

***Ubuntu* socio-political ethics and Ghana's journey to realizing the aspirations of Agenda 2063**

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Abstract: In light of the aspirations outlined in Agenda 2063, which aims to promote socioeconomic development and unity across Africa, there remains a need to explore effective socio-political frameworks that can be applied within the context of individual nations to facilitate the attainment of these goals. This study focuses on Ghana as a case study to investigate the potential impact of integrating *Ubuntu* socio-political ethics into its governance structures. The paper used conceptual analysis to study the *Ubuntu* philosophy based on data gathered from books, articles, and dissertations. The main thesis is that Ghana's chances of realizing the strategic goals of Agenda 2063 can be enhanced by anchoring them in relevant aspects of African philosophy of *Ubuntu* (the communal worldview of life). The areas of applications include tolerance and consensus building, political inclusiveness, nation building and patriotism, fight against corruption, and the promotion of human rights, gender equality, justice, and the rule of law. The paper contributes to public discourse about Ghana's potential of achieving the goals of Agenda 2063.

Keywords: Agenda 2063, Africa, Ubuntu philosophy, Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

Ghana remains underdeveloped amidst her abundant resources. Despite her rich endowment of natural wealth and human capital, the nation grapples with persistent challenges hindering its socio-economic advancement (Boaheng 2022). In the quest for progress, Ghana, like many other African countries, has embraced regional and continental initiatives such as Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is a comprehensive development framework designed to propel the continent towards sustainable growth, integration, and prosperity (Boaheng 2022). Though this development plan has much to offer the continent, the realization of its lofty aspirations demands more than just policy directives and economic strategies. There is the need for a profound examination of the ethical underpinnings shaping governance and societal relations.

The implementation of the plan should be grounded in Ghanaian/African traditional socio-political traditions. In this regard, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* emerges as a compelling framework for redefining socio-political ethics and fostering collective progress. *Ubuntu*, with its emphasis on interconnectedness, communal solidarity, and mutual responsibility, has the potential of enhancing the realization of Agenda 2063 objectives by addressing Africa's systemic challenges and promoting inclusive development.

The purpose of the study is to explore how relevant aspects of *Ubuntu* philosophy might brighten Ghana's chances of successfully realizing the goals of Agenda 2063. The study employed a literature-based research methodology, drawing insights from books, articles, and dissertations. Through an in-depth analysis of Ghana's socio-political landscape the paper uncovers the underlying factors contributing to the nation's

developmental stagnation and explores the transformative potential of integrating *Ubuntu* principles into its governance framework. The central argument is that Ghana stands to bolster its prospects of achieving the strategic objectives outlined in Agenda 2063 by grounding them in pertinent elements of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, characterized by a communal perspective on existence.

With this introductory notes, I now present a brief overview of Africa's Agenda 2063.

An Overview of Africa's Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 outlines the aspirations and goals for the Africa's development across various sectors, including economic growth, governance, infrastructure, education, health, and culture, among others, over a 50-year period (African Union Commission 2015). The adoption of Agenda 2063 can be traced back to the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) in 2013 (African Union Commission 2015). During these celebrations, African leaders recognized the need for a long-term vision to guide the continent's development and address its challenges effectively.

Consequently, extensive consultations were held at various levels across the continent. This included engagements with governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, youth groups, and other stakeholders. These consultations sought to gather input, feedback, and consensus on the aspirations and priorities that should be included in Agenda 2063 (African Union Commission 2015). Based on the inputs received during the consultations, a draft document outlining the vision, goals, and strategic objectives of Agenda 2063 was prepared that synthesized the aspirations of African people and articulated a shared vision for the

continent's development over the next fifty years.

The draft Agenda 2063 document was subjected to negotiation and review by AU member states. This process involved discussions on various aspects of the agenda, including its thematic areas, priorities, and implementation mechanisms. Through consensus-building and diplomatic negotiations, the final version of Agenda 2063 was approved by African leaders during the AU Summit in 2015 (African Union Commission 2015). African leaders reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the agenda and pledged to mobilize the necessary resources and political will to achieve its objectives.

Africa's Agenda 2063 outlines seven primary aspirations/goals for the continent's future development. The first aspiration aims for Africa's economic growth and self-sufficiency across various sectors, reducing dependence on imports and fostering shared prosperity (African Union Commission 2015). The realization of this goal will be indicated by shared prosperity, wherein Africa finances and manages its own growth and transformation. Achieving this aspiration requires industrialization, agriculture, innovation, and entrepreneurship to create jobs, reduce poverty, and enhance the standard of living for all Africans (African Union Commission 2015). Key focuses include investing in infrastructure, improving access to education and healthcare, and harnessing Africa's natural resources in a responsible and equitable manner. When this is achieved there will be reduction in imports and African economies and local currencies will be stabilized.

The second aspiration seeks to establish a politically united Africa based on the principles of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance (African Union Commission 2015). Pan-Africanism advocates for the unity of African peoples, recognizing

common interests and destinies, while African Renaissance calls for the rejuvenation of the continent, emphasizing social cohesion, development, and global significance (African Union Commission 2015). It involves breaking down barriers to intra-African trade and investment, harmonizing policies and regulations, and promoting regional integration through organizations like the African Union and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The goal is to create a single market and customs union that facilitates the movement of goods, services, and people across borders. Through unity, Africa aims to emerge as a strong, sovereign, and self-reliant continent, playing a significant role in global affairs.

Third aspiration focuses on strengthening principles of good governance, democracy, human rights, gender equality, justice, and the rule of law across African societies (African Union Commission 2015). These principles are seen as fundamental to socio-economic and political development, countering the destabilizing effects of political instability, which deter investors and hinder societal progress. Deepening democracy and upholding justice are viewed as pathways to sustainable development and the preservation of societal gains. This aspiration involves strengthening democratic institutions, combating corruption, promoting human rights, and ensuring the equitable distribution of resources (African Union Commission 2015). It also encompasses building strong legal frameworks and independent judiciary systems to uphold justice and protect the rights of all citizens.

The fourth aspiration builds upon the third; its aim is to create a peaceful and secure Africa (African Union Commission 2015). Given Africa's diversity in socio-cultural, political, and linguistic backgrounds, promoting unity in diversity is essential for fostering

peace and harmony. Peace and security are essential foundations for development and prosperity. This goal aims to prevent and resolve conflicts while fostering resilient societies that prioritize stability and peacebuilding initiatives. It requires strengthening governance structures, investing in conflict prevention mechanisms, and supporting peacekeeping operations (African Union Commission 2015). Additionally, it entails addressing the root causes of conflicts, including poverty, inequality, and marginalization.

