MORALITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS: AN AKAN COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE: On Community and Social Responsibility

Bron, Aranka

Citation

Bron, A. (2022). *MORALITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS: AN AKAN COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE: On Community and Social Responsibility.*

MORALITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS:

AN AKAN COMMUNITARIAN PERSPECTIVE

On Community and Social Responsibility

Bron, A.E. (Aranka)

S2629313

Dr. Michael Onyebuchi Eze

MA Thesis: Philosophical Perspectives
on Politics and the Economy

15-06-2021

Table of Contents

Chapter I: An Additional Morality – Introduction and Framework

I.   Introduction

The United Nations are formed in light of the member-states' shared determination to avoid war, safeguard human rights, maintain justice, and promote social progress and freedom, as is attested to in their main Charter. Currently, however, the downsides of globalization – such as the intense distributive effects on wealth both internationally as well as domestically, labour exploitation, inequal distribution of power, financial crises, rising social injustice, and increasingly unpredictable climate change[1] – ignite reoccurring criticisms on the perceived lack of resolve, strength, and efficacy of the Organization in their role on the world stage.

While certain reforms have been made, the Organization's foundational principles, delineated in the Charter of the United Nations, remain the driving political and ideological force in its decision-making, formation, and performance. This research will show that, because the Organization is built on a liberal internationalist morality, it prioritizes liberal ethics to the detriment of a communal morality. Currently, the principles governing the institutions are mostly generalized principles of conduct aimed at fostering economic freedom and to maintain security – a morality mostly based on voluntarism, mutual gains, and negative freedom – but these principles do not speak of an intrinsic motivation towards an (additional) morality based on fellowship, solidarity, equality, and global well-being. A communal moral dimension is absent in the Charter, and this in turns prevents the United Nations from becoming a *community* instead of an *aggregate* of member-states. As I will showcase later following the Akan philosophy, such intrinsic motivation is internal to the practices of a community*,* and the universalisation of the liberal morality currently is insensitive to the international context of the United Nations. Since the Organization has thus yet to become a holistic community, it is unable to take up grand collective responsibility in their striving towards global well-being and development.

Since the United Nations is built on a morality – inspired by liberal internationalism – it can be said to take up some collective responsibility, such as in joint peace-keeping missions, in establishing free-trade zones, or in developing international sustainability guidelines. However, I will argue that this morality is unable to conjure up necessary feelings of and motivation towards *social* responsibility. Such social responsibilities, responsibilities an individual begets through their inherent relationality in a community, would conjure up the intrinsic motivation to care for others and to relate positively to them – something which is of vital importance if the United Nations

---

[1] For a detailed overview of these and other negative consequences of the (mismanagement of) globalization, see Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and its Discontents.* New York: WW Norton & Co, 2003. Print.

wants to position itself as a forceful entity able to tackle international problems in a globalized world. However, because the United Nations currently does not advocate for nor is inspired by such relationality, it is unable to possess such an intrinsic motivation.

Akan philosophy specifically and African communitarianism in general will be put forward as candidates to manifest this additional morality, one which will be able to facilitate the formation of a community, to strengthen the bond between member-states and United Nations, and to address social responsibility within a framework of relationality and interconnectedness. African communitarianism could help bridge the gap that currently exists between the theoretical appeal and the actual implementation of the Organization's collective responsibility. Such responsibilities that are more encompassing is an aspiration long desired by the Secretary-General, as it reflects the Organization's "deep commitment to move the principle from the realm of rhetoric into concrete action" (3). It will be argued that while liberal morality possesses important values – such as those of freedom, voluntarism, and non-intervention – it needs to be supplemented with a communal morality if the United Nations wants to present itself as a strong, coherent, and collective body in international crises. A synthesis between liberal internationalist and African communitarian principles could fashion the United Nations as a community, one in which concepts of freedom and voluntarism would be coupled with values of solidarity and relationality, and where the individual member-states are motivated to adhere to their social responsibilities.

The object of this research will perceive the United Nations as a unique international political body comprised of a diverse membership – a total of 191 states – and possessing far-reaching economic, social, political, and developmental competencies. There are multiple reasons for choosing the United Nations and, for example, not the European Union, as the focal point of this study; it is the political body that can be regarded as being most 'international' in terms of countries involved, diversity of people concerned, and reach of areas of competence. All these themes have, furthermore, generated plenty of academic literature and philosophical critique, and by using these sources it will be possible to offer not only a more comprehensive critique of the Organization's existing structure, but also to devise a realistic and applicable alternative point of view. There will be a focus on the founding Charter of the United Nations as this Charter delineates the fundamental principles of the Organization – statements which most clearly and coherently explicate the ideology that lays behind its decisions, operations, and mechanisms. The ever-present and ever-changing philosophical and political debate about sovereignty and interdependency within the United Nations is, lastly, a debate that stands much to gain with the application of Akan communitarian philosophy, as this philosophy will provide a novel perspective on the interdependence of the two.

II.   *Issue at Hand*

The relevance of African communitarian philosophy is evident through, on the one hand, its practical dimension, and its epistemological and ontological dimensions on the other. Unlike Western communitarianism, the practical dimension of contemporary African communitarianism flows from a historical (re)appraisal of traditional African communities, to use these historical references in their emancipatory fight against European colonialism. This fight is rooted in the search and desire for the restoration of both a pre-colonial African identity and human dignity within the overarching quest of political liberation (Matolino 59, Matolino & Kwindingwi 198-9). This search for pre-colonial identity is – besides an attempt to find a central framework of values – also performative and aimed at "reforming the inadequacies of past historical cleavages of national building" by the colonial intervention (Eze, *Intellectual History* 181). This inherent practical and performative dimension of African communitarianism makes the philosophiy especially relevant and suitable to be used in the appraisal of real international political bodies such as the United Nations.

Then, on the epistemological and ontological level, African communitarianism states that "the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life … [and] this primacy is meant to apply not only ontologically, but also in regard to epistemic accessibility" (Menkiti qtd. in Maqoma 4). This understanding that the community builds, constitutes, and provides the individual results in a fundamental focus on the communal good as the cornerstone of a society. Since the United Nations, too, aims to formulate a set of common beliefs, ideals, and goals to collectively strive towards (the difficulty of which will be touched upon in Chapter II), applying a philosophy that also has its focus on achieving a common good appears to be consistent. This epistemic understanding of community – which is very much emphasized in Akan philosophy – can be used in an analytical framework alongside collective responsibility precisely because of the emphasis placed on the naturality of duties an individual has towards the communal good and therefore towards their community. The community's epistemic and ontological precedence – which is more resolute in some theories of African communitarianism than in others – furthermore provides an interesting and worthwhile contrast with the liberal focus which traditionally has favoured the individual as the cornerstone of a society.

The United Nations' foundational principles are inspired by liberal internationalism, bringing about a strong emphasis on the sovereign state and – by extension – their independent existence and voluntary association with others. However, increased globalization has ensured that states are more interconnected than ever before; technological innovations on all fronts (infrastructure, media, communication, transportation, and productivity amongst many others) have transformed the world into a global village. Despite the increase in economic wealth for some countries, globalization and its foregrounding of a market-oriented economic logic has also resulted in continuing cycles of violence, poverty, debt, and economic marginalization in other parts of the world (Akinola & Uzodike 106, Murithi 226). The belief in the individual state as an independent entity that can participate in (economic) exchanges on its own accord and without coercion is outdated when a purely isolated nation-state is no longer able to exist. Globalization has ushered in new transformations and therewith new international relations, some of which are more exploitative and marginalized than others.

What is necessary to counter the rise of these inequal relationships is a morality which intentionally underlines the equal and relational identity of human beings. African communitarian philosophies provide an alternative to liberal internationalism, as they will bring a "renewed concern for the human being" where the inherent value and dignity of each human becomes the central consideration (Akinola & Uzodike 107). Putting a stop to relationships of marginalization and exploitation requires a reframing of the manner in which both people and states perceive their mutual relationality – it requires a moral reframing of collective (and therewith of social) responsibility. Since international political bodies stand to gain greater supranational prominence within economic, political, and socio-cultural areas, it follows that it is worthwhile to critically analyse how such bodies can transform themselves into more holistic communities, and which benefits are gained in doing so. Overarching international political bodies, general communities, and specific individuals are after all connected – our identity, as Tim Murithi states, "is defined through interactions with other human beings, it follows that what we do to others eventually feeds through the interwoven fabric of social, economic and political relationships to impact upon us as well" (226). This research will expound how statements of this sentiment – specifically within Akan philosophy – could fuse with the existing principles of liberal internationalism within the United Nations, and how it could boost an assumption of collective responsibility that reflects their increasingly prominent role in world politics.

III.   *Liberal Internationalism and Globalization*

The liberal internationalism that underpins most Western-dominated international political bodies, amongst which the United Nations[2], is a philosophy rooted in the Enlightenment experience of modernity and traditional liberal values. From the Enlightenment arose a robust faith in human reason and universal logic, which presented enlightened self-interest as the guide for every individual action and general behaviour. Liberal values became manifested through a government by consent that upheld individual freedom, individual rights, the rule of law, and private property (Jahn 48-9). Such an emphasis on individual freedom created the desire for a government that would intervene with the private sphere very minimally, as to allow the individual the greatest amount of negative freedom possible, and such non-interference was therefore seen as "a mark of high civilization" (Berlin 364). With minimal interference, it is furthermore believed that man is able to flourish most, and that with him society will flourish, too; it is this individuality that is the "proper condition of a human being" (Mill 123). Liberal sentiments created "key tenets [which] are liberty under law, limited and accountable government, universalism, and a basic belief in reason and progress" and on the international level it presupposed "collective security, rules-based cooperatives frameworks and multilateral institutions [that] serve as the means of furthering economic development, sustainable peace, comprehensive security and political liberalization (Youngs 8). The premise of non-intervention here is reflected in the principle of collective security, as this demands that the members of an international body are to pace themselves and to follow rules of military restraint, and international consultation (Owen 309-11).

In the era of globalization, economic liberalization, combined with tendencies of reasoned universalism, lead to some countries taking great leaps forward in terms of economic development – such as Brazil and India – while the poorest states stayed even further behind (Youngs 97). Crises such as this have plummeted organizations based on liberal internationalism into their current dilemma – how are they supposed to reorganize their governance with the entry of countries whose governments, political orientations, phases of (economic) development, and experiences differ starkly from the Western liberal experience? (Ikenberry, *A World Safe for Democracy* 274-5). Furthermore, the rapid emergence and intensification of collective problems that cross sovereign boundaries – such as climate change, global poverty, and refugee crises – demands a harmonization

---

[2] The United Nations being a Western-dominating organization is because of multiple reasons. To start, Article 23 of the Charter describes that three out of five permanent members of the Security Council are – what is traditionally determined to be - Western (namely, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Furthermore, the United States has been (and potentially still is) the hegemon of liberal internationalism (Ikenberry, *End of Liberal Order* 8), and therefore also has profoundly influenced the Charter of the United Nations. Lastly, the European Union is the biggest funder of the United Nations (Youngs 26)

of (inter)national policies without which such grand problems cannot be tackled. Sovereign states with diverse visions, agendas, political orientations, and levels of development have entered the multinational platform, which naturally sometimes clash in their devised solutions for international issues (Thakur 3), therewith increasing the difficulty in responding to international crises with a collectively devised agreement which does not unequally burden some states, nor foregrounds one ethos over others. These are fundamental questions that appeal to the foundational structure of the United Nations. Joanna Burch-Brown states that UN guidelines – thus the Charter especially – continue to remain unparalleled in terms of influence and reach in both philosophical debates as well as practical judgement, and that studying these principles therefore "anchors the discussion in expressed commitments of the international community" (3-4). This provides the justification of my sole, albeit it limited, focus on the Charter of the United Nations, as a philosophical analysis of these principles provides a most fundamental insight into the description, assumption, and division of the responsibilities of both the individual member-states and the collective Organization.

To be most clear, the notion of collective responsibility will be understood in the way that it is characterized in the Charter – a complete overview of the plethora of debates and philosophies on the nature and existence of collective responsibility is beyond the scope of this current research[3]. What can be said about collective responsibility within this research as well as within the understanding of the United Nations, in general, is that it cannot be led back to a mere aggregate of individual responsibilities, as the atomist, individually isolated view on responsibility would suppose. The Charter clearly makes reference to either the individual member-state, or a "variety of actors, working in partnership" (3), and furthermore mostly refers to the joint 'Organization' as the acting entity. Additionally, the Organization will be understood as an institutional entity, which needs to uphold a joint institutional duty to realise a collective outcome. This in turn fashions institutional responsibilities as congruent with moral responsibilities (Miller 43-4). Therefore, the institutional responsibilities of the United Nations – as elucidated in the Charter – are interpreted as also being collective moral responsibilities.

---

[3] See for multiple interpretations on collective responsibility for example *The Routledge Handbook of Collective Responsibility* (Ed. Saba Bazargan-Forward and Deborah Tollefsen. New York: Routledge, 2020) from which the following nuance also is drawn from.

