On African Sources of Knowledge: Studies into the Instrumentality of Ubuntu for IR

Shahi and Ascione (2016) argue that the basic problem confronting disciplinary International Relations (IR), pertains to its lack of inclusivity of outside voices. However, there is a growing move beyond 'Western-Eurocentric' IR, towards exploring novel ways of studying the 'international', and the exploration of subaltern voices and suppressed knowledges (Jones, 2003; Vasilaki, 2012). This has required looking for 'difference' in the 'non-West' (Bilgin, 2008); and, according to the 2014 Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey, the development of concepts from 'other/non-Western' civilizations (Wemheuer-Vogelaar, et al., 2016). This dissertation contributes to this project through the examination of the Southern African philosophy of Ubuntu, and its instrumentality for IR.

The non-Western turn in IR has led to calls for a 'Global IR' as a space for the dialogic discovery of IR theories and concepts beyond the West (Acharya 2011; 2014). Disciplinary IRs' non-Western turn must be reflective of the current geographical and cultural distribution of the world. Animating this dissertation, therefore, is an interest in how Ubuntu as an intellectual tradition from the African region can contribute to Global IR.

The dissertation argues that the Southern African philosophical concept of Ubuntu which translates from the Bantu languages as a 'person' (humanity), can serve as a powerful performative discourse within IR. Acharya and Buzan (2007) identify a number of factors as limiting the possibility of non-Western theoretical and conceptual contributions to IR. Nevertheless, given the emergence of Global IR, the argument this dissertation makes is that there is more scope for the development of non-Western IR than Acharya and Buzan seem to allow. This dissertation demonstrates that Ubuntu can significantly be instrumental to the Global IR project in two ways: firstly, methodologically – as a dialogical tool for fostering constructive interaction between a pluralism of knowledge sources within IR, following Bilgin's (2008) argument that often non-Western ideas are found in Western thought, and vice versa. And secondly, normatively, as an alternative worldview for the development of concepts for the re-organization of global responsibilities – including, as a concept to guide the advancement of an intercultural definition of humanism and human dignity, a conflict resolution mechanism, and as a thought system for the reversal of ecological degradation. Thus, the primary question animating this study is: *how and what can* Ubuntu *contribute to Global IR and how we engage in global politics?* It must be emphasized that Ubuntu is not herein envisioned as a distinct and superior worldview to any other, rather, Ubuntu serves as a normative concept that can bring together common narratives within a plethora of distinct worldviews, recognizing differences, yet promoting harmony.

Accordingly, this dissertation asks the following research questions:

- Does the African region have anything to contribute to theoretical and conceptual development within IR?
- Does the performativity of Ubuntu in the construction of a new South Africa illustrate the prospect of a worldview that is distinct from what presently obtains?
- Following, can the philosophical concept of Ubuntu provide a dialogical technique for assessing IRs growing sources of knowledge? And,
- Does Ubuntu provide an alternative worldview that can contribute to the development of concepts for the re-organization and execution of global responsibilities?

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The key objectives of this study are three-fold: firstly, to present Ubuntu as evidence of extant knowledge sources within the African region that can contribute to theoretical and conceptual developments in IR. Secondly, to interrogate the philosophical concept of Ubuntu, and its role in the construction of a new national consciousness in post-Apartheid South Africa as a new public discourse. And thirdly, to construct Ubuntu as a dialogical tool for the navigation of IR's growing body of knowledges, as well as to normatively and conceptually develop Ubuntu for the reorganization and execution of global responsibilities. However, the examination of Ubuntu here is merely preliminary, with the primary objective being to open up space for the exploration of other African sources of knowledge for the benefit of Global IR. It is also not being argued that Ubuntu is homogenously tenable in all (Southern) African societies, but rather as illustrative of the existence of African intellectual traditions. Another example that would be worth examining is the ancient Egyptian concept of *Maat* (the principle of order), which informs the creation of the world, and how it might be instrumental in reading African forms of knowledge (see Martin, 2008).

The lack of significant engagement with African knowledge sources within IR however, implies that the dissertation applies a purely qualitative methodology with a substantial reliance on sources largely beyond the boundaries of disciplinary IR. A multidisciplinary approach has been applied, which hopefully will serve as encouragement for further interdisciplinary engagement between IR and such disciplines as African Studies, History, Philosophy, and so forth. Nonetheless, this study makes an original contribution by outlining the value of Ubuntu as a dialogical methodology, and normatively, as an alternative worldview for organizing global relations.

Having introduced the focus of the dissertation, the rest of the study shall proceed over the course of three primary chapters. Chapter two engages in a review of literature on the critique of the exclusionary gatekeeping practices of disciplinary IR, highlighting the discipline's post-Western/non-Western turn and the emergence of Global IR that has allowed for contributions from the non-West. In chapter three, the dissertation examines the meaning of African forms of knowledge and how to locate them, isolating the philosophical concept of Ubuntuas one such intellectual tradition from Southern Africa. Chapter four shall seek to demonstrate the performative instrumentality of Ubuntu as a new political discourse animating the formulation of a new national consciousness in post-Apartheid South Africa, and the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in this process. The chapter examines Ubuntu as an original contribution to IR that draws from an ahistorical (in the Western sense of the term) yet extant Southern African philosophical concept, emphasizing how Ubuntu as humanism can help us rethink and reimagine how we do global politics. The dissertation concludes with a summation of the main argument and contributions.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Introduction:

This chapter presents a review of a number of previous studies that have given impetus to this dissertation. The chapter examines such studies that have critiqued the Eurocentrism and gatekeeping practices of IR which have resulted in a turn to Global IR; and examines Africanist critiques and contributions.

Eurocentric IR to Global IR:

A number of studies have primarily served to critique the status and structure of the discipline of IR. Some of these criticisms have described the discipline as arguably an 'American social science' (Hoffman, 1977; Turton & Freire, 2016; Waever, 1998). Numerous studies have already critiqued the Eurocentrism of disciplinary IR (for example, Hobson, 2014; Wallerstein, 1997; Tickner, 2003; Hurrell, 2016). Eurocentrism implies that IR scholars within the West subscribe to a dominant standard of civilizational hierarchy, manifested in an imperialist standard – that is, the West must embark on a civilizing mission; and an anti-imperialist standard – that is, the rest must emulate the West (Hobson, 2014).

Curiously however, non-Western scholars consistently subscribe to similar standards of civilizational hierarchy. Such Eurocentrism albeit often subliminal, is reflective of the preponderance of Western dominance historically. As Falaye (2014) asserts, African universities remain the most enduring of all colonial institutions, with their structures –

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curriculum, research, and reading lists, dictated by Western philosophies and experiences. While critical theories such as Marxism and post-colonialism which are embraced by some non-Western scholars often emphasize the marginalization of the non-West, they too inadvertently perform Eurocentrism by dismissing non-Western agency (Bischoff, et al., 2016; Hobson, 2007).

