

DONALD DAVIDSON'S THEORY OF ACTION AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper looks into the intersection between the concept of responsible governance in Nigeria political system and Donald Davidson's theory of action. This work, by explaining Davidson's concept of intention, rationalization and agency, aims to explain more on why there is failure in Nigerian governance in meeting standards of accountability, transparency, campaign promises and responsibility. It argues therefore that when Davidson's theory is applied in the Nigerian system of governance, it gives room for a deeper philosophical understanding of failures of intentionality, agency and irresponsibility among politicians and their real behaviours and policies. One of the major problems facing Nigeria today is the irresponsibility and blame game which has eaten deep into its structures especially in the political space, where everyone is expected to be held responsible and accountable for their failures in carrying out their duties. Nigerian politicians often make promises during campaign periods and as well make some claims, but they are not able to transform these intentions into transparent, accountable and effective governance. As a result of this, the persistent gap between the actual system of governance and political intentions by politicians ends up in failures of responsible governance in the country. Using analytical and a conceptual methodology, this article is set to establish how misalignments between a political leader's action and intention contribute to irresponsibility in governance, and how philosophical frameworks can help in restructuring the failed institution.

Keywords: Accountability, Agency, Donald Davidson, Governance, Intentionality, Responsibility,

Introduction

Nigeria is seen as Africa's most populated democracy, but it is faced with an insistent governance crisis surrounded by the systematic failure of political leaders who cannot effectively translate their campaign promises into policy implementation after elections. In as much as there are constitutional frameworks targeted at ensuring there is accountability, responsibility and transparent governance, politics in Nigeria is known by what one can describe as institutionalized irresponsibility, a situation where public office holders usually refuse to give account for their wrong actions while they claim to be good leaders. (Transparency International, 2024; United Nations Development Programme, 2023). This persistence failures from those in politics and governance, has continued to raise serious concern and fundamental philosophical questions about agency and political responsibility in Nigeria. According to some scholars, Nigeria's governance challenges range from political, institutional and economical, this paper however, explores Nigerian problems through a philosophical perspective by applying analytical framework to know and understand why Nigerian political leaders continually fail to fulfil their already stated commitment and intentions even before winning their various seats. Davidson's action theory in his work on "Actions, Reasons, and Causes" (1963), gives one a distinct way of thinking or interpreting political behaviour by concentrating mainly on the relationship between desires, intentional actions and beliefs. According to Davidson (1980), every rational agency

should be able to make logical decisions and avoid contradictions, between his stated belief and actual conduct. But in Nigeria governance today, such consistent beliefs seem to be lacking systematically. His action theory avail us the opportunity to analyse irresponsibility among political actors, not just as ethical failure but also as a system collapse in the rational decision making itself.

This paper claims that applying Davidson's theory of action to Nigerian leadership exposes that the problem in the country's governance system originates from changes in the political power or influence, a situation where those in power methodically and deliberately cut off public opinions from their actual motivating desires and beliefs. Therefore, we can through this philosophical framework, understand why it has proven difficult to understand why it is insufficient to tackle challenges in Nigeria's governance system through only structural reforms and how politicians maintain logical consistency of thought, beliefs or ideas, as they engage in behavioral patterns of consistent neglect of responsibilities or duties. This analysis is organized into four major sections; examination of Davidson action theory and its implications for grasping duties of Nigerian leaders, second, examining how the action theory uncovers systematic irresponsibility using specific case studies, third, the role of power dynamics, policies and norms in normalizing political negligence and lastly, contributions and limitations for understanding failures in the Nigeria's system of governance.

