African Communalism and the Question of Individual Autonomy

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Abstract

There are some vital questions that continuously and constantly confront us as human beings in Africa. Such questions include, issues about their identity, culture, artistic prowess, language and appearance. Matters about leadership and the extent to which they can exert their authority are of equal concerns. This give rise to the concern of whether African individuals have autonomy at all, their definition of autonomy as well as the importance of autonomy to life for the African man. This question is important in the view of the fact that many African writers have emphasised communalism as the nature and structure of the African society. This seems to be in conflict with individual freedom within the African socio-political set up and African cannot but ask "Are we really autonomous?" Many African philosophers had one time or the other responded to such questions and this is what this article tries to answer using the method of critical evaluation.

Keywords… Communalism, Collective rights, Individual rights, Individual autonomy

1. The Idea of African Communalism.

Communalism can be said to be the socio-political theory that upholds the priority of the community over the individual. Communal social order is motivated by the well being of the community, its solidarity, cooperation, mutual concern and reciprocal obligation, as well as fair distribution of benefits and burdens among its members. In fact this could be understood better by Mbiti's assertion below:

> The deep sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. Kinship is reckoned through blood and betrothal (engagement and marriage). It is kinship wh ich controls social relationship between people in a given community. It governs marital-- customs and regulations, it determines the behaviour of one individual towards another… Almost all the concepts connected with human relationship can be understood and interpreted through the kinship system (Mbiti 1970:199).

For instance the form of African community is communal. It is communal when an individual's human personhood is made possible by the existence in the community, by the presence of other. Identity and definition are made possible in relation, by relatedness. Here the community is basically the coming together and being together of individual persons. Communalism can also be said to be the doctrine that the group constitutes the main focus of the lives of the individual members of that group, and that the extent of the individuals involvement in the interests, aspirations and welfare of the group is the measure of that individual's worth. This is another way of saying that the group that is in the community constitutes the focus of the activities of the individual members of the society. Kwame Gyekye points out that "the doctrine of communalism places emphasis on the activity and success of the wider society rather than though not necessarily at the expense of, to the detriment of the individual (1996:120).

Universal social order is motivated by the well being of the community, this happens when there is solidarity, cooperation, mutual concern and reciprocal obligation, as well as fair distribution of benefits and burdens among its members. Communal social thought is characterized by the outlook of mutual social responsibility calling upon all members of a community to act in such a way as to enhance the good of the group. The good of the group as a whole is taken to include the good of the individual members so that enhancement of the good of the community implies the enhancement of individual persons. In the words of Nyerere:

> Provided he is willing to work, no individual within that society should worry about what will happen to him tomorrow if he does not hoard wealth today. Society itself should look after him or his widow, or his orphans. This is exactly what Traditional

> African society succeeded in doing… Nobody starved… he could depend on the
> wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member (1968:3).

Kwame Gyekye in his analysis of the concepts of community and individuality among the Akan of Ghana, indicates that their social order is ambiguous manifesting features of both communality and individuality. These two features are expressed in the Akan art Motif of the "Siamese crocodile, a crocodile with two heads but a single stomach. The Akans say that although the two heads have a common stomach they always struggle for food. The crocodile symbol has reference to Akan social thought articulating the uniqueness of the individual and his or her relationship to the society. The head emphasizes unique individuality indicating the will, tastes, needs aspirations and interests of the individual and therefore his or her desire for self-expression and determination. The common stomach in the symbol indicates that the basic needs and aspirations of the community are the same. It symbolizes the common good for the group. The individuals contribute to that common good, but they are also the beneficiaries from that common good. The symbols thus indicates compatibility between individuality and community.

The word "community" in the African sense means much more than the western notion of a body of people living in the same locality. Ramose's view of the African community involves both natural and supernatural dimensions. It is human being taken as epistemologically fundamental, that recognizes and articulates the multiple dimensions of the community. First, there is the dimension of the living based essentially on the family and extended family, secondly there is the dimension of those beings who have passed away from the world of the living. Finally there is the dimension of the "yet to-be-born". It is the task of the living to see it that the yet-to-be-born are in fact born.