IV.   African Communitarianism

After determining how the absence of a communal moral dimension within the Charter negatively impacts the United Nations' possible assumption of collective responsibility, African communitarianism will be presented as the interpretation that sheds light on the importance of facilitating a holistic 'community'. Communitarianism, by its very nature, not only has a philosophical influx, but entails a practical perspective as well, making it apt to be implemented into real political bodies and become political reality. While there exist different theories of African communitarianism – both moderate and strong with regards to the primacy of the community over the individual – they all emphasize the fact that a person's humanity is by its very nature dependent on the appreciation and affirmation of other people's humanity. To be an individual is to recognize that my social world depends on a communal social intercourse of meaning-giving and identity-building (Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 387). Personhood is constituted by a communal reality, and man is defined by reference to his natural and social environment. Communitarianism, therefore, insists "that the good of all determines the good of each or, put differently, the welfare of each is dependent on the welfare of all" (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 156). I will argue that the United Nations currently is not a *community* as prescribed by African communitarianism, but rather an *aggregate*. Bernard Matolino describes how Ifeanyi Menkiti discerns between different these sorts of groupings. The aggregate is a "collection of individuals who have different interests but are brought together and forced to cooperate by the recognition that they cannot realise all their ends individually", while a community is characterized by an "organic dimension to the relationship between component individuals" (65). Since the United Nations currently is organized primarily on a morality of multilateralism and voluntarism – as will be postulated in the second chapter by a close reading of the Charter – it is an aggregate, working together on primarily for mutual gain. The Organization lacks the recognized interwovenness, the ingrained communal values, and the social responsibilities that would make it a *community*. Using African communitarianism in articulating a communal morality could help foster these feelings of relationality and fellowship within the United Nations, therewith facilitating opportunities to take up greater collective responsibility.

Sometimes, communitarianism and communalism are used interchangeably, or definitions of the one are used to explain the other. Kwame Gyekye defines 'communalism' as the idea that "the group constitutes the focus of the activities of the individual members of society" but uses it interchangeably with 'communitarianism' (*Akan Conceptual Scheme* 155). Polycarp Ikuenobe describes communalism as the attempt to "(re)construct, theoretically, an idea that captures the

resemblances among beliefs, values, and ways of life in traditional societies" (213) – it is more an informal, social experience. Communitarianism, Ikuenobe describes as "a formal or governmental structure and system in which people live together as a group, in virtue of sharing overriding set of moral, social, and political values or principles … [it] involves an affirmation of the logical or moral priority of the community or its interests over those of individuals with respect to issues involving public policies" (Ikuenobe qtd. in Maqoma 2). While both concepts postulate 'community' as the core entity of their philosophy, *communitarianism* possesses a political and governmental dimension. This governmental dimension is most important in this current research, as the philosophy is to be applied to the political body of the United Nations. For purposes of coherency and consistency, *communitarianism* will exclusively be used throughout this research when speaking of African communal philosophies.

V.   *Akan Communitarianism and Akan Humanism*

As mentioned before, there are strands of strong and moderate communitarianism. Ifeanyi Menkiti is perceived a radical communitarian – the theory of communitarianism which states that man's ontology is derived from the existence of their community, meaning that the individual does not and cannot exist alone, that they owe their entire existence to other people and their respective community. To become a person, and not merely remain an individual, one has to *achieve* personhood – this endowment is not simply given (Maqoma 3). Opposite of radical communitarianism stands moderate communitarianism, represented most famously by Akan philosopher Kwame Gyekye. Gyekye states that the ontology of the individual should precede the ontology of the community, as to not preclude the individual potentiality of fashioning own identity and capacities. This potentiality would counteract the determinist nature of the community as advocated for by strong communitarianism. Personhood is not something to be acquired through interaction with the community but rather depends on a person's growth in virtuous character – personhood is intrinsic in every individual, for every individual possesses the moral capacity to act and to be virtuous (Maqoma 4-6). However, Menkiti and Gyekye do find common ground in their conceptualization of the community itself. Gyekye describes the community as "a reality itself – not a mere association based on a contract of individuals whose interest and ends are contingently congruent, but as a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds" (qtd. in Maqoma 6). This description of a community has a resemblance to Menkiti's advocating for a "collective we" – something more than a mere aggregate; a collective built on a shared view of life. Such a community would be characterized by sharing "an overall way of life" (Gyekye qtd. in

Maqoma 6). As noted earlier, the United Nations currently has clearly articulated their common goals and, by extension, their ideal image of the international world. The aggregate of these ideals implemented in spheres ranging from the economic and multilateral to the social and political would constitute such a shared way of life. However, this shared way of life cannot be established nor acutely realized, as the United Nations currently is a mere aggregate and is not linked by interpersonal bonds denoting social responsibilities and commonalities. An Organization characterized by these bonds, instead of mere 'membership', would denote a virtuous community of nation-states, a more holistic community. Its shared way of life would be shaped through the communal desire to further the well-being of each not from a morality of voluntarism or mutual gains – as would be characteristic of a liberal aggregate – but from a morality of solidarity and relationality. In a communal morality characterized by virtues of empathy, reciprocity, and benevolence, social responsibilities become natural responsibilities - they are necessarily ingrained and internalized, as communal virtues demand mutualism. A communal morality presupposes a natural desire to take up social responsibilities as these would benefit the well-being of all. Since the United Nations currently does not possess an additional communal morality and therefore does not act upon communal values either, it is unable to conjure up both social and natural responsibilities. I will argue that these values and responsibilities, however, would fashion the United Nations as a more holistic community; member-states would be able to feel an intrinsic, social, as well as supportive relation to other member-states and to the Organization.

The conceptualizations of community within the area of overlap between Menkiti and Gyekye will be taken as the departure point in arguing for the fact that a "collective we" – a holistic entity built on a communal morality – should be facilitated within the United Nations. However, in contrast to both writers, it will be argued that neither the individual nor the community has ontological pre-eminence over the other. Rather, it will be assumed that there exists no ontological dualism between the individual and the community, but that they are contemporal – both are defined through inter-subjective processes of meaning-giving and identity formation with their counterpart (Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 389, Eze, *Menkiti, Gyekye and Beyond* 8). This understanding is especially justified in the move from the individual perspective to the (inter)national perspective, as individual member-states already possess an established identity and national sovereignty without belonging to any international or supranational network. In Chapter III, concepts within Akan philosophy related to the formation of a community will be expounded clearly employing them in articulating a communal morality. Subsequently, I will state that a more comprehensive moral foundation – a foundation characterized by communal values supplementing the existing liberal morality – is necessary in order to form a collective we, and –

additionally – that the forming of such a community will not endanger the respect for individual rights, sovereignty, and autonomy.

Understandings from Akan communitarianism specifically will be the core of the communal morality that I will be advocating for. Akan philosophy emphasizes "sympathetic impartiality" (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 198-9), and social responsibilities in "ensuring the welfare and interests of each member of society" (Gyekye, *Conceptual Scheme* 155), therewith fashioning it a humanist philosophy. To argue for these Akan concepts, however, trends from sub-Saharan African communitarianism will be used to elucidate what is meant by core notions of community, relationality, and autonomy. An adequate understanding of these concepts is necessary in advocating for a communal morality within the United Nations, and I found general sub-Saharan African communitarian philosophy to provide the clearest explication of such concepts. The understandings that arise from this explication will then aid me in my claim that *Akan humanism* – as signified by the above two core ideals – makes explicit what liberal internationalism enshrouds: the naturality of sociality and interconnectedness, and the devotion to the promotion of universal well-being,

VI.   *The Structure of this Study*

To be most clear, the liberal internationalist philosophy is already a *morality* and has brought many benefits with regards to cooperation, individual freedom, and state-freedom by foregrounding mechanisms such as deliberation and negotiation. My point is, however, that such a morality needs to be supplemented by a *social* or *communal* morality to reflect the increased interconnectedness of the world that globalization has brought about. The United Nations will be unable to present itself as a strong and uniform community if it does not additionally possess a *communal* morality that guides member-states in making coordinated actions in a holistic community. A communal morality could fashion states into moral agents – actualizing their moral potential – and would internalize the social responsibilities that are necessary for a true community to thrive. Such a connected community would be able to present itself as headstrong, steadfast, consistent, and coherent and would therefore be more apt to fulfil a guiding role in tackling international problems.

In Chapter II, a close reading of the Charter of the United Nations will be provided to gain insight into the ways liberal internationalism has influenced the foundational principles and which key benefits of this morality are commonly emphasized. A critique of some principles will be given, and the preliminary nonexistence of a community will be explicated and problematized. In Chapter III, key concepts – and relevant critiques – within African communitarianism will be expounded. Akan philosophy and its humanist tenets will be postulated as the inspiration for the addition of a communal morality to the Charter. In Chapter IV, this morality will be given shape and the formulated objections with regards to one philosophy will be responded to with relevant values of their counterpart, as to provide a balance between the two moralities. The summary of these responses will provide a comprehensive overview of the synthesis of those principles of liberal internationalism and those of African communitarianism. It will be concluded that the incorporation of Akan humanism will fashion the United Nations into a more social *community,* where inescapable values of solidarity and fellowship will be internalized by the member-states in such a way that they require the member-states to take up social responsibilities. The sum of these social responsibilities – as manifested in actions – will then bring the Organization a step closer in achieving their foundational purposes that wish to promote the universal well-being of all peoples.

Chapter II: Charter of the United Nations – A Close Reading

This Chapter in Section I will present an overview of the origins and history of the United Nations. Afterwards, in Section II, its liberal internationalist foundations will be expounded by manner of a close reading, in order to give crucial liberal concepts an elaborate nuance. Characteristic 'pillars' of liberal internationalism will be presented, and some virtues will be attached to these pillars as to further delineate the liberal morality. Each pillar will be further elucidated and attached to the United Nations as a whole by listing some of the Charter Articles which resonate the same sentiment. Then, in section III, critiques will be levelled against some pillars of liberal internationalism, before turning to section IV where the importance and the justification of an additional morality will be explicated.

I.   *Historicization and Conceptualization*

The drafting of the Charter in 1945 signified the beginning of the United Nations. This international political body offered a vision of an organization comprised of sovereign states cooperating "for mutual gain and protection within a loosely rules-based global space" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 12). Especially around 1945, this philosophy provided a vision of a globalized and international world that was manageable through organizational principles, negotiating institutions, and stabilizing capacities (13). Since the Organization was erected in an immediate post-war atmosphere, this belief in the manageability of the global space provided the United Nations primarily with a peacekeeping role; as an international body that would provide security for its members. This nature of the United Nations manifested itself in a commitment to maintain international peace and therewith to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (United Nations, *Charter* 2). Since the United Nations was now conferred the role of a security collective, it manifested itself not only as a political bloc, but it also fashioned itself as a forum for bargaining, consulting, and coordinating relations between other (non)permanent institutions – both on the domestic and global level – in order to convert collective aspirations into collective realisation (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 16, Thakur 2). Liberal internationalism – as the coming together of states that back a similar liberal political order and ideology – then resulted in a system of multilateral governance, where sovereign, national governments remain the primary source of authority, while conducting their international relations on supranational, multilateral platforms.

This Chapter will take the five pillars of liberal internationalism – as expounded by John Ikenberry – as its departure-point; openness, multilateralism, security cooperation, mutual gains, and liberal democracy (*Liberal International Order* 11). These pillars will be used as a lead in discerning the ways in which the Charter can be said to adhere to a liberal internationalist philosophy, devised and dominated by Western liberal states. It will be argued that, while a Charter inspired by liberal internationalism foregrounds important values such as formal equality, open discussion, and sovereign autonomy, it lacks a clear enunciation of a *community*. Without a sense of community in the Organization – specifically one which the member-states can identify themselves with – this collective will not be able to become more than a mere aggregate of states without real bonds of solidarity and mutuality to hold them together. The United Nations needs to become an interconnected community if it desires to become a forum through which solutions can be reached and implemented, for it to be perceived with the strength and efficacy they desire, and for it to have actual influence on happenings in and between states. I will argue that this lack of community is bolstered by an absence of a communal morality in the Charter – this particular morality ought to have made sure that the member-states feel like they enter and are part of a community, rather than an aggregate, and that their actions are part of and in favour of that community. Since such a morality is missing, the naturality of social responsibilities towards the Organization is missing and as such the United Nation is less able to take up the appropriate collective responsibility. Before delving into the implications of liberal internationalism on notions of duty and responsibility, a close reading will now be given in order to analyse how the foundations of the United Nations are erected in adherence to the liberal internationalist tenets.

II.   *Concepts of the United Nations – A Close Reading*

IIa. Liberal Internationalist Tenets – Openness

The first pillar of liberal internationalism is openness; "trade and exchange are understood to be constituents of modern society, and the connections and gains that flow from deep engagement and integration foster peace and political advancement" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 11). The importance of economics can be perceived by the fact that in enumerations regarding problems arising within the different societal spheres, the economic sphere is always mentioned first; Article 1 states the importance of achieving "international cooperation in solving international problems of an *economic,* social, cultural, or humanitarian character" and Article 13 repeats the importance of "promoting [this] international cooperation in the *economic,* social, cultural, educational, and health fields". In Article 55, the Organization states to promote

"conditions of stability and well-being", and in their first clause this includes "higher standards of living [and] full employment". Here, well-being and higher standards of living seem to be tied to increased employment, which would then increase the country's GDP and thereby its overall economic standing amongst other countries. Economic growth and GDP here are taken as both the standard for well-being as well as for general development – economic growth is the norm according to which the country as a whole is to be judged, making trade and exchange highly important in liberal internationalist thought.

To emphasize this, in the second clause of the same Article 55, 'economic' is again the first sphere to be enumerated in finding "solutions of international *economic*, social, health, and related problems". Another aspect in the Charter that reflects the primacy of the economic sphere concerns the penalties the United Nations has imposed if one were to hamper its primary goal of maintaining international peace and security. In its desire to adopt "measures not involving the use of armed forces" the Organization imposes sanctions that "may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations" as determined in Article 41. Economic sanctions are thus the primary mode of punishment, thereby crippling international trade and exchange, which from a liberal internationalist perspective are the processes through which the greatest wealth can be gathered and with which a country's (social) standing is most powerfully influenced.

IIb. Liberal Internationalist Tenets – Multilateralism

The second pillar of liberal internationalism concerns the commitment to multilateralism; "an institutional form that coordinates relations among a group of states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 11). As explicated above, multilateralism demands the sovereignty of member-states to be clearly articulated – they are the actors of power in negotiating international relations. The sovereign nature of member-states is resolutely determined and reflected within the Charter in, for example, the first point of Article 2 which emphasizes that the Organization is "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members", and the fourth point which highlights "the territorial integrity [and] political independence of any state", while the seventh point limits UN intervention in "matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state". Additionally, the Organization also appeals to member-states' primacy in actions through, for example, appealing to a subsidiarity principle under Article 52, where the Security Council encourages and even obligates member-states to "make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through … regional arrangements". These emphases on individual sovereignty are formed in the light of a post-WWII

world, but also have their roots in the liberal tendency to give greater recognition to individuals and to perceive these as both the subjects and objects of international relations (Thakur 4).

