

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF BERNARD MATOLINO'S LIMITED COMMUNITARIANISM

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Abstract

Bernard Matolino's critique of both the radical and moderate communitarian conception of personhood in African philosophy has itself been widely criticized by scholars such as Anthony Oritsegbugbemi Oyowe, Kai Horsthemke, and Mesembe Edet, just to mention a few. One of their major criticisms is that Matolino's alternative theory of personhood, known as limited communitarianism, is not different from Gyekye's moderate communitarianism in any significant sense. He has also been criticized for committing the same error for which he rejects the views of Gyekye. We expose some of the weaknesses of these criticisms by showing some remarkable ways in which limited communitarianism differs from moderate communitarianism. We then demonstrate some of the practical relevance of limited communitarianism for moral decision-making, resolution of social problems, and personal and social development.

Keywords: Bernard Matolino, Limited communitarianism, Moderate, Radical, Practical applications

Introduction

In African Philosophy, personhood often aligns with the concept of Ubuntu, which emphasizes relationship and interconnectedness in the community (MOGOBE 1999, METZ 2014, MOLEFE 2014, MANGENA 2016b). African philosophers often value ideas like harmony and compassion (Ubuntu) and often see the individual as part of a larger whole (CHIMAKONAM 2016, MANGENA 2016a). These ideas are based on the understanding that a person is only a person through other people and that individual identity is not separate from the community. In this view, personhood is not necessarily about individual achievement but about a normative sense of belonging and being part of a greater whole.

Similar to the notion above is the idea that John Mbiti captures in his often-quoted dictum, “I am because we are...” (MBITI 1970, 141, see also MOGOBE 2014). This phrase also reveals the place of relationships in the African thought system and emphasizes the fact that we are all connected and that our individual identities are shaped by our relationships with others. Another aspect of Ubuntu that sheds light on the nature of personhood in African philosophy is the idea of shared humanity. This is the belief that we are all connected through our shared humanity, regardless of our differences. It recognizes that every individual is a part of the larger whole of humanity. In this way, Ubuntu challenges the individualistic and competitive values of (especially) liberal versions of Western philosophy.

This underscores Ifeanyi Menkiti’s argument that personhood in African thought extends beyond the individual to encompass the individual’s role and contributions within the framework of collective existence (1984, 171). Personhood is not about the individual alone but the entirety of the community, which comprises physical and spiritual beings in constant relationship with one another (MENKITI 1984). To be a person, an individual must be born into a community, act morally, and have value in the community. It is a complex and multi-layered process, but it is an important aspect of being within the traditional African context.

Kwame Gyekye’s (1992) view differs from Menkiti’s proposal, and he further defines Menkiti’s view of personhood as a radical and unrestricted version of personhood. This is because Gyekye places more emphasis on the individual’s moral

responsibility and sense of duty, which is independent of the community. Gyekye places significant emphasis on moral agency and individual autonomy as core components of personhood, whereas Menkiti prioritizes communal interconnectedness and social roles as central to what defines a person. Although both philosophers acknowledge the fundamental importance of personhood, their conceptual frameworks diverge in terms of the qualities they consider most essential to being a person.

Bernard Matolino (2009, 2014, 2018) has criticized the above two conceptions of personhood on the grounds that both are the same and, if not properly articulated, can foreclose the freedom of an individual in the community. This could also mitigate against an individual's rights, autonomy, and personal pursuit. Thus, he argues that though the individual and the community are related, neither can be fully understood without the other and that individual freedoms and communal responsibilities coexist in a mutually supportive manner. This is a middle ground between the individual-focused approach of Gyekye and the community-focused approach of Menkiti. This view, which is also known as limited communitarianism, has been accused of being the same as Gyekye's moderate communitarianism (ADEATE 2023a, 2023b). Tosin Adeate overlooks the fundamental truth that individuals are the building blocks of any community, making their role and well-being indispensable to the community's existence and functionality. This paper challenges the notion that limited communitarianism is overly restrictive; instead, it asserts that individual autonomy within a community is a defining feature of personhood. It argues that each individual's unique identity transcends the community's standard, offering a richer perspective on the balance between a person and the communal life.