The idea of communalism in African traditions has substantive practical relevance in people's lives, social and political structures in the context of moral epistemology, moral reasoning and moral education in African thought. The idea of communalism in Africa cultures may be understood in terms of the moral ideas of personhood, community and their connection. According to Mbiti; Africans do not think of themselves as "discrete individuals" but rather understand themselves as part of a "community". This is what is referred to as African communalism. According to Mbiti: "I am because we are: and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1969:60). This also has immediate recognition as a play on and inversion of the well known "cogito ergo sum" of Descartes, which identifies the self with the "I am" in isolation from the "we are". Mbiti even went further by saying that:

> The individual owes his existence to other people… He is simply part of the whole…
> whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever
> happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: I
> am, because we are, and since we are therefore, I am (Mbiti 1969.61).

This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man. Mbiti is not unaware of the necessary question of the relationship between the individual and the community. In his work; African Religions and Philosophy, Mbiti addresses this thus:

> What then is the individual and where is his place in community? In traditional life,
> the individual does not exist and cannot exist alone except corporately. He is simply
> part of the whole. The highest authority is the community of which the individual is
> a cooperate member. A person cannot be individualistic, but only cooperate (Mbiti
> 1969 .107).

Communalism gives institutional expression in the social structures of African societies. The communal social structures of African societies have been noted by many writers on African social life the sense of community and social solidarity that characterizes the social structures. This sense of community, observed Dickson, is a "characteristic of African life to which attention has been drawn again and again by both African and non-African writers on Africa. Indeed to many this characteristic defines Africaness (Gyekye 1992:102).

Writing on the Bantu, Molema observed:

> Individualism, as understood in the western collectivism was the civil law,
> communism and a true form of socialism the dominating principle and ruling spirit

(Molema 1958.120

Senghor too was of the opinion that African society puts more stress on the group than on the individual, more on solidarity than on the activity and needs of the individuals, more stress on the group than on the individual, more on solidarity than on the activity and needs of the individual more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy on the communion of persons than on their autonomy. Ours is a community society (Senghor 1964:98)

Sekon Toure was of the view that "Africa is fundamentally communocratic. (Oyeshile 2006.110] The collective life and social solidarity give it a basis of humanism which many people might envy. These human qualities also mean that an individual cannot imagine organizing his life outside that of his family village or clan.

Kenyatta believes that in the Gikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual " rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost, he is several people's relative… This fact is the basis of his sense of moral responsibility and social obligation. Kenyatta was of the opinion that individualism and self seeking were ruled out. The personal pronoun "I" was used very rarely in public assemblies. The spirit of collectivism was much ingrained in the mind of the people. Communalism is also found in the works of African Novelists as well. Camara Laye's, The African Child evokes a sense of community. And so also is Chinua Achebe's No Longer at Ease refers to the fellow feelings and neighbourlines in African societies.

Communalism to me holds a most significant place in African social thought, though this does not imply that individualism as much is ignored.

2. Collective and Individual Rights.

In the view of African communalism, what is the position of the individual? The question is important because it is important to know if the fundamental human right can be catered for within its communalism. This leads us to the discussion on individual rights versus collective rights.

Individualism on its part is at once an ethical-psychological concept and an ethical-political one. As an ethical-psychological concept, individualism holds that a human being should think and judge independently, respecting nothing more than the sovereignty of his or her mind, thus it is intimately connected with the concept of autonomy. As an ethical-political concept, individualism upholds the supremacy of individual rights (Nathaniel Brandem 1972:267). Individualism regards man that is every man as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his own nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful co-existence among men, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights and that a group as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.

The foundation of individualism lies in one's moral right to pursue one's own happiness. This pursuit requires a large amount of independence, initiative, and self-responsibility. Politically, individualism means recognizing that one has a right to his own life and happiness and it also means uniting with other citizens to preserve and defend the institutions that protect the right.

Woiceshyn is of the view that:

> Individual rights are not subject to a public vote, a majority has no right to vote away the rights of a minority, the political function of rights is precisely to protect minorities from oppression by majorities and the smallest minority on earth is the individual. (Woiceshy 1970:403)

Individualism brings about freedom because the right to be left alone is indeed the beginning of all freedom. No wonder why David Kelly said the case for a free society rests on individualism... every form of totalitarianism has sought control over the minds of individuals, and has understood that it must first undermine the individuals confidence in the validity of his own faculties (David Kelly1882:112).