Africa's rich cultural heritage is a source of pride and strength for its people. Cultural development is viewed as a driver of socio-economic progress, resisting cultural imperialism and fostering a sense of identity among Africans, thus contributing to overall development (African Union Commission 2015). The fifth aspiration underscores the importance of promoting cultural identity, values, and ethics. It seeks to preserve and promote African cultures, languages, traditions, and values. It involves promoting cultural exchange, dialogue, and cooperation among African nations, as well as celebrating diversity and promoting intercultural understanding (African Union Commission 2015).

The sixth aspiration underscores the significance of utilizing African resources and skills to foster development. Strong communities serve as the foundation for a thriving and equitable society (African Union Commission 2015). Through prioritizing grassroots involvement and engaging the youth, Africa seeks to unlock the potential of its populace across different sectors. This entails active participation in decision-making processes and addressing the needs of children in national development endeavors. Investment in education, healthcare, and social services, along with initiatives to promote gender equality and uplift marginalized groups, are essential components. Strengthening

communities enhances resilience in overcoming challenges and enhances their capacity to contribute to the continent's holistic advancement.

The seventh aspiration envisions Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global actor and collaborator (African Union Commission 2015). Africa's voice and influence on the global stage are crucial for shaping its future and contributing to global development efforts. It emphasizes Africa's proactive role in global affairs, seeking active participation in shaping its development agenda and contributing meaningfully to global initiatives, rather than passively receiving external assistance. While acknowledging the importance of partnerships with other nations and continents, Africa aims to reduce its reliance on foreign goods and stabilize local currencies by taking a more assertive stance in its engagement with the international community (African Union Commission 2015).

Since its adoption, each African country has incorporated aspects of the strategic priorities in their development plans (African Union Commission 2015). Regional economic communities has also aligned their programs and initiatives with the agenda to ensure coherence and synergy in implementation efforts. In the section below, I outline Ghana's attempt to implement the strategic goals of Agenda 2063.

Ghana and the Implementation of Agenda 2063

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana serves as the cornerstone for promoting justice, equity, and inclusive development. It articulates a clear mandate for successive governments to prioritize the welfare and prosperity of every individual within the nation's borders. The Constitution unequivocally directs governments to "... take all necessary action to ensure that the national economy is managed in such a manner as to maximize the rate of

economic development and to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every person in Ghana and to provide adequate means of livelihood and suitable employment and public assistance to the needy” (The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992, Article 36, Clause 1). This directive extends beyond mere economic growth. Peace and security are essential prerequisites for development and prosperity in Ghana. This aspiration aims to prevent and resolve conflicts, build resilient communities, and promote stability and peacebuilding efforts. In line with this constitutional mandate, successive governments in Ghana have embarked on a multifaceted approach to propel the nation towards success. These efforts include various sectors and initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable development, empowering citizens, and narrowing socio-economic disparities.

In July 2015, Ghana became part of the collective effort among African Union member states to embrace the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063 (FTYIP). As noted earlier, this plan aims to expedite Africa’s political, social, economic, and technological evolution. Ghana has integrated the FTYIP the country’s Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP) for the period 2017-2024. In the medium-term, Ghana’s vision is to: “Create an optimistic, self-confident and prosperous nation, through the creative exploitation of our human and natural resources, and operating within a democratic, open and fair society in which mutual trust and economic opportunities exist for all” (National Development Planning Commission 2019, p.2). The four main goals of the development agenda are to: (i) “build a prosperous society”; (ii) “create opportunities for all Ghanaians”; (iii) “safeguard the natural environment and ensure a resilient built environment”; and (iv) “maintain a stable, united and

safe society” (National Development Planning Commission 2021, p. 1).

For Ghana, economic transformation involves strategically reducing its reliance on foreign aid and evolving into a thriving, economically independent nation, fully in control of its destiny and able to compete globally through trade and investment. In alignment with this vision, Ghana has developed and enacted the Ghana Beyond Aid (GBA) Charter and strategy, which aims to (a) foster a change in mindset among Ghanaians, encouraging a shift from a dependency mentality to one characterized by confidence and a proactive spirit fueled by patriotism; and (b) enhance the ability to effectively and creatively utilize the nation’s resources to drive swift socio-economic transformation, and (c) encouraging a culture of hard work, fostering creativity, and perpetually combating corruption in public life (National Development Planning Commission 2019). The GBA has five broad goals, namely, wealthy, inclusive, sustainable, empowered, and resilient Ghana, all of which are consistent with the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063 outlined earlier.

Over the past few years Ghana’s National Planning and budgeting processes have been informed by Agenda 2063. To ensure alignment with regional, continental, and global development frameworks in both current and future national development strategies, Ghana has adopted the 3As approach: “Alignment, Adaptation, and Adoption” (National Development Planning Commission 2019, p.7). Alignment involves ensuring that national development plans are in accordance with the broader goals and targets set forth in regional, continental, and global development agendas (National Development Planning Commission 2019). As national development plans evolve over time, it is crucial to adapt them to reflect changes in global development priorities

and the specific context of the country. This adaptation process entails modifying goals, targets, and strategies to better suit the unique circumstances, challenges, and aspirations of the nation. In Ghana's case, adjustments were made to the successor of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II) to fully integrate the goals of Agenda 2063 while considering Ghana's development context and long-term aspirations (National Development Planning Commission 2019). Adoption entails incorporating goals and targets consistent with Ghana's development context and aspirations into the country's development plan without alteration.

Ghana's advancement towards attaining Agenda 2063 objectives in 2021 demonstrates an overall performance score of 35 percent, slightly lower than the 36 percent recorded in 2019 (National Development Planning Commission 2021). This minor decrease in performance is primarily attributed to the negative impact of COVID-19. The 2023 report shows an increase in overall performance score to 46 percent (National Development Planning Commission 2023). The three biennial reports—2019, 2021, and 2023—show an overall improvement in the implementation of Agenda 2063 in Ghana. The 2023 report indicated a general improvement in “the standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all Ghanaians” with more people now having access to portable water, electricity, internet facilities, balanced diet, descent accommodation, among others (National Development Planning Commission 2023, p. 13). It also recorded an increase in access to basic and secondary education, a reduction in maternal deaths, gains in the post-Covid-19 economy, increased agricultural yield, and other improvements (National Development Planning Commission 2023).