This work is divided into five sections. Section one is the general introduction and background of the debate on various versions of communitarianism. Section two discusses the tenets of radical and moderate versions of communitarianism. The thesis of Bernard Matolino's limited communitarianism forms the third section of this work. In section four, we expose some of the weaknesses of the criticisms of limited communitarianism by showing some remarkable ways Matolino's limited communitarianism differs from Gyekye's moderate

communitarianism. In section five, we show some of the practical applications or benefits of limited communitarianism in the area of moral decision-making, resolution of social problems, and personal and social development. This work adopts the conversational method to demonstrate some of the practical implications of the idea of limited communitarianism.

Radical and Moderate Communitarianism: A Critical Analysis

Ifeanyi Menkiti's article, "Person and Community in African Thought" (1984), attempts to enunciate a certain conception of personhood found in African traditional thought that is in contrast to other conceptions of personhood found in Western thought. First and foremost, the difference between the African and Western views of a person, Menkiti claims, is that in the African conception of a person, it is the enviroing community that defines a person and not some physical or psychological characteristics of the lone individual. He opines that:

[A] crucial distinction exists between the African view of man and the one found in the West. i) In the African view, it is the community which defines the person while in the Western view, it is some static quality of rationality, will, or memory." (MENKITI 1984,172)

In the African view, it involves incorporation into the community tradition through a long process of social and ritual transformation contrary to the Western conception of a person as whoever possesses soul, rationality, or will. This Western view is minimalist in nature, while the African conception is maximalist in nature because:

[W]ithout incorporation into this or that community, individuals are mere danglers to whom the description of a person does not fully apply since personhood is not a given, simple because one is born of a human seed but something to be achieved through learning the social values by which the community lives. (MENKITI 1984, 173)

Therefore, a person in African thought has attained moral excellence by learning the norms and values that guide the community through

some rituals of incorporation. This idea of a person by Menkiti has generated a lot of questions among scholars as to what happens to the will, soul, and rationality of the individual. But is Menkiti correct in his proposals? It may appear so since he was only talking about the normative aspect of a person. Menkiti delves deeper into the concept of community, highlighting the contrasting ways it is understood in African and Western contexts. In the African sense, the 'we' represents a deeply integrated collective characterized by an organic and inseparable connection among its members rather than a mere aggregation of individuals as in Western frameworks. This can be likened to John Mbiti's "I am because we are" (MBITI 1970, 141). Menkiti critiques the Western conception of the community as being fundamentally inorganic, describing it as a mere assemblage of independent, atomized individuals. In this view, the Western idea of community resembles a functional association rather than a deeply interconnected collective.

In the contrasting dynamics between the organic African and the inorganic Western conceptions of community, the African emphasizes duties as paramount, with rights taking a secondary role contingent upon fulfilling these duties. Based on this perspective, Gyekye critiques Menkiti's theory of personhood as radical, excessively duty-centered, and lacking necessary limitations (GYEKYE 1992)

Kwame Gyekye, on his own part, contends that scholars in African thought, from Leopold Senghor to John Mbiti and Jomo Kenyatta, etc., have echoed that native-African societies put more stress on the group than on the individual. He argues that the communitarian conception of a person needs to be critically examined before making such assumptions to avoid subsuming the individual within the group. He quips that "people might believe that focusing on communal values and shared goals undermines individual moral autonomy because it can lead to dependence on the community's activities, values and goals, thereby reducing one's freedom and ability to make independent choices" (GYEKYE 1992, 102).

It is against this backdrop that Gyekye disagrees with Menkiti's claims about what constitutes a person, the process of becoming a person, and ways of sustaining one's personhood, claiming that his views are overstated and not entirely correct and

that Menkiti's views require some necessary amendments and refinement. Gyekye asserts:

While personhood may be deeply cultivated within the framework of a community, it is not merely a byproduct of participation. Instead, what an individual truly acquires through communal engagements are attributes such as status, habits, and character traits that shape and refine their identity. (GYEKYE 1992, 108)

One is a person because of specific features and capacities that they are born with and not because of what they have acquired; hence, the contrast of Menkiti between African and Western views as processual and isolated, respectively, is misguided and implausible.