Most African intellectuals, post colonials, politicians from the continent, contemporary African philosophers, literary theorists and writers on African life and human rights, have shared the view that human rights are a collective issue that is group norms, rather than a matter of individual rights. In the world's traditional societies, the individual finds himself tied and guided by communal values, which are also regarded as social values. (Oyeshile 2006: 104) According to Kwame Gyekye, communal values are "those that expresses appreciation of the worth and importance of the community." (Gyekye 1996: 35) The most appropriate type of relationship that

ought to exist between the individual and the society has been an intraceable problem for social and political philosophy. What brought about the problem is that we believe in one hand that the individual human being has autonomy, freedom and dignity. And these are values that are considered most worthwhile and ought therefore to be respected by the society. We believe also that the individual, not only is a natural member of the human society but needs the society and all it makes available for the realisation of the individual's potential and for living a life that is most worthwhile. This problem leads us to discuss what autonomy is, and the problems associated with it in relation of the social or collective.

Collectivism is defined as the theory and practice that makes some sort of group rather than the individual the fundamental unit of political, social and economic concern. In theory, collectivists insist that the claims of groups, associations, or the state must normally supersede the claims of individuals.(Gragil 1991:304). Collectivism treats society as if it were a super-organism existing over and above its individual members, and which takes the collective in some form of tribe, race, or state to be the primary unit of reality and standard of value.

Collectivism means the subsuming of the individual to a group….whether to a race, class or state does not matter. It holds that man must be chained to collective action and collective thought for the sake of what is called common good. (Ayn Rand 1980:114) Collectivism holds that the individual has no right, that his life and work belong to the group, that is the society, the tribe, the state, the nation and that the group may sacrifice him at his own whim to his own interests. It is the doctrine that the social called society , the people, the state has rights, needs, or moral authority above and apart from individuals who compromise it.

3. Individual Autonomy

Autonomy is from the Greek word *autonomia*, which simply means independence, connoting a self-managing ego, independent of any clentage or reliance on others for its maintenance. The question of individual autonomy boarders on so many factors. African philosophers have been faced with the problem of individual autonomy as against collectivism. Collectivism is a term used to describe any moral, political, or social outlook, that emphasizes the interdependence of every human in some collective group and the priority of group goals over individual goals. Autonomy has generally been considered an attribute of groups, of organizations, and of government. It is a desirable trait, the right to set your own agenda, to conduct your own affairs with a minimum of outside interference. According to Raz:

> The idea of personal autonomy….. holds the free choice of goals and relations as an essential ingredient of individual well being. The ruling idea behind the ideal of personal autonomy is that people should make their own lives. The autonomous person is [part] author of his own life. The ideal of personal autonomy is the vision of people controlling to some degree their own, fashioning it through successive decisions throughout their lives. (Raz 1986:369)

Autonomy in the sense fundamental to the idea of human rights, is a complex assumption about capacities, developed or undeveloped, of persons, which enable them to develop, want to act on, and act on higher order plans of action which take as their self-critical object ones life and the way it is lived (D. Richard:1971:65) To be autonomous is to have the right to self determination to order your affairs as you see fit. But that does not give you the right to impose your order or beliefs on anyone else, because they are also autonomous. But is this the case in Africa? Individualism is an alien concept in most part of African continent. Over the past two decades, we have seen a steady erosion of individual rights and freedom.

Frankfurt (1971:7) is of the view that persons "are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are. Many animals appear to have the capacity for first order desires or desires of the first order, which are simple desires to do or not to do one thing or another. No animal other than man, however, appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires. It is only conscious beings that have the capacity for deliberations and decisions, animals do not have it, and cannot be said to be said to have autonomy. Therefore, autonomy is a human concept.

John Benson (1977:244) sees being autonomous also as putting "oneself" in the best position to answer for the reliability of ones beliefs. It is putting oneself in a position in which one is accountable for one's life. Personal autonomy rejects blind conformity to tradition or authority of any sort while accepting that the "burden of proof that departure from the guidelines will be creative and integrative not only for the individual involved, but also for the larger community rests with those who make the exception.