The positive indications in the above report does not, however, mean that Ghana is free from socio-economic challenges. As we shall see later, despite the observable improvements across different facets of the national economy and quality of life, Ghana still confronts numerous societal issues that impede its progress and limit its ability to fully achieve the continent's development aspirations. I am of the view that advancing the various initiatives aimed at implementing Agenda 2063 can be significantly enhanced by anchoring them in relevant aspects of African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. The next section outlines this philosophy.

The *Ubuntu* Philosophy

As previously indicated, this paper seeks to investigate how relevant elements of Africa's *Ubuntu* Philosophy could accelerate Ghana's efforts toward realizing the aspirations outlined in Africa's Agenda 2063. Hence, it is essential to examine the African notion of *Ubuntu* to identify those aspects conducive to Ghana's development. Before delving into these matters, it is crucial to acknowledge that the term *Ubuntu* is not native to Ghana. Consequently, one might argue that the concept of *Ubuntu* is alien to Ghanaians. Although this argument may sound good, I will illustrate how the *Ubuntu* philosophy manifests itself in many ways in the Ghanaian context to underscore that while the term *Ubuntu* may not be indigenous to Ghana, it aligns with Ghanaian perceptions of humanity and communal values. The next section begins this journey.

The concept of *Ubuntu*

The concept of *Ubuntu* retains significance in Africa despite criticism for its perceived qualities of “vagueness,” “collectivism,” and “anachronism” (Metz 2011, p.534) and arbitrary use. *Ubuntu* is an ancient philosophical concept that originated from indigenous peoples of Southern

Africa. It is worth noting that across Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, indigenous African epistemology scholars have explored the diverse ways in which the concept of Ubuntu is perceived, appropriated, and sometimes misappropriated. For example, Ubuntu is known by different names within Bantu languages. As Tambulasi and Kayuni (2005) note, it is referred to as *Umunthu* in the Chewa language of Zambia, *Umundu* among the Yao speakers of Malawi, *Bunhu* among the Tsongas in South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland, *Unhu* among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe, *Botho* among the Basotho of Lesotho, *Setso* among the Tswana-speaking people in Botswana and South Africa, *Vhutu* among the Venda speakers of South Africa, and *Ubuntu* among the Nguni-speaking peoples of Southern Africa, including the Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, and Ngwane.

Though it is characterized by certain core values and principles, *Ubuntu* has a fluid nature as it is shaped by various perspectives (Magezi 2017). Gade (2011) argues that much of contemporary conception about *Ubuntu*—such as its characterization as African humanism, a philosophy, an ethic, or a worldview—originated primarily in written materials during the latter half of the 20th century. Gade (2011) highlights that *Ubuntu* garnered significant attention and scrutiny during political transitions from white minority rule to black majority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa. He cites Setiloane as tracing the origin of *Ubuntu* in South African literature to a conference in Durban in 1960 (Gade 2011). He also refers to Lodge as identifying Jordan Kush Ngubane's publications in *The African Drum magazine* in the 1950s as the beginning of the concept of *Ubuntu* in written works.

However, Gade's own survey of literature on *Ubuntu* made him contend

that it appeared first in literature in 1846. He observes a shift in the definition of *Ubuntu* over time. Prior to 1950, it was primarily described as a human quality. In the latter half of the 20th century, however, *Ubuntu* evolved to encompass broader meanings, including African humanism, philosophy, ethics, and worldview. Between 1993 and 1995, there was a significant transition where *Ubuntu* became associated with the Nguni proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* ("a person is a person through other persons") (Gade 2011, p.303). This proverb is used by contemporary writers to define *Ubuntu*, no matter their interpretation of it as a human quality, African humanism, philosophy, ethics, or worldview (Gade 2011). This philosophy thrives on four pillars namely; family, community, environment and spirituality.

The concept of *Ubuntu* has been interpreted variously. In what follows I outline three of the key interpretations of this philosophical concept.

Interpretations of Ubuntu

In this section, key interpretations of the *Ubuntu* philosophy are outlined, with a focus on their expressions within and relevance to the broader Ghanaian worldview. However, instances occur where other African cultures are cited to illustrate the concept of *Ubuntu*. Throughout the exploration, critiques are offered to help readers discern which aspects hold potential for advancing the realization of the aspirations outlined in Agenda 2063.

1. *Ubuntu as virtuous personhood*

Ubuntu may be interpreted as virtuous personhood,¹ comprising various dimensions of human identity and virtue

¹ I borrowed this expression, *Ubuntu* as relationality and *Ubuntu* as human dignity from Banda (2019).

(Banda 2019). This interpretation of *Ubuntu* highlights such elements as the “ideal human nature, humaneness, ethical morality, human identity, and human feeling” (Banda 2019, p.206; see also Nicolaides 2022). This means that *Ubuntu* represents the quality of being an authentic human individual, setting humans apart from all other humans.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's statement that *Ubuntu* “speaks to the very essence of being human” reflects the interpretation of *Ubuntu* as personhood. (Tutu 2009, p.34). He emphasizes the manifestation of *Ubuntu* in daily interactions by elucidating that when individuals are praised as having “*Ubuntu*,” it signifies qualities such as generosity, hospitality, friendliness, kindness, care, and compassion (Tutu, 2009, p.34; cf. Nicolaides 2022). Tutu's assertion emphasizes that personhood extends beyond abstract ideas to become a lived reality intertwined with interpersonal connections. Thus, being human transcends mere biological categorization as *Homo sapiens* to include virtues and actions that reflect the interconnectedness inherent in the social nature of humanity. Given this understanding, “One's ultimate goal in life should be to become a (complete) person, a (true) self or a (genuine) human being” (Metz 2011, p.537) through the demonstration of *Ubuntu*.

Related to the personhood interpretation of *Ubuntu* is the moral aspect of this African philosophy (Nicolaides 2022). Within the framework of *Ubuntu*, morality assumes a key role that informs the understanding of personhood and emphasizing the importance of humane values, moral consciousness, and rationality. These qualities serve as distinguishing features that separate humans from instinct-driven animals or inanimate objects lacking empathy (Gichure cited in Banda 2019; cf. Metz 2011). The moral aspect of *Ubuntu* underscores the significance of ethical behavior and compassion in defining

authentic human existence. *Ubuntu*, then, may be considered as a moral framework that delineates conduct suitable for human beings. Acting contrary to the *Ubuntu* moral framework makes one fall outside the category of human.