Donald Davidson's Theory of Action

Donald Davidson in his theory of action aims to provide clarity on what explains people's behavioural pattern as an action done intentionally. In his renowned essay "*Action, Reasons, and Causes*" (1963), Davidson addressed the orthodox distinction between reasons and causes. He argued that reasons can indeed serve as causes of actions. He further defined an action as something done intentionally by an agent under a certain description. According to him, this action by the agent is caused by a belief-desire pair (Davidson, 1980). This definition establishes a connection between intentional action and the agent's mental behaviour, especially in the agent's mental states of belief and desire at the time of action. For him therefore, understanding an action requires insight into what motivated the action in the first place. Rationalization which is the core of Davidson's theory can be defined as the process of explaining an action through the agent's justifying reasons that are desires and beliefs. For example, Chinyere may cast a ballot because she believes it is her civic duty (belief) and she wants a better future for her country (desire). The combination of belief-desire here can be said to form the reason that causes and explains the action. According to Davidson (1980), these explanations provide the reason that actually caused the action, not just mere rationalization that grounds the action in the agent's mental life. He stressed that actions are motivated by reasons, however, those reasons must also be the driving force behind the agent's behaviour. This causal relationship according to him demarcates intentional actions from non-intentional behaviour. For example, if Ngozi raises her hand in class to ask a question, she has performed an action; but the same movement of raising hand that is caused by a muscle spasm is not the same as asking a question. The difference between the two as explained by Davidson is the presence of rational intention guided by internal reasoning.

Another important aspect of Davidson's theory of action is the anomalous nature of the mind. Davidson in his essay on Metal Events (1970), introduced the principle of the anomalism of the mental. This suggests that mental and physical events are not linked by deterministic

psychological law. That is, unlike natural sciences, the mental states like beliefs and desires can cause physical action, but their interactions lack strict causal predictability (Davidson, 1980). It means therefore, to understand human action, there must be interpretation, which is not just mere deterministic analysis or empirical observation. Hence, to understand other people's actions, rationality must be attributed to them, by assuming that people typically act based on reasons they consider rational or justified. When we attempt to make sense out of an action even if they appear irrational, to try by attributing coherent desires and beliefs. This he calls the principle of charity. For him, this means a methodological approach that seeks to understand other people's behaviour and statements in the most coherent and rational way (Davidson, 1984). Agency from the analytical view shows the capacity to act for reasons, which reflects coherence between someone's external behaviour and internal states. When someone says he has value for honesty but at the same consistently faults in deceiving people, from Davidson's view it is described not merely as unethical, but as an action or behaviour also fail short of rational agency and responsibility. Davidson further explained that such people also act on reasons that are contrary to their stated values or beliefs, this goes a long way to demonstrate a breakdown in the integrity of their intentional structure. Davidson explained that actions are considered intentional under certain descriptions. These descriptions according to him are tied to the agent's reasons and beliefs. His action theory also provides a basis for how responsibility can be attributed to an agency. It therefore follows that, political actors can be held accountable or responsible for failures and actions under the descriptions where such actions by the agent were intentional. Hence, to access responsibilities among government officials in Niger, it will cause deep implications because in Nigeria, politicians make promises and public commitments (intentions), that are based on (beliefs) and desired outcomes which are (desires). Here, Davidson's theory of action implies that any responsible governance needs these mental states to line up with policy actions and decisions. We can therefore use Davidson's theory to critique failures such as lapses in responsibility as a rational agent rather than the administrative shortcomings and failures of any politician or government official who fails to act according to their earlier stated intentions. Further, Davidson's theory of action enables someone to understand political and moral responsibility, through intentional agency. In this sense, responsibility is not just a reactive attribution, that apportioning blames when there is a negative outcome, rather, it is being held responsible for one's outcome and action. For example, if Ngozi acts based on reasons that I endorse and causally, those reasons produce action, she is said to be politically and morally accountable or responsible for whatever outcome (Smith, 2007). This pattern of responsibility is useful especially in accessing political officeholders and leaders with wide-ranging consequences in their action. Furthermore, Davidson on responsibility supports the view that it (responsibility) demands a basic level of coherence between an individual's stated beliefs and the actual conduct that is his words and deeds. One can say therefore, political irresponsibility sets in when there is breakdown on this coherence between an individual's actual conduct and stated beliefs. This is the point when public officeholders say one thing and do a different thing another or when there is inconsistency between their stated justification and actual actions. Such inconsistencies weaken accountability in democracy and also betray the confidence entrusted in politicians (Watson, 1996). Davidson's action theory explores the philosophical connection between outward actions and the motives behind the actions. It also emphasizes the significance of coherence between actions, desires and beliefs as the foundation of moral and political accountability. Failures in moral leadership, lack of transparency and lack of accountability in the governance can be regarded as limitations of rational agency, offering a more detailed