Defining personhood in terms of moral excellence does not imply that the community solely determines it. However, it is reasonable to acknowledge that the community plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's moral development, particularly through practices such as moral instruction, guidance, and constructive admonition. Nevertheless, the community does not assign moral capacity to the individual. The community, Gyekye affirms, is just a place to enable an individual to move towards his/her full maturation as a person since one only acquires status, habits, and character traits in the community. Every individual is autonomous, allowing them to choose and make decisions within the community (GYEKYE 1992). Gyekye further argues that an individual's right should not supersede the community's common good, especially if the individual's right threatens the common good and personhood is actualized in and through the community. Based on Gyekye's preference for communal rights in relation to individual rights, Matolino argues that Gyekye's moderate communitarianism does not meaningfully diverge from its radical counterpart, as Gyekye acknowledges the community as the foundational element of personhood. Ultimately, he suggests that "both radical and moderate communitarianism are merely two facets of the same framework" (MATOLINO 2014, 111). He proposes "limited communitarianism," which will differ significantly from radical/moderate communitarianism in areas of rights and the primacy of the community over the individual. This will be considered in the next section.

A Critical Insight into Limited Communitarianism

Limited communitarianism argues that the individual's metaphysical status is of such a nature that nothing can precede it, which is against the traditionally accepted argument that the community takes precedence over the individual. Matolino's limited communitarianism enshrines certain strict limitations on the kinds of assumptions related to issues of identity/personhood (MATOLINO 2014, 161). There are six reasons why the metaphysical identity of the individual must be taken seriously. First, the person is born with some attributes that cannot be ascribed by the community but are inherent within him/her. According to Matolino; "[w]e know that there is something that makes a person a person and whatever that attribute could be, it is not something that is acquired or lost in one's respective community, but it is deeply ingrained in a person's identity" (MATOLINO 2014, 162). Secondly, the metaphysical view, Matolino claims "should be taken seriously since it is devoid of contradictions and incoherencies that bedevils both the radical and moderate communitarians in avoidance of fundamental category mistake" (MATOLINO 2014, 163). Third, the metaphysical view of personhood should be taken seriously because it is very simple to understand. It aims to describe the essential traits in a person's metaphysical makeup and demonstrates their interactions in forming a person. This is unlike other communitarian perspectives that muddle the straightforward concept of ontology by entangling it with social constructs, making identity appear opaque and overly complex. Fourth, it (the metaphysical view) is not controversial. It simply articulates the characteristics that are taken to be a composite of persons without seeking to show that these attributes are distinct to Africans, unlike the claims made by most communitarians that their presentation is representative of the African view of man. Fifth, the metaphysical position does not depend on morality, social organization or acceptance of certain factors for it to stand or fail. It only considers the characteristics defined as constituting a person as both necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood. Sixth, it is entirely philosophical as it deals with the specific issues of the metaphysics of identity.

Limited communitarianism claims that in issues of personhood, primacy must be given to the metaphysical view since it

is the metaphysical view that informs what persons are as a matter of strict identity, but it also does not dismiss the significance of the community, nor does it favor accounts that exaggerate the significance of community (MATOLINO 2014). The limited communitarians' sense of identity is construed on two bases: i) the identity articulated by the metaphysical view and ii) the identity that is constructed by the community, which is a social or communal identity. Matolino observes that radical and moderate communitarians misunderstand social roles as being an ontological position of what makes a person a person. Indeed, as Matolino puts it, an individual often:

...seeks to present herself in a way that is approved of by other persons. If she forms any notion of identity from this, that identity can only mean a social identity that she can attain in the view or eyes of other people. It cannot refer to what constitutes her as a person. (MATOLINO 2014, 165)

Matolino rejects social identity as vague but considers those elements that make up a person at birth as a real identity that is not subject to conventions. Limited communitarianism, nevertheless, accepts that community is important for the formation of an individual's social identity, which assists the individual in functioning in different groups within the society, including in political life.

Scholars have contested Matolino's perspective, questioning what is 'limited' about his version of communitarianism if the community plays a significant role in shaping individual character. Chimakonam and Awugosi (2020) argue that limited communitarianism leans too heavily on libertarianism and does not adequately explain its communitarian aspects. We will consider some of these criticisms in the next section.

