even when monitoring and sanction activities are not expected to occur or considered frequent. Interestingly, vigorous monitoring and negative sanctions are necessary to induce conformity at the initial stages of norm development (normative expectation stage), but as soon as normative expectations are effective and in place, empirical expectations immediately follow, and participants of the norm observe widespread compliance to the new norm (Bicchieri 2016: 117).

Emotion has been argued to play a central role in norm compliance. In Chapter Three, we argued that norms are more effective when internal motivation and convictions are at work much

¹²⁷ Note that sanction need to be proportionate to transgression, timely and specifically to forestall further transgressors and transgression. If sanction is not proportionate, it results in sanction been conceived as vengeance, hatred, or targeted violence, in this case, the norm collapses.

more than conformity out of fear of sanctions or punishment. Recall that Bicchieri argued that norms are embedded into scripts specific to situations and social roles that “guide us in interpreting social interaction, forming expectations and predictions, assessing intentions and making causal attributions” (Bicchieri, 2006: xi).¹²⁸ This implies that every social situation offers specific cues, invites specific interpretations, and builds specific expectations, predictions, and emotional responses.

In Chapter Three also, we argued under structural functionalism that, internalization is considered a mechanism that sustains norms and further argued that agents feel the need to conform to norms owing to shared behavioural principles as a matter of **ought** because conformity to the said norm has been psychologically internalized. Internalized norms in this sense, are sufficient motivation for action. This fact resonates with Elster (1989). Elster argued that when norms are internalized, they produce a strong feeling of shame and guilt associated with norm violation, therefore activating norms and associated conformity.¹²⁹ Recall in Chapter Two, we argued that self-interested persons whose ultimate desires are self-regarding, will at every given opportunity, desire to maximize utility, and in this case, always desire to avoid negative emotions which reduces their self-esteem and self-worth. Little wonder, Bicchieri argues that appealing to the emotional level of agents to convince them to abandon a maladaptive practice produces better results than trying to rationally convince them.

Human beings are mostly self-regarding, always craving satisfaction, approval, and endorsements. To this end, humans try very hard in actions and words to feel good, loved and acknowledged. Similarly, they try twice as hard to avoid negative emotional responses from

¹²⁸ Scripts are conceived as the specified sequences of actions that contain both empirical and normative expectations, and whose violation attracts varied degrees of negative emotions.

¹²⁹ See Bicchieri, 2006; McAdams and Rasmusen, 2007; Parsons, 1937; Ritzer, 1983; Hoffman, 1977; Shaw and Campbell 1962.

others such as the feeling of disgust, disappointment, disapproval as well as fear. It is precisely for these reasons that people tend to conform to certain norms to either please friends and family and solicit positive emotional responses such as love and approval or avoid repugnant negative emotional responses such as disappointments and disgust. When entrenched norms elicit such emotional responses for violation or conformity, it invariably implies that such norms have been internalized and considered legitimate.

In addition, Baumeister et al. (2007) argue that negative emotions that accompany norm violation act as requisite and appropriate sanctions that support the sustenance of norms as well as reinforce entrenched social norms. This implies that emotions play a pivotal role in eliciting conformity and serve as a unique sanction, though internal to the transgressor. Emotional responses are triggered because normative expectations are fully developed, and participants perceive norm conformity as an ought requirement. Two points are necessary to make, first, on the one hand, exists the expectation or actual feeling of shame, guilt, disappointment, disgust, or disappointment instituted by violation of an entrenched norm. These feelings reveal to transgressors that a valid norm with internalized normative expectation has been violated. On the other hand, exists the expectation or actual feeling of love and approval, the feeling of power, endorsement, and recognition as a reward for keeping or conforming to an established norm.

The above is aptly captured by Bicchieri in her analysis of trust and the feeling of guilt anchored on legitimate expectation. She argues that the feeling of guilt and resentment is sourced from the existence of an entrenched social norm that has both normative and empirical expectations and has been fully developed and internalized. According to Bicchieri,

Guilt, as well as resentment, presuppose the violation of expectations we consider legitimate. It is irrational to resent a malfunctioning computer, but it is

reasonable to resent the seller if we think he should have known (and told us) the computer was defective. We trusted him, and he flouted our legitimate expectations of honesty and good faith. Guilt and resentment signal that a social norm is in place and that mutual conformity expectations are legitimate. It is reasonable to feel guilt or resentment precisely because there is a norm, a set of mutual expectations that we recognize should be met. The existence of an accepted norm that one contemplates violating is the source of guilt, but it is the recognized legitimacy of mutual normative expectations, not the emotion of guilt, that motivates conformity (Bicchieri, 2006: 25).

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter picks up from the conclusion of the dynamics of social conventions. In the previous chapter, we argued that conventions are established persistent solutions to recurring coordination problems. In essence, it is in the best interest of agents to conform to a convention to avoid coordination failures. Simply put, most of a population conforming to a convention is sufficient to induce agents' conformity to the convention. This chapter thus begins with the argument that a simple majority of agents conforming to a regularity alone is not sufficient to induce conformity. The necessary combination of normative and empirical expectations, as well as the possibility of sanctions for transgressors, serves as the prerequisite for conformity to an established social norm. Herein, we argued that social norms engender and perpetuate social stability in human social interactions. In addition, norms are a persistent phenomenon in every human social interaction, playing a salient role in prescribing or proscribing behaviours. From

this, it was argued that norms are extremely complex and that sometimes, those who follow certain societal norms pay a high price for doing so.

In this chapter, Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of the dynamics of social norms was examined, proffering a critical analysis to the particular significance of the role expectations, reference networks and sanctions play in enhancing conformity and persistence to established norms. Critical analysis of Bicchieri's rational reconstruction, revealed the indispensable role played by empirical and normative expectations of one's reference network in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour by agents. Little wonder scholars argue that social norms are powerful enough to influence and direct human actions.

Norms exist to ensure effective cooperation and cooperation as well as to sustain proper coexistence between agents. Since norms are consistently characterised by the temptation to defect, sanctions are in place and play a crucial role in ensuring that norms are not consistently violated. In this chapter, we argued in line with Bicchieri's definition of norms and the normative constitution of norms that together with other categorised expectations bounds agents to consistently follow established norms to avoid negative externalities and the creation of maladaptive norms.

CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM AND GENDER NORMS IN NIGERIA

When we view gender as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125).

4.0 Introduction

Nature is such that there exists opposites, day, and night, good, and evil, hot, and cold, feeble, and strong, and so on. It is not always the case that these opposites are conflicting. In most cases, opposites that exist in nature are not always chaotic but unified into a harmonized universe. Among entities existing in the universe wherein exists opposites are humans. Social structures and the individuals within them create and reproduce inequalities linked to sex, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and other categories. The fundamental difference in humans stems from their binary sexes, male and female, as evident in their biological and physiological makeup. Similarly, humans are distinct concerning their place and roles in society as made manifest in the masculine and feminine genders.

Around the world, gender is the primary division between people. According to Collins English Dictionary (2020), ‘gender is the state of being male or female concerning the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women.’ Consistent with the above definition, in every society of the world, men and women are sorted into separate groups and each group is apparently assigned with its own socially, culturally, and behaviourally constructed characteristics, such as norms, functions and roles. The different genders have distinct access to

power, property, and prestige in the forms of social success and influence. Over the years, inequality between this gender grew and characterize social expectations, particularly as it relates to power and social status. Men, who tend to possess greater power and enjoy more privileges tend to dominate those who have less.

In recent years, the disparities between gender roles - a set of social and behavioural norms about what is considered appropriate for either a man or woman and that are expected to be adhered to in social settings and interpersonal relationships - have resulted in agitations for gender equity. It seems that the masculine gender enjoys more societal privileges than its feminine counterpart. Gender equity, which requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, privileges, and rewards, is not asking that men and women become the same but for equal opportunities of rights, privileges, and life chances by both genders. Through cultural norms and customs, more power is ascribed to men as they are regarded heads of the family, clan, tribe, descent, kinship, and titles are traced only through male lineage in most societies.

It is in this light that the concept 'patriarchy' is born. This chapter answers the question of gender inequality between the binary sexes, the institution of gender norms and its inherent manifestation in a patriarchal structure sustained by sexist ideology and misogynists. This chapter opens with the origin and theory of patriarchy. This part is necessary to unearth the various theories of the origin of patriarchy. It is argued that since patriarchy as a system is an unfair system, to adequately address it, we need to understand its origin. To this end, we shall discuss the biological, sociological, and feminist theories of the origin of patriarchy.

The above exposition will provide us with the required template to advance the discussion in this chapter by proceeding to discuss gender norms, gender schema and gender

roles. I should mention right from the outset that gender norms are institutionalized and internalized standards of behaviour and expected behaviour of male and female gender in the society. These norms are conventional acts that satisfy the criteria of a norm so much so that violations always make bystanders (or adherents of the said culture) uncomfortable and sometimes violators are sanctioned. This goes to say that, as we shall come to appreciate, the patriarchal system of oppression and subjugation institutes gender-specific roles and responsibilities and determines what ought to be masculine and feminine.

This section will be immediately followed by a discussion on misogyny. Misogyny is often conceived as an entrenched belief system that goes hand in hand with the patriarchal system and sexism. According to Kate Manne, misogyny is the ‘law enforcement’ branch of patriarchy. Based on what we have said earlier about gender norms, gender schemas, and gender roles, it invariably implies that the society institutes gender-specific roles for members of the society in a patriarchal system, and allows misogynists to police, enforce and sanction violators of these norms, thereby sustaining patriarchal system. To effectively analyse misogyny, we shall critically approach these from two angles: Kate Manne and Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Misogynists and sympathisers of oppression, domination, and subjugation (Patriarchy) often rely on the natural, scientific, and biological hypothesis that men are by nature superior to women to support the patriarchal system. The question that always persists is, is gender natural or a social construct? The next section shall discuss gender as a social construct and argue extensively that while being a man and a woman is biological, being feminine or masculine, is a social construct. We shall consider the theory of Sally Haslanger in analysing gender as a social construct, and like every other social construct, is subject to change and modification if found to be unfair, biased, and suppressive.

Finally, we shall proceed to discuss gender stereotypes in the patriarchal system as well as the patriarchal system structure in Nigeria. This will allow us to domesticate the theories so far discuss and situate, with examples, the various types and forms of oppression, subjugation and mechanism used to maintain the system of women subjugation, thus enabling the patriarchal system to persist with little or no growing resistance.

4.1 Origin and Theory of Patriarchy

Patriarchy, from the ancient Greek *patriarkhès* meaning “father,” describes a general societal structure in which men have power over women and thus dominated institutions and structures of the society; both in interpersonal relationships and in the organized society. Power in this context relates to privileges. Thus, in individual relationships or systematized societies, men have more power than women, and men enjoy some level of privileges to which women are not entitled. This definition of patriarchy is considered the narrow traditional definition of patriarchy which cannot be argued as that commonly used in theoretical discussion, especially as conceived by many feminists. Herein, we shall employ the definition of patriarchy as presented by Gerda Lerner to be our working definition. According to Lerner,

Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources. One of the most challenging tasks of

Women's History is to trace with precision the various forms and modes in which patriarchy appears historically, the shifts and changes in its structure and function, and the adaptations it makes to female pressure and demands (Lerner, 1986: 239).

The origin of patriarchy as a concept can be traced back to the writings of social scientists of the nineteenth century who described it as a complex form of organization that applied to and characterized ancient civilizations. I should, however, mention that there is no precise data on the origin of patriarchy. Nevertheless, numerous theories have been promulgated in a bid to explain its origin. Notwithstanding, some sociologists have continued to argue that man has always been dominant.¹³⁰ It was portrayed as a form of political organization that distributed power unequally between men and women, to the detriment of women. According to Engels (1972), patriarchy represented the earliest system of domination, it was “the world-historical defeat of the female sex.” This definition is further reinforced by Kandiyoti (2000), understanding of patriarch “as a system of social relations privileging male seniors over juniors and women” (Kandiyoti, 2000: 8).

To put it more categorically, patriarchy is a social system characterized by men’s possession of power and a system where predominant roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property are prerogatives of the man, while the women are considered second class citizens, owned by the men, thus, subjugated and discriminated upon. The patriarchal system gives priority to the superiority of men over women, where women

¹³⁰ Bachofen and Manheim (1967), were among the first social theorists to present explanations to the origin of patriarchy. Interestingly, according to him, human society was originally matriarchy in nature where women were all powerful. Similarly, Friedrich Engels (1972), supported Bachofen & Manheim (1967) to argue that the society was originally matriarchy but with advancement and expansion and increase in population and thus agriculture, men began to claim ownership and the development of private property ownership, thereby describing how the female sex was defeated in the battle. See Bachofen & Manheim, (1967) and Engels F, (1972). While these are interesting theories, they fail to provide us with convincing facts or proofs of this battle or transition from matriarchy to patriarchy.

have little or no say in political, moral, and social settings. The question is, what is the origin of this superiority and discriminatory system? In prehistoric human civilization, the shortness of life and high mortality rate gave rise to the need to preserve the human population through reproduction. This necessitated the procreation of offspring by women. Accordingly, women assumed tasks associated with taking care of their offspring and the home. On the other hand, men occupied themselves with the hunting of large animals and carrying out other tasks that required speed, physical strength, and long absences from home.

In a similar line of thought, androcentric sociologists and anthropologists argue that the male-dominated family is coextensive with human society. They argue that “man the hunter” held sway in the social world and instituted cooperative productive relation while the wife tended home fires” (Omvedt, 1986: 368). Consequently, men became dominant. The men left home to hunt animals, met with other tribes, traded with these groups, quarrelled, and waged war with them. Men also accumulated possessions in trade and gained prestige by returning home triumphantly, bringing along with them prisoners of war or large animals they had killed. In contrast, little prestige was given to women who were not perceived as risking their lives in performing their routine activities (reproduction, care for their offspring and the home) which were taken for granted. Eventually, men took over society. They empowered themselves with their weapons, items of trade, and knowledge gained from contact with other groups. Women became so to speak, inferior citizens, subject to men's decisions.

Gradually, a circular system of thought evolved. Men came to think of themselves as inherently superior based on the evidence that they dominated society. To this day, patriarchy has been and is always accompanied by cultural supports fashioned to justify male dominance such as designating certain activities as *inappropriate* for women. As tribal societies developed

into larger and more complex groups, men, who enjoyed power and privileges, maintained their dominance. Long after the premodern age of hunting and fistful combat ceased to be, and even after large numbers of children were no longer needed to maintain the population, men held on to this power. In contemporary societies, therefore, male dominance is a continuation of an antique practice whose origin is lost in history.

Patriarchy is evident in almost all societies, though its nature and practice differ from country to country, differs between societies as well as between periods of history.¹³¹ Little wonder Lerner (1986: 8), argued extensively that the origin of patriarchy cannot be traced or limited to a single event in history but a complex process through decades of almost 2500 years (3100-600 BC). Through this complex process and decades of installation of this oppressive system, the economic, social, religious, and cultural institutions of most patriarchal societies were men controlled. The family which is the smallest unit of the society is the place where patriarchy is birthed and at its peak. Through socialization in the family, children are taught all the tenets, norms, and expectations of patriarchy. To begin with, it is in the family that the children are taught that the father (men) is the head of the family, and they learn first-hand how their mother's (women) productivity and mobility, reproductive and financial decisions are controlled by the man. The children internalize these; the boys learn to take charge and be dominant while the girls internalize the culture of perpetually being under the authority and

¹³¹ It is an appreciable fact that the status of women and men in some Asian societies differ from the status of women and men in Europe and America, the very same way it differs from the status of women and men in Africa. Also, the status of women and men in Nigerian societies are different with other societies in the country. For example, in some societies such as the Igbo speaking group, the value of a male child quite unique especially in relation to inheritance rights and leadership. In effect, a woman who gives birth to a boy acquires a more valued position compared to a woman who has only given birth to a female child (See Madubuike, 2015 for detail analysis on cultural values, norms, and beliefs of the Igbo Community in Nigeria and Raji et al. 2016 for comparative analysis of Male-Child preferences amongst Yoruba Community of Nigeria. Furthermore, see www.afghan-web.com/woman for details on the change of the status of women before and after the fall of the Taliban in 2001 (difference between periods of history) and Sahai 1996 for details on traditional status of Indian women (Hindu).

control of the man. As succinctly captured by Lahey (2002: 104), “most women procreate and nurture under conditions of such unrelenting male control that it is fair to say that all of the women's reproductive arrangements are subject to some form of patriarchal domination.”¹³²

Various institutions work interconnectedly to preserve the patriarchal system, the ideology and the practices involved. When modern historians and sociologists describe a society as patriarchal, they mean that men hold the positions of power and enjoy more privileges such as heads of family units, leaders of social groups, legislative positions at workplaces, rights to inheritance and heads of governments and parastatals and so on. Coalescing all these elements together, therefore, patriarchy refers to all socio-political mechanisms put in place to exercise male dominance, to internalize the ideology and transmit these to the next generation. In this light, Facio posits that,

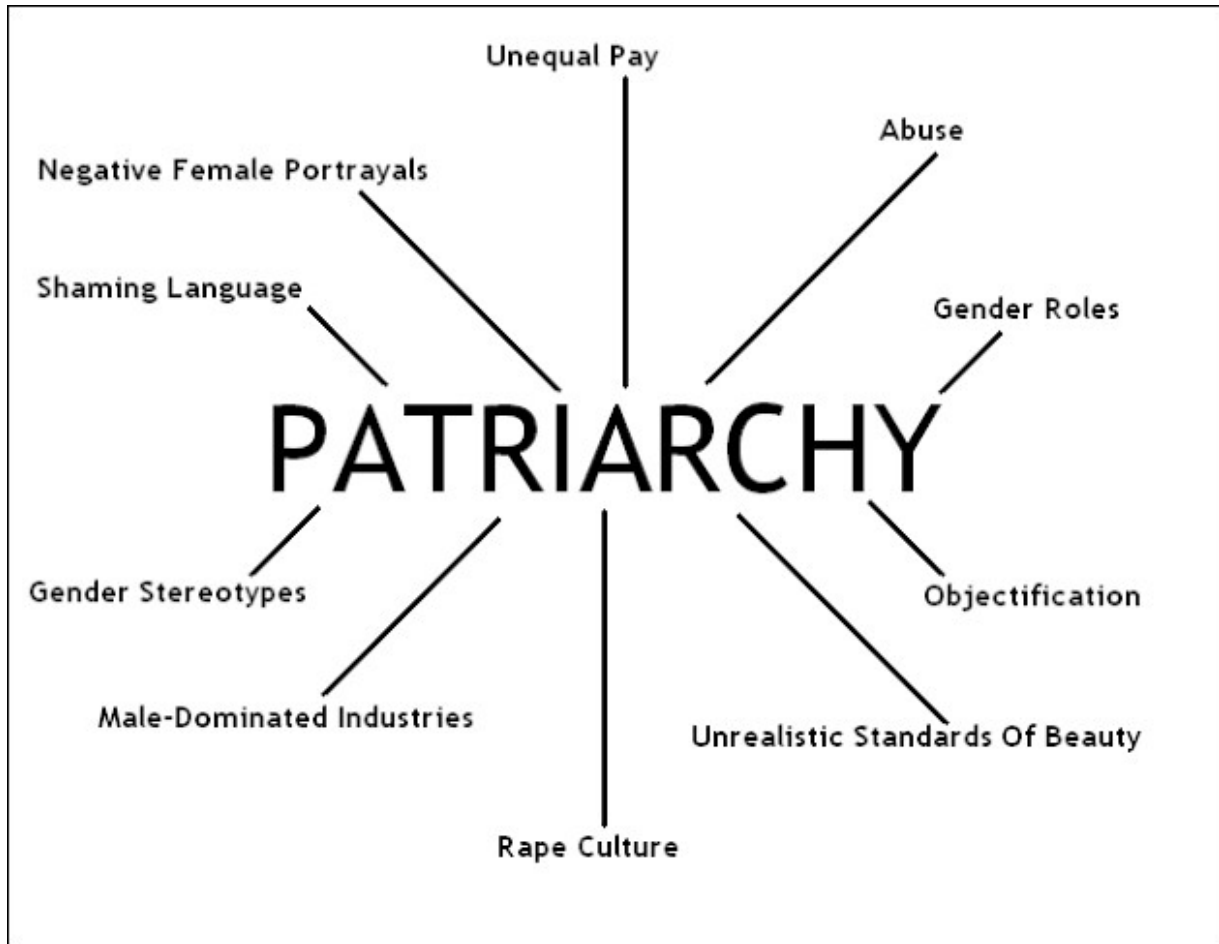
“Patriarchy is a form of mental, social, spiritual, economic, and political organization/ structuring of society produced by the gradual institutionalization of sex-based political relations created, maintained and reinforced by different institutions linked closely together to achieve consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles. These institutions interconnect not only with each other to strengthen the structures of domination of men over women, but also with other systems of exclusion, oppression and/or domination based on real or perceived differences between humans.” (Facio, 2013: 2)

¹³² Lahey's submission is key to our understanding and is a very important point. In successive chapters, we shall see how this condition of unrelenting male control of women's reproduction choices is further exacerbated in women's inability to request (demand condom use). Even though they bear all the risks in terms of infections and pregnancy.

From the foregoing, patriarchy is the product of overwhelming manifestation and institutionalization of strict hierarchical structure to always prioritise and give undue advantage to one gender over the other because its historicity proves that it has always existed and evolved in all generations and cultures. Consensus on the lesser value of women denotes the subconscious agreement between every member of the community that everything relating to the masculine gender is superior to all things feminine; an ideology that explicitly devalues and assigns less worth and/or power to their roles, work, products, the social environment through patriarchal institutions.¹³³

Through these institutions, men collectively and individually oppress women both as a social category and as individuals in different ways, controlling their bodies, minds, sexuality, and spirituality mainly through ‘peaceful’ ways in the forms of religion, norms, cultures, and traditions. It should, however, be noted that the conception of patriarchy as a system in which “men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1990: 20) does not in any way translate to or imply that women are helpless and doomed. According to Lerner, patriarchy should not be misconstrued to mean that “women are either totally powerless or deprived of rights, influence and resources” (Lerner, 1989: 239).

¹³³ The patriarchal institutions refer to a system inclusive of roles, responsibilities, norms, beliefs, myths, practices, relationships, social and political structures used to foster male dominance and saddled with the responsible for the organization of relatively stable patterns of oppressive human activity with respect to the reproduction of individuals, distribution of resources, and societal structures in a patriarchal system. Also see Spierings, 2014.



<http://themalesofgames.blogspot.in/2013/07/the-problem-with-patriarchy.html?m=1>¹³⁴

¹³⁴ The above gives a clear picture of what patriarchy is, how it operates, and the various unrealistic expectations involved therein. Sadly, these expectations and culture as we shall see especially under misogyny, is a culture perpetuated by everyone in the society, including women against women who perceive the violation of patriarchal norms. This scenario denotes the societal agreement-mostly subconscious- entered by every member of the community that everything relating to the masculine gender is superior to all things feminine.

4.3 Gender Norms

What are gender norms? In Chapter Three (3.2), we enumerated various conceptions of norms and argued that norms are the unique attributes of the society, hence, for any definition to be accepted, it must contain the salient and crucial features required. To this end, we defined norms based on Bierstedt (1963: 222), as the “standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate. It is a societal expectation. It is a standard to which we are expected to conform whether we do so or not”. In Chapter 4.3, we conceived gender as male and female members of the society, primarily categorized based on their roles and responsibilities, that are created in our families, our societies, and our cultures. Based on these, we can thus conceive gender norms as institutionalised and internalized standards of behaviour and expected behaviour of male and female gender in the society. In addition to behaviour and expected behaviour, Barry, Bacon, and Child (1957), argue that girls and boys are not only expected to acquire societally approved sex-specific skills, but they are also required to acquire sex-specific personality attributes and self-concepts, thus defined as masculine or feminine (Barry, Bacon, and Child, 1957).

The female and male distinction in society takes a central position in the institution, evolution, and organization of our everyday human social tradition. By assigning gender-specific tasks, members of society are expected to constantly perform these tasks and transmit the same to the next generation through socialization. These standards of behaviour, first and second-order expectations which women and men generally conform to define the custom and tradition of a community at any given point in time are gender norms. Specifically, these includes established feminine and masculine expected manner of speaking, dressing, walking, self-presentation and so on. It is important to mention here that, masculine and feminine differences are influenced by

social expectations and models communicated to the next generation. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Boys are encouraged not to cry because ‘men don’t cry and are generally expected to be strong, decisive, and bold. To this end, boys and girls are treated differently by their parents, neighbours, and society.

To further buttress this point, West and Zimmerman (1987), argue that doing gender is a paradigm executed by an individual, but carried out in the presence of others who are conscious of the “doing”.¹³⁵ According to them,

“The “doing” of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures.” When we view gender as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. In one sense, of course, it is individuals who “do” gender. But it is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125).

¹³⁵ In Chapter Three, we discussed extensively the theory of norms. We argued that for McAdams and Rasmusen for example, argued that one striking distinction of norms from convention is that norms are supported by normative attitudes acquired at a young age. When internalized, they serve as motivation for action. West and Zimmerman here echo the same thought. Gender norms are being internalized and carried out by individuals who are aware that others know what is expected of them, and act in accordance with these expectations since everyone is conscious of these norms and expected behaviours. According to Parsons, when norms and values, roles and expectations are completely internalized, they become part of the individual’s personality which is executed seamlessly as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures”. Ritzer, 1983; Bicchieri et al. 2018; Hoffman, M. L., 1977.

As societies, cultures and traditions evolve, feminism and masculinity become “prototypes of essential expressions”.¹³⁶ These expressions are norms and conventional acts that satisfy the criteria of a norm so much so that violations always make bystanders (or adherents of the said culture) uncomfortable and sometimes violators are sanctioned. For example, a male crossdresser in Nigeria would be shamed, disgraced, humiliated, abused, and probably even denied access to some social settings and public facilities. Similarly, a woman who is expected to behave in a “feminine” way; obedient and respectful, when found fighting or insulting her husband, no matter the cause of the quarrel, will be scolded, insulted, and sanctioned in several ways for violating the stipulated norms she is expected to always live by. Gender norms thus produce gender-specific roles.

4.3.1 Gender Schema and Gender Roles

The term ‘gender schema’ refers to the cognitive or mental account of structured sex-typing¹³⁷ through which agents organize, and process information by connecting it to prior knowledge, experience and construct meaning for societal conformity. This theory was formally introduced by Sandra Bem. She proposed this cognitive theory in 1981, in her famous article “*Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing*”. According to her,

A schema is a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides an individual's perception. A schema functions as an anticipatory structure,

¹³⁶ See Goffman, 1976: 75.

¹³⁷ Sex-typing is defined as the process through which individuals and societies transmogrify and classify roles and responsibilities from biological classification of sexes (male and female) into societally accepted expressions of feminine and masculine. For details, see Mischel 1970; Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957.

a readiness to search for and to assimilate incoming information in schema-relevant terms. Schematic processing is thus highly selective and enables the individual to impose structure and meaning onto the vast array of incoming stimuli. Schema theory construes perception as a constructive process wherein what is perceived is a product of the interaction between the incoming information and the perceiver's pre-existing schema... In general, their perceptions and actions should reflect the kinds of biases that schema directed selectivity would produce. What gender schema theory proposes, then, is that the phenomenon of sex typing derives, in part, from gender-based schematic processing, from a generalized readiness to process information on the basis of the sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema (Bem, 1981: 355).

Bem argued and maintained that sex-linked characteristics were transmitted from older members of the society to new members through socialization carried out either within the family or in the larger society. According to her, children are expected to learn their culture's expectations and perception of gender which gives them a place in society and clarity about themselves. Thus, gender schema is a process rather than content, which may vary from one culture to another. To put it clearly, it is a process through which an agent learns, understands, assimilates, and inculcates his or her culture's information about gender-typed behaviour and expectations about masculinity and femininity.

For Bicchieri, schemata are generic knowledge possessed and grounded in experience by individuals about the natural and social world and serve as the foundations of our understanding and interaction with the natural and social world. Bicchieri opined that there exists a deep and mostly complex connection and the relationship between norms and cognitive structures. This

connection and relationship, though complex, explains the ability of agents to constantly march past experiences stored in the memory (schemas), with present situations (Bicchieri, 2006). This implies that signalling, stereotypes, and others, can be conceived as schemata since they help to make sense of the present situation using past experiences and memories as well as effectively interpreting or conceiving future expectations.¹³⁸

In every society, certain practices are inculcated to foster and promote gender-specific behaviours. Socio-cultural norms and practices designate certain behaviours as more appropriate for males and others more appropriate for females. These birth Gender roles. Gender roles are therefore the adoption/acceptance and implementation of masculine or feminine behavioural traits as proscribed or prescribed by the society to be socially deemed acceptable, desirable, appropriate, or characteristic of a person living within a specific society. Gender schemas and gender roles, hence, significantly affect and influence the way people process and utilize information as cues as well as their attitudes and beliefs of what behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate of a particular gender within an environment.

It is important to reiterate here that, acceptance, and adoption of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours by the society often implies sanctions to members who deviate or are nonconformists to the culture's gender norms and roles. For instance, a man crying at his father's burial or wedding is considered highly inappropriate and being less masculine, while crying at a burial or wedding is approved and considered highly appropriate for a woman. Also, a permanent housewife whose primary duty is to take care of the children and the home is approved and perhaps appropriate in some societies, while a man performing the same task is considered highly inappropriate. Men who decide to stay at home and take care of house chores may be

¹³⁸ For details, see Strauss and Quinn, 1997.

subject to disapproval as such action is labelled gender-inappropriate, but a woman who does the same is accepted as being feminine and exhibiting behaviour appropriate to her gender.

Assigning roles to the various genders creates some form of stereotypical behaviours. Gender stereotypes are the widely accepted bias or judgement for gender roles, prevalent and perpetuated by parents, peers, teachers, and children. This bias is at the root of patriarchy. Gender schema, gender roles and gender-specific roles are often grouped into four basic areas, personal traits, domestic work, physical appearance, and occupations.

4.4 What is Misogyny?

“Misogyny” is derived from the Greek words *misein* (to hate) and *gyne* (woman). This means ‘hatred towards women’ or ‘hatred of women’. There have been several attempts at explaining and defining what exactly is Misogyny, whose contents dates to ancient periods and are evident in Aristotle’s works, conceiving the thoughts of women as incomplete male and as deformity. The origin of misogyny as an ideology is traced back to old mythologies contained in many world religions and today, is evident in virtually every facet of human existence.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ According to Srivastava et al. (2017), the origin of this ideology can be traced back to the period in ancient Greece, during the period before women came into existence. During this period, “men were coexisting peacefully as companions to Gods until Prometheus decided to steal the secret of fire from the God which angered Zeus. Zeus punished mankind with an evil thing for their delight called Pandora, the first woman who carried a box which unleashed all evils such as labour, sickness, old age, and death.” Other notable myths with such discriminatory contents spreading such vices against women over the years include by not limited to Islam as contained in the book of the Quran (Verse 34) which states that “men are in charge of women [by right] ...So righteous women are devoutly obedient. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance-advise them; [if they persist] forsake them in bed; and [finally] strike them. See Eissa, 1999 for an in-dept analysis of this verse. Similarly, Tertullian, an ancient Christian scholar argued that by the virtue of being a female, the individual is a curse given by God and that women are the Devils’ gateway (Holland, 2006). Similar myth and others such discriminatory contents are also contained in other world religions such as Hinduism. Some teachings in Hinduism reduces women’s roles to only three, a daughter, a mother, and a wife. We can therefore appreciate the understanding from this point that misogyny is contained in many comprehensive doctrines with unique approach and viewpoint.

Misogyny is conceived as prejudice or hatred of women or girls that might be expressed as intolerance, social exclusion, sexual discrimination, violence against women, disenfranchisement, sexual objectification and so on (Ussher, 2011, xxix). Kate Manne (2017) conceives misogyny as ‘the system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women’s subordination and to uphold male dominance’.¹⁴⁰ Misogyny is a common practice by men and is conceived as “potential in all men” (Iukes, 1993, xxix), however, misogyny is also practised by women against other women and themselves, usually through self-objectification.

Misogynistic views and beliefs are contained in and revealed through cultural beliefs and religious practices evident in formal and informal norms, folklores, Arts, and literature. Some of these misogynistic practices enforced in cultural hostilities include but are not limited to menstrual taboos, female genital cutting and others (Summers, 2013, Gilmore, 2009). Such hostile practices and social norms are evident in most world religions, cultures, and most world societies leading to unequal treatment of women damage the mental and physical health of women and girls.

Based on the above, it is obvious that misogyny is a cultural attitude that is a central part of the sexist ideology which stands as the justification for the oppression and objectification of women and girls in patriarchal or male-dominated societies. Inherent in the dogmas, teachings and practices of most major religions are hostile cultural practices of most male-dominated societies are several expressed forms of misogyny; in form of limitation to the specified role,

¹⁴⁰ As we shall see shortly under a more elaborate discussion of Misogyny by Kate Manne, misogyny is both an expression and a function of an established patriarchal social order.

exclusion from certain roles/responsibilities or conditioned to specified behaviours or expected behaviour.¹⁴¹

However, according to a study by Bandt (2011), covering over 57 countries, sexism exists and is more evident in countries with greater gender disparities. Consequently, since sexism is premised on superiority based on sex, based on these sexist beliefs, men are generally conceived to be superior to women and thus, more powerful than women and girls (UNDP, 2009). Women and girls in such societies are sanctioned for violation of gender roles based on the level of social expectations (Sibley and Wilson, 2004; Gaunt, 2013). These expectations covering gender roles in such societies spring from establishing historical norms; social, religious, and cultural. These norms become the framework upon which women and girls, fashion their daily behaviours and acknowledge their expected behaviours. It is also through this framework that women and girls are perceived. The violation of these norms often attracts a certain degree of discrimination, hostility, and sanction.¹⁴²

Sexism and sexist beliefs invariably promote significant gender inequality. This implies that sexist beliefs are not in themselves negative. Consequently, making such beliefs to be

¹⁴¹ Misogyny should be distinguished from sexism. In the above, we defined and conceived misogyny as the objectification, prejudice and hatred of women and girls in the form of intolerance or social exclusion that serves both as the function and expression of an established patriarchal system. This should be distinguished from sexism which may be defined as an ideology, conceived, or practised that one sex is considered superior to another. Put differently, sexism may be defined as an institutionalised prejudice and discrimination of members of the society based on the person's sex. This conceptualization of sexism implies that sexism capitalises on the established biological nature of men and women as the basis for discrimination (Savigny, 2020). Owing to this, sexism can apply to both women and men.