framework for analyzing political challenges. Any responsible governance is demonstrated through participatory, accountability, and transparency and by aligning with the rules. Often, these ideas in Nigerian politics remain mere ambition. According to reports by (Transparency International, 2024; and Afrobarometer, 2022), it highlighted the problems of Nigeria as electoral manipulations, weak institutions and corruption. To experience responsible governance means that the public officeholders should act with integrity in their decision making as they will be held accountable for any of their actions and shortcomings. However, the fundamental problem with the Nigerian governance system is the gap between what is promised and what is being delivered and between actions and inactions.

Davidson's Theory of Action and Responsible Governance in Nigeria

Political officeholders both in the federal, state and local government areas have over time developed what can be described as systematic approaches of dodging accountability while they continue to maintain the appearance of responsible and good leaders. Donald Davidson described this pattern of irresponsibility as a major corruption of the belief-desire-action paradigm essential for political decisions-making (Davidson, 1980).

This pattern of irresponsibility is what Davidson would identify as a fundamental corruption of the belief-desire-action framework that should govern rational political behavior (Davidson, 1980). The application of Davidson's theory to the Nigerian system of government provides a comprehensive analytical framework through which one can have a better and comprehensive understanding of how irresponsibility and blame game have rooted deep into the country's democratic framework from 1999 onwards. The theoretical framework reveals the persistent growth of irresponsibility in Nigeria's governance system from more than just individual moral failures or institutional weakness, instead, it shows profound flaws in the logical framework guiding political decisions. Davidson's theory sheds more light on Nigerian political irresponsibility by exposing the disconnection between political leaders' stated goals and their actual behaviour, resulting in what can be termed institutionalized irresponsibility. The inability of Nigerian politicians to take blame for their irresponsible action and their consequences, they develop what Davidson describes as agencial crisis that destabilizes both democratic legitimacy and effective governance (Mele, 2003). This crisis manifests across Nigeria's political landscape through dodging of accountability, ranging from outright denial to subtle blame-shifting tactics that obscure the link between decisions and their consequences. The interface that exists between the Nigerian system of government and Davidson's theory also demonstrates rationalized and normalized their irresponsible way of life as it contradicts the already established institutional frameworks. The normalization of irresponsibility in Nigeria's system of governance has aided in fostering self-perpetuating cycles where citizens anticipate that their leaders will avoid accountability, and leaders will actually do that by becoming increasingly skilled at dodging responsibility.

In Nigeria, political leaders methodically separate their actual convictions from their professed beliefs habitually adopting a public commitment to democratic values, rule of law and public service, while they privately maintain an entirely different belief system that prioritizes their personal enrichment, political survival and functional advantage (Joseph, 1987). This pattern has so far established a culture of institutionalized dishonesty, where public speeches and statements by political leaders serve mainly to normalize morally compromised actions, rather than to

genuinely communicate policy intentions. For example, the case of former Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State, during his tenure as the then governor, consistently he declared his commitment to developing the state and giving the people good governance, meanwhile, he systematically embezzled the state resources for personal gain. The former governor was convicted in 2018 for stealing N1,16 billion in ecological funds. This is a typical example of total disconnect between his public image as responsible leader and his private actions as a serial embezzler (Premium Times, 2018). According to Davidson's viewpoint, this ill behaviours by political leaders reveals not only corruption but also a fundamental discrepancy between the beliefs that are publicly stated and the desires that truly motivates actions.