Some Criticisms of Limited Communitarianism

Anthony Oyowe has argued that Matolino's effort to reduce or correct the over-emphasis given to the community and the exaggerated significance of the place of the community in the discussion of personhood is quite surprising. It is surprising in the

sense that Matolino opines that communal talk about personhood is different from metaphysical talk about personhood because the two are exclusive of each other (OYOWE 2015). Oyowe further contends that despite Matolino's strong opposition to communitarianism, where he seeks to limit the community's role in defining personhood, communitarian elements still persist. In the end, "this thing called communitarianism raises its ugly head again and it is never completely banished from the talk of personhood" (OYOWE 2015, 512). "Why does the communitarian perspective persist despite clear liberal commitments to individual status and the community secondary normative role" (OYOWE 2015, 515)? Oyowe believes that Matolino has yet to clarify in what meaningful way his account of personhood remains communitarian.

Tosin Adeate (2023a, 2023b) has engaged Oyowe and concludes that he misunderstood Matolino. Adeate notes that Matolino's theory of personhood is not actually communitarianism in the true sense of the word. This is because it takes the discourse on personhood outside the realm of communitarianism since it de-emphasizes the place of the community in defining individual rights. Adeate goes on to argue that Matolino's limited communitarianism is driven towards promoting individual rights and not communal norms, as found in radical/moderate views of personhood. On this note, Adeate contends that Gyekye's moderate communitarianism and Matolino's limited communitarianism share the same goal, which is the need to restrict the community's influence on the individual and emphasize the physio-psychological (metaphysical) components of the individual as the basis of defining a person and the individual rights, devoid of social norms.

Adeate goes on to note that Matolino's limited communitarianism builds on its similarities with moderate communitarianism but goes further by rejecting what might be termed Afro-communitarianism. At this point, Matolino is considered to have surpassed the communitarian threshold or boundary. Premised on this, Adeate asserts that Matolino's communitarianism is non-African and non-communitarian. This is because his theory of person is not predicated on the Afro-

communitarian thesis. Instead, it places the individual and the individual rights above the community. This is where it differs from moderate communitarianism, which places the community and the individual side-by-side.

Oyowe and Adeate's thoughts fail to see the communitarian dimension of Matolino's limited communitarianism. Matolino, like Gyekye, upholds the view that an individual could be said to be a person but that they are more of a person through the community. This is due to the fact that a person must also have social approval, social identity, and social status, which a person cannot acquire outside the community. This is where one can see the clear-cut similarity in the thought of Gyekye and Matolino. The point is that both scholars have an indispensable place for the community in their theory of personhood. This stems from the fact that a person is a social being that must exist in a community in order to be termed a person. This does not dismiss their point of divergence. We shall return to this later on in this section. Furthermore, communitarians do not jettison the metaphysical features of an individual in their theory of personhood, but his/her relationship with the community is of great importance. Polycarp Ikuenobe asserts that while the African communalistic idea of personhood is mainly normative, it also relies on a descriptive metaphysical view of personhood. This is because one cannot satisfy the criteria of personhood without possessing the descriptive metaphysical attributes of a person (IKUENOBE 2006). Hence, communitarians recognize those identities as distinct but see a relationship that exists between them.

Mesembe Edet, on his own part, attempts to critique Matolino from an epistemological bent. In his theory of Autonomy-in-community, he recognizes the influence of the community on the individual but not the tyranny of the community in shaping personhood. According to Edet, biological traits determine individual identity and grant autonomy, but social interactions highlight the community's role in shaping that autonomy and personhood. Therefore, a person is defined within the context of the community (EDET 2015).

Edet argues that Matolino's limited communitarianism is not different from other communitarian conceptions of personhood. He continues that being particularly engrossed in its metaphysics, Matolino seems to have lost sight of the epistemological foundations

of personhood, which stems from the Ubuntu principle that a person is a person through others. Thus, limited communitarianism is as limited (lopsided) as the name suggests. He, therefore, presents his “Autonomy-in-community” view of personhood, which suggests that “to be a person is to be known in the community” (EDET2015, 9). A person is a person “in” the community in contrast to a person is a person “through” the community. Edet, however, fails to understand that Matolino was only trying to establish the autonomy and rights of an individual that supersedes anything else in the community.

It is our opinion that the above criticisms and many more like them stem from the fact that the critics could not identify a clear difference between Gyekye’s moderate communitarianism and Matolino’s limited communitarianism. In light of this, these critics accuse Matolino of having made no significant improvement on moderate communitarianism and of committing the same error that he rejects in moderate communitarianism. We respond to these criticisms by demonstrating the fundamental differences between the two versions of communitarianism, thereby unveiling the remarkable sense in which Matolino’s version of personhood improves on Gyekye’s version.

