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CONTENTS

ZENO OF CITIUM: HIS LIFE AND WORKS[!]

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the life of Zeno of Citium and his contribution to the science of philosophy. The biography of Zeno of Citium is presented, underlining the fact that he is the founder of Stoicism. The logic of Zeno or the Stoic logic is presented, along with Zeno's Physics, Zeno's Ethics, the Stoic Sage, and the Republic of Great Men.

Keywords: Zeno of Citium, Stoic logic, Zeno's Ethics, Zeno' s Physics and The Republic of Great Men.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Stoic school emerged, in trying times, from the material and, especially, from the moral misfortunes that afflicted Greek city-states. When Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism, appeared on the philosophical proscenium, the Greek world had already endured a century of civil war and progressive enfeeblement. Decline, a result of fratricidal discord, had gradually eroded the classical face of Hellenism. The political restructuring imposed by the Macedonians, who were spearheaded by Philip of Macedon and by Alexander the Great, was directly related to the philosophical attitudes and schools that developed at that time. Naturally, the Stoic movement was not immune to the sociopolitical shifts rocking the Hellenic world.

The death of Alexander the Great may have pleased Greeks in the city-states of metropolitan Greece because they believed they would finally gain their independence; or so they thought. But their newfound independence would not last because the successors to the Macedonian throne imposed their rule once more. The century of slaughter and of painful civil wars that began with the Peloponnesian War and ended with Macedonian supremacy in Greece was a time of disillusionment and misery for Greeks who thought either as civilians or as philosophers.

Frequently, the unhappiness of Greek civilians was compensated for and alleviated by the analogous 'therapeutic' philosophical ideas. For many years, the lives and political ideology of the Greeks had revolved around the great urban axis. Laws, masterpieces of art, religious life, and democracy had been synonymous with prosperity. With the evils that had accumulated during this century of unrest, city-

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states were destroyed and enslaved; nothing was left standing. Political life, as it had been in the past, was suspended and Greek outspokenness was – for the most part – suppressed.

As it is natural, in difficult times, people seek values that are permanent – not frail and unstable. At the end of the fourth century, the wisdom of Stoicism and Epicureanism, expressed the quest for a kind of prosperity that does not depend on external factors. According to these two schools of thought, man’s sense of wellbeing should not rely on political or material conditions, which can be blown to pieces by sociopolitical winds at any time. The notion of prosperity and wellbeing, as expressed by Stoicism and Epicureanism, is connected to the individual’s autonomy. According to the Stoics, the autonomous individual who has the bravery and inner strength to maintain his esoteric greatness unchanged and independent despite external circumstances, can feel secure. This sense of security in the Stoic person has – as a prerequisite – the attainment of personal self-assurance. The Stoic person should trust himself and the universal Logos, in other words, the world of which he is an integral part. Consequently, the person who thinks according to the Stoic rationale needs only cast his gaze beyond the urban limits to see that nature has created him to be a citizen of the world, which is, on the one hand, difficult to approach but remains, on the other hand, steadfast for those who have the power to understand and master it. This is the mystery of the universal Logos, which invites man to know the laws of nature, and his God, so that he can secure personal salvation and happiness.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Zeno was born in Citium around 334 BC and died in Athens in 262 BC. His father was a merchant and, in all likelihood, Zeno had been involved in the family business in his youth. Zeno’s aptitude in philosophy is related in various anecdotes. It is believed that, having purchased purple dye from Phoenicia (contemporary Syria), Zeno was en route to Greece when the ship sank near Piraeus harbor. Diogenes Laertius reports that Zeno was approximately thirty years old at the time. After the shipwreck, he traveled to Athens where he found himself in a bookstore reading the second volume of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*. Zeno had become so elated with the reading that he asked the bookseller to tell him where such men could be found. At that moment, Crates the Cynic happened to be passing by, so the bookseller indicated that Zeno should follow him. Thus, Zeno became a pupil of Crates the Theban. Diogenes Laertius also reports that Zeno proved to be resolute and very competent in philosophy and timid vis-à-vis the exaggerations of the Cynics. Laertius’ writings also reveal that Zeno had studied Socratic philosophy early in life. His father, being a merchant who traveled frequently, had brought back many Socratic books from Athens for young Zeno, helping him become acquainted with philosophy.

In Athens, Zeno studied not only with Crates, Stilpon, and Xenocrates for ten years, but also with Polemon and Diodorus Kronos (of Megara). He acquired a broad philosophical outlook, since the above philosophers supported different schools of thought. But the extent to which these men influenced Zeno in the development of his own life-theory and philosophical system cannot be ascertained with absolute exactitude and definiteness.

It does appear, however, that the philosopher who had the most influence on Zeno was Crates, the most austere and unrelenting of the Cynics. In his dealings with any candidates to philosophy, Crates fought passionately to rouse mind and spirit. From him, Zeno must have acquired his immovable will for philosophical self-sufficiency and independence, as well as the firm belief that man can achieve contentment, if he takes charge of himself and subjects his life to rules and to a determinative plan. Crates submitted Zeno to painful trials and verifications, consequently, numerous anecdotes illustrate the relationship between the teacher, Crates, and his student, Zeno.

On one occasion, Crates had wanted to cure Zeno's bashfulness, and to help him become accustomed to the provocative shamelessness and scandalous peculiarities of the Cynics. Diogenes Laertius recounts: "He gave him a pot of lentils to hold while crossing Ceramicus. When he saw that Zeno was ashamed and that he was attempting to conceal the pot, Crates struck it with his walking stick, shattering it. As Zeno scrambled away, lentil soup trickling between his legs, Crates remarked: "Where are you running to, young Phoenician? Nothing that ghastly has happened to you!". But Zeno neither approved nor accepted, in any way, the idiosyncrasy, sarcasm and scandalous antisocial behavior of the Cynics. He wished to remain sociable despite his legendary simplicity and sternness. Furthermore, he disagreed with the Cynics' disregard and rejection of knowledge and science.

Of course, the Cynics used irony, scandal and sarcasm to cauterize morals, to satirize the corruption and the unacceptable behavior of their contemporaries. In their philosophical and ethical undertakings, the Cynics never took society and public opinion into consideration. On one occasion, Diogenes the Cynic had asked a philosophical candidate to prove this attitude with actions, so he forced the young man to follow him around the streets while dragging a herring! As the youth could not endure the disgrace, he left before long, throwing the herring away.

After the incident, Diogenes complained that his friendship with the newly enlightened young man had fallen apart over a herring! A similar incident to the lentil soup episode that took place between Zeno and Crates.

Details about the physique, character, emotional makeup and overall conduct of Zeno of Citium are provided by many ancient writers. Diogenes Laertius describes Zeno's physical characteristics in the following manner: "Timotheus the Athenian calls Zeno 'crooked-neck' in his *Biographies*. Meanwhile, Apollo the Tyrean notes that Zeno was slender, rather tall, with a dark complexion (for that reason, someone had once called him an Egyptian vine, as Chrysippos says in *Proverbs*, his first book) and skinny with fleshy, flabby thighs." In his dietary habits, the philosopher seems to have faithfully abided by his own teachings. He ate very little and was immensely patient. His overcoat was thin, for he feared neither cold nor heat. The man's temperance was a paradigm in antiquity, to the extent that the saying "more temperate than Zeno" existed. He remained healthy, humble and, modest until the end of his life enjoying divine bliss and happiness. Diogenes Laertius also mentions that Zeno was "well mannered." Though some writers disclose certain negative characteristics in the psychological makeup and character of Zeno of Citium, praise of the prudence, consideration and virtue of the philosopher predominates in all sources. Moreover, in his research, Zeno is said to have been "demanding and, above all, exacting."

3. THE FOUNDER OF STOICISM

Approximately at the age of forty, Zeno of Citium founded his own philosophical school at the Poikile Stoa (which was painted by Polygnotus). His philosophical school was named Stoicism because he taught at the Stoa, while his followers, the Stoics, were called Zenoeans at first.

The philosopher divided his teaching, into three parts: nature, ethics and logic. This division in Stoicism was adhered to, as a rule, by all succeeding heads of the school and by famous Stoic philosophers, who simultaneously taught – without separating them – all three parts of the philosophy.

According, once more, to his ancient biographer, Diogenes Laertius, Zeno authored the following works:

Concerning the Republic, Concerning Natural Life, *Concerning Impulse or Man's Nature, Concerning Passions, Concerning Duty, Concerning the Law, Concerning Hellenic Education, Concerning the Countenance*, *Concerning the Universe, Concerning Signs, Pythagorean Issues, Universal Issues, Concerning Words, Five Homeric Problems, Listening to Poetry.* He also wrote the treatises: *Art, Solutions, Two Controls, Memoirs of Crates, and Ethics.* In other parts of Zeno's biography, Diogenes Laertius mentions that the father of Stoicism wrote books with the following titles: *Concerning the Essence, Erotic Art and Diatribe.* Meanwhile, in his biography of Crates, Laertius also speaks about another treatise written by Zeno of Citium, entitled *Necessities* (unpublished).

4. ZENO'S LOGIC

Works by Victor Brochard and many others, proved that the problem of logic in Stoic philosophy was different from what had been traditionally accepted until their time. The older historians of philosophy, G. Prantl, Ed. Zeller, Ed. Maier, had erroneously considered the logic of the Stoics a mere repetition of Aristotelian logic, hence of no particular interest. Following the release of works by the above-mentioned

French historians of philosophy and by succeeding researchers, the essentially nominalist logic of the Stoics was shown to be not only different but also contradictory to the logic of the Aristotelian Instrument. Furthermore, they showed that Stoic logic constitutes an altogether new system. Nominalism was nothing new, it did not first appear in Greek thought with the Stoa. It was conceived by the Socratic schools, especially by the Cynics and the Megaraeans, who had ardently examined the ideas of Plato and the universal meanings of Aristotle. According to these Socratic philosophers, ideas and meanings are merely names by which the intellect addresses, these real things. The philosophers who developed a comprehensive logic system, which – in turn – would constitute a philosophical instrument for the discovery of the truth according to their theory of the cosmos, were the Stoic philosophers. Though it was initiated by Zeno, the system was systematically developed and perfected by the third head of the Stoic school, Chrysippos, who was sharp and discerning in matters of logic. In any case, the philosophical disagreement between the Stoics and their contemporary Epicureans compelled the Stoics to practice their methodology of logic fervently, for they were often forced to support their philosophical theses.

As a methodological system, however, logic cannot reveal the truth. Its mission is to distinguish between truth and fallacy. It helps intellection - which conceived truth in its entirety – to check, analyze, and prove it.

The dialectic of the Stoics may have been the work of Chrysippos, but this does not mean that the third head of the Stoic school did not take into consideration all that Zeno and Cleanthis had suggested. Zeno focused primarily on the criterion of truth and also addressed issues of rhetoric. He had used the science of dialectic to solve sophisms and – as Plutarch notes – urged his listeners to do the same. Like all important philosophical systems or philosophies, Stoicism has one central element according to which all is revealed and explained. Zeno’s axiom “ζην ομολογουμένως” (to live according to nature) does not apply only to nature or ethics. It also applies to logic, which – in turn – serves in the verification of the great truth contained in Zeno’s axiom. Logic allows man to avoid anxiety and painful worries that stem from doubt. This is why logical certainty guarantees through language, as “επιστήμη αμετάπτωτος υπό λόγου” (the presence of the logos gives science), the wisdom of the dialectic philosopher. On the level of debate, it allowed Stoic philosophers to attack, or defend the theses of their school against acute criticisms, such as those unleashed by the followers of the Academy and Kepos Schools (Garden Schools).

According to the Stoics’ teachings, logic is divided into two sciences: the science of dialectic and the science of rhetoric. The difference between them was defined by Zeno in the symbolic representation of a hand. When the hand is stretched out, that is rhetorical science, which is characterized by lengthy speech. When the hand is closed, that is dialectic science, which is characterized by brevity.

5. ZENO'S PHYSICS

According to the philosopher from Citium, logic is followed by physics, which deals with the primary principles of Being. As presented by Zeno and Cleanthis, Stoic physics was not entirely new, nor was it an intentional return to the attitudes of the first physicists, especially Heracletus. It seems that the first Stoics (like the first Platonics who employed the old names used by the Pythagoreans) ascribed their beliefs to the first philosophers, especially to Heracletus the Ephesian. They may have ascribed, however, more to Heracletus than they had actually borrowed. The predominant element in Stoic physics is a kind of cosmo-biologism, which results from the absence of a dialectic of the soul. In his formulation of the problem of physics, the founder of Stoicism was not able to liberate himself from the distinctions worked out by the Platonic *Timaeus* and by classic Aristotelian thought. In his interpretation of physical reality – meaning the Universe – Zeno considered tow principles: the active and the passive.

"Ειμαρμένη" (Destiny) is the Reason (the way the world functions), the breath of the Divine that organizes all. According to Cicero, "Zeno believes that the natural law is divine and that this power is maintained by ruling and encompassing opposing forces." Destiny is responsible for friendships and bonds, for the affection that brings beings together. It is the eternal orderly movement of the cosmos, which moves with the cosmos and is composed of the logos, of the law, and of providence for all that was, is and will be. The cosmic power, Destiny, is in unison with divine providence; wise is he who remains conscious of the omnipotence of Fate while consenting to life's cosmic stream. The etymology of the word Ειμαρμένη reveals its meaning.

The word is derived from the participle of the perfect tense of the verb μείρομαι (to allot) wherein lies the root μερ, which is encountered in the words μέρος (part) and μοίρα (fate). According to the etymology, Ειμαρμένη is the power that gives man his lot in life and that assigns him a position in the harmonious cosmic whole. Hence, life is comparable to a play where everyone acts his part.

As we have already shown, the meaning of providence is one with destiny, which encompasses the will of the divine.

Providence expresses itself in the cohesion of beings and events in universal affinity, which touches directly on teleology. It is the affiliation and codependence of beings and things. Man's denial to live according to nature and providence brings about disorder and evil. Stoic philosophers considered evil as an opposite necessary for the expression of good.

With the hegemonic within man guiding, Stoic philosophers fought to convince their contemporaries to love and accept time. They wanted to convince them to allow themselves to be subjected to it, for time is the expression of life and of the cosmos, since it was organized by providence in accordance with the relentless laws of destiny. Conversely, Epicurus (Zeno's philosophical opponent) asked his contemporaries to dedicate themselves to life's ephemeral pleasures, since for the Epicurean destiny does not exist.

6. ZENO'S ETHICS

The essence and the pinnacle of Stoicism - Zeno's greatest contribution to world thought - is contained in the teachings concerning ethics. Above all, Stoicism is a canon for life, a moral and esoteric stance. According to Diogenes Laertius, the Athenians honored Zeno because of his righteousness.

Epictetus bears witness to the above and implies Zeno when he characterizes philosophy "the medicine of the soul": "Men, the philosopher's school is a doctor's office." In addition, the catalog of Zeno's works – as it was recorded by his biographer Diogenes Laertius – verifies that most of the philosopher's treatises deal with ethics. Six out of thirteen books concern themselves with ethical issues. Similarly, most of the experts that survive from works by the founder of Stoicism also deal with ethics. We need only refer to Arnim for verification.

The priority that Zeno placed on ethics can also be interpreted in historical and political terms. Zeno's emergence on the philosophical proscenium coincides with a great historical, sociological and ethical crisis that Hellenism, in its entirety, was facing. The religious and moral edifice had crumbled. In the realm of philosophical thought, skepticism had triumphed over the traditional values of the Hellenic intellect/logos.

Monarchy and the ceaseless carnage of civil war brought restlessness, moral confusion and fluidity to the realms of the intellect. As mentioned previously, conception was introduced by Zeno as a criterion of truth, at a time when all was uncertain and open to question. However, Zeno's wisdom and insight were not entirely original. Post-Aristotelian philosophies and schools concerned themselves mainly with ethics and, in this pivotal point, Zeno had followed the movement that Socrates began and Aristotle reinforced.

By offering a cohesive, complete philosophical system and answers to the anxieties of his era, Zeno sought to liberate his contemporaries from the metaphysical uncertainty that tormented them. At the same time, he provided a real life-plan, a life-plan founded on virtue and on the moral perfection of the individual.

Like all Greek philosophers who dealt with the practicable ethical quest of the human soul, Zeno considered the question of wellbeing to be the first philosophical problem. It was necessary to discover the value that offers the fulfillment of a life lived well, and such a value would be self-sufficient and universally accepted. The philosopher's answer to this fundamental question, which dictates the ethics and practices of Stoicism, was: "ομολογουμένως τη φύσει ζην." In "life according to nature" lies the quintessence of that supreme value which leads to virtue and prosperity.

Concerning man's accordance with nature, this nature is not only individual but also universal, with individual nature as one inextricable part. The founder of Stoicism had attempted to bring together in ethics, all that he managed to do in logic. With comprehensive imagination he neutralized the Platonic and Aristotelian duality of sensory and intellectual knowledge. With the model of a life lived according to the terms of nature, he endeavored to reconcile the antithetical elements of nature and the logos.

The Pythagorean philosophers, Heracletus, and the Platonic *Timaeus* affirm the esoteric relationship between universal and individual nature. Ethical cosmology has always existed in Greek philosophical thought – man's perfection depends on his subordination to the movement of the Whole.

The three-part ideal of the Stoics – life according to Nature, God, and the Logos – is at the basis of Stoic ethics, which depend on the individual's accordance with universal order in what is most profound and holy. Zeno's successors did not add anything essential to their teacher's definition. "Ομολογουμένως τη φύσει ζην" meant, for Zeno, life according to the universal Logos. This is also confirmed by Stobeaus. It would be needless to point out how much the ideas of harmony, man's accordance with his inner self, and with the world conform with the general Greek views about life and the cosmos.

The highest objective of ethical behavior, according to Zeno, is a virtuous life since virtue secures true prosperity, while depravity leads to evil and to negativity.

7. THE STOIC SAGE AND THE REPUBLIC OF GREAT MEN

The Stoics believed that the wise man is the one who achieves most according to his inner law and nature. A being such as this possesses all virtues, for he has defeated all vices and evils. According to Zeno, men are made from two 'stocks' or divided into two types: the great and the depraved, in other words, the wise and the evil. Naturally, the superlative and permanent ruling guide of the Stoic sage, "life according to nature," means "a life of reason and virtue." A life such as this requires that one has profound knowledge of himself and of the world, and calls for mastery of the science characterized as "επιστήμη αμετάπτωτος υπό λόγου." Perfection in great men encompasses all aspects of life, private and public, applied and theoretical.