Personhood is a central ethical concept in various Ghanaian cultures, including Akan and Ewe cultures (Gavi et. al 2022; Gyekye 1992, pp.109-110). Within the normative framework, personhood is elucidated through moral capacity and the capability to adhere to societal norms; namely, duties and obligations. The ethical dimension of personhood finds its expression in the Akan concept of *nipa* which primary means “a human being” (made up of the material and immaterial components). Aside its use as a descriptor of human beings, the term “*nipa*” also signifies a standard of quality attributed to individuals. For instance, when the Akan describe someone as “*ɔye nipa*” (“He/she is a person”), they imply that the individual possesses commendable social virtues such as kindness, generosity, and compassion. Similarly, the Bono (Akan) people use the expression “*ɔye nipa paa*” (“He/she is very much a person”) to denote a virtuous individual, suggesting that such an individual embodies a heightened sense of personhood compared to others. Conversely, the phrase “*ɔnye nipa*” (“He/she is inhuman”) suggests a lack of these commendable qualities. Such individuals may exhibit impatience, unkindness, corruption, lack of empathy, or unfaithfulness. Therefore, a person achieves full personhood when they demonstrate the capacity to care not only for their immediate family but also for individuals beyond their familial ties. The Bono people would, therefore, say *yewɔ nipa ne yewɔ nimpan* (lit. “we have a human being and we have the semblance of a human being”) to underline that not all who are “humans” (by constituents) are humans (by

behavior). The term *nimpan* connotes an empty human being, devoid of social norms.

According to Gavi et.al (2022) the Ewes of Ghana use the terms “*amegbetor*” and “*ame*” interchangeably to denote human beings in general or an individual person. However, “*amegbetor*” specifically refers to humans in a biological sense while “*ame*” is used in various contexts to signify a person and personhood. In such instances, it is often combined with “*nyenye*” (to be) to create the noun “*amenyenye*” (personhood) to denote the essence of “being a person” (Gavi et.al 2022, pp. 22-23). Their study revealed that “personhood” in Ewe context embodies characteristics such as godliness, kindness, compassion, helpfulness, respectfulness, adherence to societal norms, and active participation in communal activities (Gavi et.al 2022). The Ewes denote a good person using the action-oriented term “*amewɔnute fe*” meaning “someone who does what is right” (Gavi et.al 2022, p. 23).

The ethical significance of *Ubuntu* is also found in other African cultures. For example, the Shona of Zimbabwe use the term “*munhu*” (equivalent to the Akan *nipa*), to denote both an ordinary individual and someone of genuine virtue (Manyonganise 2015:1). According to Manyonganise (2015, p.1) people who act immorally are described as “*haasi munhu*”, meaning they lack “*unhu*” or humaneness, while those of noble character are hailed as “*munhu chaiye*”, that is, a good person. Similarly, Banda (2019, p.207) cites the Zimbabwean Ndebele community as describing individuals who display immoral behavior as “*inyamazana yomuntu*” (“a beastly person”).

These examples illustrate that a person’s behavior may erode their human identity. As Banda (2019, p.207) puts it “a person’s deeds and character either authenticate or disprove his or

her human personhood.” An individual may possess human characteristics, and yet not qualify as a person because personhood is not inherently bestowed but rather earned. It signifies that specific behavioral and characterological outcomes are anticipated from each individual within the community, and these traits must align with societal rules and norms before attributions of personhood can be conferred. Within such a framework, it is not contradictory to assert that an individual is not truly a person. Here, the first usage refers to mere human existence while the second implies the normative dimension of this existence.

As a way of critique one has to consider the patriarchal connotation of *Ubumutu* (personhood) in some African societies. In the Akan context, for example, the term “*nipa*” is used connotatively to distinguish between male and female children. Upon the birth of a child, one may ask about the gender by asking *onyaa mme* or *onyaa εene?* (lit. “What did she [the mother] get?). If the child is a boy, the response is *onyaa nipa* (lit. “She got a human being”), meaning a female child is not considered human. In the Shona context, a similar question may be answered as follows: “If it is a girl, some may say ‘*hapana munhu azvarwa*’ (that is, ‘no human being has been given birth to’); however, when it is a boy they may say ‘*kwave nemunhu*’ (i.e. ‘we now have a human being’)” (Manyonganise 2015, p.2). Given this situation in the Akan, Shona and other African societies, couples who have female daughters early in their marriage are encouraged to continue having children with the hope of eventually having a son, perceived as the epitome of true humanity. Consequently, from infancy, female children may not be fully valued or included in the Akan and Shona definition of humanity. This conception of personhood in masculine terms breeds socio-economic structures that give men advantage over women (Banda

2019). In the Akan community, for example, the concept of human development is often framed in masculine terms. It is not uncommon to have an Akan successful woman being described as *baa-beema* (man-woman). This means only men are capable of succeeding and so a woman has to have a man-component in her in order to be successful in life. Hence, even though *Ubuntu* is linked with virtues like love, compassion, and humility, it could still contribute to the marginalization of women and deny them their innate humanity and rightful socio-economic standing (Manyonganise, 2015).

2. *Ubuntu* as relationality

Ubuntu is not solely defined by values, character, or behavior, but also by the practical roles one fulfills, which are subject to evaluation by society and community (Gavi et. al 2022). In Africa, there appears to be a mutually beneficial relationship between individuals and their communities, albeit with a bias towards communal expectations (Gavi et. al 2022). Thus, the *Ubuntu* framework prioritizes communal values such as human solidarity, interdependence, shared experiences, and collective identity. According to Tutu (2009, p.31), the *Ubuntu* has to do with the idea that “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours... A person is a person through other persons.” The fact that *Ubuntu* is acquired “through other persons” underlines that individual human existence relies on the existence of fellow humans (Boaheng 2020). One cannot fully embody humanity in isolation from others. It is through communal interactions and relationships with others that humanity finds its true meaning. To exclude one from social relation, therefore, means depriving the person of his/her humanness. Therefore, Shutte (cited in Metz 2011, p.537) rightly asserts that: “Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human. And this

means entering more and more deeply into community with others. So although the goal is personal fulfilment, selfishness is excluded.”