However, this intergovernmental spirit is still somewhat at odds with the supranational character of the Organization. This supranationalism is indicated in Article 103 of the United Nations Charter, which demands that, in the event of a conflict between obligations to the present Charter and to "any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail". The tension between this supranational tendency of the overall international body while being comprised of independent, sovereign states is well articulated by Ramesh Thakur, who states that such a supranational international organization is a first step "towards the establishment of a world government which would transcend the state system" but that these organization are ultimately "set up and managed by nation-states; the sovereign state remains the basic entity of international relations' (27). The debate between supranationalism and state-sovereignty continues to be ongoing, and tensions between these two poles continues to arise in discussion regarding the best way to structure (international) organizations[4]. However, it has been showcased that liberal internationalism still very much delineates the individual as being the core actor – flowing from general influences of the liberal morality which emphasizes voluntarism and negative freedoms – even while negotiating and cooperating with other nations on a multilateral, international forum.

IIc. Liberal Internationalist Tenets – Security Cooperation

The third pillar builds on the idea that "the liberal international order will entail some form of security cooperation … states within the order affiliate in ways designed to increase their security" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 11). The post-war context manifested the United Nations originally very much as a bloc of formal security against potential (ideologically opposing) aggressors, and ready to defend itself when necessary. As such, Article 43 then demands that all member-states "undertake to make available to the Security Council … armed forces, assistances, and facilities" and that such an agreement "shall govern the numbers and types of forces, their degree of readiness and general location". Additionally, sovereign security within member-states also continues to be secured, as Article 51 affirms "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations".

---

[4] For more on the debate between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, and the justification of supranational expansion, see for example Oats, John G. *Constituent Power and the Legitimacy of international Organizations: The Constitution of Supranationalism.* Milton: Routledge, 2020. *Taylor and Francis.* Web.

However, Article 51 also states that acts of self-defence "shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary". The Article supports both the intergovernmental push towards sovereignty as well as the supranational push towards internationally facilitated action; while sovereign states have the right to secure their national borders when attacked, they do have to be ready to present forces and materials to the Organization upon its request. There exists, however, the steady and consistent effort on the part of the United Nations to find political and institutional alternatives to military force – such as the economic sanctions discussed in Article 41 – in its quest to safeguard security of all peoples in the member-states, and this is an achievement that ought to be celebrated (Thakur 19). These alternatives still express the need for an increased sense of stability and are enacted in the spirit of international peace and security, but no longer include the immediate use of semi-military violence and focus rather on aligning the interests of member-states in a cooperative prevention of conflicts.

IId. Liberal Internationalist Tenets – Reasoned Mutual Gains

Then, the fourth pillar is built around the pursuit of mutual gains – power politics should be circumvented and stable relations around the pursuit of mutual gains should be installed. The prominent idea behind this is that "international society is … 'corrigible'. Reform is possible" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 11). This statement illustrates the underlying principle of reason as the mechanism used to achieve order and – when necessary – to change the structure of international society. As expounded before, this precedence and supremacy of reason has its origins in the Enlightenment faith in and optimism regarding the individual's capacity for reason. It was assumed there was a developmental and evolutionary logic to history, and that the realm of the global was governable in accordance with their logically devised, liberal principles (13-4). The United Nations, in wanting to be a forum for open deliberation and rational and structured dialogue, then "represents the dream of a world ruled by reason" (Thakur 8). The capacity of individual reason in turn is bolstered by the strong emphasis on national sovereignty, resulting in a mindset based on voluntarism. The nature of the Organization as an aggregate – built on formal membership – then results in the *voluntary* pursuit of gains. This voluntarism then ensured that member-states would likely only work together preliminarily, when mutual gains were thought to be achieved, and that if there were no benefits to be attained, the cooperation would not be followed through.

This voluntarism is seen in, for example, the fact that the Security Council cannot compel nor force member-states to adopt attitudes deemed beneficial, resolutions made, nor solutions proposed in their attempts to defuse disputes between respective sovereign parties. This is instituted in Article 33, which calls for the disputing parties to first try and seek a solution through "negotiation, enquiry, meditation, conciliation, [or] arbitration". A decision of intervention or action on the part of the Security Council – as described in Article 40 – is only allowed and proposed after suggestion (Article 33), investigation (Article 34), recommendation (Article 36), and debate on whether the dispute endangers international peace and security (Article 37).

IIe. Liberal Internationalist Tenets – Liberal Democracy

The last pillar concerns the "expectation that a liberal international order will move states in a progressive direction, defined in terms of liberal democracy" (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 11). The formal equality that such liberal democracies safeguard is reflected in another basic determination of the United Nations, which seeks to "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" (United Nations, *Charter* 2). The third clause in Article 1 by extension reflects the desire to "achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of a … humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all". Liberal internationalism became universalistic in its vision after 1945, and envisioned universal rights and protections to become more deeply anchored within the composition of their security community (Ikenberry, *Liberal International Order* 15). Concretely, Article 8 demands that the Organization "shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate" and Article 55, regarding the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), states the necessity of the promotion of "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights … without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The establishment of formal equality in a foundational document such as this is of fundamental importance, especially when coupled with the attempt of the United Nations to roll back colonialism. The Chapters XII and XIII on trusteeship and Chapter XI on non-self-governing territories reflected this shift in attitude towards colonialism that occurred halfway through the 20th century. The problems that arose within the colonized territories initiated a push for increased international supervision and scrutiny (Emerson 769-71). The United Nations answered this push by incorporating these chapters so that the colonial powers could be held publicly responsible, therewith attesting to its universalistic and supranational character.

III.   *Critiques on Liberal Internationalism – A Moral Deficit*

The combined benefits for each pillar of liberal internationalism merge into the liberal morality that has given shape to the United Nations and moulded it into the revolutionary Organization it has been since 1945. Open borders have ensured that countries can more easily trade with other nations, while capitalizing on their own comparative advantage, thereby facilitating innovation and development. A multilateral forum has brought new insights to each country by virtue of the accessibility of such negotiations. The departure from semi-military intervention and the guarantee of peace has been instrumental in the formation of a strong collective able to enunciate clear visions of the future. The voluntarism in the pursuit of mutual gains proves to be a strong check for sovereign countries, which can enter any (economic) exchange without fearing coercion nor risk a violation of their innate rights, participating only in those interactions that they know will benefit them. Lastly, advocating for democracy confirms human rights, claims to civil participation, as well as the freedom to follow one's own path in life without interference of others. However, despite the benefits of each pillar of liberal internationalism, some aspects of this morality – especially the second, fourth, and fifth pillars on reason, voluntarism, and liberal democracy, respectively – are most wanting of an addition of a communal morality. I will consequently argue that the absence of such a morality within these pillars, as well as within the foundational principles and purposes that they represent, hampers the founding of a holistic community within the United Nations. The missing communal feeling is to the detriment of natural feelings of duty, and therewith to feelings of social responsibility. This incompetency and inability in the advocating for and the assuming of collective responsibility results in a gap between rhetoric and action, between promise and performance for the Organization.

IIIa. *Multilateralism – Passivity and Non-Internationality*

On multilateralism, way the primary organs of the United Nations are structured and what powers they are endowed with present hurdles in the formation of a community. The General Assembly is the plenary body seating all member-states, and therefore is the most international organ within the United Nations. It, however, is regrettably endowed with quite a limited capacity to act. This is evident through the frequent use of passive verbs that circumvent concrete action; Article 10 states that the General Assembly "*may discuss* any questions or any matters … and *may* make *recommendations* to the Members" and Article 11 that it "*may consider* the general principles … *may* call the *attention* of the Security Council". The Security Council, in contrast, is endowed with the powers to act and to intervene in disputes, as enumerated in Chapter V. This contrast between

the two organs becomes problematic when learning that the Security Council only offers a seat to eleven members, five of which are permanent. This division between a passive and international General Assembly and an active though confined Security Council could be said to have consequences for the perception of the Organization as an entity. Since the most international organ is quite passive, references made to the actions, efficacy, or performance of the United Nations really only address and appeal to the Security Council, creating the illusion that the Organization is only comprised of a limited number of countries. Naturally, the permanent seats – reserved for national superpowers – within the Security Council would also enjoy greater privileges and force in decision-making processes compared to smaller, developing countries. When the Organization is presented as a dynamic and acting entity, the primary organ that this description really makes reference to is the Security Council, thereby undermining the possibility of attaching a real international character to the Organization and propagating inequal relations among member-states. This in turn results in the inability of countries to identify themselves with the United Nations as well as in the apathy regarding decisions made by the Security Council.

IIIb. Mutual Gains – 'Universal' Reason

The fourth pillar, which praises the potential of reform and thereby the governability of the world, is based on the primacy of enlightened reason as the ultimate ordering mechanism. This foregrounding of reason, which would logically lead to one 'good' path the world should and will follow (with the right intervention and direction), becomes problematic when grasped that the identities – and therefore the perceptions and ideologies – of the sovereign member-states are sometimes too divergent for one such ultimate path to emerge. Since the United Nations is currently comprised of 191 member-states, it is foolish to assume some universal logic that reigns over all these countries despite their – sometimes fundamental – differences. While reason is fundamental in making decisions and recommendations that balance the interests of the member-states equally, it is *universal* reason that becomes most contestable. There is no single set of beliefs and solutions that can be applied to every situation, nor would that set of beliefs be accessible to all. Fundamental differences in welfare, economy, politics, culture, and ideology negate the existence of a single solution in navigating problems. While the foundation of the United Nations does rest upon a "belief [in] our collective destiny" (Thakur 6), it becomes immensely difficult to agree upon one set of global norms and values as these can greatly diverge between nations and peoples. Reason can therefore not always be considered universal, as it could manipulate a heterogenous group into believing to be a homogenous collective, creating tensions.

As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer state, adopting reason as the ordering mechanism could furthermore lead to a classification of identity, abstracting individual identities and endowing them with universal interchangeability where "qualities are dissolved in thought, [and] men are brought to actual conformity" (10, 12-3). The objectification of the relations of and between men, as a result of the conviction of the governability of the social world, results in both their individual alienation, as well as in their alienation towards the desired collective. Especially with regards to the United Nations, where a true collective is yet to be discerned, and feelings of solidarity, mutualism, and connectedness seem to be hampered, it becomes difficult to identify – let along promote – a collective destiny amongst alienated members.

IIIc. Liberal Democracy – Formal Equality

The fifth pillar that promotes the erecting of liberal democracies based on the universal appreciation of human rights also is left wanting. Drawing from Marxist theory, the political emancipation that liberal societies advocate for does not necessarily lead to human emancipation[5]. While formal equality is firmly entrenched within the Charter, as described above, there seem to be no affirmative steps described throughout the Charter to achieve (when necessary) or uphold such equality. Chapter V discerns the actions that may be taken by the Security Council to respond to and intervene in threats in maintaining international peace and security, but there are no such guidelines regarding actions to be taken to achieve social or humanitarian equality within the member-states. While the United Nations currently seem to have expanded its humanitarian reach as is evident through, for example, the drafting of their new Sustainable Development Goals, this humanitarian dimension is not actively strived for within its foundational Charter. If humanitarian concerns are mentioned throughout the Charter, they are usually coupled with passive verbs – since they reside only within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly; Article 13 obliges the General Assembly to "initiate *studies* and make *recommendations* … [in] *assisting* in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all", and Article 62 states ECOSOC "*may make recommendations* for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all".

---

[5] See, for example Marx, Karl. "On the Jewish Question." 1844. *Marxists.org.* Web., Comninel, George. "Emancipation in Marx's Early Work." *Socialism and Democracy* 24.3 (2010): 60-78. *Taylor and Francis.* Web., and Le Baron, Bentley. "Marx on Human Emancipation." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 4.4 (1971): 559-70. *JSTOR.* Web.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that there seem to be no humanitarian requirements for UN-membership within Article 4, as it articulates that "membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter". This contrasts with, for example, the European Union which requires stable domestic institutions that guarantee democracy, human rights for all, and respect for and protection of minorities (EU Treaty, Article 49, Copenhagen Criteria). The negligence with regards to safeguarding and realizing humanitarian equality is also problematic when viewed together with the fourth pillar of liberal internationalism, which foregrounds the notion of voluntarism. The pursuit of human rights should not only be formally outlined nor merely be voluntarily acquired, but actively pursued in accordance with the universalism of the United Nations.

IV.   The 'Organization' – Implications for Community, Duty, and Responsibility

In general, a morality characterized by values such as open dialogue, rational deliberation, and political emancipation has its benefits, and this morality has helped states to shape their behaviours to be less conflictual and more cooperative. Liberal internationalism presents sovereign states as the entities that determine much of the decision-making process, but the connected focus on voluntarism, sovereignty, and individual reason has led to the precedence of individual member-state responsibility over collective responsibility. In Article 2, four out of seven principles[6] are focused on the member-states responsibility towards the Organization and does not include principles expounding the general responsibilities of the Organization itself. The lack of a well-articulated, additional morality which foregrounds social and communal bonds in the foundational Charter prevents the transformation of the Organization from an aggregate into a community. There exists a desire to form an ethos comprised of collectively shared norms and values, but without the member-states' identification with the international body such a clearly enunciated, ideologically strong community cannot be formed. This precluding of a community – through the precluding of feelings of mutualism, solidarity, and interconnectedness – leads to the absence of social responsibilities on behalf of the member-states.