¹⁴² Sexism rests on the notion or assumption that women are inferior by the mere fact of their biological differences and men biologically superior to women. This premise informs the binary relationship of total subordination and domination in every society. Based on the above analysis on patriarchal system and its origin, it is evident that society, including world religions use such biological differences as the mechanism to institute an entire social structure and system. Such premises and assumptions are highly problematic as such arguments have been used to support racial discrimination and other similar biologically unsupported claims. Unfortunately, such 'scientific' claims serve as natural and rational justifications for sexist ideologies, misogynistic tendencies, and patriarchal system.

ambivalent and such prejudices can be directed to men and women alike, depending on the society and culture being analysed. The above underscores the fact that sexist beliefs cannot and should not be measured and analysed strictly in a negative light. However, Glick and Fiske (2011) argue that notwithstanding the positive colouration of sexist beliefs to appear positive and to elicit positive attitudes, the fact that behaviours in society are narrowly defined promotes gender inequality. Little wonder Mikolajczak and Pietrzac (2015), argue that,

Insofar as women are seen through the lens of traditional homemaker, wife, mother, or young innocent, their activities outside of these roles are seen as transgressions and will elicit hostility. Ambivalence toward women stems from the inevitable interdependence between the genders, which, according to the authors, is most prominently expressed in paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexual relationships. Depending on whether the interdependence is turned into competition or cooperation, it generates hostility or benevolence, respectively. Male power might take the form of domination or protective paternalism; distinct gender traits and roles might be attributed as either competitive or complementary; and heterosexual relations might be either adversarial or intimate (Mikolajczak and Pietrzac, 2015: 170).

As a sequel to the above, we can say clearly that sexism which grossly promotes gender inequality evolves from the background and rests on the biological premise of superiority and inferiority. According to this theory, owing to biological differences, men are considered superior and women inferior. Sadly, this theory obtains support and 'justification' from unproven scientific statements, cultural, and religious beliefs. Such discrimination, hatred, and inequality based on one's sex births Patriarchy as a social system. Patriarchy as a social system privileges

men and place them in an advantaged position while at the same time, structurally oppressing women by giving men unwarranted and unrestricted opportunities while relegating women to subordinate positions. Finally, misogyny was conceived as the law enforcement branch of the patriarchal social system that systematically places women in a disadvantaged position of utter hatred, disenfranchisement, intolerance as well as the sanctioning of the female gender especially those who violate specified gender-specific norms. We shall now proceed to discuss misogyny from the lenses of well-known scholars. Considering this, we shall be considering the views of Kate Manne and Kimberlé Crenshaw.

4.4.1 Kate Manne

Kate Manne is a renowned Australian Philosopher who specializes in social philosophy, moral philosophy, and feminist philosophy. She is also the author of the famous book published in 2017 titled "*The Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*". In this book, Kate Manne presents her views and arguments about the logic of misogyny. *The Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* was written primarily against the backdrop of Manne's harrowing and unpleasant experiences as a young girl attending an all-boys school where she was one of the first three girls who attended the school the year it was integrated. To this end, we can safely argue that Manne's account of misogyny is an exposition of what misogyny is from personal or first-person narration and experience.

To begin with, Manne argues that misogyny should be conceived as intrinsically different and distinct from all the other feminist works and agender as conceived in many works of

literature.¹⁴³ The first point that needs significant clarification according to Manne, is to explicitly distinguish misogyny from the tendencies to be conceived as deep hatred harboured by men toward girls and women (womanhood). Kate Manne (2017: 32) conceives the dictionary definition of misogyny as “a property of individual agents (typically, although not necessarily, men) who are prone to feel hatred, hostility, or other similar emotions toward any and every woman, or at least women generally, *simply because they are women.*”¹⁴⁴. While Manne acknowledges that this is only a naïve conception of misogyny which in effect, is “primarily a property of individual misogynists, who are prone to hate women qua women” (Manne, 2013: 44). Manne goes further to argue that this sort of conception of misogyny is defective, riddled with significant limitations. It is defective primarily because misogyny is completely inaccessible to women thereby silencing its victims and thus misogyny becomes difficult to diagnose under such naïve conception (Manne, 2013: 42).¹⁴⁵

Instead of defining misogyny as conceived above (deep-rooted hatred against women in the society), Kate Manne argues that misogyny should be approached from the perspectives of victims of misogynistic acts in the society rather than in terms of perpetrators of misogynistic acts.¹⁴⁶ This would in her view, institute a paradigm shift thus uniquely resituating misogyny and thus conceived no longer as “distinctively gendered contents, which reflect and help to regulate

¹⁴³ There is a lot of feminist work on sexism, oppression, and patriarchy, Manne noted which implies thus that for Manne misogyny is a unique concept that feminist scholars research has focused upon. See Manne 2013.

¹⁴⁴ She defines misogyny as social system where women face hostility and hatred because they are women in a man's world: Patriarchal system.

¹⁴⁵ Manne draws in part the three different approaches to the question of “what is X” from Sally Haslanger (2012). For further analysis on conceptual, descriptive, and analytical method of investigation, see Haslanger 2012; Manne 2013. Herein, we shall not engage in Manne’s analysis of misogyny under these investigative models simply not to deviate from the core of the purpose of the part. Instead, we shall jump directly to analysis what Manne herself conceive misogyny as. For in-depth analysis of Manne’s position on the three methods of investigation, refer to Manne 2013: 42-29.

¹⁴⁶ In a strict sense, Manne is suggesting a paradigm shift from the traditional subjugation conceptualization of misogyny (misogyny as conceived and defined by perpetrators) to a conceptualization of misogyny by the victims. Simply put, an objective conceptualization of misogyny.

or restore patriarchal order; or particularly harsh enforcement mechanisms for girls and women (in the relevant class), as compared with boys and men; or particularly intense and/or invasive forms of policing (for example, surveillance, scrutiny, and suspicion) for girls and women, as compared with male counterparts” (Manne, 2017: 64). This conception of misogyny as conceived over centuries would according to Kate Manne, be transformed and misogyny would be conceived as primarily targeting women because they are women in a man’s world rather than because they are women in a man’s mind, where that man is a misogynist” (Manne, 2017: 64).

Kate Manne further creates a compelling link between patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny. To begin with, she defines patriarchy as certain

[K]inds of institutions or social structures both proliferate and enjoy widespread support within it—from, for example, the state, as well as broader cultural sources, such as material resources, communal values, cultural narratives, media, and artistic depictions, and so on. These patriarchal institutions will vary widely in their material and structural, as well as their social, features. But they will be such that all or most women are positioned as subordinate in relation to some man or men therein, the latter of whom are thereby (by the same token) dominant over the former, on the basis of their genders.

Based on her definition of patriarchy above, Kate Manne proceeds to define sexism. According to her, sexism is that ideological system that stands to continuously provide theoretical backing to patriarchy capitalising on the perceived fundamental differences between men and women. Such supposed and perceived differences in sex and capabilities evident in and preached by patriarchy are naturalized through sexism, consequently standing as patriarchy’s proofs and teachings. In short, sexism is that branch of patriarchy that rationalises all the beliefs

of the patriarchal social order. Kate argued that Misogyny¹⁴⁷ is the moral manifestation of sexist ideology and the law enforcement arm of a patriarchal social order.¹⁴⁸ Put simply, Kate Manne argues that sexism can be defined as “the branch of patriarchal ideology that justifies and rationalizes a patriarchal social order, and misogyny as the system that polices and enforces its governing norms and expectations. So, sexism is scientific; misogyny is moralistic. And a patriarchal order has a hegemonic quality.” (Manne, 2017: 20)

According to Manne, misogyny should be

“[U]nderstood as the “law enforcement” branch of a patriarchal order, which has the overall function of policing and enforcing its governing ideology. Constitutively speaking, misogyny in a social environment comprises the hostile social forces that

(a) will tend to be faced by a (wider or narrower) class of girls and women because they are girls and women in that (more or less fully specified) social position; and

(b) serve to police and enforce a patriarchal order, instantiated in relation to other intersecting systems of domination and disadvantage that apply to the relevant class of girls and women (e.g., various forms of racism, xenophobia, classism, ageism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, and so on) (Manne, 2013:63).

¹⁴⁷ The concept misogyny has always been misunderstood to imply sexism and vice versa. As we shall see shortly and important to note herein, while sexism is conceived as the prejudice and overt discrimination against girls and women in the society based on sex, misogyny according to Manne is simply put, is the moral manifestation of this sexist ideology evident in patriarchal social systems.

¹⁴⁸ A system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property, while the women are subjugated which thus goes a long way in identifying the delegatory role of the women in a form of lower beings in the society.

Based on the above, Kate Manne argues that the function of misogyny is not to justify women, or non-men, as having a lower place in the social hierarchy, but is rather to enforce that lower social status. This implies that misogyny could be argued to persist to exist only in a patriarchal order, like other forms of systemic domination, misogyny is directed on a specific class of girls and women keeping them perpetually disadvantaged and enforced to remain so. Sadly, women and girls in this category help to enforce this perpetually disadvantaging position. Because misogyny is a systemic social order, Manne argues that acts of misogyny can be committed by people who desire women in one way or another, particularly as objects for men's ego ascension primarily because it is not a matter of individual attitudes or sexist hatred of women but something practised and noticeable within the general existence of the society.

Recall that it was argued above that while sexism is the installed prejudice and discrimination of girls and women in the society based on biological realities, misogyny is the moral manifestation of the sexist ideology in a patriarchal social system. Therefore, misogyny and sexism work together to uphold such unfavourable and prejudiced social relations. In her view, sexism is an ideology that supports patriarchal social relations, but misogyny enforces it when the violation of the established norm is perceived. In effect, "*failure to play one's assigned part in the script, or to attempt some kind of role reversal, is prone to give rise to startling reactions— a sense of being "taken aback."* The person may then be perceived as "off," off-putting, peculiar, and creepy" (Manne, 2017: 169).

Kate Manne believes that all humans play a part in perpetuating misogyny, even if some individuals are not aware of it in the cause of practising established social order or culture. Misogyny is widespread and supported by institutional rules and practices. Being directed at women and girls, it surfaces each time the society and norms remind this category (i.e., the

category of women and girls) of those things they are “expected” to do or not do, and those things they are “supposed” to be. Since ‘women are in a man’s world’, they are expected to always, without exemption, abide by the rules in the said world. That means women are always to be sensitive to men’s overall dominance; if she dares tries to climb the ladder, if she dares try to create/carve a niche for herself, if she dares not to consent, if she dares to have a voice, all societally approved misogynistic forces are directed at her to force her into her “established” roles. To her, most misogynists are unapologetic because misogynists often think they are taking the moral high ground by preserving a status quo. They want to be socially and morally superior to the women they target (or in fact, any woman that appears to violate the norm).

“It turns out that women penalize highly successful women just as much as men do, as indicated earlier in this chapter, but for seemingly different reasons. The researchers had male and female participants rate a newly appointed female vice president, described in a personnel file, on measures of hostility, antisocial traits, and overall likability. Both male and female participants were prone to punish her, socially, by inferring norm violations— for example, manipulateness, coldness, aggression— unless given specific information about her feminine virtues and good behaviour. In which case, the “social punishment” effect was blocked for male and female participants. However, crucially, only the female participants then had more negative self- evaluations. This supported the researchers’ hypothesis that penalizing successful women serves an ego- protective function (only) for other women. It defuses the threatening sense that a similar— and similarly good, decent, and/ or “real” woman— is more competent or

accomplished than they are. And, tellingly, it appears that this is linked to a lack of self-belief that can be assuaged by positive feedback (Manne, 2013: 263-264).

I think most misogynistic behaviours are coloured with is about hostility toward women who violate patriarchal norms and expectations, thus not serving male interests in the ways they are expected to. The above elicits a sense of right and privilege, making agents perceive women as constantly doing something wrong.¹⁴⁹ Kate Manne however, passively submitted that women only appear that way because society expects them to think, feel and behave that way. Kate Manne believes that there are roles we all play in society, roles that are assigned to us at birth and that we rarely question. These roles are directed to women, carried out by both men and women in a patriarchal system against women, especially as women have constantly been punished whenever they defy these roles and norms. Manne further argues that a lot of unconscious biases and cultural norms sustain the way women are being treated in this regard.

According to Manne, misogynistic violence is a way of controlling subjugation of the female gender rendering them inferior. Manne tried to give an insight into how women are positioned as givers of characteristically moral goods such as affection and care thus capturing the unreasonable demands patriarchy makes of women. Manne states that “a giver is then obligated to offer love, sex, attention, affection, and admiration, as well as other forms of emotional, social, reproductive, and caregiving labour, in accordance with social norms that govern and structure the relevant roles and relations.” (Manne, 2017: 301).¹⁵⁰ Patriarchal societies are usually societies with deeply entrenched social norms and sometimes violations

¹⁴⁹ Society has been systemically unjust to women and constantly privilege men. While men could be free and do what they want as part of being a man and creative, women are always morally objectionable with certain actions sanctioned as having a bad attitude, abrasive, nagging and so on.

¹⁵⁰ We see this recurring in various world religions and cultures that tend to conceive women as sexual objects, reduced to only household chores and giving birth.

attract deadly consequences. This fact forced Manne to paint an interesting face of misogyny as more or less a conservative social control, at the hands of which women suffer monumental pain and punishment. This conception is very pessimistic and for what it is worth, society must begin to call out misogyny for what it is, the tenacious coercive and consistent unforgiving punishments women suffer in all patriarchal confines.

To her, with Misogyny we can only get huge amounts of backlash when men think women are taking opportunities and privileges away from them when they think women are challenging male dominance. She believes we must deal with this backlash as women cannot and should not internalize patriarchal values and give and give and give until they are nothing. In summary, Kate Manne believes Misogyny has long been understood as something men feel, not something women experience, and this, according to her, is a mistake.

In conclusion, we should state that Kate Manne set out to firstly, dispel the naïve and simplistic picture as well as the definition of misogyny that conceives misogyny as the hating of all women. Why should misogynistic men and women write off all women, including those who appear to strictly adhere to all patriarchal standards? Thus, misogyny is not an unpredictable break, but the law-enforcement branch of an established patriarchal system that happens each and whenever women try to become or do things they are not 'supposed' to do. Misogyny's place and role in society are, to remind women of their place in the society by punishing them and making sure they remain in their place and maintain the biased social order.

4.4.2 Kimberlé Crenshaw

Kimberlé Crenshaw is an American philosopher and a professor at the UCLA Law School, Columbia. She is a co-founder and executive director of the African American Policy Forum. Kimberlé is well known for her contribution to the critical race theory and the development of the theory of intersectionality. Intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé over three decades ago to describe how gender, race, class, and other individual characteristics ‘intersect’. It is, therefore, a theoretical framework for understanding how women and people of colour is marginalized. It further provides clarity to the social and political aspects of a person’s identity that taken together (social + political), evolve the obvious degree of discrimination and/or privileges.

Over the years, the understanding of and definition of gender-based violence has been transformed from a strictly family affair (private discourse) to a societal scale discussion.¹⁵¹ This is one among many such categories of marginalized persons in society. Kimberlé argues that,

Intersectionality is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power... The term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them. Intersectional erasures are not exclusive to black women. People of colour within LGBTQ movements; girls of colour in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse—all face

¹⁵¹ By this we imply that gender-based violence is no longer conceived simply as pockets of abuses; battery and rape against women but, has now been transformed into a broad scale system of domination. As a sequel to the discussion of misogyny and further analysed under Kate Manne above, it is safe to conclude that this full-blown scale system of domination targets and affects certain class in the society, women. (Also see Crenshaw, 1991).

vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, able-ism and more. Intersectionality has given many advocates a way to frame their circumstances and to fight for their visibility and inclusion.

Based on above, it is obvious that intersectionality is an umbrella, a banner that holds and includes virtually all classes of persons that consider themselves as ‘dominated’ or subjugated in the society, thereby giving them identity and power to demand recognition, acceptance, and equality. To be fair, the theory of intersectionality evolved as a tactical approach to framing the interactions of race and gender, particularly against the background of violence against women of colour, aimed at addressing the difficulties faced by black women. Today, other social categories marginalised and subjugated identify and are captured in the discourse and conceptualization of intersectionality. They include by not limited to race, gender, class, religion, sexuality, disability, and age (Crenshaw 1991). This point and clarifications are necessary to redirect our discussion swiftly and effectively from the broad path of intersectionality in the strict sense of its usage in the literature and directing towards the specific issue and scope of this work, women subjugation. Herein, I should mention that the core question to be asked is, how does intersectionality deal with the case of violence against women in general? (i.e., considering misogyny discussed above).

In the past five decades, scholars have challenged the ways subjugation, abuse, and violence against women are perpetuated and condoned with a significant level of institutional backings.¹⁵² In over 30 years of her academic life, Crenshaw worked tirelessly to promote the idea of intersectionality by critically addressing the high degree of difficulties women must endure because of their race and gender. To Crenshaw, there are different intersectionalities,

¹⁵² Some examples of such subjugation include denial to female social mobility and intimate gender violence.

namely: structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality.¹⁵³ Hence her position gave a brief introduction to the theory of intersectionality while also considering how media representations of women of colour reinforce race and gender stereotypes. Intersectionality in this regard according to Crenshaw is a core concept both provisionally and illustratively.

Although the primary intersection explored by Crenshaw was the intersection between race and gender, she, however, posits that the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and colour. To briefly discuss the categories of intersections, Crenshaw conceived structural intersectionality to be the intersect that addresses and refers to how women of colour are situated within overlapping structures of subordination. Structural intersectionality is thus unintentionally producing a system of subordination created by individuals' burden obtained from pre-existing vulnerabilities creating a 'perpetual' system of disempowerment (Crenshaw 1991: 1249).

Structural intersectionalism, therefore, deals strategically with issues of violence against women and how this is anchored on the wings of racism and patriarchy. Political intersectionality, on the other hand, was used by Crenshaw to refer to the different ways in which political and discursive practices relating to race and gender interrelate, often obliterating

¹⁵³ Crenshaw used these; structural, political and representational intersectionalities to discuss the issues of rape and gender subordination, racism and sexism, race and domestic violence under these categories (structural, political and representational intersectionalities) to demonstrate succinctly how women's actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and subjugation are supported and crystalized affecting social mobility so much so that life women in such situations accept these vicious circle as a norm and are eventually punished for daring to speak out against such institutional condemnation. An example of such high headed and unpleasant discrimination against women is exemplified in the ways the female gender is being deprived of equal values, opportunities and privileges by the society and male gender. In effect, the society has significantly been controlled by laws strategically instituted to the subjugation of the female gender by downplaying gender-based violence committed by men towards females while the men receive swift resolutions given to gender-based violence committed by female. This fact invariably upholds the submission, Crenshaw's view as well, that there is favouritism in the way male gender violence are being perceived in the society when compared to the female gender. See Crenshaw, 1991.

women, especially women of colour. (i.e., the intersection between anti-racism and feminism organisations). Crenshaw used the political intersection to discuss the dilemma of women of colour that are completely different from the experiences of fellow white folks concerning sexism and racism. She argues that “women of colour experience racism in ways not always the same as those experienced by men of colour and sexism in ways not always parallel to experiences of white women, antiracism and feminism are limited, even on their own terms” (Crenshaw 1991: 1252).

Finally, Crenshaw conceived representational intersectionality as the category of intersectionality that deals with race and gender images (stereotypes) perpetually present in human social culture, that often converge to create unique and specific narratives deemed appropriate for women of colour. According to her, race and gender always converge to form a disproportionate level of concerns for women, consequently limiting the issues and challenges, concerned either with racism or gender. Taken together, these concerns are significantly reinforced since one discourse relegating the importance of the other makes “the power relations that each attempt to challenge are strengthened” (Crenshaw, 1991: 1282).

From the above discussion and positions of Kate Manne and Kimberlé Crenshaw, it could be deduced that both subscribe to the view that misogyny is both social and structural discrimination/subjugation of the female gender, a vicious circle of maltreatment, hatred, and various degrees of abuses caused by years of patriarchy and sexist ideology. Put differently, this inequality between men and women in the society is a result of years of the unchecked cultural superiority of the male gender over the female gender, leading to different levels of subjugation of the female gender, sexual abuse, maltreatment, and sanctioned for violating established norms. These discriminations and subjugations persist, translating into the conception that the female

gender is indeed sympathetic compared to that of the male gender. Kate Manne and Kimberlé Crenshaw directly oppose misogyny as a social problem that needs to be addressed through structural and political recreating laws and regulations. This social problem can also be addressed by cultivating a new culture where there is unity in speaking out against gender-based violence, sexual abuse, discrimination, and subjugation of the female folk in whatever form or manner.

4.5 Gender: A Social Construction.

Historically, gender was used as a means of identification, specifically describing the obvious biological distinctions between sexes. Over the years, socialized connotations of these sexes evolved to connote concepts as femininity and masculinity, which does not only limit itself to biological distinctions but a whole system of behaviours and expected behaviours. Scholars such as Fenstermaker, S. and West, C. (2002), agree that gender is not a personal trait. According to them, “an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society” (Fenstermaker and West, 2002: 4).

Gender is an important concept that denotes the duties and responsibilities given to men and women in society, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) basic concept analysis and implementation framework. These are learnt and vary between cultures. According to them,

“Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies, and our cultures. The concept of gender also

includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time, and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis, it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever.”

Based on the above, it is thus clear that while the “sex” of a person refers to the biological characteristics that categorize one as either female or male, gender as a concept is used to describe how an individual's biological characteristics are interpreted, measured, and culturally valued and integrated into a specific culture or society.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, while sex appears to be general, applying to all cultures and societies, gender is not. Gender is culture-specific and applies to a specific geographical location with specific gender roles, relations, expectations, and identities.¹⁵⁵ It is important to mention because, in some societies, there exists a high level of unfavourable treatment of females in the society based on their gender, denying

¹⁵⁴ It is important to state here that this distinction between sex and gender has however been challenged by some scholars. According to Baden and Goetz (1997), it is untrue that gender is socially constructed and sex not. For them, both sex and gender are socially constructed. It is safe to argue that this line of thought though defective, takes into consideration the various challenging discourse of the 21st century on transgenders, cross dressers, homosexuals, among others. Notwithstanding the above, for the purpose of this project, we consider sex as the concept that specifically refers to the biological characteristics of an individual and thus categorization of persons to male or female while gender is the social determined concept referring to ideas, roles, practices and expectations of men and women in the society (i.e., femininity and masculinity)

¹⁵⁵ The biological differences of a man and a woman in Europe, America, and China, is the same as the biological differences of a man and woman in Africa and the Caribbean. However, the gender roles, identities, relations and expectations of males and females in China, is very different from those of males and females in Africa and America.

them certain rights and opportunities. In other societies, there exists a fair level of gender division of labour; sharing appropriately between men and women.¹⁵⁶

As a sequel to the above, it is safe to argue in line with social constructivists that gender is a social construction. According to the proponents of social constructionism, knowledge is an account of what has been “produced collaboratively by a community of knowers”. An account of reality could therefore be termed a society produced if the concept, the cultural code, the expression, teaching, and interpretation of the account are specific to a particular time and place. An example of a socially constructed term is Power. According to Marecek et al. (2004),

“For social constructionists, power, along with its associated differences in status, entitlement, efficacy, and self-respect, is a central dimension of social life. Viewed from afar, power may appear entrenched. Yet power is not a fixed and invariant property of individuals; rather, it is a network of noncentralized forces. It is continually produced, contested, resisted, and subverted” (Marecek et al. 2004: 195).

Owing to our definition of gender and as conceived by UNESCO, gender is a social construct since it attends to the roles and responsibilities of members of the society and is produced collaboratively by the community to guide “gender division of labour”. This is specific to a particular time and place. As a social construct, gender is considered to achieve a unique status because it is inculcated and learned by members of the society very early in life, which they are supposed to practice and expect from others as children, teenagers, adults, and until

¹⁵⁶ Such unfavourable level of discrimination against one gender by the other is similar to the sort of discrimination argued by Kimberle Crenshaw perpetuated by the whites against the blacks in the US. Haven't said this, it is safe to thus conclude that, in the same way there is nothing natural about racism or superiority of one race over another, there is also nothing biological/natural about the perpetuated discrimination of one gender claiming to be superior to another gender.

death (Greco, 2013). Also, gender has been conceived to be an activity of utilizing normative prescriptions and beliefs about sex categories based on situational variables.¹⁵⁷ Consequently, we shall therefore proceed to interrogate the idea Sally Haslanger which will help us better comprehend the concept of gender as a social construction.

4.5.1 Sally Haslanger: Gender A Social Construction.

Sally Haslanger is an American Philosopher. She has several philosophical publications to her name with special interests in feminist theory, feminist metaphysics, ancient and political philosophy. Sally Haslanger is one of the most prolific contemporary analytic feminist philosophers. She is a strong believer in the power of ideas. She opines that social justice will not be achieved by just working to change beliefs, for the habits of body, mind, and heart are usually more powerful than arguments.¹⁵⁸ Her primary goal was not the quest of unravelling the origin of rules, roles, expectations, and practices of a member of the society, but to explain what happens in the society when these have been crystallized and practised.

The theory of “social constructionism” is important in contemporary social discourse. Social constructionist accounts of what it is to have a gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, thus, systematically challenging preconceived assumptions about what is real, natural, and normal. The contemporary literature on race and gender concerns primarily, questions concerning reality, knowledge, and nature, which sometimes conceive social construct as mere illusion or at best,

¹⁵⁷ This is to say that gender has is not only ascribed to roles, responsibilities, and expectations, but also, normative prescriptions, so much so that people expect certain behaviour from specific genders, violations to these are always accompanied by sanctions. Also see Bosson, Taylor, & Prewitt-Freilino, 2006; Richardson and Green, 1999.

¹⁵⁸ This is striking and significantly punctures the ideas of social norms. If social justice cannot be achieved by simply changing believes, how can we change habits of body and mind and heart if not through changing believes?

something less than fully real. The important question to ask however is, can we accept that race and gender are unreal? For those in subordinated positions, it sometimes seems that race, gender, age, disability, and such are concepts *too* real to be considered an imagined illusion.

As previously conceived, traditionalists present and justify racist and sexist theories by often relying on false scientific and biological precedence that- blacks in terms of racism and women in terms of sexism- are inferior by nature.¹⁵⁹ There is an unmistakable pattern of projecting onto subordinated groups, as their “nature” or as “natural,” features that are instead (if manifested at all) the result of social forces.

According to Haslanger, in her well-known and much-discussed conceptions of gender and race, she takes them to be social classes constituted by patterns of social domination, subordination, and privilege. According to her, in defining what it is to be, e.g., a woman, we must refer to social factors. For Haslanger, race and gender and their elements combine to portray a vivid picture of classification that qualify as a social construction. Examples of these are not farfetched since, in virtually all societies, we experience the situation where dominant groups conceive others as subordinates. In *Resisting Reality: Social Reconstruction and Social Critique* (2012), Sally Haslanger

“Provide accounts of race and gender that clarify the sites and forms of construction involved, and that can also be fruitfully employed in the quest for social justice...I am interested in certain forms of oppression that are read into, marked upon, and lived through the body. The process of marking groups and naturalizing their subordination is an element in virtually all oppression, yet the

¹⁵⁹ This is very important. It inevitably implies that, while in her view, gender and race are real, efforts are made by sexists and racists to rely on nature for their arguments.

form and degree of bodily involvement varies. The markers of race and gender, like the markers of disability and age, are not accessories that might be added or dropped, habits to be taught or broken; they are parts of our bodies and “as-if” indelible. Although other forms of oppression may be equally lasting, and maybe more severe, it is both analytically and politically valuable to have a framework within which we can explore contemporary forms of embodied oppression (Haslanger, 2012: 6).

Markers of all forms of domination and oppression; race and gender, disability, age and other forms of classification promote and through teachings and sexist ideologies, conceive these oppressive cultures as part of our bodies. By being taught and learned, oppression and domination become phenomena of social relation: “men as dominant and women as subordinate...whites as dominate and coloured as subordinate” (Haslanger, 2012: 7).

For Haslanger, ‘neither gender nor race is an intrinsic feature of bodies.’ This implies that having a gender does not simply translate to having specific reproductive anatomy.¹⁶⁰ Gender for Haslanger is simply the social meaning of sex in the same way it is argued that race is the social meaning of “colour.” Notwithstanding this point, it is however clear, and we should mention that even though sex and gender are significantly different, sex and gender have the same referent.

Sex and “colour” have social meaning to the extent that the interpretation of someone as male or female, white or Asian, has implications for their social

¹⁶⁰ This line of thought is in tandem with our discussion and analysis of gender and the distinction between sex and gender. We argued previously that while sex implies the biological differences inherent in man and woman, gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies, and our cultures. In effect, gender is socially constructed and only gender places restrictions on members of the society as to what they can do or not do, achieve, or not achieve and not sex.

position: the roles they are expected to play in the social context, the norms in terms of which they will be evaluated, the identities they are expected to have, and the like. Such implications are easily demonstrated, hence, on my view, gender and race are real. However, their reality in the contemporary context is the product of unjust social structures, and so should be resisted (Haslanger, 2012: 7).

In line with standard feminist practice, she takes ‘woman’ and ‘man’ to be gender terms, and ‘female’ and ‘male’ to be sex terms. For her, women, on the one hand, are societally conditioned to occupy a subordinate, underprivileged, and subjugated social position in virtue of observed or imagined female reproductive features. On the other hand, men occupy a privileged and authoritative social position in a parallel manner. In chapter two, we argued that through the process of internalization of norms or complementary norms, cultural vocabulary, and narratives that evolve, provide an acceptable framework for action within the society.¹⁶¹ An example of such a biased and subjugate narrative is that “weakness is a norm for women in certain classes/races/periods and not others, corresponding to the sort of role that women of that sort are assigned, or corresponding to the reference domain” (Haslanger, 2012: 10). The obvious question however is, what makes being weak and helpless a gender norm for women in some contexts and yet not others?

¹⁶¹ Through internalization of societal expectations, norms, members of the society develop and accept all manner of frameworks for actions, prescribed and proscribed actions. This further cemented by the evolution of cultural vocabularies, images, and scripts as well as concepts and narratives that provide the framework for action. Similarly, we also argued in Chapter Three (3.4.1) that through the process of socialization, these internalized knowledge of norms and values, roles and expectations are passed from one generation to the next. For further details, see Ritzer, 1983; Bicchieri et al. 2018; Haslanger, 2012.

Furthermore, Haslanger drawing direct conclusions from Mackinnon's critique of objectivity¹⁶² focuses on the explanations of practical and empirical norms that tend to legitimize and sustain the objectification of women. To begin with and as a sequel to the above, women are considered the weaker sex and gender and so, are expected to always abide by stipulated norms and narratives that consolidate their place, roles, and responsibilities in society. Consequently, gender is thus defined in a very narrow sense in terms of sexual objectification.¹⁶³ Through sexual objectification (women as objects of satisfaction for men's desire) women are sexually objectified by men, the objectifiers. To sustain this argument and maintain the status quo of sexual objectification in society, rationality and reason are construed, internalized, and transmitted from one generation to the next as a gendered phenomenon.

To understand the point we have made so far, we therefore affirm and define gender norms as a cluster of rules and regulations, roles and responsibilities, narratives, images, abilities characteristics internalized by members of the society stipulating expected standards by which individuals are expected to act and serve as the canon to judge good and virtues actions appropriate to the gender.¹⁶⁴ For Haslanger therefore, "masculinity and femininity are norms or standards by which individuals are judged to be exemplars of their gender and which enable us to function excellently in our allotted role in the system of social relations that constitute gender" (Haslanger, 2012: 42-43).

¹⁶² Objectification is the understanding and treatment of persons especially women simply as objects. In particular, women are always sexually objectified. Objectification is considered a central theme in feminist thought. See MacKinnon, 1979; MacKinnon et al. 1988; Haslanger, 2012.

¹⁶³ Women as a class are those individuals who are viewed and treated as objects for the satisfaction of men's desire. Other references of sexual objectification

¹⁶⁴ This working definition of 'gender norm' appears to be apt as it most of the points we have raised so far and consolidates in a significant way that fact that gender is a social construct. It is often argued that because a tool has no inherent value or role, it is only good or bad simply in its function or purpose, so too is the norms for gender and been judged according to function been allotted to said roles.

Gender, like other categories, enable society to organize social life. The category of man and woman in society, are essential in organizing society and social life. The question is, could this be done in a just way without the oppression of one by the other? These categories and social life have grossly been internalized and significantly serve in real life as the real in most patriarchal societies. This section is very important by bringing to the fore the unremitting discrimination, oppression, and subjugation women face as members of various societies. This consequently plays an important role in the general outlook of this thesis by showing how entrenched gender discrimination is and how women, specifically in the context of Nigeria, have become sexually objectified so much so that they are defined only in relation to men and the satisfaction derived in this lopsided relationship.

4.6 Patriarchal System in Nigeria: Then and Now

In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the discrimination and subordination of women is even more pronounced. Being the major feature of a traditional society, Nigerian society is patriarchal. It is no doubt that both in traditional and modern Nigerian societies, women have been found to play vital roles as mothers, producers, organizers, and farmers. Women are the nutritional bedrock of the Nigerian society who feed and nurture its citizens and at the same time manage the home. Notwithstanding, Nigerian women continue to suffer subordination, and the ability to realize their full potential is greatly hampered. They have and are being discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, access to social and productive resources, education, political positions, family decisions, among others.

The most domestic form of subjugation in traditional Nigerian society lies within the family. As Aderinto (2017), avers, the remotest pattern of subordination is “who decides what?” Males enjoy a domineering position in this regard. Men are considered heads of the family unit, chiefs in villages and clans. Through this, heritages and inheritance are transmitted only through male lineage. In these societies, men are decision-makers in all ramifications and are primarily responsible for their family’s material, financial, health and social needs. Little wonder there is great jubilation when a male child is born, compared to the level of jubilation when a female child is born.

In present-day Nigerian society, women constitute more than half the total population of the country.¹⁶⁵ Their contribution to social and economic development cannot be overemphasized as they play dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal and informal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. Makama (2013), puts it succinctly, stressing the commonality of beliefs that reduces the Nigerian woman to a second-class citizen whose office is the ‘kitchen’. In effect, women have had gross misrepresentation in society. Women are therefore discriminated against from acquiring formal education, being mistreated and perpetually kept as house-helpers. Thus, the purported irrelevance associated with the status of women in society has merely reduced an average Nigerian woman to an inferior human being (Makama, 2013).

¹⁶⁵ According to the world Health Statistics 2019 aggregated by sex, women outlive men everywhere in the world. In countries with poor access to health facilities, it is argued that men are less likely to seek health care compared to women. This is also true in counties with HIV pandemic such as Nigeria. In such countries (Nigeria), men are less likely to take HIV tests and less likely to access antiretroviral therapy, hence more likely to die due to AIDS related diseases than women. In addition, in developing countries, such as Nigeria, men are more likely to engage in risky jobs with high fatality index compared to women. Examples of such jobs include factory workers, mining, driving and so on.

The idea of gender norms and gender roles are well known to the average Nigerian. In private and public spheres, a systematic bias has been maintained such that certain behaviours have been stereotypically attributed to either of the genders. This is so because there are agents responsible for the effective perpetuation of gender inequality thus ensuring the sustenance of patriarchal society. In the economy, for instance, women do not enjoy similar privileges as men. They are employed in public spheres to work in lower positions. In politics, although a lot has changed, women are relegated to the background. A woman is yet to emerge as a governor or a president of the country. Religion has been used generally as an instrument in defence of patriarchy. This is especially evident in the northern parts of the country where there exists Sharia Law. The Sharia Law, an Islamic religious law, gives a central place to the paternalistic interpretation of women's appropriate roles and socio-political arrangement of the society.¹⁶⁶ As against the secular national law, the sharia law places so many restrictions on the rights of women. It fosters inequality on practices that pertains to the mode of dressing, types of works appropriate to the genders, manner, and places of worship, naming of children and other personal or private matters.¹⁶⁷

Makama (2013), argues that the advancement of patriarchy in Nigeria is rooted in a lack of education for the girl child. He posits that “lack of education has been a strong visible barrier to female participation in the formal sector.” Boys and girls do not have equal access to formal education. Generally, the girl child educational opportunities tend to be restrained by patriarchal attitudes about gender roles, which result in some parents attaching greater importance to the

¹⁶⁶ See Loimeier (1997); Nasir (2007), and Ostien (2007), for an elaborate discussion on Sharia Law in Nigeria.