Paul Taylor is of the view that individual autonomy can be understood as self-direction according to a life-plan

which conforms to the individuals long term dispositional nature and interests. This autonomy requires that the individual be free from any form of manipulation, it also requires that the autonomous person know himself, understand who he is, what he would like to make of his life and how best he can make of his life what he believes it should be. One must also be the originator of one's action because one's belief and values are identified with oneself (Taylor 1992:157). The libertarian view of freedom has gained significant recognition during the past three decades in philosophical circles. This is the notion that people are free when they may act without interference in accordance with their rights. They are unfree when they are constrained by others or institutions for example the government, to do anything which they have not. It is doubtful if this is true in most Africans countries these days as our governments do not give room for such freedom. Take for instance the issue of elections which is now largely monetised. It has become a matter of he who plays the piper dictates the tune.

It is important to state that concerns about human rights fall into schools. They are liberals and communitarians. Liberals give primary moral value to individual human beings and believe that the individual has autonomy and dignity and therefore should be free to express his or her unique qualities and dispositions and that these should be respected by the community and the state.

Liberals base the notion of human rights on the democratic basis civil and political rights of all citizens as individuals and insist that since the individuals interests can easily be threatened, all citizens should be protected against the oppression of the state and against collective authoritarianism. In contrast to the liberal perspectives, communitarians emphasize the value of specifically communal and public goods, and conceive of values as primarily rooted in communal practices. They argue that the community rather than the individual, the state, or the nation is the ultimate originator of values. In their analysis of human rights, groups or communal rights rather than individual rights are emphasized.

The communitarians are of the view that for the survival and the preservation of the community and hence, its members personal lives it would be perfectly justifiable for some individual rights and acts to be restricted or even banned especially those rights claims of individuals whose actions are not in harmony with the ways of society and are considered to pose a threat to the maintenance of the community at large. The communitarian theory or perspective developed as a critique of the liberal theory.

Absolute rights have gone out of fashion. Individual rights are being subverted by group rights. The needs and rights of the group are taking precedence over the individual. Everything is being done today for the good of the society. It should be noted that when the rights of the individual are weighed against the common good, the individual loses out every time, and this is dangerous because the society is made up of individuals, and if rights take precedence over individual rights, our society as an association of free autonomous individuals is diminished.

Every human society is characterized by a particular social structure or patterned arrangements of roles and stations which are closely linked with economic organizations, legal and political standards and sanctions of a given community. The patterned arrangement in a given society reflects a specific public perception of person, and in turn, reflects a conception of human rights. According to Masolo, it is a fairly recent doctrine in social and moral philosophy and it is the anti-thesis of individualism which in its various manifestations in intellectual traditions around the world reveal important regional modifications. (Masolo 2004:483)

But a question readily comes to mind here which is how do Europeans view Individualism or who is an individual Man in Europe? Is it the way we see it in Africa? The individual in Europe, is the man who distinguishes himself from the others and claims his autonomy to affirm himself as a being. But he feels, he thinks that he can develop his potential, his originality only in and by society in union with all other men.

5. Individual Autonomy in African Communalism

In African social thought, human beings are regarded not as individuals, but as groups of created beings inevitably and naturally interrelated and interdependent. But this does not necessarily lead to the submit or giving of the initiative or personality of the individual for after all, the well being and success of the group depends on the unique qualities of its individual members.

The individual's consciousness of their responsibility to the group is ever present because they identify themselves with the group. Some writers on African social thought and practice have failed to comprehend the nature of the relation between communitarianism and individualism, as these concepts really operate in Africa.

Another important question is what do the scholars of Africa say about the relationship between the individual

and its community and by extension that of human rights in Africa? A communitarian ethos is embraced by many African scholars as a solution for the alleviations and disintegration of ethnical values and social institutions in modern African life. They claim that the roots of a communitarian ethos go back to indigenous African societies and that the social structure of these was communitarian in character. They believe that in African societies, the principles of community, for example the communal ownership of land (that is the non-ownership of land by individuals on a private basis), egalitarianism, that is the equality of all human beings, and solidarity, that is mutual dependence and co-operation were held.