In the 20th century, *Ubuntu* emerged as a potent force in the South African anti-apartheid movement, with leaders like Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela invoking it to foster unity and resilience against oppression. *Ubuntu* principles, invoked by these and other leaders played a crucial role in uniting diverse populations against oppression. Tutu (2009, p.34-35), for example, notes that “A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has the proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole, and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.” In this view, the essence of being human lies in the relationships and solidarity one shares with others within their community. From this perspective, *Ubuntu* is seen as a symbol of justice and equality, transcending racial barriers, reminiscent of how open-source software fosters collaboration across diverse developer communities.

Regarding the relational dimension of *Ubuntu*, the concepts of identity and solidarity need examination. The concept of identity entails collaboration on joint initiatives, coordinating actions to achieve shared objectives. Failure to establish this mutual identification can lead to more than mere alienation; it can result in outright division, with individuals viewing themselves in opposition to one another and actively seeking to undermine each other's interests (Metz 2011). Solidarity entails individuals providing mutual support and engaging in actions beneficial to one another (Metz 2011). It encompasses the cultivation of positive attitudes,

including emotions and motives directed towards others, such as empathy and assistance motivated by genuine concern for their well-being (Metz 2011). Conversely, a lack of solidarity manifests when individuals show indifference towards each other's welfare or, worse, display hostility and cruelty towards one another. Nelson Mandela (cited in Mpanga 2017, p.220), in his inaugural speech as South Africa's first democratically-elected president, invoked *Ubuntu* by stating, "We are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us." Mandela's words underscored the importance of unity, compassion, and mutual respect in overcoming the divisions and injustices perpetuated by apartheid.

That this interconnectedness (solidarity) forms a solid basis for human development is exemplified in the customary greeting and response of the Shona people. Their exchanges in the morning and at lunchtime reflect this ethos: "*Mangwani, marara sei?*" (Good morning, did you sleep well?), with the response being, "*Ndarara, kana mararawo*" (I slept well, if you slept well); and "*Marara sei?*" (How has your day been?), with the response, "*Ndarara, kana mararawo*" (My day has been good if your day has been good) (Nussbaum 2003, p.4). These greetings, whether extended to a native or a stranger, underscore that "we are all so interconnected that if you did not sleep well or have a good day, how can I sleep well or have a good day?" The communal ethos prevalent in African life is echoed in Gichure's assertion that the "significant element of *Ubuntu* culture is that it lends itself to a communal and traditional lifestyle in which every person is their neighbor's keeper" ((cited in Banda 2019, p.209).

Interconnectedness is expressed in various aspects of Ghanaian culture,

where kindness, generosity, and understanding are valued virtues. This principle is evident in acts of hospitality towards strangers, where Ghanaians open their homes and hearts to provide for others. For example, during times of hardship, such as natural disasters or economic downturns, Ghanaians often come together to practicalize *Ubuntu* as they offer support and assistance to those in need. Traditionally, people fetch water and prepared food for one who has just given birth or one who is bereaved. The assumption is that a person in such a situation needs help which the neighbors offer through their benevolence. In rural communities, farmers come together during the planting and harvesting seasons to collectively work on each other's farms, a practice which the Bono people refer to as *nnɔboa*. This practice underscores that people's collective prosperity depends on cooperation and mutual support. Moreover, the extended family system may serve as a good illustration of interconnectedness which provides a support system where individuals can rely on each other for emotional, financial, and practical assistance in times of need.

In spite of the above, a key limitation of *Ubuntu* in this regard lies in "its discriminatory and exclusive view of human identity" (Banda 2019, p.207). Magezi (2017) opines that the *Ubuntu* understanding of community is limited to people who are connected by blood and geography. He further notes that, *Ubuntu* often overlooks individuals from diverse geographical backgrounds (ethnicities) or those without familial ties (Magezi 2017). The Akan refer to people of one family as *mogyaa korɔ* (one blood) or *mogyaa baako abusua baako* (one blood, one family). From this perspective, people more often assist their blood relatives than people not related to them by blood. Moreover, there is a tension between the attention given to individual affairs and communal affair. On the one hand, the

Akan hold that without others the individual cannot exist and enjoy life to the fullest. On the other hand, they emphasize the need to attend to affairs affecting the individual. This is why the family is often likened to a forest: from the outside, it appears dense and impenetrable, but once you step inside, you can appreciate the unique position of each tree. This analogy highlights the complexity and interconnectedness of family dynamics. Just as a forest consists of various trees, each with its own role and significance, families are made up of individuals who contribute to the overall structure and health of the unit. When viewed from within, the distinct roles and relationships become clear, revealing how each member supports and influences one another. At the same time, the forest-metaphor underlines that in spite of the communal sense of life, one finds people discriminating against others on socioeconomic and/or relational basis.

3. *Ubuntu* as human dignity

The concept of *Ubuntu* may also be interpreted in terms of human rights and human dignity (Nicolaidis 2022). When *Ubuntu* is applied to the context of human dignity, it underscores the belief that every person possesses inherent worth and deserves to be treated with respect, regardless of their background, circumstances, or differences. Tutu's (2009) perspective on *Ubuntu* highlights the reciprocity, where the treatment of others reflects not only on their humanity but also on one's own. However, the concept of human dignity extends beyond mere treatment of others in a humane manner. Banda (2019) emphasizes that embodying dignity involves not only asserting one's own sense of human worth but also conducting oneself in a manner that reflects this dignity. This dual aspect of human dignity suggests that when one person mistreats another, it diminishes the inherent value of the victim while simultaneously degrading the moral standing of the perpetrator. This

perspective highlights not only the interconnectedness of human dignity, but also that our actions toward others ultimately reflect on our own humanity. This is captured, to some extent, in Tutu's (2009, p.35) assertion that, "What dehumanizes you, inexorably dehumanizes me." In this sense, *Ubuntu* serves as a moral compass that guides individuals to uphold the dignity of both themselves and others in their interactions and conduct.

Ubuntu maintains the inherent worth and value of individuals while also operating within a communal framework (Nicolaidis 2022). For instance, in the Ghanaian context, it is mandatory to greet people not only to show politeness but also to show a recognition and affirmation of the other person's human dignity. Similarly, such acts as hospitality toward other people (including strangers), being friendly, and participating in such rites as marriage, funerals, and naming, among others, are not simply acts of kindness; they also uphold and acknowledge the human dignity of those involved.