¹⁶⁷ See Abiodun-Eniayekan et al. 2016; Awolowo and Aluko (2010) for further details on Women participation in politics in Nigeria, enumerating the unpalatable feeling of marginalization and alienation by the women in the society.

education of boys than girls. The gender role attributed to the girl child does not include pursuing any meaningful career but rearing children and carrying out other house chores. Also, it is believed that investing in the formal education of the girl child is a waste since she will be married out to another family. Since the boy child is responsible for advancing the family name and heritage(s), it is more profitable to invest in the boy.

In this light, research by the United Nations Human Development Report (2005) shows that the female adult literacy rate (ages 15 and above) for the country was 59.4% as against male 74.4%. Instead of formal education, the female child is forced into early marriage, street hawking, and other inhibitive social and religious practices in some parts of Nigeria supporting illiteracy amongst women. Education gives women the opportunity to be less dependent on men and to have more control over their sexual and reproductive health.

Some examples of patriarchy in Nigeria are as the following:

- In most societies in Nigeria, male children are preferred compared to female children. In some societies in the southern and western parts of Nigeria, a woman with female children is sometimes compared to a barren woman, saying “female children are good for nothing, only to be married out to other families”. A woman who gives birth to a girl is thus undermined, oppressed, and treated with utter disrespect by her husband, her in-laws, and society.
- Discrimination against girls in domestic chores is highly profound. Young girls and women in Nigerian societies take the full responsibilities of the household work; cleaning, taking care of the children and old, cooking, while the male children would normally sit and watch movies/football matches or go about playing games.

- When financial constraints abound, the girl child takes the burden as she is denied access to equal educational opportunities. Education is considered a right for the male child but a privilege for the girl child.
- In traditional and typical Nigerian societies, the male child is free to exercise the full scope of his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, while the female child is denied all manner of freedom and mobility. They experience all manners of restrictions to visit friends or go out to work and are always given limited hours to spend away from home when going out becomes necessary. Besides, women are excluded from the sharing of family inheritance and property rights, they are not expected to own, because whatever they own, belongs to the husband and his family.
- Sexual harassment against women at workplaces, domestic violence, child abuse, and discriminatory prejudice against women and girl child is common in culture and practice.
- Men are said to have total control over the female body and sexuality, with women having little or no control and no reproductive rights. In most Nigerian societies, the husbands decide family planning methods. This is also the reason why it is considered that the children belong to the husband and his family. In the unfortunate situation of death, the husband's family members inherit the property, children, and wife.

The patriarchal system simply places women as a “disadvantaged minority” in all ramifications of society. All practices and ideologies in the patriarchal system work in unison to support and perpetuate the continued oppression, subservience, subjugation, and subordination of women in these societies.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter addressed issues relating to patriarchy, gender, gender roles, and power relations in human societies. Gender was defined as the state of being male or female in terms of the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women. In the form of social success and influence, the different genders have different access to power, property, and prestige. Inequality between the gender has grown over time and has come to characterise social norms, particularly in terms of influence and social status.

Since men are viewed as the leaders of their families, lineages, tribes, and ancestry, more power is accorded to them through cultural norms and conventions. The problem of gender imbalance between the sexes, the establishment of gender norms, and their innate embodiment in a patriarchal framework reinforced by sexist ideology and misogyny. In this chapter, we argued that gender norms are socially accepted and internalised standards of conduct for both males and females. This implies that patriarchal system of oppression and subjugation establishes roles and responsibilities specific to each gender and establishes what is considered appropriate for men and women.

We also saw misogyny as the "law enforcement" arm of patriarchy, a deeply rooted belief system that upholds both sexism and the patriarchal system. Existing gender norms, gender schemas, and gender roles imply that society has created gender-specific roles for its members within a patriarchal system and that misogynists are allowed to police, enforce, and punish individuals who breach these standards to maintain the patriarchal system. In this chapter also, the issue of gender stereotypes in the patriarchal system structure in Nigeria was analysed. Here,

the various types and forms of oppression, subjugation and mechanism used to maintain the system of women's subjugation, with little or no growing resistance was discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR: THE MISSING LINK

5.0. Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa still faces significant health challenges related to HIV. There is currently no vaccination or recognised cure for this pandemic. It's interesting to note that 98% of HIV transmission occurs because of risky sexual behaviour. It follows that safe sexual behaviour will considerably minimise the virus's propagation and may even completely eradicate it. The unfortunate reality is that unsafe sexual behaviour continues to be a problem. Therefore, we want to critically analyse the dynamics and theories of risky sexual behaviour and HIV transmission in sub-Saharan Africa in this chapter.

We shall begin this chapter by first discussing HIV and AIDs as a serious health challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa with particular attention to available statistical data. While this thesis is not primarily about HIV and AIDs, analysing this puts us in a strategic position to understand the challenge faced and why the discussion of risky sexual behaviour is an all-important venture. To understand why this is important, I will discuss HIV and AIDs to be able to understand and quantify the degree of risks of infection, harmful and unpleasant consequences and reiterate the question, why persist in risky sexual behaviour even when aware of all these?

It has been argued in several quarters that misperceptions are very powerful and significantly affects human social behaviour. To this end, we intend to discuss the role misperceptions play in sustaining human social behaviours, consequently bringing to the fore the indubitable role perception play in the process of decision making.

With risky sexual behaviour constantly on the rise and by implication transmission of HIV, researchers over the years allude to different causes of this persistent maladaptive behaviour. Herein, we desire to discuss these theories and argue, at the same time, why we believe these theories, (though relevant and explain limited causes of risky sexual behaviour) fail to adequately capture the remote and immediate causes of risky sexual behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, we shall round up this chapter by analysing the data of the risky sexual behaviour survey conducted to determine if there is a significant correlation between patriarchal gender norms and the persistence of risky sexual behaviour, as well as to determine if there is a correlation between pluralistic ignorance and risky sexual behaviour by making concerted effort to unearth what gender norms, peer effects and patriarchal norms support risky sexual behaviour.

5.1 HIV and AIDS: Theories and Statistics

What is HIV/AIDS? HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus while AIDs stand for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. HIV is an infection that attacks the human body's immune system targeting the white blood cells thereby weakening the person's immunity against infections (The immune system is the body's defence against infections). When an infection such as the Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the immune system, the defence system becomes weak and thus unable to defend itself. HIV refers to the virus at its early stages. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is therefore the advanced stage of HIV (Kordy, Tobin and Aldrovandi, 2019). HIV is not selective, which invariably implies that it can be contracted by anyone. Millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa are currently living with the virus.¹⁶⁸ with the help of Antiretroviral therapy, however, patients who can get help and treatment, live long and healthy lives.

As previously mentioned, HIV can be contracted by anyone- persons of all age brackets, rich and poor, privileged, and underprivileged, men, women, and children, educated and illiterates. This fact makes HIV one of the most dreaded diseases currently ravaging Nigeria and indeed sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶⁹ The virus is usually transmitted from person to person through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk (Kordy, Tobin and Aldrovandi, 2019). Consequently, HIV can be contracted through unsafe vaginal, anal sex and oral sex, through childbirth and breastfeeding of infants, through contact with infected and unsterilized syringes

¹⁶⁸ The UNAIDS publishes yearly estimates and statistics of global HIV prevalence. Statistics shows that in West and Central African region, a total of 4,900,000 million adults and children above 15 years old are living with HIV. More specifically, a total of 1,800,000 million adults and children above 15 years old in Nigeria are living with HIV. Of this number, women aged 15 and above account for about 940,000 cases.

¹⁶⁹ See UNAIDS (2019). AIDSinfo.unaids.org for details.

and needles exposed to infected blood, other common means of transmission in sub-Saharan Africa include blood transfusion due to poor medical facilities and access to proper hospitals.¹⁷⁰

5.1.1 Symptoms of HIV/AIDS

So many of the symptoms of HIV can be likened to that of common flu (Ann & Daniel, 2014). These similar symptoms are called the early symptoms and most of the time, they come and go. They are mild and they last only for a few days or weeks, so it is important to get tested first before concluding. Some of the symptoms include frequent fever, swollen lymph nodes, skin rash, general aches and pains, headache, sore throat, nausea, and others.

After the early symptoms, the actual symptoms start to manifest. Even at this stage, some people might not still know they have been infected with HIV and that is why there's so much emphasis on getting tested (Parekh et al., 2018).¹⁷¹ This stage goes on for a few years before moving to the last stage. Some of the actual symptoms are persistent headaches, aches and pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, weight loss, recurrent oral or vaginal yeast infections, Pneumonia, shingles, and others (Parekh et al., 2018).

¹⁷⁰ Fleming A, (1997) argued that back in 1980, blood transfusion was contributing to between 10 to 15 % of HIV transmission in Africa. While this is a long time now, it is true that millions of Africans still live far below the poverty line and unable to meet their health needs.

¹⁷¹ It is important mention here that in sub-Saharan Africa, several issues arise from the topic of getting tested. First, as mentioned above, poverty, lack of adequate hospitals, ignorance and lack of adequate knowledge make it very difficult for individuals to get tested and know their HIV status. Secondly, HIV positive patients face significant level of stigmatization, abuse, and condemnation. For these reasons, people detest being tested and prefer to remain in their ignorance.

5.1.2 Preventing HIV.

The risk of contracting HIV cannot be completely eradicated. However, because the modes of transmission of the virus are known, it is extensively argued that abstinence, safe sexual relations and being faithful to one's sexual partner as well as other healthy habits limit the chances of contracting the virus. Specifically, preventing the contraction of HIV is discussed in the following sub-headings.

- Safe sexual practice- HIV as previously discussed, is primarily transmitted from person to person through sexual intercourse. This includes all forms of sexual relations where the bodily fluids of an infected partner mix with the body fluids of the other partner. Consequently, to prevent the transmission of HIV, it is important to always use a condom when having sexual relations with others and should be used as well as disposed of correctly. The use of condoms is considered necessary to protect against HIV and other diseases.
- Getting tested- Knowing one's status is important. Whether you have been infected or not, it is essential to get tested and know your status. When one is sexually involved with one or more partners, one should also know his/her status as well as the status of one's partner. With this, if infected, the person will get treated as well as be extra careful not to spread the virus further by infecting other sexual partners.
- A limited number of sexual partners- Having multiple sexual partners puts one at a higher risk of contracting HIV. It is better and safer to have one sexual partner. While having multiple sexual partners appears to be the trend in our contemporary society, it puts society at risk of contracting and spreading HIV and other venereal diseases. One sexual

partner and being faithful to one's partner limits the chances of contracting or spreading the virus.

- **Dispersing Misconceptions about HIV/AIDS through knowledge:** Misconceptions about HIV is considered an important factor for the high increase in HIV over the years. Despite constant information being transmitted about HIV and safe sexual practices to avoid risks, some people still have a lot of misconceptions about HIV/AIDS and some people do not even know how to protect themselves from this disease. The Executive Director of UNFPA in 2002 stated that young women, who are highly vulnerable, are dangerously ignorant of HIV/AIDS and that many have never even heard of the deadly disease and many harbour misconceptions about how the virus is transmitted (UNFPA, 2002).
- **Practice accurate prophylaxes:** Prophylaxes refers to all the prescribed measures taken as a preventive method against viral infections either occupationally or through sexual intercourse. In case of a post-exposure to an HIV infected patient or body fluid, health workers (partners) are expected to take post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) quickly and accurately through the consumption of short-term antiretroviral treatment to reduce the possibility of HIV infection.

5.1.3 Why are Women Most Affected by HIV?

Research and statistics¹⁷² show that women account for more than half of the number of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, while young women between the ages of 17-30 are twice as likely to acquire HIV than men within the same age bracket (Avert, 2019). Michel

¹⁷² See UNAIDS (2019). [AIDSinfo.unaids.org](https://aidsinfo.unaids.org) for details.

Sidibé, the former executive director of UNAIDS talked about the HIV epidemic unfortunately as being an epidemic of women. This statement refers to and emphasizes the fact that women are mostly affected, compared to men in terms of statistics. This fact underscores the reason why some persons in sub-Saharan Africa are of the erroneous opinion that “men are strong and cannot contract HIV”. Furthermore, the negative burden of HIV spread and death from the virus often rests on the shoulders of women since they become widows and are left to take care of the children of the deceased. Many questions abound considering the above; this includes why and how women remain the gender most affected by HIV despite the continuous global effort to spread knowledge and encourage safe sex, thus begging the question, why is the percentage of men being infected with HIV worldwide is not as high compared to women?

Most sub-Saharan societies are patriarchal with a significant level of male domination. While feminists and gender equality advocates have clamoured for change over the years, very little success has been recorded and little in terms of domination has been achieved. As a result of this, female members of society are constantly exposed to significant dangers and consequently become vulnerable because of social, economic, and cultural statuses, domination, and abuses.¹⁷³ The inequality in society has birthed so many reasons for the persistence of HIV. A few would be highlighted.

- Lack of access to Education: Education implies the systematic acquisition of values, beliefs, knowledge skills and habits that are an essential part of healthy living. Being adequately educated therefore cannot be overemphasized. Studies have shown that educated persons possess the required knowledge and values that provide them with the wherewithal to be in control of their sexual activities and take responsibility (Avert,

¹⁷³ Among the other reasons, we can also mention reasons such as female subjugation, rape, and violence.

2019). Obviously, women who are educated possess the required knowledge about important topics such as childbearing, need to practice safe sex, abortions and risks of risky sexual relations which include contracting sexually transmitted diseases.¹⁷⁴ Based on the above, it is clear therefore that lack of knowledge about the dangers of risky sexual relations is responsible for the continued spread of HIV and why women appear to be most affected.

- **Poverty and Transactional sex:** In sub-Saharan Africa, poverty and transactional sex are major causes of the continued spread of HIV and AIDs. This is a direct fallout from lack of proper education which implies that women who are not educated,¹⁷⁵ have little option of securing meaningful and gainful employment to help them cater for their needs and that of their families. The job that is mostly available to them is transactional sex which guarantees survival means for women in such societies.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Poverty and transactional sex are key factors responsible for the continued spread of HIV since participants of transactional sex are considered to be at a high risk¹⁷⁶ of getting infected by HIV due to their level of risk and exposure (Avert, 2019).

- **Lack of access to health care:** In most sub-Saharan nations, affordable primary health care is provided by the local governments, and it is not always adequately equipped to cater to the well-being of the masses. The alternative is private health care, which is

¹⁷⁴ This does not automatically mean that an Educated woman cannot contract HIV. It only explains the fact that Education goes a long way in reducing the rate of HIV among women in the world.

¹⁷⁵ In most sub-Saharan societies, cultural practices significantly limit women education as a strategy to keep them perpetually loyal and 'contained' so as not to acquire knowledge and later rise against established patriarchal systems.

¹⁷⁶ Their customers might mostly prefer to have sex without the use of condom as it is believed to be more enjoyable. In a case like this, only few of the women are always able to convince their customers to use a condom. This also implies that women have very little bargaining power even when it concerns their own bodies. All these factors can be categorized under "Gender imbalance"

usually adequately equipped, yet very expensive for the average citizen. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, in Patriarchal societies, as in most sub-Saharan African societies, men are the decision-makers of the family. They reserve the economic, financial, and social rights of women in such societies. Consequently, women and young girls need the consent of a spouse or a parent before consulting health physicians about their sexual and reproductive health (Avert, 2019). Lack of education, independence, and access to these services leave many of these women clueless and ignorant about their sexual and reproductive health.¹⁷⁷

5.2. ABC Strategy in Curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS

Since 1981, when HIV/AIDS was first identified, and its subsequent classification as a global health pandemic, several approaches to controlling the infection's rapid spread have been developed. This study identifies only one approach—condoms—as the primary strategy for preventing HIV transmission in Nigeria. As previously stated, the most common way to contract HIV is through risky sexual activities with infected people. Simply put, any strategy or approach used to decrease the high rate of risky sexual behaviour tends to reduce the rate of infections significantly.

¹⁷⁷ Even if they have contracted HIV, they are barely aware and cannot get tested. They reproduce and eventually infect their children with it because of lack of knowledge. The few that have the knowledge do not have the freedom to act on it because they cannot gain access to health care services. Therefore, we have a lot of unplanned pregnancies, induced abortions, and exposure to sexual violence. Some females also need parental consent before gaining access to HIV services as they are underage. Many of them grow up with thick skin against every form of stigma related to sex and HIV. It does not bother them anymore because their rights have been so violated.

In this section, I describe the approach used in Uganda in the 1990s. The method is known as ABC, and it is thought to have played a significant role in reducing the nation's rising infection rates. The ABC method stands for abstinence, faithfulness, and condom use.

5.2.1 Abstinence

Abstinence was classified as either primary or secondary by Okware et al. (2005). Primary abstinence, according to them, refers to the state of delayed sexual activities for young people who have yet to become sexually active. Secondary abstinence, on the other hand, refers to the cessation of sexual activities by previously sexually active individuals. Through various innovations, primary abstinence for young individuals in Uganda was promoted, including activities such as “*Straight Talk and Young Talk*”. According to Okware et al. (2005), “these monthly sexual health newspapers target the youth, with print runs of 155,000 and 280,000 respectively; and the increase of the median age of sexual debut in the country from 14 to 17 years is indicative of the cumulative success of programs such as these” (Okware et al., 2005: 626).

Abstinence, according to Murphy et al. (2006), is defined as the act of remaining faithful or reducing one's number of partners. This definition differs slightly from that of Okware et al., (2005) because, whereas Murphy et al. (2006) define abstinence as being faithful while sexually active or reducing sexual partners, Okware et al., (2005) simply define it as delaying sexual activity. The crucial query is how long and up until what age sexual activity should be delayed. The Ugandan government encouraged public faithfulness and delayed sexual activity abstention. However, condom use was encouraged for those who were at high risk (Jones and Norton, 2009).

Being faithful and abstinence are combined in Murphy et al's (2006) definition of abstinence, which has an inherent flaw. However, as we shall see, the Abstinence theory has some serious flaws.

5.2.2 Being Faithful

In the ABC approach, faithfulness is defined as the act of engaging in sexual relations with only one partner in long-term or lifelong relationships such as marriage, and only after determining that both partners are HIV-negative. Faith-based organizations that preached abstinence and fidelity to their members championed this approach. The ABC approach is a logical approach that prioritizes abstinence for young people who are expected to refrain from sexual activities until they marry (Jones and Norton, 2009). After marriage, they are expected to be faithful to their partners for the rest of their lives. The approach's immediate challenge is that many African societies accept and practice polygamous marriages or serial monogamy.

5.2.3 Using Condom

The third element of the ABC strategy is the use of condoms. As was already said, when used appropriately and regularly, the male condom is thought to be an efficient way to lower the risk of the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. According to the Ugandan government's ABC strategy, condom use should be limited to high-risk groups (Okware et al. 2005). High-risk groups in this context include commercial sex workers, unfaithful spouses, persons living with HIV, migrant workers, and others.

From the foregoing, the ABC technique covers a wide range of topics and, if correctly applied, has the potential to be quite successful. However, the ABC strategy has come under heavy fire for exclusively supporting and preaching abstinence. In the 1990s, advocating and promoting abstinence in sub-Saharan African urban and rural populations may have had a substantial impact. Today, this might not be the case. In the 1990s, there was a marked lack of understanding and information regarding sexual behaviours in Africa, which were primarily related to procreation. People were also quite dogmatic about morality and imposed severe penalties for sexual immorality. Pantelic et al. (2018) claim that HIV stigma was further exacerbated by the belief that the disease was a punishment from God or the ancestors.

By focusing on individual behaviors, the ABC approach does not acknowledge the underlying factors that make people vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The ABC strategies dismiss the real social, political, and economic causes of the epidemic, and end up blaming infected people, because it is implied that they failed to adopt and practice the ABCs. The ABC approach ignores vulnerable populations, such as sex workers and those who lack the ability to negotiate safe sex. It further fails to address non-heterosexual risk groups such as men who have sex with men and intravenous drug users (Murphy et al., 2006: 1446).

The above excerpt demonstrates that the ABC strategy and emphasis on abstinence did not consider the primary variables predisposing society's members to the epidemic. By disregarding the actual cause of the pandemic and condemning infected patients for their lack of abstinence or faithfulness, according to Murphy et al. (2006), the ABC method elevated the level of stigmatizing attitudes about HIV infection. The ABC method also overlooked the fact that

people in high-risk groups are unable to successfully negotiate safe sex. Furthermore, by neglecting the primary underlying factors and lack of acknowledgment of the social circumstance that predisposes individuals to the risk of contracting HIV, the ABC approach fails to prioritise other factors such as the place of “transactional or commercial sex, to pay for post-secondary schooling, to gain financial independence from family obligations, or to provide adequate resources for those contained in IDP camps” (Murphy et al., 2006: 1446). This means that encouraging condom use without providing adequate sex education to teach people how to do it regularly and correctly puts young boys and girls in danger of being ignorant and exploited and undermines the promotion of abstinence, sexual purity, faithfulness, and other virtues.

5.3 Social Norms: The Role of Misperceptions of Behaviour

In Chapter Two, we discussed extensively the issues of convention, mutual expectation, preference, and equilibrium selection. Herein, we argued that mutual expectation, conditional expectations, and individual preferences play a significant role in shaping agents’ choices (equilibrium selection) and the persistent behaviour of agents. In chapter three, we argued that second-order expectations play a pivotal role in shaping behaviour and expected behaviour with the possibility of sanctions whenever violations against the established norm are perceived. It is important to mention here that, and as can be easily deduced from our discussion of convention and social norm, behaviour may be conditioned by convention, laws, surveys, norms and so on, by bringing to the awareness of agents what is considered a majority opinion or preference. Consequently, individuals develop and prefer action combination that is considered the preference of the majority. Little wonder O’Gorman and Garry (1976), argue that most of the

“ideas, feelings and actions of individuals are determined and sustained by their conceptions of what others think, feel or do” (O’Gorman and Garry, 1976: 449)

In Chapter Three, we further argued that Social Norms usually exerts unprecedented social pressure for conformity on the members of the society by making “demands on individual agents concerning what they are permitted, forbidden, or required to do” (Brennan et al. 2013: 42). As mentioned above, the way people feel, think, and behave in interpersonal relationships are sometimes significantly affected by established social norms. We refer herein to certain beliefs that motivate our actions in an interdependent situation where we recognize the legitimacy of others’ expectations. Individual members in the society by recognizing the legitimacy of the expectations and social pressure, above-all, prefer to conform to these norms to avoid stipulated punishments or sanctions.¹⁷⁸ This implies that, for some interdependent behaviours, what others think and expect, matters a lot, and significantly affects what we think, feel and how we prefer to behave (Baric 1977, Tayler and Bloomfield, 2011).

Based on the above, it is obvious that with certain interpersonal action combinations, agents prefer a certain action or behaviour over other possible alternatives, on the condition that others in their reference network (people that matter in one’s choices) engage in it, and/or that they believe members of their relevant reference network expect and prefer them to act in a certain way, and they recognize the legitimacy of these expectations (Acemoglu and Jackson, 2014). The theory of Social Norms theorizes that human behaviours are sometimes influenced by misperceptions of how members of our reference network think and act as well as how we perceive they prefer us to think and act. Invariably, therefore, overestimations of problem

¹⁷⁸ Remember that social norms can be prescriptive or proscriptive. In this sense, if an action is prescribed, individuals prefer to act accordingly and often receive appreciation or rewarded for their actions. When it is proscriptive, individuals prefer to avoid such actions because violations are often accompanied with sanctions such as ostracism, etc.

behaviour in a reference network will cause agents to increase their problem behaviours, while an underestimation of problem behaviour in a reference network will discourage agents from engaging in the problematic behaviour. Simply put, the gap between the actual estimation of the persistent behaviour in a reference network and the perceived estimation of a persistent behaviour in a reference network is a misperception. In the sequel, we shall discuss three types of misperceptions: pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and false uniqueness.

5.3.1 Pluralistic Ignorance

Pluralistic ignorance is a type of misperception. It refers to a situation where most individuals falsely interpret other peoples' beliefs and expectations about certain salient matters (Shamir and Shamir, 1997). This is the most common misperception. Pluralistic ignorance is the situation where an established norm is privately rejected by a majority, yet publicly supported thereby persisting due to incorrect belief that most others endorse such behaviour. For O'Gorman, the idea of pluralistic ignorance is the mistaken knowledge of a shared cognitive pattern as against the ordinary sense of ignorance as not knowing. For him,

“Pluralistic ignorance refers to erroneous cognitive beliefs shared by two or more individuals about the ideas, feelings, and actions of others... Pluralistic ignorance is not ignorance in the ordinary sense of not knowing. On the contrary, it is knowledge of others that is mistakenly considered to be correct... Pluralistic ignorance refers to shared cognitive patterns, that is, socially accepted but false propositions about the social world” (O'Gorman 1986: 333).

Bjerring, Hansen, and Pedersen (2014) for their part, conceive pluralistic ignorance as to the systematic socio-psychological discrepancy between public behaviour and private beliefs in a certain social context.¹⁷⁹

The term Pluralistic Ignorance was first coined by a psychologist, Floyd Allport (O’Gorman, 1986). Allport conceived pluralistic ignorance as to the mistaken and unwarranted impression of how other people feel and think (Allport, 1924). Renewed interest in pluralistic ignorance within the last three decades reveal significant degrees of mistaken, erroneous and unwarranted patterns of beliefs in different social and behavioural studies and experiments.¹⁸⁰ These studies overwhelmingly show that the desire for conformity to established patterns of behaviour and perceived patterns of behaviour often serves as the primary motivation for individual preferences as it relates to public view (Hedstrom and Bearman, 2010).

This fact is easily arrived at through surveys which undoubtedly reveal that individuals publicly uphold, support, endorse, approve, and enforce certain patterns of behaviour or norms, but completely disapprove of this view in private. Therefore, when confronted with conditional public action decisions, agents rely significantly on perceived expectations of what others think and feel as well as infer cues from the behaviour, approval, and preferences of others to arrive at their own decisions.

¹⁷⁹ This definition captures aptly our purpose in this section. We should mention here that Bjerring, Hansen, and Pedersen (2014) by their conception of pluralistic ignorance, argue that while agents hold the view that littering the environment is ‘bad’ (the view or belief can be either first or second level normative belief) the common behaviour of agents in the reference network in question would be that of constant littering. This invariably implies a disconnect or gap between what I believe and what I prefer to do.

¹⁸⁰ These fields of studies and research include varied topics in social norm (behaviour), voting preferences, economics and business ethics, international relations, legal studies, and politics. For details see Prentice and Miller 1993; Wenzel 2005; Korte 1972; Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Monin and Norton 2003; Manji 2018; Halbesleben, Wheeler and Buckley, 2005.

Pluralistic ignorance as a social comparison error is no doubt a widespread phenomenon. Prentice and Miller (1996), report the overwhelming social comparison error among college students regarding the support for the consumption of large quantities of alcohol. Their research reveals that college students erroneously believe that their peers consume large amounts of alcohol and so support consumption. Individually, however, the students did not support heavy consumption of alcohol, but only erroneously believe the existence of a norm that favour heavy consumption of alcohol among students (Prentice and Miller, 1996; Prentice and Miller, 1993).¹⁸¹

In Chapter Three, we argued in line with Brennan et al., (2013), Cialdini et al., (1991), and Bicchieri (2006, 2016, 2018) that a variety of social norms persist to exist often because agents within a reference network desire to conform, imitate and coordinate with others primarily to avoid various forms of sanctions.¹⁸² As a result, very few persons desire to challenge the status quo or established norm thus leading to the perpetuation of an unpopular social norm.¹⁸³ Since such norms are unpopular and erroneously perceived as the preference of most members of a reference network, Duque (2017) argued that “when group members conform to what they think others want, they may end up doing what nobody wants” (Duque, 2017: 2).

Child marriage, female genital cutting, and intimate gender violence are unpopular practices that though are on the decline are still considered widely practised. While these practices are

¹⁸¹ Pluralistic ignorance and alcohol consumption among college students have been well documented over the years with Perkins and Berkowitz (1986), being the first to systematically document the consequences of misperception and pluralistic ignorance among college students. Also see Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Schroeder and Prentice, 1998; Perkins, 2002; Baer, Stacy, and Larimer, 1991; Suls and Green 2003; Braddock and Wolf, 1995.

¹⁸² We argued extensively that agents often conform to some established maladaptive social norms possibly to avoid sanctions such as some degree of criticism, shaming, sarcasm, ostracism, disapproval from fellow agents and so on even when agents stand to benefit more from defecting. Some of this are society or private, immediate, or futuristic sanctions. For details on sanctions as inducing conformity, see Coleman 1990; Axelrod 1986; Gilbert 1990; Taylor, & Prewitt-Freilino, 2006; Richardson and Green, 1999; Eagly, 1987.

¹⁸³ See Boven (2000).

considered violations of fundamental human rights because they constitute abuse to womanhood, they perpetuate primarily because they are norms that are supported by sanctions as well as what everyone conforms to, yet nobody wants. Child marriage, female genital cutting and intimate gender violence are all considered social norms because, in light of our definition in Chapter Two, social norms are established behavioural patterns that members of a relevant reference network practice that are often influenced by what others in the reference network think should be done.¹⁸⁴ In the light of this, the preference of adherents to these social norms persist due to an estimated normative beliefs they hold of what others think and prefer to be done.

Adherents of these practices are aware of the harmful consequences of these maladaptive practices, yet they persist and work assiduously to enforce adherence to these practices. The question is, why do these practices, like practices of excessive drinking among college students,¹⁸⁵ uncommitted sexual behaviour (hook-ups),¹⁸⁶ and others persist? One underlying and recurrent explanation or justification for the persistence of these collective practices are mistaken overestimations of what community members think and prefer to be done. In other words, research on the persistence of child marriage, intimate gender violence and female genital cutting reveals that these collective practices are sustained by false beliefs, making agents persist in doing what nobody wants.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ For details see Bicchieri 2006; 2016; 2018.

¹⁸⁵ See Schroeder and Prentice 1998; Perkins, 2002; Baer, Stacy, and Larimer, 1991.

¹⁸⁶ See Lambert, Kahn, and Apple 2003; Paul McManus and Hayes, 2000.

¹⁸⁷ Child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and intimate gender violence are three broad topics that cannot be exhaustively discussed here. Notwithstanding, we introduce these here primarily to bring to fore first-hand harmful consequences of pluralistic ignorance and indicate that while other variables might be responsible for persistence of such harmful practices, research reveal overwhelming degrees of majority of agents been ignorant of the true beliefs and expectations of members of their reference network. For elaborate discussion on reference network, see Bicchieri, 2006; 2016. For in-dept discussion on Child marriage, see Bicchieri, Lindemans, and Jiang, 2014; Loaiza and Wong, 2012; Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle, and Lee-Rife, 2011; Mikhail, 2002. For discussions on Female Genital Mutilation/cutting, see Bicchieri and Marini, 2015; Easton, Monkman and Miles

As a sequel to the above analysis, it is obvious that the estimation of agents' opinions, expectations, and preferences on conditional actions within social interaction is important. It is important because as we have seen, a significant misperception: underestimation or overestimation, often results in an increase and persistence in unwanted behaviours. When faced with conditional actions within a social setting, it is important to understand the social nature of pluralistic ignorance, because analysing the nature of pluralistic ignorance reveal unequivocally the fact that "pluralistic ignorance makes the "ignorance" composite, shared, and collective rather than personal distortions and individual ignorance. As such, the error is necessarily systematic rather than random, "invalid" rather than "unreliable" (Shamir and Shamir, 1997: 228).

Understanding the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance often intersects with other established approaches.¹⁸⁸ Adopting one approach over and above the other, limits the level of conceptualization required for effective diagnosis and analysis of pluralistic ignorance among agents. In this research, we rely on the established intersection of the different approaches to infer, analyse, and evaluate our position on the level of misperception in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour among agents. Consequently, for this research, we adopt Bicchieri's conception of pluralistic ignorance as our working definition. Bicchieri defines pluralistic ignorance as "a cognitive state in which each member of a group believes her personal normative beliefs and preferences are different from those of similarly situated others, even if public behaviour is identical" (2016: 42). This definition reveals the fact that misperception is the primary reason why agents conform to certain established patterns of acting in society although they disagree

2003; McChesney 2015. For discussions on intimate gender violence, see Manji, K., 2018; Uthman, Lawoko and Moradi, 2009; Jakobsen, 2015; Kishor and Johnson, 2004.

¹⁸⁸ See Shamir and Shamir (1997) for further analysis on the various approaches.

with the action or reason for such behaviour. Agents do this because they feel their position is in the minority and conform for fear of standing out or being sanctioned. This Bicchieri argues, is being caught in the “belief trap” (Bicchieri, 2016: 39-42).

5.3.2 False Consensus

False consensus is another type of misperception. Unlike pluralistic ignorance, false consensus is the incorrect belief that others believe, think, feel, and prefer certain behavioural patterns like oneself when in fact, they are not. False consensus was first coined by Ross, Greene, and House (1977). They defined false consensus as agents’ tendency “to see their own behavioural choices and judgments as relatively common and appropriate to existing circumstances while viewing alternative responses as uncommon, deviant, or inappropriate” (Ross, Greene, and House 1977: 280).

Since Ross et al., (1977) conceptualization of false consensus, a lot of research has been conducted to further validate their initial hypothesis as well as prove that false consensus is a persistent phenomenon. In Chapters Two and Three, we argued extensively that people often evaluate, compare, and prefer to make decisions based on the perceived behaviour, feelings, and preferences of other members of their reference network.¹⁸⁹ This is thus the foundation for false consensus. According to Thomas Schelling, “you can sit in your armchair and try to predict how people behave by asking yourself how you would behave if you had your wits about you. You get free of charge a lot of vicarious empirical behaviour” (Schelling, 1966: 150). Therefore, false

¹⁸⁹ See Bicchieri 2006 and 2016 on “reference network”.

consensus is one mechanism through which agents consciously overestimate their incompatible opinion or preferences as a consensus.

Like pluralistic ignorance, considerable research has been conducted on false consensus among college students regarding certain common behaviour among adolescents. For example, Sherman, Presson, Chassin, Corty, and Olshavsky (1983) in their research, argued that false consensus was a significant phenomenon in excessive smoking behaviour among adolescents. According to them, this was discovered and is consistent with adolescents who uphold the fact that a norm against smoking existed in the society and so, smoking adolescents violate such social norms. In similar research conducted by Suls, Wan, and Sanders (1988), they found that proscribed behaviours such as excessive drinking, smoking and risky sexual behaviour are likely to activate higher circumstances of false consensus than in prescribed behaviours such as moderation in drinking, smoking and safe sexual behaviours.¹⁹⁰

In Chapter Two, we argued that to arrive at an effective action equilibrium, agents often rely on coordination devices of agreement, precedence, and salience to help them avoid coordination failures and miscoordination.¹⁹¹ As a sequel to our understanding of false consensus, it is obvious that agents depend on their internal processes of belief, feelings, and expectations to make certain decision alternatives salient. By making these beliefs, feelings,

¹⁹⁰ As earlier noted, false consensus is the state of self-assertion, overestimating one's behaviour with other members of one's reference network. It implies that adolescents (for example) who engage in one or other proscribed behaviour in the society (behaviour that satisfies been called a social norm), often estimate that a larger percentage of agents in sone's reference network engage in the same behaviour. In this sense, adolescents who are sexually active and engage in risky sexual behaviour often estimate a higher proportion of agents in their reference network are sexually active and engage in risky sexual behaviour. On the other hand, adolescents who are not sexually active and/or engage in risky sexual behaviour, estimate a higher proportion of agents in their reference network are like them. For further analysis on this, see Sprecher, McKinney, & Orbuch, (1987), Whitley (1998), Billy, Landale, Grady, and Zimmerke (1988).

