

A Survey of Folk Intuitions about the Physical Criterion of Personal Identity among Some Philosophically Laypeople

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Abstract: The paper attempts to answer the question whether some of the views and theories on personal identity proposed and debated by professional philosophers is supported by ordinary intuitions. Rather than using the traditional conceptual analysis method of philosophy also known as the armchair method, the paper relies on an experimental method using a questionnaire to investigate ordinary beliefs and conceptions of philosophically laypeople about what constitute personal identity overtime. This was done by seeking the opinion of some members of the lay-public on some of the main claims of common theories on personal identity, thereby determining whether the said theories are intuitive to most laypersons or not. With respect to the physical criterion of personal identity, empirical testing shows that the theories under this criterion are not nearly as intuitive as some of its proponents commonly assume, which then makes it difficult to adopt them as the means through which personal identity overtime can be explained and understood.

Keywords: Personal identity, physical criterion, folk intuition, philosophically laypeople, lay-public.

INTRODUCTION

Personal identity deals with closely related questions about ourselves qua human persons. These include questions such as: What am I? When did I begin? What will happen to me when I die? What sort of event would necessarily bring my existence to an end? [1]. Among the many questions on personal identity, there are those that deals with the issue of existence over time, also known as the Persistence question [2]. This is the question about what it mean for a person to persist from one time to another, or for the same person to exist at different times. Thus the question aims to establish the necessary and sufficient conditions for a past or future being to be someone existing now. The question on identity overtime or persistence, has received the most attention in recent times than any other question on personal identity [1]. Since philosophical discussions on the persistence question of personal identity attempt to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for saying that a person at earlier time (t1) is the same person as a person at present or even later time (t2)-they are understood to be giving criteria of personal identity over time [2]. The principal competitors for a criterion of personal identity overtime have been the physical criterion and the psychological criterion where the former criterion advocates for the sameness of body and the latter criterion advocates for sameness of character as entities responsible for sameness of person overtime [3, 2]. Whereas the psychological criteria include memory criterion and the psychological continuity criterion as some of its common versions, the physical criteria has the brain criterion and physical criterion as its accounts.

It is common for proponents of various theories in the field of metaphysics covering contentious issues such as free-will and determinism, personal identity and meta-ethics to claim that their preferred view is supported by ordinary pre-theoretical intuitions, that is, such theories are commonsensical, inert or are widely shared by laypeople [4-6]. For instance, William [7] used a conceivable scenario in which an experiment is carried out on two people, say person x and person y, resulting in the memories of person x transferred to the body of person y. We may suppose that after the transfer is complete, the body of person x is subjected to all kinds torture and pain. William holds that under such circumstances, we will experience a very strong intuition that naturally support the psychological criteria of personal identity where, if we were in person x's position, we will instinctively consider how fortunate we were to be swapped to y's body. Similarly, when advocating for the centrality of consciousness as the criterion for persistence of persons overtime, Dainton, & Bayne [8] argued that "when presented with a scenario in which bodily continuity goes one way and mental continuity goes another, *many of us find it intuitively obvious* that the person goes with the latter rather than the former". When introducing the different theories on personal identity, Noonan [9] points out that the most natural theory of personal identity, the one which almost immediately comes to the mind of almost everyone who is confronted with this question, is that personal identity is constituted by bodily criterion [9]. Furthermore, Noonan [9] is of the view that personal identity over time is something knowable to all of us, and it is the duty of whoever think otherwise to prove that this is not the case. On this point Noonan [9] writes, "For both our identity

overtime and that of others is, we ordinarily think, something of which can have knowledge. Conceivably this common opinion may be mistaken, but the onus of proof must be on the philosopher who says so". In light of the foregoing, it would help to find out through empirical testing, which of the aforementioned criteria of personal identity overtime accords best with the intuitions of philosophical laypersons. Thus this survey moves away from a standard philosophical methodology, whereby philosophers consult their own intuitions from the armchair and assume that they represent ordinary intuitions. It is worth noting that some writers such as Hershenov [10] have opposed the use of this approach, often referred to as the experimental method, in dealing with metaphysical issues in general, arguing that metaphysics should "not be driven by pre-theoretical intuitions even if linguistic practices reveal them to be widely shared by laypeople". Nevertheless, Nahmias *et al.*, [11] hold a contrary view in which they equally argue in favour of using the experimental method to test certain philosophical theories. In so doing, Nahmias *et al.*, [11] hasten to point out that by advocating for the use of the experimental method,

...we are not suggesting that any philosophical theory would be demonstrably confirmed (or disconfirmed) just because it aligns with (or conflicts with) folk intuitions and practices. After all, such intuitions and practices may be mistaken or contradictory and hence in need of elimination or revision.