Matolino’s limited communitarianism is more individualistic than Gyekye’s moderate communitarianism. Matolino places a higher value on individual interests and rights, while Gyekye places more emphasis on community interests. They both believe there should be a balance between the two, but Matolino’s version focuses more on the individual. To make this clearer, let us consider a situation in a community where individuals have an option to choose among various alternatives available to them. If the majority chooses to go for option A, and the minority chooses to go for option B, which is what is comfortable for them, Gyekye’s version of communitarianism would likely consider the individuals (majority) as persons, since they support that communal interest should take precedence, over the individual in such situation. However, Matolino’s version would likely support the idea that the minority are persons since he prefers the rights and autonomy of the individual over the communal choices.

This underlines a significant difference between the two versions of communitarianism. It further shows that contrary to critics, Matolino's limited communitarianism is not the same as moderate communitarianism.

Furthermore, we can think of limited communitarianism as being more about individual rights, while moderate communitarianism is more about community responsibilities. In limited communitarianism, there is an emphasis on considering individual interests, even when those interests conflict with communal interests, whereas moderate communitarianism does not.

Following our earlier example, limited communitarianism would likely argue that the minority group should not be forced to sacrifice their interests, even if it would benefit the majority. Moderate communitarianism would likely argue that the majority's interests are more important, and the minority should be willing to make sacrifices for the greater good. The point being made here is that limited communitarianism is more individualistic, while moderate communitarianism is more communitarian. Both are valid ways of thinking about how to balance individual and community interests, though from different perspectives and approaches.

Another difference between the two versions of communitarianism, which further responds to the critics of Matolino's limited communitarianism, is how they approach moral decision-making regarding who is a person and a non-person. Limited communitarianism would rely more on the autonomy of the individual's moral reasoning, which makes her a person and not merely the conventional stereotypes of the communal values that moderate communitarianism offers as the ground for personhood.

Another practical example would help emphasize the point being made here. Let us consider a situation where there is a community-wide decision about whether or not to build a new road. The new road would benefit the majority of the community, but it would be detrimental to a small number of people. In the context of limited communitarianism, the decision to support or oppose the construction of a new road does not diminish an individual's personhood. Moderate communitarianism, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of advancing the community's collective

interests, which are inherently tied to and shape the individual's sense of personhood.

This is not to say that one approach is right and the other is wrong. The point is more about the different values and priorities of each of the approaches, which shows how the different approaches could lead to different conclusions about the same situation. Understanding these differences is important for both moderate and limited communitarianism proponents and critics. This is so because it will reveal the impacts of the two approaches on how we make decisions and interact with others. It shows how philosophical thoughts help us navigate the complexities of real-world situations. The next section will elaborate further on some of the practical relevance of Matolino's limited communitarianism for personal and social development, conflict situations, and decision-making.

Some Practical Applications of Limited Communitarianism

Bernard Matolino's theory of limited communitarianism points us to one of the ways of thinking about the relationship between individuals and communities in Africa. It does not deny that there is a fundamental link between the individual and the community and that such a link is essential to individual identity and personhood. Matolino emphasizes the fact that the individual and the community need not be opposed to each other; instead, they should be construed as contemporaneous (MATOLINO 2018). This shows the need for balance and equality between individual and community interests. In other words, limited communitarianism recognizes that individuals have their own interests, which makes them persons and unique. This is contrary to the views of the classical and moderate communitarians that individual rights do not matter when they count the most since the foundational logic of communitarianism does not prioritize them. It further emphasizes the importance of balancing these with the needs and interests of the community, which also promotes human dignity and well-being. Matolino argues that it is incorrect to assert that the community is the primary factor that solely defines a person. Instead, the essence of personhood does not acknowledge the community as the exclusive shaper of an individual of an individual, but rather as a context within which relational aspects of personhood are realized. Ultimately, it is the metaphysical elements that define a person. A careful understanding of the theory

will reveal the fact that it suggests that individuals should be treated with dignity and respect and that their well-being should be a priority for communities. This includes ensuring that individuals have access to basic needs such as food, shelter, education, and opportunities for personal growth and development. So, in a nutshell, this means that communities should create an environment that is conducive to human flourishing.