Also, there is a pattern of temporal shift of responsibility in the Nigerian system of governance such that those at the helm of affairs often play blame games and defer accountability to administration yet to come. For example, governors make it as a norm to always apportion blames especially on their predecessors for present challenges and why its present administration is not working, and at the same time, they make promises to the public that they will proffer solutions to the current problem facing them in later campaign period (Osaghae, 1998). A very good example of this is the case of former Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha, who showed off his pattern during his eight years tenure from 2011 to 2019. Consistently, Okorocha on one hand blamed previous administrations for the problems facing the state, and on the other hand, promised the people that his projects would be productive in future, despite numerous questionable infrastructure projects and accusations of financial mismanagement (Iwuoha, 2019).

A different technique Nigerian politicians also use to behave irresponsibly is through organizational blame-shifting. This is when public office holders take advantage of the complexity of Nigeria's governance framework to dodge accountability for their failures. Here, the federal push blames to the state government for its policy failures, states on the other hand blame the federal policy for its own failures, while local officials put their blame on insufficient funding from the federal government. (Suberu, 2001). A striking illustration of this irresponsibility pattern is the Nigerian's persistence power outage. Once citizens lodge complaints about electricity disruption, hurriedly, the federal authorities blame the state government for failures to maintain the electricity grid infrastructure and inability to pay electricity bills. Also, state governors shift blame to the federal government over insufficient electricity supply and distribution policies outside their control while the local government alleges poor funding from both the federal government and state government to sustain and manage the local electricity system. This pattern of blame-shift is described as "systematic cloudiness", a situation where no one level of government accepts total responsibility for their lack of capacity. Citizens are therefore left with the confusion of who to actually hold responsible for the electricity crisis affecting them. This finger pointing between the federal, state and local governments has crippled the system in a manner that obstructs true accountability for breakdown on infrastructure (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2022).

Nigerian leaders also blame security challenges on foreign influences and international terrorist networks like Boko Haram, instead of finding lasting solutions to the persistent systematic internal issues that lead to insurgency mostly experienced in the Northern part of the country (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). The public office holders use a defensive mechanism to deceive people by constantly blaming external factors even during the colonial era in Nigeria to

explain institutional weakness and gap in the infrastructure development, pointing accusing fingers after they have failed. (Falola, 2023). By blaming the external factors for their governance failures, politicians continue to avoid being held accountable for their failures while they continue to parade themselves as responsible leaders limited by circumstances (Bandura, 1991). Also, Muhammadu Buhari exemplified this pattern of blame-game of externalization while addressing security challenges between 2015 and 2023. Despite being the Commander-in-chief and his campaign promises to curb down insecurity, Buhari continuously blamed external factors like climate change, historical grievances and international terrorism as reasons for his failures for security policy (BBC News, 2021). An example to demonstrate this is the recovery saga over Sani Abacha loot. The continual stories of recovering stolen funds by a former military dictator Abacha, have demonstrated a notable irresponsibility by the government in handling issues such as this. Nigerian governments, despite international cooperation and legal methods for use in recovering assets, have shown some heights of irresponsibility in managing recovered money, as they usually fail to make sure there is effective use of the fund or provide transparent accounting (Transparency International, 2014). Former president Olusegun Obasanjo led-administration (1999-2007) also retrieved large sums of Abacha loot but could not use accountability method in managing the funds neither was it able to show publicly how the recovered funds were used. Also, during the regime of former late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, (2007- 2010), he went on with the recovery process, same Abacha loot, continuing from where Obasanjo stopped, but as their manner is, he equally failed to give transparent accountability about the fund. After him, former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan administration (2010-2015), took over. When he assumed office, he recovered additional funds but later accused of misappropriating some of the said recovered funds for personal political reasons like campaign funding (Premium Times, 2015). Furthermore, when late Buhari took over power (2015-2023), he promised greater accountability on recovered funds, which was why he set up the Presidential Committee on Assets Recovery. However, investigation showed that good sums of money were recovered but could not be accounted for or were diverted as some of the officials were not able to give a clear account of total funds spent. (EFCC, 2024). This trend reveals how public office holders at different political parties, positions and offices in Nigeria systematically dodge accountability for good stewardship over recovered funds. Analyzing this trend using Davidson's theory, one can easily notice a clear disconnection between the stated beliefs (that recovered stolen funds must be used for interest of the public) and the actual behaviour (which is the systematic diversion and mismanagement of recovered assets). The implication of this persistence reoccurrence of irresponsibility across Nigerian governance indicates that there is a problem with the political structure that rewards lack of accountability while at the same time provides insignificant penalties for failures in accountability. Another good example of irresponsibility in the political system is the continuous attempt by the Nigerian government to remove fuel subsidies over the years. A series of Nigerian administrations have since 1999, announced plans to remove fuel subsidies saying there is need to get rid of corruption in the system and also reduce unnecessary government spending. However, the politicians have failed to implement these promises as it is mired with partial reversal, policy modification or complete abandonment of plans to remove the subsidies when they are faced with the public opposition (Nwoke, 2013). Obasanjo during his tenure severally announced the removal of fuel subsidy but he constantly backed out when the organized labour opposed him. In the same way, Ya'Adua announced plans to remove subsidies but in a modified way. When Jonathan came on board, he made attempts to remove it in January 2012 but it raised dust, a lot