---

[6] Namely sub-articles 2, 3, 4, and 5 which are focused on individual duties towards the Organization, as opposed to sub-articles 1, 6, and 7 which detail the Organization's attitude towards (member) states.

The emphasis throughout much of the Charter is on individual rights and responsibilities by virtue of them being sovereign states, thereby foregoing the explicit recognition of their relatedness (between other sovereign states, as well as to the United Nations). If there does not exist a desire to take up duties towards the collective – such as duties ensuring the efficacy of the United Nations in peace-keeping missions, or in the upholding of humanitarian rights in other member-states – there is an impossibility of collective responsibility. The currently omitted morality in the Charter of the United Nations ought to have appealed to values and norms such as solidarity, understanding, caring, empathy, equality, and mutualism in order for these concepts to be deeper ingrained into member-states behaviour towards each other and to the community as such. Precisely because this morality is not present, there exists a gap between promise and performance. This gap becomes especially problematic when considering current criticisms on the United Nations, such as a lack of popular trust, social legitimacy, and democratic legitimacy[7]. An appeal to a communal morality would ensure greater awareness of interconnectedness and relationality, would explicitly reference social responsibilities of member-states towards the Organization, and would thereby transform these responsibilities into actions. The United Nations needs to transform itself from a mere aggregate into a community if it wants to continue to uphold its central principles and beliefs, and to be able to take relevant, justifiable, and efficient actions that mirror these desires – to be able to take up the role as primary negotiator on the world stage. To be most clear, the liberal internationalist philosophy is already a *morality* and has brought many benefits like non-intervention, sovereign autonomy, and state-freedom by foregrounding mechanisms such as deliberation and negotiation. My point is, however, that such a morality needs to be supplemented by a *social* or *communal* morality to reflect the increased interconnectedness of the world that globalization has brought about. The United Nations will be unable to present itself as a strong community if it does not additionally possess a *communal* morality that guides member-states in making coordinated actions. A communal morality would internalize the social responsibilities necessary for a true community to thrive and to tackle international problems, as it foregrounds values such as relationality, empathy, benevolence, and fellowship.

---

[7] For insight in the lack of trust from the general population see Torgler, Benno. "Trust in International Organizations: An Empirical Investigations Focusing on the United Nations." *The Review of International Organizations* 3 (2008): 65-93. *Springer.* Web. On social legitimacy, Dellmuth, Lisa Maria, and Jonas Tallberg. "The Social Legitimacy of International Organizations: Interest Representation, Institutional Performance, and Confidence Extrapolation in the United Nations." *Review of International Studies* 41.3 (2014): 451-75. *Cambridge Core.* Web. On the democratic ordering within the United Nations, Iyase, Blessing Nneka, and Sheriff Folami Folarin. "A Critique of Veto Power System in the United Nations Security Council." *Acta Universitatis Danubius* 11.2 (2018): 104-21. *Danubius UP.* Web.

In the next chapter, it will be argued that Akan philosophy and humanism proves itself to be a great contender in presenting this communal morality. Its emphasis on the constitution of the individual through their community, and the duties and responsibilities an individual has towards their community will grant vital insights regarding the relation between member-states and the United Nations. Akan communitarianism sheds light on the formation of a community – as opposed to a mere aggregate – and on mutualism, relationality, and interconnectedness; values the United Nations requires in bridging the gap between promise and performance.

Chapter 3: African Communitarianism and Akan Humanism

In this chapter, concepts within African communitarianism in general will be expounded – in Section II and III – as to provide thorough insights into crucial theories necessary to argue for the importance of Akan humanism specifically. Special emphasis will be on community, autonomy, and social responsibilities, enumerating both their worth, and also touching upon some critiques – in Section IV – that could be levelled against this communitarian understanding. Section V will use Akan humanism to argue for the importance of a communal morality, and what benefits such a communal morality would bring for the United Nations.

I.   *Historicization and Contextualization*

Regarding the history and trajectory of African communitarianism, the philosophy arose from an emancipatory politics of independence, where the "narrative of return" was played upon in an attempt to re-identify 'African' pre-colonial values of relationality and harmony to inspire current sovereign politics (Matolino & Kwindingwi 198, Matolino 59). In opposition to these holistic values were individualistic values brought by Western colonialism "concerning individual accountability and individual reward, the spreading sense of individual vision and the ascendancy of self-interest in contrast with community interest as a basis of action, [and] the growing sense of private power arising from self-action" (Emmanuel Abraham 27). A rise in (what was perceived to be) an 'African' consciousness alongside this colonial, individualistic philosophy resulted in the coexistence of multiple, albeit diverging value-sets in newly sovereign states. This coexistence coupled with the fast-paced, unavoidable march of modernization and globalization within these states fuelled domestic ideological tensions. On the one hand, there was a desire to return to an old, 'original' way of life, and on the other the desire to change the old ways of life along the lines of the values established through interactions with other cultures. In general, a quest for identity arose which prompted self-analysis and critical self-reflection (Wiredu, *Problems in Africa's Self-Definition* 59-60). African *communitarianism* was deemed most adequate – politically and philosophically – to fashion state governance in accordance with, as it not only conformed most to the vision of African pre-colonial mentality, but also because it allowed the collective pursuit of African destiny in politics (Emmanuel Abraham 35). Furthermore, communitarianism was believed to fortify most strongly the newly found African independence and sovereignty to make sure that the new states were to persevere within the challenges of modernization and globalization.

African communitarianism – most generally – perceives the human person as innately communal, as embedded in a complex interweaving of interdependent social relationships each characterized by a different nature – never as isolated or atomic (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 104). Akan communitarianism, then, takes this interdependency as its departure-point in arguing for their general idiom, which reads that what is good in general is that what promotes human interests, or – more narrowly – that what is conducive to the harmonization of those human interests (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 194). Akan people – a meta-ethnic group situated in current Ghana and Ivory-Coast – have their focus on the lived reality of persons, which ensured a strong proverbial dimension in traditional Akan philosophy and thought (*The Ghanaian Tradition* 1, 5). This focus then manifested as an approach that was characterized by a speculative-theoretic effort aimed at understanding and interpreting this lived experience and reality for the betterment of the general human condition (2).

While strands of African communitarianism differ with regards to the level of primacy the community takes over the individual (see for example Eze, *Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu* and Maqoma) as well as to the ways in which the communal relationality moulds a person, this research will not give primacy to the community nor to the individual. As postulated beforehand in Chapter I, it will not be assumed that one party is ontologically prior to the other (see Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 389) – this ontological dualism will be replaced by the contemporality of both entities. However, in this Chapter advocates of strong communitarianism – such as Menkiti – will be appealed to, as they do provide a very apt analysis regarding the importance and value of the community as a moulding apparatus. The community begets this role in virtue of its nature as the educator, provider, and furnisher of norms, values, and material conditions which guide the individual person.

II.   *Community and Communitarianism*

In Chapter I, some key ideas of communitarianism have already been briefly described. A community within African communitarianism is an entity – not an aggregate – that possesses "an organic dimension to the relationship between the component individuals" and which signifies "not an additive 'we' but a thoroughly fused 'we'" (Menkiti 179-80). An aggregate would entail a voluntary association of individuals, whose interest happen to align and which would be achieved more easily through association. A community, however, is a collective linked by interpersonal bonds – both biological and non-biological – where each individual actively perceives themselves as a member of said collective and, in virtue of this identification, share common goals and values

(Gyekye, *Person and Community* 104). Even without ascribing ontological primacy to the community, the community does provide the (im)material foundations for the construction of each individual's identity and sociality. The community is itself endowed with a place-specific discourses that reflect a social habitat, and its utterings consist of commonly propagated values that push the ultimate objective – within African communitarianism – of harmony, relationality, and balance (Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 389). The individuals are defined by their social environment as it provides the social structure – compounded of such values and objectives – which builds the framework with which individuals can realize their hopes, dreams, well-being, and paths of life (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 101, 104). This framework – as a function of the structure itself, as the product of this cultural community – the individual inherits by virtue of the necessity of their embeddedness (106, 112). Individuals are only endowed with the capacities of meaning-giving and sense-making by relating to and with other persons – each individual begets an identity through continuous inter-subjective processes of meaning-giving and identity-formation and this identity is then actualized within the community (Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 387, 389).

Thus, this framework reflects African communitarian values such as kindness, solidarity, reciprocity, and mutuality. For the Akan, these values in turn fashion the first principle of all moral conduct as "sympathetic impartiality", where the commonality of interests provides the naturality of pure moral motivation (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 197-9). The commonality of interests determines that, when the community's well-being is furthered, so is each individual's personal well-being – the natural identification with other individuals and with one's community engenders a fundamental sense of togetherness and kinship, in exhibiting love as if each were direct family (Maqoma 3, Metz & Gaie 276, 284). The relation between individual and community will be further expounded in Section III by elucidating key concepts as to provide the basis from which to argue for the necessity of this conceptualization of community and social responsibility. Some potential downfalls of communitarianism – that ought to be avoided, or where debate still reigns – are mentioned in Section IV before turning to the ways in which the insights gained can aid in achieving an organic dimension within the United Nations in Section V.

III.   *African Communitarianism – Concepts*

IIIa. *Relationality*

The core idea of positive relationality, where self-realization is begotten only by advancing one's humanness in harmonical and communal terms (Metz & Gaie 275), is metamorphosized in many other different core values such as reciprocity, interdependency, mutualism, synthetism, togetherness, empathy, solidarity, benevolence, etc. It is considered, by many sub-Saharan communitarian moralities[8] that a human being is "essentially the centre of a thick set of concentric circles of obligations and responsibilities matched by rights and privileges revolving around levels of relationships of the circumference of human familyhood" (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 199). Relationality, the network of overlapping and interconnecting bonds, then ensures that we are given a social identity even before we are born (197). As such, man has a "moral obligation to be concerned for the good of others" (Metz & Gaie 275) as one's personal good determines and reflects the good of others and vice versa. These interactions furthermore mould our economic and political relationships with other individuals, and they ultimately provide the foundations of the general social fabric of our community (Akinola & Uzodike 95, 100, Murithi 226). The combination between our fundamentally relational character and the indivisibility of our common humanity is showcased by interactions with others through which we identify, comprehend, and connect with the complete world around us. The striving for mutual good is not limited to human familyhood but rather extends itself to also include our natural milieu; to the ecosystems that we are indivisibly a part of. Even a hermit who withdraws themselves from human society enters a communion of nature (P'Bitek 74).

IIIb. *Personhood and Subjectivity*

A crucial debate in African communitarianism concerns the acquisition of personhood. As explicated in Chapter I, there are strong and moderate conceptions of becoming a person – instead of remaining an individual, a process initiated and shaped by the community. Ifeanyi Menkiti – the exemplar of strong communitarianism – argues that personhood is conditioned on having adhered to the social-ethical standards of one's community and on having achieved ethical maturity, which are both defined with regards to the respective value-framework of the community. If one fails to live up to these social and moral demands, one is not a bad person but rather not a person at all (Eze, *Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu* 74, *Menkiti, Gyekye and Beyond* 3). Menkiti advocates for a processual nature of being (Maqoma 3) where the community plays a vital role as the perpetuator and teacher

---

[8] The values iterated in the previous sentence are values associated with Ubuntu philosophy in South-Africa in the Article of Metz and Gaie

of its values, norms, and social rules. An individual, then, can only become a person[9] After a process of internalization and social transformation through and by which they have attained "the full complement of excellencies definitive of man" (Menkiti 172).

Kwame Gyekye, as the exemplar of moderate communitarianism, argues that an individual does not acquire personhood through nor by the community, since "he *qua* person, … becomes the *subject* of acquisition, and being thus prior to the acquisition process, he cannot be defined by what he acquires" (*Person and Community,* 108). Individuals therefore cannot fail in becoming a person, since personhood only depends on a potentiality present in each individual. This potentiality is defined in terms of moral capability, and one therefore becomes a person by actualizing this potentiality i.e. by making just moral judgements (109-11). That being said, both Menkiti and Gyekye adhere to the understanding that personhood – and thereby a person's moral capacity – can only reach its full realization *within* a community, as relating, identifying, and interacting with other persons is a fundamental aspect of being able to make morally good judgements, as that what is morally good is that which promotes the well-being of all. An individual will never be a self-sufficient, atomic entity ontologically independent from their community – one is by nature a communal being and this necessitates the naturality of relationality. One can only develop one's personhood (and morality) progressively by participating in the community and being taught how to properly use one's capacities and skills (Ikuenobe 214). The individual, in turn, can develop their own personality and disposition within the socio-cultural space and options that the community builds and provides for them – only by utilizing these contextualized options will an individual truly be able to coherently place themselves into the world (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 106, Menkiti 172). The possibility of distancing oneself from or giving critique on their community will be expounded in the Section IVa.

---

[9] A 'person' – in contrast to an 'individual' is defined by Menkiti as having attainted "the full complement of excellencies seen as truly definitive of man …[i.e.] social self-hood" (172-3).
.

IIIc. Freedom and Autonomy

Freedom and autonomy within African communitarianism are concepts that are not naturally given, self-evident, nor metaphysically present. Most fundamentally, man is not born free. As Otok p'Bitek exclaims:

> Man is not born free. He cannot be free. He is incapable of being free. For only by being in *chains* can he be and remain "human" … Man cannot, and must not be free. "Son," "Mother," "Daughter," "Father," "Uncle," "Husband," "Grandfather," "Wife," "Clansman," "Mother-in-law," "Grandfather," "Chief," "Medicineman" and many other such terms are the stamps of man's unfreedom. It is by such complex titles that a person is defined and identified … The central question "Who am I?" cannot be answered in any meaningful way unless the relationship in question is known. Because "I" is not only one relationship, but numerous relationships (73-4).

This quote additionally elucidates both the concepts of relationality and personhood, in that the existence of an atomistic individual is metaphysically impossible. The lone individual is not self-sufficient nor self-reliant as both capacities need to be predicated on an interconnected, communal existence. This impossibility of the atomistic individual flies in the face of many liberal convictions, which tend to emphasize rational self-interest as the core of all interaction and development.