The concept of *Ubuntu*, when interpreted through the lens of human dignity, serves as an African reflection of the biblical doctrine of the *imago Dei*, which posits that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God (see Gen. 1:26-27). In Ghana, the prevailing understanding of the human person includes the belief that a significant aspect of our being is derived from God. For the Akan-Bono people, the *kraa* (soul) comes from God to inhabit each individual at conception. Therefore, on the basis of the *kraa*, it can be said that, to some extent, each person carry the image of God. This idea is expressed in the Bono-Twi saying *nnipa nyinaa ye Nyankopɔn mma* ("All human beings are God's children"). All people are God's children because they all carry a spark from God, the *kraa*. As bearers of God's image, every individual possesses intrinsic dignity that must not be compromised. The *imago Dei* confers

upon every human “a universal stature, dignity, and value that surpasses the value of the state, the tribe, the race, and all human institutions” (Turaki, 2006, p. 811).

Ubuntu, therefore, promotes the idea that societies should actively protect and uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual, hence fostering an environment of equality, non-discrimination, and justice (Mkabela 2014). By advocating for these principles, *Ubuntu* serves as a guiding framework for building inclusive societies where each person's rights are valued, and social justice is prioritized. In doing so, it not only strengthens community bonds but also contributes to the overall well-being and harmony of society.

With the above outline, I now proceed to consider the Ghanaian context which is the focus of this paper.

The Ghanaian political and socio-economic contexts

Ghana, like most African countries, shows diverse features (Danso-Wiredu and Brako 2021). The basis of Ghana's diversity is largely evident in the different ethnic groups, dialects spoken, religious affiliations, cultures, and political traditions, among others. Ghana is a country with a high degree of linguistic heterogeneity. The country is believed to have ten major indigenous languages comprising sixty dialects all of which belong to the Niger-Congo family (Guerini n.d). Ghana is religiously pluralistic though majority of the populace profess the Christian faith. There is also political pluralism though the Fourth Republic has been dominated by two key parties; namely, the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party. Ghana is relatively stable despite its ethnic, religious and political diversity.

In Ghana, political exclusion is a significant issue, exacerbated by the “winner-takes-all” nature of its political system, where the victorious party often

monopolizes power and excludes members of other parties from governance. Despite its reputation as one of Africa's more stable democracies, Ghana struggles with ensuring inclusive representation. Women face cultural and economic barriers that limit their leadership roles, while ethnic and regional disparities, particularly in the northern regions, deepen feelings of disenfranchisement. Additionally, the youth, despite being a significant portion of the population, often find their political involvement limited to roles with little influence. These layers of exclusion, combined with the concentration of power within the winning party, undermine the diversity and inclusivity essential for a healthy democracy.

Economically, poverty and inequality remain prevalent issues in Ghana. Rural areas, where agriculture predominates, tend to experience higher poverty rates compared to urban counterparts. Disparities in access to education, healthcare, and basic services also persist between different regions and socio-economic groups. In terms of education and healthcare, Ghana has made significant investments to increase school enrollment rates and reduce child mortality. However, challenges persist, including quality gaps in education, healthcare infrastructure deficiencies, and limited access to healthcare services in remote areas.

Corruption also remains a significant challenge in Ghana. The National Anti-Corruption Coalition (2001, p.23) defines corruption as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Despite efforts to combat corruption, it persists at different levels of government, private sector, and society. In Ghana, corruption manifests itself in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, extortion, and kickbacks. Corruption hampers economic growth, distorts market competition, and undermines public trust in institutions. Because of

corruption “state expenses are not used effectively or even efficiently, but according to individual and corporate profit interests of high-ranking politicians, influential middlemen and big international businesses” (Koechlin 2008, p.18). Corruption results in significant inefficiencies, as resources are mismanaged and public funds intended for critical services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure development are diverted for personal gain. This misallocation of resources hinders the government's ability to effectively address the pressing needs of its citizens and undermines the overall progress and development of the nation. Corruption erodes public trust, fosters a culture of impunity, and perpetuates a cycle of underdevelopment, ultimately depriving the people of the essential services and infrastructure they rightfully deserve. Obviously, corruption exacerbates poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, hindering progress towards achieving sustainable development goals.

Human rights abuses in Ghana, while not as severe as in some other parts of the world, remain a significant concern that undermines the Ghana's democratic values and development. Issues such as police brutality, unlawful detentions, and the suppression of freedom of speech have been reported, highlighting the need for greater accountability and reform within law enforcement and government institutions. The exploitation of child labor, particularly in the fishing and mining sectors, also constitutes a serious human rights violation, depriving children of education and exposing them to hazardous conditions. While Ghana has made progress in strengthening its legal framework and human rights institutions, gaps remain in enforcement and public awareness.

The issues outlined above will be in focus as the next section considers how relevant aspects of *Ubuntu* might

facilitate Ghana's realization of the goals of Agenda 2063.

APPLYING UBUNTU SOCIOPOLITICAL ETHICS IN THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT

Embracing the insights gleaned from the study of *Ubuntu* presents an opportunity for Ghana to adopt a more holistic and culturally informed approach to societal development. A brief work like this cannot cover all the strategic goals in the Agenda 2063. This section focuses on such thematic areas as: tolerance and consensus building, political inclusiveness, nation building and patriotism, fight against corruption, human rights, gender equality, justice, and the rule of law.

1. *Ubuntu* and tolerance & consensus building

In the context of Agenda 2063, which envisions a politically united Africa based on the principles of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, tolerance and consensus-building are crucial for fostering continental solidarity and cooperation. Ghana's commitment to Agenda 2063 necessitates fostering a culture of tolerance both domestically and within the broader African context. The country's success in this area depends largely on tolerance and consensus building (Asante 2010). Political tolerance refers to the willingness or ability to accept political views or behaviors that one finds disagreeable or objectionable. A leader who embodies tolerance actively safeguards the rights of all individuals, including those they may personally dislike or strongly oppose. This quality is essential for fostering a democratic environment where diverse opinions can coexist, allowing for constructive dialogue and the healthy functioning of society. Toleration indicates “the permission of, or patience in the presence of opinions or practices that are not regarded as really good or of persons identified with such opinions and practices” (Rule 1960, pp.525-526). Asante (2010, p.14) adds

that “toleration has to do with the capacity to accept what one considers to be acceptable even though substandard or imperfect.” Political tolerance and consensus building are both key to the development of every nation.