of people protested against it and he was forced to partially reverse the policy (Arugay, 2013). Later, during his tenure, Buhari promised Nigerians that he would remove the subsidy, rather than increase the payments of the subsidy, even after claiming that removing the subsidy was very important for economic sustainability. A good example of governance irresponsibility was demonstrated by former president Jonathan on January 1, 2012, when he announced subsidy removal without proper preparation. As usual, he blamed the Labour Union and oppositions for the crisis outcome of the policy, rather than blaming himself for poor implementation of the policy (Ewi, 2012). His subsequent compromise of the partial restoration on subsidy however, was displaced as leadership with accessibility instead of accepting initial mistakes.

Also, there is creation of an institutional mechanism in Nigeria's system of governance that systematically protects politicians from accountability and irresponsible behaviour, it is called immunity clauses. It protects the presidents, the governors, the Senators, House of Representatives members, Ministers, and Commissioners from being prosecuted and also provides complex administrative processes that makes it almost impossible to pinpoint blame for policy failures (Omotola, 2009). The most evident example of institutionalized irresponsibility is the provisions of constitutional immunity for the presidents and governors. These immunity, apparently formulated to shield independence of executive officials, have been used consistently to protect political office holders from accounting for uncivilized and criminal behaviours (Nwauche, 2007). The case of former governors of Bayelsa state Diepreye Alamieyeseigha and James Ibori of Delta state is a clear example of immunity. Despite flawless evidence of massive corruption by the former governors, they continued in office and were protected by immunity from prosecution. Davidson's theory however, gives insights into cognitive processes that allows politicians to hold firm irresponsible behaviours while they avoid cognitive discord resulting from dangers of avoiding the blame game.

Another vital mechanism is what Davidson described as compartmentalization of desires and beliefs. Government officeholders create unique ideologies for their private and public, which can allow them ensure there is coherence with each domain's framework while sidestepping potential clashes between these ideologies (Davidson, 1984). This compartmentalization of beliefs and desires allows politicians to sincerely buy into their own good governance narrative even as they privately pursue conflicting self-interests that contradicts their public claims. A good example of this psychological compartmentalization was demonstrated by the former Senate President Bukola Saraki, in his political career. During his tenure as the Senate President, Saraki regularly advocated for accountability, good governance and transparency in the public statements and legislative initiatives. However, his prosecution for false declaration of assets and money laundering charges demonstrated systematic discrepancies between public statements and actions (Vanguard, 2017). Therefore, from the perspective of Davidson's theory, this leadership style reveals a nuanced psychological dynamics where separate belief systems facilitate consistent actions in various domains.