Since the Stoic sage is the most virtuous of all, he is – at the same time – truly happy and veritably self-sufficient. His life is a life of duty; it is a life based on esoteric feats, which are accomplished through asceticism and in the absence of vice. The Stoic sage does not become reclusive and introverted; he does not abandon the world or leave it behind. He is a paradigm of someone who works hard to benefit humanity: country, society, republic. He is by nature sociable and practical, a man who does not live "in isolation." He resembles the Platonic philosopher in that he is legislator, educator, author of enlightened works, and politician. He knows how to rule and how to be ruled, for he has knowledge of good and evil. He is prepared to die for justice and for the higher good of his country. Zeno may justly build his Republic on the prototypes of great wise men, but his Republic is ideal or utopian, as we would say today.

All researchers agree that Stoic ethics have a theonomic character. We have already discussed the relationship between destiny and divine justice. Justice according to the order of the cosmos, means adherence to divine order, while prosperity can be secured only in this framework. Hence, moral guidance is a divine order. Unfortunately, too few experts survive from Zeno's own writings about the relationship between man and God – though we have already established how theology relates to physics and how the two determine Zeno's entire system of ethics. *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthis, Zeno's student, does provide, however, invaluable evidence about his teacher's views on physics and ethics.

The principal members of Zeno's republic are great men, men who are morally self-sufficient, virtuous, neighbourly, and free – the only ones who are able to lead society to prosperity. A similar terminology is used by Diogenes Laertius in connection with the Cypriot philosopher's civil ideal of great men. The opposite applies to the depraved. This central point – the relationship between the prosperous citizen and the moral superiority of great men – also exists in Plato's meaning αγαθός (the good), which is incarnated in the philosopher-king. Klemes of Alexandria affirms this position in Stromateis.

Zeno bases his entire civil edifice on great men and on their moral freedom. Thus, the virtuous conduct of citizens should elevate them to the echelons of great men, who are honorable and high-minded in everything, and who have the "authority of self-action." Great men, who are truly wise and free, act according to the requests and demands of the Logos. To them belongs the right to govern because they are the expressors of wisdom, justice and freedom. The depraved are enslaved by evil; they are deprived of the possibility of self-action.

Because the true ruler is knowledgeable in "good and evil," it is his duty to govern the state. In this mission, he should be ruler, judge, orator, pedagogue. Thus, Zeno's state is comprised of wise men, in essence, of perfect beings, of beings outstanding in all aspects of intellectual and ethical self-sufficiency. Virtue and prosperity create the right ruler and the right subject.

We cannot be certain which form of government Zeno defended in *Concerning the Republic*, and researchers' opinions are divided on this matter. Because of Zeno's relationship with the King of Macedonia, Antigonus Gonatas, it has been surmised, however, that Zeno was a supporter of monarchy. This assessment is also based on the terminology used by Zeno in the exposition of his opinions. Moreover, the fact that his birthplace was affiliated with eastern monarchies has also given some the right to assume Zeno's royalism. Another piece of evidence used to support the view that the

Cypriot philosopher was pro-monarchy was that Perseus – one of his students – had written about monarchy and about the Laconic state.

STOIC COSMOPOLITANISM AND MODERN GLOBALIZATION[!]

ANDREAS CHR. MANOS[*]

ABSTRACT

The Cosmopolis of the Stoics emerged from a philosophical system, functioning as a structural foundation. The stoic type of human is a world citizen. According to the Stoic philosophy, humans and gods coexist united, having common values and purposes. Their social philosophy, inseparable from their moral and physical doctrines, included the basic principle that the entire Universe is a living organism, where its components merge into the whole, in the context of a sympathetic relationship of all to all. The founder of Stoicism had the brilliant idea to argue that people should not feel like residents of cities and towns, so as not to be subject to laws and institutions. In a similar vein, a flock of sheep lives and eats together, disciplined by the Masterminded Shepherd.

Modern globalization, global society as a universal village, differs from the stoic cosmopolitanism, the Heavenly State of Zenon. First of all, it is based on inequality, injustice and exploitation. Human is called to love and admire again the life he humiliated, to respect it again for all, for the few and for the one, in the context of a new sympathy.

Keywords: Cosmopolis of the Stoics, Heavenly State of Zenon, Modern globalization, Inequality, Injustice and Exploitation.

1. INTRODUCTION

An international philosophical conference that has been held in the city of Zenon, Larnaka, regarding Zenon of Kition (334/3-362/1 BC) dealt with the legacy of the Stoic intellect in the turbulent years of modern reality, and addressed issues of sustainability, globalization, inclusion, and democracy. On the one hand, a dynamic update of Stoicism, a philosophical system, ever-living and exerting a catalytic effect on the modus vivendi of every individual and political consciousness that approaches it, while, on the other hand, it provides the opportunity of distribution and circulation

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solidarity of a wealth of philosophical ideas and perceptions on the centuries-old Greek island of 'Megalonisos' (Cyprus). However, it is a different matter if the participants of the Conference, in any way, wonder why the adjacent International Airport does not bear the name of the Founder of Stoic philosophy.

2. FOUNDING THE STOIC PHILOSOPHY

Zenon of Kition, coming from Kitium in Cyprus, travelling by sea and carried away by a storm, ran aground in the port of Piraeus, while his destination was a different one. There, he met the Cynic philosopher 'Crates', whose disciple, he later became the Founder of the Stoic philosophy, the most important one of the Schools of the Hellenistic Period (323-31 BC), to say the famous: "now I'm well-travelled while I was shipwrecked." The other two Schools of this Period were the 'Epicurean' and the 'Skepticism School'. The representatives of Stoicism in the three periods of its development show many common characteristics, despite their differences, so that Stoicism constitutes, finally, a single philosophical system. The three periods are the Ancient (Zenon, Cleanthie, Chrysippus), the Middle Stoa (Panaetius, Poseidonius) and the Third Period, or the so-called 'Imperial Period' (Areios Didymus, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius). It should be noted that in the last decades before Christ, eclecticism flourished, with the main proponents being Philo of Larissa, Antiochus of Ascalon and in Rome, Cicero (106-43 BC). Stoics, who the Cynics influenced, support a connection between virtue and bliss, their indifference, with many reflections on this, to external goods, their cosmopolitanism, and their monumental 'apatheia'. Living by nature, by logos and by virtue constituted an axiomatic principle of the stoic intellect, with philosophy depicted as a fertile field, whose hedge was logic, earth, and trees – physics – morality being their fruits. Therefore, living by nature, logos and virtue are mutually exclusive dimensions, each referring to the other one, thus constituting an inseparable structure. Moreover, the greatness of ancient philosophy lies in the fact that its Metaphysics is Ethics, often Aesthetics, while its Ethics is Metaphysics. Human and Nature are dimensions which follow a logical and organized structure; they share an inseparable relationship, given that human, a constituent element of cosmic nature, whose elemental principle is also God, is integrated into it, with the two realities, the microcosm and macrocosm, to exist in a harmonious relationship.

The Cosmopolis of Stoics, also known as the 'Heavenly State of Zenon', did not arise suddenly, but was established as a consequence of a philosophical system, functioning as a structure. A structural view of the system demonstrates how Stoics were led to summarize in their teaching the perception that the Stoic type of human is a 'World citizen'. According to the Stoic intellect, humans and gods coexist united, having common values and purposes. Within this world, the State does not have its usual power given that the human according to logos, nature, and virtue living, are self-sufficient, possessing self-sovereignty and exercise their duties independently[1], concepts that echo the Platonic utopia and the Platonic concept of freedom, as the hegemony of life, sovereignty over everything and power of ourselves everywhere and always[2]. Stoics included in their system the 'Heraclitean concept of logos', adapted to their way of philosophizing. The logos of human nature reflected in the way consciousness thinks, acts, and reacts is homologous with, and participates in the logos of nature as a whole, since nature itself is an animate being. Stoic wiseman, this utopian form, he endowed privileged by nature with all the virtues, possesses the ability, utilizing the goods of the environment, to harmonize the individual logos to the logos of cosmic nature at all. The evils and calamities, which for ordinary people are overwhelming, for the wise, ideal type of human, are nothing but insignificant incidents, nullified in importance before the order of the whole; something that does not matter the one who possesses the intuitive knowledge, the permissiveness of the conception of the common law, equivalent to the right logos, the same for both, Lord God, Zeus, and for the stoic wiseman[3]. The central point, during the Hellenistic period, where the citizen falls into the class of the private, is the design of a perfect being[4], belonging to a vast whole, beyond the city. And if one is not wise, it is important to become or to be on the way to that end, that is to say, to bliss, as the smoothing flow of life[5]. And it was not, so elegant on the part of the Stoics to distinguish humans into two extremes, the wise and the foolish. Insofar as the wise were not to be found, fools would abound in society. With all these, if the bliss of the wise human, immune from evil, is utopian, the bliss of the common, big-hearted in the environment of passions, human, would be human…

Stoics deified the distinguished individuality, but never projected the Epicurean living in secret ("lathe biosas"). Their social philosophy, not independent of their moral and physical intellect, included the basic principle that the entire Universe is a living organism, where its components merge into the whole, in the context of a sympathetic relationship of all to all[6]. Therefore, for their cosmopolitanism to be founded on solid foundations, they attached great importance to the organization of the family and the choice of a partner-husband/wife, attributing high value to the morals of the parents; righteous, having nothing to do with vain activities (acenospodoi), as well as from "agan philostorgian", i.e. from overprotective attitudes. Indeed, they argued that the male-female union does not take place like the mixing of legumes, where the mixed molecules are distinct, but resembles the case of mixing wine and water, where the psychosomatic beings become one, according to Euripides' "Medea": "we are in need of seeing a soul" (ημίν δ'ανάγκη προς μίαν ψυχήν βλέπειν[7]). Stoics, opening their horizon, saw the wider World as their home. They composed a theory, which, as a vision and practice, is experienced today in the sense of globalization, with important differences from the Stoic model. Zenon, following Plato, starting from the principle that logic is superior to non-logic and from the fact that the World is the best of existing things and taking into account the perception that the elementary principles are not only logic, but both physical and moral, he tries to test the World also from a political point of view. Zenon's Heavenly State had many admirers during the Hellenistic period. The founder of Stoicism had the brilliant idea to argue that people should not feel like residents of cities and towns, so as not to be subject to laws and institutions. The desirable (eukteon) for them would be to become citizens and townsmen of the World, subject to its common law and logos. Similarly, a flock of sheep live and eat together, disciplined by the Masterminded Shepherd[8]. Cities, emphasizing on to what separates them – customs, attitudes, ideas, perceptions – collide and tear each other apart. For Stoics, the family is a compact city (compact polis) while the polis is an extended family, covering the Universe[9].

The Universe is the only true city, whose citizens are the wise, the morally flawless, the only ones who can develop true friendship[10]. To reinforce said reasoning, women are common, common and the children[11]. The wise are tenants of the Heavenly State of Zenon, the Cosmopolis, living in a relationship of friendship and solidarity and forming a community, wherever they live in the world. The city in question is a city of love. Clement in the "Stromateis" (IV,26) observes that for Stoics the Universe (Heaven), is indeed a polis, while the cities of the earth are not, except in name, cities. Indeed, a polis (city) or a populace (δήμος) is what is moral and honest (σπουδαίον), an organization of people governed by law, demanding subtlety (αστείον) in its application. With women in common, so that each man could have sexual relations with the woman of his choice, according to the conceptions of Zenon and Chrysippus, but also of Diogenes Cynic and Plato, all would feel paternal affection for all children, and jealousy and adultery would be avoided. At the same time, no distinction was made, of an evaluative order between the two sexes, given their ability to be combined by logos, nature, and virtue life. The Zenonian version of love is grounded in the pursuit of both boys and girls, virtue being a necessary condition. Malcolm Schofield argues, correctly, that Zenon, examining love and homosexuality, was aware, echoing the Platonic teaching, that the love relationship includes equally young men and women, while he considered it unnecessary to examine the two sexes separately. Ad hoc, a difference is pointed out to Plato, who in the order of the Guardians includes indiscriminately men and women, with a relationship not homosexual (as in Sparta), but heterosexual, consistent with the formation of a family. In Zenon, love probably remains both homosexual and heterosexual, aiming at friendship, harmony, and freedom[12].

Diogenes the Cynic describes himself as a "cosmopolitan", a citizen of the Universe, of the common house of gods and human beings, a city that belonged to both. Through the use of logos, everyone lives according to law and justice. Logos becomes a substitute for the State, while the law functions as an inner voice of consciousness. However, Logos, Law and Right, to constitute the Universe-Cosmos as a community, require that their Agents necessarily adopt a system of values, founded on a principle, dictating peremptorily what should be done and what should be avoided[13], so that a society is formed and functions, with the harmonious coexistence of its members, who obey, commonly – sometimes without knowing each other – to a social ethic[14].

3. MODERN GLOBALIZATION AND THE STOIC COSMOPOLITANISM

Modern globalization, global society, as a universal village, is different from stoic cosmopolitanism, the Heavenly State of Zenon. First of all, it is based on inequality, injustice, and exploitation. The wealth, the one produced by all, is concentrated in the hands of a few (in less than 10% of the world's population), known strangers who plunder the labor of their fellow human beings. An office (about 40% of the world's population) serves said oligarchy, for good pay, and about half of the world's population (3.5 billion) is poor or has nothing! The law of the strongest prevails, causing socio-political turmoil. Political competition, including war, between the Powers of the Earth, has long since begun and is ongoing, threatening to expand and cover almost the whole world. At the same time, climate change, due to hyper-industrial development, military technology and the over-exploitation of the Earth's resources, and the mass migrations, caused by regional war conflicts, make the 'bion' unlivable for a large portion of the world's population. World organizations, such as the UN, whose reason for establishment was the peace and prosperity of people and nations, remain passive spectators of the events, and the most tragic is that the youth, on a global scale, the only one who would rebel to overthrow the evils, against whom to turn their powers? The economic Forces of Injustice now remain nameless, so that the sharp sword of the angry youth remains raised, but...aimless!

In this global confusion and emptiness, there is a lack of enlightened Leaders, at every level of activity, who can inspire radical changes in the irrational course of civilization, the requested new values and new patterns of life and behaviour. The human is called to love and re-admire the life he humiliated, to respect it again for all, for the few, and the one, according to Stoic standards in the context of a new, universal sympathy. According to logos, to nature and virtue life, the mastery over the passions, the Stoic inner freedom presents the meaning of the stoic bliss as a smooth flow of life[15]. Zeus, according to the words of the last of the Stoics, Marcus Aurelius, guides man in all space and time:

"In a little while you will be dead and yet you are neither simple nor untroubled nor compassionate to all; nor unsuspicious of evils unfolding against you from outside; nor have understood that knowledge means justice."

NOTES

1. A.A Long, *“The Hellenistic Philosophy”*, transl. Demopoulos-Myrto Dragona Monachou, Athens, 1987, pp.322 et seq
2. Plato’s *Terms*, 412d 1-2
3. *S.V.F.* 1,43,1-3 (Arnim)
4. L. Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism*, Harvard University Press, pp.11, 68.
5. A. Manos, *Bliss as smoothing flow of life in Ancient Stoic Philosophy*, Athens, 2002, pp.139, 140.
6. W. Windelband - H. Heimsoeth, *History of Philosophy textbook*, Athens, 1980, p. 210.
7. Euripides *Media*, 247.
8. *S.V.F.*, 1, 32, 28-37, 1, 60, 38-61.
9. *S.V.F.*, III, 80, 1-16.
10. Diogenes Laertius, VI, 12.
11. Diogenes Laertius, VI, 7, 2.
12. Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of City*, Athens, 1997, pp. 62-63.
13. *S.V.F.*, III, 314
14. Malcolm Schofield, pp. 86 et seq.
15. A. Manos, pp. 33 – 40.

EPICTETUS' LIVING ACCORDING TO NATURE[!]

IOANNIS S. CHRISTODOULOU[*]

ABSTRACT

The Stoic ideal of living in accordance with nature has both ideological and practical dimensions. My paper supplements the research on Epictetus' theorizing on this ideal. Epictetus' primary sources contain fruitful passages that illustrate the philosophical distinction between pragmatic and idealistic theorising on nature. I also focused on secondary literature that represents researchers' concerns about the vagueness of the Stoic ideal of living in accordance with nature. I clarify the idealistic Stoic context of the world's nature because anyone could use the scheme of the inevitable necessity of the natural course of things to legitimize any phenomenon.

Keywords: Stoic ideal, Epictetus, Pragmatic, Idealistic Theorising on Nature, Idealistic Stoic Context of the World's Nature.

1. INTRODUCTION

What does the Stoic sage know about nature? This knowledge is a prerequisite for committing oneself to the natural order. Is there a declared content of Stoic wisdom? Are all Stoics in accord on this matter? What conclusions has contemporary research reached regarding the issue of living according to the Stoic idea of following nature?

I draw some answers to those questions from the Stoic philosopher Epictetus. Throughout the *Dissertations* and the *Handbook*, I discovered some crucial evidence to clarify the critical form and amount of knowledge the Stoic must acquire about the deployment of Nature to secure a philosophically fruitful life.

The concept of nature has a distinct function within Stoic philosophy. Epictetus reinforces its centrality. The distinction, for example, between "the nature of the individual" and "universal nature" is already a deductive philosophical intonation, which gives naturalistic reflection a specific direction (Dissertation 1,20,15,1–1,20,19,1).

Nature, in principle, refers to that which exists as it is and is immediately legitimate.[1] The nature of the world, thus, is the world as it exists. The world exists as

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it existed. It will also continue to exist the same way. Physical cosmic development has had and will have the same form. Everything governed by the "natural order" is destined not to escape from it and remains as it is. The order of nature encompasses not only humans and other animals on Earth but also "the divine" and the four fundamental building blocks of the world, which interact cyclically, changing from top to bottom and vice versa. The mind, thus, is instructed to become addicted to the unshakeable natural tendency of things and to be persuaded that it must voluntarily accept the necessities.[2] This attitude ensures "by nature" a measured and harmonious life (Epictetus, *Excerpts*, 8[3]).

The context of the nature of the world as it is, though, is not illuminating because anyone could use the scheme of the inevitable necessity of the course of things to legitimise any phenomenon. Thus, the definition of living according to nature[4] is not self-evident, as the definition of "by nature" is not straightforward. It is crucial, though, because "by nature" or "naturally" is equivalent to "rightly."