¹⁹¹ See Chapter 2.5.

preferences, and expectations salient, agents thus overestimate and conclude these to be a common phenomenon among community members, thus enhancing the salience.

Whitley (1998) further identifies two other possible causes of false consensus. According to him, aside salience of individual internal processes, motivation for action and information processing are two other possible origins of false consensus. For him, “motivation explanation holds that people overestimate others' similarity to themselves to justify their own beliefs and behaviours” (Whitley, 1998: 207). This explanation anticipates motivation as an explanation for false consensus on proscribed behaviour and higher on agents with low self-esteem than on proscribed behaviour or from agents with higher self-esteem. On the other hand, information-processing as an explanation, reveals that agents “attribute the causes of their beliefs and behaviours to situational factors rather than to their dispositions, they will expect other people to be similarly affected and therefore to believe and behave in similar ways... then, leads people to overestimate others' similarity on beliefs and behaviours” (Whitley, 1998: 207).

Based on the above, we conceive false consensus as an overestimation of the proportion or percentage of agents who share our behaviour and/or beliefs in the society and particularly, proscribed behaviours. This sort of bias as revealed by experiments is a misconception since it is a cognitive bias that affects members of the society by erroneously concluding that members of their reference network think, act, feel and behave exactly like them.

5.3.3 False Uniqueness

False uniqueness is another type of cognitive bias or misperception defined as the situation or tendency where agents underestimate the percentage of others who share desirable

attributes or will perform desirable actions and behaviours and at the same time, the overestimation of the percentage of agents who share one's undesirable attributes or will perform undesirable actions (Suls and Wan, 1987; Goethals, Messick, & Allison, 1991). Based on the above, it is therefore obvious that false uniqueness can be easily understood by contrasting it with false consensus effect.

In some situations, people often hold particular social opinions and often tend to believe that this view is unique and unpopular, presumptuous that others hold rather a different view. In effect, people who perform actions capped as socially desirable often underestimate the number or percentage of others who perform similarly socially approved desirable behaviours. Suls and Wan (1987) argue that the motivation for false uniqueness is an unreserved desire for self-esteem and the desire to feel exceptionally good about oneself for being 'good'.

Similarly, Moore and Kim (2003), argue that misperceptions of false consensus and false uniqueness occur primarily because agents often rely on self-information to form preferences and opinions rather than information on others when it relates to forming judgments about prevalence. This view aligns with Whitley (1998), who argued extensively that the salience of internal processes, the motivation of action and the information process clearly explain the origin of misperception that led agents to overestimate or underestimate behaviour in the society.

Based on above, we can infer that false uniqueness is a common phenomenon among agents since most agent's desire to define themselves in a positive light as having exceptional traits as well as conceive themselves as behaving better than most other people. False uniqueness has the advantage of supporting the feeling of self-worth as well as might lead to overconfidence and negative impressions about others. Chambers (2008) argues that it is common for humans to possess the tendency to see themselves as unique, particularly in ways that are socially desirable

and more likely to experience positive outcomes than others. He further argued that “most reports themselves to be kinder, fairer, happier, more honest, polite, generous, athletic, logical, attractive, socially skilled, and better drivers, managers, friends, lovers and parents than the average person” (Chambers, 2008: 878).

The above show exceedingly the various faces and manifestations of misperception of false uniqueness. Also, Ross and Sicoly (1979), reported false uniqueness in their studies of workers who often reported being hardworking and producing much more than others. They further argue that group members often claim to have worked more than others and contributed to a group project more. Experiments reveal that group members often report this kind of self-appraisal with some degree of uniqueness.¹⁹² Smith, Rasinski and Toce (2001), on the other hand, researched following the devastating September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in America. They reported that their survey showed a great level of false uniqueness where most Americans were upset about the attack, and believed they were more upset than other Americans, thus manifesting some sort of uniqueness. Put differently, most Americans contacted reported being uniquely affected by the tragedy more than other Americans.¹⁹³

¹⁹² This reveals probably the reason why several authors argue that most investigation to reveal and analyse socially desirable and subjective dimensions of social interactions, agents are often self-righteous and conceive themselves as better than average while conceiving others as less or at least not up to them. Also see Myers 1998.

¹⁹³ False uniqueness is thus a very common phenomenon as it relates to the prevalence of egocentric bias primarily as justification for socially desirable behaviour, carried out by self-overestimation of similar behaviour by others. Consequently, this phenomenon is evident all facets/walks of life; social, economic, health and so on. One recurrent phrase associated with false uniqueness is “I am kind and nice, but not everyone around here would treat you kindly”. For further details on some specific false uniqueness, see Kruger and Dunning, 1999; Andrews and Withey, 1976; Alicke, 1985; Epley and Dunning, 2000; White and Plous 1995; Fields and Schuman, 1976.

5.4 The Power of Perception

The advent of critical research and experiments on the theory of social norm provided a paradigm shift from traditional explanations on recurrent behaviours and explanations in many fields. We argued earlier that the theory of social norm is premised on the idea that the way people think, feel, and behave are sometimes significantly “influenced by how individuals perceive other members of a social group behave” (Scholly et al. 2005: 160). Research and experiments significantly demonstrate and enforce the understanding that perception of beliefs, behaviour and expectations held by some agents contributes to motivating action in interpersonal action situations. This implies that, for some interdependent behaviours, what others think and expect, matters a lot, and significantly affects what we think, feel, and how we prefer to behave (Baric 1977, Tayler, and Bloomfield, 2011).

Crandall, Eshleman and O’Brian (2002), argue that perceptions significantly affect agents’ choice of action or behaviour after close interaction with established regularity of behaviour. Consequently, Crandall, Eshleman and O’Brian (2002), in their survey, established a strong correlation between the agent’s toleration of prejudice and the approval of behaviours that reinforce the phenomenon.¹⁹⁴ By eliciting behaviour, perception helps to create and shape behavioural narratives in societies. As earlier stated, preferences are modified to suit what others think, feel and what is perceived as allowed and permitted. Invariably, therefore, there exists an existential and persistent correlation between the persistence of established social norms and perception.

¹⁹⁴ Prejudice is conceived as biased perception of an established norm instead of agent’s attitude and/or state of mind. This implies that, in a situation where individuals experience renewed efforts by others to reinforce acts that encourage prejudice, the more likely these agents will tolerate acts of prejudice. Invariably, agents act in accordance with the perceived norm rather than their individual personal attitude or state of mind. See Paluck, 2012.

Perception of the prevalence of behaviour is evident in empirical and normative expectations as well as a primary feature of group identity. Although perception is crystallised in self-belief, it provides agents with the necessary impetus to comply with behaviour that they consider important to members of their reference network and actions expected of them.¹⁹⁵ As a sequel, information on the prevalence of behaviour in the society and permitted social norms are often arrived at by seeing others engage in similar behaviour, thus serving as the tool for social approval. We consequently “view a behaviour as correct in a given situation to the degree that we see others performing it” (Cialdini, 2001: 100).

From our understanding of norms and the role perception plays in modifying and influencing behaviour by either causing overestimation or underestimation of behaviour, we can conclude that perception is central to the discourse of norms and the place of misperceptions (pluralistic ignorance, false consensus, and false uniqueness), are often the reasons for the prevalence of problem behaviours in the society.¹⁹⁶

5.5 Dynamics and Theories of HIV Spread in Sub-Saharan Africa

HIV awareness in most sub-Saharan countries has increased significantly in the last two decades. Despite the high rate of recorded deaths from infected persons, the availability of condoms and the constant appeal for condom use, risky sexual behaviour is still widespread, and

¹⁹⁵ On the one hand, perceptions for descriptive norms easily develop since agents have direct knowledge of what is expected of them through experiences and observations. On the other hand, perceptions for social norms develop in a rather complicated manner because of normative expectations that are often based on self-made beliefs and biases. In both cases however, it is possible for individuals to rely on other pointers or cue to form necessary perceptions fuelled expectations to enable required action. Misperceptions are therefore less prominent in descriptive norms are they appear in normative social norms due to the experiential gap that exist between behaviour, observation, and belief. Also see Cialdini, 2001.

¹⁹⁶ See Chapter 5.2 of this thesis for an exhaustive discussion on misperception.

thousands get infected daily. The inescapable question is, why is risky sexual behaviour a persisting phenomenon in the face of ill health and death?

Social norms persist to ensure the conformity of agents to maintain certain forms of traditions, customs, and conventions of society. Social norms exert social pressure for conformity by making “demands on individual agents concerning what they are permitted, forbidden, and required to do” (Brennan et al. 2013: 42). Owing to the arguments in the preceding chapters, it is evident that norms are direct or remote causes of the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among agents in the face of these life-threatening health risks. Due to the highly private nature of sexual relation believes, it appears easy to infer what the general behaviour is, but difficult to deduce, correctly, the existing normative expectations. Consequently, we now proceed to discuss in detail some identified causes and established maladaptive norms directly linked to the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. These are Behavioural Gender Norms, Poor Negotiation Skills, Contextual Life Uncertainties, Alcohol Misperceptions, and Sexual Misperception.

5.5.1 Behavioural Gender Norms and Poor Negotiation Skills

Despite advancements in HIV prevention and treatment, massive campaigns for condom use and widespread misery, pain and death from HIV/AIDs, risky sexual practices among agents in sub-Saharan Africa is still widespread. Recent studies attribute the persistence of risky sexual behaviour to behavioural gender norms and poor negotiation skills (Lardie et al. 2019). Elsewhere, Fairbairn, Wood, Dong, Kerr and DeBeck (2017), argue extensively that the perceived ability to have extensive discussion about safe sex practices with one’s sexual partner

decreases the perception of risks.¹⁹⁷ Based on this, we shall now proceed to discuss and unravel the issues surrounding gender norms (if women reserve the power to enforce condom use) as well as sexual negotiations and decision-making processes among sub-Saharan Africans.¹⁹⁸

In a study on sexual decision making that was conducted by Worth (1989), he found a significant correlation between a partner's objection to condom use, personal preferences, and socio-cultural factors to high resistance to condom use by women. In Worth's (1989) study, a significant number of women expressed the inability to exert any form of influence on their partners over condom use. Simply put, they had little or no bargaining power to negotiate with their partners for fear of rejection, violence, disappointments, betrayal, stigmatization and so on. The fear of stigma, betrayal and rejection by women is one recurrent phenomenon experienced in established patriarchal societies as enforced by sexism and misogyny.¹⁹⁹ In Worth's (1989) study, it was obvious and as recorded, despite HIV/AIDs awareness and the associated risks, risky sexual behaviour is normalized and thus characterized as a rational decision (salient

¹⁹⁷ This implies that the ability of agents to engage in meaningful discussion about sexual practices and employ sexual negotiation techniques and skills increases the possibility of engaging in safe sexual behaviour on the one hand. On the other hand, not engaging in any form of sexual relations or employing proper sexual negotiation skills increases the chances of engaging in risky sexual behaviour. For details, see Fairbairn et al 2017; Schwitters et al. 2015; Lardier et al. 2019; Varga, C. 1997.

¹⁹⁸ In Chapter Four, we discussed extensively issues relating to decision making in a patriarchal society. Herein, we shall employ this knowledge to understand in practice how patriarchy, misogyny and sexism affects healthy decision-making process especially where family decisions are carried out solely by men. On the other hand, we make efforts to understand how the knowledge of the risks of HIV/AIDs affects and influences the decision-making processes of members of a patriarchal society in sexual relations; with whom to engage in sex, where, when, and how (to use condom or not).

¹⁹⁹ In Chapter Four of this thesis, we described gender as a social construct established in patriarchal systems, justified by sexism, and enforced by misogyny. This being the case, specific roles and responsibilities are assigned to women as 'inferior' among the sexes. In societies with such unfavourable treatments of female members of the society (sub-Saharan Africa), women have little or no say in sexual relations. Consequently, to guarantee economic and social survival, women in such societies submit to the desires of their partners including desires of risky sexual relations.

alternative) option particularly since it serves to avoid rejection and stigmatization (Worth, 1989: 304).²⁰⁰

Elsewhere, researchers stress aspects of behavioural gender norms and poor negotiation skills as the primary cause of the persistence of risky sexual behaviour particularly as agents often reply, “I couldn’t afford to resist”. According to Pivnick (1993) and Sobo (1993), the negative connotation of condom use, and the powerful symbolism attached to unprotected sex underscores the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. By implication, the social bond is considered the primary tool in the sexual decision-making process which would in a big way, significantly affect the choice of action. We imply here that despite registered widespread promiscuity, unprotected sex prevails to present and preserve established family (partner) sexual trust and feeling of fidelity. This is in tandem with Worth’s (1989) study where partner(s) feel the need to persist in risky sexual behaviour to avoid rejection and stigmatization as unfaithful and promiscuous.

As a sequel to the above, gender roles and poor condom negotiation skills records a significant percentage of risky sexual relations. According to Carter et al., (1999) and Shearer et al., (2005), gender roles, gender stereotypes (perceived inherent differences between male and female) play a significant and strategic role in the sexual partner’s decision-making process on condom use. Carter et al., (1999) argued that while men often provide condoms billed to be used during a planned sexual relation, its use or not often depended on the female partner and her

²⁰⁰ In Chapter Two of this thesis, we argued extensively that confronted by action alternatives, agents while selecting an option (action combination), look for an action combination that guarantees Pareto optimal outcome, which in turn guarantees highest beneficial value to agent(s). (See Chapter Two for details-it is important to note here that gets always and reserve the right to order their priorities and preferences in their own unique manner). In Worth (1989) study, he argues that agents prefer to submit to risky sexual behaviour than to face rejection and stigmatization from their sexual partners. In effect, their action to submit to risky sexual behaviour is ‘rational’ since it is perceived to guarantees them economic and social survival.

negotiation skills to convince and negotiate condom use. Also, they argued that men were most likely to be convinced to use a condom as well as most likely to convince their female sexual partner against condom use. Carter et al., (1999) and Shearer et al., (2005) reveal rather unequivocally that gender role and gender stereotype delineation and ability to negotiate, play a pivotal role in the condom negotiation process.²⁰¹

Odimegwu and Somefun (2017), argue that social norms and in particular, gender-power relation norms affect and influence significantly male and female behaviour in established patriarchal systems. For them, gender-power relation norms are responsible for specified suitable roles for men and women in society. These norms persist and are “enforced by that society’s institutions and practices, such as marriage, polygamy, and female genital mutilation, among others.” (Odimegwu and Somefun, 2017: 2). According to them, this gender-power relation norm

Determines the extent to which men and women are able to control the various aspects of their sexual lives, i.e., their ability to negotiate the timing of sex, conditions under which it takes place, and condom usage. This plays a critical role in determining their respective vulnerabilities to HIV. For example, femininity often requires women to be passive in sexual interactions and

²⁰¹ Carter et al., (1999) and Shearer et al., (2005) research show that condom use is heavily impacted by gender roles and the ability to effectively negotiate its use. Owing to our understanding of norms and conclusion that norms affect how people think, feel, and behave (See Chapter Three for details), it is safe therefore to argue that the physical community of many patriarchal societies have over the years normalized and specified gender roles for her members. In this case, practicing preventive sexual behaviours (abstinence and using of condoms) suggested/orchestrated by the female partner is consistently viewed as a violation to established norms and often attracts sanctions of stigmatization and rejection. This view is succinctly captured by Young et al., 2010 and Broaddus et al., 2010. In their studies, Young et al., 2010 details community members consistently view women who provide condoms thus suggesting preference in preventive sexual behaviour with the least favourable rating in likeability, positive character, and negative character rating categories. Interestingly, Young et al., (1999) recorded favourable rating scores on the three rating categories-likeability, positive character, and negative character- for men who provided the condom. On the one hand, this clearly reveals sexual double standards between women and men, and on the other hand, reveal how deep gender bias, stereotype and norms are, as well as how they significantly affect behaviour and expected behaviour of women in the society and particularly in sexual matters.

ignorant of sexual matters, limiting their ability to access information on the risks of sex or to negotiate condom usage. Masculinity, on the other hand, requires that men be sexual risk-takers and condones multiple partners which, without adequate prevention, increases their vulnerability to HIV. The unequal power balance between men and women results in their unequal access to HIV information, resources, and services (Odimegwu and Somefun, 2017:2).

A similar position was also clearly expressed by Envuladu et al., (2017),

Studies in Nigeria have proven that socially defined role and power ascribed to men and women affect the reproductive health of adolescent differently. [18, 19] The inequality faced by Nigerian females on the basis of the gender norm that places the male child above the girl has been reported from studies to affect the ability of the females to assert their right to negotiate sex or condom use. This is because of the perceived superiority of the man and the expectations that a female should always submit to the demands of the man. [20-22] The sexual behaviour of adolescents in Nigeria has exposed them to the risk of unintended pregnancy, STI and HIV (Envuladu et al., 2017: 1-2)

The above excerpts as clearly captured by Odimegwu and Somefun (2017), and Envuladu et al., (2017), reveal the position of this section. We argued that certain behavioural gender norms and the inability of sexual partners to effectively negotiate condom use, is in part, significantly responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour in many sub-Saharan African States (patriarchal societies). Placed in tandem with our analysis of patriarchal systems, sexism, and misogyny in chapter three, women are placed at a disadvantaged position in most

gender-power relation struggles; they are at the receiving end and have little or no right about their very own body.

Little wonder Odimegwu and Somefun (2017), and Envuladu et al., (2017) argue that women are forced to negotiate the timing of sex, conditions under which it takes place, and condom usage. While this is a plausible and sensible argument, it has a serious limitation. One obvious limitation to gender norms and poor negotiation skills as a primary cause of the persistence of risky sexual behaviour is that unlike three decades ago, a significant percentage of those considered the vulnerable groups of contracting HIVs (adolescents and youths) are now highly educated. With education, comes the ability to properly negotiate safe sexual relations, resist '*argumentum ad populum*' and significantly take personal responsibility for actions and inactions. We shall now proceed to the subsection by interrogating Contextual Life Uncertainties as a possible cause of the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among community members.

5.5.2 Contextual Life Uncertainties

Despite increased HIV awareness in most sub-Saharan countries in the last two decades as well as renewed campaigns by established governments to flatten the curve of transmission of HIV/AIDs, risky sexual behaviour and casual sex is still widespread. The inevitable question is, why have risky sexual behaviour, a seemingly irrational behaviour (unprotected sexual relations with multiple and 'unfamiliar' partners in areas with a high prevalence of HIV), remain widespread and a persistent phenomenon in the face of such serious health concerns?

The dynamics of risky sexual behaviour and HIV spread in sub-Saharan Africa has remained a serious concern for researchers. In this section, we turn our attention to the dynamics of HIV spread particularly interrogating the topic of the uncertainty of future health prospects, the availability, and the possibility of economic and social mobility to understand the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. In effect, high HIV-susceptible populations such as persons living in extreme poverty, drivers, migrant workers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and so on, face untold hardships as life realities and encounter enormous risks in their daily lives. Some researchers argue that this category of members of society conceive risky sexual behaviour as an insignificant risk compared to the risks they face daily. Thus, 'risky sexual behaviour' is not risky behaviour as such. The question however is, is this argument extensively defensible? To be able to critically respond to this question, let us expansively interrogate this line of thought and consider the arguments more closely.

According to Andrea Mannberg (2012), contextual uncertainty about individuals' health prospects and future are common features among many HIV-susceptible populations such as refugees, migratory workers, etc is responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour (in the said category).

For Mannberg,

The tangible presence of risk and an uncertainty about future prospects are common features among many HIV-susceptible populations, such as migratory workers, refugees, miners, intravenous drug users, and CSWs. Indeed, it has been shown that HIV frequencies soar in countries with malfunctioning institutions and

civic unrest. The basic intuition behind the theory presented here is that, for people living in harsh conditions, HIV constitutes a significant threat but it is not dominant in daily life. In other words, if private actions only determine the future health status to a minor extent, there is little gain in abstaining from risky activities with potential future health costs (Mannberg, 2012: 298),

Based on the above excerpt, Mannberg (2012), unequivocally argues that people living in harsh conditions; civil unrest, poor socio-economic structures such as extreme poverty and low life expectancy index while evaluating their likely life span or future economic advancements/earnings, while considering the costs of risky behaviour, conceive HIV as a significant threat to life but less dominant compared to their daily life situations. This line of thought is re-echoed in various other research publications. According to cross-sectional research carried out in some African countries, Oster (2007), argues that the cost of risky sexual behaviour is systematically and significantly reduced by expected life length and future earnings. He further argued that the effect on the number of sexual partners and risky sexual behaviour based on HIV frequency and HIV knowledge is less significant compared to the effect caused by income levels and expected life length.

Elsewhere, Benz (2005), following a similar line of thought, argued that there is a significant correlation between the experience of civil conflict and HIV prevalence. According to him, this correlation could be explained at least in part, due to civil wars by nations, directly or indirectly leading to high HIV prevalence in neighbouring countries. Specifically, Benz (2005), states that “it has been argued that civil war in one country reduces economic growth rates of neighbouring countries. Due to this, war involvement of neighbours indirectly affects HIV

prevalence in bordering countries through its direct impact on wealth in these countries” (Benz, 2005: 86).²⁰²

Macheke and Campbell (1995), examine life uncertainties as an incentive to miners as a vulnerable group to HIV and AIDs. According to them, masculinity plays a pivotal role in how migrants construct their social identities especially related to health, ill-health, HIV, and sexuality. Macheke and Campbell assume that the sexual behaviour of miners and migrants are significantly influenced by social identities strategically developed through their years of living and working in the same condition and environment. According to them, the living and working conditions of migrants and miners are characterized by perpetual danger, living in large single-sex hostels, and living for months without contact with family members.

In the interviews factors such as the general working and living conditions on the mines, the ever-present danger of accidents, and mine workers' perceived lack of control over their health and well-being repeatedly emerged as important features of the world in which mine worker identities were fashioned... From the accounts of our informants, drinking and sex appeared to be two of the few diversionary activities easily available on a day-to-day basis.... In talking about the stresses of daily life on the mines, the issue of rock-falls emerged as the central concern of most of the informants. They reported living in daily fear of fatal, mutilating or disabling

²⁰² Based on Benz (2005), it is obvious that civil unrest and wars, create an atmosphere of untold hardship and multiplication of refugees and migrants, thus living in highly unfavourable conditions in camps. Camps of millions of refugees are often characterized by poor health services, poor hygiene, inadequate sanitation, poor nutrition, and limited pharmaceutical interventions. In such critical conditions in refugee camps, the task of preventing the spread of HIV is not prioritized. Consequently, in order of priority, it is not perceived or considered an immediate threat. In addition, the plight, and risks of individuals in refugee camps and camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is further aggravated by lack of appropriate HIV education programs and materials (in local languages for effective assimilation), lack of adequate information, lack of campaigns for appropriate behaviour and lack of adequate access to affordable condoms and so on.

accidents. This fear is well-based... Every time you go underground you have to wear a lamp on your head. Once you take on that lamp you know that you are wearing death. Where you are going you are not sure whether you will come back to the surface alive or dead. It is only with luck if you come to the surface still alive because everyday somebody gets injured or dies (Macheke and Campbell, 1995:276).

Owing to the above excerpt, Macheke and Campbell (1995), argue extensively and rather convincingly that vulnerable groups such as miners and migrants through their living and working conditions, attain new social identities that make them acquire an uninviting sense of powerlessness, which is an important feature in building their self-efficacy.²⁰³ Self-efficacy is therefore used to understand the tendency of workers to engage in and promote healthy behaviours or not. Consequently, agents who possess greater self-efficacy, are more likely to engage in and promote healthy behaviours than agents who possess low self-efficacy. Since migrant workers and miners work in environments with appalling conditions, they are more likely than not to possess low self-efficacy. Invariably, therefore, risky sexual behaviour becomes a persistent behaviour among migrants and miners since the risk of HIV/AIDS appear minimal compared to the immediate dangers and risks of death they face every day as they go underground.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Macheke and Campbell (1995), conceive self-efficacy to mean the power of negotiation to which agents feel totally in control or otherwise in making important life decisions. In this sense, self-efficacy is used as a determinant of migrant and mine workers in negotiating their sexual identities and behaviours as well as how they determine their health-related behaviour in general. For details see Macheke and Campbell, 1995; Prieur, 1990.

²⁰⁴ Though HIV/AIDS has since been declared an epidemic, it is a disease that when contracted, allows positive individuals to lead one-to-two years without antiretrovirals and 'normal' lives with proper medication. It therefore makes a lot of sense that vulnerable individuals especially those who face untold hardship, constant risks, and perpetual fear of death, mutilating or disabling accidents to consider HIV/AIDS as a risk but of less gravity to significantly alter their behaviour from risky sexual behaviour to safe sexual practice.

The arguments presented in support of Contextual Life Uncertainties as a plausible explanation for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour though very convincing and thought-provoking, in my opinion, presents experimented reasons for a limited population of the society. It thus fails to address or provide a practical reasoning and sound argument for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among youths and teenagers who fall outside this HIV-susceptible population.

5.5.3 Alcohol, Hard Drug Consumption and Peer Pressure

HIV/AIDs prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa is still unacceptably high. Misperceptions about alcohol and peer pressure are arguably one important factor that creates mistaken ideas about HIV/AIDs whose consequence is the evolution of behavioural patterns that cause agents to contract HIV. Invariably, therefore, the links between persistent risky sexual behaviour, alcohol consumption (other hard drugs) and HIV thus needs renewed attention.

In the first section of this chapter, we had an exhaustive discussion on HIV and its statistics. We argued that unsafe sexual escapades or risky sexual behaviour in general accounts for over 98% of all HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa. This makes risky sexual behaviour an essential component of HIV infection. This is however contingent on the number, diversity, and frequency of multiple sexual partners/type of sexual intercourse, sexual debut as well as the choice of the sexual partner(s). The consequent interaction between these contingent choice options and alcohol (drug use) is, therefore, our primary goal in this section.

The link between risky sexual behaviour and alcohol consumption (as well as other hard drugs) has been established in several research papers.²⁰⁵ According to Gabhainn and Francois (2000), alcohol and other hard drugs serve as depressants consequently clouding the agent's sound rational judgement. The situation is aggravated when considering adolescents who are often considered "naturally less in control of their emotions and alcohol use may worsen the situation by reducing their ability to make rational decisions...alcohol and other drugs of abuse such as Indian hemp increase adolescents' risk-taking behaviours especially concerning their sexuality" (Nwagu, 2015: 405).²⁰⁶ It is important to mention this primarily because UNICEF (2019 Statistical data) reveals that about 1.7 million adolescents between the ages of 10-19 were living with HIV worldwide and 84% of these living in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁰⁷

Nigeria has an estimated population of 200million of which the adolescent population is estimated at 23%. Also, about 40% of all new HIV infections acquired in Nigeria is contracted by young adults under the age of 25 years. This implies that our attention should be slightly tilted to adolescent and youth consumption of alcohol and risky sexual behaviour. Despite the confirmed rise in the spread of HIV and other STIs, condom use is limited by adolescents which accounts for the precipitous rise in cases of teenage unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Nwagu

²⁰⁵ Serving as depressants and inhibitors, alcohol and other substances like cannabis and Indian hemp, reduce the ability of agents to make sound logical decisions, in fact, agents often show significant lack of self-control after large consumption of alcohol and other drugs as well as inability to understand and control their behaviour. For further details, see Fritz et al., 2002; Campbell, Williams, & Gilgen, 2002; Unachukwu and Nwankwo, 2000; Adams et al., 2014.

²⁰⁶ Risky behaviours in adolescents often lead to undesirable and unwanted lifelong consequences. Risky behaviours are characterized by deliberately engaging in behaviours that are clearly perceived to lead to negative and dangerous outcomes. Such behaviours include adolescent smoking and drinking, unprotected sexual relations that often lead to diseases with permanent consequences/effects.

²⁰⁷ While a significant number of adolescents living with HIV might have contracted/acquired the virus at birth through vertical transmission, others acquired the virus through youthful sexual exploration. Simply, adolescents and young adults are at the critical stage of emotional and physical changes and development with heightened interest to obtain personal autonomy and take personal responsibility of their individual health. With autonomy and personal responsibility comes the challenge of exploring and proper navigation of peer pressure, especially alcohol and sexuality.

(2015), defines adolescents as ‘experimenters.’ She argues that adolescents “experiment with lots of human behaviours including drug use and sex.²⁰⁸ As experimenters, especially in human behaviours, adolescents and young adults engage in a variety of behaviours associated with different types of sexual activities including but not limited to casual, group, and anal sex. These activities are further aggravated by the influence of alcohol and other related drugs.

Alcohol consumption and drug abuse are considered some of the most important and immediate problems of adolescents and young adults in sub-Saharan Africa. It is readily available to them because of ineffective government regulations, consequently, adolescents and young adults use alcohol as a means of socialization, recreation, as well as inspiration to execute activities hitherto considered impossible.²⁰⁹ It suffices to say that alcohol and drugs being readily available at nightclubs, brothels, and motels, increases the likelihood of the prevalence of unprotected casual, group, and anal sex at these locations shortly afterwards.

Campbell’s (2003) research on risky sexual behaviour and alcohol in Botswana reveals overwhelmingly that people generally hold that alcohol consumption affects sexual behaviour. Two points that appear very important and should be deduced from Campbell (2003). are as follows. First, Campbell argues extensively that from his survey, there is a general belief that alcohol serves as an inhibitor. This fact makes alcohol consumption an appealing activity for friends. With alcohol comes the intoxication of agents and the desire to engage in reckless

²⁰⁸ Alcohol is prevalent in most social gatherings and often a must consume for adolescents and young adults (for social and peer pressure to conformity especially of adolescents to alcohol and drug use, see Prentice & Miller, 1993; Marks, Graham, & Hansen (1992), leads them to unsound decisions and perpetuation in risky sexual behaviours. or commonly used as depressants and disinhibitory, and makes consumers often act irrationally,

²⁰⁹ Alcohol consumption is often associated with inspiration execute certain behaviours that agents would ordinarily not execute being in the right state of mind such as approaching the opposite sex, social violence as well as execution of crimes. See Evans, 1980 and Coid, 1986.

behaviours such as unsafe sexual relations. He further argues that “sometimes people have sex when they are drunk, and it is not something they planned. They simply do it while under the influence of alcohol. There have been reports of drunken people raping or being raped. Also, while intoxicated, people may forget or be unable to protect themselves by using a condom (Campbell, 2003: 152). A similar finding was reported by Agius et al., (2013). Their research reveals that students’ alcohol use or consumption was associated with higher rates of sexual behaviour. While this is so, interesting statistics reveal that one-third of their respondents (n=450) reported significant sexual regrets due to alcohol. Also, “students who reported binge drinking in the past two weeks and compulsive drinking in the past year, were more likely to have, in the past year, experienced sex” (Agius et al., 2013: 78)

The second vital point taken from Campbell’s research is the fact that alcohol consumption increases the frequency of sexual relations with a partner (as well as multiple partners) where the drinking status of a sexual partner does not affect the resulting sexual behaviour of youths. According to him,

The number of sexual intercourse youths had during the past month increased according to the number of times that they drank alcohol. Males who drank at least once a week had 2 times more sex than their non-drinking counterparts. The quantity of alcohol consumed is implicit in the number of alcoholic drinks consumed at a single drinking session. The drinking status of youths' partners does not seem to have a significant effect on the sexual behaviour of youths. The frequency of sexual intercourse among males who have had sex with a casual acquaintance when under the influence of alcohol is significantly higher than it is among those who have never had such a sexual encounter (Campbell, 2003: 152-153).

In Chapter Three, we argued that a reference network, which sometimes varies in size and force (depending on the norm in question), often serves as a compelling force as well as a strong incentive for conformity to certain norms.²¹⁰ Herein, we refer to this as peer pressure. Peer pressure is often conceived as the pressure or direct influence others exert on us that can make us abandon our original individual behaviour or expected behaviour thus changing our behaviours and attitudes to conform to group or individual expected behaviour. For Adegboyega et al., (2019),

Peer pressure is the influence on an individual who gets encouraged to follow others by changing their attitudes, values, or behaviour to conform with those of the influencing group or individual either positively or negatively. A peer could be anyone you look up to in behaviour or someone who you would think is equal to your age or ability. On the other hand, the term pressure implies the process that influences people to do something that they might not otherwise choose to do. Children try to get in touch with their peers as early as the age of seven (Adegboyega et al., 2019: 50).

Peer pressure is attractive to young adults and adolescents since none of them desires to be left out of seemingly interesting and fun activities. Adult-like activities such as alcohol consumption and sexual experimentation and exploration are foremost in their minds and appealing to them, leaving them completely vulnerable and increasing the risk of pregnancies, HIV infections and other diseases.²¹¹ While peer pressure has positive effects, peer pressure has been directly linked to the high increase and persistence of teenage alcohol beverage consumption and sexual behaviour (Hollander, 2010). Analysing alcohol, hard drug consumption

²¹⁰ For details on this, see Prentice and Miller 1993; Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Wenzel 2005.

²¹¹ For more details see Olugbenga, Adebimpe & Abodurin (2009).

and peer pressure as an important factor that creates mistaken ideas and perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour among young adults and teenagers is therefore obvious. Conclusively, due to peer pressure, adolescents and young adults perceive excessive alcohol consumption as exploration, interesting and fun which in turn, heighten their sexual drives and passion to experiment with other activities such as sex with multiple partners, casual sex, group sex, oral and anal sex. All these activities and behaviours increase their chances of getting pregnant, contracting HIV, or other sexually transmitted diseases.

5.5.4 Sexual Misperception

Sexual misperception is considered one of the foremost causes of risky sexual behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa. Earlier, we argued that misperceptions of how our reference network feel, think and act, can significantly affect how we prefer to model our subsequent actions.²¹² In this section, we desire to interrogate how sexual misperceptions of sexual intent, interest, and sexual knowledge (safe and unsafe practices) culminates in sexual coercion, overperceiving partner's sexual desires and perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour.

Sexual relation is often very complicated. It is characterized by conventional signalling which differs from one culture to another. Thus, sexual relation is made up of observing cues, focal points, relevant signals, and involve coding and decoding signals. Signal interpretation and estimation of a partner's sexual interest and intent sometimes leads to ambiguous interpretation, overestimation, or underestimation. Sexual intent or interest expressions are characterized by

²¹² For more details on legitimacy of expectations, see Acemoglu and Jackson, 2014; Shamir and Shamir, 1997 on saliency of beliefs and expectations; Bicchieri, 2006, 2016 on reference network and convention.

fear of mating rejection, damage to signaller's value, immediate or future mating reputation and success. Signals are carefully coded bearing all these in mind.²¹³

Gender²¹⁴ difference plays a pivotal role in sexual interest expression, particularly as it pertains to the sexual bargaining process, consent, where and how. Interpreting and making assumptions about sexual interests and intents based on nonverbal communication or behaviour such as flirting, giving compliments, eye contact, smile/laughs, and the type of clothing/makeup worn is ambiguous and often misleading (Abbey & Melby, 1986). Little wonder according to Farris, Treat, Viken, & McFall (2008), men often overperceive sexual interests and intent compared to women.