Furthermore, South Africa – arguably the one African country with a strong disciplinary IR culture, while having a fundamentally African approach to teaching and research, persistently employs Eurocentric theoretical and methodological approaches (Smith, 2013). It is also telling that for a long time IR realism remained and continues to be in some quarters, the primary theory of analysis deployed by South African intellectuals (Smith, 2013). Of course, this emphasis on realism has its roots in a confrontational pre-apartheid South Africa, with realism highlighting the nation's alienation from the international system, while providing justification for domestic suppression (Smith, 2013). While the 2012 TRIP survey revealed that more IR intellectuals in South Africa now had a preference for using constructivism in their research, it remains the case that there is great dependence on Western-centric approaches for the analysis of the international from the African region (see Maliniak, et al., 2012). South Africa cannot represent all of Africa, nonetheless, the implication of this as Smith (2013) argues is that by continually employing standard mainstream theories, African intellectuals have not problematized the predominant Eurocentric worldview. This dissertation contributes to the problematization of the Eurocentric worldview.

The move away from Eurocentric IR has led to calls for a Global IR, as a framework that serves to create the space for academic discourse, empirical studies, and analysis, with the purpose of critiquing the prevailing restrictions that have been set by the pervasiveness of Eurocentric thinking, and engage with cosmologies and epistemologies from the peripheries so as to give disciplinary IR a truly pluralist and universal outlook (Acharya, 2016). It is within this framework that the dissertation seeks to establish a foundation for the development of IR theories and concepts from Ubuntu, as a performative discourse that can foster dialogue between a plethora of knowledge sources within the framework of Global IR, and as a reengineered concept for contemporary times that challenges Western universalist sentiments on the organization of global politics. Following, a number of studies have already begun the project of thinking about the 'international' differently, with a number of those voices from the African region.

Africanist IR Critiques:

Some studies have interrogated the nature of knowledge and ways of knowing within IR. For example, Zondi (2018) investigates what a 'decolonial turn' in IR entails, arguing that achieving epistemic justice alongside social justice requires the abandonment of the monocultural knowledge system that characterizes Eurocentric IR, and emphasizing a shift towards knowledge pluralism, whereby epistemological diversity can play a significant role in the decolonization of knowledge and power. de Matos-Ala (2017) has equally studied how the IR curriculum at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa has been modified to be more epistemically plural. Pluralizing the IR curriculum in universities opens up spaces for countering the Eurocentrism that has led to the marginalization of subaltern voices in IR (see also Vasilaki, 2012).

In other studies, Karen Smith (2009, 2012) has identified two ways through which Africa has/can contribute to our understandings of international politics. The first consists of those contributions that are easily identifiable as doing IR and sometimes fall prey to Eurocentrism, including the indigenization or localization of mainstream canons; criticisms of the limited view of the state as the primary unit-of-analysis in IR; and the understanding of the behaviour of African states in international forums in a collectivist manner (Tieku, 2011; Smith, 2012; Odoom & Andrews, 2017). The second way by which Africa can contribute to our understandings of international politics primarily lie beyond the present boundaries of disciplinary IR (Smith, 2012). These include contributions from other disciplines; and sourcing for knowledge from the everyday life stories of ordinary Africans (Smith, 2012; 2009; Odoom and Andrews; 2017).

Equally necessary argues Smith (2009), is the re-interpretation of old stories using a different language, new primary characters, and new plot twists. It is within the framework of telling stories from African epistemologies and cosmologies that the philosophy of Ubuntu finds its niche to contribute to how we organize and engage in global politics. Nonetheless, as Smith (2012) cautions, this does not "imply that African stories are of themselves morally superior: that would entail turning a blind eye to the way in which various African actors themselves engage in

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marginalization and domination" (p. 33). Like Western sources of knowledge, African intellectual traditions must be subjected to academic rigor and scrutiny.

Non-Western Sources of Knowledge:

Already, numerous studies have explored a plethora of Eastern sources of knowledge which have all contributed significantly to IR, such studies of course cannot be fully examined here. However, certain examples stand out, specifically because they give direct impetus to how this study is being approached. Giorgio Shani's (2007; 2008) examination of the Islamic *Umma* and Sikh *Khalsa Panth* and how the two communities reconceptualize universalism and solidarism, carves a space for bringing back religion into IR(see also Petito & Hatzopoulos, 2003). Similarly, Deepshika Shahi's (2019) efforts to develop a 'non-derivative and non-exceptionalist' Global IR through the Sufi philosophy of the 13th Century poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, theoretically presents an "alternative explanation of recognized practices of IR…" while "…proposing an unexplored generative ground for fresh universalist theoretical inquiries of IR" (p. 269). Thus, Shahi opens up IR to a very distinct intellectual tradition. On the other hand, an examination of the Chinese IR community presents an exploration of a distinct worldview that draws significantly from ancient Chinese thought and dialectics, as well as philosophers such as Confucius (Qin, 2012). These studies are merely illustrative, however, they and many more have given direct impetus to the analysis of the instrumentality of Ubuntu for IR that now follows.

Conclusion:

This chapter has provided a summation of key studies that challenge disciplinary IR's Eurocentrism, identifying the Global IR framework as opening up space for Eastern voices and thought. The chapter also examines Africanist contributions to IR, and illustrates the emergence of non-Western knowledge sources that have given impetus to this dissertation. The chapter that follows now interrogates the existence of distinctive African knowledge sources, identifying and examining Ubuntu as a philosophical concept emerging from the Bantu langues of Southern Africa.

CHAPTER III. UBUNTU AND THE LOCATION OF AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE:

Introduction:

This chapter examines questions regarding African knowledge sources, and how Ubuntu evinces the existence of African sources of knowledge. While there are increasing novel sources of knowledge in IR from the East, such original theorizing and conceptual development within IR from indigenous knowledge and belief systems are lacking from the African region. In this chapter, the philosophical concept of Ubuntu is examined and defined. Before exploring Ubuntu, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by 'African knowledge.' Does it exist? How distinct is it from other knowledge sources? A more pressing question however is: what is meant by 'African'?

On African Knowledge:

The geographical continent and political region known as Africa is as diverse as any, and it is the case that within individual African countries, the experiences of individuals are equally diverse depending on social, cultural, and economic contexts (Smith, 2009). Following, it is expected that varying contexts and factors influence people's worldviews, hence, 'African' as used here signifies a substantial degree of generalization. Nonetheless, using 'African' here must be justified on the basis that there is a significant degree of shared commonalities between various African experiences, for example, disciplinary-wise, it can be said that Africans share a peripheral status to IR's mainstream (Smith, 2009; Odoom & Andrews, 2017). This study concurs with Smith (2009) on leaving the definition of 'African knowledge' open to comprise: inputs from African intellectuals within and outside the African region; inputs by non-Africans specializing on Africa; and understandings gathered from a close reading of African experiences. The most significant point here is that; original theoretical and conceptual developments from Africa must be reflective of African experiences and contexts.