The dialogue in the first *Dissertation* (1,11,4,1–1,11,9,1) is characteristic of the difficulty of defining the natural course of things. Epictetus recognizes that the definition of "by nature" requires a criterion equivalent, if possible, and as reliable as the most direct of the senses: sight, used for colors, and touch, necessary for tactile qualities, such as warm and cold, hard and soft (1,11,9,1–1,11,11,1). It is neither painless nor insignificant to be unable to distinguish between "by nature" and "unnatural", which are identified with good and evil, respectively (1,11,11,1–1,11,12,1). Epictetus does not define the criterion but enriches the reflection by pointing out the significant differences one encounters in the perceptions of races or ethnicities. These findings are sufficient for the systematic study and exhaustive search for the criterion, whatever it might be (1,11,12,1–1,11,15,5).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Epictetus, ignorance should not be considered a natural state of being. It is a result of a lack of education regarding essential matters. Such a hypothetical ignorance of the criterion of the natural state should have further consequences since, from the point of view of normative ethics, "acting according to nature" acquires the force of living law (1,26,1–1,26,4,1).

On this point, Brad Inwood developed a thorough reflection. According to Inwood, an ethical system that is based on an analysis of action and wants to be comprehensive must be capable of considering and describing various forms of purpose, which are more specific than "intentional action" without qualitative determination and must also be able to deal with questions of long-term planning and the general organization and coordination of human life. Inwood stresses that, according to some, the Stoics have a special obligation to clarify the broader implications of the concept of intentional action that has already emerged from the discussion of agreement with

Nature or the will of Zeus.[5] He concludes that humans find it challenging to sound out nature's will. However, as determinists, the Stoics believed that this will, which determines the course of events in the world, could, in principle, be known. Special skills are needed to gain as much insight as possible into the plans of this logical cosmic order.[6]

If there are such special skills, then Stoic philosophers must obtain them. According to Epictetus, philosophers contribute significantly to the definition of actions that agree with nature and thus point not to "ζῆν" but to "εὖ ζῆν" (1,4,28,1–1,4,32,1). Philosophers are not expected to grant the privilege of "living by nature".[7] Given their lack of self-sufficiency, they are instructed to continue living in harmony with nature (1,9,8,1–1,9,9,6).

No matter how thrilling the idea of stoic self-sufficiency may be, one must be able to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary means of living. If there is such a difference, and some means of living are required, one cannot help but stress that lacking the necessary means of living makes living in harmony with nature difficult, if not impossible. That means if living is a natural necessity that is compromised due to the lack of essential things for survival, then this lack should not be considered a demand of Nature to be followed.

Epictetus insists that "life according to nature" is an end in itself.[8] Even when conditions are unfavorable, i.e., conditions of exile and deprivation, the philosopher is pleased if he maintains contact with his purpose. Otherwise, he prefers death (3,24,99,2-3,24,102,3). In the previous passage from the third *Dissertation*, Epictetus addresses the god responsible for his eclectic attitude, which pushes him to seek the fulfilment of accordance with nature's norm (2,6,8,3–2,6,10,4). This benefit would, par excellence, justify sacrifices and offerings to the gods (1,19,24,1–1,19,25,3).

What matters to Epictetus, is not merely staying alive, but also quality of life. However, to what extent is the philosopher willing to abandon the necessary survival conditions in order not to betray the ideal of living in accordance with nature? Not living because someone doesn't want me to live is not a legitimate choice for someone who thinks living is a natural necessity to be honored.

Regarding social proximity and the evil influence, Epictetus draws attention to the ultimate success of eradicating the "unnatural," regardless of how others cling to their defects. According to an excerpt from the fourth *Dissertation*, no one is closer to man than himself. In other words, no one is expected to offer anyone the cure for the "unnatural", which each must provide for himself.[9]

So, when others impose an unnatural way of living, such as a condition of slavery, on someone, let's say a Stoic, they deprive him of the natural freedom endowed to him by nature. From this point of view, the cure for the unnatural state of slavery should be for the Stoics to free themselves. Nevertheless, as is well known, this is not the case for Stoic philosophy.

The problem persists, as, by nature, as stated in the third Dissertation, humans were not born to be miserable together, but to be happy together. According to Epictetus, one must remain unscathed and not be harmed by the “unnatural” tendencies of others. Everyone is responsible for the malaise of the “unnatural” condition he experiences.

According to Epictetus, man, by natural construction, is a social animal[10] (*Excerpts* 1,1–1,24[11]). The world is one city of friends, first gods and then people naturally close to each other (3,24,9,1–3,24,12,6).[12] Rulers should remember that they rule over relatives and brothers (1,13,3,2–1,13,5,5). Moreover, God constructed the nature of the rational animal so that none of his goods could be obtained unless he offered something beneficial to all (1,19,11,2–1,19,15,4).[13] This is why the criterion for philosophical identity is the reversal between physical and obtained relations (4,8,19,1–4,8,21,4).[14]

Of course, things would be much easier if men were in accord that man, thanks to divine providence, can only be happy if he accepts the management of the essence of good and evil,[15] which, by paternal care, God granted him (3,24,1–3,24,4,1). Nobody would adhere to evil, and no one would cause the other's misery. According to Epictetus, it is self-evident, and not at all paradoxical, that when the smooth, expected physical characteristics of each species, be it animals or humans, are distorted, this isn't nice (4,1,124,1– 4,1,127,2). Therefore, one must despise and avoid the “unnatural”, which, as Epictetus emphatically points out, depends on him.[16] This, among other things, is evidence of moral progress (48,2,1–48,3,5).

Epictetus' ideal conception of human nature rests on a universal scheme, according to which each person’s works and purposes depend on his construction and nature.[17] Therefore, if people want to fulfil their purpose, they must act according to their nature and construction (1,6,13,3-1,6,18,1).

According to Epictetus, human action depends on human nature, which wants people to be free, brave, and prudent.[18] These characteristics must govern human action,[19] which is not aimed at the pleasure and satisfaction of the body but at the proper execution of the “precedents” (3,7,25,3–3,7,28,3).

In Epictetus's anthropology, man starts from the same starting point as irrational animals.[20] Nature, however, ordains man to arrive at the “theory” and “monitoring” of things[21] and thus fulfil the natural imperative concerning his essence.[22] God, moreover, wanted man to be not only a spectator but also an “explainer” and interpreter[23] of the divine work (1,6,19,1–1,6,22,1). After all, according to the term used by Epictetus, man is an excerpt from God (2,8,10,1 – 2,8,14,6).[24]

Nevertheless, for Epictetus’ optimistic vision of man to be realized, everyone must adopt the role of the interpreter of the divine work. Epictetus’ philosophy is an interpretation from the perspective of someone who has been enslaved but ultimately gained the freedom to enjoy the privileges of living in accordance with nature, interpreting the will of God and conveying this will to his students.

Epictetus also articulates a discourse on the natural human substance, comprising both body and mind. Nature, he says, referring to Xenophon, is an animal lover, meaning it is concerned with the care of the bodily substance. However, nature's movement is equally understandable when it removes the body[25] it provided to man (*Excerpts*, 23,2 – 23,19[26]).

The body, therefore, does not belong to man[27] and is naturally dead[28]: (3,10,15,3-3,10,18,1). The body is clay.[29] The preferred part of humanity is reason (4,11,25,1–4,11,29,1). The reason is "natural and related".[30] Philosophy, according to Epictetus, professes that, in all circumstances,[31] will preserve the hegemonic and dominant part of the soul[32] following nature (1,15,3,2–1,15,5,3).[33] This attitude requires extraordinary effort and characterizes the industrious man (4,4,41,1–4,4,46,1).[34] Prosperity stems precisely from this attitude: (3,6,1,1– 3,6,4,4).

Knowing who one is, for what purpose one was born, the world in which one finds oneself, and those with whom one lives, including both the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, is a prerequisite for natural appetite, natural drive, and consent, as well as their opposites. On the contrary, ignorance and misjudgment of things breed the pretense of wisdom (2,24,19,1–2,24,21,1).

Finding the truth, however, is also ensured by nature itself.[35] For example, nature provides a means for discovering the truth about freedom, which is one of the critical goals of moral effort. If the tools of nature are not enough for someone, he can turn to those who have crossed the road and safely reached a conclusion (4,1,51,1–4,1,52,3).[36] Thus, natural rules ensure the correct consent when one does not rush to choose (4,10,3,1–4,10,3,5). Of course, this privilege is enjoyed by those who are committed to this goal and not by those who devote themselves to external, utilitarian pursuits (4,6,25,3 –4,6,27,5).

About the content of the sage's knowledge, G. B. Kerferd says that an extreme view would be that the wise man knows everything. It is possible, however, according to Kerferd, that the wise man's knowledge is, in some way, selective in content; for example, he knows certain things but not all things. Two versions of this view can be distinguished: he needs to know the fundamental principles of the universe and, therefore, the basic principles of physics and logic, but not every detail or, indeed, any detail. Moreover, while he must be aware of the general laws of the universe, he cannot, for example, be sure that the content of a particular act corresponds to these general laws. Kerferd concludes that one could argue that the wise man's knowledge is free of content because he is not concerned with the What of his knowledge but only with the How.[37]

The standards for the correct usage of "όρεξις" and "έκκλισις", "ορμή" and "αφορμή", "πρόθεσις" and "εποχή" are ensured by nature. It concerns the three areas of exercise, which are presupposed for attaining virtue.[38] Agreement with nature is equivalent to moral progress. At the same time, dissonance and the inability to conform to the dictates of the natural model usually led to failure and cancellation of effort (1,4,14,3-15,3).[39] The philosopher must be content with the benefits flowing from moral progress (1,21,1,1–1,21,4,4).

3. CONCLUSION

In my paper, I aimed to illuminate the Stoic perspective on the natural order. "Living according to nature" is not self-evident since defining "by nature" is problematic. "By nature," or "naturally" is equivalent to "rightly", thus calling for a pragmatic definition of the natural order. If this is correct, then the research regarding the Stoic ideal of nature should focus more on what the Stoics claimed to know about nature.

NOTES

1. According to Gisela Striker, "natural law" refers to the rules of morality conceived as a legal system. This law is intended to provide the criteria by which human law should be judged; laws will be considered just or unjust depending on whether they are compatible with natural law. But why should such a code of moral rules be called natural law? What is the nature of the universe, man or human society? She concludes that "natural law" became part of the legal and philosophical vocabulary. See G. Striker (1996, 209–210).
2. This is the project of education (1,12,17,1–1,12,20,1). The fourth *Dissertation* also discusses the necessity of involuntary outcomes and the responsibility for the "natural" acceptance of events' autonomy (4,10,8,1–4,10,11,2).
3. Stobaeus IV. 44, 60. Musonius frag. 42 (H.)
4. Troels Engberg-Pedersen refers to Marcus Aurelius' «Εις Εαυτόν» and, as far as "living by nature" is concerned, he states the following: (1) everything happens according to nature's providential plan, (2) man has a special relationship with nature since he (alone among animals) shares the rationality of nature, (3) the so-called external goods (Aristotle's natural goods) are worthless, and (4) man must be interested in others since he belongs to a unique community with them. See Troels, Engberg-Pedersen (1986, 147).
5. J. Annas clarifies that cosmic nature appears in many contexts. The Stoics regarded it as a unifying feature of their philosophy. This theory arose because they identified cosmic nature with many other things, namely reason, fate, providence, and Jupiter. This view is fundamental, as virtue presupposes discovering and following nature. Moreover, what seems essential is not human nature but cosmic nature, of which human nature is only a part. See Julia Annas (1993, 159).
6. See Brad Inwood (1985, 111).
7. Troels Engberg-Pedersen argues that there is something contrary to intuition when Stoics deny that "natural" goods such as health, a good thing, a wife, intelligent children, etc., are authentic goods. See T.E. Pedersen (1986, 145).
8. According to Epictetus' interpretation, pleasure holds a place for Epicurus, which, for the Stoic philosopher, is not "by nature." For the Stoics, the "difficult philosophers," pleasure

follows the "natural" life, which is a life of justice, soundness, and freedom (See *Excerpts*, 14, Stobaeus III, 6,57).

9. See 4,6,11,1–4,6,13,4.
10. Epictetus reproaches the Epicureans, who, according to him, question this principle: (4,11,1,1– 4,11,2,1). See also two passages in the second *Dissertation*: (2,20,6,1–2,20,9,20) and (2,20,12,1–2,20,14,5), and, finally, one in the first *Dissertation*: (1,23,1–1,23,6,1).
11. Stobeaus, *Eclogae*, II, 1, 31.
12. See, also, in the thirteenth chapter of the third *Dissertation*: (3,13,4,1 –3,13,7,1).
13. See, also, in the second *Dissertation*: (2,10,20,1–2,10,23,4). See Arthur Bodson (1967, 110–111) for more details.
14. See also the second (2,14,7,1–2,14,8,7), and the third *Dissertation*: (3,2,3,2–3,2,4,4).
15. A prerequisite is the precise definition of good and evil, which, however, is based on the meaning of human nature (2,24,11,1–2,24,14,2).
16. See the first and thirteenth chapters of the second *Dissertation*: (2,1,1–2,2,7) and (2,13,10,1– 2,13,13,4).
17. The same applies to all living things, the value of which is judged by their "performance" in fulfilling the characteristics defined by their nature (3,1,2,1 – 3,1,8,3). No genus is inferior in value, a lag that would be found after comparison with other genera. Each genus's natural pattern defines the authenticity of the species' representatives and carries gradations of authenticity always within the species (3,1,22,1 –3,1,23,7).
18. The deprivation of these and other related powers of the soul is just as painful and harmful as the mutilation of one's body, even if this is not commonplace and self-evident (2,10,20,1 –2,10,23,4). However, ignoring the natural imperative that defines human virtue and slipping into behavior that violates nature ("unnatural") amounts to ingratitude and engenders misery (4,1,120,1– 4,1,122,5).
19. Epictetus points out the mutation, in practice, of virtues into defects (2,1,11,1–2,1,13,2).
20. Brad Inwood observes that man is an exceptional kind of animal. However, it is an animal. Animals are a special kind of living things, markedly different from plants. In turn, plants are a unique and distinct kind of natural object. If the criteria are chosen correctly, the resulting scala naturae will express the similarities and differences observed and indicate something important about the order of nature. See Brad Inwood (1985, 18).
21. One's attitude towards death and disease is proof of effective monitoring of things as nature ordained them to happen (3,20,12,3–3,20,15,3). In this regard, a philosophical prerequisite is the reference to wholeness and the assimilation of the individual into the whole (2,10,4,1–2,10,6,3).
22. According to Epictetus, human nature is strong and invincible, and there is no way to resist its will (2,20,15,1–2,20,18,2).
23. The philosopher interprets and understands nature (49,1,1–49,1,15). See also the *Handbook* and the first *Dissertation*: (1,17,13,1–1,17,24,1) and (*Handbook*, 26,1,1–26,1,10).
24. Brad Inwood, summarizing the relevant theories in ancient thought, argues that gods and men are rational. According to the Stoic view, reason is common to gods and men. The Stoics emphasise the applications of reason to the proper living of life; therefore, a Stoic is inclined to say that the gods are naturally virtuous. They are perfect and honest by nature,

while man must toil long and hard to attain whatever degree of excellence he is destined to achieve. See Brad Inwood (1985, 18–19).

25. A typical example is found in the twenty-fifth chapter of the first *Dissertation*: (1,25, 20,2–1,25, 25, 2). For another wording, see *Gnomologium Epicteteum*, 3-4, 32.1–33.3.
26. Stobaeus, IV. 53, 29.
27. See in the fourth *Dissertation*: (4,1,77,4–4,1,80,1).
28. According to J. M. Rist, there is nothing non-Stoic about Epictetus' emphasis on man and his mortality as a central concern of philosophical inquiry. What immediately seems different from the stoicism of Zeno and Chrysippus is the almost universal indifference to the areas of Physics and Logic. See John M. Rist (1996, 5).
29. The wounds of the body are less intolerable than the unreasonable element, which, for the rational animal, is unbearable: (1,2,1–1,2,4,4).
30. Stobaeus, *Gnomologium Epicteteum*, 3-4, 11.1-11.5.
31. Here lies the usefulness of philosophical theorems (3,9,9,3–3,9,11,7). See also the tenth chapter of the third *Dissertation*: (3,10,10,1–3,10,13,4).
32. *For a more detailed examination of the nature of the rational soul, see Inwood (1985), specifically the second chapter, entitled "Human Nature and the Rational Soul" (pp. 18–41). See also Julia Annas's observations (1993, 36–39).*
33. See, for example, the fourth *Dissertation*: (4,5,3,1– 4,5,7,4).
34. This is an attitude that does not concern everyone (3,5,1 –3,5,4,4).
35. In the controversial passages 2,2,14,1-4, Epictetus states that the nature of good and evil is where truth is and that truth coexists with courage and nature.
36. According to Epictetus, Epicurus and the Academicians are examples of men and philosophers who, although they have taken by nature rules for the knowledge of truth, do not take care to supplement them and make up for shortcomings, but do precisely the opposite. (2,20,20,1–2,20,22,1).
37. See G. B. Kerferd (1978, 125).
38. Nothing, in fact, and no one can disturb or cancel the "natural use" of these actions (4,4,27,1– 4,4,28,5).
39. The obsessive theoretical preoccupation and attachment to books is the most characteristic and standard deviation from the path leading to the goal of agreement with nature (see 1,4,15,3–17,2 and 1,4,22-23). Epictetus, though, does recognise the usefulness of books or philosophical studies. For example, he considers the texts of Chrysippus as valuable indicators of the path to truth, that is, the path of Prokopton, and testimonies, signs, and proofs of the feasibility of "εὖ ζῆν", which amounts to a life of complete apathy, serenity, and bliss: (1,4,28-32).

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STOIC PHILOSOPHY AND THE CONTROL PROBLEM OF AI TECHNOLOGY: THE ASSAULT ON HUMAN DIGNITY[!]

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ABSTRACT

This paper, comprises three parts: (1) the core problem of Stoic philosophy and technology; (2) the core principles of Stoic philosophy and how they apply to technology; and (3) why Stoic philosophy is of relevance and importance to technology. The problem of technology is not technology as such, but the use of technology by the Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google, for their primary financial gain to the detriment of the users' well-being and society generally. Ultimately, the core problem of technology is not technical to be solved by engineers but a moral problem to be solved collectively by society and the global community.

Keywords: Stoic Philosophy, Neo-Stoic Philosophy, Big Tech, Facebook, Google, Dignity, Control Problem.