Ubuntu provides a philosophical foundation for fostering tolerance and consensus-building. It underlines the need for tolerance towards diverse perspectives, beliefs, and identities within the community. In a country with diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, tolerance becomes essential for promoting social cohesion and unity. Practically, embracing tolerance and consensus-building in Ghana involves promoting dialogue, respect, and understanding among diverse communities (Asante 2007). It requires creating platforms for constructive engagement and mediation to address conflicts and grievances peacefully. In this regard, *Ubuntu* reminds the populace about their common identity and the need to forge ahead together toward sustainable development. This will, in effect, help the country to resist any dictatorial tendencies (Busia cited in Anane-Agyei 2014).

2. *Ubuntu* and political inclusiveness

Aside tolerance and consensus building, the principle of political inclusiveness is required to enhance Ghana’s chances of realizing the goals of Agenda 2063. *Ubuntu* “welcomes consultation and inclusivity from all role-players from all walks of life” (Nicolaidis 2022, p.4). The traditional Ghanaian worldview acknowledges the reality of diversity and the need for mutual support. This view is expressed in Akan-Bono proverb “*Nyansa nni baakofoɔ tim*” (“Wisdom is not the preserve of one person”), which underscores the belief that everyone possesses valuable insights that contribute to governance. Similarly, the proverb “*Ti korɔ nkɔ agyina*” (“one head does not go into counsel”) emphasizes

the collective wisdom inherent in collaboration. It means that (important) decisions or discussions should not be made or undertaken by a single person. The proverb underlines the value of collective wisdom and suggests that better outcomes are achieved when multiple perspectives and ideas are considered. This sociopolitical worldview prepares Ghanaians to be inclusive in their national politics.

Political inclusion, in this context, refers to a political landscape where ruling parties recognize the value of tapping into diverse skills and perspectives for effective governance (Asante 2007). This includes appointing qualified individuals from various political backgrounds and implementing policies that address national challenges, regardless of party affiliation (Asante 2007). Applying this principle, the ruling party should always acknowledge that the non-ruling party may have equally good, if not better, ideas and arguments to offer. For this reason, political leaders should not consider their ideas and arguments as the best and final without considering the opinions of others. As Ghana strives to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063, collaborations among the various political parties is essential. From the *Ubuntu* perspective individual well-being is tied to the well-being of others; therefore, the common good should be prioritized over personal interests. This requires political figures to prioritize the collective well-being of the country over their partisan interests. It also requires the ruling government to subject proposed policies to the scrutiny of the opposition party.

Political inclusiveness is expected to promote interconnectivity and shared responsibility. In this regard the Bono-Adinkra symbol *Funtumfunefu Denkyɛmfunafu* has much to offer the reader as it embodies the *Ubuntu* philosophy of interconnectedness and shared responsibility. The symbol represents two mythical crocodiles with

a common stomach, symbolizing the idea that despite individual differences, all members of society are interconnected and share a collective destiny. The name “*Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunafu*” is the shortened form of the proverb “*Funtumfunafu Denkyemfunafu, bewɔ yafunu korɔ; nso se benya biibi (aduanɛ) a, befom efiri sɛ aduanɛ he de he bɛtɛ no menetwitwie mu*” (“*Funtumfunafu and Denkyemfunafu share the same stomach, yet when they get something (food) to eat, they strive over it because the sweetness of the food is felt as it passes through the throat*”). The result of this is the constant struggle between the two crocodiles when they have food to eat.

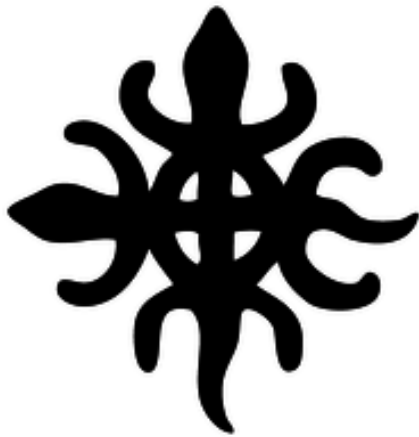


Fig. 1. *Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunafu*

In the Ghanaian political context, the symbol serves as a metaphor for the relationship between the two major political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) which are the only two parties which have ruled Ghana in the last thirty two (32) years (as of 2024). While both parties claim to exist for the nation's welfare, their actions often reflect self-interest rather than genuine concern for the citizenry. This reflects the behavior of the siamese crocodiles, who, despite sharing the same stomach, compete over food due to the perceived sweetness of what passes through the throat. The symbol teaches that while individuals may have their

own desires and perspectives, their ultimate success and fulfillment are intertwined with the success and well-being of the community. Given this, Ghana's political leaders need to embrace unity in diversity and hence promote inclusiveness. Ghana's NDC and NPP should seek the nation's good rather than their own political "sweetness." Just as the crocodiles must learn to cooperate despite their instinctive urge to compete, *Ubuntu* entreats all parties to work together harmoniously, ensuring that what benefits one benefits all.

3. *Ubuntu* and patriotism

No country can achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063 without patriotism. Patriotism plays a vital role in nation-building; it serves as a driving force behind collective efforts to strengthen and develop a nation. Not only does patriotism inspire individuals to love, serve, and sacrifice for their country, it also inspires individuals to contribute their talents, skills, and resources toward national progress and prosperity. Patriotism also fosters a sense of unity and solidarity among citizens by transcending differences and promoting a shared national identity. When individuals feel a deep connection to their country, they are more likely to work together towards common goals and overcome challenges that arise during the nation-building process.

Unfortunately, patriotism, which once a cornerstone of national identity and unity, keeps declining among contemporary Ghanaians. This decline is evident in various aspects of society, including decreased participation in national events and celebrations, waning pride in national achievements, and diminishing sense of collective responsibility towards the nation's well-being. Ghana's socioeconomic challenges such as unemployment, inequality, and corruption have eroded citizens' trust and confidence in their country's institutions and leadership, leading to apathy rather

than active engagement in nation-building efforts. Another factor that has negatively affected patriotism is the increasing influence of globalization and Western cultural values, which sometimes overshadow traditional Ghanaian values and pride in one's cultural heritage. Furthermore, the rise of divisive politics and ethnocentrism has fragmented national unity and diluted the sense of belonging to a shared Ghanaian identity. Ethnic tensions, regional economic disparities, and political polarization has undermined efforts to promote a strong sense of patriotism that transcends individual differences.