Zegeye and Vambe (2006) in contemplating the matter of who speaks for or represents Africa, asks the question:

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"What is African knowledge?" (p. 336). When writing about Africa is done in a European language, does it count as African knowledge? This study concurs with the conclusions of the International Symposium on Globalization and the Social Sciences in Africa in 1998, that "the production of African knowledge is an exercise that cannot be defined geographically and any attempt to seal off African knowledge production would not only be futile, it would also be a very damaging exercise" (Nieftagodien, 1998, p. 232). Any attempts at exceptionalism and exclusivity counters the objectives of Global IR, the aims must remain to recognize a plurality of knowledge sources.

Furthermore, Smith (2009) interrogates the degree of distinctiveness between African knowledge and European insights for example. As Smith (2009) admits, "in an increasingly globalised world it is difficult to determine what is purely Western or non-Western as history has been strewn with cultural, social, political and intellectual cross-pollination" (p.272). Hobson (2004) has equally demonstrated how historically, the East influenced the emergence of Western civilization through what he calls 'resource portfolios' such as technology or ideas. Hence, Bilgin (2008) is right to suggest that both the East and the West influence each other. However, as Smith (2009) purports, a plethora of factors depending on socio-cultural and politico-economic context substantially influence the way imported or enforced knowledge is interpreted. Through the process of interpretation, depending on geographical realities and individual experiences, new knowledge can potentially emerge. The *Gacaca* courts of Rwanda for dealing with genocide cases, provides an apposite illustration of a hybrid of Western practices of justice dispensation and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms (see Human Rights Watch, 2011). Besides, the aim of Global IR is to explore ways in which different worldviews, contexts, actors, and experiences, can enrich disciplinary IR, in this regard, the distinctiveness of Africa and African insights provides prospects for enriching IR (Smith, 2009).

Sources of African Knowledge:

A major factor influencing ways of knowing is culture, because one's cultural background significantly influences one's realities about the world (Smith, 2009). According to Ali Mazrui, "culture provides lenses of perception, a way of looking at reality, a world vie'' (Mazrui, 1980, p. 47). Similarly, Tickner (2003) identifies people's 'everyday lived experiences' as a source of knowledge, knowledge then is produced depending on one's realities. Accordingly, an intellectual thus must prioritize what type of knowledge to produce depending on his/her realities. Further, there is the question of the proximity between a researcher and the realities being researched. Anyidoho (2006) has discussed the effect of positionality on identity, arguing that the identity(-ies) of a researcher relational to their proximity to the realities they research matters. This further substantiates the need for African knowledge to reflect African insights and experiences.

Using African experiences and insights to generate alternative theories and concepts is a difficult, but not impossible task. Such sources are extant in African literature and society, exposing them to locate agential spaces requires engaging in theoretical entrepreneurship and innovation, including drawing on African epistemologies and cosmologies (Akoto & Akoto, 2005). What we know today as social facts or knowledge – particularly dominant Western knowledge, were once stories. These *stories-turned-knowledge* within IR as Bleiker (2001) notes, constructed a particular interpretation of global politics into a universal standard. However, there is a need to problematize the construction and maintenance of such a standard. To challenge these dominant stories and standards, alternative stories must be developed. How does one accomplish this task?

One way is by casting new characters in old stories. Mainstream IR has stuck to particular characters in story-telling about global politics, particularly the character of the 'state' – as the primary unit of analysis (Smith, 2009; Odoom & Andrews, 2017). IR liberalism and critical theories have already responded to this problem by arguing that numerous actors within and outside the state, influence global politics. What African insights can do is further problematize IRs' hegemonic state-centrism by introducing novel characters and expanding the units-of-analysis to include for example, traditional leaders and their roles in peace and conflict (Malaquias, 2001). Significantly, African insights already lie within African scholarship, but unfortunately beyond IRs' disciplinary boundaries (see Smith, 2002; Tickner, 2003; Bajpai, 2005).

In this dissertation, the emphasis on drawing from African insights, experiences and stories, lies largely beyond Eurocentric IRs' boundaries, and draws from multiple sources including African Studies, Philosophy, History, and

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more. Particularly, this dissertation turns to Southern African cosmology, with cosmology here defined as a collection of a people's way of thinking drawn from their history and culture, addressing issues of reality, value, truth, and so forth (Akoto & Akoto, 2005). However, the origins of African stories and insights should not necessarily qualify them as social facts. It will be easy to recommend that African sources of knowledge be subjected to standard (Western) social science critique. Yet, for a discipline that has systematically marginalized a large body of knowledge sources outside Western boundaries over the course of history, are methods and methodologies from the social sciences sufficient to examine for example, Africa's alternative intellectual traditions?

In this regard, Mudimbe (1988) has argued that Western as well as African readers of African knowledge, have largely depended on conceptualizations and categorizations consistent with a Western epistemological process. This situation is not necessarily always deliberate, nonetheless, such a process of knowing seems to suggest that African traditional knowledge sources are devoid of their own independent rationality (Mudimbe, 1988). Nevertheless, this study does not and cannot dismiss the value of mainstream social science methods and methodologies for any kind of academic endeavor, yet, a refusal to problematize the Eurocentrism of such techniques may risk Eurocentric tendencies. This study encourages the exploration of knowledge sources from the African region via a multidisciplinary approach, especially, by drawing from works in African Studies.

What is Ubuntu?

The philosophical concept of Ubuntu is widely held to be practiced by Southern, Central, and some Eastern and Western African cultures that fall within the Bantu tribal grouping (Eze, 2010). Dolamo (2013) has suggested that the concept may not necessarily be confined to the African region, however, it achieved mainstream prominence as a result of efforts by post-Independent African countries to draw from their past in hopes of constructing better nations. The philosophical concept according to Eze (2010), derives from the 'vernacularizing' of the style of referring to a 'person' in the Bantu family of languages: in Shona as 'Munhu' (plural: 'Abantu'); in Sotho as 'Mutho' (plural: 'Batho'); in the Nguni languages – that is, isiZulu, isiXhosa, and isiNdebele as 'Umuntu' (plural: 'Abantu'); and as Ubuntu in isiSwati (see also Dolamo, 2013). While in the Sesotho languages – that is, Sepedi, Setswana, and (Southern) Sesotho, as 'Botho' *(Dolamo, 2013)*. For the purpose of this dissertation, the popularized term of Ubuntu will consistently be used.