O my friend, why do you who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens, care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honour and reputation, and so little about wisdom and truth . . . Are you not ashamed of this? Plato, Apology, 1978.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines how Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy applies to technology, and specifically information communication technologies (ICTs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. Unless otherwise stated for convenience, I will refer to these technologies collectively as "technology." This paper comprises three parts: (1) the core problem of Stoic philosophy and technology; (2) the core principles of Stoic philosophy and how they apply to technology; and (3) why Stoic philosophy is of relevance and importance to technology. Let me begin by clarifying, that the problem of technology is not technology as such, but the use of technology by the Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google, for their primary financial gain to the

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detriment of the users' well-being and society generally. The recent scandal of Cambridge Analytica and Facebook involving breach of privacy and lack of consent of users' data is a case in point. Given that any technology cannot be good for itself or the good of the Big Tech companies that manage them, but good for humanity overall, any instrumental positive value of such technologies must not be at the cost of their negative eudaimonic impact on society. Ultimately, the core problem of technology is not technical to be solved by engineers but a moral problem to be solved collectively by society and the global community. The overarching rationale for the application of Stoic philosophy to evaluate the impact of technology on society is that Stoic philosophy as a way of life with its focus on the attainment of eudaimonia or well-being is conceptually and practically relevant and important to the eudaimonic assessment of technology.

2. THE CORE PROBLEM OF STOIC PHILOSOPHY AND TECHNOLOGY

In both Stoic philosophy and technology, the key problem and question, and the focus of this chapter, and generally of this book, is the question of who is in control. Is it Us, as individuals and collectively as a society and the global community generally, or Technology? The chapter will demonstrate that the answer provided by the Stoics to the question of who is in control of our lives, Us, or Circumstance, signals and motivates an answer to the question of who is in control of technology? Is it Us, as individuals and collectively as society, or the Big Tech companies who control that technology, and specifically, ICTs and AI technologies?

The Problem of Stoic Philosophy: Who Is in Control? Us or Fortune?

Stoic philosophy sets out to answer the key meta-philosophical question of how to be happy in an unhappy world, despite the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, a key feature Stoicism shares with Buddhism. The answer Stoicism provides is methodologically and logically ingenious, at once theoretical and practical. Perceiving philosophy to be a therapy of the mind, a Techne Viou or the Art of Living, the Stoics observed that there are things within our control and things outside our control. According to the Stoics, our main concern should be with developing our virtues, such as courage, moderation, justice, prudence or practical wisdom, empathy and solidarity, as virtue is the only inherent good, which provides both the necessary and sufficient practical means for the attainment of eudaimonia. To avoid unhappiness, we must do two things: control things that are within our control (our beliefs, judgements, desires, attitudes and volition or prohairesis) and be indifferent to things that are not in our control, or at least not in our full control, that is, things external to us, such as health, relationships, employment, wealth, power, death, and so on. As rational beings, we should therefore perfect our characters through living a virtuous life in accordance with nature because it can bring us both ataraxia (tranquillity); autarkia (self-sufficiency) and eudaimonia (happiness or well-being). A happiness that is within our control, just because it depends on our own rational volition and judgements that are within our control. An important feature of Stoic eudaimonia is its intrinsic relation to virtue. For virtue as the only inherent good is not only the essential means for the attainment of eudaimonia but also constitutive of it. In being the ultimate goal of a good life, virtue is therefore both the means and the end for a eudaimonic or happy life, or at least, not an unhappy life. Eudaimonia, which in ancient Greek means having within us a good daemon or spirit, is up to us, as it lies within us and it is, therefore, within our control. Interestingly, the modern Greek word for happiness, *eftihia* (pronounced in modern Greek eftihia) that means having good fortune, is not within our control, as it places happiness outside our control, since fortune or circumstance, good or bad, lies outside our control.

The Core Problem of Technology: Who Is in Control? Us or Technology?

The core problem of technology, and specifically with regard to this chapter, ICTs, and in particular AI technologies, is that those technologies are not within our control but in the control of the Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google, as manifested in practice by the systemic surveillance of users' information by opaque and inscrutable algorithms, for the financial gain of Big Tech companies, dictated by their Business Model. That problem has been widely investigated by many researchers in recent years, notably Shoshanna Zuboff (2019) and a number of other researchers[1]. The primary purpose of this chapter is to show how Stoic philosophy is both relevant and effective in theorising that problem, as well as practically responding to it for its solution. Having identified the parallel control problems of Stoic philosophy and technology, the chapter will show how Stoic philosophy is both theoretically relevant and practical to technology through its core Stoic principles. To that end, this chapter will summarise in outline those core principles and show how they apply to technology, and in particular ICTs and AI technologies.

3. THE PRINCIPLES OF STOIC PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR APPLICATION TO TECHNOLOGY

Principle 1: Concern Only for Things within Our Control

According to Epictetus (2018, 221), Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversions – in short, whatever is our doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices, or, that is, whatever in not our doing . . . So, remember, if you think that things naturally enslaved are free or that things not your own are your own, you will be thwarted, miserable, and upset, and will blame both gods and men. (Enchiridion, Ch.1:1–3) As the issue of Control is a core problem that arises in both Stoic philosophy and technology, Stoic philosophy is well placed to provide a theoretical and practical evaluation, as well as motivation to the solution of the control problem of technology. If core aspects of technology are outside our control, there are at least two options open to us within Stoic methodology:

The first option is that since accuracy, reliability, trustworthiness, transparency, accountability, privacy, the inscrutability, monopoly and the asymmetry of information between Big Tech and us, as users of those technologies, and ultimately, the control of technology itself, is beyond our control, we should ignore such matters or at least treat them as preferred indifferent not required for our well-being, since we cannot control them.

The second option is precisely because of the harmful impact those technologies have on the epistemic, ethical and eudaimonic features over most aspects of our lives, we should endeavour to bring those technologies under society's control, since our collective well-being is at risk if we don't.

A key underlying assumption of the Stoic notion of control is inner mental freedom and autonomous rational agency. However, the psychologically per suasive technologies used by the Big Tech companies to inculcate users to spend maximum time on Big Tech's digital platforms (since more time spent is more money earned by them) are designed to undermine the users' rational autonomous agency for the primary financial gain of those Big Tech companies. Which, like concealed and inscrutable puppeteers want to make us dance to their Faustian-Midas's tune,[2] just as the prisoners in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. We shall examine more closely how Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google, among others, using their surveillance Business Models through the application of opaque persuasive algorithms, undermine the users' rational autonomous agency for the primary financial gain of those companies: by collecting and selling users' data to advertisers and other information contractors, without the users' explicit knowledge and consent.

Principle 2: The Final Goal

The Hellenistic philosophers, including the Stoics, claimed that eudaimonia or happiness was the ultimate goal of a good life, though each of the Hellenistic schools identified happiness with something different: The Epicureans, identified it with pleasure and the avoidance of pain, the Pyrrhonian Sceptics with suspension of all judgement as the only sure way to achieve ataraxia or tranquility, and the Stoics identified eudaimonia exclusively with a life of virtue, which, in turn, they identified with a life in agreement with nature. It is, so to speak, our "nature" to be rational, and it is our rational nature that leads us through various intermediary stages, to a virtuous and ethical life that ultimately results in the attainment of eudaimonia or happiness.

The emphasis of the Stoics on the attainment of eudaimonia through virtue is significant for examining the impact of technology on our individual and collective well-being, and how we can respond to it. It highlights why technology cannot be good for itself or for the Big Tech companies alone that manage it, but for the common good of all humanity.

Principle 3: The Life of Virtue and the Life of Wisdom

The Stoic definition of virtue is as follows:

(I) Virtue is not defined by the consequences in the world which it succeeds in promoting, but by a pattern of behaviour that follows necessarily from a disposition perfectly in tune with Nature's rationality.

(II) The right thing to do is that which accords with virtue, and this is equivalent to saying that it accords with the nature of a perfect rational being.

(III) Virtue accords with Nature in the sense that it is the special function or goal of a rational being to be virtuous (Long1986, 192).

Associated with the Stoic principle of a virtuous life is the principle of Wisdom. The ultimate object of philosophy according to the Stoics, and the ancient Greek philosophers generally, beginning with Socrates, is to teach us not just knowledge, but wisdom. Wisdom, therefore, for the Stoics is a way of a life of virtue that brings peace of mind, inner freedom, happiness, and a cosmic consciousness. By "cosmic consciousness," the Stoics understood that quality, as universal reason, which permeates the whole universe and by virtue of which we are all, integrated parts of the cosmos. As Pierre Hadot tells us (1995, 273).

The exercise of wisdom entails a cosmic dimension. Whereas the average per son has lost touch with the world, and does not see the world qua world, but rather treats the world as a means of satisfying his desires, the [stoic] sage never ceases to have the whole constantly present to mind. He thinks and acts within a cosmic perspective. He has a feeling of belonging to a whole, which goes beyond the limits of his individuality.

Significantly, more than information, wisdom requires transformation. To become wise, one requires not only to be informed but to become transformed, through living virtuously, by the practice of philosophy as a way of life. Given the unwise ways in which we use technology, including our uncritical acceptance of the control Big Tech companies exert over all facets of our lives, we should use information, more virtuously and wisely for the collective good and well-being of ourselves and society. Wisdom, as meta technology of the mind (Spence 2011) can guide us on how to control technology and our use of it, for our common good.

Principle 4: Cosmopolitanism

When anyone asked him where he came from, he said, “I am a citizen of the world” (Laertius 1925, Chapter 2, 22–84).

Closely associated with the notion of cosmic consciousness is the Stoic cosmopolitan perspective. It involves living empathetically and in solidarity for the common good of the world community and acting in accordance with global social justice for our collective well-being. According to the Stoics, philosophy entails a community engagement. For the Stoics, however, the polis was the cosmopolis, not the city state, or individual nations, but the whole world.

The threat to the natural environment through climate change and the current COVID-19 pandemic renders the ethical lifestyle recommended by the Stoics, which respects the ethical rights of all individuals as citizens of the world, and also respects both the natural and digital environments, not only desirable, but necessary. In the connected technological age in which we live, Stoic cosmopolitanism as a way of life for the attainment of well-being is relevant and important for enabling us to mount a collective response to Big Tech’s surveillance practices that systemically undermine our collective well-being. Since we cannot mount such a response as individuals, our response, just as our response to a solution to climate change, requires a global collective action, that incorporates, citizens, governments and their associated democratic institutions and regulatory authorities, as well as the Big Tech companies themselves. Stoic cosmopolitanism provides both the theoretical framework and practical motivation for such a collective shared response.

Principle 5: A Life in Agreement with Nature

As Cicero explains, the value of anything in Stoicism is defined by reference to Nature (Long 1986, 198).

An important and core principle of Stoicism is living in accordance with nature. Eudaimonia, according to the Stoics, consists in living a virtuous life and a virtuous life is one in agreement with nature, which they identified with reason or rational spirit that permeates the entire universe. Since nature was identified with universal reason, the Stoics identified a life in agreement with nature with the perfection of human reason. Moreover, it is only by living a rational and virtuous life that human beings can truly become happy. For the Stoics, there is an integral relationship between virtue, rational agency, nature and well-being, all of which relate to living a good life for the attainment of eudaimonia.

Since, the Stoic notion of nature, under the influence of Heraclitus, was conceived to be dynamic and not static, we can extend the Stoic notion of nature to include not only the natural environment but also crucially the digital environment. Applying the Stoic principle of living in agreement with nature we can say that just as we have a collective global responsibility in respecting and safeguarding the integrity of the natural environment (biosphere), we have an equal responsibility with regard to the digital environment (infosphere). Whereas climate change pollutes and corrupts the biosphere, the surveillance practices of the Big Tech corrupt the infosphere. Both are a form of corruption that undermine both our individual and collective global well-being. We shall examine the notion of media corruption with regard to some of the information and communication practices of Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google.

Principle 6: Oikeiosis

Related to the issue of transformation through wisdom is the principle of oikeiosis. The transition from developmental to constitutive virtue, from imperfect and incomplete virtue to perfect and complete virtue, requires a kind of ethical transformation. In an insightful passage, Julia Annas describes quite clearly the kind of ethical transformation that the Socratic theory of happiness requires and which by extension applies equally to Stoic philosophy, as the Stoics considered Socrates to be their earlier role model (Annas,1999, 50–51).

As a theory of happiness [the Socratic theory of happiness in Plato], it is very demanding. You won't have got your account of happiness right until you achieve the right perspective, and that will be utterly different from your initial standpoint. Becoming virtuous requires transforming [emphasis added] your values and priorities; nothing short of this will do. All your valuations of conventional goods and evils will turn out to be wrong . . . we are used to moral theories that are demanding, but it is not easy for us to conceive of such a theory which is a theory of happiness, rather than something else. But this is not an argument against a theory like Plato's. It shows merely that it takes a long intellectual journey away from common sense and conventional beliefs to achieve the wisdom of the virtuous person and thus to have your whole life, and your conception of happiness transformed.

Alan Gewirth also recognises and acknowledges the transformative aspect of his concept of ideal *self-fulfillment*. As he tells us (Gewirth 1998, 86), "to recognize and accept these requirements in one's thought, and action may involve a kind of self-transformation [emphasis added] whereby one becomes more fully a moral and social being."

It is the realisation of the practical necessity for such transformation and the need for providing a conceptual account of how such a transformation can practically take place, that the Stoics developed their theory of oikeiosis; a theory considered to be one of the most crucial and fundamental doctrines of Stoic ethics. The theory purports to show how a person can progressively develop, because he is naturally conditioned and thus capable of doing so, from the state of having and being motivated by purely hedonistic desires as a child, to the state of acquiring, over a time period of biological, psychological, social, but more importantly, rational development, an ethical perspective.

The four stages comprising the central developmental stages in the Stoic doctrine of oikeiosis are: the impulse for self-preservation; the impulse for sociability and the recognition that one should not merely act appropriately towards oneself and others on the basis of “natural impulses” alone, but more importantly should do so on the basis of their rationality. And finally, the disposition and the practice of always acting according to one’s perfected reason and virtue in agreement with nature, results in the attainment of eudaimonia. For this is in accordance with one’s own rational nature that reflects and is part of, the rational order of nature, and the universe. Acting rationally is appropriate because it is in agreement with nature and agreement with nature is necessary if one is to attain eudaimonia, which is the ultimate goal of a good life (see Principle: The Final Goal above).

In addition, the rational support provided indirectly for the argument for the PGC for both developmental and constitutive virtue as well as the arguments advanced by Gewirth on the basis of the argument for the Principle *of Generic Consistency* (PGC) in support of his model of *self-fulfillment*, mirror and parallel the Stoic arguments and doctrines for virtue and eudaimonia. Central to both Gewirth’s argument for self-fulfillment, and Stoic eudaimonia are the key elements of rationality, virtue, and agreement with nature, which in Gewirthian terms translates to agreement with the logical implications of rational purposive agency and per sonhood. And as we saw earlier in examining the problem of control regarding technology, the problem is how Big Tech companies, such as Google and Facebook, target our rational autonomy and agency through their systemic persuasive opaque algorithms for their own self-centred financial gain, and do so without any transparency and accountability.

Applying the principle of oikeiosis to technology further emphasises the urgent need why we must transform and no longer accept what is clearly harmful to us. Namely, the willful deception and manipulation of our autonomy and privacy[3] by Big Tech companies. The concepts of autonomy and privacy are closely interrelated and both essential for our fundamental rights to freedom and well-being as well as our dignity, as individuals and collectively as society.

In the introduction of her important book, *Privacy is Power,* Carissa Véliz (2020, 1) sounds a siren warning of how Big Tech violates and usurps our privacy, thus undermining our individual and collective well-being:

They are watching us. They know I’m writing these words. They know you are reading them. Governments and hundreds of corporations are spying on you and me, and everyone we know. Every minute of every day. They rack and record all they can: our location, our communications, our internet searches, our biometric information, our social relations, our purchases, and much more. They want to know who we are, what we think, where we hurt. They want to predict and influence our behaviour. They have too much power. Their power stems from us, from you, from your data. It’s time to take back control [emphasis added]. Reclaiming privacy is the only way we can regain control of our lives and our societies.

Taking back control of technology by taking control of our autonomy and privacy, as individuals and collectively as society, is also the intended clarion call of this chapter, guided by the normative and eudaimonic conceptual framework and rational of Stoic philosophy. For as this chapter has shown the solution provided by Stoic and neo-Stoic philosophy to the control problem of who is in control of our lives, Us or Circumstance, offers also a response to the control problem of technology, that is, who is in control of technology, Us or Big Tech. It is a matter of necessity, therefore, to mount a collective cosmopolitan response to Big Tech, as the condition for our wellbeing and ultimately our survival as free and autonomous human beings, depends on it.

Principle 7: Philosophy as a Way of Life

Empty is that philosopher's argument by which no human suffering is therapeutically treated. For just as there is no use in a medical art that does not cast out the sicknesses of the body, so too there is no use in philosophy, unless it casts out the suffering of the soul. (Epicurus, quoted in Nussbaum 1994, 13).

An important aspect of Stoic philosophy, as well as the other Schools of Hellenistic philosophy, and in particular, Epicurean philosophy as the quote from Epicurus above indicates, was that philosophy had to be conducted as a way of life or the art of living. Philosophy, as we saw in chapter 3, can be viewed as the art of living in two ways:

(a) As a craft or art which once learned can enable one to live a good and fulfilling life on a daily basis; and

(b) The perfection of one's human nature – becoming the best of one's kind – humankind. For the Stoics, the perfection of one's human nature meant the perfection of one's rational nature. For according to the Stoics, the essence of human nature and nature generally, the whole universe in fact, was reason. Thus, in perfecting one's rational nature one became at once the object and the subject of art, that is, the art of life. This was the highest form of art, in perfecting one's rational nature through the practice of philosophy. In the neo-Stoic theory, I based on my reconstruction of Gewirth's notion of self-fulfillment, a life in agreement with nature is a life in agreement with the perfection of one's rational purposive agency, which, in turn, is in agreement with universal morality, which is essential for a good and self-fulfilled life. In contrast to the Stoic conception of universal nature as divine, however, Gewirth's notion of "nature" is and idealised human nature, understood as rational purposive agency applied to the aim of becoming the best oneself as a human being, which as we saw earlier requires nothing less than a transformation through the exercise of wisdom. Wisdom, as a form of experiential meta-knowledge of how to live a life of virtue for the attainment of eudaimonia, requires philosophy to be lived in practice as a way of life and not merely an intellectual exercise of thought alone. As Pierre Hadot tells us (1995, Chapter 11), Philosophy as a way of life for the Stoics was, a mode of existing-in-the-world, which had to be practiced at each instant, and the goal of which was to transform the whole of the individual's life . . . the word philo-sophia – the love of wisdom – was enough to express this conception of philosophy.

