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Understanding Indigenous Philanthropy in Ghana from an Akan Perspective

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

February 2024

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to gain in-depth understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, with a particular focus on the Akan and contributes to filling the existing knowledge gap of a dearth of information on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. It examines the conceptualisation of Akan philanthropy, explores the meaning, nature and practice of Akan philanthropy and identifies potential changes that may have occurred over time as well as the underlying reasons behind such shifts. Indigenous methodologies and methods such as ethnophilosophy and sagacity, as well as a decolonial approach informs the research design. The findings suggest that Akan philanthropy is '*adɔyɛ*' - the reciprocal and morally obligatory demonstration of love by every member of a community (individually and collectively) to other members of the community. Community here includes the members' relations (physical and spiritual) . This demonstration of love is through that members' way of life, be-ing and consequent actions and is for the ultimate benefit of the community. Akan philanthropy is anchored in Akan humanism values. It is a life-long cyclical practice that includes all irrespective of wealth and is midwifed by traditional institutions like family, the community and traditional leadership. Although, affected by colonialism, Akan philanthropy has adapted to the existing era and is still a key source of community sustenance and wellbeing. The hegemony of Western philanthropy has relegated it to the background hence the need to decolonise philanthropy. This is done through conceptualising philanthropy through indigenous knowledge systems like that of the Akan and foregrounding indigenous philanthropy in Africa.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis/dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu
February 2024

DEDICATION

To my HT, Nene and Keli for all your support and love. Thank you and God bless you.

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To Mawuko, my husband and strong pillar of support throughout this journey and to Nene and Kekeli, my sons, who sacrificed family time so I could pursue my PhD.

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To the Board of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) who granted me the permission to take some time off every now and then to work on my thesis, and the amazing WACSI team, especially my senior management team who doubled up on their tasks, taking up some of mine so that I could get the time I needed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... ***ii***

DECLARATION ..... ***iii***

DEDICATION ..... ***iv***

Acknowledgments ..... ***v***

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... ***vi***

GLOSSARY ..... ***ix***

LIST OF TABLES ..... ***xii***

1 CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION ***1***

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background 2

1.3 Meaning of indigenous philanthropy 14

1.4 Research problem 16

1.5 Research aims and objectives 18

1.6 Research questions 18

1.7 Delimitations 18

1.8 Contribution to knowledge 20

1.9 Conclusion 21

2 CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW ***22***

2.1 Introduction 22

2.2 African Philanthropy 22

2.3 The African philanthropy landscape 26

2.4 Indigenous philanthropy in Africa : Institutions and Practices 32

2.5 Philanthropy in Ghana 54

2.6 Indigenous philanthropy in Ghana 59

2.7 Akan Philanthropy 67

2.8 Theoretical framework 77

2.9 Conceptual Framework 87

3 CHAPTER THREE- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 92

3.1 Introduction 92

3.2 Research Paradigm 92

3.3 Research Design 94

3.4 Credibility, Dependability, Transferability and Confirmability 111

3.6. Limitations 114

4. CHAPTER FOUR- FINDINGS 118

4.1 Introduction 118

4.3 The meaning of Akan philanthropy 125

4.4 The nature of Akan philanthropy 127

4.5 The practice of Akan philanthropy 133

4.6 Changes and cause of changes to Akan philanthropy 151

4.7 Conclusion 155

5 CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION 156

5.1 Introduction 156

5.2 Summary of Findings 156

5.3 The meaning of Akan philanthropy 157

5.4 The nature of Akan philanthropy 160

5.6 The practice of Akan philanthropy 182

5.7 Changes and causes 202

5.8 Conclusion 207

6 CHAPTER SIX- CONCLUSION 208

6.1 Introduction 208

6.2 Research aims, objectives and conclusions 208

6.3 Implications for research 211

6.4 Recommendations for further research 214

6.5 Conclusion 215

References ***217***

Appendix 1: Participant List ***236***

Appendix 2: Aide Memoire ***239***

Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Guide ***240***

Appendix 4: Observation Checklist ***242***

GLOSSARY

Word/Phrase/Clause	Meaning
Abasateaa (abasayirifie) a adɔyɛ wɔ mu	The slender arm full of benevolence
Abusua	Family
Abusua Ayowa	Family pot
Adae	An Akan 40-day festival
Adinkra	Message (the adinkra symbols are traditional symbols that convey messages)
Adɔyɛ	Demonstration of love with action towards community welfare and wellbeing
Anyansafo	Sages, philosophers
Asaase Yaa	Akan name given to the Earth
Aseda	Gratitude/ Giving thanks
Bosompo ankame wo nam a, wo nso wonkame no abia	If Bosompo, the divinity of the sea, does not begrudge you his fish, you do not begrudge him of your catch
Botho/Ubuntu	The ideal of being human
Bu me bɛ	Tell me a proverb
Deɛ adeɛ ato n'ani no, nyɛ ono ara na oyie	The one who has the mote in their eye is not the one who removes it.
Eberɛ dane	Time changes
Ego	Me, myself (Individualistic) (Latin language)
Ehunumɔbrɔ	To show sympathy
Enɔbua / Nnɔbua	An Akan mutual aid practice
Ɛtɔ / Ɔtɔ	A festive dish of mashed yam and boiled eggs
Fante	An Akan sub-ethnic group; an Akan dialect
Fofie, Adae and Kundum	Special Akan festive days
Fufu	Akan traditional dish
Futumereku ne denkyerɛmereku (won tiri ye mmienu na wɔn yafunu baako) se: "Me kakra ntwi wo me men emo, na ma	Stomach mixed up and crocodile mixed up, (their heads are two, but their stomach is one) say: 'Let a little slip down your throat and let a little slip down mine, and it will all meet in one stomach'.