In order to elucidate (the differences between) both the liberal and communitarian perspectives on freedom and autonomy, the insights of John Stuart Mill and Polycarp Ikuenobe will be presented in this subsection. For Ikuenobe, the African conception of personhood – as being (partially) communally constituted – requires a positive and relational view of autonomy, too. One's autonomy is therefore defined by the relationship with and participation in one's culture and community, which leads to autonomy not being intrinsically, but instrumentally valuable – it is valuable only when that what is chosen by virtue of one's autonomy is good (i.e. when it promotes harmony and communal well-being) (Ikuenobe 212-3). This stands in opposition to the metaphysical view of autonomy, prevalent in liberal societies, which states that any self-legislating choice is good, and that for choices made from or for self-respect or self-development the individual is not to be held accountable (Mill 140, 142). Especially when adhering to "custom", Mill states that one will not "educate or develop in him any of the qualities which are the distinctive endowment of a human being". Fundamentally, any choice "arrived at by the maturity of his

faculties" is *valuable,* despite it possibly not being morally good (123). Ikueobe counters this belief – in the name of communitarianism – and states that the capacity of autonomy (or Mill's 'spontaneity') is merely a vacuous potential and therefore not something intrinsically good nor valuable. Rather, autonomy can only be made meaningful through harmonious communal relationships, and its goodness (or badness) – and therewith its value – depends on the manner in which an individual were to use their autonomy for communal well-being (213). Additionally, where the liberal individual has an unlimited plethora of choices available, the communitarian's respective options are determined by interpersonal bonds (as elucidated by P'Bitek in the above quotation) as well as by external factors, such as material conditions, values, norms, and knowledge (Ikuenobe 215-7). Where, for Mill, an act only begets a social dimension if it could or will injure others (142-5), for Ikuenobe the autonomous individual is already and necessarily socially integrated. Not being socially integrated would mean "one's choices [are] empty and the individual bereft of humanity as he lacks the conditions to develop and actualize his potential" (218).

Thus, autonomy in African communitarianism is relational in three senses: to the best life plan, to the material and normative conditions a community delimits, and to the best means for achieving the best life plan. Autonomy is intentional and instrumental (215). Important to note, however, is that while both individual well-being as well as personal identity are dependent on the community (and the options it provides), this dependency does not limit the individual in *making* their choice. The community and its value-framework would only guide, aid, and educate an individual in exercising their free will amongst the options available.

IIId. Communal Good and Solidarity

As mentioned previously, the good of the individual and the good of the community are inevitably and necessarily dependent on each other. Gyekye understands the common good as that what is "predicated on a true or essential universal, the good of *all* that which is essentially good for human beings as such" (*Akan Conceptual Scheme,* 160). Therefore, the common good is what I understand to be the well-being of all – with regards to the communal entity, as well as to its individual parts. This again points to the mutual constituency of the individual and their community. As such, it is not only the case that the individual ought to further the communal good purely for the community, but also that in advancing this communal good, their good is advanced alongside it (Ikuenobe 214). Communal well-being – by virtue of its dependence on individual well-being – does not supersede nor undermine individual well-being, since both are coextensive, contemporal, and mutually constitutive. Therefore – in line with the ontological contemporality of the individual and the community – the community's collective pursuit of

common ends needs individuals. While an "individual's subjectivity is necessarily located and actualized within a community", the community is "dependent on an intersubjective affirmation and unique subjectivities [of individuals]" (Eze, *What is African Communitarianism?* 389). Since the communal good entails the well-being of all, the communitarian morality requires the dominance of interpersonal values such as solidarity, interdependence, relationality, compassion, cooperation, and reciprocity that serve the social well-being of all entities within a community (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 104, 110). This necessary solidarity and interwovenness will enable each member of the community to perceive one another as fellow and equal human beings – as a family with their interests and needs mutually reinforcing.

IIIe. Duties and Responsibilities

Since this research urges the United Nations to take up greater levels of collective responsibility, it is crucial to understand how African communitarianism in general and Akan communitarianism specifically conceptualize duties and responsibilities. Gyekye describes a duty within communitarianism as a "task, service, conduct or function that a person feels morally obligated to perform in respect of another person or other persons", which ought to be performed or are owed to others "by reason of our common humanity". Fundamentally, these duties do not flow from "a social contract between individuals … a contrivance for voluntary, not natural membership of the community" (*Person and Community,* 117). It therefore is different from, for example, the Kantian notion of duty which flows from rational reflection, as the communitarian understanding builds on the naturality of the social. Gyekye describes that, for Kant, rights and duties would flow from a purely rational reflection on human nature (*Tradition and Modernity* 64)*, while communitarianism states that duties are natural phenomena that occur in communities signified by relationality and other social values.

The description by Gyekye of the notion of duty recalls the distinction made by Menktiti between an aggregate and a community. In his organic community, the sensitivity to the needs and well-being of others – by virtue of one's interwovenness with others – manifests itself into the dutiful pursuit of humanity. The morality of this humanity then demands duties – to exhibit solidarity with others, to be concerned for the good of others, to help them, and to sympathize with them therewith deepening and enhancing the harmonious communal relationships and living (Ikuenobe 213, Metz & Gaie 276). This dutiful sensitivity and responsiveness transform into a *social* responsibility – a responsibility an individual begets through their inherent relationality. These social responsibilities entail, for example, to fashion one's autonomy in a just way, to become a just person by actualizing one's moral capacities, and to further the community's well-being. Each

individual ought to develop their natural abilities and moral potentialities in such a way – the most important of which is to hone one's own humanness (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 105, Metz & Gaie 285).

The communitarian ethic, then, appeals to a dual responsibility; a responsibility to oneself – to develop one's own personal and moral capacities through one's own efforts – and a responsibility to the community – to attain appropriate social, communal, and normative standards that will help boost the community's well-being (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 120, Metz & Gaie 285). The combined of those social responsibilities and duties – towards oneself and towards the community – begs the question regarding the moral standing of individual rights, as the other side of the coin. This is one of the tensions that will be elaborated on in the next Section IV, where some critiques on the African communitarian relationship between the individual and the community are expounded. After elucidating some critiques on the various concepts as understood by communitarianism, an appeal will be made to the inherent value that these concepts do carry, and why a morality characterized by these virtues should be incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations.

IV. *African Communitarianism – Critiques*

As has been done in the preceding Chapter, this Section will expound some critiques, open questions, and problematics surrounding three concepts crucial within African communitarianism – the conception of personhood, the existence of a communal good, and the precedence of duties. Later, in Chapter IV, both these critiques and the ones enumerated under liberal internationalism, will be refuted as a synthesis of both moralities will be presented.

IVa. Personhood – Individual Distanced Critique

A concern placed with regards to the communitarian perception of achieved personhood concerns the possibility of the individual to assume a distanced position towards their community, and their ability to criticize their community (and its value-framework) when they would deem appropriate to do so. One of the advantages of being a member of an *aggregate* is that one is a member voluntarily, bound only over the common promotion of mutual interests, able to leave at any moment when desired. Here, initial reactions may make out that the threshold for critique and distance is less severe when compared to that of a *fused* community. However, Kwame Gyekye states that the individual in communitarianism is indeed also able to distance themselves from a community and to re-evaluate it by virtue of their capacity of self-assertiveness. As such, "the

individual is not absorbed completely into the cultural apparatus" and they do possess other attributes and are thereby able to "take a distanced view from the communal values and revise them" (*Person and Community* 112-3). However, this insistence on the metaphysical presence of a potentiality of self-development clashes with the other end of the duality of the individual's autonomy, namely its communal constitution. Since autonomy, too, is constituted by the material conditions, norms, values, and knowledge that the community provides the individual with, self-assertiveness is still very much dependent on paths laid out by the community. While it is still the individual themselves that chooses which path to follow, it is only by choosing the morally good path – i.e. the one promoting communal well-being and positive relationality – that they give true substance and value to one's autonomy. If we continue to adhere to this duality within autonomy, it becomes questionable to state that the individual is able to distance themselves from their community *purely* through their self-assertiveness, as this capacity seems to still partially be communally constituted.

Another point regarding the creation of an individual's identity, as stated by Gyekye, reveals that the meaning of an individual's life also depends on whether they can identify themselves with their community. To feel socially worthy, one must sense that their role in the community is respected and appreciated (*Akan Conceptual Framework,* 156-7). Thus, if an individual is unable to identify oneself with the prevalent value-framework, and is thus no longer able to identify themselves with their community, an individual stands the risk of becoming meaningless and socially unworthy. The beacon that were to prevent a complete loss in meaning – or respect – is formed by the belief in innate dignity, present in each person and which unequivocally demands respect, appreciation, and value. From this perspective, one would be able to criticize one's community and its socio-cultural values, and it should be listened to out of respect that person's individual dignity. However, irrespective of whether a person will be listened to, the question remains as to what were to happen to one's identity, personhood, and self-development if one were to break with one's community, since all these attributes necessitate communal constitution. There would arise a clash between this communally constituted disposition and an individual's innate dignity, and it is unsure which should take precedence (in which situation). A critique, even when well-founded, could initiate an adverse reaction from the community if it were to go against its ethic, and this would presumably have great impact on the individual's social worth. Ultimately, the communitarian explanation and justification of distancing – as being based on and flowing from self-assertiveness and innate dignity – is not expounded well enough, as it is unclear where the independent individual begins.

IVb. Communal Good – In-Group Bias and 'Others'

Another critique levelled references the communitarian process of community-building as the striving to and manifesting of a communal good. Because the communal good is so tightly interwoven with duties and responsibilities, as well as with each individual's identity, personhood, autonomy, and choices, Akinola and Uzodike state that there exists a risk of in-group bias (104-5). This risk would be tied to the idea that communitarian philosophy would only favour one particularized and idealized cultural mode of being, thereby suppressing other individuals' modes of valuations as they would be deemed unacceptable (Matolino & Kwindingwi 198-9). Especially in times of conflict or felt danger, cohesion within a group could grow in such a way that it idealizes itself and demonizes 'Others'. This is an especially relevant criticism, since globalization and modernization currently somewhat preclude the existence of homogenous groups, due to – for example – great waves of immigration as well as general increased connectivity through technological and infrastructural innovations.

Interestingly, Kwasi Wiredu notes – in contrast – that *foreigners* within the communitarian framework are "double deserving of sympathy on ground of their, first, common humanity, and second, of their vulnerability as individuals cut off for the time being from the emotional and material supports of their kinship environments" (*Moral Foundations,* 202). While the findings of Wiredu appear to clash with those enumerated in the above paragraph, the two notions actually appeal to different subjects. Wiredu only makes reference to *foreigners* – people finding themselves in another community only temporarily before returning to their own "kinship environments". These foreigners are less likely to constitute an essential threat to a community's social fabric, as they are unlikely to initiate or facilitate deeper socio-cultural or political changes. Foreigners do not present another community themselves and are more so an aggregate or association – bound by a single characteristic, that of 'being abroad' – than a fused entity. The theory that too great a focus on the community and its communal good – coupled with the relevant value-framework – could still stand. It seems, therefore, that a certain check is necessary within communitarian behaviour – one that prevents a demonization of perceived 'Others'. While it is natural to feel greater distance towards people not belonging to your (imaginary) community, these communities ought not to be demonized, nor should one's own way of life be idealized. What is necessary to achieve this, it seems, is a sense of security both in the political and cultural sense for communities that (could) develop an in-group bias when they were to perceive danger. They require an assurance that 'their' culture will not be eroded nor replaced. This train of thought will be further argued for in Section IIIb of Chapter IV.

IVc. Duties – the Place of Individual Rights

The last criticism concerns the primacy of duties and social responsibilities, and the perceived dichotomy between these duties and human rights. Duties are foregrounded in African communitarianism, because of the innate connectedness of individuals in a community where values as solidarity, reciprocity, and mutualism are emphasized in the communal morality. Rights, then, are described as "claims that the individual is entitled to by virtue of being an individual human being" (Matolino 62). Gyekye states, on the existence and respect of human rights, that, while rights might not be foregrounded in African communitarianism, they are not precluded but rather a conceptual requirement. Communal values are based on the respect for innate human dignity, which in turn necessitates regard for individual rights, which ensures that rights are built into the ethos of a community (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 114-5). The insistence on rights within a communitarian framework is therefore less intense – the relationality of all individuals, as well as the natural sense of solidarity that is coupled with it, makes a person "naturally oriented to other persons which directly involves social and moral roles, duties, obligations, and commitments" (118)

It seems, therefore, that rights are only actualized when a moral duty require an individual to act upon it – rights seem to not enjoy an independent, unalterable existence. Rights are an important concept in the exercise of moral and social actions, and they beget a concrete dimension when tied to social responsibilities. That being said, human rights can still never totally diminish or become lacking, as the irreducibility of human dignity would prevent this (Menkiti 177, Wiredu *Moral Foundations* 199). This holds for people not adhering to their social responsibilities, as well as for those not being a part of a social or moral interaction. While human rights within African communitarianism are thus built into the framework of social duties and responsibilities, the question arises as to whether this supposed self-evidence is enough. This tension grows in verve when tied to the critiques provided on the notion of personhood – as done in Section IVa, as to whether a belief in innate dignity is enough to safeguard individuals from an excessive drop in not only status, but also in self-development and autonomy. There needs to be a *guarantee* of individual rights, especially for those that risk becoming demonized 'Others'. In a heteronomous community, the self-evidence and universality of individual rights cannot be presupposed, but rather needs active confirmation and assent in order to avoid a deprivation of character within individuals.