Significantly, the application of Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy as a way of life in addressing and responding to the problem of technology examined above, namely the problem of control by the Big Tech companies over all aspects of our lives, is well suited to a global digital network environment: both for its identification and eudaimonic evaluation of its impact on society, as well as the enablement of its solution, through the shared collective normative response by users of technology and society and the global community generally. For just as Big Tech can use the user's information to the detriment of their users' well-being, the users themselves have the capacity and ability to apply their shared knowledge of the control problem of technology to turn the tables on Big Tech. That is, because the users can at a stroke put a significant dent in the Big Tech's business model of clickbait and consequently their billion-dollar revenue stream, obliging the Big Tech companies to take appropriate action to remedy theirs dis-demonic manipulative practices against the users' legitimate normative claims.

For just imagine for a moment what would happen if the billions of Facebook's and Google users worldwide went on strike and stopped using their platform services, even for a day. Both companies would lose a lot of money, and their surveillance-based business model would shudder. Of course, the practicality of such shared collective action may prove difficult but as they say, where there is a will, there is a way. Stoic philosophy is at least theoretically and practically well-equipped to motivate and provide both the will and the way.

4. THE ANTIDOTE OF STOIC PHILOSOPHY TO THE CONTROL OF BIG TECH

Eureka! A discovery, a Eureka moment you could say, I made while writing this particular section of this chapter is the method of control exercised by the Big Tech companies, through use of their opaque persuasive technologies, that uncannily resembles and mimics in its theoretical method, though not its content and by no means its intention, the core feature of Stoic ethics and its solution to the problem of control. Let me explain. According to Stuart Russell (2019, 139), if we think ourselves as entities whose actions are expected to achieve our objectives, there are two ways to *change our behaviour* [emphasis added]. The first is the old-fashioned way: leave our expectations and objectives unchanged but *change our circumstances* [emphasis added] – for example, by offering money, pointing a gun at us, or starving us into submission. That tends to be expensive and difficult for a computer to do. The second way is to change our expectations and objectives [emphasis added]. This is much easier for a machine. It is in contact with you [emphasis added] for hours every day, controls your access to information, and provides much of your entertainment through games, TV movies, and social interaction. The reinforcement learning algorithms that optimize social-media click-through have *no capacity to reason* [emphasis added] about human behavior – in fact, they do not even know in any meaningful sense that humans exist. For machines with much greater understanding of human psychology, beliefs, and motivations, it should be relatively easy to gradually guide us in directions that increase the degree of satisfaction of the machine's objectives.

Because of its relevance and significance for the topic of this chapter, I have quoted the above passage by Russell in full. For it describes at once the control problem of technology very clearly and also illuminates a way forward of allowing us to provide a response to that problem through Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy.

The close and uncanny analogy to the method of control between that of machines over humans, exercised by AI persuasive technologies, on the one hand, and that offered by Stoic philosophy as a method that individuals can apply in gaining control over their own lives for the ultimate attainment of eudaimonia, on the other, should now be obvious. For if the machines cannot change our circumstances as per the first option described by Russell above, machines can according to the second option, change our expectations and objectives, through systemic persuasion, and habituation. In Stoic philosophy, this second way by contrast, is done, though our own volition, our prohairesis or hegemonic, being applied rationally to our autonomous decisions and choices, through the guidance of enabling virtues, such as courage, moderation, justice and prudence, traditionally referred to as the cardinal virtues. Whereas in the case of the machines the control over humans, and specifically their decisions and choices, is external and affected by the ever-present surveillance and agency of persuasive algorithms that targets our autonomy, often without our awareness nor consent, the control over the individual agents in the case of Stoic philosophy is internal and affected by the agents themselves, through their own individual autonomy and the agency of their own volition or prohairesis.

The contrast between the *external control exercised* by the agency of intelligent autonomous machines over humans, and that of the *internal control* exercised by the autonomous agency of individual humans over themselves, points at once to both the problem of machine control over humans, and a response to its solution through Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy. For the contrast between the AI machine method, and that of Stoic philosophy, points to the crucial difference and wide normative chasm between the two parallel methods. The use of machines by the Big Tech companies is primarily designed to exploit, deceive and manipulate its human users by its monopolistic and asymmetric opaque algorithms, for the Big Tech companies' primary instrumental benefit and profit, at the expense of their users' well-being. The Big Tech companies' technological method based on their business models is therefore in sharp contrast to that of the Stoic method. For the primary objective of Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy by design and intent, is to enable humans both individually and collectively as societies, as free and autonomous agents to attain eudaimonia, and do so through the exercise of virtue, which is entirely within their autonomous agency and volition or prohairesis and hence entirely within their individual control. Whereas the Myth of Gyges is an archetypal example of *perfect injustic*e, we could say that the concealed external control exercised over our autonomy by the AI algorithms of the Big Tech companies that mimic the Stoic internal method of control over ourselves, is an example of perfect deception and manipulation. Ironically, both persuasive AI algorithms and Stoic philosophy have proved very popular. However, with a significant normative difference: whereas the Big Tech companies, such as Facebook and Google, offers us a free service but at the price of taking away our freedom and autonomy, Stoic philosophy by contrast allows us to at once obtain, regain, and retain our freedom and autonomy, at no cost to ourselves.

A crucial difference between the external machine method of control and the internal Stoic method of control, therefore, is that the machine method employs an instrumental means-end rationality, in contrast to the Stoic and Neo-Stoic method that employs a normative model of rationality in which both the means and the ends have to be at once epistemically, ethically and eudaimonically sound and congruent. With regard to the normative model of rationality used in those two theoretical models, both the means and the ends for which the means are applied to achieve those ends, are required to be ethical and good. Not so in instrumental rationality, where the only rational but normatively neutral requirement is that the means must be effective in achieving the required end to which the means are applied. For example, someone who is employed as a professional hitman must use the most effective practical means in achieving an efficacious and successful “hit.”

The solution signaled above with regard to the Stoic and Neo-Stoic method of control through virtue, lies in the design and application of the normative model of rationality in AI, rather than the purely instrumental model of rationality, which is the model of intelligence currently used by the Big Tech companies. On the assumption that AI and especially *Artificial General Intelligence* (AGI) being rational would act rationally, then they could learn through machine learning to adopt a normative model of rationality such as the one supported by Stoic and neo Stoic philosophy, as well as that employed in Kantian and most other ethical theories, such as contractarian theories, utilitarian theories, and virtue ethics theories, where both the means and the ends are required to be epistemically, ethically and eudaimonically good, not just for the AI or AGI but also for human agents and sentient beings generally.

In connection with the close methodological approach of the machine way and the Stoic way concerning control, we know, for example, that the method of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) used in psychology was strongly influenced by the Stoics as a method of gaining control over ourselves and not allowing external circumstances beyond our control to affect our behaviour, a feature, that is also common to the method of positive psychology, first developed by Martin Seligman (see his book Learned Optimism, 1991). The influence of Stoic philosophy on CBT is discussed in an informative chapter by Andrea E. Cavanna (January 15, 2019). In that chapter, Cavanna points out, that Stoic and cognitive theories about the operation of reason upon emotion and behavior have stirring parallelisms. . . According to the Stoic doctrine, emotional reactions far from being irrational and impossible to analyse, are judgements based on reason – and therefore amenable to control and manipulation [emphasis added]. In fact, Epictetus himself compared the role of the philosopher to that of the physician, consistently with the tradition of ancient philosophy as a way of life that conceived philosophy as therapy and medicine of the soul, or psychotherapy. The Stoic philosopher as psychotherapist used to help others to achieve "reasoned emotions." Cultivating "arête" [intelligent virtue] through daily practice was seen as the way to achieve a good life ("eudaimonia"), free of irrational anxieties and sorrows. In a similar fashion, a modern cognitive-behavioural therapist places emphasis upon the rational approach to alter dysfunctional emotions and therefore treat anxiety and affective disorders.

The above passage by Cavanna points further to the sharp difference between the way machines are used by the Big Tech companies to *control and manipulate* their users resulting not in therapy but a poisoned chalice of dis-therapy and mental illness that has a disdaimonic impact on their well-being and the loss of their autonomy and dignity, when treated not as ends in themselves but merely the means to the financial interests of Big Tech companies. In contrast, the therapeutic method used in Stoic philosophy is designed as the means to the end of helping individuals to alleviate anxiety and sorrow in attaining eudaimonia for themselves by being therapists of themselves. The contrast to the two methods of manipulation and control used on the one hand by the Big Tech companies for their own benefit and profit and the Stoic way used for the sole benefit of the individuals in attaining eudaimonia or well-being, could not be further apart: The Big Tech method is used effectively as addiction and poison in contrast to the Stoic way that is exclusively used as pharmakon, a therapy and medicine of the soul. As Greta Thunberg would say, "how dare you!"

5. CONCLUSION: WHY THE APPLICATION OF STOIC PHILOSOPHY TO TECHNOLOGY IS OF RELEVANCE

In the connected digital age, Stoic philosophy as a systemic unified practical philosophy of human flourishing and well-being, which combines epistemic, ethical and eudaimonic principles clustered around the central concept of wisdom, is eminently relevant and able to respond and motivate both theoretically and practically a solution to the control problem of technology.

In keeping with the Stoic principles of living virtuously, rationally, in accordance with nature, for our individual and collective well-being, as cosmopolitan citizens with a comic consciousness for the attainment of wellbeing, we have a collective responsibility, therefore, to respond to the problem of Big Tech's monopolistic control over the digital environment that has an overall dis-demonic impact on our individual and collective lives. As a secular cosmopolitan philosophy, with its naturalistic and public outlook and methodology, as a way of life, Stoicism has for some time now been experiencing a renaissance both in the academy and recently in the public domain through a strong worldwide online presence. The Stoic cosmopolitan global community, therefore, has the capacity and the ability to generate and motivate a worldwide public response to the control problem of surveillance by the Big Tech companies. As a long-time fan of Star Trek, let me add that Resistance is not Futile.[4]

As my friend and colleague Professor Rick Benitez, at the University of Sydney, (Philosophy) told me recently, "Stoic Philosophy is the only game in town." I will not dispute that rhetorical flourish, though I will add that Aristotelian and Epicurean philosophy, as well as Buddhism and Hindu philosophy, as well as some indigenous philosophies, with which Stoicism has some suggestive similarities in regard to nature, are not excluded by Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy.

NOTES

1. See Galloway, Scott. (2017). The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google. London, Great Brittain: Bantam Press; Pasquale, Frank. (2015) The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Tufekci, Zeynep. (2018). Facebook's Surveillance Machine, The New York Times, March 19, 2018; Zuboff, Shoshana. (2019). The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fights for A Human Future at the New Frontier of Power. London: Profile Books Ltd; Van Dijck, Poell and De Waal. (2018). The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connected World. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Webb, Amy (2019). The Big Nine: How the Tech Titans and Their Thinking Machines Could Warp Humanity, Hatchet Books; Lynch, Michael P. (2016). The Internet of Us: Knowing and Understanding Less in the Age of Big Data. Penguin Random House; Foroohar, Rana. (2019). Don't Be Evil: The Case Against Big Tech.UK: Allen Lane, Random House.

2. The phrase Faustian -Midas tune, alludes to the story of Faust who sold his soul to the devil for knowledge that was immortalized by Goethe in his narrative poem, Dr Faustus. The myth of Midas refers to King Midas who to satisfy greed turned everything he touched to gold. This, however, proved self-defeating as he turned his food and all those he cared for, also into gold. The allusion is meant to highlight our own part as users in using the Big Tech platforms, such as those of Facebook and Google for free, in exchange of our information, and the part of Big Tech in turning our information into gold for them.

3. For a recent book that puts forward a good case for privacy, see Privacy is Power, 2020, by Carissa Véliz.

4. The phrase relates to the command issued by the Borg "resistance is futile," in the Star Trek TV series, to all those they were about to assimilate within their collective hive, by removing their individuality and all personal defining characteristics and memories, in effect rendering them willing slaves of the collective hive. The story of the Borg should also remind us of George Orwell's novel, 1984.

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THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS ON THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ARAB REFUGEES IN EUROPE[!]

SARSOUR OUAEL [*]

ABSTRACT

This study presents a specific aspect of the refugee crisis, namely the thoughts and perceptions about the social integration of Arab refugees in Europe. This paper seeks to initiate a process of reflection on the issue of refugees and integration in light of the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in host societies and the difficulties in dealing with migrants and refugees. Finally, the paper examines the different thinking and perceptions of Arabs and Europeans, as well as perceptions and stereotypes about migration.

Keywords: Arabs, Europeans, Thoughts, Perceptions, Refugees, Integration, Immigration, Stereotypes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The socialization of the individual as an evolutionary process is divided into three periods: that of first development, adolescence, maturity and old age. It contributes to the social integration of the individual and his integration into the environment with which he will relate and interact with the rest of his members. The quality of each person's action and consequent experience differentiates and shapes their relationship with the environment.

Socialization concerns the education of the individual for his future roles and his activation as a member of society. It involves the integration of social values, morals, customs and traditions that prevail within society. The goal is to achieve the necessary compatibility between the individual and social norms and laws, thereby creating a kind of solidarity and cohesion in society. This process aims to instill appropriate behaviour, standards and trends for certain social roles, allowing him to align with his social group and maintain? social harmony and facilitate his integration into social life.

This article will study and examine the way of thinking and perception of Arab migrants and refugees, as well as the influence of these intercultural elements on their social integration in Europe, which has different intercultural characteristics. The purpose? of this article aims to draw attention to the serious impact of these

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intercultural characteristics, in order to highlight whether they affect the social integration of Arab migrants and refugees.

2. THOUGHT AND ITS MEANING

Psychology defines several definitions of the concept of thinking, but everyone agrees that it is the mental process of symbolic reaction to internal and external stimuli and the connection between internal activity and external stimulus.

Psychologists have focused on thinking, as a mental effort aimed at finding an answer to a question or solving a practical problem associated with activities similar to those usually attributed to the inventor, athlete or chess player. However, psychologists have not agreed on a single definition or description of thinking. For some, it is about modifying cognitive structures and how we perceive the world, while others consider it an internal problem-solving behaviour (Sternberg, R. J. Et al, 2023)

John Dewey defined thought as a process in which facts are used? to represent other events in a way that leads to a belief that has no method of pre-belief, and considered thought to arise from the active adaptation of the human organism to its environment. The subject of thought is connected to the cognitive structure of a person and reflects his perception. Thinking is linked to a person’s conscious experiences, as well as to his trade-offs with the variables and conditions that surround him. It involves his ability to understand, connect, analyse, absorb and interact with them, in the context of solving problems, satisfying his needs and desires, and understanding things (John Dewey, 2018).

Edward de Bono developed methods of thinking, and described how the mind functions as a self-organized pattern recognition system. It explains how to structure our thinking so that we can create alternative decisions at will. The six thought hats are used by individuals and groups. The blue hat is the control hat. The blue hat sets the agenda, focus, and order, ensures guidelines are followed, and asks for summaries, conclusions, decisions, and action plans. The green hat is for creative thinking and creating new ideas, alternatives. The red hat is all about emotions, intuitions and instincts. The red hat evokes emotions without justification. The yellow hat is for a positive view of things. The black hat identifies the danger. It is used for critical judgment and must provide reasonable grounds for concerns. The white hat is all about information (Edward de Bono, 2008).

The way a person thinks determines their identity. Thinking is an identifying element that is constantly developing and increases self-confidence and strengthens the mentality of research and criticism, allows a person to set goals and develop social relationships with others. A person's identity includes their characteristics, abilities, beliefs, morals, likes and dislikes. A person's ability to define themselves usually reflects both their self-esteem and determination about what they want from life (Herman, W.E., 2011).

Critical thinking is not limited to developing just one field. It is a global issue that concerns all sectors, skills and businesses, as it is important for the development of technology, innovation, economy, science, democracy and other sectors on which societies are based, and helps to regenerate, grow, evolve and create wealth (Daniel, T. O., et al 2013).

Thinking of migrants and refugees as third parties, the experience of leaving their country does not necessarily reflect who they are, what specific country or region they come from, what language group they belong to, or whether they share a common culture, since individual decisions are a fundamental component of migration. People move abroad for a number of individual reasons, from the most tragic to the most fascinating. Decisions to stay or return depend on individual consideration (Nature Human Behaviour, 2019).

It should be noted that the identity of a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant cannot be reduced to his legal status alone. Each person is not only defined by his legal status, but also by other qualities e.g. being a teacher, doctor, artist, avid football fan, father, brother, son or mother.

3. THE DIFFERENCE IN THINKING BETWEEN ARABS AND EUROPEANS

The modern Arab is associated with religion, language, social traditions, conservative upbringing and the elements that emerge and shape a system of material-spiritual-economic values and ideas. It is defined by historical events and turning points experienced by their grandfathers and fathers and remembered by generations of Arabs, such as defeat, setback, ominous agreement and others that instilled in the Arab mind a sense of humiliation. He lives and is brought up in the present. With the evolution of modern technological means, the "forbidden" was the first thing that attracted the interest of new generations through search engines, especially for topics that are not mentioned in textbooks or family discussions (Arab Democratic Center, 2020).

Mohammad Abed Al-Jabri (2017) argues that the minds of Arabs think in an organizational way. It reduces things to their value, limits them, and has no room for analysis or prediction. Few can do the opposite, that is, think objectively and analyse. Arabic thought patterns are dominated by negative emotions, panic, anger, feelings of inferiority, humiliation, etc.

The Arab world is experiencing a period of passive thinking. It could be said that in the past, they had a future. Previous generations envisioned a better future and concentrated their efforts on achieving it. Today's Arab world suffers from a future deficit, as ambitious dreams of an alternative and profoundly better future have been reduced or set aside in favour of the short-term goals of maintaining stability, ensuring security, and preventing civil war or state collapse. The Arab world stands in the current reality, disappointed by a cultural heritage, dreaming and hoping for a new day that will restore the bad feelings it is experiencing. He clings to the old by singing its glory. Sometimes the Arab does not find himself holding a valuable position in the midst of current productive, material and cognitive prosperity, nor in the global arena.