Moreover, Nahmias *et al.*, [11] further observes that even though objections and controversy surrounding the use of intuition in philosophical debates is well documented, still, "many philosophers accept that, at a minimum, a theory that conflicts with widely shared intuition takes on a cost that must be offset by other theoretical advantages, while a theory that accords with relevant intuitive judgments has "squatter"s rights." Whereas an empirical survey on folk intuitions about the two dominant criteria on the persistence question of personal identity, namely, the psychological criteria and the physical criteria, was carried out among some Batswana groups, only the results on the latter criteria will be presented and discussed in this paper. Thus for purposes of avoiding a lengthy paper, the results presented below reflect the views of the respondents on the bodily criterion and brain criterion, which are the two criteria that constitute the physical criteria.

Statement of the problem

It is a common practice in philosophical inquiries to study views from professional philosophers while at the same time making very little attempt if any to discover and compare views of philosophically laypersons with these philosophical views on some important issues. With regard to personal identity, there have been a number of theories that have been

developed over time to explain personal identity in general, and the issue of persistence of human persons in particular. Therefore, there is need to investigate whether or not theories on personal identity but particularly the physical criterion accords with judgments of ordinary people on what it take for a person to persist from one time to another.

Research Questions

- What does it take for a person to persist from one time to another?
- Does the bodily criterion accords with judgments of ordinary people on what it take for a person to persist from one time to another?
- Does the bodily criterion accords with judgments of ordinary people on what it take for a person to persist from one time to another?

An overview of physical criteria of personal identity

Answers rendered in respect of the persistent question of personal identity attempts to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity over time [12]. The physical criterion of personal identity endeavors to provide such an answer by arguing that what makes a person the same person over time is that she has the same brain and body [3]. That is, the criterion of identity over time in this case, involves the physical continuity, over time, of one"s brain and body. Proponents of this view think that the identity of human persons over time is no different from the identity of all other material things that exist in the world. Some versions of this criterion point out that even though living and non-living objects such as dogs, trees, cars and houses persist overtime, it is the retention of the same form, not matter, that ensures persistence. This is because "...artifacts can be repaired and patched up and living things are necessarily involved in a constant exchange of matter with their environment" Noonan [9]. The understanding here is that despite the gradual replacement of matter in this way, the form of an object remains the same and through it we are able to identify it as the same object it was before. However, the opponents of the physical criterion points out that physical continuity is neither necessary nor sufficient for personal identity partly because it is imaginable for a person"s physical body to change drastically to an extent that the person could not be regarded as the same person based on the physical body she had before [13]. Instead, it the psychological being inside the body expressed through character, interests, memories, love, hate and so on that really matter and therefore a worthwhile candidate for personal identity. On this point Korsgaard [13] observes that opponents of the physical criterion further argue that it is even conceivable that "the very same psychological person could occupy a different body, or, as in some religious conceptions, that a person could become independent of a body altogether". Perhaps as a counter argument to some of the objections raised above, Parfit insists that according to the physical

criterion, what is necessary for persistence is not the continued existence of the whole body, but the continued existence of enough of the brain to be the brain of a living person. Parfit thinks that this position is true in certain actual cases where some people continue to exist even though they lost, or lose the use of, much of their bodies [12, 14]. As already alluded to above, the physical criterion is often divided into two criteria, namely, the bodily criterion and the brain criterion. According to the bodily criterion, a person X at time t_1 is identical to a person Y at t_2 if and only if X and Y have the same body, that is, they are bodily continuous [15]. The brain criterion on the other hand, states that a person X at t_1 is the same person as Y at t_2 if and only if X and Y possess the same brain.