V.   Akan Humanism – An Appeal to Responsibility

In the political world dominated by the liberal paradigm – propagating the supremacy of rationalism and enlightened self-interest – a renewed introduction to our common, interwoven humanity seems refreshing. The age of globalization and modernization has emphasized voluntary associations purely for (mostly economic) mutual gains, leading to a rationale deprived from natural sociality, dependency, and mutuality. Tenets of Akan communitarianism – and other sub-Saharan communitarian theories – can provide novel perspectives of something that almost feels self-evident, albeit pushed away. Our relationality and our commonality endow us with greater capacities of sense-making and meaning-giving – it makes us better equipped to understand changes and requirements in a complex world. The conceptualization of personhood – as partially communally constituted – sheds light on the inescapable reality of our embeddedness in a social fabric, and on the educational and guiding role a community plays in the actualization of our potential, be they skills, morality, identity, or attitude. The relational view of autonomy endows the concept with more nuance by adding to it a virtuous dimension, which makes possible praise and criticism of individual behaviour. Instead of seeing only *value* to autonomy, the communitarian perspective sees *goodness* in autonomy. Lastly, the primacy of duties appeals to our common humanity – to our desire that each person may be as well of as ourselves. This desire transforms into willingness, and with the actualization of this willingness comes duty and social responsibility. These social responsibilities to those around us fashions Akan communitarianism into Akan *humanism,* the essential meaning of which is "ensuring the welfare and interests of each member of society" (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 155). Since each person possesses the innate capacity and potentiality for morality, it being tied so strongly to autonomy and personhood, each individual "should be treated a morally responsible agent" (*Person and Community,* 109).

It is precisely this inescapability of the inherent (potentiality of) morality and social responsibility that I have argued is lacking in the Charter of the United Nations. States are entities, they are communities that shape the lives, well-being, autonomy, and subjectivity of their peoples. States therefore have the potentiality of morality – their sovereignty (clearly articulated in the Charter) is their autonomy, and as such they are able to be moral in the communal sense. To make the jump from local communities and their individuals – as has been the case so far – to the international level of member-states, an appeal to the Ubuntu communitarian morality is insightful. Ubuntu philosophy states that one depends on others to be a person – *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* – and that this is the process in which one becomes an ethical being (Matolino & Kwindingwi 200). Similar to the values ascribed to Akan and other sub-Saharan communitarian moralities, the

Ubuntu code of conduct would be built on core values such as humanness, humaneness, respect, harmony, compassion, responsiveness, mutualism, interdependence, reciprocity, and symbiosis (Matolino & Kwindingwi 199, Akinola & Uzodike 94, 98, 102, Murithi 227). Ubuntu is necessarily relational – we can only be fully human if we relate to others in a positive way, in seeking out a community and to live in harmony to perpetuate our shared destiny and the essential unity of humanity. Living according to an Ubuntu ethic denotes the duty to exhibit solidarity with others and the social responsibility to be concerned for the good of others – to identify fully with others (Metz & Gaie 275-6, 284, Murithi 227). Ubuntu philosophy thus demands relationality and identification if one desires to perpetuate a believed shared destiny.

Since the United Nations already believes in a collective destiny and a shared value-system (Thakur 6), it needs to acknowledge that what is necessary to actually carry out this collective destiny is positive relationality in spirit of our common humanity. Member-states are sovereign and political entities, endowed with similar capacities of autonomy when compared to individuals. Furthermore, in a globalized world, sovereign states – again, like individuals – cannot circumvent interconnectedness, especially when they are members of an international political body such as the United Nations. If the Organization wishes to present itself as a *community,* it needs its member-states to become moral agents – they already possess the potentiality of communal morality (because of their sovereign autonomy), and the actualization of such a morality would fashion the states into true moral agents. The internalization of communal values would endow the member-states with social responsibilities that further the spirit of relationality, solidarity, and fellowship as demanded by such a communal morality. Just as the African communitarian philosophy explicates that the community and individual constitute each other, so too does the actualization of the moral potentiality of an international political body depend on the morality of its member-states. A communal morality that is incorporated into the Charter would fashion member-states into moral agents within their community, something which is necessary if international problems are to be tackled by international political bodies. Additionally, with this manoeuvre, it becomes possible to generate a political praxis that is mutually inclusive and not primarily a top-down paradigm with elitist exclusion.

Communal values, additionally, can already be said to resonate with the United Nations' mission to propagate universal welfare, security, and development. An incorporation of a communal morality that perceives member-states as moral agents will only bolster the sense of *social responsibility* in upholding and striving for these values. The contemporality of the relationship between the member-states and the United Nations in turn will guarantee that the responsibility taken up by the member-states will translate itself into a duty for the United Nations to assume

collective responsibility within the overall mission to promote international well-being and equality. Briefly, member-states as moral agents can be realized by the actualization of the incorporated communal morality, and the naturality of its communal values would help fashion the United Nations into a true *community*. The United Nations will then beget more social responsibilities, which it is more apt to carry out because of it being steeped in and motivated by positive relationality and communal caring.

In the next Chapter, a synthesis between the liberal morality and the communal morality will be presented. First, in Section I the communal morality that has been envisioned will be further given shape by addressing Akan humanism. In Section II, the critiques levelled to the liberal morality will be addressed by applying African communitarian concepts, and in Section III the same will be done but vice versa. The combination of the two sets of reactions will provide the core for the synthesis between moralities – it will showcase the importance of *supplementing* the liberal morality with a communal morality, not its *replacing*. In Section IV, the importance of the United Nations as a community comprised of moral agents will be touched upon once more.

Chapter IV: Synthesis – Moralities within the United Nations

To briefly recapitulate the problematic that is currently expounded; the prevalence of liberal internationalism in the Charter of the United Nations has undermined the existence of an additional communal morality. Currently, it solely focuses on formal, multilateral relations based on voluntarism – which in turn precluded the formation of the United Nations as a *community* instead of an *aggregate*. This precluding has resulted in the impossibility of the internalization of sentiments reflecting solidarity, reciprocity, and interconnectedness, which thereby prevents the member-states from taking up duties and social responsibilities towards each other and towards the Organization, something I have argued is vital to be able to combat international problems in a globalized world. This is the dynamic that hampers the United Nations from taking up *adequate* collective responsibility – the scope of responsibilities that would reflect the increase in areas of competence and commitments to actions of the Organization. In the preceding two Chapters, the core principles and concepts of both liberal internationalism and African communitarianism have been expounded and some downfalls of both philosophies have been touched upon. In this Chapter, a synthesis between the liberal and communal morality will be presented. In Section I, Akan morality will be addressed as the candidate for iterating a communal morality to supplement liberal morality. In Section II, the critiques levelled against liberal internationalism in Section III of Chapter 2 will be responded to by presenting core concepts of African communitarianism. In Section III, the critiques levelled against African communitarianism in Section III of Chapter 3 will – in turn – by responded to by reiterating pillars of liberal internationalism. A synthesis between the two philosophies will thus be provided here, where each philosophy will engage with the downfalls of their counterpart as to facilitate the most optimal balance between the virtues of both perspectives. This Chapter will end with Section IV providing a link between community, communal values, and a virtuous Organization.

I.   *The Akan Morality*

Akan communitarianism is apt to be incorporated into the liberal internationalist framework that currently dominates the Charter, as it is a morality that emphasizes the constitution of a virtuous character and not an adherence to specific rules, as for example deontological ethics would demand. Morally right actions are those that build and determine a moral character; "to be just, for instance, one must first behave in a just manner" (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 150). The 'right' actions are the actions that promote harmonious well-being between individuals and the community, actions that are carried out in spirit of communitarian values and reflect positive

relationality (Metz & Gaie 275). As iterated before with regards to autonomy, the community is the entity that guides and educates individuals in making those judgements that would translate into just actions which benefit the whole community. Akan morality is, then, humanist in nature – it considers the impartial pursuit of universal well-being, determined by the belief in each person's inherent dignity, as its most fundamental principle (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 143). Furthermore, Akan humanism harbours great optimism with regards to human nature, considered to be essentially good, and believes each individual possesses an innate capacity to be virtuous and thus to perform morally right actions (*Person and Community* 109). Since this morality relates to actions, it naturally begets a social character and becomes grounded in individual experiences of communal living (*Akan Conceptual Scheme* 145, 150). This social character and "the natural relationality of the person … [makes] morality an essentially social and trans-individual phenomenon" (*Person and Community* 118). Words such as 'natural' and 'essential' make morality (i.e. harmonious actions which promote the well-being of others) a duty to uphold, as it fundamentally determines the welfare of the community as a whole. These duties become the supreme principle of morality, and it is therefore the individual's responsibility to "use one's capacities to internalize, rely on, and acquire communal values and virtues" as to acquire a virtuous character that furthers the well-being of each and therewith of all (Ikuenobe 213). Since a virtuous character depends on one's virtuous actions, the belief dominates that the individual is responsible for the sort of person they become (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 150).

However, these virtuous actions still flow from communal education and guidance, making this responsibility comprised of more than individual enlightened self-interest combined with rational thinking, as liberal internationalism would presuppose. Akan humanism recognizes and explicitly acknowledges the social dimension of morality, and therefore instrumentalizes morality to "regulate the conduct of individuals and for social harmony and cooperate living" (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 146). The liberal morality, with its subject of the metaphysical individual endowed with negative freedoms, glosses over the innate sociality of human nature, and instead perceives the individual as an atomistic entity – independent and self-sufficient by virtue of their capacity to reason – and the philosophy is therefore unable to formulate a morality to govern social actions within an interconnected community. Akan humanism recognizes the social relationality of the individual and is therefore well-equipped to provide a morality not based on rules but on harmonious interactions. This attribute of Akan humanism provides the missing component in the formation of a *community* – over a loosely bound *aggregate* – as it acknowledges both the inescapability of interwovenness and the trust in innate goodness of character. As such, it is able to work from and rely on values of solidarity, fellowship, empathy, reciprocity, generousness,

sympathy, and benevolence. Ultimately, an individual's conception of their well-being is revealed through communal guidance, and the mutual constitution of individual and community means that an individual's well-being translates into communal well-being.

The interconnectedness of states deepens because of their membership to a common organ, the United Nations, and this results in an overlapping of responsibilities within a communal framework. The primary responsibility for an action rests with the doer, but – because of the community's role in having indirectly influenced this action due to previous guidance – "a non-trivial secondary responsibility extends to … the environing community" (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 196). However, this overlapping is not something to be worried about. Akan humanism determines that values such as empathy and reciprocity lead other nation-states to willingly take up such secondary responsibilities, especially because they know the same will be done for them in the future if necessary. This interconnectedness and overlapping of responsibilities, additionally, does not lead to a need to relinquish national sovereignty nor autonomy. It merely showcases the reality of being a member of a supranational governmental body which asks for "international cooperation in solving international problems" and for "harmonizing the actions of nations" (Article I). Just like morally bad actions towards other member-states results in the imposing of economic sanctions by the Organization – a punishment for actions that do not promote communal well-being, morally good actions boost the virtuous character of the whole and deepen fellowship and reciprocity. Individual behaviours shape collective capabilities. A morality that acknowledges the human sociality and relationality on which it is built will install social responsibilities within its members that reflect sympathetic impartiality, and its composite will facilitate the assumption of collective responsibility – a responsibility that will be more genuine, dutiful, empathetic, and solidary than the one that is currently taken up by the United Nations.

The goal here, thus, is a synthesis between the core values of both moralities. The analyses of liberal internationalism and Akan communitarianism will now provide insight into how each can mitigate the deficits of their counterpart. In an international political body as diverse as the United Nations – in terms of geographic location, national histories, levels of development, cultures, ideologies, and political systems – an interdisciplinary, interconnected, and compounded philosophy is not only insightful, but *necessary* if the Organization strives to respect all member-states. The current liberal internationalist foundations are only familiar to and resonate with the Western world. While this morality will naturally remain valuable, it needs to be supplemented with other viewpoints that should be deemed just as valuable if a true – and equal – political community is to be formed.

II.   *Mitigating Liberal Internationalist Critiques: Relationality, Innate Dignity, and Duty*

The liberal internationalist core values are those of economic openness, multilateralism, security cooperation, voluntary mutual gains, and liberal democracy. The three critiques that were levelled were on multilateralism, voluntary mutual gains, and liberal democracy. Below, I will answer each critique with a virtue of African communitarianism – and connect this to the central Akan humanist values – as to provide the ultimate synthesis between the two moralities.

IIa. *Passivity in Multilateralism – Unavoidable Relationality*

The first critique related to the passivity of the General Assembly, as signified by the almost exclusive use of passive verbs to describe their role and tasks. I have argued that these passive verbs indicate a limited capacity of the United Nations to be perceived and act as a truly *international* community, especially when these verbs are contrasted with those describing the tasks of the Security Council – which is less international than the General Assembly as it only seats eleven members, while the General Assembly seats representatives of all member-states.

A first inclination to try and mitigate this shortcoming is to increase the bargaining power of the General Assembly, endow it greater capacity to act as to overcome its impasse of passivity and break through the cycle of continuous negotiation. However, since this passivity currently is very much connected to the ideal of multilateralism, and therefore to the beacon of national sovereignty, it would be an incredibly unwavering concept to try and overturn. For the United Nations to take such an incredible supranational leap would most probably not be feasible, nor readily accepted. Rather, what is required for the United Nations to be perceived and act as a tight-knit, international community is for the member-states to identify themselves with the collective and therewith propagate a sense of belonging. This process of identification and belonging can be achieved by emphasizing the African communitarian value of *relationality,* whereby member-states need not relinquish more national sovereignty, but merely make explicit and underline their relatedness and interconnected in ways that go beyond voluntary, chosen multilateral attempts at coordination. One cannot always reason the extent to which one wants to *be* relational. Rather, inescapable geographic, socio-cultural, political, and ideological adjacency combined with the inherent sociality of human nature create unavoidable bonds between (peoples of) member-states. Acknowledging the naturality of these bonds will ingrain into the Organization a more comprising notion of community that is international by nature, not by choice. It then does not matter whether the Security Council is endowed with greater capacity to act when compared to the General Assembly – all member-states would recognize their commonality and would promote their communal foundational principles whether it be through action or negotiation.