In the previous section, we argued that peer pressure and perceived peer behaviour suffices as a viable explanation for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. This fact is also true for the evolution of the persistence of sexual misperceptions. It is generally believed that adults in sub-Saharan Africa who led lives with close relationships engage in in-depth discussions with peers about various social activities, parties, burials, weddings, and sexual

²¹³ When sexual intent and desires build, agents carefully code these and send only appropriate signals to interested partners. Sending direct signals are often avoided since rejection or branding partners as promiscuous often tarnishes the sexual image of others, destroys their reputation, and reduces their future mating chances. To this end, signals are often misinterpreted. In addition, since these sorts of non-verbal communication to express interest to pursue a sexual relationship with other partners or not is open to misinterpretation, errors tend to characterize this social decoding process and can leave both the signaller and signalled party confused. For more details, see Symons, 2005; Abbey, 1982.

²¹⁴ In Chapter Four (4.3), we discussed gender norms, conceiving it as institutionalised and internalized standards of behaviour, and expected behaviour of male and female gender in the society. We argued that gender and socially created roles specific to male and female members of the society as masculine and feminine specific and stipulated roles and behaviours. This gender specific roles play a pivotal role in sexual interest, sexual negotiation and bargaining, consent, interpretation, and assumption of various sexual signals and behaviours in nonverbal sexual communication between partners.

relations with others. Through this, opinions conceived as being held by the majority are judged acceptable, promoted, and normalized among peers.²¹⁵

Based on above, it suffices to argue therefore that, sexual relations in such environments are characterized by significant levels of misperceptions. These misperceptions are often men's sexual over-perception of what women want, how and where. As a result, men are often afraid of the costs associated with missed sexual opportunity and desire to always utilize every cue or signal for sexual relation perceived. Among these is also risky sexual behaviour and condom use. We mentioned earlier that risky behaviour characterizes adolescents and young adults as "experimenters" in human behaviour. We should mention that these risky behaviours including drug use, alcohol consumption, smoking, criminal activity, drinking and driving, as well as unprotected sexual exploration carry immense immediate and/or future negative consequences.²¹⁶

Based on Levine (2001), the decision to engage in risky sexual behaviour by both sexes and particularly by women (owing to the disproportionate level of risks enumerated above) is a decision based on a high level of ignorance. This is so because while comparing the costs and benefits of alternative action combination, young adults and adolescents either ignore the

²¹⁵ In Chapter Four (4.2.2), we argued that through socialization, sex-linked characteristics were transmitted from one generation to the next. Herein, sexual misperceptions that evolve within a culture, is maintained, promoted, and transmitted to the next generation. Consequently, certain behaviours like flirting, giving compliments, eye contact, smile/laughs, and the type of clothing/makeup worn are interpreted by community members as sexual invitation for physical, verbal, or non-verbal appraisal.

²¹⁶ In many sexual relations, partners are particularly afraid of immediate consequences of their action rather than long term future consequences. This implies that girls fear getting pregnant much more than they would fear contracting a venereal disease. Little wonder she might have pregnancy pills ready at hand or immediately purchase morning after pills and not purchase condom, which is a safer and cheaper preventive strategy. Risky sexual behaviour, which is our major concern here, has a double-edged risk attached: unwanted/early pregnancy and HIV infection (this includes other sexually transmitted infections). Women bear a disproportionate level of risk. They are at risk of unwanted pregnancy and sometimes complications at childbirth due to their age. Women are at risk of abandoning all activities such as school and work for the period of pregnancy and the postpartum period. They become objects of ridicule in the society, their immediate and future mating value and reputation destroyed, and they are at high risk of contracting HIV infection.

consequence of risky sexual behaviour (the prices attached-unwanted/early pregnancy, risks of early childbirth, HIV, and other diseases) or highly value the momentary pleasure and exploration over and above the potential risks they may incur immediately or in the future. One important deduction we can make here is that risky sexual behaviour suffices for young adults as salient compared to safe sexual relations. This implies that as argued above, relying on discussions with friends, peers, neighbours, and perceived societal disapprovals of condom use, it becomes valid precedence as well as an invitation for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among adolescents and young adults.

As a sequel to the above, it is obvious that sexual misperception significantly creates a false reality for teenagers and young adults, considering most spoken words by peers, friends, and neighbours as a cue to societally approved actions or behaviour. Based on research conducted to discuss pluralistic ignorance and alcohol consumption particularly among college students,²¹⁷ a significant level of ignorance persists in sexual relationships and is thus responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa.

5.6 Survey Data Analysis

The data and statistics available to us show that the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa is still unacceptably high, a serious health concern for policymakers and health workers. We are made aware from the previous section, the fact that several possible reasons are responsible for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among agents. It is important to

²¹⁷ Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Prentice and Miller 1993; Wenzel 2005.

reiterate the fact that our primary goal here is to understand the cause of risky sexual behaviour and the underlying reasons for its persistence in the face of life-threatening diseases such as HIV.

As a sequel to the above-abridged objectives, it suffices to state right from the outset that this research rests on three pivotal research questions. Firstly, we desire to use all the tools and resources available to understand why rational agents in high HIV prevalence areas, aware of the consequences of Risky sexual behaviour persist in such behaviours. Secondly, is pluralistic ignorance responsible for the persistence and perpetuation of Risky Sexual Behaviour and HIV Spread in Nigeria? And finally, is Risky Sexual Behaviour (RSB) a conditional behaviour enforced by Patriarchal Gender Norms?

This survey was designed with two objectives. The first objective is to utilise the data to determine if there is a significant correlation between the existing patriarchal structure, gender norms in Nigeria, and the persistence of risky sexual behaviour among agents. The second objective is to use the data to determine if there is a correlation between pluralistic ignorance and risky sexual behaviour. The survey data was therefore projected to be used to determine what gender norms, peer effects and patriarchal norms support risky sexual behaviour and how these norms function.

The Risky Sexual Behaviour Survey was designed using the KAP survey method primarily aimed at gathering information on the knowledge level of participants regarding safe sexual practices, attitudes of participants and practice. In addition to this, however, a further section was included to ascertain the function expectations play in perpetuating risky sexual behaviour among agents. This survey was conducted online with a total of 46 questions, and administered to Nigerians, with a total of 5,753 respondents.

Analysing the survey data shows that 48.19% of the respondents are Female while 51.25% are Male, and a total of 66.81% as Christians, 24.61% as Muslims, 3.23% as African Traditional Worshipers (ATR), 2.81% Atheists. In addition, 48.03% are Graduates, 26.54 are Undergraduates, 15.59% are Postgraduates, 3.37% are Secondary School Students. Furthermore, 83.22% of the respondents are Straight/Heterosexuals, 6.49% are Questioning their Sexuality, 3.39% are Asexual, 3.39% are Bisexuals while 3.53% are Gay/Lesbians. Based on the above statistics, the data shows that 90.16% of the respondents are highly educated or at least currently at the university level. This finding is not very surprising since it was an online survey.²¹⁸ In a situation where most respondents are highly educated (university graduates), the data might be pointedly biased and thus, significantly affect the level of the correlation between pluralistic ignorance, expectations from relevant reference network, and risky sexual behaviour.

²¹⁸ While this is not surprising, I should mention here that because we are dealing with entrenched social norm as well as interested in unravelling the primary cause of risky sexual behaviour, over 90% highly educated respondents might sway the responses and make the data biased. This is true for two main reasons. Firstly, highly educated individuals often take personal responsibility for their actions by seeking more knowledge to dispel established pluralistic ignorance. Secondly, highly educated individuals tend to be less affected by expectations of “reference network” since they tend to present themselves as self-determining individuals.

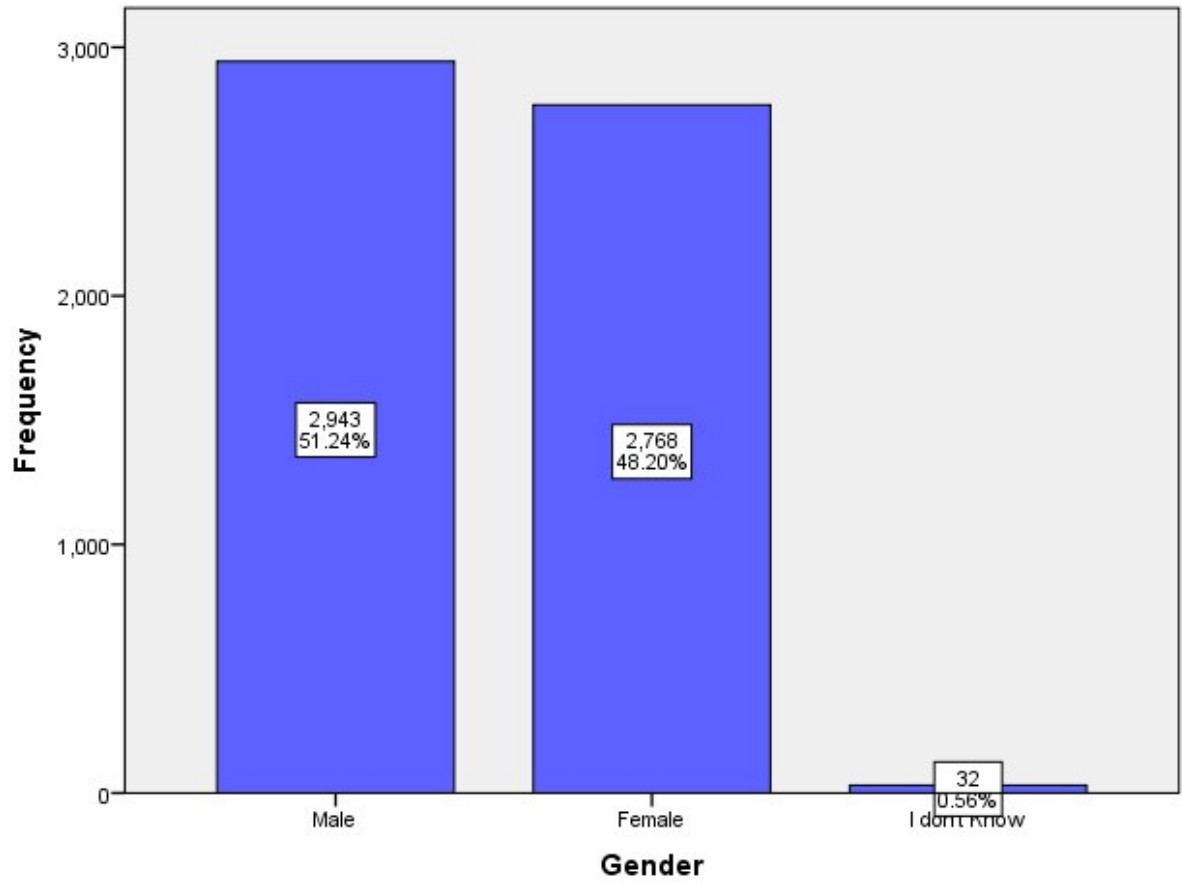


Table. 5.1

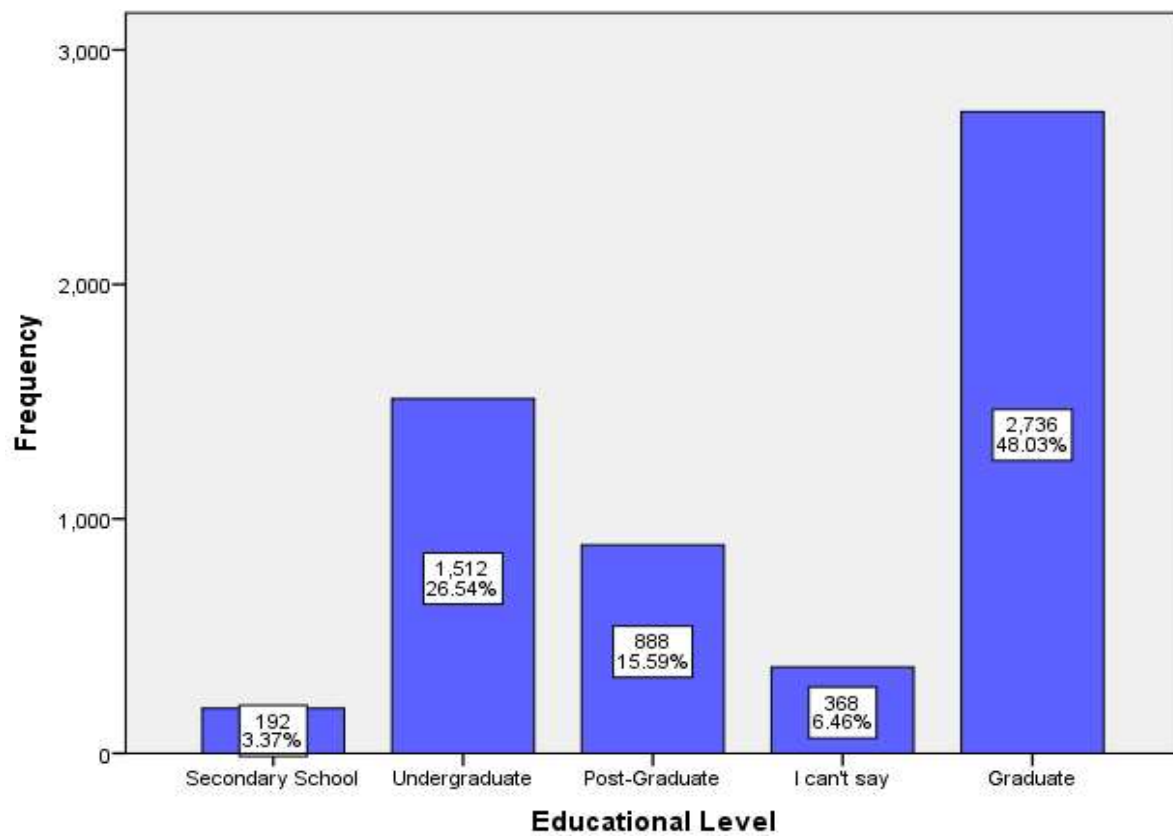


Table. 5.2

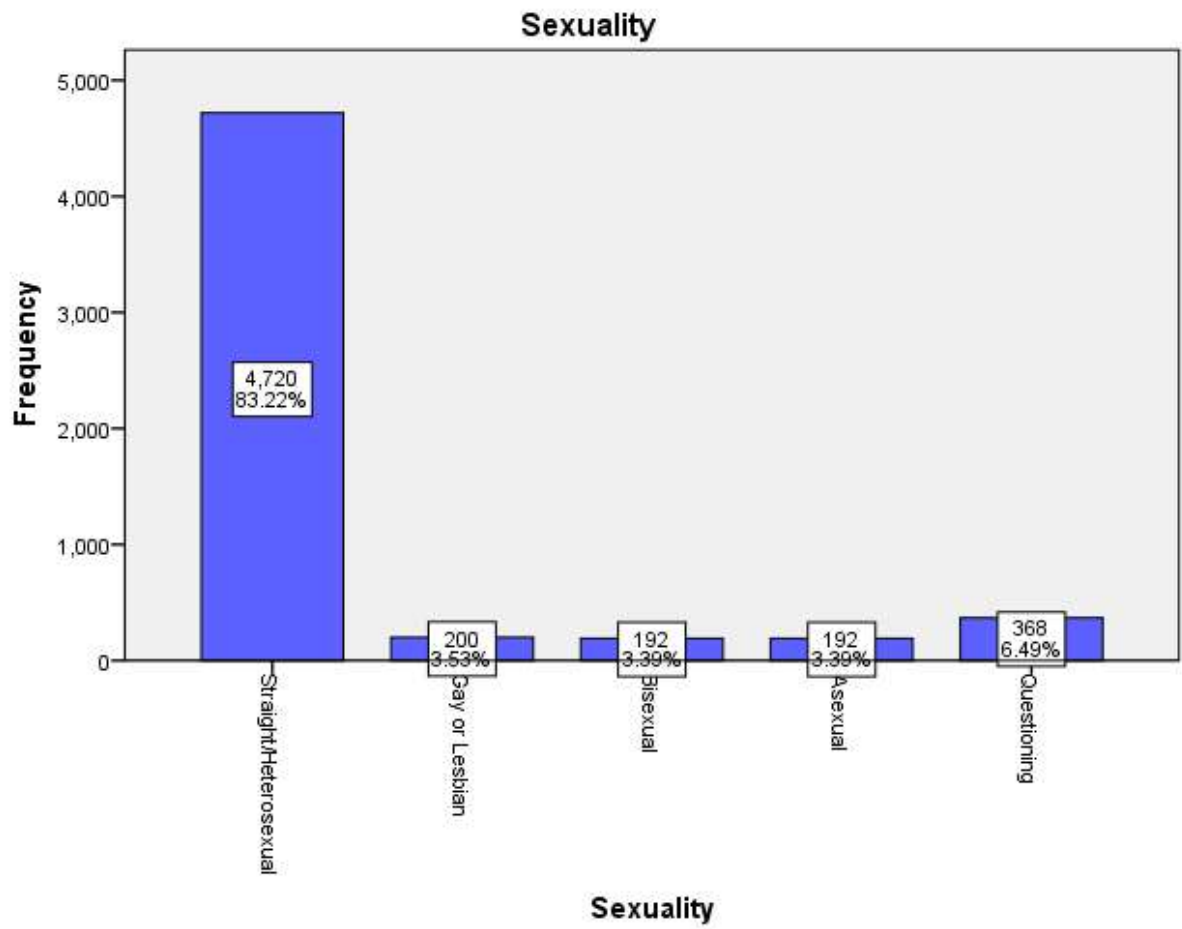


Table. 5.3

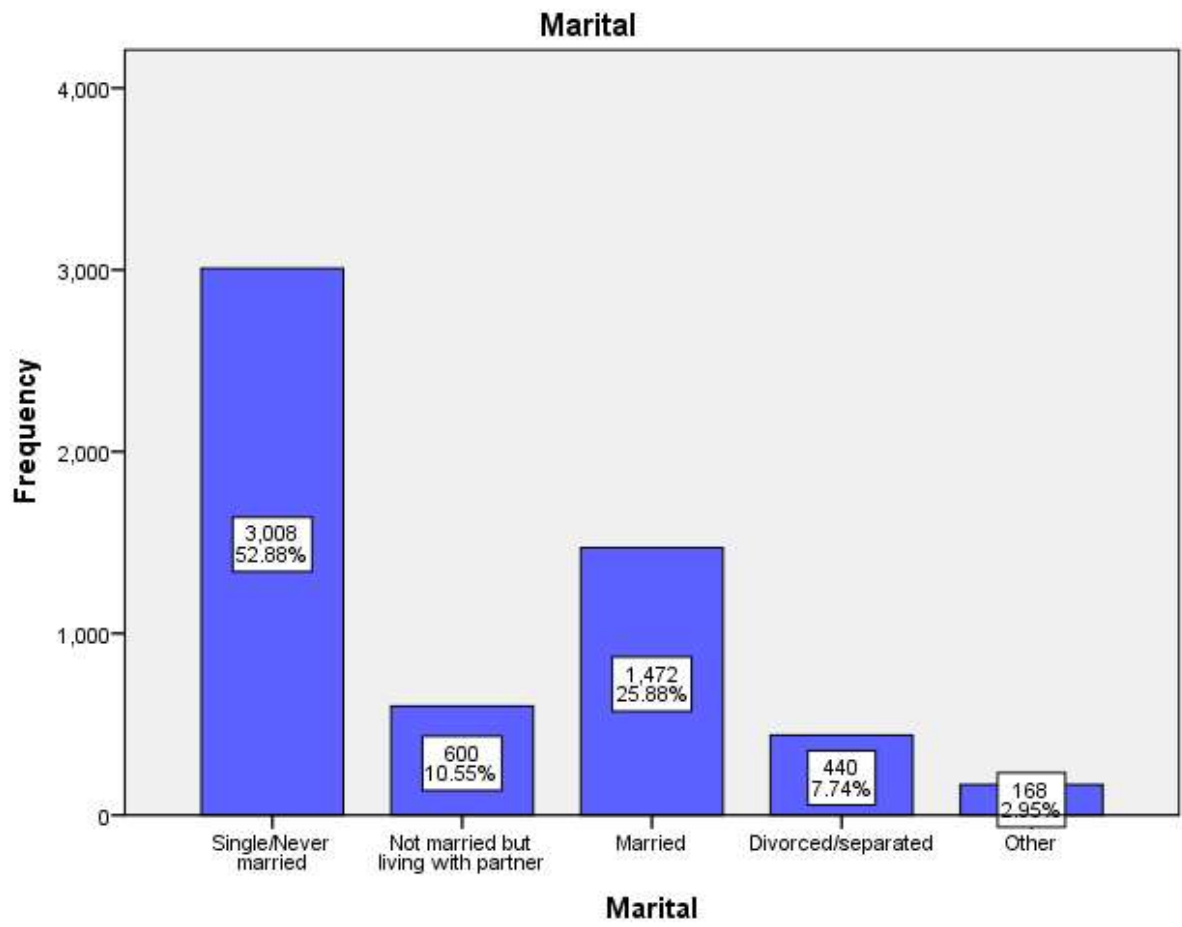


Table. 5.4

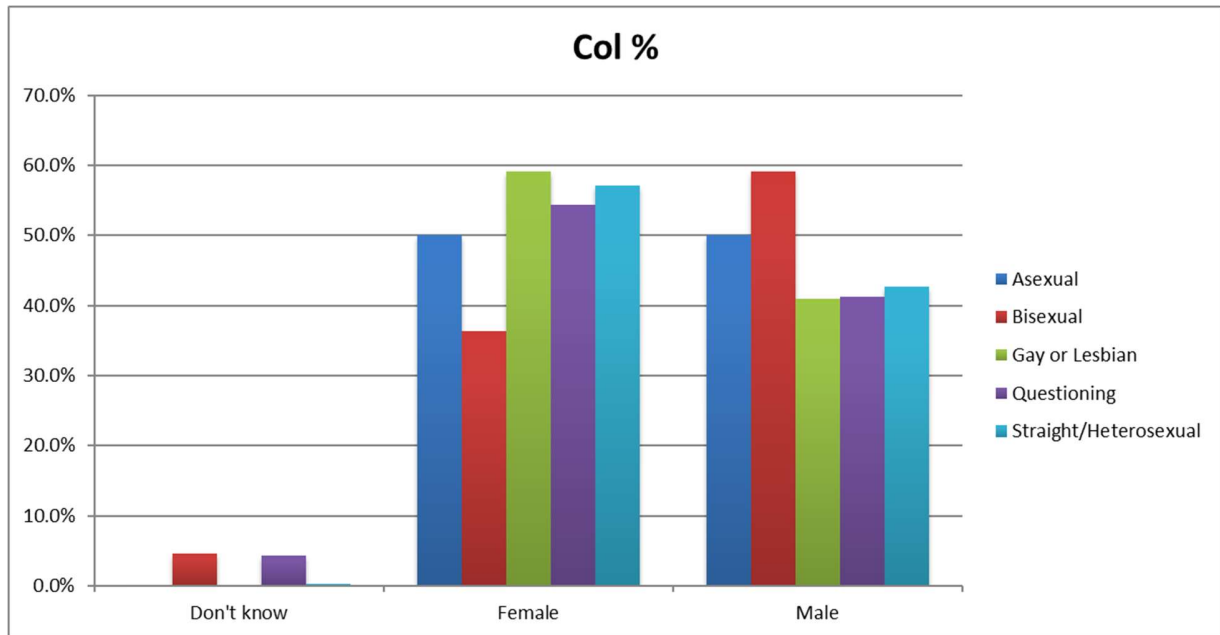


Table. 5.5

Tables 5.1-5.4 show basic information about respondents concerning gender, educational level, sexuality, and marital status classified in percentages. Tables 5.5 on the other hand, shows a cluster percentage of gender vs sexuality. This cluster analysis is important to immediately show that though 83% of respondents are heterosexuals, women make the highest proportion in being lesbians, questioning their sexuality, as well as being straight/heterosexuals. On the other hand, male respondents are highest concerning bisexuals, while both genders responded almost equally to the asexual option. This cluster and analysis are important because as we shall come to realize, a significant number of female respondents tend to be sexually flexible and rely heavily on their partners' approval or decisions on sexual activities.

The second section of the survey involved assessing the level of knowledge of respondents about sexually transmitted diseases and information on condom use. The results

indicate that an awe-inspiring majority of respondents (86.3%) are sufficiently informed about how to avoid the risks of STDs' transmission. This fact is in tandem with the percentage of educated respondents, the results of which are encouraging. It is encouraging because if 86.3% of respondents are sufficiently aware of how to avoid contracting STDs, they are therefore aware of the essential role condoms play in safeguarding the sexually active members of the society from HIV and AIDS by perpetually practising safe sex.

Unfortunately, however, this heart-warming percentage of respondents sufficiently aware of how to avoid contracting STDs is quickly and overwhelming crushed by the perception of condom (condom use) expressed by respondents. When asked about their perception and what first comes to mind when they see someone with a condom, a huge 35% of respondents disclosed that the first thing that comes to their minds was promiscuity, while 33.3% disclosed being protective. In addition, 17.4% think of family planning, while 13.5% responded to sexual pleasure. As a sequel to our discussion on social norms and in particular expectations of relevant reference network, it would invariably imply that such negative perception from about 35.8% of respondents reveals the presence of a very subtle but strong norm against condoms that is fuelled by negative perception. Since this norm is very subtle, it can affect the perception of even the highly educated members of society. Based on this, we can immediately notice the origin of the establishment of a unique form of pluralistic ignorance²¹⁹ that sweeps across age and educational background so much so that it affects or enhances the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour.

²¹⁹ In Chapter 5.1, we discussed pluralistic ignorance as a type of misperception. We argued that Pluralistic ignorance is an erroneous cognitive belief shared by two or more individuals about the ideas, feelings, and actions of others. It is important to clarify here that for pluralistic ignorance to be, there must be a strong disconnect between personal normative belief about an idea, a feeling, or actions of others, held opinion about true state of reality and second order normative beliefs. For example, agents have personal normative beliefs that using a condom is good because they have evaluated the benefits of using it which outweighs any side effects of not using a condom (if any). Due to negative perceptions of condom, agents therefore erroneously believe that the second normative belief is against condom use, while in effect, majority (like in the case of this survey of significant number of highly educated respondents) hold personal belief that using a condom is good. This situation thus

Gender ^ In the past 12 months, I have used condom Crosstabulation

			In the past 12 months, I have used condom				Total
			100% of the time	50% of the time	25% of the time	0% of the time	
Gender	Male	Count	184	880	1104	640	2808
		% within Gender	6.6%	31.3%	39.3%	22.8%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	63.9%	49.5%	48.3%	55.6%	51.0%
		% of Total	3.3%	16.0%	20.1%	11.6%	51.0%
	Female	Count	96	896	1176	496	2664
		% within Gender	3.6%	33.6%	44.1%	18.6%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	33.3%	50.5%	51.4%	43.1%	48.4%
		% of Total	1.7%	16.3%	21.4%	9.0%	48.4%
	Don't Know	Count	8	0	8	16	32
		% within Gender	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	2.8%	0.0%	0.3%	1.4%	0.6%
		% of Total	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%
Total	Count	288	1776	2288	1152	5504	
	% within Gender	5.2%	32.3%	41.6%	20.9%	100.0%	
	% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	5.2%	32.3%	41.6%	20.9%	100.0%	

The next section of the survey was structured to assess respondents' risky sexual behaviour as well as their disposition for safe sexual practices by using latex condoms during sexual activities. To this end, respondents were asked in percentage, their frequency of condom use in the last 12 months. Interestingly, though sadly, only about 62% of male respondents (2808), in the past 12

institute pluralistic ignorance where "everyone" holds a personal normative believe that using a condom is good yet perpetuate in risky sexual behaviour because they believe that others hold personal normative beliefs that using a condom is bad.

months, have used condoms less than 50%. Though very poor, this percentage only goes to show that significant number of male respondents sparsely use condoms. One necessary question to ask is if majority of these respondents are married or in stable relationships. This question is answered by in Table: 5.6. Comparing the result with highly educated, married, as well as individuals living with partners, the statistics appear to be balanced and reflect the true state of the respondents. However, if we quickly juxtapose this with the percentage of single/not married respondents which accounts for 52.9% of respondents, it clearly and invariably reveals the heavy presence of risky sexual behaviour among respondents (highly educated respondents which accounts for a total of 90.16% of the total respondents).

Marital Status * In the past 12 months, I have used condom Crosstabulation

			In the past 12 months, I have used condom				Total
			100% of the time	50% of the time	25% of the time	0% of the time	
Marital Status	Single/ Never married	Count	192	1040	1120	504	2856
		% within Marital Status	6.7%	36.4%	39.2%	17.6%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	66.7%	58.6%	49.1%	43.8%	52.0%
		% of Total	3.5%	18.9%	20.4%	9.2%	52.0%
	Not married but living with partner	Count	24	224	312	40	600
		% within Marital Status	4.0%	37.3%	52.0%	6.7%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	8.3%	12.6%	13.7%	3.5%	10.9%
	Married	Count	40	352	592	448	1432
		% within Marital Status	2.8%	24.6%	41.3%	31.3%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	13.9%	19.8%	26.0%	38.9%	26.1%
	Divorced/separated	Count	24	80	224	112	440
		% within Marital Status	5.5%	18.2%	50.9%	25.5%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	8.3%	4.5%	9.8%	9.7%	8.0%
	Others	Count	8	80	32	48	168
		% within Marital Status	4.8%	47.6%	19.0%	28.6%	100.0%
		% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	2.8%	4.5%	1.4%	4.2%	3.1%
Total	Count	288	1776	2280	1152	5496	
	% within Marital Status	5.2%	32.3%	41.5%	21.0%	100.0%	
	% within In the past 12 months, I have used condom	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	5.2%	32.3%	41.5%	21.0%	100.0%	

Table: 5.6

Based on the above statistical examination, we can safely conclude that a substantial number of so-called highly educated respondents perpetuate risky sexual behaviour, mostly as single men, and women. Furthermore, we can infer that this is fuelled by the negative perceptions of condoms already discussed above which we argued, heralds a very subtle yet strong development of pluralistic ignorance. It is crucial to note that in Table 5.6, we observe that 52.0% of respondents reported as Single/Never Married (2856 frequencies). In the previous 12 months, 48.5% of single/never married respondents used condoms between 0% and 50% of the time.

What is your reason for not using a condom?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It is against my religion	728	12.7	12.9	12.9
	My spouse does not like it	1288	22.4	22.8	35.7
	I do not indulge in pre-marital sex	736	12.8	13.0	48.8
	I have just one partner (I am married)	936	16.3	16.6	65.4
	I do not like it	648	11.3	11.5	76.9
	It is not pleasurable	1304	22.7	23.1	100.0
	Total	5640	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	112	1.9		
Total		5752	100.0		

Table. 5.7

Respondents were also asked to choose from the list of options their reasons for not using condoms in the last 12 months for sexually active agents as we can see in Table. 5.7. This aspect was necessary to understand personal reasons behind risky sexual behaviour and compare this with personal normative beliefs about condom use, perception and expectations about friends, colleagues, and family members as well as second-order normative expectation. This was believed, would clarify, and shed crystal light on hypotheses I and II. As a sequel, two options owing to the percentage of respondents stand out and are worthy of note. Firstly, findings reveal that 23.1% of respondents disclosed that their reasons for persistence in risky sexual behaviour are because using a condom is “not pleasurable”. On the other hand, 22.8% of respondents disclosed that they persist in risky sexual behaviour because their “partners do not like using a condom”.

In section 5.4.4, under Sexual Misperception, we noted that critical evaluation of the cost and benefit of risky sexual behaviour should always oblige agents that the rational and sound action given the circumstance, is to engage in safe sexual relations. This is because momentary sexual pleasure and experimentation come at a huge cost to the practitioner, be it early and unwanted pregnancy, or the contraction of STDs. We concluded that most of such decisions to persist in risky sexual behaviour is based on a high level of ignorance. Fortunately, or unfortunately, we are dealing with highly educated respondents who are fully aware of the risks involved in persistence and indiscriminate risky sexual behaviour. Ordinarily, one would expect highly educated individuals to persist in safe sexual practice as against risky sexual behaviour owing to their knowledge of the huge cost of desire for immediate pleasure and irrational sexual experiments.

This high level of ignorance is thus manifested in this data on personal reasons for not using condoms. It is safe to argue that the survey reveals overwhelmingly that respondents who are fully aware of the benefits of using a condom and aware of the consequences of risky sexual relations prefer to persist in risky sexual relations. Interestingly, they prefer to persist in risky sexual relations because they prefer momentary pleasure to fear of contracting STDs or unwanted pregnancies. Is risky sexual behaviour more profitable to them? Is it possible that there is yet another variable that plays a pivotal role here by convincing participants that HIV and other diseases are non-existent or reduces the obvious risk in their sexual judgement? Could it be that sexual misperception of 'invincibility' to diseases, contextual life uncertainty, alcohol consumption and peer norms play a nonreducible role in the decision-making process of agents? Also, could this be because of the high level of ignorance (in cost and benefit analysis) exhibited

by agents that make them susceptible to irrational decisions of persistence in risky sexual behaviour?

What is however of particular importance to us at this point is the fact that 22.8% of respondents disclosed that their “partners do not like to use condoms”. Relating the responses to these questions with gender-specific response percentages reveal very interesting points. Firstly, 59% of respondents who disclosed that their partners do not like using condoms hence their persistence in risky sexual behaviour are female. This is a striking finding and a very important one and significantly supports our argument so far.

We should immediately mention here that we opine that pluralistic ignorance is specifically hinged on an established patriarchal system. This implies that a significant number of female respondents believe they are trapped in the disadvantaged female gender web and by their male partners so much so that they are compelled to engage in risky sexual relations even when this is accompanied by significant consequences for them. In Chapter Four (section 4.7), we argued that patriarchal society institutes gender-specific norms, gender schema, and gender-specific roles that are oppressive and subjugate women. Herein, this data reveals that female respondents have little or no say about their sexual preferences because they exist in a man’s world and society, which creates for them the role of accepting the man’s decision. Consequently, anytime their partners prefer a specific action combination like engaging in risky sexual behaviour, the female partners are compelled to adjust their preference, else be sanctioned by misogynists.

Whose expectations about your sexual behaviour matter most?

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Missing system	160	2.8	2.8	2.8
	My colleague	1016	17.7	17.7	20.4
	My family	976	17.0	17.0	37.4
	My friends	1416	24.6	24.6	62.0
	My neighbour	1256	21.8	21.8	83.9
	Not applicable	928	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	5752	100.0	100.0	

Table. 5.8

Further analysis of the data of the section aimed at assessing the attitudes and practice of risky sexual behaviour among agents, especially understanding which reference network category matter most about their sexual behaviour, some interesting findings were also discovered. Firstly, close attention to the survey data reveals that the friend's category matter most to respondents over and above colleagues, family, and neighbours. Looking at Table. 5.8, 24.6% of respondents disclosed that their friends' expectations about their sexual behaviour matter most. Based on our analysis of social norms in Chapter Three, we can emphatically conclude that what friends think, feel, and prefer significantly affects how others prefer to modify their action combination. Neighbours' expectations and preferences (21.8%) also appear to be a pivotal factor in helping respondents modify their action combination.