The word Ubuntu shares a common root 'Ntu', with the word 'Bantu' which means 'human' (a person); 'Ubu' as a prefix denotes a condition of 'being and becoming'; and coupled with the stem 'Ntu', suggests a notion of a transformation into personhood as a continuous process oriented towards not just communal unity, but also unity with the cosmos (spiritual realm) and the physical environment (Mhlambi, 2020). This unity of an individual in relation to another individual in harmony with the cosmos and ecology encapsulates the condition of existence according to Nguni tradition, and is integrated within the harmony of 'uMvelinqangi' (the creator who was before all other) and everything else (Mhlambi, 2020). It is from 'uMvelinqangi' as the supreme realitythat the reality of other beings proceed, for in all creations were manifested uMvelinqangi's form, various and individually unique, but perfect as a whole (Mhlambi, 2020). According to Ngubane (1979), some of these forms were the spirits of things that had life in them, and uMvelinqangi put flesh and bone on them to make them human to roam the earth. As a part of the essence of uMvelinqangi, the human being is sacred, and that is why all humans must be considered as equals and treated with respect and dignity, from this belief proceeded the philosophy of life popularly referred to as Ubuntu*(Ngubane, 1979)*.

Defining Ubuntu is as ambiguous as trying to define any indigenous knowledge system, African or otherwise. L.J. Sebidi (1998: p.1) defines Ubuntu as "something abstract, … [a] non-perceptible, almost un-definable, quality or attribute of human acts the presence or absence of which can only be intuited by the human mind"(qouted in Mnyaka, 2003, p. 142). The concept is quite broad and non-specific that in a survey, Gade (2012) discovered various and distinct interpretations of the concept by South Africans of African Descent (SAAD). In this survey, Gade (2012) was able to differentiate between two groups of interpretations: one – those who describe Ubuntu as the moral essence of an individual; and two – those who identified Ubuntu as a concept or an ideology, for example, a worldview, an ethical system, African humanism, and so forth, which connects people. Significantly, both groups of definition have as a central theme the notion of personhood and community (Gade, 2012).

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Further complicating this process of defining Ubuntu is the frequent misuse of the concept in popular media and daily usage (commodification), often leading to misinterpretation and a misconception of its meaning (Blankenberg, 1999). It makes sense hence as Blankenberg (1999) suggests, that because Ubuntulike most African ideas and philosophy are transferred from generation to generation orally without any authoritative written source to consult, it is left open to (mis)interpretation. The process of recollection hence, must be done in a manner that emphasizes the primary 'essence' of an idea. In trying to define Ubuntu, this dissertation emphasizes its 'essence', identifying the making of a human (personhood) through their community, and their relationship with one another as fundamental.

The Essence of Ubuntu:

Ubuntu primarily underscores the importance of community or a group, with the concept succinctly expressed in the Nguni/Ndebele aphorism: 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu', which roughly translates into the English language as: "persons are persons through other persons" (Mboti, 2015, p. 125). At the heart of Ubuntu lies the basic tenet that an individual is not more significant than the group; this worldview sharply differs from the Western worldview, where individual comfort is absolute. Pobee (1979: p.49) captures this succinctly when he makes the statement: "Cognatus ergo sum", translated as "I am related by blood therefore I exist". Buttressing this position, Desmond Tutu expresses that 'a person is made a person by other persons' (Tutu, 1999). Similarly, Mbiti (1989: p.106) expresses this African dictum that "I am because we are; since we are therefore I am". Any student of Western thought can easily note how Mbiti's statement sharply contradicts the Cartesian 'Cogito ergo sum', 'I think therefore I am' (see Newman, 2019). There are numerous qualities attributable to Ubuntu, Prozesky (2003) identifies ten of them: humaneness, hospitality, compassion, vulnerability, deep kindness, generosity, friendliness, empathy, gentleness, and toughness. This dissertation will emphasize those qualities that can be instrumental for IR studies and practice.

Qualities of Ubuntu:

It is requisite to understand the differences between (African) 'humaneness' and 'humanism'. Humaneness according to Dolamo (2013), has to do with the simple essence of being human, coupled with the qualities that define it; while humanism can be conceived of as an ideology – as a system of thought that places collective human needs and interests over individual ones. African humaneness then emphasizes qualities of selfless commitment to the collective over individual triumphs; while African humanism can be conceived of as a thought system that places a high significance on collective wellbeing and prosperity.

According to Ubuntu, a person achieves humanity through continual good relations with other persons in their community (Eze, 2011; Mhlambi, 2020). Becoming human then requires a significant recognition of the humanity of the 'other', which can only happen and flourish when respectful human relations are cultivated (Eze, 2010). Mbiti (1989) stresses the importance of human relations when he argues that individuals in traditional life are incapable of existing on their own, for they owe their existence to other humans, which can be traced from their contemporaries back to their ancestors.

However, Eze (2010) raises an interesting issue when he suggests that the linguistic similarities among the Bantu tribal grouping in their respective terms for Ubuntu, quite plainly incorporates the 'essence or quality of being human or humaneness' (that is, Ntu). In this regard, the essence or quality of being 'human' must be perceived as indigenous to these Bantu societies, therefore, non-indigenes are not accorded similar degrees of essence or quality of humaneness (Eze, 2010). This might suggest that non-blacks are not fully human, which is an oversimplification of the matter. In the Nguni languages for instance, a white person is referred to as 'Umlungu' (plural: 'Abelungu') – which refers to 'White people' "with a benign emphasis on difference" (Eze, 2010: p.96). This difference is further emphasized in the Tsonga aphorism: 'Mulungu a nga na 'xa ka,' xaka ra yena i imali', that is, "A white person has no relatives, money is his relative" (Coertze, 2001, p. 113).

Eze (2010) has suggested that the 'othering' of the white person as 'different' (i.e., not fully human), is entrenched within the historical encounters between indigenous peoples and Europeans, particularly in the case of Black South Africans. This claim should not be simply dismissed as an inversion of Eurocentrism's Western self, as against a non-Western other. Indeed, the 'othering' of the Westerner by African indigenes was a result of early encounters between

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them, one that was marked by plundering and material exploitation. Hence, Black Africans became incapable of identifying intersubjective values of Ubuntu within 'White people'. Nevertheless, being human among the Bantu languages is not homogenous as Eze (2010) argues, for even within the Bantu tribal grouping what constitutes a human differ from community to community. This does not insinuate that there is an exclusive bias towards an 'other', it merely implies that within each community, there are standard criteria or values that an individual must consistently exhibit to be considered as a full human member of community (see Eze, 2010; Mhlambi, 2020).