IIb. 'Universal' Reason in Mutual Gains – Communal Good

Another critique brought up in Chapter II relates to the belief in 'universal' reason as the prime mechanism in regulating, ordering, and governing the world and its developmental course. This concept has been contested by referring to the extreme diversity that exists between the member-states of the United Nations – such diversity would make it illogical to assume that they would all back the same course of action and adhere to the same ideal of the world. The metaphysical abstractness of such illusionary 'universality' furthermore objectifies the relations between member-states, as it does not take into account lived experiences and identities.

While the attribute of reason is necessary in the weighing and balancing of the interests of member-states in decision-making processes, it also "requires judgement (and not merely reason), which, in turn, requires substantial engagement with a variety of real-life moral issues and rich narratives … [it] requires the adoption of certain attitudes, emotions and, more generally, ways of behaving that do not come easily" (Metz & Gaie 286)[10]. Reason therefore needs to be complimented by another orientation that reflects the above sentiments, since mere enlightened reason is unable to make moral decisions through impartial reflection. It needs the orientation towards the *communal good*. The communal good, in Akan humanism, is ultimately achieved and promoted by the well-being of each (as expounded above when discussing relationality) and thus through sympathetic impartiality.

Already the organs of the United Nations should be impartial when negotiating disputes between member-states that could possibly hamper the furthering of their goals, but reason alone cannot guarantee such continuing impartiality – sometimes these disputes reflect moral issues. A focus on the communal good – i.e. well-being for all – would add a communal value to the use of reason, and such a morality could facilitate extensive albeit impartial engagement with the issues at hand – through a variety of perspectives – and would be more adequate in achieving decisions that respect the diversity of the United Nations. Despite these benefits, one could say that the concept of 'communal good' is just as metaphysically abstract and illusionary universal as the concept of 'reason' and that it therefore cannot provide an adequate answer to criticisms levelled previously. While the notion of 'well-being for all' gives content to the notion of the communal good, it would still remain unclear as to what exactly 'well-being' would entail and how to achieve it. However, this objection can be refuted by referring to the Charter of the United Nations which

---

[10] Metz and Gaie in this article expound Ubuntu philosophy, and not Akan philosophy. However, because Akan philosophy, too and in common with other Sub-Saharan communitarian philosophies, also emphasizes organic, communal values (such as empathy and benevolence) this refutation regarding the use of pure reason is justified. It provides an apt objection to adhering only to (universal) reason, as liberal internationalism would desire.

provides the articulation of their common ends. The communal good – for the (member-states of the) United Nations – is uncontestably given shape in the Principles and Purposes; maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations amongst states, achieving international coordination, and harmonizing national actions in order to achieve "common ends" (2). A focus on common ends would still respect member-states sovereignty, as it would be a morality enacted in the spirit of sympathetic impartiality and communal well-being that takes into account the diversity of experiences.

IIc. Political Emancipation in Liberal Democracies – Innate Dignity

The final critique that was levelled in the second Chapter concerned the problematics of a sole insistence on formal equality in a society. Liberal democracies tend to foreground political emancipation over human emancipation, as this aligns with their values of non-intervention and negative freedom[11]. This belief combined with the foregrounding of such a theoretical conceptualization of equality leads social equality in direct interpersonal or institutional exchanges to often be disregarded.

Since sociality is inevitably bound up with morality and vice versa, a communal morality is necessary in achieving social equality in trans and interpersonal exchanges. As such, there needs to be an insistence on *innate dignity*. While an insistence on liberal democracy can ensure formal equality – abstract and theoretic equality – communal values are necessary to ensure that this equality is ingrained in all interactions. Democratization itself is "an inexcludable and irreplaceable expression of human dignity in the political life of a nation" (Emmanuel Abraham 35), and the United Nations needs to acknowledge this dignity as indeed being fundamental in the construction of an equal (international) society. Recognizing dignity will bring an internalization of values as solidarity, mutualism, empathy, and reciprocity – which necessarily will flow from the belief in inalienable dignity and equality. A belief in dignity would make the United Nations more competent in their quest to promote social and humanitarian development, as it would be connected to social responsibilities to this end – it would install a true conviction regarding the necessity of equality and solidarity. Furthermore, believing in the inherent dignity of each state and people would require member-states' attitudes and actions to be harmonious, which would aid them in building a virtuous character and to become just moral agents. Within the United Nations as an entity, all member-states in spite of their diversity would be able to cultivate feelings of identification and belonging to the Organization, therewith boosting the realization of a

---

[11] For more on the (problematic) relation between democracy and formal equality see, for example, Shulman George. "Rethinking Equality." *International Social Science Journal* 67 (2017):.11-20. *Wiley Online Library*. Web.

community. While the United Nations already insists on some aspect of innate dignity, namely sovereignty, it is necessary for this conception of dignity to beget a social dimension as human rights are not universal, and feelings of empathy and fellowship would boost the realization of a community and the taking up of social (and collective) responsibilities in achieving this end.

III.   *Mitigating African Communitarian Critiques: Liberal Democracies*

The core values of Akan humanism, and African communitarianism in general, are relationality, inherent dignity, organic community, solidarity, and mutual duty. The three critiques that were levelled concerned the notions of personhood, communal good, and duty as core concepts of African communitarianism. As is done above, I will attempt to mitigate the critiques by incorporating liberal internationalist virtues as to provide a synthesis. Rather than presenting diverse liberal internationalist values for each separate criticism levelled against African communitarianism, I will present the value of *liberal democracy* as the relevant virtue that could be used to relieve the criticisms. Different facets within liberal democracy will be utilized to provide an adequate, non-generalizing, insight into resolving each communitarian issue. The decision to solely apply liberal democracy, and not other virtues of liberal internationalism – economic openness, multilateralism, security cooperation, and voluntary mutual gains respectively – derives from the fact that these do not represent facets of the communal morality that I have been advocating for. All these values have developed from enlightened self-interest, as has been expounded thoroughly in Chapter II, and this attitude is what has been challenged throughout this research. It would therefore be contradictory to hail perspectives that themselves are not grounded within sociality nor community as further elucidation on the criticisms levelled against African communitarian morality. Furthermore, by focusing on a single value – that of liberal democracy – this analysis will be less lacklustre and more in-depth as to provide a comprehensive account of the value of liberal democracy.

IIIa. *Personhood and Critique – Negative Liberties*

The first criticism levelled drew on the African communitarian perspective of individual personhood as being constituted by and given meaning to through the respective community (the degree to which this was determined differs depending on what theory of African communitarianism is adhered to). Attention was drawn to the consequences for an individual's sense of identity, autonomy, respect, and belonging if they were to deviate from or – more rigorously – critique their community. There would arise a clash between their communally

constituted identity and their inherent irreducible dignity if they were to want to distance themselves from the values that reigned supreme within their community. Kwame Gyekye states that deviation from and critique on one's community is indeed possible by virtue of the other attributes and capacities that an individual possesses. Sometimes, such critique is even necessary and desirable as this exercise of individually specific capabilities would "enhance the cultural development and success of the community" (*Person and Community* 115). Only actions that would affect other people's sensibilities and thereby would disrupt the community are to be restricted, implying that individual dispositions are somewhat tied to one's social responsibilities (*Tradition and Modernity* 65). However, there are no utterings as to what would happen to the individual's personhood, development, and autonomy if they were to level (valid) criticism to communal values, even if such criticisms are (eventually) deemed desirable for the community as a whole. Furthermore, the line between that what affects individual sensibilities and communal sensibilities is difficult to draw, especially if it concerns sensibilities that are attached to social or moral norms and values. It is to be expected that, when critiques condemn deeply ingrained moral frameworks, the community would feel threatened, ridiculed, or abandoned and that it would retaliate by diminishing the individual's development of identity and exercise of autonomy (as these attributes ultimately are very much communally constituted).

The great optimism that liberalism harbours with regards to the individual's capabilities and potentials – resulting from the Enlightenment faith in individual reason – leads to an emphasis on individual freedom in fashioning one's path in life. While such a conception of what one would deem desirable in life might not always flow from what is morally 'good', such a conception is deemed *valuable* as it is assumed that an individual came to this perspective through reasonable judgement and experience. Such freedom is "a means to the discovery of truth, or of a certain type of character … - imaginative, independent, creative and so forth" (Berlin 363) and therefore intrinsically valuable and worthy. The individual in a liberal democracy can deviate from their community because one exhibits the innate desire to govern one's private life by oneself (365). The quest for personal identity and character is less rigorously determined, and for one's self-development one is not accountable to others within one's society (Mill 142). The last statement expresses too harsh a sentiment, and one which directly challenges African communitarianism and the importance of community-building that has been advocated for. However, the indirect and fractional interest society has in an individual's conception of the good (140), and the absence of moral constraints on individual self-development could be said to facilitate critiques more readily. At least an individual would not lose their autonomy nor would become less of a person if they decided to break away from communal values. Rather, one would be regarded as having insisted

on their negative freedoms in fashioning their own life and self-development. Naturally, according to liberalist sentiments, one's community and relations can give advice on how an individual ought to make decisions (Mill 140), but there exist no rigorous repercussions – such as a loss in autonomy, identity, rights, or subjectivity – if one chooses to not take up such advice in a liberal democracy. It is precisely the absence of repercussions, as demanded by liberalism, and the emphasized presence of communal education, as demanded by African communitarianism, which provide the worth of a synthesized morality. Such a morality would facilitate a decision-making process within the United Nations that respects the innate dignity and freedom of each member-state while advocating for a communal attitude that would resonate with their newly imposed values of solidarity and fellowship.

IIIb. Communal Good and In-Group Bias – Minority Rights

The following criticism was levelled against adhering (too strongly) to a communal good, especially one tied strongly to a community's value framework. This focus on the communal good could foster a certain in-group bias within one's 'own' people, perceiving them with an identity and belief system that would most comprehensively adhere to that of 'their' community. Such a bias could grow in verve when existential, territorial, or essential threats are perceived to the respective community and when a specific 'other' people can be segregated and demonized.

What is necessary to – in part – avoid such segregation is reassurance. Such a reassurance would entail a sense of innate respect for each people, providing them with a sense of security in that 'their' identity will not be threatened or eliminated. Globalization especially has ushered in an era characterized by great heterogeneity of peoples and familiarity with all cultures, which has sometimes led to the erosion of core values and identities of specific cultures[12]. This could be a specifically precarious issue to peoples that have historically experienced suppression, such as by colonialism or (cultural) imperialism, and feel such trends within globalization as – again – threating their essence and existence. As a result, they could cling together while condemning – what they perceive to be – 'other' peoples, as to prevent another substantial loss in identity. Reassurance, concretely, could be manifested through incorporating minority protection and rights in formal systems of law. Such rights could facilitate senses of security, recognition, and respect for communities that currently feel threatened or unseen. However, such formal recognition is insufficient. If the United Nations truly wants to position itself as a community, it ought to couple

---

[12] Joseph Stiglitz, on page 14 of his introduction, states that this erosion of community arose because of processes of labor commodification, diminished social responsibility, rising inequality, and outsourcing (*Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2017 Print)

this formal reassurance of dignity with values of solidarity and mutualism as expounded in African communitarianism. Human rights cannot be presumed to be universal, and formal iterations of rights would provide a concrete framework of reference regarding actions and negotiations – as is fundamental when considering the inherent sociality of man. However, for the in-group bias to totally disappear, a sense of positive relationality is fundamental. The United Nations is then tasked with manifesting itself as a community that underlines this positive relationality and sociality, as to alleviate such feelings of endangerment within respective states.

IIIc. Duties – the Inalienability of Human Rights

A last discussion point that was brough to light appealed to the co-existence of rights and duties within African communitarianism in general. Communitarianism has the performance of social duties as one of its core values, and states that rights are inherently embedded into the communitarian structure. Gyekye states that this embeddedness flows from the recognition of inherent dignity within each individual, which in turn necessitates the recognition of rights (*Tradition and Modernity* 63), where the "claims of individuality and community ought to be equally morally acknowledged" (66). Furthermore, rights are embedded within the community in such a way that individuals do not feel the need to insist as much on their inalienable rights, but rather focus their energies on taking up their social duties. So, while individual rights do not hamper executing one's social duties, and vice versa, the communitarian society does emphasize duties more so. This emphasis flows from the ingrained values of relationality, mutuality, solidarity, and reciprocity as well as by virtue of the natural sociality between individuals, making society more naturally oriented towards an altruistic morality (67).

Despite this supposed embeddedness, issues regarding the absolute recognition of rights continue to arise, for example those related to deviation from and critique on the value-framework of one's community as touched upon in previous sections. While foregrounding duties has its value in facilitating a greater sense of community and in the taking up of social responsibilities, the supposed self-evidence of the embeddedness of rights remains lacking. It is not enough for rights to be a mere (sometimes secondary[13]) part of the communal ethos. While, theoretically, this embeddedness would guarantee individual rights and social responsibilities to deserve equal merit, what is necessary is a concrete worth placed upon those rights – just liked it has been placed on

---

[13] Regarding this secondary status, Menkiti (as a strong communitarian) states that "priority is given to the duties which individuals owe to the collectivity, and their rights, whatever these may be, are seen as secondary to their exercise of their duties" (180). Gyekye (as a moderate communitarian) states that "priority will not be given to rights if doing so will stand in the way of attaining a more highly ranked value … Rights would not, therefore, be held as absolute in the communitarian theory" (*Person and Community* 116).

social responsibilities – in order to give both concepts equal *moral* standing. If we desire to present the African communitarian philosophy as a morality fit to be incorporated into the foundations of the United Nations, we need to be sure that it thoroughly and undoubtedly insists on human rights, as this is one of the core principles of the Charter (Article 1.3). The sociality within the communitarian morality – with its values of solidarity, generosity, and reciprocity – ought to also clearly reference the sacred position of the individuals as the subject of these values. Working from the apparent importance of abstract dignity is not enough, especially because this dignity is in part dependent on the communitarian perception of and respect for the individual (and the choices they make). The equal moral standing of individual rights to their social duties depends on the assertion of the inalienability and indisputability – instead of self-evidence – of innate human rights one begets purely through being human. After this has been clearly asserted, then claims can be made with regards to the necessity and moral justness of communal duties reflecting communal values enacted in virtue of positive relationality and innate dignity. Human rights should not occupy a secondary, but morally equal status and should therefore not be tied to conceptions of personhood but rather be an independent concept. Trends within liberal democracy – for example the insistence on formal equality – could provide a bulwark for the inalienability of human rights and be used as the theoretical basis for political, social, and cultural exchanges between individuals as well as groups to be certain each person's innate dignity is respected.