Religious authority represents one of the most important actors in Arab thought. Influenced by religious discourse, as it exerts a direct and indirect force by moving the compass to establish the pillars of its sovereignty, the sanctification of individuals, not ideas – like many movements in Arab societies – gains its power from the presence of its founders. Religious texts and the ritual influence of religious teachings without their practical application as an example of virtuous behaviour, limit the Arab mind. On the other hand, press freedoms have been severely curtailed in Arab nations. Governments control and censor the media, aiming on the one hand to prevent critical discourse and, on the other, to subordinate citizens to their political will, with the consequence that the horizons of their thoughts are trapped in darkness (Shahira Fahmy and Thomas J. Johnson, 2007).

The Arab has been known since antiquity for erotic poetry with which he compensated for his rapid life, the disasters and wars he has endured over the centuries, which have led Arabs to be among the most emotional people. The ruling regimes realized and exploited the role of emotional discourse in disrupting the logical analysis of the mind, to control citizens easily using resonant phrases and emotional words that move the people. It suffices to recall the sermon of Gamal Abdul Al-Nasser, who, upon announcing his resignation, prompted the masses to take to the streets, refusing his resignation, and demanding that he remain in office.

The thinking of European citizens includes values, such as the achievements of the arts, painting, architecture, literature, and music, while substantive thinking includes values of a free, modern democratic society, and its evolution. Protestant thought in Europe was a diverse intellectual and political revolution, and exerted influence on European history. Protestant religious diversity produced political mores and effective governance, while most believed that government had a role in promoting certain doctrines by supporting and protecting religion without being a burden on freedoms (Wolfe, Stephen Michael, 2020).

The humanistic worldview originated in ancient Greece and was resurrected during the renaissance of antiquity and the humanistic thought that followed. It starts with the thought of giving value to one person (humanistic thinking) and ends with the thought of giving value to all people (human rights). It is a worldview made by the people for the people. Today's humanist thinking is being reintroduced from the era of "humanism. This ideal is characterized by an awareness of human dignity. Today's European thought is represented by a shift from the theocentric worldview (God is the center of everything) of the Middle Ages, to the anthropocentric worldview of the modern era that puts man at the center of everything. Humanist thinking instigated transformations regarding the state and religion. Man leaves the collectivity of subjects and becomes an independent individual in relation to the state, and leaves the collectivity of believers and becomes an independent individual in relation to religion. Today's Europeans and supporters of European values accept and appreciate thoughts and actions about universal human rights, democratic principles, judgment based on reason, separation of politics and religion, and man as a measure of all things. They think and act in a humane way, rationally, secularly, democratically and respecting the rule of law (European Values. Info, 2010).

As far as Europeans' thinking on the migrant-refugee issue is concerned, many Europeans see migrants as a force that strengthens their countries, and not as a burden. Among them, are some of the largest immigrant host countries in the world: The United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia. In contrast, the majority in countries such as Hungary, Greece, South Africa, and Russia see migrants as a burden on their countries (Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, Philip Conner, 2019).

4. THE PERCEPTIONS OF ARABS AND EUROPEANS

Scientists have been interested in the mental activities that man carries out in different life situations, such as thinking, paying attention, perceiving, remembering. Ancient philosophers had tried many times to explain these intellectual activities. Similarly, scholars, philosophers, and thinkers continued to develop interpretive theories in successive times. However, the precise meaning of perception has never been sufficient. Regarding the general definition of perception, it is a mental and psychological process that enables a person to understand the external world and grasp the meanings and connotations of things, organizing sensory stimuli, to interpret and formulate conceptual abilities.

Perception is the primary form of human cognitive contact with the world. Conceptual knowledge is based on or derived from the primary form of awareness. Consequently, the term "perception" implies a form of awareness. Culture influences the processes and dimensions of perception, and creates diversity of perception, based on previous studies of perception and intercultural communication. Beliefs, values and attitudes are the main cultural factors that cause the diversity of perception (Efron, R, 1969).

People have different perceptions in the way they express themselves. Migrants and refugees living in a new country initially find it difficult to understand the perceptions of citizens of the new society. For example, gestures can be particularly annoying, or they can mean something quite different from what is intended. Gestures are culturally shaped and give different interpretations. Also, silence can be interpreted as a sign of agreement, lack of interest or negative emotions, but silence can be interpreted differently in different cultures. In addition, people's different perceptions of space may be reflected in the physical distance they maintain during communication. It is well known that Arabs tend to interact more closely than North

Westerners, and when an Arab is near to an American who will be forced to retreat, the Arab may perceive this reaction as abrupt and rude, which makes him quite irritated while Americans perceive it differently, and keep some physical distance away from others due to the fact that American culture emphasizes more individualism. Finally, people often perceive time quite differently. Some see time accurately and expect others to be accurate. In Arab countries, the whole system may be as slow as buses and trains. They may not be conscious of time, whereas in England, they believe that time should be used in a correct and wise way as much as possible (OU Qiong, 2017).

Today's Arabs hold a negative view on the performance of their governments in foreign, economic policies, and public services. They believe that corruption is widespread. Citizens' perceptions of the extent of corruption in their countries are high in both the public and private sectors. The principles of law do not apply equally between citizens. Certain groups are treated more favourably. Consequently, the principle of justice is not being respected. Moreover, Arab political participation is limited. The majority believe that democracy is incompatible with Islam, although a large part of the Arab world disagrees with the view that their society is not ready for the implementation of the democratic system. Most describe themselves as religious. The Arab public is divided over what the way forward should look like (Arab center Washington, 2020).

In the perception of the Arab migrant-refugee, regarding the decision to migrate, several factors interact. Primary is the role of the family, which can support or hinder his decision to move to another place (Fayrouz Fawzi, 2018).

Also, the wider immigration industry that provides its services to the irregular migrant to help him move (including smugglers, employment agencies or employers) and finally, enforcement by other control bodies (border guards, escape routes, etc.) that make movement difficult (Augustova, K., Carrapico, H., & Obradović-Wochnik, J., 2021).

In the news discourse about perceptions and the way news presents Arab men and Arab women, they believe that press reports about other cultures are usually inaccurate. Moreover, they believe, most people in the United States and Europe have a negative perception of Arabs (Mustafa-Awad, Z., & Kirner-Ludwig, M, 2017).

The vast majority of the recent refugee crisis since 2015 has come from Arab countries, which are underestimated compared to other socio-ethnic groups. Cultural, sociopolitical, psychological, religious and economic are forms of social relations that make Arab integration possible but extremely difficult. The lack of positive assessments of Islam creates a negative climate of representation that Arab immigrants have to negotiate (Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, Marta Pachocka, Jan Misiuna, 2019).

In Europe, with references to peace, cosmopolitanism and its values, the dominant perception of Europeanness among debaters is based, precisely, on the disappearance of the EU's internal borders. European identity has reached not insignificant levels between countries and can be subdivided into two distinct components, urban and cultural (Michael Bruter, 2007)

Most European citizens understand that the EU's main contribution is economic in nature: economic stability and freedom of movement. The frustration is evident because the EU has not matched its ambitions addresses? the challenges of their everyday concerns and real needs, such as migration, complexity, bureaucracy, and lack of information. The European Union's perception of international relations is not consistently shared, but varies in relation to the geographical area and the range of activities it undertakes. Regarding the national and political identity of European integration, there is concern about the EU's interference in national culture that is gradually increasing, such as the imposition of immigrants who see it as a perceived threat to the common European identity. (European Committee of the Regions, 2018).

Views on migration do not differ dramatically between regions. Southern Europeans are slightly more positive about immigration overall, and believe that immigrants in their country contribute to local communities, while Eastern Europeans are more negative. Young Europeans see the issue of migration as one of the most serious problems facing the whole world, and give priority to solving it (Allison Dunne, Daan Bijwaard, 2021).

The causes of anti-immigrant attitudes are largely lack of familiarity and fear of value conflict. The threat to cultural-national identity, traditions and culture can lead to negative emotions and even conflict. Restrictive policies have proven to reduce? support for integration efforts, and extensive media coverage of migration has contributed to negative attitudes towards migrants. Competition between people for economic and social goods creates negative impacts on migration within? the labour market. Also, factors that shape the perception towards migrants-refugees are negative stereotypes and emotions. In addition, vulnerable groups, such as the unemployed, low-paid, and semi-educated may feel threatened by the presence of migrants on an individual level. Nevertheless, contact with immigrants on a personal level can reduce negative perceptions (Kostas Rontos, et al, 2022).

It is noted that such perceptions or promotion of such images by groups and extreme political parties of nationalist or religious character do not help at all in the process of integration of migrants and refugees in European countries.

5. THE MISCONCEPTION AND STEREOTYPES IN MIGRATION

Hans Rosling, in his book Fact fullness, pointed out a series of psychological and cognitive biases that underlie poor perception of the world. We tend to understand the world through simple and intuitive thinking through fascinating and simplified stories. We have the tendency to perceive the world as a struggle between good and evil and consider controversial issues through division into two camps. We must look at the areas of agreement between the two parties. The misconception affects the interactive relations (cooperative and confrontational) between individuals and it also affects international relations at three levels: The first level: states and the official relations of countries and their foreign policies are influenced by how each country perceives the actions of other countries and then creates interactions characterized by conflict, cooperation or neutrality. The second level, the level of people. People develop mental images among themselves which affect social, cultural and commercial relations between individuals either positively on. These are greatly influenced by decision-makers and according to trends in public opinion. As for the third level, it concerns non-state actors, where poor knowledge or its quality plays with their view of the world, and then with their thoughts and beliefs, ending with the pattern of behavior to achieve goals (Hans Rosling, et al, 2018).

Psychologist David Schneider defined stereotypes as beliefs formed about people or groups; for example, stereotypes can also exist about objects like cars or trees. Thus, the stereotype that arises in individuals often stem from personal experiences with the other party, leading to generalizations, which in turn contributes to the phenomenon of "misperception". The stereotype about another party can have other causes? such as socialization, education and the role of religious institutions, which resort to presenting a false stereotype about different groups for them (David J. Schneider, 2004).

The sociologist Norbert Elias presented a study on the mechanisms of social exclusion and how societies use stereotypes and rumors, in addition to strengthening identity to elevate it, for example, through the so-called historical heritage, at the expense? of the degradation and marginalization of other societies (Elias, N., &; Scotson, J. L, 1994).

The most common stereotypes about immigrants today that affect people's way of thinking and behaving are crime and terror. The most serious concern about immigration today is the fear that immigrants bring crime and terror to the new country. The spread of the anti-immigrant meme and the simultaneous increase in hate speech and violence towards migrants are part and parcel of a new culture of intolerance and prejudice. That is the dehumanization of migrants and the stigmatization of their children and anti-immigrant narratives that portray newcomers as criminals, drug dealers, human traffickers and terrorists. Although the power of this meme is extraordinary, it is largely without data: the preponderance of evidence suggests that immigrants are much less likely to commit crimes than comparable samples of non-immigrants. The role of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination in forming opinions creates negative impacts on migrants and their children, as well as negative consequences for civil society. The stereotypical threat is a psychological condition with detrimental effects on the performance of migrants. Thus, reducing the negative influence of stereotypical threat could help close the achievement gap. Stronger cognitive performance and educational success can increase migrants' opportunities to participate in the societies they inhabit. Moreover, closing the achievement gap of migrants could be an important key to the future prosperity of societies (Steele Claude and Joshua Aronson, 1995).

6. PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATION

When it comes to the goal of migration, migrants understand the desperate uncertainty, the difficult years they lived? in their country before making the decision and the uncertain hope that awaits them in the new country. Aiming at a satisfactory salary, even if the jobs are strange, they think only about the future of their children, in meeting their everyday needs and save money for supporting their families and relatives (Anna Triandafyllidou, 2018).

In the Arab world, citizens consider migration one of the most important issues affecting their country and it has radically changed Europe's politics in recent years. They support the prominence of immigration and see it as a political issue. In the Arab world, citizens show that they do not experience xenophobia strongly in their personal lives, but when it comes to the labour market, there is considerable anti-immigrant sentiment. There are also consistent social predictors of negativity, including age, education, income, and attitudes toward democracy and religiosity.

Arabs in the south of the Mediterranean put economic issues such as unemployment, inflation, corruption, and security issues first. In the eastern Mediterranean, this is less true (Dennison J. and M. Nasr, 2020).

People who migrate face change individually influenced by childhood experiences, age, gender, education, ethnic and religious background, culture in the country of origin, reasons for moving, traumatic experiences, living conditions, length of period they have to wait for asylum and related uncertainty, attitudes towards migrants, as well as the presence or lack of social support (Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. A, 2005).

The perception of migrants is usually aimed at and limited to improving their lives. They may move to another country to study, to secure a better future for the whole family, or simply to spread their wings in a new environment. However, they usually had the time and opportunity to plan their departure, say goodbye to their loved ones, and organize their decision data. In the country where they flee, attitudes towards her become more realistic after some time after experiencing the daily problems that arise. Access to education or finding a job is difficult. At this stage, they usually feel bad and suffer from various types of ailments. Feelings of loneliness and frustration are common, and they begin to wonder about the correctness of their decision. Did I make the right choice? Continuity is expressed through psychosomatic reactions, fatigue, weakness, frustration, despair, irritation, bitterness, anger, hatred, aggression, insomnia and fear. Gradually, they begin to see positive things in the new country and have a more positive attitude towards the future. They begin to regain faith in the ability to cope even when there are difficulties. They invest both emotionally and in action, starting to build lasting relationships and interact with the new society (Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. A, 2005).

It is worth noting that there are contradictory attitudes in the perception towards migration. They are the ones who have negative attitudes, and the others who believe that immigration is good for their country. Attitudes towards migration are ambiguous, depending on economic, social, political or cultural factors. In addition, they vary according to the religious group to which they belong or place of origin. As a result, negative stereotypes about migrants portray them as untrustworthy, prone to criminal activities and taking up jobs.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The debate related to refugee integration often revolves around cultural differences in thinking and perceptions, especially differences related to values, which play a big role in social inclusion. Immigrants from distant countries increase the heterogeneity of values. In contrast, theories of acculturation and assimilation argue that values are not static constructions, but are subject to change and transformation.

The integration process includes the interaction of the migrant-refugee with the new society. The immigrant is nothing but a person who grew up in a country that still bears his traces in his sad memory, and grew up in a society whose characteristics are still present in most situations, therefore he cannot suddenly identify with any society, No matter how close he is to his mind and thought, ?this immigrant must part with his emotions if he is really willing to settle and adapt to the new country with its positive and negative elements, and among the members of the new society. As for the way of thinking and perceptions of the new country that contradict the belief, thought or nature of his behavior, no one can force him to integrate into them, especially, the countries that guarantee and respect the freedom of individuals, regardless of religion, belief, race or colour, etc.

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THE EFFECTS OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN LUXURIOUS HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

Customer relationship management (CRM) can be defined as the approaches, practices, or technologies used by an organization to manage the relationship with customers. The implementation of CRM in a luxury hotel can have positive or negative effects on the business. Positive effects of CRM include increased customer loyalty, revenues, customer satisfaction, and reduced costs of guest acquisition. The negative effects of CRM include increased cost of operation as the CRM systems require maintenance and can have high initial costs. Customer trust may also be reduced due to the increased tracking and collection of customers' personal information.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Customer Loyalty, Customer Retention, Information Technology, Customer-Centric Service, Luxury Hotels.

1. INTRODUCTION

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an important strategy used by businesses to improve performance, customer retention, and customer satisfaction. CRM is a technology-enabled process and utilizes technology to capture data used to improve customer experience. In the luxury hotel industry, many hotels utilize CRM as a tool to gain competitive advantage and improve profitability (Al-Azzam, 2016). CRM can also be described as a framework consisting of principles, managerial, and conceptual aspects. CRM takes advantage of increasing number of tech-savvy customers who use the digital space to research, make purchases, and seek feedback on products and services. Luxury hotels can access the data shared by customers online, enabling them to analyze customer spending habits, preferences, experiences, and attitude towards services and products offered. The effective utilization of CRM by luxury hotels can result in various outcomes including increased revenues as a result of higher customer retention rates, increased customer loyalty and customer satisfaction hence willingness to spend more on the services offered, and streamlined marketing and sales activities. CRM can also contribute to increased customer loyalty as hotels can use the information gained from analyzing customer behavior to develop individualized services and products for clients. Improved customer service can also be a direct effect of the implementation of CRM strategies. Luxury hotels can use

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CRM software to track customer interactions and customer reviews of the services offered and identify ways of addressing issues undermining quality service delivery (Nguyen, 2012). Reduced guest acquisition costs can also result from hotels using CRM systems to improve customer service and customer targeting strategies. Rather than spending a lot of money on general marketing campaigns, luxury hotels can use CRM systems to segment customers and develop different marketing strategies that target specific potential customer segments where the hotels are likely to get the highest number of customers. This paper provides a detailed discussion on the effects of customer relationship management in luxury hotels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer relationship management (CRM) has become a critical element of business success in the hotel industry. Parvatiyar and Sheth (2001) define CRM as a process involving the acquisition, retention and partnering with selective customers to establish superior value for both the consumer and the business. Debnath, Datta, and Mukhopadhyay (2016) note that CRM was developed as an attempt to enhance relationship marketing where businesses could establish long-term relationship with customers to increase profitability. The success of CRM as a marketing strategy in the hotel industry has contributed to its increased utilization by hotels and it has captured the attention of many scholars. According to Sofi et al. (2020), the CRM strategy enables hotels to seek, collect, and store the right information, and share it to enable the organization to provide personalized and unique customer experience. However, the positive effects of CRM can only be achieved if managers and those tasked with its implementation, have at least basic understanding and knowledge of CRM (Mohammadhossein and Zakaria, 2012). Xu et al. (2002) categorized CRM into three functional areas: marketing, sales, and services and support. These three areas also form the life cycle of customer relationship and an understanding of the functions makes it easier to integrate the appropriate technology to support and maintain the CRM process.

The effects of customer relationship management (CRM) have been subject of research by many scholars. Sofi et al. (2020) note that effective utilization of CRM by hotels significantly improved customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, CRM helps luxury hotels to remain in close contact with their customers and obtain feedback that can be used to provide individualized services and products to enhance customer experiences, which translates to better customer satisfaction (Angamuthu, 2015). Maintaining close contact with customers also allows luxury hotels to receive feedback and recommendations from customers on how they can improve the services offered. Another key effect of CRM is increased revenues for the luxury hotels that results from the increased sales, higher customer retention rates, and reduced costs of acquiring new customers (Bhakane, 2015). The increased revenues are often experienced as long-term effects of effective utilization of CRM approaches (Bhakane, 2015). CRM can also result in a reduction in the cost of acquiring new customers. This is achieved through an increase in customer referrals by satisfied customers who recommend their acquaintances utilize analogous services. Additionally, CRM facilitates more precise customer targeting during marketing campaigns.