The measure of moral standards according to Ubuntu depends on the nature of the relationship one cultivates with others, as well as the environment and other interdependent forms (Mhlambi, 2020). One demonstrates 'unoBuntu' (having Ubuntu) when they cultivate meaningful relations in service to their communities; in reverse, one lacks Ubuntu ('akala' Ubuntu) when they isolate themselves from their communities (Mhlambi, 2020). It is the case ergo, that even indigenes are capable of losing their humaneness or personhood when they stop cultivating communally beneficial relations, a sentiment well captured in the Nguni saying: 'Wo, akumuntu lowo' (Oh, that is no person) because one has negated their humane responsibilities (See Mhlambi, 2020). Similarly, it can be deduced that White people can achieve 'unoBuntu' or 'Okuba ngumu-Ntu' (personhood) as long as they cultivate continuous good relations with others in their community. The significance of grounding ones humanity in that of others is simplistically reflected in the common Zulu greeting: 'Sawubona', which translates as "we see you", or "I, on behalf of the community recognize and affirm your humanity" (Mhlambi, 2020, p. 14). Such a salutation affirms the quality of one's personhood, which subsequently recognizes their humane existence as defined by their community, allowing them to truly say, I am a person because I have been recognized by another person. This understanding subsequently ushers in the idea of hospitality, gentleness, and generosity as significant qualities of Ubuntu, because they establish the paths for the acceptance of a 'different' 'other' into the community.

Hospitality entails selflessly welcoming a stranger into one's life. In Bantu communities the significance of hospitality is captured in the following expression: 'Alela Moeng, gobane motlalekgomo ga a tsebje', that is, "receive a guest with hospitality because the one that will bring you a beast [cattle] as a present is not known" (Eze, 2010: p.100). However, this openness does not transform the status of the guest, as s/he is still only a stranger, thus: 'Moeng, o naka di maripa', that is, "A guest has short horns" (Eze, 2010: p.100). A guest remains an 'other' until they are assimilated into the ways of the society, in other words, when they achieve UnoBuntu or 'Okuba ngumu-Ntu'. There is an express connection between getting assimilated into the society and becoming a full human member of society, as long as a stranger adopts and lives by the defined good ways of society, s/he can become a full human member of society irrespective of race or original culture.

According to Mangena (2020), there is significant distinction between hospitality in the Ubuntu sense – which accommodates generosity, and Western hospitality. Western hospitality is very much commercialized with comfort often provided for a cost. It is not being suggested that 'White people' are generally inhospitable, the point being made is that in Western societies hospitality like many sources of human welfare have been commodified. Contrarily, in the Shona/Ndebele communities for example, a stranger was often freely provided with basic necessities while in transit (Mangena, 2020). Similarly, among the Northern Zimbabwean 'Korekore-Nyombwe' people, before a stranger can seek direction, s/he must first be given water to quench their taste (Mangena, 2020).

Closely connected to hospitality is the quality of gentleness and empathy, which includes softheartedness and the sacrifice of one's time to cater to the concerns of others; hence, reflecting the altruistic character of Ubuntu. Yamamoto (1997) captures this succinctly when he suggests that when a community is unhealthy, individual members of the community are also liable to be unhealthy. This claim is given credence in the emphasis on good public health in the contemporary world. These qualities emphasize a sense of selflessness, because when one diminishes the humanity of another, they inadvertently dehumanize themselves.

Furthermore, Ubuntu emphasizes tolerance, compassion, and forgiveness. An individual is capable of losing their humanity, in which case an individual can be ostracized and cast out of the community (Mnyaka, 2003). However, a repentant individual must be welcomed back into the community, because an inability to forgive and reconcile signifies a lack of Ubuntu. This quality is reflected in the expression: 'umntu akancanywa' (one should not give up on another person) (Mnyaka, 2003). The purpose of these qualities – of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation,

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which will later underpin the South African TRC, is the promotion of healing over retribution, the mending of inequities, and the restoration of damaged relationships (Tutu, 1999). A refusal to use one's humanity for the betterment of the society is always frowned upon, until such a time when that individual recognizes their responsibility to the society (Netshitomboni, 1998).

Conclusion:

This chapter has examined the question of the existence of African knowledge, significantly, it has examined the concept of Ubuntu as evidence of African forms of knowledge. The concept has been defined, relying chiefly on proverbs that have been passed on orally from one generation to the next, thus demonstrating that African knowledge sources can only be truly gathered from African experiences and stories. Crucially, the chapter has outlined some of the defining qualities of Ubuntu, which shall provide the basis for evaluating the significance of the concept for IR. In the next chapter, the importance of Ubuntu as a public discourse in South Africa is discussed, and its usefulness for IR are outlined.

CHAPTER IV: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UBUNTU:

Introduction:

This chapter identifies two ways in which Ubuntu can be useful for IR. One – as a dialogical tool for disciplinary IR; and two – as an alternative worldview for the advancement of concepts for the conduct of global affairs on issues of humanitarianism, conflict resolution, and ecological challenges. South Africa's post-Apartheid nation-building exercise that had its foundations in the construction of a new national consciousness through Ubuntu, provides a blueprint for challenging certain Western standards in IR and proposing alternative ways of promoting global stability.

Ubuntu in the Making of a New South Africa:

Cobley (2001) asserts that the new social history of South Africa was initially typified by the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which stressed first, the emancipating power of joint recollection and confession; and second, the need to locate and unify existing monuments of the old apartheid government and the new South African government, while erecting new ones. Ubuntu as a new public discourse legitimated the TRC, giving it authority to give new meaning to past history, while reinterpreting the contents entrenched within the old narrative (Eze, 2010). It was the power of Ubuntu as a new narrative and public discourse that led to the dampening of apartheid tensions, while simultaneously unifying South Africa. Ubuntu was hence; a reconstructed memory which told a story within another story; the first story was that of apartheid – translated from the Afrikaans as 'apartness', formally becoming state policy with the advent to power of the Nationalist Party government in 1948 (Coleman, 1998). The new policy set apart the White minority from the Black majority population, isolating the latter through repressive structures in a manner that seemed to keep the White population aloof to the predicament of the Black population (Jolly, 2001). This political system was based on exclusionary and exploitative policies that negated the 'other' person's identity and humanity, setting them apart (as different) (Eze, 2010). The second (new) story was Ubuntu, having the capacity to produce a memory that reflected, and was sympathetic to the tumultous and diverging narratives within the history of South Africa (see Eze, 2010). Underpinning this 'confluence of narratives' was a moral legitimacy granted to the new government, permitting it to surmount past injustices through the institution of a 'new political humanism', one that defied common sense Western notions of retributive justice (see Eze, 2010).