Also, Nigerian political institutions suffer from institutional reinforcement of irresponsibility. This is when the politicians destabilise the accountability system in order to systematically enable irresponsible misconduct. This reinforcement takes place through formal rules and informal practices by the politicians that encourages irresponsible behaviour from them while they provide little or no accountability for failures. Maybe, the electoral system should be blamed for providing the most substantial institutional support for irresponsible leadership in

Nigeria. What is experienced today in Nigeria is the practice of winner-take-all type of electoral system, a practice that encourages government officials to prioritize short-term electoral benefits over long-term administrative performance (Diamond, 1988). Politicians who carry out unpopular yet essential reforms or enforce fiscal responsibility are always experiencing electoral disadvantage when compared to those specializing in dispensing patronage rewards or vote-buying expenditures with the interest of gaining popular support as witnessed during campaign period. This type of institutional reinforcement of irresponsibility was noticed during the 2023 electoral period when the federal government routinely manipulated social welfare initiatives for patronage distribution and vote-buying. According to Hassan (2023), the general elections of 2023 illustrated the winner-take-all dynamics in Nigeria's elections encouraging political officeholders to always give precedence to short-term electoral benefits through politically motivated spending over accountable and stable governance. When the 2023 elections period were approaching, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) influenced various social welfare initiatives like the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) features like the Micro Enterprise Enhancement Scheme (MEES), N-Power and TraderMoni to promote party interest (Mbah et al., 2023). Apparently, these programmes designed for poverty eradication in the country, were systematically rebranded as vote-buying tools demonstrating how governance framework structured for social welfare can be turned into electoral benefits. Social programme beneficiaries were organised as campaign supporters and were given monetary benefits to support election rallies. The deception was done in different ways such that the distribution programmes were usually done to correspond with voting periods. For example, few days to the September 2020 Edo State governorship election, former president Buhari endorsed the release of N10,000 MEES funds to about 2,000 women and youths in the three senatorial districts in Edo, with Dr. Idia Ize-Iyamu, wife of APC governorship candidate Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu, actively engaged in the distribution process (Mbah et al., 2025). Politicians across the tiers of government can credibly shift governance shortcomings on restrictions imposed by other levels of government which according to them is hindering their ability to ensure there is clear accountability policy performance (Suberu, 2001). Also, this complexity of institutions makes room for structured opportunities to dodge responsibility, a strategy political leaders have taken advantage of. This institutional reinforcement of irresponsibility can be buttressed using the revenue allocation system in the governance system of Nigeria. The control on oil revenues and the complicated distributing methods of these revenues by the federal government to the 36 states and their local government areas produce incentives, reason why officials at the state and local governments focuses more on pushing for higher federal allocations, instead of advancing effective service delivery or improving the sources of their local revenue (Watts, 2004). However, once there is failure in the service delivery, they quickly blame the poor federal funding, instead of blaming themselves for poor performance. This pattern is demonstrated by former governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki when he had conflict with the federal government of Nigeria over allocation of resources. All through his time as the governor of Edo state, Obaseki repeatedly faulted the federal policies and insufficient revenue distribution as reason the state is having challenges, while on the other hand, the federal government accused the state governments for failures in carrying out policies (Guardian Nigeria, 2023).