Furthermore, some practical implications can be drawn from the theory of limited communitarianism for human development in the community. Even though the community plays a vital role in personal and social development, it is also important to note that the individual has a responsibility to pursue his/her dreams and goals while being an active participant in the community. This means that the individual's right to personal growth through the pursuit of personal ambitions should not be downplayed while he/she makes efforts to contribute to the community and engage in social activities that promote mutual benefits. For example, consider a young person growing up in a community. To foster personal and social development, this individual would need to participate in community life in a way that is both active and individualistic (personal). As such, s/he could participate in community service activities that help others while also developing their unique skills and talents. Or they could form friendships within the community while maintaining their sense of self. By doing this, the individual can find a balance between personal development and social (community) development. This is one of the important practical applications of Matolino's limited communitarianism.

Again, Matolino's limited communitarianism can be seen to be practically useful and applicable in a conflict situation. The contemporaneous relationship between the individual and the community, which points to the need for balance, as suggested by the theory of limited communitarianism, comes very handy in resolving some conflict situations. In light of this, the individuals in the community recognize that their well-being is interconnected and that what happens to one person affects everyone else in the community. This understanding helps resolve conflicts as it encourages people to consider the impact of their actions on others rather than just focus on their self-interest. For instance, if two individuals are in conflict, they can try to resolve the conflict by

thinking about how their actions affect not only themselves but also their shared community. Limited communitarianism, while emphasizing collective harmony and shared values, can also serve as a powerful mechanism for fostering individual rights. By encouraging mutual understanding and trust, this approach creates a space where individual needs and perspectives are acknowledged and respected within the broader framework of community well-being.

First, the emphasis on shared values does not erase individuality but ensures that individual rights are integrated into collective decision-making processes. When parties focus on common ground during conflict resolution, they are more likely to recognize the unique contributions and needs of each individual, thus ensuring that their rights are not overshadowed by group interests. Second, the trust and cooperation cultivated through limited communitarianism enable individuals to express their concerns and advocate for their rights without fear of marginalization. This inclusive environment allows for a balanced approach where the rights of the individual and the interests of the community are mutually reinforcing. Finally, by prioritizing creative and mutually beneficial solutions, limited communitarianism ensures that the resolution of conflicts does not come at the expense of individual liberties. Instead, it seeks to harmonize individual rights with collective interests, promoting an equitable framework where all parties feel valued and protected. In this way, limited communitarianism not only strengthens communal ties but also safeguards and amplifies individual rights within the context of conflict resolution.

For example, in the small village of Obodoukwu, a young girl named Adamma refused to support the community's plan to cut down an ancient tree to build a market. The tree, sacred to her late mother, held deep personal significance. The villagers argued the market would benefit everyone, but Adamma stood her ground, asserting her right to honor her mother's memory. This disagreement could lead to conflict or a stalemate if both sides focus only on their differences. However, by seeking common ground, they could find a solution that respects individual rights while considering the community's needs. For example, they could relocate the market to

another site or build it around the tree, preserving its significance while still meeting the community's goals.

In both policymaking and individual decision-making processes, limited communitarianism emphasizes prioritizing individual rights as a strategic pathway to achieving the community's collective well-being. Unlike extreme individualism, which may disregard communal values, limited communitarianism recognizes that the individual's dignity, autonomy, and agency are essential components for fostering a thriving society. By ensuring that individual rights are protected and upheld, this approach enables individuals to contribute meaningfully to the community's development. This focus on individual rights does not undermine the African communitarian ethos; rather, it reinforces it by acknowledging that the prosperity of the community is intrinsically linked to the empowerment and flourishing of its members. Thus, limited communitarianism promotes a balanced synergy between individual rights and communal good, reflecting a nuanced understanding of African communal values in a contemporary context.

Conclusion

Bernard Matolino's theory of limited communitarianism provides a unique approach to African communitarianism by emphasizing the balance between individual autonomy and communal responsibilities. This perspective has practical applications in fostering conflict resolution and community-building. It encourages the recognition of individual rights within traditional African societies while promoting collective well-being. We made a distinction between it and the moderate communitarianism of Gyekye. By exploring the applications of this framework, we demonstrated its potential benefits for personal-social development, conflict resolution, and decision-making.

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