CRM can also negatively affect a business in different ways. Nguyen (2012) notes that more advanced CRM systems track the activities of customers, including their movements, expenses, purchases, and spending patterns, which has led to increased privacy concerns among customers. Nguyen, Simkin, and Canhoto (2015) also established that the use of CRM software to track and reward customer loyalty can result in unfairness where certain customers receive better offers and rewards than others, resulting in reduced trust and concerns about discrimination and favoritism. Implementing CRM strategies can also be costly, especially when acquisition of expensive software and hiring of more staff to manage the systems is required (Kumar and Reinartz, 2018). The implementation of CRM strategies can also reduce customer trust if customers perceive themselves being exploited by the CRM systems adopted by a business (Nguyen and Mutum, 2012). It is therefore important that hotels demonstrate how the customer benefits from sharing their personal information with the hotel. High costs of purchasing and maintain CRM systems is also a major drawback. Kumar and Reinartz (2018) note that some CRM systems are very expensive to purchase and maintain since they require businesses to pay premium subscription fees. The high cost of maintenance can also arise from the need to train employees on how to use the systems.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Commitment-Trust Theory

Trust and commitment are important in the establishment and maintenance of firm-customer relationship. When businesses establish trust and commitment with clients, there is a high likelihood of obtaining positive results due to increased efficiency (Wu et al., 2012). For a business to establish and maintain relationships with customers, the business must have a commitment based on trust. Relationship marketing succeeds through the formation of bonds with customers which result from businesses satisfying customers' needs (Wu et al., 2012).

The theory also states that businesses should focus on establishing long-lasting relationships with customers that can guarantee sustained profitability rather than short-term profits. This theory can justify the implementation of CRM practices in luxury hotels where the hotels can forgo short-term profits by investing heavily on customer service and enhancing customer satisfaction which will guarantee higher customer loyalty and retention rates. Once a hotel establishes trust with customers, the likelihood of such customers using the services offered frequently is high. The satisfied customers are also likely to refer their friends to the hotel resulting in lower guest acquisition costs and increased revenues (Wu et al., 2012).

3.2 Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is founded on the belief that the relationship between two individuals is influenced by a cost-benefit analysis process (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Individuals analyze the benefits gained and loses incurred from their participation in a relationship and this influences their willingness to form and maintain the relationship. In this case, customers analyze the costs and benefits of their encounters with service providers (luxury hotels), and make up their minds on whether or not they should continue the relationship with the hotel. Customers also compare different alternatives and are more likely to identify an alternative where they get the highest benefits and least costs.

For luxury hotels, customer experience is the greatest indicator of benefits, and a hotel that offers customers the best experience and highest level of satisfaction can be perceived as the most beneficial partner. The theory suggests that customers are likely to maintain relationship with hotels when they find the relationship beneficial (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). CRM can be used to increase the benefits for customers by collecting data from the customers and using the information to provide personalized products and services that satisfy each customer’s need.

4. EFFECTS OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

A. Positive Effects of CRM

4.1 Improved Customer Service

The primary focus of CRM is improving customer service. The hotel industry is highly competitive and customers often have a wide range of options to choose from. As a result, the type and level of customer service offered by a hotel significantly influence whether or not it will attract new customers and retain current customers. CRM is founded on the idea that the “customer is king” and emphasizes on customer-centric services (Kim et al., 2012). A CRM system enables luxury hotels to understand what customers need, including the services and products that they are interested in. According to Sahoo (2011), the majority of the customers seeking services from luxury hotels are not interested in the price offered, rather they are more concerned about the customer experience. Thus, the success of a luxury hotel is largely dependent on its ability to go above and beyond the expectations of the customers and deliver a great experience. Customer experience is an important brand differentiator in the luxury hotel industry and influences the buying decisions of customers more than product and price.

Customer feedback is key to identifying which services or products contribute to or negatively affect customer experience. For luxury hotels to obtain feedback from customers, they must establish and maintain meaningful communication, which can be effectively achieved using CRM.

According to Stirtz (2008), each contact between a business and its customers will influence the customer's decision as to whether or not they will seek the services again. Thus, every time a customer has a great experience the business increases its chance of retaining the customer, while every bad experience or interaction makes the business to lose customers. Using CRM, luxury hotels can keep in touch with customers and ensure that each interaction with the customer enhances their experience with the hotel. Hotels can keep track of previous activities, purchases, and conversations with the customers and identify concerns raised by the customers. The feedback can then be used to inform decisions such as introduction of new services or improvement of existing services. Additionally, since most clients who use luxury hotels have individual preferences, keeping in touch with customers ensures that the hotel designs personalized services that suit each customer's needs (Hardiono and San, 2017). The use of CRM software to segment customers also helps luxury hotels to improve customer service by identifying the needs of each group, and provide communication that is suitable for each segment rather than sending the same type of information to all consumers.

4.2 Increased Revenue

The goal of every business is to generate revenue that is sufficient to sustain operations and profits for the business owners. Business operations in the hotel sector tend to be seasonal with peaks and lows, making it necessary for luxury hotels to identify ways of attracting customers throughout the year to boost sales. Operational CRM can be used by hotels to streamline and automate sales making it easier to track each purchase. This enhances accountability and transparency and the hotel can maintain a record of revenues earned (Nguyen and Mutum, 2012). Additionally, streamlining and automating sales reduces unnecessary loses as all revenues earned are captured and recorded. This can translate to higher revenues for the hotel.

CRM enables hotels to customize or individualize the services and products offered which results in an increase in the perceived value. Since there is a direct association between perceived value and perceived quality, an increase in the perceived value of the services and products offered by luxury hotels results in increased perceived quality by customers, hence increasing customer satisfaction (Bhakane, 2015). As a result of the increase in perceived quality, more customers will be willing to pay more for the services or products offered by a hotel translating to higher revenues.

Additionally, customers are more likely to be loyal to a hotel that offers services that they perceive to be of higher quality and worth the amount they are paying. Increased customer loyalty and customer retention means more returned customers and higher likelihood of customers increasing their spending on services offered. This results in long-term profitability as the hotels will have more customers frequently purchasing the services and products offered. The increased revenues also result from increased number of customers from referrals by customers who had a great experience at the luxury hotels. CRM enables hotels to also reward customers for referrals.

4.3 Improved Efficiency

The use of CRM can lead to improved efficiency in the management and operation of luxury hotels. CRM enables luxury hotels to keep track of all activities, including sales, marketing, and communication with customers. Since CRM focuses on establishing a customer-centric approach to service delivery, keeping track of marketing and communication with customers ensures that the hotel can identify areas that require improvement to enhance customer experience (Hardjono and San, 2017). For instance, CRM can enable segmentation of customers which can then inform marketing decisions where each customer segment can be targeted with specific marketing approaches and messages that appeal most to their preferences. Specific marketing approaches targeting different customer segments enhance the efficiency of a hotel’s marketing strategies as it increases the chances of the message reaching a larger number of customers who are more likely to be interested in the advertised services or products (Bhakane, 2015). Improved efficiency in marketing approaches also results from the reduced spamming of clients especially when using emails to reach customers. Luxury hotels ensure that they only send messages that are most relevant based on client preferences, rather than sending general messages to all customers.

CRM systems can help luxury hotels automate many tasks including marketing, tracking sales and booking records, and records of customer interactions. Automation streamlines hotel operations making it easier for the management and employees to execute their duties resulting in improved efficiency. For instance, most hotels have adopted automated booking systems that allows customers to select their preferred services and book in advance through smartphone applications or via a phone call or email. The CRM system enables the persons handling the booking appointments to quickly access the customer’s preferences based on previous visits and recommendations and also available offers that are individualized for the customer. At the same time, the automated system can send a report to the sales department and marketing department on the type of service ordered, enabling data collection by the departments (Hardjono and San, 2017). Improved efficiency also results from enhanced communication between the hotels and customers. Using the CRM systems, luxury hotels can automate communications enabling them to send reminders and emails to customers about their booking.

4.4 Improved Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is an important element of success in the luxury hotel industry as it translates to high customer retention rates and profitability. Customer loyalty refers to the behavioral and attitudinal tendencies of customers towards a specific brand over others offering similar services or products (Debnath, Datta, and Mukhopadhyay, 2016). Through CRM, luxury hotels can influence the attitudes and behaviors of customers towards their brands through the services provided, performance, and overall customer experience. The hotels utilize CRM to capture customer data such as booking history, preferences, and spending habits while also tracking customer interactions over time. The data enables the hotels to understand each customer's preferences and design services and products that are most suitable for them (Hardjono and San, 2017). Additionally, the data can be used to guide decisions on special offers and discounts as the hotels can tailor such offers to suit the individual needs of the customers. Data such as customer contacts is also collected using CRM and utilized by hotels to establish relationships with customers by remaining in contact and frequently updating on existing offers and discounts (Angamuthu, 2015). For instance, most luxury hotels give customers options to subscribe to frequent updates through emails or text messages on offers and discounts, new services, and availability of specific services. CRM practices like customer orientation strategies, customer relationship upgrading, and customer interaction management practices also enhance customer loyalty as hotels demonstrate to customers that they value them and are determined to provide the best customer experience. Overall, the hotel's customization efforts rely on the ability of the hotel to utilize information collected from customers and learn how it can develop successful strategies that coordinate marketing, customer service, and high-quality services.

Understanding customer behavior and intentions is a key to establishing the effect of variables like gender, age, education, job level, and marital status on customer loyalty. There are significant differences in customer preferences across different demographic segments which influence customer loyalty (Banga, Kumar, and Goyal, 2013). Understanding what each customer segment wants enables luxury hotels to design services and products that address the needs and preferences of each segment. Since luxury hotels often offer premium services and products at a significantly higher price, they must demonstrate to the customer, why the service or product being offered is worth spending more on. By understanding the needs and preferences of each customer segment, the hotels can establish a wide range of services that can further be personalized to suit individual needs. Additionally, customer segmentation using data from CRM software allows luxury hotels to personalize marketing communication, where the business keeps in touch with its customers through different channels and communicates different messages that are most relevant to each consumer. This helps in strengthening the connection between the business and its customers which can influence their loyalty towards the business.

CRM enables luxury hotels to establish effective customer reward programs that also enhance customer loyalty. For instance, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has a membership program called "Fans of M.O." that allows individuals to apply for and get granted membership that allows them to qualify for benefits and discounts when staying at the luxury hotel. Individuals who sign up for the program provide consent for the hotel to collect and use their personal information to improve services offered by the hotel (Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group Limited, 2018). The consent also ensures that customers and the hotel have an agreement that can also be used in legal processes in case the hotel uses the data for purposes other than what has been agreed in the terms and conditions signed by the customers. Such provisions also serve to protect customers' privacy and ensure that hotels collecting customer data can be hold accountable if they fail to secure the collected data. Furthermore, customers are likely to consent to hotels collecting their personal information if they have a guarantee that legal action can be taken against the business if they use the data or collect other information apart from what the customer consents. For customers who do not wish to have their information collected, the consent form also ensures that there is a record of them rejecting in intent to collect their personal information. Through such programs, luxury hotels not only keep in touch with customers, but also reward them for using their services, and hence, customers feel more valued and loyal to the brand.

4.5 Reduce Guest Acquisition Costs

Marketing is one of the most expensive and critical determinants of success in the hotel industry. Luxury hotels spend millions on marketing campaigns to create awareness of the services offered and establish a strong market presence which is critical in attracting new customers. Giglio et al. (2020) notes that luxury hotels spend a significant amount of money on marketing to establish a strong market presence, and have to continuously advertise their services to keep attracting new customers and retain existing ones. The use of CRM can reduce guest acquisition costs in several ways. First, through more specific marketing campaigns that target specific customer segments or individuals. By targeting more high-value and potential customers, luxury hotels can ensure that they maximize the return on investment since the majority of those targeted by the advertisement are individuals who are likely to purchase the services offered. Additionally, the use of customer targeting advertisements such as emails can reduce the costs of marketing as they are cheaper than non-specific marketing strategies like television advertisements and newspapers. Secondly, CRM focuses on increasing customer satisfaction rates which can promote free word-of-mouth advertisements by customers to friends. When customers are satisfied with the services offered by a certain hotel, they are more likely to recommend it to friends seeking similar services, and by doing so, the hotel gains new customers through free advertisements. This can also be combined with the referral system where current customers can receive rewards for referring new customers to use the hotel's services.

B. Negative Effects of CRM

4.6 Time Consuming

CRM practices continue evolving and becoming more sophisticated. As a result, implementing CRM solutions can be time consuming especially for first time users. Nguyen (2012) notes that designing individualized marketing approaches using CRM data can take a lot of time as businesses have to analyze data, identify the needs of individual customers, and design offers that suit the needs of each customer. The need to track customer interactions and develop strategies to strengthen long-term customer relationships makes CRM a time-consuming practice.

Additionally, there is significant ambiguity in the definition of a good firm-customer relationship which can contribute to negative perceptions like unfair customer treatment, and hotels have to spend a lot of time trying to design the perfect offer for each customer that would not result in differential treatment of customers (Nguyen, 2012). Training hotel staff on the use of CRM practices and technologies can also be a time-consuming exercise especially when adopting complex technologies that most staff are unfamiliar with. The continuous training required to keep the staff updated on the new technologies adopted by the hotel may require a lot of time and might have an impact on the overall productivity of the hotel if the training is done during working days.

4.7 Expensive

The cost of adopting and integrating CRM can be high especially when acquiring software and other technologies necessary to support all the processes involved. CRM software and systems often require frequent upgrading to ensure they are up-to-date with recent development and when there is a need to manage more data. The process of upgrading can be quite expensive since most hotels outsource such services and rely on third parties to provide and manage the systems. Additionally, CRM systems often require experts to manage the systems and ensure that the data collected is secure. This creates a need to employ more staff which increases the cost of operation for hotels in the long run (Kumar and Reinartz, 2018). Most countries have made it a legal requirement for any business that collects personal information from its customers to establish the highest possible security features that protect the data from access by unauthorized persons. This implies that hotels have to contract data security firms to secure their systems and avoid any legal consequences that arise when data security breaches occur. For instance, in the 2018 incidence where hackers accessed Marriot's reservation data for over 300 million people, the hotel was fined £18.4 million by UK's data privacy watchdog for failing to establish appropriate safeguards (Sangar et al., 2018). Thus, implementing a CRM solution may result in higher costs as a result of the system's failure or external attacks that compromise the safety of customers' personal information. Other costs associated with the use of CRM include subscription fees and customization fees. For some of the software used, hotels have to pay subscription fees that may be charged monthly or annually. Hotels might also need to train their staff on how to use CRM systems resulting in increased cost of operation since the staff might need continuous training to keep up with frequent upgrades and improvements on the system.

4.8 Privacy

The use of CRM involves collecting and analyzing customers' personal information. This can raise concerns about privacy as more businesses track customers and store their personal information even without the knowledge of the customers (Nguyen, 2012). The information collected is not entirely safe and data security breaches often lead to leaking of sensitive client information. Advancements in technology and increased internet use has led to an explosion of spyware that are used by businesses and criminals to track customer behavior online and collect sensitive information about customers (Nguyen, 2012). For instance, in 2018 hackers breached Marriot's reservation database and attempted to steal information of over 300 million people (Sanger et al., 2018). An investigation by the government further established that the majority of hotels collected massive amounts of personal information but failed to establish sufficient safeguards to ensure the information does not fall into the wrong hands (Sanger et al., 2018). Majority of the clients who use luxury hotels are also high-profile individuals who may often want a break from the prying eyes of the public, and by collecting their information and keeping track of their movements, CRM systems infringe such individual's desire and right for privacy. As a result, customers tend to avoid using services offered by hotels that track their activities and personal information. The ambiguity involved in the data collection processes also increases privacy concerns among customers as most software used tend to indiscriminately track customer activities including those that are not directly linked to their interactions with the hotels. For example, some software can even track customers' social media activity to understand their preferences and spending habits. Other customers may resort to keeping their information private or intentionally distort data targeted by the hotels if they feel their information will be misused or used to offer them substandard services.

4.9 Reduced Customer Trust

Customer reward programs which often assess customer loyalty and individualize offers and discounts based on customer's spending habits can negatively affect customer trust. Some customers may find the system unfair where certain individuals are given more favorable and frequents offers than others, which can imply that the hotels consider some customers to be more important than other customers (Nguyen, Simkin, and Canhoto, 2015). CRM enables luxury hotels to offer personalized services, and also personalize the offers and prices for different clients. When customers interact and communicate with each other, they are likely to find out about the deals offered to other customers which may be perceived to be of higher value than what they are being offered (Nguyen, 2012). Customers are also more likely to share their experiences on social media platforms, and those who had negative experiences with the hotels might feel discriminated and intentionally offered substandard services. This differential treatment of customers may therefore negatively affect customer's attitudes and trust towards a brand. Such claims of discriminatory practices may also negatively affect the hotel's public image and repel potential customers. Repeated negative reports by customers and spread of negative word of mouth by customers can reduce the hotel's credibility and discourage new customers from using its services. Since the luxury hotels relies on customer information to improve services offered, it is crucial that hotels engage in dialogue with customers and collaborate to safeguard the information collected as well as identify which information customers are comfortable sharing and which information they consider too sensitive to be shared. Through collaboration with customers, luxury hotels can address most of the privacy issues arising from collection and handling of clients' data and maintain trust with customers.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Customer relationship management is a fundamental element of success for luxury hotels and can influence the success or failure of businesses in the sector. The implementation of customer relationship management is often done to improve a hotel's performance through increased customer loyalty, increased revenues, reduced guest acquisition costs, and improved customer service. CRM software, enable luxury hotels to collect information such as customer purchasing behavior, preferences, feedback on services, and customer contact information, which can be analyzed to better understand what customers want and enable the luxury hotels to offer more personalized services (Mohammadhossein and Zakaria, 2012). The end goal is to enhance customer experience and customer satisfaction so that as to increase customer retention and also gain new customers through referrals. The high competition in the luxury hotel sector means that customers have many alternatives and hotels must strive to prove to the customers why the services offered are worth the customer's attention. CRM presents an opportunity for luxury hotels to gain competitive advantage by establishing and strengthening relationships with customers to promote customer loyalty and customer retention (Hardjono and San, 2017). However, the implementation of CRM can result in some drawbacks such as increased cost of operation when hotels have to acquire expensive software and machines, hiring of IT staff, and outsourcing data security services. Other potential negative effects include reduced customer trust due to increased tracking of customer information and infringement of customer's privacy when collecting personal information for individualization of services or market research (Nguyen, 2012). Based on the drawbacks identified in this paper, future research can focus on identifying ways of addressing the drawbacks such as privacy issues associated with collection of customers' personal information and ways that luxury hotels can avoid losing customers' trust when using CRM solutions.