One may now ask, is a person wholly constituted by social relationships as the radical/unrestricted/extreme communalist maintains? By communitarianism, it means a social arrangement where the community is not conceived as a mere association or a sum total of isolated individuals, but as a unity in which the individual members are linked by inter-dependent relationships, sharing common values and working towards common goals. This view is shared by post-colonial African intellectuals such as Nkrumah, Senghor, and Nyerere, who advocated African socialism as a viable solution for the problem of uniting people into nation-states and tribal units, which are real or constituted by colonial government which traditionally had different and often conflicting socio-economic and political systems.

African philosophers such as Gkyekye, Gbadegesin, Okolo, Okafor, Khapoya and Okoye amongst others, are of this view as well. For example in Ghana, after political independence from Britain, Kwame Nkrumah observed:

> If one seeks the socio-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism……… In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances. (Nkrumah 1964:73)

Equally, the Senegalese political leader, Leopold Senghor states:

> Negro-African society is a collectivist or communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals…….Negro-African society puts more stress on the group than on the individuals, more on solidarity than on the activity and needs of individual, more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy. Ours is a community society. (Senghor 1964:49)

What Senghor emphasizes here is the communal nature of African societies and the precedence the community takes over the individual. Julius Nyerere took after Leopold Senghor when he advocated *Ujamaa* as the ideal of social solidarity, where people agree to subordinate their individual interests to the interest of the common objective of the collective. He maintains that *ujamaa* emphasizes:

> The Africaness of the politics we intend to follow…….. It brings to the mind of the people the idea of mutual involvement in the family and regards all human beings as members of this extending familyhood. (Nyerere 1968:2)

Kwame Gyekye (1992:102), a Ghanaian philosopher and scholar on traditional Akan culture, maintains that the communitarian aspect of African social ethical thoughts are reflected in the communitarian features of the social structures of African societies and that these features are not only outstanding but the defining characteristics of those cultures. This is another way of saying that the sense of community that characterizes social relations among individuals is a direct consequence of the communitarian arrangements.

For Gyekye, "autonomy must be a fundamental feature of personhood, in so-far as the realization of oneself-one's life plans, goals and aspirations greatly hinges on it, that is on its exercises. Autonomy is thus, valuable in itself" (Gyekye 1992:102). What he means here is that, an individual's right, choices and autonomy are absolute, categorically valid and intrinsically valuable in themselves. Hence, the rights and autonomous choices of individual, given its categorical validity must either take precedence or be balanced with the interest of the community. This idea of autonomy involves the metaphysical freedom of individual to choose his goals and life plans in order to achieve self realization. He argues that a person's actions and choices of goals derives from his rational and moral will because he sees autonomy as a fundamental metaphysical feature of a person that is valuable in itself.

This is however in contrast with Raz's view, which seems to capture the African view that is articulated by Menkiti's account of a person, community and the relationship between them. Menkiti is of the view that the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories. In other words, it is the community according to Menkiti, which defines a person as a person, not the static quality of rationality, will

and memory. Menkiti and Raz are of the same line of argument as regards the question of individual autonomy and this is what Gyekye seems to contradict. Gyekye is of the view that autonomy is not only valuable when it is used in pursuit of human good. Raz's view is that autonomy is a moral notion, which is distinct from the metaphysical notion of a free-willing, isolated, and abstract rational individual, who is free to make any choices, irrespective of the moral status or value of those choice. As a moral notion, autonomy is contingent on the pursuit of the good and the normative structure of the community which indicates the valuable, acceptable or allowable good that one ought to pursue.

In Gyekye's view, the individual as a metaphysical or abstract entity with metaphysical autonomy is logically and morally priori to and independent of the community. This means that a person is an autonomous or free-willing individuals, who has choices and rights or interests prior to, outside of, irrespective of the community. The fundamental issue that Gyekye has not sufficiently addressed in his view of communalism is the basis on which an individual may develop a normative sense of identity interests, and rights, and the role such identity or interest may play in one's own rational choices and moral autonomy.

The African communalistic approach to this issue is that an individual's interest and identity or the rights that individuals have, are claims that make sense only in the context of a given community. In some sense, one's idea of rational options is circumscribed by the community and the options he makes available. In this regard the community is analytically or logically prior to the individuals normative identity, moral autonomy, rational options, social rights, goals and aspirations.