Earlier, we noted that respondents disclosed a huge negative perception of condom use since what first comes to mind was promiscuity and nobody likes to be labelled as such. Based on Table. 5.8, particularly on the expectations of friends and neighbours being significant, reveals a further layer of pluralistic ignorance. We noted that personal normative believes indicated by respondents are that most believe condom use is good and preferable, yet only 5%

engaged in 100% safe sexual practice in the last 12 months. With negative perception as the primary outlook, it would imply that respondents hold that condom use is good but will persist in risky sexual behaviour to avoid negative perception (considered as a sanction) from friends and neighbours. Interestingly, though unfortunately, these friends and neighbours also personally approve of condom use. Consequently, risky sexual behaviour persists due to the pluralistic ignorance that exists in this circle of friends and neighbours.

Gender * I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man. Crosstabulation

			I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man.					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know	
Gender	Male	Count	224	480	432	808	768	2712
		% within Gender	8.3%	17.7%	15.9%	29.8%	28.3%	100.0%
		% within I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man.	38.9%	44.1%	43.5%	63.9%	54.5%	50.9%
		% of Total	4.2%	9.0%	8.1%	15.2%	14.4%	50.9%
	Female	Count	352	608	560	456	616	2592
		% within Gender	13.6%	23.5%	21.6%	17.6%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man.	61.1%	55.9%	56.5%	36.1%	43.8%	48.6%
		% of Total	6.6%	11.4%	10.5%	8.6%	11.6%	48.6%
	Don't Know	Count	0	0	0	0	24	24
		% within Gender	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%
Total	Count	576	1088	992	1264	1408	5328	
	% within Gender	10.8%	20.4%	18.6%	23.7%	26.4%	100.0%	
	% within I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	10.8%	20.4%	18.6%	23.7%	26.4%	100.0%	

Table. 5.9

Furthermore, the above point is further enforced by the section of the survey on friends' perception of men as strong men when they do not use condoms. In section 5.4.4, we argued that

numerous sexual misperceptions are in place to enforce the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour. Herein, respondents were asked if they do not use condoms to be perceived as strong men by their friends and avoid being labelled weaklings. In this instance, 8.3% strongly agreed while a significant 17.7% of male respondents simply agreed (See Table. 5.9). This invariably implies the presence of sexual misperception and pluralistic ignorance. This is evident because respondents earlier indicated that they will be sanctioned negatively when it is noticed that they use condoms, and thus perceive themselves as different from others. We noticed earlier that while these perceive themselves differently, they are in fact, the same as most respondents emphatically approved condom use.

Gender * I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman. Crosstabulation

			I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman.					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know	
Gender	Male	Count	256	487	528	608	840	2719
		% within Gender	9.4%	17.9%	19.4%	22.4%	30.9%	100.0%
		% within I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman.	41.6%	42.9%	54.1%	53.1%	57.7%	51.0%
		% of Total	4.8%	9.1%	9.9%	11.4%	15.8%	51.0%
	Female	Count	360	640	448	536	600	2584
		% within Gender	13.9%	24.8%	17.3%	20.7%	23.2%	100.0%
		% within I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman.	58.4%	56.4%	45.9%	46.9%	41.2%	48.5%
		% of Total	6.8%	12.0%	8.4%	10.1%	11.3%	48.5%
	Don't Know	Count	0	8	0	0	16	24
		% within Gender	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman.	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%
Total	Count	616	1135	976	1144	1456	5327	
	% within Gender	11.6%	21.3%	18.3%	21.5%	27.3%	100.0%	
	% within I don't demand condom use from my partner because I think most of my friends will think I am arrogant, not submissive to my partner and a bad woman.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	11.6%	21.3%	18.3%	21.5%	27.3%	100.0%	

Table. 5.10

A similar finding revealed by the survey is captured in Table. 5.10. Herein, 13.9% strongly agree while a significant 24.8% female respondents agree that females should not demand condom use from their partners because their friends will sanction them negatively as being arrogant, and a bad woman. Simply, about 38.7% of female respondents believe that female members of the society are answerable to men and their place in the society is never to question the authority of the man. Consequently, they should never demand condom use. While

it is obvious that enshrined pluralistic ignorance plays a significant role here, it further supports the hypothesis that the established patriarchal system in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African societies play a pivotal role in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour by dominating and subjugating women. This also shows the degree to which the fear of societal sanctions as well as fear of being called arrogant or a bad woman is capable of perpetuating risky sexual behaviour. In addition, just like the case of Misogyny as the police of the society put forward by Kate Manne (2017), we see that women work very hard to ensure the persistence of established patriarchy. This is evident in Table. 5.10, where female respondents show to be the police of fellow female members of the society by sanctioning violators to ensure adherence to established system.

I think most respondents believe girls should demand and enforce condom use by their partners during intercourse.

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	512	8.9	9.7	9.7
	Agree	1216	21.1	23.0	32.6
	Neutral	1040	18.1	19.6	52.3
	Disagree	1224	21.3	23.1	75.4
	Strongly Disagree	744	12.9	14.0	89.4
	I do not Know	560	9.7	10.6	100.0
	Total	5296	92.1	100.0	
Missing	System	456	7.9		
Total		5752	100.0		

Table. 5.11

Table. 5.11 overwhelmingly reveal the existence of pluralistic ignorance and show clearly why this maladaptive norm persists among community members, and sadly, even those

considered highly educated.²²⁰ In Table. 5.11, we observed that a significant percentage of participants disclosed they prefer not to demand condom use from their partners because they feel their friends will think of them as arrogant and less submissive females. In Table. 5.11, we see that 9.7% strongly agree while a huge 23.0% of respondents simply agree that girls should, in fact, demand and enforce condom use by their partners.

Critically investigating and comparing the response provided in Table. 5.10 and Table. 5.11, we see a sharp disconnect between what girls believe others think, feel, and expect of them and what others truly hold as expectations of what girls should do. Specifically, female respondents believe that most of their friends think, feel, and expect them to not request/demand for condom use for fear of being labelled arrogant and a bad woman while in fact, most of the respondents personally believe that girls should be able to request, demand and enforce condom use by their partners. We can safely argue from this that pluralistic ignorance is responsible for this disconnect and misperception which is in effect, created and kept in force by the feeling of inferiority and subjugation of the established patriarchal system in sub-Saharan Africa.

²²⁰ The primary goal was to investigate pluralistic ignorance among less-educated members of the society, especially those in a rural setting. This goal was anchored on the fact that since they are less educated, they often take less personal responsibility, which is a fertile ground for the persistence of pluralistic ignorance. With an online survey conducted, it was assumed that if a significant percentage of pluralistic ignorance is evident among highly educated respondents. It would imply that even a higher percentage would be found among less-educated members of the society who are more prone to ignorance.

Most people I know and interact with have sexual intercourse without a condom

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	640	11.1	12.1	12.1
	Agree	1064	18.5	20.1	32.2
	Neutral	1032	17.9	19.5	51.7
	Disagree	1288	22.4	24.3	76.0
	Strongly Disagree	584	10.2	11.0	87.0
	I do not Know	688	12.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	5296	92.1	100.0	
Missing	System	456	7.9		
Total		5752	100.0		

Table. 5.12

Most of my friends who talk about sexual intercourse said they rarely use a condom, so I am also not going to use. I prefer to do what we all do as friends.

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	624	10.8	11.9	11.9
	Agree	1104	19.2	21.0	32.9
	Neutral	984	17.1	18.7	51.6
	Disagree	1032	17.9	19.6	71.2
	Strongly Disagree	1056	18.4	20.1	91.3
	I do not Know	456	7.9	8.7	100.0
	Total	5256	91.4	100.0	
Missing	System	496	8.6		
Total		5752	100.0		

Table. 5.13

To further understand how the preference and behaviour of friends (in this case, the most important reference network cluster) affects the subsequent preferences and behaviour of others,

respondents were asked about their perception of sexual behaviour exhibited by their friends (Table. 5.12) and their preference because of their interaction with friends who persist in risky sexual behaviour.

Findings reveal that 12.1% strongly agree while 20.1% of respondents agree that most people they know and interact with have sexual interactions without a condom (Table. 5.12). Similarly, Table. 5.12 reveals that 11.9% strongly agree while 21.0% of respondents agree to the question that most of the friends, they talk about sexual interaction disclosed that they rarely use condoms. As a result, they prefer to do what their friends do.

Comparing these results (Table. 5.12 and Table. 5.13) and correlating this with the response already recorded about the importance and usefulness of always using a condom, we immediately see the presence of strong maladaptive social norms and pluralistic ignorance in form. To begin with, respondents agree unknowingly that there are two ideas about condom use that is consistent in society. On the one hand, most respondents agree that condom use is good and helpful as it protects against diseases, early, and unwanted pregnancies, and so should always be used. On the other hand, respondents agree that there is a general consistent social discussion against condom use among friends that is salient, as well as a salient conception of people seen with condoms as promiscuous that is strong enough to make agents prefer to do what others do.

Concerning the percentage in Table. 5.12 and Table 5.13, we can safely confirm this is not an overwhelming significance (this might be primarily because most of the respondents are highly educated), but it nonetheless overwhelmingly indicates a very strong pluralistic ignorance. What this implies is that, by strategically revealing to all respondents that most respondents

agree that condoms should always be used, the ignorance of risky sexual behaviour as a norm might be significantly dispelled.

The majority of my friends said the decision to use a condom or not is the man's right, so I do not bother to ask my partner to use a condom. I do not want to be labelled a bad wife or girlfriend for demanding a condom

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	552	9.6	10.5	10.5
	Agree	1136	19.7	21.6	32.2
	Neutral	1040	18.1	19.8	52.0
	Disagree	1192	20.7	22.7	74.7
	Strongly Disagree	888	15.4	16.9	91.6
	I do not Know	440	7.6	8.4	100.0
	Total	5248	91.2	100.0	
Missing	System	504	8.8		
	Total	5752	100.0		

Table. 5.14

Gender * I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions. Crosstabulation

			I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions.					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know	Total
Gender	Male	Count	288	544	559	520	720	2631
		% within Gender	10.9%	20.7%	21.2%	19.8%	27.4%	100.0%
		% within I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions.	52.2%	44.4%	55.5%	50.4%	52.6%	50.8%
		% of Total	5.6%	10.5%	10.8%	10.0%	13.9%	50.8%
Female		Count	264	680	448	512	624	2528
		% within Gender	10.4%	26.9%	17.7%	20.3%	24.7%	100.0%
		% within I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions.	47.8%	55.6%	44.5%	49.6%	45.6%	48.8%
		% of Total	5.1%	13.1%	8.6%	9.9%	12.0%	48.8%
Don't Know		Count	0	0	0	0	24	24
		% within Gender	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%
Total		Count	552	1224	1007	1032	1368	5183
		% within Gender	10.7%	23.6%	19.4%	19.9%	26.4%	100.0%
		% within I am married and love my spouse. I know my husband sleeps around. When we have sex, I do not ask him to use a condom because he is the man of the house and makes all the decisions.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	10.7%	23.6%	19.4%	19.9%	26.4%	100.0%

Table. 5.15

Gender * I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him. Crosstabulation

			I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him.					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know	
Gender	Male	Count	200	503	616	632	672	2623
		% within Gender	7.6%	19.2%	23.5%	24.1%	25.6%	100.0%
		% within I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him.	29.4%	43.4%	60.6%	63.2%	50.9%	50.7%
		% of Total	3.9%	9.7%	11.9%	12.2%	13.0%	50.7%
	Female	Count	480	656	400	368	624	2528
		% within Gender	19.0%	25.9%	15.8%	14.6%	24.7%	100.0%
		% within I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him.	70.6%	56.6%	39.4%	36.8%	47.3%	48.9%
		% of Total	9.3%	12.7%	7.7%	7.1%	12.1%	48.9%
	Don't Know	Count	0	0	0	0	24	24
		% within Gender	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%
Total	Count	680	1159	1016	1000	1320	5175	
	% within Gender	13.1%	22.4%	19.6%	19.3%	25.5%	100.0%	
	% within I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	13.1%	22.4%	19.6%	19.3%	25.5%	100.0%	

Table. 5.16

Correlations

		Whose expectation about your sexual behaviour matter most?	If all girls demand condom use 100% of the time from their partners, as a girl, I am to always honour and respect my partner's wishes. So, if he doesn't want to use a condom, I will allow him	If all men use condom 100% of the time, as a man, I will still not use a condom. Men will always be men. Using a condom is for weaklings. After all, "all die na die"	I think the majority of respondents believe girls should be totally submissive to their partner's decision regarding using a condom during intercourse	Men are very strong individuals; they cannot contract HIV. HIV is for weak people, but I am a strong man, so I don't need to use condom	I think the majority of respondents believe men should always be strong men and risk-takers and seldom use a condom	I am married, and I love my spouse. I also have a few girlfriends I have sex with. When I have sex with my wife, I do not use a condom because she will suspect I am unfaithful.	I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him
Whose expectation about your sexual behaviour matter most?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 5592	.194** .000 5320	.236** .000 5312	.147** .000 5288	.212** .000 5288	.173** .000 5272	.185** .000 5192	.232** .000 5184
If all girls demand condom use 100% of the time from their partners, as a girl, I am to always honour and respect my partner's wishes. So, if he doesn't want to use a condom, I will allow him	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.194** .000 5320	1 5328	.251** .000 5320	.293** .000 5296	.273** .000 5296	.279** .000 5280	.277** .000 5200	.265** .000 5192
If all men use condom 100% of the time, as a man, I will still not use a condom. Men will always be men. Using a condom is for weaklings. After all, "all die na die"	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.236** .000 5312	.251** .000 5320	1 5320	.185** .000 5288	.275** .000 5288	.252** .000 5280	.257** .000 5200	.262** .000 5192
I think the majority of respondents believe girls should be totally submissive to their partner's decision regarding using a condom during intercourse	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.147** .000 5288	.293** .000 5296	.185** .000 5288	1 5296	.157** .000 5296	.241** .000 5280	.205** .000 5200	.215** .000 5192
Men are very strong individuals; they cannot contract HIV. HIV is for weak people, but I am a strong man, so I don't need to use condom	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.212** .000 5288	.273** .000 5296	.275** .000 5288	.157** .000 5296	1 5296	.179** .000 5280	.238** .000 5200	.303** .000 5192
I think the majority of respondents believe men should always be strong men and risk-takers and seldom use a condom	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.173** .000 5272	.279** .000 5280	.252** .000 5280	.241** .000 5280	.179** .000 5280	1 5280	.254** .000 5200	.277** .000 5192
I am married, and I love my spouse. I also have a few girlfriends I have sex with. When I have sex with my wife, I do not use a condom because she will suspect I am unfaithful.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.185** .000 5192	.277** .000 5200	.257** .000 5200	.205** .000 5200	.238** .000 5200	.254** .000 5200	1 5200	.254** .000 5192
I know it is right to use a condom, but I cannot force my partner to use a condom if he doesn't want to use it, he is the man I cannot decide for him	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.232** .000 5184	.265** .000 5192	.262** .000 5192	.215** .000 5192	.303** .000 5192	.277** .000 5192	.254** .000 5192	1 5192

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table. 5.17

Correlations

		Most of my friends don't use condoms during sexual encounters because it is a thing of shame to use condoms	Whose expectation about your sexual behaviour matter most?	I think using a condom during sexual intercourse is bad/wrong	I will stop using a condom if most of the people i know stop using a condom	I think most people expect me not to use condom during sexual intercourse	I think most of my friends expect me to have sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man	Most people I know and interact with have sexual intercourse without a condom	Most people who are important to me prefer me not to use a condom
Most of my friends don't use condoms during sexual encounters because it is a thing of shame to use condoms	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .000 5544	.284** .000 5416	.194** .000 5224	.217** .000 5224	.195** .000 5224	.168** .000 5208	.226** .000 5208	.149** .000 5192	.228** .000 5192
Whose expectation about your sexual behaviour matter most?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.284** .000 5416	1 .000 5592	.245** .000 5344	.169** .000 5344	.252** .000 5344	.235** .000 5328	.242** .000 5328	.195** .000 5288	.202** .000 5288
I think using a condom during sexual intercourse is bad/wrong	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.194** .000 5224	.245** .000 5344	1 .000 5352	.310** .000 5352	.245** .000 5352	.277** .000 5336	.255** .000 5336	.234** .000 5296	.248** .000 5296
I will stop using a condom if most of the people i know stop using a condom	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.217** .000 5224	.169** .000 5344	.310** .000 5352	1 .000 5352	.132** .000 5352	.315** .000 5336	.266** .000 5336	.222** .000 5296	.288** .000 5296
I think most people expect me not to use condom during sexual intercourse	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.195** .000 5224	.252** .000 5344	.245** .000 5352	.132** .000 5352	1 .000 5352	.180** .000 5336	.221** .000 5336	.206** .000 5296	.205** .000 5296
I think most of my friends expect me to have sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.168** .000 5208	.235** .000 5328	.277** .000 5336	.315** .000 5336	.180** .000 5336	1 .000 5336	.202** .000 5336	.244** .000 5296	.242** .000 5296
I don't use condoms because I think if I use a condom, most of my friends will think less of me as a strong man	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.226** .000 5208	.242** .000 5328	.255** .000 5336	.266** .000 5336	.221** .000 5336	.202** .000 5336	1 .000 5336	.173** .000 5296	.298** .000 5296
Most people I know and interact with have sexual intercourse without a condom	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.149** .000 5192	.195** .000 5288	.234** .000 5296	.222** .000 5296	.206** .000 5296	.244** .000 5296	.173** .000 5296	1 .000 5296	.193** .000 5296
Most people who are important to me prefer me not to use a condom	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.228** .000 5192	.202** .000 5288	.248** .000 5296	.288** .000 5296	.205** .000 5296	.242** .000 5296	.298** .000 5296	.193** .000 5296	1 .000 5296

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table. 5.18

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.073 ^a	.005	.005	1.70241	1.328

a. Predictors: (Constant), Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Gender

b. Dependent Variable: In my last three (3) sexual encounters,

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.209	3	29.070	10.030	.000 ^b
	Residual	16172.012	5580	2.898		
	Total	16259.221	5583			

a. Dependent Variable: In my last three (3) sexual encounters,

b. Predictors: (Constant), Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Gender

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.417	.090		37.827	.000
	Gender	-.043	.045	-.013	-.955	.339
	Educational Qualification	.088	.020	.059	4.447	.000
	Marital Status	.060	.019	.041	3.106	.002

a. Dependent Variable: In my last three (3) sexual encounters,

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.160 ^a	.025	.025	.82309	1.750

a. Predictors: (Constant), Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Gender

b. Dependent Variable: In the past 12 months, I have used condom

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.319	3	32.440	47.884	.000 ^b
	Residual	3720.672	5492	.677		
	Total	3817.991	5495			

a. Dependent Variable: In the past 12 months, I have used condom

b. Predictors: (Constant), Marital Status, Educational Qualification, Gender

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.683	.044		61.073	.000
	Gender	.010	.022	.006	.456	.648
	Educational Qualification	-.056	.010	-.077	-5.774	.000
	Marital Status	.099	.009	.139	10.412	.000

a. Dependent Variable: In the past 12 months, I have used condom

Further findings reveal that there is heavy support for male dominance. In Chapter Three, we argued that in a patriarchal system, most health, social and economic decisions are made by men, and it is considered their right. This understanding makes certain decisions on family planning methods, and other economic family decisions impossible for women to make meaningful contributions. Consequently, women are subject to approvals and express permission from their partners to engage in any contraceptive method. Table. 5.14 (also see Table 5.10), Table 5.15, and Table 5.16 overwhelmingly support the theory that patriarchal gender norms in a significant way, encourages and supports risky sexual behaviour by making women scared and unable to request, demand condom use, or even provide condoms.

In Table. 5.14, 10.5% strongly agree while 21.65% of respondents agree that it is a man's fundamental right as a man, to decide if condoms are used during sexual intercourse or not. This response prodigiously proves that this is a shared belief in society. Since this is a shared opinion, female members of the society are most likely going to hold onto this as a second-order normative expectation which attracts some level of sanctions, thus maladaptively shaping the believes, actions and behaviour.

Similarly, Table. 5.16 shows that while female respondents know the importance of using a condom and know it is good and right, they feel significantly debilitated against the system that conceives men as decision-makers. In such a system, women feel strongly they cannot question their partners' decisions. Interestingly, in Table. 5.16, we see that 44.9% of female respondents (2528 female respondents) disclosed that they know it is good and right to use a condom, yet responses suggest they believe it is a man's decision and they cannot decide for him. This percentage is significant and huge specifically because it is made by the highly educated members of the society. Table.5.16 further supports the idea that gender norms and gender roles

ensure that women are unable to enforce condom use by their partners, even when they are married and aware that their partners are unfaithful.

The results of the survey show exceedingly that a significant number of respondents (86.3%), are sufficiently informed about sexually transmitted diseases and how to avoid the risks of STDs' transmission. Based on Table. 5.17 (a correlation analysis of questions relating to the patriarchal norm) reveals a significant correlation that supports the hypothesis that patriarchal gender norms contribute substantially to the evolution and sustenance of pluralistic ignorance of expectations in Sub-Saharan African societies. Also, inferring from the above, it is obvious that established patriarchal gender norms create and keeps in force the subjugation and domination of women. This further enshrines the feeling of inferiority and total submission to men. In typical sub-Saharan African patriarchal societies, women cannot request, demand, or be heard of to provide condoms for sexual relations.

Furthermore, Table. 5.17, a figure of correlation analysis of survey questions relating to pluralistic ignorance and risky sexual behaviour. As can be easily deduced from the above analysis, a significant level of pluralistic ignorance about sexual relations and sexual expectations exists, directly supporting the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. This is evident and further complicated by the fact that the survey results show significant disconnect and misperception between personal normative believe and second-order normative expectations of others. In addition, the expectation rests heavily on the established patriarchal system.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter's primary objective was a critical analysis of the factors and beliefs that contribute to hazardous sexual behaviour and the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. The results of the poll were also examined to see the degree to which pluralistic ignorance and the persistence of risky sexual behaviour are correlated. Many people have argued that misconceptions are extremely potent and have a big impact on how people behave in social situations. To achieve this, we talked about how misconceptions support human social behaviours, which highlighted the unquestionable importance of perception in the decision-making process.

The chapter expands on the findings of earlier chapters addressing the function of social norms in the regularity of human behaviour. Here, we critically debated the existence of misperception and how it supports social behaviour in people. The findings of the survey are further evidence for what has been stated above. The data analysis showed a statistically significant association between the continuance of risky sexual behaviour and patriarchal gender norms. The survey results also showed a strong link between unsafe sexual relationships and pluralistic ignorance. Combining the above findings, it argues for the presence of pluralistic ignorance based on established gender roles and patriarchal norms that perpetuate dangerous sexual behaviour.

CHAPTER SIX

ARTICULATING THE ROLE OF NORMS SUSTAINING BEHAVIOUR.

6.0 Introduction

As a follow-up to our examination of the nature and dynamics of social norms in Chapter Three, the main objective of this chapter is to formulate and apply Cristina Bicchieri's theory of social norms in conjunction with the expositions found in prior chapters. This analysis will help us to better understand the results of the survey data in Chapter Five, to better understand the propensity and nature of conformity as well as the unrivalled role emotions play in the persistence of a maladaptive behaviour among members of a “communal society.” In addition, we shall discuss how patriarchy, gender norms, sexism, and the practice of misogyny in many human societies, are directly linked to the persistence of many maladaptive norms. Herein, we desire to use our knowledge and analysis of convention, social norms, patriarchy, sexism, misogyny together with the analysis of the survey data in Chapter Five to interrogate the persistence of risky sexual behaviour supported by gender norms. Also, we shall interrogate the role of emotion in applying sanctions and the relationship between negative emotions and Social Norms. As we shall come to appreciate, reference network (the category of individuals who matter most for an individual in the decision-making process) plays a pivotal role in sustaining social norms and in this case, risky sexual behaviour.

6.1 Dynamics of Social Norm: Employing Bicchieri's Theory

As a sequel to Bicchieri's classification of social practices and the important differences therein, certain salient features are easily deduced.²²¹ For emphasis, we shall recount some of these. Firstly, it is important to note that in analysing and understanding social practices, we are not particularly interested in all behaviours, but interdependent behaviours. That is, we are particularly interested in interdependent behaviours that can be classified/categorized into customs, descriptive norms, and social norms.²²² A second point that immediately follows the interdependency criterion and is evident in the definition of descriptive and social norms is conditionality. We argued in Chapter Three that for Bicchieri, "conformity to a social norm is conditional on expectations about other people's behaviour and/or beliefs". (Bicchieri, 2006: 8).

It is noteworthy that the above logically follows from Bicchieri's systematic definition of social norm captured in the conditional preference rule (that is: i prefers to conform to R in situations of type S on the condition that). Combining the first and second criteria (interdependent behaviours and conditionality principle), it is safe to argue that conditionality, preferences, and expectations (empirical and normative) are the major tools for an efficient categorization and conceptualization of social norms specific to interdependent behaviours. The distinguishing features of social norms, according to Bicchieri, thus provide scientists with the

²²¹ In Chapter Three, we mentioned that for Bicchieri, social practices can be classified to be either custom, descriptive norm, or social norms. It is important to reiterate the differences since this is central to employing Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of social norm to risky sexual behaviour and pluralistic ignorance. See Bicchieri 2006: 8-42.

²²² In the previous chapters, we argued that some actions are considered interdependent in situations where we recognize the legitimacy of others' expectations, and thus allow these legitimate expectations to motivate our action and we consequently prefer to conform to these norms to avoid stipulated punishments or sanction. This implies that, for some interdependent behaviours, what others think and expect, matters a lot, and significantly affects what we think, feel and how we prefer to behave (Baric, 1977; Tayler and Bloomfield, 2011).

requisite tools to effectively categorize collective practices as either customs, conventions, legal norms, moral rules, or social norms (Bicchieri, 2017).

Further features could be deduced from Bicchieri's conceptualization of social norms. For any rule to be considered a social norm, it must be dependent on the fact that individuals in the society or community are aware that such a norm exist and that it applies to specific situations. For Bicchieri, social norms are rules that apply to collective practices, and the perpetuation of such norms are hinged on individual preference to conform to these norms that are now public, and everyone is aware it applies to specific situations. Also, these norms must be backed by empirical and normative expectations (and/or with sanctions) (Bicchieri, 2006).

Recall that when Bicchieri (2006: 11) argues that a combination of empirical and normative expectations (condition requirement 2, 2(a), 2(b) and 2(b')), is necessary for social norm, it implies that conformity to an entrenched norm is always based on one's expectations of the opinions and expectations of members of one's relevant reference network.²²³ That is to say, these expectations must be the expectations of those who really matter to an individual and thus play a significant role in one's decision-making process, preferences and choices. Reference network is thus germane because it provides the basis for social norms to be conceived as prescriptive or proscriptive as well as be sustained and enforced by social sanctions that include gossips, ostracism, or dishonour/disregard to transgressors.

For Social Norms to be so-called, they require conditions 1, 2, 2(a), 2(b) and 2(b') to be met. This implies that for social norms, reciprocal normative and empirical expectations are in

²²³ Reference network plays a central role in Bicchieri's framework. It is the pillar upon which normative and empirical expectations stand. Without a strong and functional reference network, the entire theory disintegrates. For details on reference network, see Bicchieri, 2016.

place as well as agents believe others care about their choices and expect them to conform.²²⁴ Consequently, all other actions or behaviours that are unconditional and/or lack condition 1 or 2, such as moral preference, legal preference or self-regarding are ruled out and cannot be considered a social norm (Bicchieri 2006: 1; Bicchieri et al 2014).²²⁵ In addition to the requirement of conditions 1, 2, 2(a), 2(b) and 2(b') for a social norm to be, another way to validate the presence of an established norm is by testing whether a recurrent community behaviour provokes accompanying negative sanction; condemnation or punishment (Bicchieri, 2017: 74).

Social Norms are established norms and evolve to constrain individual and community excesses by prescribing or proscribing required behaviour that is considered inestimably dangerous to the sustainability of the community.²²⁶ As a result, norms are always associated with the temptation to violate and defect. To make norms effective and enduring, social sanctions are established and enforced to ensure the sustainability of norms, without which norms easily fall apart (Bicchieri, 2016: 39).

A valid and legitimate social norm must be open and accessible to all participants, likewise the process of monitoring and sanctioning of transgression to deter public or secret violations. In this way, monitoring and sanctioning activities are said to be effective ways of reinforcing and sustaining entrenched norms, without which established norms easily

²²⁴ For example, when agents queue up at the train station to purchase a ticket, everyone remains in line till it is his or her turn, everyone expects everyone to patiently remain in line (empirical expectations). In addition, all those in line believe that others believe they *ought* to wait in line till it is their turn. Anyone who violates this rule, is compelled to conform by negative sanctions which vary but may include being reprimanded, delayed even more than required, or outrightly denied the ticket.

²²⁵ Collective practices are therefore classified based on conditionality (conditional or unconditional preferences), expectations (empirical or normative), and reference network.

²²⁶ Unlike convention that are beneficial to agents and violation attracts Pareto inefficient outcome, violation of social norm is sometimes of immediate benefit to the transgressor. As self-regarding and egocentric members of the society, transgressors will always violate established social norm since they derive immediate benefit.

disintegrate beginning with a secret violation then public abandonment of a norm and subsequent establishment of a maladaptive norm.²²⁷ Experiments have shown that legitimate norms are widely accepted and help agents to quickly internalize these norms so much so that normative and empirical expectations are crystalised.

Expected emotional repercussion has been argued to play a central role in support of norm compliance. Transgressors often report emotional backlash of the feeling of guilt, disappointment, and resentment after violating an entrenched norm, while conformists report feeling of love, appreciation, and feeling good with themselves after compliance.²²⁸ Normative and empirical expectations are argued to be responsible for these feelings and point to the fact that a social norm has been fully developed and internalized. This implies that every social situation offers specific cues, invites specific interpretations, and builds specific expectations, predictions, and emotional responses. Expected emotional backlash is therefore key to understanding the conditional preferences of agents in responding to social norms, either to comply or to defect. Little wonder agents try twice as hard to avoid negative emotional responses from others such as the feeling of disgust, disappointment, disapproval as well as fear when they violate social norms. It is precisely for these reasons that people tend to conform to certain norms to please friends and family and solicit positive emotional responses such as love and approval and avoid repugnant negative emotional responses such as disappointments and disgust.²²⁹

²²⁷ The characteristics of openness and accessibility of social norm, further validates the process of monitoring and sanctioning activities, making it accepted and elicit widespread compliance. Furthermore, vigorous monitoring and sanctioning transgressors induce conformity primarily because with social norms comes the inalienable expectation of monitoring and sanctions for transgression.

²²⁸ See Dubreuil and Grégoire, 2013

²²⁹ When entrenched norms elicit such emotional responses for violation or conformity, it invariably implies that such norms have been internalized and considered as legitimate. argue that negative emotions that accompany norm violation act as requisite and appropriate sanctions that support the sustenance of norms as well as reinforce entrenched social norms. This implies that emotions play a pivotal role in eliciting conformity and serve as a unique

In Chapter Three, we argued that what is an entrenched social norm in one location or among a group of people, might be a mere descriptive norm in another and vice versa. It is thus no doubt that Bicchieri's rational reconstruction offers numerous theoretical advantages. Right from the outset, we dare to say that this reconstruction provides a theory and definition of a social norm that is practical and can easily be operationalized by experimentally validating a hypothesis of an entrenched social norm through assessing the presence of second-order normative belief and expectations about collective behaviours (Bicchieri and Chavez, 2010).²³⁰

According to Bicchieri et al., (2014), without empirically testing a collective practice considered entrenched in a specific location, we will never know for certain "the nature of the practice, because we do not know why people endorse it" (Bicchieri et al. 2014: 4). A collective practice such as child marriage or FGM has the potential of being a mere moral response, an established custom, a descriptive norm, or a social norm. Consequently, knowing exactly what it is and why people persist in such behaviour and identifying the reference network that supports such practice is crucial to proper identification and naming, and effective change where necessary.

It is against this backdrop that we engaged in this research to utilize Bicchieri's theory to experimentally investigate the nature of the practice of risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria and to understand why people endorse it. We believe that successful execution of this will reveal

sanction, though internal to the transgressor. Two points are necessary to make, first, on the one hand, exists the expectation or actual feeling of shame, guilt, disappointment, disgust, or disappointment instituted by violation of an entrenched norm. These feelings reveal to transgressors that a valid norm with internalized normative expectation has been violated. On the other hand, exists the expectation or actual feeling of love and approval, the feeling of power, endorsement, and recognition as a reward for keeping or conforming to an established norm.

²³⁰ This theory offers a lot of practical advantages and has been employed to address some significant maladaptive social norms. These include practices such as female genital mutilation, open defecation, alcohol consumption by teenagers and so on. It is important to also note here that owing to these advantages, UNISEF has employed this model in some of their efforts to address harmful social practices. Bicch (2014) for example, employed this strategy to theoretically analyse Child-Marriage and thus dispel any ignorance or misconceptions obtained by mere observation of a recurrent collective practice and consequently conceiving it as an entrenched social norm.

without any doubt if this practice is a mere moral response, a convention, an established custom, a descriptive norm, or a social norm.

HIV awareness in most sub-Saharan countries has increased significantly in the last two decades. Despite the high rate of recorded deaths from infected persons, the availability of condoms and the constant appeal for condom use, risky sexual behaviour is still widespread. The inescapable question is, why is risky sexual behaviour a persisting phenomenon in the face of ill health and death?

This research is modelled around the question of persisting risky sexual behaviour by critically interrogating the level and degree of expectations as well as the underlying reasons why such unhealthy and harmful behaviour persists. This is premised on the identifiable gap in the literature, that is, the lack of practical definition and operationalisation of pluralistic ignorance owing to a misconception of the second-order normative expectations hinged on established patriarchal gender norms that support this phenomenon. To this end, we employed Bicchieri's measurement tool and evolved a narrative to categorise risky sexual behaviour carefully and effectively as either a mere moral response, an established custom, a descriptive norm, or a social norm. Also, to decode exactly the nature of the practice and why people persist in such behaviour, as well as identify the reference network that supports such practice.

6.1.1 The Nature of Conformity

Based on above and from the survey data, we can safely argue that conformity to risky sexual behaviour is hinged primarily on the conditionality of expectations of reference network

and expected negative sanction. The results of the survey reveal that a statistically significant number of respondents who *ab initio* conceive that using a condom is good, do not eventually use condoms because if they do, most of their friends will think less of them as strong men and if they demand condom use, be seen as arrogant female partners. This goes to say that risky sexual behaviour is a norm that is further supported by a ring of other norms (as do most norms). Patriarchal gender norms, in this case, create a conducive environment for risky sexual behaviour to thrive. This is because, in such societies (like Nigeria), men are considered pre-eminent and should always act as such, even when it is not in their best interest in the long run. Consequently, men prefer to conform to the norm which triggers the feeling of internalized masculinity as well as that of feeling good and being praised for conforming to a maladaptive norm.