As a remedy, there is the need to promote *Ubuntu* by instilling national pride and values from a young age. The philosophy of *Ubuntu* will help individuals to recognize their inherent interconnectedness with others and have a sense of responsibility towards the collective good. The promotion of *Ubuntu* will also promote a strong sense of solidarity and empathy towards fellow community members. Consequently, individuals will be encouraged to support and uplift one another, regardless of differences or background. This solidarity will create a shared sense of purpose and identity, essential components of patriotism. Furthermore, an *Ubuntu*-oriented political structure will promote communal values and norms, which are often intertwined with notions of patriotism.

Patriotic attitudes will promote development in many ways. For example, it will reduce brain drain which affects development negatively. An increase in the spirit of patriotism among Ghanaians will also help Ghana retain her human resources for sustainable development. Patriotism can also reduce the incidence of "government's work" mentality. Currently, there is a mindset where individuals perceive public work as the sole responsibility of the government,

leading them to treat these initiatives with indifference or a lack of care. This attitude, which (to some extent) is a sign of the lack of patriotism, reduces work output and costs the nation a lot. *Ubuntu* can effectively counter this attitude of by instilling a sense of collective responsibility and accountability. *Ubuntu* emphasizes that individual actions are interconnected with the well-being of the entire community, promoting a shared sense of duty and mutual respect. This philosophy encourages individuals to approach their roles with diligence and integrity, understanding that their work impacts others and that they are accountable to the community. Also, patriotic citizens are always proud of their country and are always inclined to support local industries, products, and services to boost economic activity and create jobs.

4. *Ubuntu* and the fight against corruption

As previously mentioned, corruption is a major hindrance to Ghana's realization of the goals of Agenda 2063. The country loses huge resources because of corruption. Corrupt activities mostly involve dishonest or unethical behavior by individuals in positions of power, typically involving the misuse of public resources or authority for personal gain. *Ubuntu* ethics can serve as a panacea to this social canker as it emphasizes the prioritization of the common good (Nicolaidis 2022). This can serve to address the canker of corruption in the following ways. First, *Ubuntu* principles can empower citizens to actively participate in decision-making, monitor the use of public resources, and hold public officials accountable for their actions (Dudzai 2021). Community oversight mechanisms, such as citizen audits and participatory budgeting, can help to prevent and detect corruption by increasing transparency and engaging citizens in the governance process.

Secondly, as *Ubuntu* values honesty, integrity, and fairness in

sociopolitical contexts, Ghanaian leaders who embody *Ubuntu* principles are more likely to prioritize the common good over personal gain and to uphold ethical standards in their decision-making. From the *Ubuntu* perspective, one's status as a person is intricately linked to moral conduct rather than mere biological existence. This can encourage people in authority to live uprightly and avoid the anti-social of corruption. It will also encourage the public to question the source of people's wealth rather than hailing them without scrutinizing how they made wealth.

Thirdly, the sociopolitical implication of *Ubuntu* can address corruption through restorative justice. *Ubuntu* emphasizes reconciliation and restoration rather than punishment and retribution. In the context of corruption, this approach can involve creating mechanisms for perpetrators to acknowledge their wrongdoing, make amends, and be reintegrated into the community. *Ubuntu*-oriented approaches to justice, with their focus on healing and rehabilitation rather than solely on punishment, can address the root causes of corruption and promote long-term behavioral change.

Fourthly, the communal dimension of *Ubuntu* opposes selfishness, greed, favoritism, and greed that promote corruption (Dudzai 2021). In the *Ubuntu* framework there is a collective responsibility to uphold integrity and fairness, making corruption antithetical to the ethos of communal harmony and shared prosperity. Embracing *Ubuntu* fosters an environment where people prioritize the well-being of the community over personal gain, thereby contributing to the prevention and mitigation of corrupt practices.

5. *Ubuntu* and human rights, justice & the rule of law

The promotion of human right, justice and the rule of law is a key part aspect of the aspirations of Agenda 2063. *Ubuntu*

promotes human rights, gender equality, justice, and the rule of law through its emphasis on interconnectedness, compassion, and collective responsibility within communities. Firstly, *Ubuntu* recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of every individual within the community. *Ubuntu* promotes a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity, and upholds fundamental human rights including the right to life, liberty, and security of person. It encourages communities to protect and promote the rights of all individuals, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or beliefs.

Secondly, *Ubuntu* values the contributions and perspectives of all members of society and ensures justice. Keevy (2008, p.374) argues that "*Ubuntu* embodies not only values and morals, but also justice. Justice is perceived as *Ubuntu* fairness; doing what is right and moral in the indigenous African society." *Ubuntu* fundamentally embodies the principle of establishing order, restoring balance, and fostering peace within the African worldview, while also maintaining a delicate equilibrium between conflict and harmony in traditional African societies (Keevy 2008). Keevy (2008, p.375) further notes that *Ubuntu* equates justice "in terms of the proper relationships between a human person and the universe, between the person and nature, between the person and other persons." To some extent, justice is achieved through inclusive deliberation and consensus-building (Letseka 2014). This approach ensures that every individual's voice is heard and valued, contributing to decisions that are aimed at the common good (Letseka 2014).

Nonetheless, *Ubuntu* marginalizes females in a way (as noted earlier). Such aspect of *Ubuntu* cannot promote equality and justice. To address this issue, there is the need for Ghana to consciously and carefully address gender inequality and initiate programs to empower women for sustainable

development. In this regard, the aspect of Ghanaian widowhood rites which end up impoverishing widows need to be reassessed and reformed. Ghana sociopolitical systems need to empower women and girls, ensure their equal participation in decision-making processes, and eliminate discrimination and violence based on gender.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the potential of integrating *Ubuntu* socio-political ethics into Ghana's governance structures to advance the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The communal values of *Ubuntu*—such as tolerance, consensus building, political inclusiveness, and a commitment to justice and human rights—were key among the themes considered. It was noted that these values can catalyze Ghana's efforts toward achieve socio-economic development and unity across the nation. In all, the paper underscores the relevance of African philosophical traditions in shaping contemporary governance practices and contributes to the broader discourse on realizing Africa's future aspirations through culturally grounded approaches.

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