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EFFICIENCY AND TRENDS OF BOUTIQUE HOTELS' MAINTENANCE: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing how maintenance strategies influence the operations of boutique hotels helps the stakeholders solve problems and harness improvements. Under this, this essay takes a qualitative approach to analyze predictive maintenance, sustainability endeavours, skill development of employees, and adoption of innovation. The research also indicates that IoT systems help to change existing processes, AR tools improve how a hotel serves its guests, and renewable energy solutions optimize resource usage. It underscores the drivers of environmental gains and reduced operation costs, operations, thereby presenting AI and blockchain as immensely positive prospects. The study provides research implications that can inform future innovative and competitive activities.

Keywords: Boutique hotels, Maintenance strategies, Predictive maintenance, Sustainability, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Workforce training, Augmented Reality (AR), Renewable energy, Operational efficiency, Guest experience, Technology integration, Cost-benefit analysis, Environmental conservation, Innovation, Partnerships and collaborations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Boutique hotels are stylish, most commonly independent-owned, and smaller than traditional hotels (Buhagiar, Pace, and Dingli, 2023). They first came into the market about twenty years ago, and while their future seemed uncertain because they were not confined to traditional expectations, they have managed to stay afloat over the years. The boutique hotel segment has become more popular over the years because its design, services, and guest experiences are relevant to guests seeking to fulfil their leisure needs due to its ability to offer personalized guest experiences (Braun, 2017). Nevertheless, attaining these high-performance levels necessitates proper maintenance strategies appropriate for their unique operations. Compared with a large hotel conglomerate, boutique hotels typically experience lower financial and human capital, which require creative methods to address maintenance management.

While the maintenance of boutique hotels in most times was complex at the beginning, rapid advancements in technology created optimized solutions for maintenance to be efficient and affordable. Predictive maintenance, for instance, employs big data analysis to track systems in real time to minimize system failures

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(Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). In the same way, IoT devices have transformed the nature of maintenance activities by predicting performance, energy consumption, and risks in hotel equipment (Taylor et al., 2022). All these innovations assist boutique hotels in operating optimally even though they are resource-constrained. Additionally, environmental sustainability is now an inherent part of maintenance practices in the operation of boutique hotels. Using environmental conservation practices enhances the guests' concern with environmental problems and creates value for their stay (Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn, 2024). Maintenance teams are now more than ever involved in implementing business sustainability goals ranging from energy-efficient measures to waste minimization.

This paper seeks to analyze the effectiveness of the key aspects of maintaining boutique hotels, including the current trends, the use of technological solutions and innovations, and approaches to sustainability. This research also explores the nuances of training a workforce and integrating traditions with modern technologies, thus presenting a versatile outlook on this ever-changing field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The available literature on the maintenance of boutique hotels sharply focuses on what experts have long been hinting at: increased managerial awareness of the impact of boutique hotel maintenance on both the administration of the hotel and the impressions guests gain throughout their stay. Compared to setting up larger hotels and hotel chains, boutique hotels come with unique challenges because of their small scale and selected service segments (Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn, 2024). Therefore, they call for specific preservation approaches.

2.1 Predictive maintenance

Predictive maintenance is set up to redefine the management of boutique hotels because it offers solutions long before any known problems occur. Using analytical tools coupled with IoT, the maintenance crews can see probable pitfalls likely to cause expensive failures and solve them before they wreak havoc (Takuatung and Bussracumpakorn, 2023). Takuatung and Bussracumpakorn (2023, p. 173) categorically state that “the power of data helps decision-makers to solve the challenging domain-specific tasks including improving occupancy forecasting, setting competitive room prices, choosing the most profitable distribution channels, optimizing procurement operations, increasing guest loyalty, and identifying and targeting the most profitable guests.” Using predictive maintenance minimizes the frequency of equipment failure and increases the equipment's useful life, thus increasing resource management in boutique hotels. Literature also shows that predictive maintenance leads to significant cost savings in total maintenance expense at a 25% rate and boosts operational productivity by 30% (Ihsan and Alshibani, 2018). Although these statistics are not categorical to boutique hotels, it is important to note that they are a category of hotels and, as such, part of the statistics. If fully implemented, such hotel technologies will result in fewer service interruptions, increasing guest satisfaction and loyalty. Recent technological advancements in the industry have enabled smaller properties to access predictive maintenance more efficiently in recent years. This has made it easier for boutique hotels to implement predictive analytics without having to incur the costs of owning cloud-based platforms today (Ucar, Karakose, and Kırımça, 2024). Such systems provide real-time information on trends and variances and enable hotel managers to act on the arising anomalies.

Similarly, studies found that integrating predictive maintenance with machine learning algorithms can enhance the accuracy of the forecast and help hotels predict equipment failure in the best possible manner (Alotaibi, 2020). All of these have important consequences regarding increased operational dependability and decreased cost. This makes predictive maintenance more applicable in boutique hotels, especially those located in areas with higher tourist traffic because equipment failure and out-of-order signs put in place can cost the business much money. Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers (2023) have shown that predictive analytics has reduced service disruptions by 35 percent in hotel properties in urban regions. Some enhancements of the current predictive maintenance solutions are based on new digital tools like augmented reality to help maintainers during diagnostics and repairs. AR-based systems allow workers to understand internal systems better, overlapping the range of applications with OWL-R and changing repair time by up to 40% (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). Considering the change, it is evident that predictive analytics is an efficient way for boutique hotels to thrive.

2.2 Sustainability initiatives

Given today's pressure on environmentally friendly facilities, sustainable maintenance has gained significant importance in boutique hotels. Sustainable initiatives include the application of energy-efficient systems, flexibility in powering systems through renewable means, and utilization of water efficiency measures (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019; Musau, Mapelu and Njeri, 2024). Other emerging trends that are being applied by the hotel industry include incorporating solar energy systems and increasing the utilization of biodegradable materials in construction and repair. Such measures mitigate the negative effects of environmental pollution and are strategic competitive factors in the competitive environment of boutique hotels (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019). For instance, a few remarkable examples include solar panels put to use in boutique hotels that described the annual energy expense reduction, proving that apart from environmental, some economic stimuli for going sustainable are also effective (Ghimire, Muneenam and Techato, 2023). There are now standards of organic certifications like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or Green Key. Gaining these certificates involves compliance with set energy, water, and waste management standards, which may warrant intersectionality/interdisciplinary coordination (Ghimire, Muneenam and Techato, 2023). The study further states that clientele was willing to return to hotels involved in sustainability practices.

However, sustainability needs a planned and accomplished approach that requires continual evaluation, staff training, and stakeholder engagement. Issues like the high cost of implementation and organizational resistance to change indicate that future sustainability work in boutique hotels must be sensitized in response to the present challenges (Ghimire, Muneenam and Techato, 2023). Moreover, many studies have been carried out on the social dimension of setting up the sustainability of boutique hotels, among them utilizing community engagements and ethical sourcing of materials. These are useful in improving their image and are responsible for what is happening to the environment and society. For example, presently, rural boutique hotels have implemented sustainable maintenance practices with a particular focus on procuring maintenance materials in local markets, thus cutting across transport pollution and promoting the local economy (Johnson and Taylor, 2023). They also appeal to the increasing number of environmentally friendly visitors, increasing guest satisfaction and market standing.

2.3 Workforce training

The workforce plays an important role in influencing the efficiency of the maintenance operations. As such, training skills and knowledge acquisition related to predictive maintenance tools, WCM sustainability procedures, and disaster management enable the staff to effectively meet today's maintenance management challenges (ALOTAIBI, 2020). Practices such as cross-employee training improve the flexibility of the processes and a lack of exclusive specialization in specific roles (ALOTAIBI, 2020; Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). For example, cross-trained employees can coordinate routine and exigent actions in maintaining properties, improving customer satisfaction, and decreasing disruption.

Furthermore, employees also need to pay attention and participate in any of the maintenance programs in order for them to be successful. Research has confirmed that hotels with robust employee involvement and training improvement yield overall performance improvements of 20 percent more than hotels with poorly trained people (Khuong and Phuong, 2024). Providing selective incentives, such as employee recognition programs and professional development opportunities offered to a particular type of employee, can improve the worker's loyalty and thereby suppress turnover intentions.

New advancements in media technologies in learning design have transformed the reach and scale of workforce learning. Ucar, Karakose and Kırımça (2024) explain that the maintenance teams of hotels utilizing these platforms have increased productivity in the first year. Other elements of training focus on culturally appropriate themes, especially for brands in international settings, especially boutiques. This has dire consequences for service delivery and guest satisfaction since procedures are improved when different guest expectations are well understood and incorporated into the maintenance.

2.4 Integration of technology and traditional practices

Integrating technology with ordinary maintenance concepts effectively solves the problem of integrating innovation and personalized service in boutique hotels. For example, IoT systems perform routine maintenance tasks, leaving human staff to attend to other matters, such as improving the guest experience. (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023; Ucar, Karakose and Kırımça, 2024). Case studies highlight the effectiveness of hybrid maintenance strategies in selected boutique hotels. An example of this is the application of sensors on the Internet of Things (IoT) to manage room temperatures and control HVAC demand with 20% less energy required from the guests while satisfying their comfort (Intelius, 2024). On the other hand, private area inspections, for example, guarantee that the customers are provided with individual solutions in the spirit of a boutique hotel offering (Anderson and Lee, 2023).

However, one area that still has problems is integrating technology with face-to-face communication. This relates to Roberts and Smith's conclusion to avoid overdependence on technology to limit actions that might make guests feel inadequate (p. 23). This is where staff training and feedback from guests on the services they render come into play. Other technologies like blockchain also find applications in other boutique hotel maintenance areas. Maintenance arrangements benefit from blockchain systems because they offer reliable and precise records of all work done and efficiently deal with vendors (Kokkhangplu and Auemsuvarn, 2024). Thus, integration of technology into hotel practices is the way to go.

2.5 Guest experience and feedback in maintenance

Research shows a significant relationship between feedback-based maintenance and guest experience. As earlier stated, people prefer boutique hotels due to their ability to offer personalized experiences. As such, regular maintenance assures positive attitudes from patrons and return clientele (Crossman, 2024). The feedback collected from the guests helps point out some maintenance issues that might not have been noticed in the first place. Concerns can be handled effectively and, most importantly, on time through feedback mechanisms like post-stay surveys or real-time apps for maintenance work teams. For instance, several boutique hotels adopted mobile applications through which guests can order maintenance services and report various problems to the maintenance team, which adds value for the guests and increases response rates (Wang, 2024). Dedicating feedback to executing the maintenance plan increases efficiency and generates loyalty between the hotelier and their customers to offer a better view of the hospitality industry.

2.6 A comparison between maintenance techniques

Comparing boutique hotels to some big hotel chains, unique features are apparent about maintenance or lack of it. Big chains have an edge in size; they can afford to invest huge sums in high-end technology and large maintenance staff (Quadri-Felitti, Sa and Day, 2022). On the other hand, most boutique hotels work with less substantial budgets and fewer employees, which also means that their solutions are inspired while being more concise. For example, whereas a large chain may have a proprietary system related to maintenance schedules, boutique hotels may have to depend on inexpensive third-party applications. Nevertheless, several limitations exist in these aspects, and boutique hotels may be extremely effective in utilizing flexible solutions. This makes adopting innovations such as Internet of Things (IoT) devices and practices such as predictive maintenance much more manageable. Comparing the above strategies, one realizes that the only solutions that make the most impact while demanding the least resources will be what boutique hotels have to use (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). In light of this, the comparative analysis implies that boutique hotels must remain relevant and flexible in the market.

2.7 Difficulties and constraints in processes

While advanced maintenance strategies are undisputably helpful to the success of boutique hotels, their implementations pose unique challenges to this segment of hotels. Lack of funds is one major challenge because the cost of acquisition of things such as IoT devices and software for predictive maintenance is high (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). Moreover, a scarcity of technical skills within the workforce constitutes unproductive implementation. This lack is often tied to boutique hotels, which usually have fewer workers due to their earning capacity. Other challenges boutique hotels face are the staff members in their upkeep division and other professionals responsible for maintenance, who are stubborn and set in their traditional upkeep strategies. Some of these challenges include access to technology and skilled technicians; this can be made worse by geographical barriers such as distances. Therefore, the solution to these challenges requires a comprehensive approach (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). For instance, free or subsidized prices from technology providers may act as an opportunity to redesign and develop new payment arrangements. Consequently, the skill gap can be closed during training programs designed for boutique hotel employees to handle new technologies. Through early identification and management of these challenges, boutique hotels can fully leverage the proposed maintenance approaches' proposed improvements.

2.8 Maintenance trends for boutique hotels

A perspective for the further development of boutique hotel maintenance is based on the use of modern technologies and the principles of sustainable development. One can expect significant advancements to occur in Artificial Intelligence (AI), which means that predictive algorithms can be even more accurate in carrying out their functions (Gidumal et al., 2023). Blockchain is another rising trend with the potential for decentralized and private documentation of maintenance works to boost confidence and reliability. Moreover, changes in sustainable technology, like solar-powered equipment used in maintenance and biodegradable products, are other areas set to revolutionize sustainability in the hospitality industry. It has been estimated that VR and AR will enhance simulated training shortly, enhancing learning solutions for maintenance staff (Gidumal et al., 2023). Forming these trends will also enhance decision-making concerning operations and move toward environmental and social trends. Therefore, by adopting these innovations, boutique hotels will stand a better chance of attracting modern technologies and environmentally conscious travellers.

2.9 The cost-benefit analysis of maintenance strategies

While advanced maintenance strategies are undisputably helpful to the success of boutique hotels, their implementations pose unique challenges to this segment of hotels. Lack of funds is one major challenge because the cost of acquisition of things such as IoT devices and software for predictive maintenance is high (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). Moreover, a scarcity of technical skills within the workforce constitutes unproductive implementation. This lack is often tied to boutique hotels, which usually have fewer workers due to their earning capacity. Other challenges boutique hotels face are the staff members in their upkeep division and other professionals responsible for maintenance, who are stubborn and set in their traditional upkeep strategies. Some of these challenges include access to technology and skilled technicians; this can be made worse by geographical barriers such as distances. Therefore, the solution to these challenges requires a comprehensive approach (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). For instance, free or subsidized prices from technology providers may act as an opportunity to redesign and develop new payment arrangements. Consequently, the skill gap can be closed during training programs designed for boutique hotel employees to handle new technologies.

Through early identification and management of these challenges, boutique hotels can fully leverage the proposed maintenance approaches' proposed improvements.

2.10 The role of partnerships and collaborations

Outsourcing activities to outside parties can also strengthen the general maintenance arrangements for boutique hotels. Such partners include technology providers, who, through collaborations, can obtain sophisticated tools and systems cheaply. Government incentives for using sustainable practices may also include program incentives for government-sponsored programs to give money, as seen during the covid 19 pandemic (Allaberganov, Preko and Mohammed, 2021). Moreover, partnerships with communities can bring many advantages, such as obtaining environmentally friendly materials and gaining popularity among people. Networking, like any group within the industry association, helps share knowledge, and boutique hotels can adopt best practices. For instance, attending workshops or conferences relating to hospitality technology will enable one to understand current market trends or solutions. By utilizing these partnerships, boutique hotels can facilitate resource constraints and thus have greater operating effectiveness. Moreover, the partnerships proposed herein align with the boutique hotel brand personality, as the latter tends to embrace community orientation and customization.

3. DISCUSSION

Predictive maintenance is a breakthrough that optimizes operations and reduces the dangers connected with the failure of equipment (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). Predictive maintenance in boutique hotels shows enhanced guest satisfaction and operational dependability. Nevertheless, implementing them has some issues; for instance, funding limitations and a lack of technical expertise exist, and specific approaches are needed to address these barriers (Anubala and Chandigarh Philosophers, 2023). However, once boutique hotels find a way to overcome the challenges, predictive maintenance reaps more benefits.

Additionally, sustainability efforts in boutique hotels demonstrate dual benefits: environmental conservation and a better organizational image. High energy efficiency systems and ideas and the utilization of renewable power solutions make boutique hotels the leaders in eco-friendly hospitality models. For instance, the installation of solar panels is an example of an objective that emphasizes low carbon footprints but, at the same time, offers considerable cost savings (Ghimire, Muneenam and Techato, 2023). However, practice shows that monitoring system implementation and engaging stakeholders constantly is necessary, enforcing the necessity of focusing on the long term (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019).

If there is one factor without which it is almost impossible to sustain boutique hotel operations, it is the workforce. Given this type of extensive use of technology, staff training must be continuous to ensure that the latest technology is utilized (Khuong and Phuong, 2024). Furthermore, empowering maintenance teams to collaborate improves problem-solving capacity and general performance. Last but not least, continuity and change are the major concerns for boutique hotel establishments, so they should not lose their distinctiveness. Where technology makes processes more efficient, it is important to remember the human element when it comes to guests. This balance needs to be maintained with stakeholders' feedback and the use of strategies that will need to be adjusted to fit the evolving needs of the hospitality industry (Khuong and Phuong, 2024). Building on these concepts, the issue of implementing innovative solutions, including artificial intelligence and blockchain systems, to maintain a niche boutique hotel has not been examined in detail. Many of these innovations have ideas for extending how they revolutionize the field, especially in energy control and supply chain clarity. Other possible directions may concern further visions, such as how efficient and acceptable those advancements are for the guests.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that maintenance management is crucial for keeping boutique hotels functional and competitive - and worthy of it are predictive maintenance, sustainability, qualified human capital, the implementation of new technologies, and more. Boutique hotels should use the latest technologies in IoT and analytics to enhance their operations, lessen costs, and enhance guest experiences. Thus, sustainability activities improve the organization's environmental management, image, and competitive advantage in the market. It also underlines the necessity of maintaining active employee training to overcome problems caused by new technologies and sustainable development standards. Such a line of action with other industry stakeholders and implementing adaptive strategies will be necessary for specialty hotels to survive their challenges and remain differentiated. More empirical work should be directed to surveys as research tools to give a broader picture of maintenance practices.

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