On the other hand, a significant number of respondents argue that women are unable to demand condom use from their partners since doing so will make their friends categorize them as a bad partner and a lady who is both arrogant and not submissive. This second conditional expectation is also supported by patriarchal gender norms such that women feel powerless and are unable to surmount the pressure from their friends and demand condom use from their partners. Fear of the consequence of violating this norm is therefore considered sufficient to induce conformity.

We argued in previous chapters that monitoring and sanctioning activities serve to reinforce the presence of norm, induce conformity, and help to perpetuate an entrenched norm. One thing that however remains grey and uninvertible about the persistence of risky sexual behaviour supported by conditionality and sanction is the fact that it is a highly private activity and effective monitoring is almost impossible. The only conditions open for others to be aware of conformity to this norm is the physical evidence such as pregnancy or contracting one STD or

another.²³¹ The second way is when either or both sexual partners decide to disclose this to their friends. On the one hand, sexual partners desire to share with their friends the ‘good news’ of conforming to the entrenched norm to receive their share of feeling good, manly, and fully in charge. And on the other hand, women might also be compelled to share with their friends that they respect their sexual partners, to receive their share of the desired feeling- good and virtuous. Conceived as such, it is therefore obvious why agents might be moved to quickly share with their friends about their sexual activities. The question that could be asked however is, could they have lied and still violate the norm in private? Could they have used a condom during their sexual activity, and still come out to tell their friends they conformed to the norm? While this is possible, it only leads to more problems since it creates a rancorous circle of risky sexual behaviour, HIV transmission and other STDs.

6.1.2 The Role of Emotion in Applying Sanction

Bicchieri (2006 and 2016) argue that entrenched social norms are often conceived as a natural way to behave and because strong normative and empirical expectations are involved, social norms are perceived as a right and a duty.²³² When norms are internalized, backed by strong normative second-order expectations, they become one with the value system of the

²³¹ Physical evidence remains the primary way others can be sure one persists in risky sexual behaviour. This is to say, simply purchasing or going about with condom, is not sufficient to conclude that condoms are using during sexual relations. We should mention here that, even though the perception of condoms is negative as evident in the survey data, the level of stigmatization levelled against HIV patients and ladies who get pregnant is worrying. On the one hand, when seen with condoms, one is termed promiscuous, which significantly supports the idea that one should persist in risky sexual behaviour. However, when one persists in risky sexual behaviour and receives the undesirable consequences associated with risky sexual behaviour (HIV infection or early pregnancy), the individual is even more sanctioned for being careless, foolish, and ignorant. This is more of a double edge.

²³² In Chapter Three, we elaborated on similar point. We argued that when norms have been practiced for decades, even when they are not consistent with personal normative belief, they are internalized so much so that agents conceive them as a duty and the right way to behave. It is against this backdrop of internalized norms that rightness of a norm elicits strong emotional backlash in applying sanctions.

society and thus elicit feelings of strong obligation to conform. Earlier, we argued that expected emotional backlash is responsible for conformity to risky sexual behaviour for the most part. The fear of expected social sanction triggers the fear of expected emotional backlash responsible for conformity. Consequently, we can safely and logically deduce that there is a strong, significant, and consistent relationship between emotion and sanction.

Bicchieri (2016), and Baumeister et al. (2007) both echo the individual attribute of legitimacy and appropriateness of social norms such that violation of social norm triggers negating emotions which imply norm violation. This individual legitimacy and appropriateness conception of social norms is responsible for the audacity of applying sanctions. That is, individuals who have violated this norm and experienced emotional backlash, feel obligated to monitor and apply sanctions as they have experienced, to future transgressors. When social norms are judged legitimate and appropriate, accompanying sanctions are also conceived as legitimate and appropriate.

When asked about sanctions, respondents were particular about the type of sanctions been served transgressors of the risky sexual behavioural norm: emotional. That is, unlike other norms (such as norms of wife infidelity and incest), that require physical social sanctions such as ostracism, violating risky sexual behaviour norms attracts sanctions like gossip and being called derogatory names. Female members of the society who violate the risky sexual behaviour norms are tagged arrogant, a bad partner or a proud woman who is not submissive to her partner (recall that this is a particular trait in patriarchal societies upheld by patriarchal gender norms and

stereotypes).²³³ On the other hand, male violators are gossiped as being weak and unworthy of being referred to as “strong men”.

In patriarchal societies, a man is considered the head of the society, family, and any relationship. He is expected to provide for his family as well as be responsible for most decisions, including economic, social and health decisions. That is, a man decides the economic freedom or otherwise of his partner, decides if a condom or contraceptive is used in the relationship or not and so on. With many years of practice, monitoring, and sanctioning activities, this trend evolved to become an entrenched social norm.

In established patriarchal societies like Nigeria, no woman wants to be labelled a bad wife/partner and no man wants to be tagged a weakling. This is because, aside from the immediate emotional backlash experienced by transgressors, their family members would also be associated with “negative” titles so much so that other families will avoid families of transgressors. After all, no one wants to marry the daughter or son of a bad wife or a weakling.

It is noteworthy that as already conceived above, internalized norms are a product of years of cultural practice, family background and overall association. Consequently, what is a social norm is built into the value system of society. Patriarchy, misogyny, and sexism²³⁴ as can be deduced from the survey data, are conceived as the mechanism used to justify and enforce gender norms, gender roles and stereotypes, consequently seen as ‘natural’ and ‘right’. Because

²³³ For more details, refer to chapter Four, particularly on how misogyny serves to maintain a patriarchal norm and keep women in check of being totally submissive to men.

²³⁴ Recall that in Chapter Four, we argued that sexists, proponents of patriarchy and misogynists present unsubstantiable biological justifications why men are heads of the family and society, while women are the weaker sex and should remain as caregivers. These they argue is right and natural.

these sexual rules, gender norms and gender roles are held, justified, and enforced by cultural doctrines, these gender roles should remain unchanged because they are natural and right.²³⁵

6.2 The Relationship Between Negative Emotions and Social Norms

We mentioned earlier that when social norms evolve and are consequently built into the value system of a society, adherents are convinced that these norms are natural and right. Convincing them otherwise requires and involves changing their personal beliefs, factual and normative expectations (Bicchieri, 2016). This is because “our knowledge about the social and natural world is grounded in experience and structured into what are called “schemata.” Such schemata are generic knowledge structures that lie at the base of our understanding of the natural and social world” (Bicchieri, 2016: 131). Schemata and scripts are very important to the stance of social norms. In Chapter Three, we argued that schemata and scripts guide agents in their process of decoding and interpretation of social interactions. This is particularly important because, in specific situations, schemata and script offer specific interpretation, expectation, and prediction of behaviour. Since norms are embedded into scripts and contain “both empirical and normative expectations, ... violations of scripts typically elicit negative emotions” (Bicchieri 2016: 132).

The above show that there is a deep-rooted relationship between negative emotions, scripts, schemata, and social norms. What is important in this relationship is the fact that social

²³⁵ Based on the survey result, highly educated members of the society even though practice the gender roles and cultural expectations (particularly because they benefit from it), their opinions tend to deviate slightly. When asked if it is good to use condoms and if women should in fact demand condom use, a statistically significant number answered in the affirmative. However, only a fraction of respondents used a condom 100% of the time in the past 12 months of sexual activity. See Chapter Four for details.

norms, which is embedded in scripts and schemata, is regulated by emotions. Little wonder Bicchieri (1990: 840) argue that aside from expectations playing a crucial role in sustaining a norm, the negative emotional backlash of transgressions such as the feeling of guilt and shame reinforce the inclination and desire to conform.²³⁶

The survey data helps to strengthen this conceived relationship between negative emotion and social norms. This is evident in the response of agents, particularly when they opine that women and girls are expected to be submissive to their partner's sexual desires. This invariably aligns with our earlier arguments (Chapter Four), where we argued that patriarchal societies create conducive avenues for gender roles and misogyny to thrive (being submissive to their partners). Violating this norm of being submissive to one's partner (especially in marriage settings), creates a chain of events, schema. After all, a violation results in negative emotions and the feeling of guilt and shame. This is further worsened when the woman experiences negative sanctions and is tagged as a bad and arrogant wife. Sanction is aggravated and taken to a societal level when a 'bad wife's siblings find it difficult to get married as family reputation has been dented. In this scenario, we see how negative emotions, responsibility and sanctions are related to inducing conformity to the norm and its persistence. This evident chain of events reveals overwhelmingly how empirical and normative expectations interact to keep women perpetually submissive to men's sexual desires and thus perpetuate risky sexual behaviour.

Also, we argued earlier that risky sexual behaviour as a social norm is built and sustained by expectations and prescriptions of patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny. A schema of risky sexual

²³⁶ It is important to clarify that, negative emotional backlash is not the same as negative sanctions. While negative sanctions include gossip, ostracism, scolding and other sorts of external legitimate sanctions by agents monitoring violation, negative emotions are the consequences of transgression felt by violators of a norm because of violating a norm already internalized. Simply, while negative sanctions are external sanctions, negative emotions are internal sanctions.

behaviour, therefore, comprises normative expectations that prescribe total submission on the part of women and “manly” behaviour on the part of men. Since a schema is a mental structure where information and knowledge about social norms and expectations are processed and organised, it is safe to argue that the semantic network²³⁷ of risky sexual behaviour is activated by simple appeal to patriarchal norms. At the instance of violating a patriarchal norm of obedience and total submission to one’s partner, on the one hand, the violator immediately experiences negative emotional backlash, an indication that an internalized norm built into the value system has been bridged. On the other hand, conforming to the norm of total obedience and submission to one’s sexual partner’s desires indicate that one’s schema has triggered the activation of the schema of risky sexual behaviour.

Based on the above, it is evident that there is an intrinsic relationship between negative emotion and social norms. First, negative emotions act as a naturally built sanction mechanism to give feedback to agents by alerting them whenever violations occur. Consequently, negative emotions of shame and guilt serve to regulate social norms by reinforcing conformity to entrenched norms. In addition, negative emotions help to sustain social norms by interacting with multiple social processes and by activating elements of the semantic network.²³⁸

6.3 Norm Identification and Norm Conformity

We argued earlier that for Bicchieri, social norms are interdependent practices that are supported and persist due to empirical and normative expectations (social expectations) within a

²³⁷ Semantic network is the varying degree which scripts and schemata are connected. Because scripts and schemata are interconnect, activation of one aspect or element, invariably leads to the activation of others. For more details see Bicchieri, 2016; Payne, 2001.

²³⁸ Also see Bicchieri, 2016.

reference network. We also presented strategies to be employed in norm identification as well as how norms are sustained through social sanctions. Herein, we shall interrogate the intricacies in norm identification and conformity to risky sexual behaviour expectations.

In Chapter Three, we argued that what distinguishes a social norm from a descriptive norm is that while social norms have a second condition (normative expectation and the possibility of sanctions), this is not required for a descriptive norm. We dare to add here that, to effectively identify a social norm, we must be able to accurately measure normative consensus.²³⁹

Before we proceed any further, however, we should state right from the outset that, norm identification is not as easy and forthright as it appears or sounds in textbooks and real-life situations. While it is easy to expand theories of norm identification deduced from lab-controlled experiments and environments, accurately deducing conditions that would provide the social scientist required tools to measure the exact degree of belief, motivation and expectations of actual behaviour appears much more daunting. Thus, while norm identification conducted in a lab-controlled experiment is ‘simple’, they are much more complex in real-life situations, notwithstanding, these lab-controlled experiments provide us valuable insights and guidance to effectively manage intricate real-life situations that are complex, unpredictable, and fluidic. Little wonder Bicchieri advocates for caution in norm identification so there is no misconception that simple identification of norm provides one with all there is about norm measurement. According to her,

²³⁹ Let it be clear that to identify a norm, we simply need to follow and respond in the affirmative, the conditions already stipulated for the existence of a norm. That is, interpersonal behaviours, conditional preference, empirical and normative expectation, as well as expected sanctions from members of one’s reference network.

“Identifying a norm and measuring consensus about its relevance in a specific situation, does not guarantee that the norm is followed by all or even most participants. A measure of normative consensus or agreement is different from a measure of compliance, or the conditions under which a norm is likely to be followed. We need both measures to be able to say that a norm exists and is regularly conformed to by members of a relevant reference network (Bicchieri 2016: 60).

Risky sexual behaviour remains a persistent phenomenon among young adults in most sub-Saharan African countries, leading to a high rate of transmission of HIV and other STDs. Is this a maladaptive norm? Is it supported by other norms in its semantic network? Which schema activates risky sexual behaviour? What sanction mechanism supports the persistence of risky sexual behaviour? Investigating if risky sexual behaviour is a norm provides answers to most of these questions. In identifying a norm, the first approach is an “independent assessment of individual expectations” (Bicchieri, 2006: 69).

In Chapter Three, we argued that expectations play a crucial role in social norms and serve as the basis for behaviour as well as expected sanctions within a reference network. To identify norms and verify if the norm of risky sexual behaviour exists, we employed the use of a carefully structured questionnaire with tailored questions to assess personal normative beliefs, empirical expectations, and normative expectations of respondents. According to Bicchieri (2017: 70), “when a social norm exists and applies to a specific situation, the normative expectations of participants will be mutually consistent”.

Recall that for a social norm to be backed by monitoring and stipulated sanctions as well as to be considered effectively internalized, a social norm must be valid and considered

legitimate by participants of the norm. A norm considered valid and legitimate is the sort of norm that participants personally endorse and consider overt and concealed monitoring and sanctions by reference network. Norm conformity is therefore only grounded on the basis that participants see the norm as valid, legitimate and endorse stipulated monitoring and sanctions by those who matter and influence their decisions (reference network).

Our aim in this research was straightforward; to measure the level of consensus and consistency of the salience of risky sexual behaviour in specific situations of gender roles and gender norms.²⁴⁰ Consequently, questions were asked about the personal normative beliefs of participants regarding condom use and risky sexual behaviour (about its appropriateness and if it should be used by sexual partners). Similarly, questions were asked about empirical and normative expectations as well as expected sanctions from relevant reference networks. Building on this, it is safe to argue that from the survey data analysed, we can emphatically say that we have successfully identified a norm of risky sexual behaviour which applies specifically to a sexual relationship, whence exist mutually consistent normative expectations of participants.²⁴¹

Expectations of sanctions and in some cases, actual sanctions, are associated with normative expectations. It suggests therefore that a positive or negative indication of social consequences of a recurrent behaviour or belief is an accurate gauge of a social norm. It

²⁴⁰ Though riddled with some limitations, using questionnaire to assess personal normative beliefs and expectations in specific situations is the most reliable approach to obtain results since we cannot observe human beliefs.

²⁴¹ Recall that earlier, we argued that careful examination of the survey data reveal that there is an evident consistency between empirical expectation and normative expectation. This is therefore in tandem with Bicchieri's theory of social norm. We also noticed that normative expectation applies particularly to friends, which herein shows mutual consistency of normative expectation. What is however important to note here, (less we conceive it as an inconsistency) is the fact that at the same time, there is a significant inconsistency between personal normative belief and second-order normative expectation. We argued earlier that this evident inconsistency, is clearly responsible for the overwhelming conception of pluralistic ignorance. It is therefore this evident gap that leads (significantly) to the persistence of this maladaptive social norm.

invariably indicates therefore that norm conformity, sustainability, and persistence, is linked to normative expectations backed by sanctions. Not all social norms are accompanied by explicit/overt social sanctions. This is because some norms are entrenched so much so that participants wholly internalize the norm such that participants personally endorse the norm and need no overt sanction to motivate compliance or deter transgressors. Two points can be deduced from this. On the one hand, norm adherents conform to a norm because they acknowledge the legitimacy of the norm backed by detailed monitoring and stipulated sanctions (overt or concealed sanctions). On the other hand, norms are significantly entrenched and considered legitimate and may be conceived to be in the interest of participants, and consequently been internalized, such that agents comply with the norm from personal endorsement.

Conformity to the norm of risky sexual behaviour can therefore be argued to be based on the above premise. Participants consider this norm valid and legitimate, as well as recognise the audacity and authority of friends to enforce monitoring and apply requisite sanctions whenever violations occur. This point is deduced from responses provided by respondents as evident in the risky sexual behaviour survey conducted. From the survey conducted, analysis reveals that about 29% of participants reported that the reason why they would prefer to persist in risky sexual behaviour is that they do not want their friends to think less of them as strong men. It implies that this percentage acknowledge this norm to be valid and legitimate and, acknowledge the authority of their reference network (in this case friends), to monitor and apply appropriate sanctions whenever violations are perceived (actual sanction or fear of expected sanction). I believe this is statistically significant.

Similarly, about 30% of respondents reported that female partners would not request/demand condom use to avoid being tagged arrogant or a bad woman by their friends. Consequently, they prefer to respect and submit to the sexual preferences of their partners than resist and be labelled as bad and arrogant. In responding to another question, about 29% of respondents reported that most people who are important to them prefer them to persist in risky sexual behaviour.²⁴² It is safe to argue that the interdependency principle, conditionality preferences, expectations (empirical and normative) and sanctions are the major tools for effective identification, classification, and conceptualization of social norms as distinct from descriptive norms and other social practices. Consequently, conceiving a norm as valid and legitimate together with monitoring and applying appropriate sanctions, induces norm conformity and persistence.

6.4 Persistence of Gender Norms and Misogyny

In Chapter Four, we made concerted efforts to understand patriarchy as a social system, sexism, and misogyny. Therein, we argued that gender inequality, gender stereotypes, gender roles, and gender norms are all manifestations of an established patriarchal system sustained and kept in force by misogyny and sexist ideology. To effectively interpret Bicchieri's contributions to social norms in this line of thought, we engaged and employed the ideas of Kate Manne and Kimberlé Crenshaw. Placed side by side, this presented us with a holistic understanding of the underlying processes, conditions and workings of gender inequalities and gender roles in the face

²⁴² In Chapter Five, we analysed the various implications of this question and how second-order normative expectation here plays an integral role in sustaining risky sexual behaviour. About 29% of respondents having such strong conviction of second-order normative expectations is statistically significant and is consistent with empirical expectation as recorded in chapter four. See Bicchieri 2016; Paprzycka, 1999; Andrighetto, Grieco, and Tummolini, 2015.

of entrenched gender norms, processes, and sanctions. Herein, we desire to interrogate the persistence of gender norms and misogyny in Nigeria, particularly as it relates to and explains persistence in risky sexual behaviour.

Earlier, we conceived gender norms as the systematically institutionalized and internalized standards of behaviour and expected behaviour of male and female genders in society. Invariably, through socialisation, children and members of the society are instilled basic roles and responsibilities of men and women, male and female by families, friends, society, and culture. Little wonder Barry, Bacon and Child (1957), argue that these socially approved sex-specific skills, sex-specific personality attributes, and sex-specific self-concepts are expected and required of every boy and girl in society. Thus, masculine, and feminine categories have been created (Barry, Bacon and Child, 1957).²⁴³ Gender norm and the creation of feminine and masculine standards of behaviour involves gendered expectations (empirical and normative) of appropriate behaviour, appropriate and expected manner of dressing, speaking, self-presentation, social status and so on.

In the process of norm identification, we argued that empirical and normative expectations are considered indispensable. Based on our presentation of Kate Manne in Chapter Four, we observed that women only appear in a particular light because society expects them to think, feel and behave that way. These rest on the foundation of socialization, imparted with roles we all play in the society, assigned to us at birth, that we hardly question. Kate Manne

²⁴³ In Chapter Three, we argued that socialization is the mechanism through which the value system of the society as well as norms upheld by the society are transferred to new members of the society. Through socialization, members of the society come to the knowledge of societal norms and values, roles, and expectations, practise them and subsequently transmit them to the next generation. Literature on gender norms reference the above point and emphasis that through early childhood socialization, gender norms are transmitted to the new generation, making gender biases, gender stereotypes internalized and practised rather unconsciously. This sort of socialization also means a vicious circle characterized by continuity and persistence rather than change. See Munoz et al. 2013.

further argued that these roles are directed to women in a social system strategically structured to be a system against women. It repetitively punishes women whenever they challenge these roles and norms or dare to challenge their existence. Manne's submission, argued alongside Bicchieri's conditions 2, 2a, 2b and 2b', presents us a wholistic viewpoint of how a lot of unconscious prejudices and cultural norms sustain the way women are being treated in different civilizations and worldviews to make second-order normative belief a dominant belief, perpetuate gender norm, and impede female social mobility.

We are confronted with a similar discourse in Chapter Four under Kimberlé Crenshaw. We discussed intersectionality and the categories of marginalized persons in the society who are dominated, subjugated, abused and especially, the structural/institutional acceptance of widespread violence against women. In her analysis, Crenshaw chronicled that in deliberations in school (socialization), men were referenced and discussed when it relates to 'serious' and 'important' topics such as politics, economics, inventions, mathematics, and other science topics. However, when it relates to other topics like literature and poetry, women were referenced. This sort of bias and discrimination established in sexist ideology and patriarchal systems, reveal decades and perhaps centuries of persistence of prodigious biases against women and womanhood. The necessary question is, why is gender norm a persisting phenomenon? The answer to the above important question in my view is captured in two words: misogyny and social sanctions.

In Chapter Four, we conceived misogyny as an ideology of prejudice, bias, or hatred of women and girls expressed as sexual discrimination, violence, intolerance, social exclusion, disenfranchisement, and sexual objectification that is evident in several world religions and human civilizations (Ussher, 2011: xxix). Similarly, Kate Manne (2017) conceived misogyny as

“the system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women’s subordination and to uphold male dominance”.²⁴⁴ Merging these conceptions of misogyny, we immediately realize that misogyny is an ideology transmitted from one generation to another through socialization. Also, it operates within a patriarchal system, which implies that these prejudices, sexual discrimination, violence, and intolerance are directed to and experienced by women. Misogyny is “potential in all men” (Iukes 1993: xxix).²⁴⁵ We can immediately and confidently argue that misogyny is the process of systematically sanctioning women and girls who are ipso facto disadvantaged, hated, disenfranchised, and not tolerated for violating specific gender-specific norms in the society based on Manne's interpretation of misogyny as the law enforcement branch of the patriarchal system.

So far, we have agreed that social norms can easily be conceived as the regularity of behaviour by interdependency, conditionality, expectations, and sanctions from a reference network. Inescapably, therefore, effective monitoring and sanction is the mechanism through which transgressors are punished to ensure conformity to norms and persistence of norms. As a sequel, therefore, the persistence and enduring nature of gender norms are primarily because gender norms are entrenched norms, solidified by years and decades/centuries of socialization and internalization by members of the society.

Gender norms play a key role in sustaining male dominance and social superiority by constantly interacting with other norms such as misogyny and sexism in a mutually reinforcing manner. The structure of gender norms is such that it employs centuries of normative and

²⁴⁴ Refer to Chapter Four for an elaborate discussion of Kate Manne.

²⁴⁵ It is important to mention at this point that in several societies and cultures, misogyny is sometimes practised by women against other women and themselves, usually through self-objectification. This point supports the claim that this practice is transmitted through socialization and quickly internalized so that it is part and parcel of value system of the society and judged natural and right by majority.

empirical expectation of specific behaviours and gender-specific roles, domesticity, and inferiority; designed, packed, and transmitted from one generation to the next via social learning from childhood.²⁴⁶ Gender norms persist because there is an established social structure that effectively monitors behaviour and effectively sanctions violators.²⁴⁷

Risky sexual behaviour as an established social norm has been demonstrated to be supported by patriarchy and enshrined gender norms. The persistence of risky sexual behaviour and persistence of gender norms go hand in hand, thus overlapping and mutually reinforcing each other. Based on the above understanding, both risky sexual behaviour and gender norms persist to exist because of the enshrined mechanism of misogyny and social sanctions. More specifically, the persistence of gender norms as illustrated above, stems from the fact that these norms are entrenched norms that mostly benefit a particular gender (male) in the society, and they are wholly unwilling to relinquish any part of this power, benefits, and privileges. In addition, gender norms are entrenched norms that are strategically supported by different civilizations, institutions, and world religions. To maintain the *status quo*, these civilizations, institutions, and world religions engage in social teachings and socialization drive of their dogmas and doctrines from one generation to the next from childhood.

²⁴⁶ Transmission of gender norms from one generation to the other through social learning from childhood is contained in gender schema and explains in part subsequent conformity and adaptation. It is also noteworthy that, understanding and acceptance of gender schema helps members of the society to explain certain concepts with reference to their pre-existing knowledge and experience. These concepts include housewife, good wife, good husband, bad wife, irresponsible man etc. Acceptance and submission to pre-existing knowledge and experience of required and expected behaviour is responsible for rightness or wrongness of expected behaviour and prescription of appropriate sanctions to violators.

²⁴⁷ A typical example of this is how Manne strategically captures the happenings of the United States election in which Hilary Clinton was judged to be violating gender norms and gender roles by daring to contest to become the president. Manne argues that Hilary Clinton was punished for this, she lost the election. As mentioned earlier, monitoring and sanction regarding gender norm, are executed by men and women alike. See Manne, 2017.

6.5 Reference Network and Persistence of Behaviour

In Chapter Three, we defined descriptive norms as behavioural rules that agents prefer to conform to on the condition that most people in their *reference network* conform to (empirical expectation). Similarly, we defined social norms as the behavioural rule that members of the society prefer to conform to on the condition that most of the people in their *reference network* conform to (empirical expectation) and most people in their *reference network* believe they ought to conform to (normative expectation). This implies that social expectations that sustain descriptive and social norms subsist within a reference network as opposed to independent practices (Bicchieri, 2016). One point that must be emphasised here is that certain behavioural patterns persist because participants of the social norm strongly believe that most people in their reference network believe they ought to conform to the norm, which matters most to them.²⁴⁸ Unlike conventions and other independent practices, a reference network is not a prerequisite for conformity. Recall that in Chapter Two, we argued that conventions persist because it is in agents' best interest to cooperate and coordinate at an equilibrium.²⁴⁹

The point to be stressed here is that social norms are held in force by empirical and normative expectations. Within a reference network, normative and empirical expectations are conceived as effective reciprocal expectations since as others' expectations matter to one's choices and decision, so too one's expectations and behaviour matter to others within the same network (Mackie et al. 2012). Also, reference networks can be well-established or simply

²⁴⁸ FGM and child marriage are examples of behavioural rules that have been shown to persist because there exists a strong normative expectation for conformity to the norm. As earlier mentioned, it matters most to participants that their reference network, friends, well-wishers, pastors/imams believe they ought to do. Opinions, expectations and policies of Strangers or policy makes from other parts of the world or other parts of the same country, have little or no effect on them since their reference network is local.

²⁴⁹ Driving rule is a typical example of a convention, mutual expectation is sufficient for conformity. However, it is also in the best interest of agents to conform to either driving on the right side or on the left side. Going contrary to this leads to a crash that is Pareto inefficient. Refer to Chapter One for details on convention.

transient. For transient situations, shared expectations are relevant, but normative expectations are primarily to avoid disadvantaged positions or problems. On the other hand, well-established reference networks are situations where factual beliefs support shared expectations and agents desire to conform and wholly value what the norm stands for (Bicchieri, 2006, 2016). As captured in the excerpt above, a reference network comprises mainly those with whom one shares a strong affinity, such as family, religious groups, and friends. It can also be as large as a community, an ethnic group, or a country.

Reference network is specific to descriptive norms and social norms since it is only practised in an interdependent behavioural situation where agents prefer to act in a specific way particularly because they hold strong empirical and/or normative beliefs about what members of their reference network do and/or think should be done. The preferences of agents in this sense, are conditional. To this end, a norm and behavioural rule persist because a significant number of members of a reference group hold the belief that the norm is legitimate, should be followed and are willing to monitor and sanction violators of the norm to deter further transgression. On the contrary, if it is the case that a significant number of members of a reference group breach a norm have little or no longer fear sanctions due to violation of the norm, conformity to the said norm is said to be at risk, and the norm is abandoned.

Reference network associated with a specific norm is easily identified by simply asking participants of a norm “whose actions, beliefs, or preferences individuals take into account when deciding whether to perform a certain action” (Bicchieri, 2016: 100). The point worthy of note here is that different situations or circumstances might go along with an entirely different reference network. That is, a different group of people matter to individuals on different topics and for different behaviours. Reference network is often reciprocally reinforcing itself such that,

“what we expect them to do matters; what we think they believe we ought to do matters” (Bicchieri, 2016: 14). In certain situations, a co-worker’s actions, beliefs, and preferences matter most to an individual’s decision while at other times, the actions, beliefs and preferences of family members, ethnic group, or community matter most.²⁵⁰ At other times, religious community or religious leaders’ actions, beliefs or/and preferences matter most and therefore condition one’s preference to act and influence an individual’s preferred choice.

“I called the network of people whose behaviour and expectations matter to the decision-maker the “reference network.” The reference network is usually (but not always) quite local: people normally do not worry much about what strangers might expect of them. Sometimes the reference network includes a small group of friends and family, at other times religious leaders, and it may even comprise people who live in countries from which an individual has emigrated. Mapping the reference network is an essential part of understanding social norms and how to change them, because the norm has to change within the reference network” (Bicchieri, 2016: 53)

Based on the above understanding, it is safe to conclude that reference network plays a vital role in Bicchieri’s theory of social norm, and thus indispensable. It is essential because it is the pillar upon which empirical and normative expectations rest. Because it is the perspective through which norms are viewed as either proscriptive or prescriptive, the reference network is crucial. It is essential because it gives sanctions the ability to be justified and accepted in the event of a norm violation. It is safe, therefore, to argue that, without a strong and functional reference network, Bicchieri’s theory of social norm disintegrates.

²⁵⁰ Also see Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) for strategies and methods of identifying reference network.

Furthermore, a reference network is indispensable in the conception of social norms whenever there is a need to change from an old, maladaptive, or unsustainable norm to a new one. Recall that for descriptive norms, empirical expectation alone is sufficient for conformity. This implies that it is sufficient for participants of a norm to conform if most people in their reference network conform to the norm. In this case, change is possible if the group concerned decides to coordinate on change and subsequently communicate this change (the fact that an old norm has been abandoned for a new norm) to the relevant reference network. While this is straightforward for descriptive norms, changing a social norm is a lot more complicated. This is because social norms involve both empirical and normative expectations. To institute change for an entrenched social norm involves changing participants' personal and normative expectations. Communication of a change is insufficient to lead to coordination on a change for social norm (Bicchieri, 2016).²⁵¹

Based on the survey results and submissions above, we argued that risky sexual behaviour is an entrenched social norm. Determining the reference network linked to risky sexual behaviour, respondents were asked whose expectations about their sexual behaviour matter most to them.

²⁵¹ Coordinating on a change for social norms are complicated and much more difficult because it does not only involve second-order normative expectations, but it also involves sanction. Even when everyone is aware that everyone is aware of the communication for a norm change, very few individuals will be willing to be used as sacrifice or scapegoats to test the general acceptability of the new norm. This shall be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

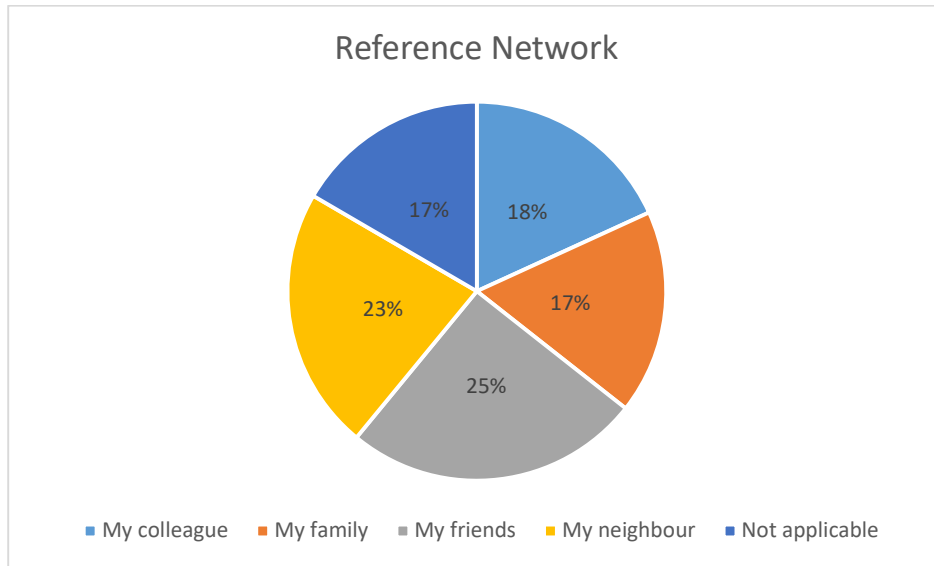


Table. 6. 1

We can easily infer from the above results that friends, neighbours, family, and colleagues obtained statistically significant percentages as those who matter to individuals' sexual relations. We can interpret this to mean, and as already mentioned, different people matter to other people in specific situations. For example, a young adult (a man) who lives alone, might not be bothered about what his colleagues say about his sexual relations, but might be particularly concerned about what his neighbours would say (assuming he comes back home with different girls and/different girls' sleepover at his house often). Adults who still live with their parents might be more concerned about what their family members think and expect, thus acting according to their expectations.

In Table. 6.1, it is evident that friends (25%) are the dominant reference network for a significant number of respondents. Re-echoing the points already made above, what friends think, feel, act, and prefer to be done regarding sexual behaviour matter most to this category of members of society. Regarding risky sexual behaviour, a reference network is central to the

persistence of the behaviour since it is conditional. It is important to mention here that risky sexual behaviour is conditional because an undesirable emotional backlash accompanies violation and social sanctions.

Based on the analysis in other sections and applying Bicchieri's rational reconstruction of social norm and model to diagnose and distinguish collective behaviours effectively, we can safely conclude that Risky sexual behaviour is an established social norm. This conclusion is because risky sexual behaviour satisfies and meets all the criteria stipulated for the existence and/persistence of a social norm. Also, as a social norm that rests on other norms such as gender norms, risky sexual behaviour endures and remains persistent due to social sanction and misogyny.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the connections between patriarchy, gender norms, sexism, and the practise of misogyny in many human communities and the preservation of the unhealthy norm of risky sexual behaviour. Here, we used our knowledge of convention, social norms, patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny to examine the continuation of dangerous sexual behaviour that is encouraged by gender norms. We also considered how emotions affect the way punishments are administered as well as the relationship between negative emotions and social norms. Additionally, we talked about the crucial role that a person's reference network—a group of people who are most important to them in the decision-making process—plays in upholding social norms, in this case, risky sexual behaviour.

This chapter showed how important a role reference networks play in the persistence of maladaptive behaviour. In this chapter, it was argued that reference networks are essential for encouraging compliance with accepted behavioural norms, mainly because it was established that behavioural regularity was in line with agents' expectations under normative and empirical expectations. The survey's findings on risky sexual behaviour were also found to be compatible with the idea presented above. This suggested that the findings indicated that some respondents' persistence in risky sexual behaviour was dependent on the empirical and societal norms of other agents in their reference network.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.0. Introduction

Social norms are ubiquitous in our everyday life and interactions. They are an essential source of motivation for actions. They are a significant source of motivation for individual decision-making and the reason for obeying established conventions and regularities. In the previous chapters, we established that certain conditions must be met for certain regularities to be considered social norms and conditions that warrant obedience to established norms. We also mentioned that for Bicchieri (2006), adherence to established norms is hinged on two main levels of expectations. These expectations are empirical expectations- what we think others do and normative expectations- what we believe others expect us to do. It is important to reiterate the point that, these expectations, empirical and normative, play a vital role and are effective only within a reference network or in situations where people consider the opinions of others important.