Gbadegesin (1991:65), a contemporary Nigerian philosopher who focuses particularly on traditional Yoruba cultures, observes that the:

> Value that traditional Yoruba place on community and communal existence with all its emphasis on fellow-felling Solidarity and selflessness leads directly to the social order of communalism. He concludes that the social structure of African societies are communal –where Human persons are conceived as communal Beings embedded in a context of interdependence sharing the same common interests and values (Gbadegesin 1991:65)

Chukwudum Okolo (1995:397), another Nigerian philosopher, stresses the communal nature of African societies too in claiming that the African, "through cultural upbringing is not individualistic, there is no question of rugged individualism in outlook and life-style so characteristic of the European or American". One may now ask the question is a person wholly constituted by social relationships as radical/unrestricted/extreme communalism maintains? If this is the case, there will be problem maintaining individual autonomy in this kind of society.

Moderate or restricted communitarians argue that this position rejects the values of the individual such as autonomy and the capital capacity of free choice. Radical communitarians such as Joseph Mbiti and Ifeanyi Menkiti in Africa as well as Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Alasdair Macintyre in the West claim that the community defines a person as a person and not isolated property like rationality and freewill. The advocates of radical communalism believes that it is the community that determines the social, political and moral being of a man. They also believe that personhood is acquired, that is an individual's moral achievements earn him or her the status as a person, a full member of the community. And that also, personhood is something at which an individual can fail.

In this perspective, priority is given to the duties, which individual owe to the community because the common good is a priority, individuals rights are given a secondary status.

African communitarianism can be broadly divided into radical and moderate perspectives. Radical insisting on the moral primacy of the community without consideration of the need of individual rights and that of moderate trying to accommodate communal values as well as individual rights, by maintaining that both individuality and communality need to be recognized morally and functionally. There is in general a communitarian concern with the collective rather than the individual.

Both perspectives share the view that human persons are intrinsically communal being, embedded in a context of social relationships and have common values, interests, and goals. The Nigerian philosopher Ifeanyi Menkiti follows an extreme form of communitarianism, asserting the ontological primacy of the community over the reality of the individual's life. He maintains it is:

> The community which defines The person as person, not some Isolated static quality of rationality Will, or memory……. In the African Understanding human community plays A crucial role in the individuals acquisition Of full personhood (Menkiti 1984:173).

Menkiti's view is from the assumption that the welfare, values and goals of the community are supreme and overriding consideration for morality and social justice. It stresses the value of specifically communal and public goods and conceives of values as rooted in communal practices. This is another way of saying that the individual is submerged in community and that community interests and its continued existence take preference over the will and interests of the individual. It can be inferred from Menkiti's view that community values are not contingent but a necessary condition for personhood. This means that the individual must of necessity be subject to the normative power of the community and is thus not seen as the primary reference point for moral actions. Rather ,his or her moral status is linked to the fact that cultural community is the primary context or social space within which he or she is regarded as a moral agent. In other words, the importance of the individual human rights is denied in terms of the priority of group rights.

There are however some flaws in Menkiti's argument. Menkiti's assertion about the ontological primacy of the community over the individual is based on an idealized view and inflation of the importance of the collective. Though he is right to an extent because we cannot do without the communities, that is people are largely interdependent and that the moral self develops within a social context where culture and history play vital roles, but it should be noted too that the self is a mere product of a constitutive collective submerged in the community conceiving of itself primarily as a member of a group and someone who discovers self as constituted by a community's value.

Another point of criticism involves the view that the communitarian self is always the object of the object of an ethical community encumbered with a community's value and a perception of the common good, but never a choosing subject or a moral agent who can make choices in terms of its own values and ends and one who can never change or resist when claiming that a member of a community simply inherits a set of values and discovers himself ; herself primarily as a member of a group, embedded in a context of social relationships, one is also claiming that a community's value are to be taken as an institutionalized given or a sanctioned absolute.

Since it has been established from the foregoing that the idea of autonomy cannot but generate problems within the African society, with the way the radical communitarian has conceived it.

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