The success of the TRC was grounded in a historical context unique to South Africa, a nation that had evolved through two distinct narratives – of oppressed and oppressor. While the Black-dominated African National Congress (ANC) party was fated to be victorious in South Africa's first interracial elections, the Afrikaner National Party clearly still controlled the machinery of government including all security apparatuses (Eze, 2010). Thus, when Michael Onyebuchi Eze refers to an acceptance of the condition for amnesty for former National Party officials by the ANC as 'progressive', we find the evidence of his claim in the very fact that power transitioned peacefully to a democratically elected government. Given the sociopolitical climate in the immediate post-apartheid South Africa however, the transfer of political power in itself could not serve as remedy for decades of marginalization and oppression suffered

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by the majority in the hands of the minority. It will take something special, almost miraculous, to sustain the peace that had emerged from the negotiations for amnesty.

Eze (2010) suggests that the institutionalization of the TRC with the legitimacy to grant amnesty, as well as serving as a podium for the development of a new common history towards the future, significantly met this end. Ubuntu became the theoretical foundation for the TRC, infusing into it the values that guided the processes of negotiating reconciliation, while justifying such reconciliatory efforts (Eze, 2010). Ubuntu "facilitated the process of reconstituting the subjectivity of "victims" and "perpetrators" within the ambience of a new consciousness" (Eze, 2010: p.161); simultaneously 'reconstituting' and 'reconciling' distinct subjectivities, provoking a conversion from *victimhood-to-survivorhood*. The TRC thus provided forum for both victims and perpetrators to have a human encounter. Ubuntu provided an opportunity for the oppressed to speak and be heard as agents in South Africa's history, bringing the victims and perpetrators to embrace their common humanity. As Eze (2010) maintains, the 'other' became a recognizable human being, no longer a distant 'it' set apart by the segregationist policies of apartheid (see also Jolly, 2001). Libin (2003) in his summation of the thoughts of journalists who covered the TRC proceedings, suggested that the most significant achievement of the TRC was its ability to put a face to both victims and perpetrators; and give a voice to the opressed.

The TRC and its Ubuntu-based processes have faced accusations of a denial of justice, with the process often critiqued in contrast to the Nuremberg, Hague, Arusha, and Tokyo trials (see Gibson, 2002; Derrida, 2001; Ramose, 2003b). However, Eze (2010) is right to suggest that South Africa was a different context, the country lacked the immediate capacity to attempt to bring thousands of perpetrators to justice, but significantly, the Western notion of punitive-based retributive justice did not serve the nation's practical purposes, and a restorative concept of justice made more sense (see also Jolly, 2001). This sentiment was aptly captured in the report of the TRC (vol.1, 1998: p.5):

There is no doubt that members of the security establishment would have scuppered the negotiated settlement had they thought they were going to run the gauntlet of trials for their involvement in past violations. It is certain that we would not, in such circumstances, have experienced a reasonably peaceful transition from repression to democracy. We need to bear this in mind when we criticise the amnesty provisions in the Commission's founding Act.

Ubuntu*'s* capacity to reveal the cruel truth of South Africa's past, exposing the injustice of apartheid as enjoyed by perpetrators who for a long time claimed innocence through a crime of complicity, is in itself sufficient justification for the TRC and its processes (Krog, 1998; Jolly, 2001). However, the magnanimity of 'victims-turned-survivors' to forgive and reconcile rather than seek vengeance, has its foundations in Ubuntu's notion of restorative justice as distinct from standard (Western) notions of retributive justice as codified in humanitarian international criminal law for example (Ramose, 2003b). The Western concept of retributive justice finds justification in a belief in established judicial processes, which aids people in overcoming their feelings of anger from perceived injustices by meting out the appropriate measure of punishment, the victim is satisfied, and the wrongs of the past are forgotten (Nussbaum, 2016). Contrarily, the notion of restorative justice is well defined within the Nguni maxim: 'Umu-Ntu akalahlwa', that is, "no one is beyond redemption" (Mhlambi, 2020: p.16); a desire to turn one's life around must be welcomed by the society. This is the basis of tolerance and reconciliation in Ubuntu and the legitimating logic of South Africa's TRC, by discarding the humanity of the oppressed, the oppressor equally lost their humanity, which could only be restored through reconciliation.

The Instrumentality of Ubuntu for IR:

While disciplinary IR is increasingly becoming receptive to non-Western sources of knowledge, with the emergence of Global IR as evidence of this progression, there seems to be a vacuum concerning how to reconcile novel sources of knowledge outside the West with extant, albeit Western, yet indisputably useful knowledges. Equally, concerns remain over the nature of interactions between knowledge sources from distinct regions of the non-Western world. The following sections of the dissertation aims to propose the usefulness of Ubuntu as a dialogical tool for guiding interactions between distinct sources of knowledge within Global IR; as well as propose Ubuntu as an alternative worldview for ordering global politics. As Michael Onyebuchi Eze (2010) has asserted, it is practically impossible to

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apply the values of Ubuntu traditionally even to Bantu communities in contemporary times. While Ubuntu possesses rich qualities, it is also the case that the societies associated with these qualities are known historically for their dehumanizing practices that marginalized and oppressed certain members of the society such as women. The use of the concept in post-apartheid South Africa required reengineering to fit the context in which it was being applied, its usefulness in IR must equally follow such processes of reengineering and contextualization as a modern ideology.

Ubuntu "can be enriched, refined to accommodate vagaries of present circumstances; it can be useful in law, in Constitution, and public ethics. As an ideology, it ceases to be dogmatic; it becomes flexible (although it can also be manipulated)" (Eze, 2010, p. 160). Ubuntu cannot be substituted for a political system such as democracy, hence, its instrumentally as a discourse rests on an ability to reexamine and incorporate the concept into fluctuating sociopolitical and economic circumstances (Eze, 2010). We must recall and locate Ubuntu as internal to particular societies – the Bantu tribes; thus, an imposition of Ubuntu externally to other societies amounts to hegemonism. The point is that the goods and virtues of Ubuntu possibly carry different meanings in different societies, what is considered good in any society must be internal to that society as publicly agreed upon (see Eze, 2010). Ubuntu must constantly be evaluative, paying attention to historical as well as socioeconomic and political context, it must be open, adaptable to changing circumstances, nondogmatic, and dialogic. If Ubuntu can be any use for IR, its advantages will rest on its performative capacity.

Ubuntu as a Dialogical Tool:

A major challenge to the Global IR project maybe a refusal by the mainstream to engage with emerging alternative sources of knowledge. While Global IR is providing a framework within which novel knowledge sources can contribute to the discipline, a lack of a methodology for accommodating unique sources of knowledge may result in prophylactic tactics that renders dialogue impossible. A dialogical methodology that opens up space for an encounter of distinct knowledge sources in their uniqueness and 'otherness', yet adaptable to context is necessary. Borrowing from Freire (2005), dialogue herein is conceived as a process of interaction between two or more sources of distinct knowledges, with the ultimate aim of constructing new knowledge that benefits all.