In the previous chapters, we affirmed the theory that human behaviours are sometimes influenced by misperceptions of how members of our reference network think, act as well as how we perceive they prefer us to think and act. This misperception creates a gap between the perceived estimation of a persisting behaviour and the actual estimation of the persistent behaviour in a reference network. Invariably, an overestimation of problem behaviour in a reference network will cause agents to increase their problem behaviours, while an underestimation of problem behaviour in a reference network will discourage agents from engaging in the problematic behaviour. Pluralistic ignorance is a misperception, a situation

where an established norm is privately rejected by a majority, yet publicly supported thereby persisting due to incorrect belief that most others endorse such behaviour.

The above theory is further enshrined and enforced by the survey and analysis conducted in Chapters Five and Six. Due to the highly private nature of sexual relations, we discovered that a significant level of ignorance persists among various reference networks (friends, families, colleagues, neighbours) since it is nearly impossible to accurately estimate the sexual behaviour of others in the community. Consequently, community members establish and persist in a vicious circle of risky sexual behaviour by sometimes overestimating the presence of risky sexual behaviour among community members. In this chapter, we proceed to contribute to the literature by enunciating the discovery of pluralistic ignorance in the discourse of sexual relations and its role in sustaining risky sexual behaviour among community members particularly as evident from the survey conducted.

The contribution to the literature will be followed by tools for norm change. Herein, we will employ Bicchieri's (2016), tools for norm change (that is, educational and media campaigns, legislative, economic interventions, and group deliberations) clearly enumerating the various challenges that might be encountered particularly in changing an enshrined risky sexual behaviour norm enforced by established pluralistic ignorance and patriarchal gender norms. One thing that should be stated clearly here is the fact that without targeted policies backed by political will, it would be a herculean task to induce enduring norm change. We shall then proceed to present our recommendations, present the future trajectory of the research, and finally conclude our discourse.

7.1 Tools for Norm Change

My findings and contributions to the research are a testament to the significant role social norms play in the society as well as uncontestably points to the spontaneous nature of gender norms and gender roles in the society. In addition, these social norms, roles, and meanings are seen to be learnt from childhood through socialization (through all socialization avenues; family, parents, society, school, religious houses etc), and constantly reinforced by laid down sanctions and schemas. This overwhelmingly supports the theory that normative expectation is a power level of expectation and combined with empirical expectation, is sufficient to induce and influence behaviours.

Haven accepted the fact that risky sexual behaviour is an enshrined maladaptive social norm, supported by patriarchal gender norms and constantly reinforced by pluralistic ignorance, we now turn our attention to investigating critically how we can bring about enduring change. Particularly as it pertains to normative and empirical expectations that support the persistence of risky sexual behaviour.²⁵² Since people conform to and persist in risky sexual behaviour because of the normative and empirical expectations (as well as other conditions necessary for the persistence of a social norm), to change or abandon this maladaptive risky sexual behaviour social norm implies changing empirical and normative expectations. The inescapable question that immediately comes to mind at this crucial point is, what strategies and modalities can be implemented that will translate in changing the believes and expectations of members of the society, thus abandoning the norm of risky sexual behaviour?

²⁵² This is a simple way to state that empirical and normative expectations serve the backbone to the institutionalization and sustenance of social norms in a particular reference network. See Bicchieri (2006: 30) and Chapter 3.6.1 of this research where we interrogated and affirmed that for a norm to be considered as such, conditions 1, 2, 2(a), 2(b) and 2(b'), must be met.

In Bicchieri (2016), we find an elaborate discussion of what she calls tools for norm change. These tools for norm change include legal means, media campaigns, economic incentives, and community deliberation.²⁵³ According to Bicchieri,

“Whenever changing social norms, a crucial aspect and reason for change is a change in social expectations. Changing social expectations, however, can be quite easy or extremely difficult. An easy case would be our realization, typically through surveys and vignettes, that the target population’s personal normative beliefs about a practice are incongruent with how much they believe members of their reference network support it. Interventions that disseminate information about what people really think would replace the perceived consensus with the objective one, eliminating pluralistic ignorance. Of course, the source of the information must be credible, and the information must reach a majority of those people who still engage in that practice.” (Bicchieri, 2016: 146).

7.2.1 Legal Means

In Chapter Three, we discussed extensively what formal norms are. We argued that formal norms are norms that belong to the macro-level of the society because they are enacted by competent authorities. Formal norms are backed by legal status and transgressors of enacted formal norms are sanctioned according to stipulated penalties. Recall also that we argued that

²⁵³ As we shall come to appreciate, these four tools for norm change should not be seen or considered as isolated tools for norm change since implemented in isolation, might be insufficient and grossly unsuccessful. Bicchieri echoes this point to stress the fact that for an effective norm change and to achieve resounding success (complete norm change), these tools should be combined where applicable and necessary.

while informal norms normally fall outside the legal framework (informal norms are not enacted by state authorities and violation of informal norms cannot be legally sanctioned), they thrive due to favourable formal and legal structure. This fact serves as plausible grounds for the proposition that social norms be analysed as interdependent systems rather than in isolation (Licht, 2008). For example, Lind et al. (1994) and Tyler (1990), argued that fairness, neutrality, and honesty play a significant function in allowing individuals to uphold legal injunctions and individuals' relevant incentives for 'law-abidingness' and legal injunction compliance.²⁵⁴

According to Bicchieri (2016), one point to note and always bear in mind when engaging in norm change is that for any strategy employed to induce normative and empirical believe change, it must be (being an interdependent behaviour) executed in a public space where target population can all have access to the same message, where target population know that others in the same population have access to the same message, and know that others know they also have access to the same message. To say it more technically, for any strategic approach to norm change, there should be common knowledge that all should abandon a particular norm for a new norm.²⁵⁵

Legislative interventions have, among other things, a signalling function. They may signal in a public and unequivocal way that certain practices should be discontinued. A governmental diktat may easily work for conventions (such as traffic rules) because it is in the best interest of everyone to coordinate with each other, and therefore people can trust that everyone else will comply with the

²⁵⁴ This clearly shows that on the one hand legal injunctions, framework and enacted laws serve to create a favourable environment for social norms to thrive and persist. On the other hand, social norms serve to return the favour by allowing individuals develop certain abilities and behavioural dispositions (fairness, neutrality, honesty etc) necessary to become law-abiding and injunction complaint citizens of the society.

²⁵⁵ Refer to Chapter 1.6 for more detailed discussion of common knowledge. In addition, members of the target population must also trust the message and the messenger, see it to be authentic and reliable.

governmental injunction (because it is also in their best interest to do so). The law coordinates behaviour via the creation of new expectations. (Bicchieri, 2016: 144)

Based on the above, it is obvious that state enacted laws and legislative injunctions immediately signal norm change and since enacted laws are accompanied by stipulated sanctions for transgressors, people often immediately abandon old norms for new ones since they trust the message and the messenger. However, we should immediately mention that, and as clearly stated by Bicchieri (2016), social norm change using legal means/tools is much more complicated and problematic.

Recall that risky sexual behaviour is an interdependent behaviour that persists due to pluralistic ignorance and the presence of other norms- patriarchal gender norms. Considering this, top-down initiative or intervention (legal injunctions) by simply enacting laws that all persons must engage in safe sexual behaviour might produce little or no desired results.²⁵⁶ Notwithstanding this perceived limitation, the legal approach to changing risky sexual behaviour can significantly contribute to changing the empirical and normative expectations and beliefs of target populations if certain conditions are met. According to Bicchieri and Mercier (2014), legitimacy, procedural fairness, origin, and enforcement of an enacted law are underlying factors that determine if a target population will comply with it. For any meaningful result and consequent abandonment of a maladaptive and harmful social norm, the trust of the target population and legitimacy of the competent authority and law is crucial.²⁵⁷ While it is unapplicable to enact such as law as “an individual must at all times practice safe sex”, certain laws could be enacted by legitimate and competent authorities to intervene in the persistence of

²⁵⁶ Refer to Stuntz (2000) for further discussion on why top-down interventions, especially in developing countries seldom produce desired results.

²⁵⁷ See Bicchieri and Marini (2016), for further analysis.

risky sexual behaviour. Such laws would help in changing the maladaptive norm by facilitating behavioural change particularly addressing the identified stigma associated with violating risky sexual behaviour.²⁵⁸

If we view the law as legitimate, we are more likely to comply with it. A legitimate law must ensue from a legitimate and recognized authority, and the procedures through which the authority makes decisions must also be seen as fair and appropriate. It should be clear that the law is consistently enforced and that the enforcers are perceived as honest (Bicchieri, 2016: 144).

It is obvious that trust, legitimacy, origin and strategy for the enforcement and enforcers must be seen as honest and authentic. It is important to add here that, notwithstanding all these variables, what is indisputable is that any legal injunction must not be seen and perceived to be too distant from established social norms as well as be in tandem with other supporting laws. If a legal arrangement or injunction is seen to be distant from existing social norms and other supporting social norms, the enforcement strategy will lose its credibility and the target population will likely not comply.²⁵⁹ The above is trenchantly captured by Stuntz (2000) when he argued that

²⁵⁸ Based on the risky sexual behaviour survey conducted, it was obvious that there is a strong stigma associated with been seen with a condom. Been labelled promiscuous is a very strong stigma in Nigeria because it is often accompanied with other consequences. This include a family been labelled wayward so much so that nobody wants to marry anyone from the family. To avoid the stigma, individuals in the population thus persist in risky sexual behaviour. Refer to Chapter 4 for further analysis and other stigmas and process of stigmatization identified.

²⁵⁹ We argued earlier that to achieve success in changing a harmful norm, common knowledge about abandoning the established norm is crucial. Also, target population must not conceive the new norm as too distant from what they know and support, and with other norm, simply put, the new law must approximate popular opinion. If a norm is too drastic, it will be unsuccessful and enforcement agencies (police) will be less likely to enforce and punish transgressors. See Dan Kahan (2000).

If the law strays too far from the norms, the public will not respect the law, and hence will not stigmatize those who violate it. Loss of stigma means loss of the most important deterrent the criminal justice system has. If the law is to have any value at all, it needs to stick close to the norms (Stuntz, 2000: 1872)

Founded on all these, we can emphatically affirm that the legal approach to norm change, all things considered, is a viable approach to changing social expectations and effectively lead to norm abandonment. When considering norm change, policy makers must always consider the fact that for the target population to be willing to engage in the process of norm change, they must be convinced that it is common knowledge among their reference network that all are expected as well as have already commenced the process of abandoning an old norm. Once this is the case and the target population have sufficient trust in policy makers, the legal approach is most likely going to have a good result.

In the previous chapters, we argued in line with Bicchieri (2006, 2016) and Guala (2012) that even though established norms are sometimes not in agent's material and immediate self-interest, agents consistently persist in compliance with established social norms. Based on the preceding arguments, three points can be identified as explanations for compliance with social norms that are not in the best interest of individuals. First, we argued the fear of punishment or sanctions from a reference network. This fear of punishment or sanction rests heavily on peer groups (friends reference network) to enforce risky sexual behaviour among agents. Clearly, an overestimation of expectations (empirical, normative and of sanction) serves as the background and force the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour.²⁶⁰ Secondly, agents are said to persist and comply with the established social norm in a bid to avoid a negative tag, shame, or destruction to

²⁶⁰ See Guala (2012), for further analysis on overestimation of punishment.

one's self-esteem.²⁶¹ And thirdly, the strong desire to comply with others' expectations of oneself (normative expectation).²⁶²

7.2.2 Media Campaigns

The media is an important medium of communication and conveying information. Media campaigns could employ both traditional and modern technological tools in their approach to bring about information to target populations. These tools include television, radio, newspapers, billboards, the internet as well as public events. Media campaigns can also take the form of short dramas, movies, and videos through which certain salient topics are discussed, misperceptions dispelled, and new expectations suggested. Media, therefore, is the most efficient means through which common knowledge about social norms, empirical and normative expectations, sanctions, and norm change processes are created, transmitted, and sustained.

Based on the foregoing, it is obvious then that media campaigns can be conceived as a very important tool used by policy makers and parties interested in changing established maladaptive norms. Evidently and as previously under legal means, policy makers are solely responsible for creating and enacting laws that create a suitable environment for norm change to

²⁶¹ Based on the results of the survey, we argued that people tend to comply with risky sexual behaviour norm because they fear been called weak man, bad wife, promiscuous and others. While this can also be categorized under sanction, we have decided to separate this here to help us clearly itemize effective policy recommendations that will reduce the perception of condom use as promiscuity, the request and enforcement of condom use by women as required and not be conceived as bad or arrogant ladies, and finally, persistence in safe sexual behaviour by men as activities of strong and focused men.

²⁶² Based on Bicchieri's definition and social norm approach, we noticed that while empirical expectation is sufficient for the persistence of a convention, normative expectation must be present, in addition to empirical expectation for a behavioural regularity to be considered a social norm. This point is very important to make here primarily because for any meaningful and effective risky sexual behaviour social norm change, policy makers must institute policies that will address normative expectations. Agents must become aware that normative expectations of relevant reference network in terms of risky sexual behaviour have changed. See Bernheim (1994); Sugden (2004); Bicchieri (2006) for further discussion on empirical and normative expectations.

take place successfully.²⁶³ For example, in Nigeria, FGM has been banned by national law backed by legislation. This creates the sort of conducive atmosphere required and necessary for norm change. Law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations and other social workers can now, relying on this law, creatively utilize media campaigns to create in all media outlets target interventions to change social expectations, thus abandoning the norm. It is important to mention right from the outset that, creating media content for norm change must be creative and created only after research has been carried out to determine the true underlying pillars supporting compliance and sustenance of the norm.

According to Bicchieri (2016), common media campaigns used as interventions such as edutainment-soap operas and telenovela showed significant success in changing the established social norm by first making the target population identify with characters that defy maladaptive social norms and meet with resounding progress and success. It is necessary to mention here that to change risky sexual behaviour, we must necessarily have policy makers promulgate laws targeting sanctions from relevant reference network, targeting negative perceptions of risky sexual behaviour such as promiscuity, and finally, promulgate laws targeting normative expectations.

Effective soap operas rely on cultural schemata and scripts that people can recognize and identify with. A successful program involves suitably representative and relatable characters and events that deviate from the cultural paradigm to a sufficient degree. For example, a soap opera centered on a young girl should have her adhere to all of the values and interests that are typical of a girl from such a community (i.e., she is largely prototypical), yet at the same time she should also espouse different

²⁶³ It is important to mention here that for norm change tools to be optimally effective, they must not be implemented in isolation and haphazardly, there must be some form of coordination in their implementation.

aspirations. Perhaps she wants to stay in school longer, marry later, or even choose her own husband. Viewing such an otherwise prototypical character has the potential to cause someone to update the associated social schemata (in this case, the schema for a “young girl”) (Bicchieri 2016: 148).

To effectively change the maladaptive norm of risky sexual behaviour, all media campaigns should contain in each intervention approach, ‘recognizability and difference’. With the combination of these, the target population can immediately recognize, decode, and associate with the message, and thus trust that what one agent now knows and thereafter prefer to do, is common knowledge among his/her relevant reference networks. In addition, media interventions should not be seen as completely utopian in nature and content so that the target population can easily relate emotionally and psychologically. For the media approach to be effective, therefore, agents must be able to relate to characters used in jingles, soap operas, and telenovelas seamlessly. This ability to relate to characters and deduce the desired message would invariably lead to the abandonment of normative expectations and beliefs that support risky sexual behaviour.

To address risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria, two approaches could be adopted and stressed while utilising media tools. First, all media messages, including edutainments, could be used in a comparing strategy to induce change. Using a comparison strategy, policymakers and social agents for change can compare agents who persist in risky sexual behaviour and agents who persist in safe sexual behaviour. Through comparing these, agents who persist in risky sexual behaviour will become aware of the significant dangers they are consistently exposed to while practising risky sexual behaviour. The comparison could include issues relating to an untimely death due to HIV/AIDS, unproductivity in adulthood due to frequent hospital

visitations and sickness, consistent consumption of powerful antibiotics and retroviral drugs, hunger, and poverty due to the high cost of maintenance.

Comparing the above to a healthy life, adulthood full of productivity and a bright future, and success always associated with healthy agents of the society (agents who practice safe sexual behaviour), resounding success would be recorded. This is primarily because agents who practice risky sexual behaviour would soon realize that they have consistently opted for a Pareto inefficient equilibrium, and thus abandon risky sexual behaviour for safe sexual behaviour by changing their empirical and normative expectations and beliefs, to one which will guarantee them Pareto efficient equilibrium. Also, agents who practised safe sexual behaviour will therefore persist in this behaviour to avoid the possibility of falling victim to sickness and unproductivity (Pareto inefficient equilibrium).²⁶⁴

Policy makers and other agents interested in changing maladaptive social norms can also apply the second strategy, which is to emphasize an action combination as the most dominant and salient action among many agents in the target population. By implication, media tools inform the target population that many agents consistently engage in safe sexual behaviour. By emphasising this and making safe sexual behaviour salient, agents who persist in safe sexual behaviour will know they are in the majority and thus persist in it. While on the other hand, agents who persist in risky sexual behaviour will know they are in the minority and persist in an unpopular behaviour and soon abandon this maladaptive behaviour.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ See Ferraro, Miranda, and Price (2011), and Allcott and Mullainathan (2010) for more details on interventions using comparison approach.

²⁶⁵ For examples and details on employing this approach, see Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008) and Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, and Rogers (2006)

Although the above approach is pragmatic and can lead to effective norm change, it is a dangerous approach and can be counterproductive if not applied effectively. On the one hand, this approach can encourage agents who have already practised safe sexual behaviour and translate into changing agents' normative and empirical expectations and beliefs and transforming negative outlooks (promiscuity) associated with condom use and sanctions meted on those who practice safe sex. On the other hand, it can also serve as a spark, a counterproductive strategy by triggering distrust for policy makers and other agents since the target population soon realize they are being deceived. This might lead to an increase in risky sexual behaviour.

7.2.3 Economic Incentives

The economic incentive is the third tool of norm change specifically applied to change the costs and benefits of target behaviours. This could be either through introducing strategies such as fines to deter violations or monetary incentives to induce compliance. Economic incentives could be an effective norm change tool but must be applied strategically and it does not apply to all situations. Incentives from pro-social behaviours, on the one hand, reduced the voluntary component of certain behaviour and on the other hand changed “what was originally a normative into a market transaction” (Bicchieri, 2016: 154). This invariably implies that being a “market transaction” such behaviour pro-social or not downgrades certain behaviour by reducing its value.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ The value of certain behaviours like voluntary behaviours, would significantly be downgraded since it is now pegged at a price or fee. This is because the fee signals the fact that people now doing it for a fee or for the

Jensen (2012), records positive results of monetary incentive which resulted in keeping girls in school and well-nourished as against the persisting norm of keeping the girl child at home. Other studies support the argument that monetary incentives results in a positive outcome by serving as a stimulus to engender desired behavioural change.²⁶⁷ What is important to note is, a monetary incentive is always designed to induce a new behaviour different from a familiar one, and hence, monetary incentive must be specific to a norm. The main challenge of monetary incentive norm change tool is that when it involves a norm change that needs consistent monitoring and will continue indefinitely, monetary incentive as a norm change tool becomes less effective and a difficult task. Bicchieri (2016), puts it succinctly when she argued that “when dealing with ongoing, long-term practices that involve many connected behaviours and consistent monitoring, substantial behavioural change requires a paradigm shift from economic incentives to the establishment of new norms (Bicchieri, 2016: 157).

The above is the case when considering risky sexual behaviour. Given the preceding analysis of maladaptive social norms of risky sexual behaviour, it is obvious that monetary incentives as a norm change tool to change risky sexual behaviour will be significantly counterproductive. Earlier, we noted that risky sexual behaviour is the foremost cause of HIV transmission. Therefore, any form of monetary incentive to address risky sexual behaviour will invariably result in one form of stigmatization or another. Secondly, we also noted that being a very private behaviour, there is no way to effectively monitor the risky sexual behaviour of the target population. This implies that there is considerably no practical way to apply monetary incentive to risky sexual behaviour or change the norm by applying monetary incentive. In

economic attachment. This might permanently be counterproductive and even further decrease involvement. See Mellstrom and Johannesson (2013) for details.

²⁶⁷ See Pejtersen, 2020 and Chang, 2011.

addition, risky sexual behaviour is a practice that involves many other enshrined norms and behaviours. Hence, initiating monetary incentives to change risky sexual behaviour will only result in destabilizing other important social norms.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, the monetary incentive could be used to significantly contribute to changing maladaptive risky sexual behaviour norms in several ways. Firstly, the economic incentive could be used to provide free access to condoms. While the availability of condoms is not a guarantee that it would be used, providing condoms for both men and women, which is free, reshapes and changes the perception of perceiving condoms as only meant for and used by promiscuous persons. In addition, the economic incentive approach could be used to educate the target population of the enormous costs they incur by persisting in risky sexual behaviour which include a vicious circle of poverty, early and untimely death, unfulfilling life riddled with persistent hospital visitation and consistent drug consumption as well as unproductively. Economic incentive alone, therefore, might produce little or no tangible results in changing risky sexual behaviour. However, in addition to legal means and media campaigns as well as deliberations, an economic incentive if effectively and strategically applied will result in a positive outcome to change persistent risky sexual behaviour.

7.2.4 Deliberations

In the previous chapters, we argued that social norms are collective behaviours that are enshrined in the belief system of a particular group of people enforced and sustained by scripts, ideas, and societal values. For this reason, community deliberations can be an effective way to change maladaptive norms by discussing behavioural expectations, beliefs and unearthing

inconsistencies and pluralistic ignorance. Through deliberations, the target population would discuss, for example, beliefs surrounding sending girls to school, and unearth beliefs and expectations surrounding female genital cutting. Public deliberations will bring about new information, leading to community members being aware of the enormous costs and benefits they deny themselves by practising these maladaptive behaviours.

Community deliberation is an important norm change tool since it allows community members to talk openly and freely about practices and beliefs. Remember that, when an individual tries to change a norm on his own, it results in norm violation, and he/she is punished by society even when they privately condemn the said behaviour. Also recall that, earlier, we discussed that common knowledge is central to norm persistence as well as norm change. To abandon an enshrined norm, therefore, the target population must understand the beliefs in their value system that support such practices and thus have consistent reasons to support the change. As soon as the reasons to change become common knowledge and shared, positive results about changing a maladaptive norm are achieved.

Deliberations, therefore, satisfies the above and create the perfect opportunity for common knowledge about norm change to thrive since most of the erroneous premises that support the persistence of a maladaptive norm will become obvious and outrightly rejected leading to the abandonment of the maladaptive norm (Mercier and Sperber, 2011). Deliberation even though very important might become counterproductive if it is applied inappropriately, planned, and executed wrongly. Simply put, for deliberation to be effective, the facilitators must be seen as trustworthy and unbiased to any preconceived views or beliefs. Through this, agents will not conceive the discussion or deliberation has been hijacked from the outset, thus open to learning, and acquiring fresh practical information about old practices and behaviours. In

addition, deliberating groups should comprise a certain level of diversity, including all members of the reference network.²⁶⁸

Consequently, deliberation would be an effective tool to change the maladaptive social norm of risky sexual behaviour. Recall that it was noted earlier that risky sexual behaviour is a norm supported by other enshrined norms but enforced by pluralist ignorance. Through deliberation, most of the inconsistencies involved in risky sexual behaviour and the beliefs and values and ideas and scripts that support the persistence of pluralistic ignorance will become common knowledge. Recall that the survey results indicate that people personally feel they should practice safe sexual behaviour, but end up practising risky sexual behaviour, which translates to everyone doing what nobody wants. Through deliberation, the target population will become aware of their beliefs and that of others who support risky sexual behaviour and collectively develop a consistent and practical way to abandon risky sexual behaviour.

In our contemporary society (mostly urban settings), community deliberation can be a very difficult task. The reason is not farfetched. People sometimes live isolated lives, very busy schedules and sometimes become very difficult if not impossible to assemble large community members to deliberate on issues.²⁶⁹ Notwithstanding, a different approach in form of pieces of training, workshops and inclusion in the secondary and tertiary curriculum could be adopted to replace community deliberation to effectively dispel misconceptions.

²⁶⁸ Including all members of reference network and a certain degree of diversity in deliberating group reduces the possibility for polarization and lack of inclusivity of all target population, population at risks as well as population who support and enforce these practices. For more see Bicchieri (2016) and Myers and Kaplan (1979).

²⁶⁹ It is true that traditional African societies had community squares where members of the community came together to discuss salient matters. However, today, this is less effective and less prevalent with increasing population, growth and desire of total self-independence, Africans, and Nigerians in particular, live-in larger communities and a community central authority has since been abandoned.

7.3 Future Research Trajectory

This research, as evident from the previous chapters, contributes to the study of social norms mirroring how pluralistic ignorance and expectations perpetuate risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria. This research, the survey conducted, the analysis and the conclusions reveal the inherent interplay between patriarchal gender norms and social norms and how decades of experience perpetuate maladaptive equilibrium. As a sequel to the solutions provided, the research reveals that every enshrined maladaptive social norm is peculiar (like every established social norm). For effective norm change and Pareto optimal improvement, tailor-made solutions must be strategically implemented. In addition, this research provides a framework and template for future research on a larger scale to eliminate any alluded spurious correlation.

Consequently, some relevant trajectories emerged that future research should address. Firstly, this research presents a novel understanding of risky sexual behaviour and reveals that, the dynamics of risky sexual behaviour in Nigeria go far beyond the conceived theories in the literature. The currently conceived theories limit the problem to gender norms, poor negotiation skills, contextual life uncertainties, hard drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, or sexual misperception.²⁷⁰ Further research, therefore, needs to be conducted to decipher the interplay between these dynamics crystalized in social norms and expectations leading to the persistence of risky sexual behaviour.

Secondly, future research should be conducted to further shed light on how the various important categories, religion, marital status, educational status, gender, and sexual orientation,

²⁷⁰ Refer to Chapter Four for an elaborate discussion on these theories and their limitations.

shape sexual norms and influence individual behaviours.²⁷¹ One striking point worthy of mention and crucial for future research is the role of religious affiliation, dogmas and social expectations in social norms and sexual practices. What is particularly relevant, given the above, is the case of Northern Nigeria, a predominantly Muslim geographical location in Nigeria that consistently records low cases of pre-marital and teenage pregnancies as well as HIV/AIDS cases compared to other regions in Nigeria.²⁷²

The Northern part of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, while other areas are predominantly Christian. This fact raises several relevant questions that further research should consider when investigating risky sexual behaviour in Northern Nigeria. Firstly, is safe sex and faithful sexual relations a consistent practice in the Northern region of Nigeria due to the widespread and persistent early child marriage and the ability to marry multiple wives? The northern part of Nigeria is overwhelmingly judged as the poorest region in Nigeria, with a high rate of poverty²⁷³, an uneducated population, lower life expectancy and inadequate medical facilities compared to the other areas of the country.²⁷⁴ Does this fact imply safer sexual practices, less promiscuity, less teenage sexual exploration, teenage pregnancy, and faithfulness to sexual partners? These questions are pertinent and necessary to effectively deduce the true

²⁷¹ Based on the survey conducted and analysis provided in Chapter four, it becomes pertinent for further research to get more in-depth understanding on how these important categories relate and consequently influence individual behaviours.

²⁷² Data available and provided by “The statistics of National Agency for the Control of Aids” (NACA) in Nigeria of 2018 on HIV national prevalence divides Nigeria into regions and reveal that in 2020, among adults aged 15-49, South-South region of the country has the highest HIV prevalence at 3.1% compared to the Northeast Zone and Northwest Zone with 1.1% and 0.6% respectively.

²⁷³ In the National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA) report 2018, we see a range of socio-economic factors argued to play a key role in contributing to the spread of HIV. These include poverty, lack of education (lack of information) and patriarchal gender norms.

²⁷⁴ This could easily be inferred as the cause of high rate of misinformation about hospital and medical procedures with widespread disinterestedness in seeking medical help and HIV/AIDS testing.

status of risky sexual behaviour in Northern Nigeria and reveal what sorts of expectations and gender norms are in place that encourages risky sexual behaviour.

Finally, this research overwhelmingly supports Cristina Bicchieri's theory of reference network. As a consequence of the research analysis, further research is necessary to explore and understand other empirical and normative expectations that become locally entrenched in supporting risky sexual behaviour in the face of severe health risks and fixation in an obvious Pareto inefficient equilibrium.

7.4 Recommendations and Conclusion

Risky sexual behaviour remains a persistent maladaptive social norm in Nigeria. Throughout this research, we reiterated that social norms are persistent behaviours supported by normative and empirical expectations and with the possibility of sanctions from members of one's reference network. In the previous sections, we argued alongside Bicchieri (2006; 2016) that legal means, media campaigns, economic incentives and deliberations are all practical maladaptive norm change tools if employed effectively and strategically. We also noted that considered/used in isolation, these norms change tools might produce very few positive results and mixed results at best. However, considered and employed together, these norms change tools would produce significant positive results. It is against this background and conclusion that we now analyse and put forward this recommendation.

Remember that risky sexual behaviour is an enshrined social norm in Nigeria. This norm deduced from the analysis in this research reveals that it is supported and persists owing to pluralistic ignorance and because of other enshrined norms such as patriarchy and gender norms. As a sequel, the first and most effective approach to changing risky sexual behaviour rests primarily on the political will of policymakers and political actors. More specifically, we recommend that political actors and policymakers enact specific laws that reduce and criminalize all stereotypes relating to risky sexual behaviour and condom use.²⁷⁵ We imply here that political actors and policymakers introduce programs in the form of deliberations or seminars and curriculums of secondary and tertiary institutions that teach sex education to young adults with

²⁷⁵ Recall that in Chapter Four, we argued that one of the foremost reasons for the persistence of risky sexual behaviour was the fact that once seen with a condom, reference network immediately sanctions the agent by terming him/her "promiscuous". To avoid this sanction, individuals prefer not to be seen with condom, thus significantly related to the persistence of risky sexual behaviour. To change this norm and encourage condom use, policy makers must enact laws that target this sort of sanction, so much so that been seen with a condom has a positive connotation.

particular attention to enabling the free discussion of condom use. Presently, the topic of condom use appears more like and taboo, and people often avoid such discussions.²⁷⁶ Deliberate policies in this direction inevitably filter down other norm change tools and make their approaches effective, valid, and sound. That is, by enacting such policies, the methods of media campaigns, economic incentives, and deliberation will be readily accepted and yield positive results.

Sample of Adaptable Curriculum for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions

Basic Topics:

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Gender sociology and sexual orientation
- Questions on human sexuality- youth and adults
- Safe Sexual Behaviour and sexual rights- costs and benefits
- Risky Sexual Behaviour and sexual rights- costs and benefits
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- HIV/AIDS: impact of AIDS on their sexuality, productivity, and future uncertainties
- Family planning methods
- Fertility and infertility and its prevalence in the society.
- The sociological and anthropological approach to sexuality in various African countries

²⁷⁶ This recommendation might appear like a repetition of what is presently been practiced. However, this is not the case. At present, most sex educators teach the topic of sex and condom use from a religious and traditional point of view that every adult should be chaste until after marriage, and once married, must remain committed and faithful to one's partner. While this can be seen as the ideal, often, and as revealed from observation, this is obviously not the case. We therefore recommend that instead of teaching young adults superficially about sex and avoid the topic of safe sexual behaviour, sex educator should be presented with explicit curriculum about safe sex practices and not merely encourage chastity or celibacy.

To effectively change risky sexual behaviour, media campaigns are herein considered an inevitable norm change tool to be employed. As political actors and policymakers enact suitable laws to promote inclusivity and open discussion about safe sex and condom use, media campaigns can be rolled out to consolidate the gains of legal means and approaches to changing risky sexual behaviour. Through media campaigns, jingles could be developed to openly discuss condom use and safe sex practices, thus making it a salient alternative. In addition, programmes in different local languages targeting other Nigerian societies could be developed.²⁷⁷ This approach will serve as a constant call and reminder to the target population about what they have learnt and discussed in schools, seminars, and programs. Also, this approach serves as a medium to make safe sex and condom use common knowledge to both sexes, so much so that girls know that they can demand condom use, and at the same time, men become disposed to being challenged to and compelled to use condoms.²⁷⁸

It is difficult to include an economic or monetary incentive to enforce safe sexual behaviour in Nigeria without causing more harm to the already delicate situation. First, Nigeria has a population of over 200 million. It is argued that over 60% of this population is youth. How do we institute monetary or economic incentives to use condoms for this vast population? Secondly, risky sexual behaviour is highly private, and disclosing one's sexual practices in a highly religious setting is also very difficult.

²⁷⁷ This approach is important because members of the target population will listen to this in their own language, relate to it personally and see the value of the effort been made to talk to them with their own language. There is always a certain degree of scepticism associated with messages communicated to locals in a foreign language, and even when they understand the content and agree, prefer not to comply since it is considered alien.

²⁷⁸ Recall that we mentioned that without common knowledge and shared change in expectations, individuals would be acting alone thus attracting sanctions from reference network. In chapter four, we saw that women are unable to enforce or even demand condom use from their partners because they fear being tagged arrogant and bad women. When it becomes common knowledge that women do demand condom use and should demand condom use from their partners and this belief and expectation is shared, we will in a very short time, experience change in risky sexual behaviour.

Notwithstanding the above, the government and well-meaning persons, including NGOs, can engage in a subtle form of economic incentive by providing access to free condoms at shops, malls, and hotels. In this way, sexually active agents will have access to condoms at zero cost whenever they need to use them. Through this also, agents will see the value of condom use owing to the efforts and resources the government and NGOs put into making condoms accessible and available.

We argued earlier that deliberation, as it stands and relating to risky sexual behaviour, is a difficult task to achieve. Notwithstanding, approaching it differently will make deliberation exciting and an effective norm change tool. Earlier, we noted that government policies to include safe sex topics in schools' curricula can be employed in place of community deliberations. However, to make it effective, this could be designed in the form of seminars and conventions executed in the said communities with free lunch and study materials. Being a highly religious society, such topics would be considered highly inappropriate in religious gatherings where we usually have a large congregation. Notwithstanding, safe sex and condom use can be discussed and fit perfectly into other social settings and programmes.

In conclusion, we can safely argue that legal means, media campaigns, economic incentives and deliberations applied together is effective norm change tool and should translate into significant positive results if systematically and strategically applied to risky sexual behaviour. Policymakers and political actors must integrate sexual health in the multi-year plan on health as a preventive approach rather than reactionary, as has been consistently practised in Nigeria. In rolling out sexual education, particular attention should be drawn to the key population (teenagers, young adults, prostitutes, men who have sex with men., etc) of the society to reduce persistent risky sexual behaviour leading to high transmission rates of HIV/STIs. The

sex education curriculum for secondary and tertiary schools should include all essential truths about sexual rights and sexual orientation studies. In the long run, this will dispel a significant portion of sexual misperceptions and biased sexual normative and empirical expectations from the referenced network and societal sanctions.

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