IV.   *The Value of the Synthesis – A Respected Community*

The insights drawn from liberal democracy then provide the nuances necessary for implementing African communitarianism as an additional morality within the United Nations. The relation between rights, duties, and dignity are especially precarious in formulating what is necessary to achieve a just, interconnected, and responsible *community*. Most importantly, it is the equal moral standing between individual rights and their social responsibilities that needs to be clearly articulated formally and concretely (through liberal democracy), as well as socially and abstractly (through appeals to dignity). A true organic community needs a clear articulation of equality of being, as well as of the necessity of social responsibility. The combination of these sentiments will lead to each member-state being able to build a more virtuous character – one which reflects the sentiments of sympathetic impartiality and positive relationality. A virtuous state will be apt and willing to take up their respective social responsibilities through their inherent identification with and care for their community. The taking up of this attitude will be coupled with the internalization of communal values – such as solidarity, empathy, and benevolence –

which would ultimately lead to a striving for universal well-being. Within the United Nations, the respect for each country's sovereignty combined with the implementation of a such a communal, social, and relational morality will ensure that actions are undertaken to promote the Organization's purposes – actions which are inherently backed by member-states, and vehemently identified as *their* community's *common* beliefs.

Conclusion

This research has taken Akan communitarianism – and trends within African communitarianism in general – as the philosophy that could provide insights towards reform to counter reoccurring criticisms on the performance, strength, and cohesion of the United Nations. The key issue that has been discussed throughout is that of collective responsibility and the (im)possibility of the United Nations to advocate for and take on the appropriate responsibility in order to really embody the Organization that they strive to be. While the United Nations currently can be said to take on some collective responsibility – especially in their operations that attempt to maintain international peace – they do so insufficiently. The member-states do not identify with the Organization, and do not see themselves as inevitably and intrinsically interwoven with other members, despite the iteration of common purposes and principles. The United Nations, as a result, is an aggregate – member-states voluntarily come together solely by the prospect of achieving their mutual interests in a more efficient way. It is not a holistic community which actively considers itself to be an entity and as such propagates a shared way of life with common interests, goals, and values. There exists an impossibility to take up complete collective responsibility, as there exists no community which demands certain social duties to be carried out. Throughout my analysis, I have argued for the necessity of the addition of a communal morality – as inspired by Akan humanism – to the United Nations Charter, to truly fashion the Organization as a *community* fit to answer international crises in a globalized world. While the Organization already has formally articulated the wish to adhere to communal values, it lacks an internalized morality built on sociality and community. This morality would make the member-states believe in the naturality and necessity of pursuing communal values as part of the general quest in promoting universal well-being.

By providing a close reading of the Charter in Chapter II, I have showcased in which ways the United Nations is built on the principles of the morality of liberal internationalism (namely economic openness, multilateralism, security cooperation, reasoned mutual gains, and liberal democracy) and which values in particular elicit critiques. I have concluded that there is a lacking within the current Charter of the United Nations in terms of identification, community, and responsibility, and that an appeal to a communal morality would ensure greater cohesion between member-states, and as such a deeper internalization of (altruistic) duties and social responsibilities. The content of this morality has been filled in by appealing specifically to Akan humanism, and trends within African communitarianism in general which were thoroughly analysed in Chapter III. By explicating the core concepts of this philosophy (those of relationality, personhood and

subjectivity, autonomy, communal good, and duties), I have provided a jumping-off point for a deeper justification of incorporating these understandings into the United Nations Charter. The core perspective of Akan communitarianism is that of "sympathetic impartiality" (Wiredu, *Moral Foundations* 198-9), which makes its core social responsibility out to be "ensuring the welfare and interests of each member of society" (Gyekye, *Conceptual Scheme* 155). This combined with the belief in the innate dignity of all individuals and their inescapable sociality and interwovenness – resulting in the contemporality of individual and community – is the central understanding that is of fundamental importance in articulating the desired communal morality.

In the synthesis that characterized Chapter IV, critiques of liberal internationalism have been answered to by using values of Akan humanism, and the gaps in African communitarianism have been addressed by applying diverse facets of liberal democracy. Primarily, I have argued that the Akan belief in innate human dignity abstractly, and the liberal internationalist insistence on formal equality of individuals concretely would be the formula in ensuring that social responsibilities and values of reciprocity and solidarity be most comprehensively adhered to. "Morality is an essentially social and trans-individual phenomenon" (Gyekye, *Person and Community* 118) and the duties one has towards others – by virtue of this sociality – will therefore become inescapable. However, taking up such duties would not be an issue as the internalization of values of solidarity will make adhering to such responsibilities not a burden, but rather a desire as to boost the well-being of all.

What is necessary, in the end, is for the United Nations to undergo a metamorphosis towards a holistic community built on true equality, dignity, relationality, and fellowship. It would mean that each member-state within the United Nation is treated equally and begets an equal platform in negotiations. It would mean countering the Western hegemony which has stood unwavering. It would mean fashioning a community that is connected, responsible, and ready to respond impartially and benevolently to international issues from whichever nature. Building the community on these values – and these values upholding the community – will make adhering to *communal* responsibility not only easier, but inevitable. A promise of fellowship would necessarily entail a duty of responsibility, and therefore of action. Liberal internationalism makes this promise stagnate at the formal level, the Akan humanist ethos would make explicit and dynamic the communal good, interwovenness, and sociality that already underlie the principles of the United Nations Charter. The "economic and social advancement of all peoples" (*Charter* 2), or the all-encompassing quest towards great universal well-being, needs to be accomplished by addressing the social responsibilities the member-state has by virtue of being a member. National sovereignty will be maintained, as inescapable interconnectedness does not entail relinquishing autonomy – as

was argued for in Chapter IV – but merely requires an acknowledgment of the connectedness that is already assumed. A communal morality would facilitate the formation of a community that truly wants to further the common good – as given content through the Charter – since they personally and directly identify with the Organization as an entity and the ideals they strive to promote.

Akan philosophy makes explicit what liberal internationalism presupposes and fills in what is required to achieve its values. Liberal internationalism focusses on rules of conduct that govern relations between member-states – as expounded in the pillar on multilateralism, and Akan philosophy makes explicit the importance of such conduct by placing the locus of morality at the level of character and actions. 'Conduct' is furthermore given concrete meaning by incorporating harmonizing and balancing values of fellowship and solidarity. Furthermore, both philosophies focus on the promotion of universal well-being, and Akan humanism provides a clearer articulation as to which values are most effective in pursuing this ideal, namely relationality and innate dignity especially. Liberal internationalism, through multilateralism, supposes that there are mutual gains in establishing peaceful connections between states. Akan philosophy goes further and supposes human sociality as a natural attribute of human nature – interconnectedness and interwovenness are unavoidable, meaning the individual states and its United community can constitute each other, fashioning new and higher benefits that can be reached through cooperation and harmonization.

Further research on this similarity between Akan philosophy and liberal internationalism is worthwhile. Some topics regarding this similarity could include that of democratic elements; how aspects of communitarian governance could benefit the United Nations' decision-making procedures as to make it more democratic and socially legitimate. Another research could point towards the composition of (the branches of) the United Nations as a community. This could be a concrete analysis regarding the ideal composition of a community with regards to geographic, gender, and culture diversity with different social, historical, and ideological backgrounds – which guidelines should be imposed to make the United Nations truly equal and impartial in its composition, decision-making, and actions? Lastly, the application of other theories of African communitarianism, such as Yoruba or Ubuntu philosophies, on different collective operations of the United Nations could bring other, nuanced communitarian insights.

All in all, this inherent sociality that is continuously emphasized by African communitarianism is especially relevant in the age of globalization, where innovations and techniques postulate states as being more connected – and therefore dependent – than ever before. As said in the introduction of this research, new insights into this connectedness and interwovenness become increasingly important if the downsides of globalization are to be avoided.

The morality that underlies, constitutes, and determines our interpersonal exchanges should demand actions that promote harmony, avoid inequality, and strive for universal well-being. Mere collective responsibility will then be transformed into *social* responsibility – a duty assumed by acknowledging the inherent sociality of man, and the necessity of morality in governing these relations. Akan morality with its incredible emphasis on community, duty, sociality, relationality, and responsibility can help the United Nations to actively transform itself in the community that it wants to be and to combine member-state effort in such a way that it can achieve what it has determined in the Charter, and to counter international threats and boost international well-being. After all, the prosperity of man depends on man (Gyekye, *Akan Conceptual Scheme* 20) - *onipa na ōma onipa yē yie.*

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Verso: London, 1997. Print.

Akinola, Adeoye O., and Ufo Okeke Uzodike. "Ubuntu and the Quest for Conflict Resolution in Africa." *Journal of Black Studies* 49.2 (2017): 91-113. *SAGE.* Web.

Berlin, Isaiah. "Two Concepts of Liberty." *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age.* Ed. Henry Hardy. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014. 358-87. *De Gruyter.* Web.

Burch-Brown, Joanna. "Should Slavery's Statues Be Preserved? On Transitional Justice and Contested Heritage." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* - (2020): 1-18. *Wiley Online Library.* Web. 10.1111/japp.12485.

Emerson, Rupert. "The United Nations and Colonialism." *International Relations.* 3.10 (1971): 766–81. *SAGE.* Web.

Emmanuel Abraham, William. "Crisis in African Cultures." *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I.* Ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992. 13-35. Print.

Eze, Michael Onyebuchi and Thaddeus Metz. "Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu." *Philosophia Africana* 17.2 (2016): 73-86. Web.

--, *Intellectual History in Contemporary South-Africa.* London: Palgrave, 2010. Print.

--, "Menkiti, Gyekye and Beyond: Towards A Decolonization of African Political Philosophy." *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7.2 (2018): 1-18. Web.

--, "What is African Communitarianism? Against Consensus as a Regulative Ideal." *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27.4 (2008): 386-99. *EBSCO.* Web.

Gyekye, Kwame. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: the Akan Conceptual Scheme.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. Print.

--, "Person and Community in Akan Thought." *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I.* Ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992. 101-22. Print.

--, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience.* New York: Oxford UP, 1997. Print.

Ikenberry, G. John. "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94.1 (2018): 7-23. *Oxford University Press.* Web.

--, *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order* New Haven: Yale UP, 2020. Print.

Ikuenobe, Polycarp. "African Communal Basis for Autonomy and Life Choices." *Developing World Bioethics* 18 (2018): 212-221. *Wiley Online Library.* Web.

Jahn, Beate. "Liberal Internationalism: Historical Trajectory and Current Prospects." *International Affairs* 94.1 (2018): 43-61. *Oxford Academic.* Web.

Maqoma, Walter P. "In Defence of Communitarian Philosophy: the Contribution of Moderate Communitarianism to the Formation of African Identity." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41.1 (2020): 1-8. *AOSIS.* Web.

Matolino, Bernard. "Restating Rights in African Communitarianism." *Theoria* 65.157 (2018): 57-77. *EBSCO.* Web.

--, and Wenceslaus Kwindingwi. "The End of Ubuntu." *South-African Journal of Philosophy* 32.2 (2013): 197-205. *EBSCO.* Web.

Menkiti, Ifeanyi A. "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought." *African Philosophy: An Introduction.* Ed. R.A. Wright. Lanham: UP of America, 1984. 171-81. *Southeastern.edu.* Web.

Metz, Thaddeus, and Joseph B. R. Gaie. "The African Ethic of *Ubuntu/Botho:* implications for research on morality." *Journal of Moral Education* 39.3 (2010): 273-290. *Taylor & Francis.* Web.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty.* Luton: Andrews UK, 2011. *EBSCO.* Web.

Miller, Seumas. "Collective Moral Responsibility as Joint Moral Responsibility." *The Routledge Handbook of Collective Responsibility.* Ed. Saba Bazargan-Forward and Deborah Tollefsen. New York: Routledge, 2020. 38-50. *Taylor & Francis.* Web.

Murithi, Tim. "An African Perspective on Peace Education: *Ubuntu* Lessons in Reconciliation." *International Review of Education* 55 (2009): 221-33. *Springer.* Web.

Owen, M. John. "Liberalism and Its Alternatives, Again." *International Studies Review* 20.2 (2018): 309-16. *Oxford Academic.* Web.

p'Bitek, Okot. "The Sociality of the Self." *African Philosophy.* Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 73-4. Print.

Thakur, Ramesh. *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Print.

United Nations. *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice.* San Francisco: United Nations, 1945. *Un.org.* Web.

United Nations. Secretary-General. *Fulfilling Our Collective Responsibility: international assistance and the responsibility to protect.* New York: United Nations, 2014. *UN Digital Library.* Web.

Wiredu, Kwasi. "The Ghanaian Tradition of Philosophy." *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I.* Ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992. 1-12. Print.

--, "Moral Foundations of an African Culture." *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I.* Ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992. 193-206. Print.

--, "Problems in Africa's Self-Definition in the Contemporary World." *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I.* Ed. Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992. 59-70. Print.

Youngs, Richard. *The EU's Role in World Politics: A Retreat From Liberal Internationalism.* London: Routledge, 2011. Print.