The Bodily Criterion

The bodily criterion, according to Noonan [9], can be expressed in the following manner: *P2* at time $t2$ is the same person as *P1* at time $t1$ if and only if *P2* has the same body as *P1* had. In this case, and as mentioned above, the person, just like any other material object need not retain the same body or matter, it only needs to retain the same form as the matter undergoes gradual replacement. This means that the formula above does not mean that *P2* and *P1* are materially identical, it only means that the matter constituting *P2* has resulted from that constituting *P1* by a series of gradual replacements [9]. In such a scenario, Noonan thinks it will be correct to say that the body of *P2* at $t2$ is identical with the body of *P1* at $t1$. It is hoped by the proponents of this view that their explanation of the bodily criterion rendered above addresses issues often raised by their critics, such as, where is a known fact that overtime, most body cells of all living things die and are replaced by new cells, so that in a way, we do not have the same bodies we had when we were younger. On this point Richard Swinburne [16] points out that to say that two bodies are the same is not to say that they contain exactly the same bits of matter. Further, as discussed below, Garrett [15] also agrees with Swinburne pointing out that two bodies at different times can be said to be the same even if the body at a later time has no matter in common with the body at an earlier time. When justifying this claim Garrett [15] writes, „the identity of body is preserved since the replacement of matter is gradual, and the new matter is functionally absorbed into the living body“.

Garrett [15] points out that one of the objections to both the bodily criterion and the brain criterion is that if a person drops dead due may be to heart attack, the body will still exist. That is, even though the body in this case will not be a living body anymore, it will still be in existence [15]. Given that the bodily criterion holds that a person continues to exist if and only if his body continues to exist, it follows that a person continues to exist even after he is dead as long as the body exists, which is absurd. According to Garrett [15], the adherents of the bodily criterion have

no choice but to accept the possibility of personal-existence-while-dead and argue that it does not undermine their favoured criterion of personal identity.

Another common (and yet weaker) objection to the bodily criterion is based on traditional views attempting to address the question on what it is to be a person. One such view asserts that a person is an immaterial soul which happens to be attached to a physical body. This view, also categorized as dualist, is associated with Plato and Descartes as well as with most religions, assumes that a person can survive the death of his body, which means that once it is dead, the body could not be a necessary and sufficient condition for personal identity. Garrett [15] point out that the dualist theory fell out of favour with most philosophers due to the difficulty it poses in accounting for the nature of the relationship between the immaterial soul and a material world or body, therefore rendering it an unlikely candidate for personal identity.

The Brain Criterion

Given the fact that a particular part of the body, namely, the brain, is responsible for the psychological life of a person, whatever happens to it could bring radical changes to a person's personality, character and so on [15]. Therefore, some proponents of the bodily criterion realized that damage to one's brain has far reaching consequences, unlike damage to other parts of one's body, such as the knee or even the eye. This, together with some imagined stories involving brain transplants has led to the rejection of the bodily criterion in favour of the brain and other criteria [15]. Noonan [9] points out that the rejection of the bodily criterion was simply a matter of logical or conceptual necessity, and not that the criterion was itself not plausible or appealing to most people. The traditional story of the transplantation of a Mr. Brown's brain into a Mr. Brownson skull meant that we are left with the problem of saying whether or not Mr. Brownson is now Mr. Brown, and whether or not we could still refer to the brainless body left behind as Mr. Brown [17]. Noonan points out that the fact that the character, personality and memories of Mr. Brown are now in and expressed through Mr. Brownson led most modern philosophers on this subject to conclude that Mr. Brownson is no doubt Mr. Brown. It was on this basis that the bodily criterion was rejected. That is, given that Mr. Brown is the same person as Mr. Brownson, and yet Mr. Brownson's body is not the same body as Mr. Brown's body, it follows that the bodily criterion is false [15]. Even though the brain is part of the body and it could therefore be argued that the imagined brain transplant only gives further credit to the bodily criterion, some philosophers argue to the contrary that it in fact shows that what is required for personal identity is not the identity of the whole body but, merely, the identity of that part of the body which is responsible for character and personality, which is the brain. According to Noonan [9], this suggestion could be expressed as *P2*

at t_2 will be the same person as P_1 at t_1 just in case P_2 at t_2 has the same brain as P_1 at t_1 .

Garrett uses a somehow similar imagined story from science fiction to cast doubt on the credibility of the brain criterion. This is a scenario where one's parts of brain become cancerous leading to their gradual replacement by silicon chips and, eventually the whole brain is replaced by silicon chips. In this case, one's mental life continues as before, with the same beliefs, memory, character and so on. Garrett argues that even though the silicon brain is indeed a brain in that it carries out the functions of a brain, one can hardly say it is the same human brain that one had earlier on. There have been a destruction of one brain and a replacement with another, he asserts. Garrett's point is a valid one in that, apparently, the proponents of the brain criterion are concerned about the continuity of the brain primarily in its „matter“ form, with a supposition that once that is preserved, then it will continue to function as a brain. The point here is that the brain needs not to retain the matter or stuff with which it is made for it to function as a brain. Thus as Garrett points out, in as far as the earlier human brain is not identical to the later silicon brain, the brain criterion may be rendered false.