In his seminal work 'Orientalism', Edward W. Said had argued that European scholars who studied the Orient (East) constructed a division epistemologically and ontologically between East and West, which consequently (re)presented the East as backward and evil, and significantly, irreconcilable with the West (Said, 2003). Said's proposal was not to deny differences between East and West, but rather to problematize the "notion that difference implies hostility, a frozen reified set of opposed essences, and a whole adversarial knowledge built out of those things" (Said, 2003, p. 352). A significant challenge to the progress of Global IR, is potential hostility towards non-Western sources of knowledge, or indifference. But there simply cannot be disciplinary progression without dialogue. Ubuntu as a dialogical tool can bridge this "unbridgeable chasm separating East from West" (Said, 2003, p. 352).

Dialogue as a creative process enables us to "transcend our subjective particularism by looking beyond our purviews and mind-sets"; dialogue serves the purpose of bringing subjectivities to an understanding (Eze, 2010, p. 154). Transcending our subjective particularisms can be accomplished via the hermeneutic "process of experience, judgement, interpretation and understanding" (Eze, 2010, p. 154). Ubuntu's role in dialogue must be performative, in that it embraces diverse histories, accounts, experiences, and memories, while concomitantly reinventing, rather than concealing antagonisms (see Eze, 2010). The point where Eastern and Western knowledge meet is a point of a potential confluence of distinct memories, narratives, and realities, this distinction need not be confrontational, as long as one narrative does not seek to impose itself and dominate. Jolly (2001) has argued that where collective memories encounter there is a need to negotiate contradictions; similarly, transcending the chasm of East and West in disciplinary IR requires negotiation, accomodation, and compromise.

Ubuntu as a method of dialogue as Eze (2010) argues, is a creative process, fluid, adaptable, and transformative for both subjects. It is transformative in the sense that the experience of an encounter between two distinct cultures through dialogue is bound to improve the status of the subjects, because as Bernstein (1991) suggests, by comprehending cultures distinct to ours "we can come to a more sensitive and critical understanding of our own culture and those prejudices that may lie hidden from us" (p. 36). Ubuntu's hospitality trait allows for the

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accomodation of the 'other', without requiring that the 'other' discard their difference.

The marginalization of knowledge sources outside Western boundaries within disciplinary IR has been a problem of a misconception of the 'other', a problem of setting apart what one does not, or refuses to recognize. Ubuntu as was evident in the TRC in post-apartheid South Africa, was able to transcend a subjectivity constructed on exclusionary practices while reconstructing a new discursive subjectivity based on distance and relation. While being inclusive, Ubuntu remains open and sensitive to difference, cautiously non-hegemonic, paying attention to historical context as it reconciles diverging memories not by imposition as a unified false consciousness, but via a process of bringing these memories into dialogue (Eze, 2010). Ubuntuas a dialogic tool hence, becomes a process of a construction of novel intersubjective knowledge, a better understanding of the other. Knowledge of the other is significant for IRs purposes as a discipline that deals with the world, but not in the confrontational manner that has underpinned the discipline for much of its history, but in a constitutively dialogical manner. It is the case hence, that criticisms levelled against IRs inability to sufficiently analyze the non-Western world are justified, because Western knowledge has refused to dialogically encounter knowledge from the 'other'. The validity of knowledge must therefore, depend on its dialogue with, and recognition of the validity of other sources of knowledge.

Ubuntu and Global Responsibilities:

Normatively, Ubuntu can be instrumental in developing an intercultural definition of humanity and human dignity to cater for the world's present humanitarian crisis in its numerous guises; as an alternative conflict resolution mechanism; and as a belief system for responding to an impending ecological catastrophe. Magobe Bernard Ramose (1999) has discussed how for centuries the ideals and values – underpinned by individual rationality, that emerged during the enlightenment epoch, were reserved solely for Europeans. While the status of humanity was later extended to other regions of the world, publicly at least, first codified globally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948), social science scholarship seems to have persisted with the definition of humanity that led to the dehumanization of numerous races. This definition is grounded within Western individualist rationality as promoted from the enlightenment era (see Karavanta, 2011). Kozlarek (2011) is right to argue that there is a need for a new kind of humanism, one that reflects the realities of the contemporary world. Indeed, a new kind of humanism cannot emerge through an imposition of a universalist humanist tradition, and because universal ideas and values are extant in all cultures, there is a need for dialogue to identify those common values that makes a human in today's world (Kozlarek, 2011; Dieterlen, 2011). The reality of today's world is one of differences – in culture, as well as in experiences and narratives; yet as Kozlarek (2011) posits, people throughout the world share a common predicament, that of dehumanizing experiences. From the experiences of migrants fleeing conflict and inhumane conditions of living, to ordinary citizens living in constant fear as a result of warfighting and crime, today's reality points to a confluence of dehumanizing experiences, one in need of constructive dialogue.

The continuing crisis of humanity to an extent, as intricate as it obviously is, can be traced to Western individualist conceptions of what makes a human. Eze (2011) for example, has described the exclusionary policies of apartheid South Africa as underpinning the needs of capitalism; the need to exploit and accumulate wealth justified the need to oppress the 'other'. Capitalism has its roots in such individualist notions that promote competition as necessary for living a dignified life. This dissertation is not a critique of capitalism; however, there is a need to problematize the kind of thinking that has created the current reality of the world, especially if an alternative is to be proposed.

It is almost a truism to suggest that global politics, like the world itself is everchanging and non-static, and in such a world, new relationships are consistently being constructed and old ones reconstructed. This process of construction and reconstruction requires a new kind of mediation in the contemporary world, one underlined by such Ubuntu values as reconciliation, hospitality, forgiveness, and the recognition of difference as the starting point of dialogue; with a strong symbolism of inclusiveness, and an intersubjective process that seeks to restore discarded humanisms. Ubuntu can be instrumental in this case by guiding the processes of the construction of new relationships and the reconstruction of strained extant ones.

The new social history of South Africa in the post-apartheid era was a merging of two diverging memories and narratives, of oppressor and oppressed, of perpetrator and victim. From the civil war in Yemen that has created the

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world's worst man-made humanitarian disaster among other conflicts in the Middle East (International Crisis Group, 2020); to the unending civil wars in the African region (De Waal, 2019); to the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan along other tensions in the Asian region (Tellis, et al., 1998); and the race crisis that grips the United States of America (U.S.) and Europe (King, 2020); all potentially made worse by the present Covid19 pandemic (Charlton, 2020); these problems and numerous others, between state and non-state actors globally, are all emblematic of an unending crisis of humanity. The inability to resolve these challenges is reflective of the inadequacies of extant conflict resolution mechanisms for example. This is not to oversimplify the nature of these challenges; it is merely to suggest that we need to approach them today from new perspectives.