The fact that this aged long systematic pattern of political irresponsibility in Nigeria has serious repercussions for national development and democratic governance, it cannot be overlooked. The impact of these political irresponsibility goes beyond mere policy failures, encompassing a broader loss of development prospects, social trust and governance institutions. The immediate

effect of this is the collapse of mechanisms for democratic accountability. Systematically, when politicians refuse to be accountable for their actions, then the essential tenet of democratic rule which holds that those in leadership are subjected to accountability of their performance becomes irrelevant. (Beetham, 1991). Once citizens cannot effectively establish direct links between political decisions and the outcome, they cannot assess the political performance. This breakdown of accountability by politicians unfolds growing support for non-democratic alternatives, poor voter turnout and increasing distrust in politics. In Nigeria, elections have continuously demonstrated decreasing voter participation as many people doubt the credibility of the electoral system that will produce accountable and people-centered leadership (Bratton & Mattes, 2001). Also, opinion polls are not excluded as they consistently reflect widespread public doubt in government institutions and political leaders, showing the rising impact of systematic lack of accountability.

The link between the Nigerian system of governance and Davidson's theory of action reveals that deliberately, irresponsibility among political leaders has been integrated within the country's democratic institutions and political cultures. This deliberate pattern of irresponsibility in governance shows both the failures on individual moral life and fundamental misrepresentations in the logical framework of political behaviour that weakens development effectiveness and democratic accountability.

This analysis illustrates that political leaders in Nigeria have stylishly developed blame-shifting mechanisms while they present themselves as responsible and transparent leaders. This system of blame-game operates through mental processes by allowing separation of desires and beliefs, cultural practices that support irresponsible action and institutional structures that point fingers, while suppressing efforts to hold others accountable. The consequences of this pattern is that it goes beyond specific policy deficiencies to include wider reduction in developmental opportunities, social trust and democratic institutions. When those in authority consistently dodge being held responsible for behaviour, they simply weaken the basic principle of democratic governance while they create structural barriers to address challenges of national development. Also, the continuous irresponsible behaviour of government leaders across various political factions and administration indicates that the problem lies with arrangements of the institution and larger system of political enticements that reward irresponsible actions, and not with specific individuals.

To tackle these challenges, there is a need for fundamental changes in accountability mechanisms and political culture and institutional reforms that can create real motivations for accountable leadership. However, Davidson's theory offers critical analysis into the psychological and philosophical facets of governance failures that compliments traditional structural and traditional analyses. We can develop better approaches for promoting democratic accountability and responsible governance in Nigeria, by understanding how political actors sustain logical alignment in thinking while they systematically avoid accountability.

Conclusion

Donald Davidson's theory of action provides a persuasive philosophical framework to evaluate failures in Nigeria governing system. Through an emphasis on rational agency, belief and intention, Davidson's theory provides insight into why government officials mostly exhibit

irresponsible behaviours even after making moral claims. Linking political practice and philosophical theory, this paper posits that when one engages deeply with the foundations of agency, it can facilitate the fight for more responsible and accountable patterns of governance in Nigeria. His framework also enables in-depth philosophical analysis of Nigerian governance. It exposes that accountability in governance is not just about systematic restructuring, but also promoting rational agency in politicians. Political leaders must learn to act based on reasons they can defend both in public and in private, to ensure that desires and beliefs correspond with his actions. If genuine intentions are wrongly executed, it shows incompetence of the leaders. And if intentions for an action is insincere, it signals manipulation or corruption. One significant implication of Davidson's theory is the ability to apply it in analyzing governance failures in Nigeria. The theory also reveals how irregularity between publicly declared goals and the real outcomes demonstrates limitations of agency. Take for example, the government can allege that he is giving priority to anti-corruption, but within its structure, it tolerates corruption. This can said to demonstrate a collapse of rational coherence. Davidson's theory therefore, provides a lens by which one can access what the political leaders do and why they carry out such action and also, how it is sincerely pursued. However, one of the shortcomings of Davidson's theory is the abstract nature. While it is useful and good for interpretation, it does not recommend practical policy directives. Although opponents may contend his philosophical structure offer little from the standpoint of operational approach, his focus on rational coherence provides a moral and conceptual foundation for civic education, leadership training and reconceptualizing public service ethics. By educating political leaders to carefully reflect on their motive for carrying out an action and the outcome of their decisions, a Davidsonian method can foster a new mindset to accountability.

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