Thus, both the bodily and brain criteria as components of the physical criterion have been found to be failing when submitted to some imagined yet conceivable scenarios. For example, the traditional story about whether a ship which parts has been gradually replaced with new parts over a long period of time can still be said to be the same original ship or not has been applied and used against these physicalist theories. However, as alluded to above, despite these objections against the physical criterion, some writers such as Garret [15], and Noonan [9] share the view that the physical criterion accords with most of our ordinary judgments of personal identity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research explores the views of ordinary people on philosophical theories arising from the ideas of the human person and personal identity, which theories are not known to the target group. As a result, the study used both exploratory and descriptive quantitative design. The study was descriptive in design in the sense that a detailed picture of the subject matter was constructed by making reference to known theories on the subject to enable the participants to get a full understanding of subject matter and to participate meaningfully. This study is primarily quantitative and the research questions were designed to make it possible for the researcher to objectively learn the confirmations or disapproval on the different philosophical theories on the notion of personal identity by the target group. Given that the researcher empirically tested a number of theories (as opposed to just one or two) on personal identity, it seemed that the

quantitative method was the best, as it made it possible for the researcher to exposed the respondents to as many theories or views as possible. As a field research, the views of the Ovaherero people were studied in specific locations where they live and interact regularly with one another. Thus this research was carried out in Maun and Mahalapye.

Rationale for Quantitative Design

The nature of the research problem necessitates the use of quantitative design in that it simply sought to test certain known theories on human nature and personal identity. The aim here was to determine whether the participants would accept or reject certain theories on personhood and personal identity as being consistent with what they believe to be the case. The assumption was that if, for example, most participants accept a certain theory or view as correct or consistent with what they already believe to be the case, then it was assumed that the participant are adherents or followers of that theory or point of view. It will also means that such theory is folk intuitive in that it accords with judgments of ordinary people on what it take for a person to persist from one time to another.

Setting

This research was carried out among Batswana groups of the Ovaherero descent found in Maun and Mahalapye regions. These two places were selected because they are home to many of the people belonging to the target group. Moreover, the two places are considered to be of cultural significance to Herero people than any other place in Botswana where this group is found. It is therefore safe to assume that the views of the Herero in these two places were representative enough of most the Ovaherero people found in Botswana. Secondly, due to time and financial constraints it was not possible to cover many other places where members of the group in question are found in Botswana.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through written and oral interviews using a closed ended interview guide. This method was selected following its success in the sage philosophy projects pioneered by Oruka [18]. The aim was to bring the connection between the thoughts of the philosophically laypersons, and those of professional philosophers into focus.

Methodological Problems/ Limitation

Questionnaire and interview questions were interpreted from English into both Setswana and Herero during the interviews. Sometimes these interpretations proved to be a challenge due to the possible loss of meaning of certain ideas due to the abstract and philosophical nature of some of the themes in the subject matter. Thus some literal and accompanying emotional meaning may have been lost during the process of interpretation.

Data presentation and discussions

Ideas on human nature and personal identity

The statistical analysis of the results on each question will focus mainly on the dominant views, i.e. on the view that has been popularly chosen by the respondents. The purpose of doing this is to avoiding a lengthy and repeated presentation and discussion of the results.

What is the essence of a human person?

To this question 20% of the respondents indicated that a person is essentially physical, 23% opted for spiritual/mental option, and 57% people indicated that a person is both physical and spiritual in essence. This information is further illustrated below:

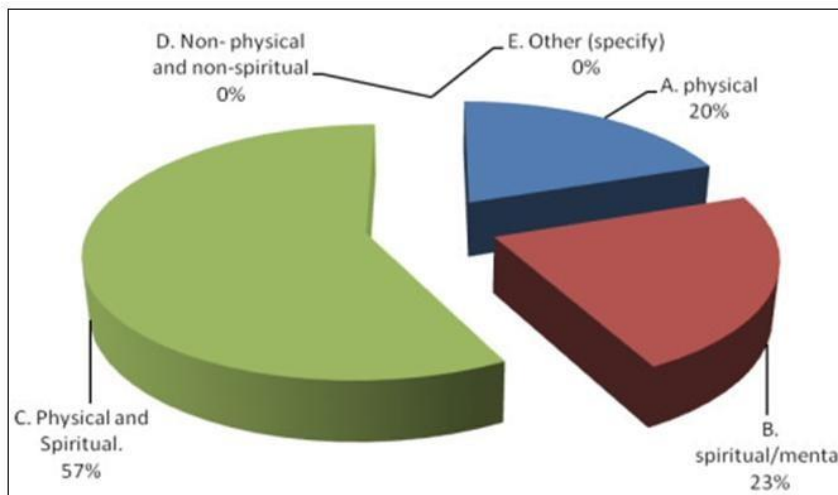


Fig-1: Percentage of respondents' views on question 1.