Ubuntu's performativity implies that where conflictual parties dialogue, past inadequacies can be reformed by reconstructing their future relationship. Conflict resolution mechanisms globally often seek retribution for the victims, a process considered as the norm; however, such retributive concepts of justice often exacerbate conflicts because perpetrators are unwilling to subject themselves to punitive measures. While suggesting a restorative notion of justice for conflict resolution may be considered unfair or a denial of justice, in situations such as the Yemen crisis for example, where the humanitarian costs of war have become unmanageable, surely alternatives must be pursued for the ultimate sake of peace. Restoration does not imply letting perpetrators of heinous crimes work free; the Nguni aphorism: 'Umu-Ntu ngu mu-Ntu' (a person is a person) implies that individuals have the liberty of conscience to do right or wrong, and as long as they demonstrate a genuine willingness to do right, which must be reflected in an individual's effort towards incessant service to one's community, then restoration can commence **(Mhlambi, 2020)**. A demonstration of such a willingness implies that an individual must be permitted the chance of redemption: 'Umu-Ntu akalahlwa' (no individual is irredeemable) (Mhlambi, 2020).

In a humanitarian crisis, both victim and perpetrator lose their humanities, the victim loses their dignity of life while the perpetrator loses the essence of their humanity because they no longer recognize the humanity of another, they lose and lack Ubuntu. In this case, a gradual and deliberate effort at restoration can be instrumental in forging new relationships and giving a new meaning to their horrible histories. However, transforming how we resolve conflict in today's reality is simply not enough to ensure harmony and stability. In the Anthropocene age, there is a need to make our environment a conscious part of our reality because it directly affects both domestic and global security (see Dalby, 2013).

In Nguni cosmology, there is an environmental attribute to becoming a human being, for an individual's existence is not dependent on his/her relations to another individual alone, but also to a unique form that makes up a whole (Mhlambi, 2020). Mhlambi (2020) outlines the forms as the individual, the community, the cosmos, and the environment. These forms together make a whole and harmony can only be achieved when one recognizes his/her relationship with the individual forms, as the ultimate reality. Recognizing others, including all the other forms is in conformity with uMvelinqangi, who is the ultimate source of all forces complexly and inseparably intertwined (Mhlambi, 2020). Today's reality must recognize the intricate connection between individuals and their communities, as well as their relations with the natural world, for a failure to take care of the environment will ultimately result in disharmony and global instability. The impending ecological crisis is reflective of the wasteful culture of the current order of affairs, because humans have objectified the environment as separate (different) from ourselves, allowing us to unscrupulously exploit the earth. The interconnectedness between humans, the environment, and the spiritual is what Kunene (1981) has referred to as 'umthetho wobuntu' ('the Fundamental Law of Humanity'). Yamamoto (1997) alludes to similar sentiments when he says that Ubuntu is the "idea that no one can be healthy when the community is sick" (p. 52). The realities of the modern world have taken the natural environment for granted, exploiting and destroying its resources, individuals must reconcile with the environment by recognizing it as a significant part of our existence and humanity, and begin to make practical effort towards healing.

Conclusion:

In summation, this chapter has demonstrated the performative ability of Ubuntu as a public discourse typified by South Africa's TRC. Significantly, this chapter has outlined the instrumentality of Ubuntu for Global IR, as a dialogic methodology for engaging with a plethora of knowledge sources, as well as a distinct worldview for the reimagination and reorganization of global affairs.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

The dissertation has argued that there are African forms of knowledge which are quite distinct from other forms of knowing, which can be located in African experiences, insights, stories, and more, while emphasizing the need for such African knowledge sources to be reflective of African experiences. The third chapter evinces the location of such African forms of knowledge through an examination of the Southern African cosmology of Ubuntu, introducing the essence of the philosophical concept and its primary qualities of African humanness and humanism. The subsequent chapter demonstrates the performativity of Ubuntu as a public discourse in the foundation of the post-apartheid South Africa, arguing that the values of humaneness – especially those of reconciliation and forgiveness, entrenched within the concept were the theoretical basis for the functioning of the nation's TRC. The dissertation argues that Ubuntu's restorative model of justice is significantly distinct from Western notions of retributive justice, hence Ubuntu can serve as a distinctive worldview capable of enriching Global IR.

The rest of the dissertation is dedicated to demonstrating the performative power of Ubuntu as a public discourse, especially its instrumentality to Global IR. In this regard, the dissertation makes the case that Ubuntu can serve as a dialogical methodology for assessing IRs' growing body of knowledge sources. The power of Ubuntu to recognize differences while reconciling antagonisms, is reflective of the concept's capability to integrate a plethora of distinct forms of knowing for the promotion of a truly Global IR. This ability to recognize and accept difference, is aptly reflected in the popular Nguni aphorism: *a person is a person through other persons*. This is not to say that people are the same, the case being made is that the primary quality of an individual that must first be recognized is their indestructible and unique humanity, which is a process of a construction of community-wide relations.

Ubuntu's instrumentality for Global IR is further emphasized through its distinct worldview, by proposing alternative ways of reorganizing and reimagining global responsibilities. Relying on Ubuntu qualities of hospitality, generosity, and empathy, the dissertation proposes the need to develop a new intercultural humanism as a response to the continual crisis of humanity. The dissertation similarly argues that conflict usually dehumanizes both victim and perpetrator, hence, conflict resolution mechanisms can rely on Ubuntu's restorative quality especially in cases where individuals have significantly lost their humanism and dignity. According to Ubuntu, forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be dismissed as a denial of justice, but as a redeeming process for the greater good of humanity. Further, the environmental attribute of Ubuntu challenges individuals to embrace the natural environment as a fundamental part of our humanity, for a genuine healing process is required for restoring the environment after centuries of exploitation.

In summation, the Global IR project has begun a process of bringing together distinct sources of knowledge, a process this dissertation has contributed to through an examination of Ubuntu and its instrumentality for said project. This dissertation is an original contribution to the process of pluralizing IR, as well as a demonstration of the ability of non-Western sources of knowledge to significantly contribute to the reimagination and reorganization of global politics. The process of bringing in African knowledge will require looking beyond IR boundaries as well as engaging with other disciplines, but it will also require developing new methods and methodologies for reading African sources of knowledge. As has already been alluded to, this dissertation is merely a preliminary engagement, with the hope that subsequent studies will explore and examine numerous other sources of knowledge from the African region for the enrichment of Global IR.

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