This may mean that according to the respondents, both material (physical) and immaterial (spiritual) elements constitute the essence of the human person, a view that is in agreement with John S. Mbiti's claim that African societies understand a person to be made up of body and spirit. However, after death, which is understood as a point in time when the spirit leaves the body, the spirit is believed to join the other (departed) spirits [19]. According to this African view, the departed spirit does not lose the identity it had when it was living in a person, which ensures its personal continuation of life beyond the grave. Since, according to this African view, the spiritual aspect can be understood to be superior to the physical aspect to the extent that it survives one's death, it may be expected that the respondents would also opt for a non-

physicalist view as the criterion that accounts for the persistence of persons over time. It can also be observed, based on responses to this question, that most respondents hold a view of human nature that has been described in history of philosophy as dualism or the Cartesian view [20]. This would mean that the respondents would agree that there exists matter, which goes to make up physical objects, which according to dualism, occupies space, and secondly, that there exists the soul, which is the bearer of conscious mental states, and it is non-physical and do not occupy space.

If a person loses half of his brain, does he remain the same person?

Responses to this question were as shown below:

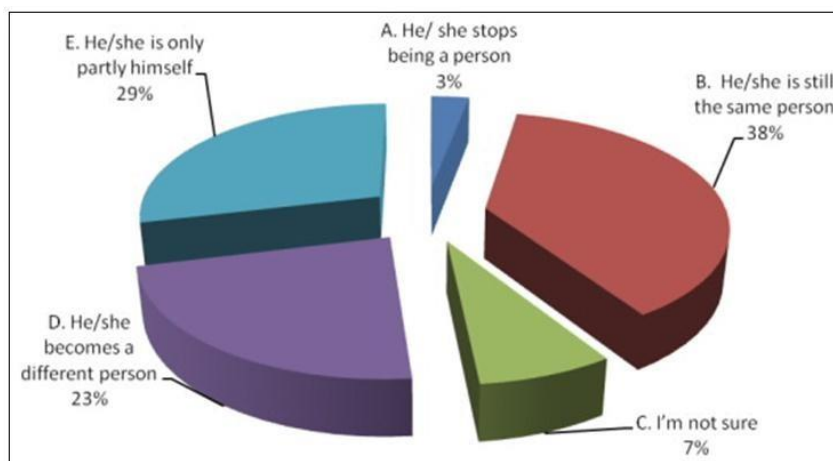


Fig-2: Percentage of respondents' views on question 2

To suggest, as the respondents have in this question, that a person who loses half his brain will still remain the same person is to say that the brain is not a necessary criterion for personhood or survival over time. However, it must be noted that while 38% of the respondents seem to deny the centrality of the brain to personal identity, only 3% suggest that a one ceases to be a person upon losing her brain, the rest (52%) suggest that either the person remains partly himself or becomes a different person altogether. This may mean that according to the respondents both personhood and personal identity depends on something else rather the brain. As already mentioned, the fact that a particular part of the body, namely, the brain, is responsible for the psychological life of a person, made the proponents of the bodily criterion of personal identity realise that whatever happens to the brain could bring radical changes to a person’s personality or character [9]. It became clear that damage to one’s brain has far reaching consequences, unlike damage to other parts of one’s body parts, such as the knee or even the eye. Noonan points out that it was on this basis that the bodily criterion was rejected in favour of the brain criterion. Therefore, the fact that some of the respondents claim that a person continues to be the same person regardless of what happens to their brain, or that such person will only be partly himself as some indicated, may mean that the respondents reject the brain only in its material form as opposed to its functional form, as a criterion for persons’ persistence. That is, it may mean that the respondents appreciate, as the proponents for the brain criterion do, the crucial role played by the brain in determining a person’s character, personality and other psychological traits. While they may appreciate this, it may also be the case that they do not think the loss of the brain and its accompany mental life will result in that person ceasing to exist because

according to them, a person’s survival constitute in something else, rather than the brain and its psychological traits. Further, it is also possible that due to the dualistic position that most of the respondents have opted for in the first question, they do not even think psychological traits such as thinking, remembering, beliefs, intentions, desires and so on are brain processes, as the proponents of the mind-brain identity theory would like us to believe [15, 21]. It is possible that most respondents think such traits and processes are purely mental or spiritual and are components of the immaterial soul. This will be consistent with most versions of dualism which hold that mental events are completely non-physical in their aspects and consist in changes in the non-physical states of an immaterial entity, namely, the soul [22]. Therefore, one would have expected the respondents, having already indicated their adherence to a dualist account of a person, to more conclusively reject than they did, any suggestion that if a person loses half his brain he does not remain the same person. It can be assumed, that by so doing the respondents will also be conclusively rejecting in principle, the materialist view that mental events are just physical events in some particular brain and nervous system.

If a person loses half his body (e.g. legs, arms and so on), does he remain the same person?

As shown below, 64% of the respondents indicated that in the above scenario, such a person will still be the same person. Only 11% of the respondents indicated that if a person loses half his body, he become a different person, 21% indicated that he is only partly himself, while 4% were not sure. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents indicated that such a person stops being a person, which was one of the options availed to them.

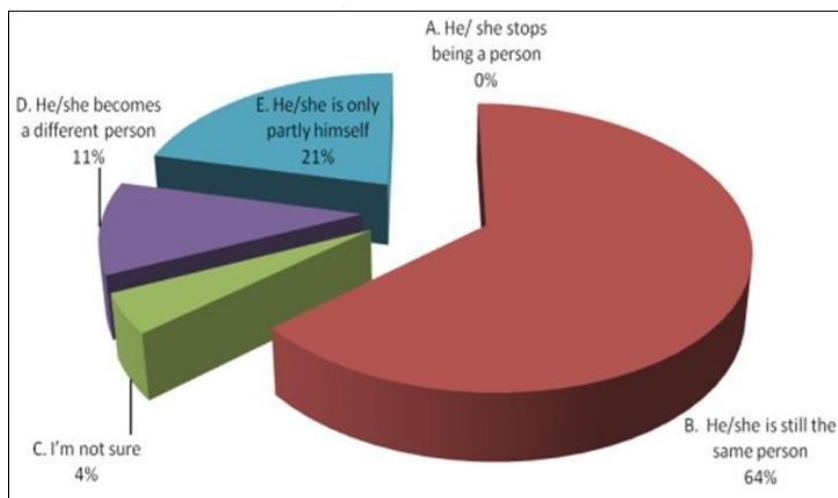


Fig-3: Percentage of respondents’ views on question 3.

An observation can be made that contrary Noonan’s [9] view that the most natural theory of personal identity, or of identity of persons as the same

persons overtime, and which almost immediately comes to the mind of everyone who is confronted with this question is that personal identity is constituted by

bodily identity [9], the respondents seem to deny this. This is because by choosing the view that a person can be regarded as the same person even after losing half his body, could mean that the body is not that important in making a person a person, or in identifying a person as the same person over time. However, as already alluded to, such an interpretation of the respondents view may be wrong. This is because by asserting that a person remains the same person even after losing half his/her body, the respondents could be suggesting that a person is in fact identical to even half his body, which re-emphasizes the importance of the body in personal identity. If this is the case, the respondents view can be understood to be in agreement with the views held by the proponents of bodily criterion. This is because, as already alluded to, according to the bodily criterion, the person need not retain the same body or matter; she only needs to retain the same form as the matter undergoes gradual replacement [9]. It can be argued however, that in the above scenario, the person loses half his body, and therefore does not retain the same form, and there is no replacement of lost matter or body parts to talk of. Therefore the question that remains is, if a person loses half the matter that made his initial body, how does he remain the same person? David H. Lund [23] agrees with Noonan above, pointing out that according to the bodily criterion what makes a person p_2 at t_2 one and the same person as p_1 at t_1 is p_2 's having the same body as p_1 had. Lund hastens to explain that „same body“ must be explicated in terms of bodily continuity, since the material content of the body is continuously but gradually being replaced by new material in such a way that „the structure or arrangement of matter is more or less preserved“ [23]. It

can be assumed that Lund's „structure or arrangement of matter“ is the „form“ that Noonan alluded to. However, this claim seems to be plausible only in as far as the natural process of growth of the body is concerned. It will not apply to a scenario where one loses a significant part of his body due to misfortunes such as accidents. It may not even apply to other situation where the person does not lose parts of the body but instead is disfigured or paralyzed due to diseases or strokes. In such cases the person may not retain the same structure or arrangement of matter as Lund suggests.

It can be concluded that the respondents do not identify a person with his/her body, that is, they do not believe, as the proponents of the bodily criterion and the physicalists believe, that a person is nothing but his body or is identical to his/her body. If they did, they would have most probably opted for the view that if a person loses half his body, he/she would then only be partly himself. As the results show, only 21% of all respondents opted for the view that such a person is only partly himself, compared to the 64% who suggested that such a person remains the same person.

What would you say remains the same when people change overtime (for example through growth), which ensures continuity of persons over time?

On this question, a sizeable number of respondents indicated that the spirit is unaffected by change and ensures continuity. A few respondents came up with the concept of „soul“ which was not among the options. Responses to this question was as shown below.

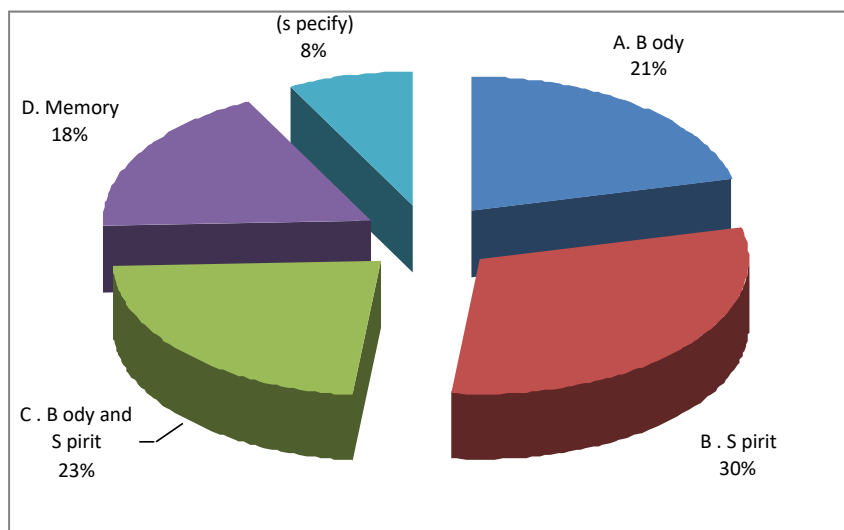


Fig-4: Percentage of respondents' views on question 4.

When the respondents' dominant view here is related to the literature on the issues at hand, it would be remembered that a distinction has been made between debates about the nature of persons and those on personal identity [12, 1]. That is, the following sorts of questions should be distinguished from each other,

namely: what is the nature of a person? And secondly, what makes a person at two different times one and the same person? The question that the respondents were responding to here undoubtedly falls under the second sorts of questions since it is concerned about what is necessarily involved in the continued existence of each

person over time. However, these two sorts of questions are closely related or even similar in a way in that when answering the second question, we are partly answering the first one [12, 1]. This is because the necessary features of our continued existence depend upon our nature. Assuming this is the case, one would expect the respondents' answer here to be consistent with the answers they gave earlier to questions on human nature, particularly question one (1). However, it appears that the respondents were not consistent in that, in question one most respondents (58%) pointed out that a person is essentially physical and spiritual, while in this question, the leading view asserts that what remains the same when people change and which also ensures continuity of persons overtime is the spirit. This may mean that the respondents do not support the view expressed by Parfit

[12]; Olson [1] and others that the necessary features of our continued existence depend upon our nature, or that an answer to the nature of human persons should also be the answer to the persistence question. This analysis remains correct unless, by asserting that a person is essentially physical and spiritual, the respondents did not mean that the spiritual and physical aspects of the human person should be taken together as one, holistic, indivisible essential nature, which is likely to be the case since most dualist theories and religions often upholds the immaterial aspect over the physical aspect when it comes to issues of survival and continuity.

How can you tell that this person at this time is 'the same' as that person at an earlier time? It is through his/her

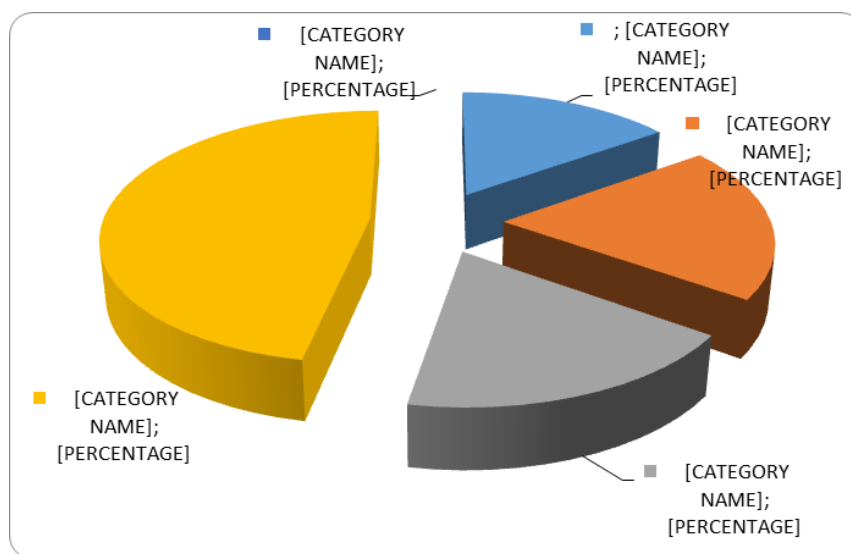


Fig-5: Percentage of respondents' views to question 5.

Despite having made reference to the mind or spirit as the entity that ensures continuity in the previous question, most respondents (47%) referred to the combination of the body, thoughts and memories as a means of identifying a person as being the same over time in this question. The respondents' choice of „the body, thoughts and memory“ as the means through which a person can be identified as the same person at different times maybe viewed as a confirmation of view expressed by Noonan [9] that proponents of the bodily criterion simply graduated from their preferred criterion to the brain criterion out of a logical and conceptual necessity, having realized that the brain is the seat of all mental life and processes. That is, since the bodily criterion has been viewed as the most natural theory of personal identity, and the one that almost immediately comes to the mind of almost everyone who is confronted with the question on persistence [9], one would have expected the respondents choice of the „body“ option to be much high than 15%. This expectation is legitimate unless the respondents avoided this option for the same reasons that the proponents of the bodily criterion moved away from the body to a

specific body part, which is the brain. Furthermore, even though the respondents had the option of choosing either thoughts or memories separately as the contents of the brain that are necessary condition for identifying persons over time, and therefore being consistent with the brain criterion, they instead opted for a combination of these together with the body. This may mean that while they „naturally“ appreciate the body as an entity that ensures continuity over time, they also appreciate the crucial role the brain play in supporting one's mental states, character and personality, all of which are crucial in making a person the same over time. Such interpretation, however, is unlikely to be correct if one considers earlier responses by the respondents where they tended to either avoid an absolutely physicalist position and resorted to an immaterial entity from time to time as the one that survives the death of the body. Perhaps a more plausible interpretation would be that by opting for the „body, thoughts and memories“ the respondents were simply maintaining their dualist understanding of a person.

CONCLUSION

As shown under the discussion of the result, the respondents are in no doubt of the view that a person is both physical and spiritual. They have denied the view that a person can be reduced to his brain and brain processes. By asserting that even if a person loses half his brain he remains the same person, the respondents may be suggesting that in terms of the essential human nature, a person is more than just a brain, or that there is something else to being a person than the physical brain. In fact, the respondents have denied the physicalist understanding of a person, which includes both the body and the brain, where human persons are understood as essentially physical. On the whole, the respondents disapproved of the Bodily Criterion, which is the view that a person at a given time can be identified to be the same as an earlier person if he retains the same body, that is, if there have been a gradual replacement of matter so that the matter is functionally absorbed into the old one. The respondents expressed their disapproval of the Bodily Criterion in their response to question 3, where they pointed out that if a person loses half his body (e.g. legs, arms and so on), he remains the same person. They also pointed out in question 4 that what remains the same as people change overtime, which also ensures their continuity, is not the body, but the spirit. Moreover, in question 5, the respondents further denied that it is through the body that one can tell that a person at this time is „the same“ as that person at an earlier time. The respondents have also disagreed with the brain criterion, which is the view that what is required for personal identity is not the identity of the whole body but, merely, the identity of that part of the body which is responsible for character and personality called the brain. While the margin of negation on the brain criterion is less than on the bodily criterion, the respondents view on this issue comes out clearly when their response to other similar or related questions are considered. For instance, in question 3 the respondents“ clearly indicated that even if a person loses half of his/her brain, this does not affect or alter his/her personhood in any way, meaning that such a person remains the same person. This means that on the whole, it is implied that respondents have not only rejected the two physicalist criteria of personal identity in question, but also the view that a person is reducible to a brain and that mental events are just brain processes.

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