Word/Phrase/Clause	Meaning
kakara ntwi me dee mu, na ne nyinaa nkohyia yafunu- koro mu."	
Galamsey	Illegal small-scale mining
Honam	Human body
Kente	A colourfully woven traditional Akan cloth
Kandiro kanoenda kunobva kamwe	You give to those who give you (Shona language)
Kente and Adinkra	Traditional Akan clothing
Kyiniɛ ntuatire	Umbrella tops
La charite	Charity (French language)
L'aumone	Alms (French language)
Me kɔ yɛ adɔyɛ ama mmɔbrɔwa fo	Showing kindness and love to people who are in need (destitute)
Me kɔ yea agyanka adɔyɛ	Benevolence or act of kindness towards orphans
Me kɔ yɛ akunafoɔ adɔyɛ	Show benevolence or act of kindness towards widows
Mee-mee a ne ho wɔ me	Fount of satisfaction
Me yɛ adɔyɛ ama mmɔbrɔwa fo	Showing kindness and love to people who are in need (destitute)
Me yɛ wɔn mo adɔyɛ	Showing love or kindness towards someone
Me yɛ wɔn mo adɔyɛ	Showing love or kindness towards someone
Me ho wo atsɛ	I have not seen you in a long time.
Mmɔbrɔhunu	Sympathy
Mogya fra	Incest, literally meaning ‘mixing of blood’
Motho	A being that is of value in itself (Zulu language)
Mtu ni watu	An individual’s wellbeing is predicated on the wellbeing of the collective (Swahili language)
Nana senkeseɛ gye ahɔhoɔ	Grandmother, the big cooking pot that entertains strangers
Nansen deɛ me yare	I have been sick recently
Nkosuo hene or Nkosuo ohemaa	development chief/ development queen

Word/Phrase/Clause	**Meaning**
Nnipa na ema onipa ye nnipa	It is a human being that endorses another's humanity
Nsono na oboa yafunu	The intestines help the stomach
Nyame no ono ne ame na awo	God is you and I
Nyame/Onyame, Nyankopon/Onyankopong, Odumankoma	The supreme God
Nsono na oboa yafunu	The intestines help the stomach
Ntoro	Personality or character
Obi anwo wo, onni wo	If someone has not given birth to you, they do not know you
Obi a ne din da wo so na wo ne no dware asukuro mu	It is the person whose name you bear that you bathe in the same water with
Onipa baakofuo te sɛ akokofunu.	A single person is like a dead chicken (One person alone does not thrive)
Onipa nye abe na ne ho ahyia ne ho	A person is not a palm tree that has all it wants. (Human beings can never be self-sufficient)
Theo	God (Latin language)
Wohwɛ obi dehyeɛ yie a na wo nso wo deɛ reyɛ yie	If you take good care of someone's royal personage, your royal personage will also prosper
Wo yɛ dua tantam: w'abaa so. Woaso wosowosow. Mmɔfra ba w'ase a, woanya bi di)	You are a mighty tree with big branches laden with fruit. When children come to you, they find something to eat

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Numerical Table of Respondents 98
Table 2: Code Framework 107
Table 3: Code and Sub-codes 107
Table 4: Research Questions, Themes and Findings 119

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Ghana showing Akan area 6
Figure 2 : Adinkra symbols (left) and Kente cloth (right) 7
Figure 3: Adinkra Symbols: Siamese crocodiles …….40
Figure 4: Theoretical Framework..... 86
Figure 5: Conceptual Framework 91
Figure 6: Adinkra symbol - Nkonsonkonson, a symbol of unity and human relations and contributing to the good of the community 162
Figure 7: Eating from one bowl..... 165
Figure 8: Adinkra symbol- Adinkrahene 172
Figure 9: Adinkra symbol – Sankofa (go back and get it)..... 212

1 CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The act of giving to support or provide a service for the well-being of others, universally known as philanthropy, transcends cultural boundaries, as illustrated by various scholars (Mauss, 1969; Feireman in IIlchman et. al., 1998; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Sulek, 2009; Payton & Moody, 2008; Reich, 2020; Smith, 2013; Asante-Darko, 2013). Some scholars have posited that philanthropy is one of the innate characteristics of *homosapiens* that has morphed through evolutionary processes and migration (Fowler & Mati, 2019; IIIlchman et. al. 1998). Fowler and Mati (2019) notes that "an ontological perspective of gift-giving is…an evolution of a universal human predisposition, with observable acculturated mores, values and practices" (p. 727). In Africa, philanthropy exists, thrives, and sustains communities, even though it has not been given the necessary prominence in the global discourse on philanthropy (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Moyo, 2013; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2006; Mati, 2017, 2020; Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016). Philanthropy is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Ghanaian society (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; Gyekye, 1987; 1996;1995; 2010; 2013; Atibil, 2014). While some literature exists on various forms of philanthropy in Ghana, including community foundations, alumni giving, volunteerism, and corporate giving (Atibil, 2014; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; SDG Philanthropy report, 2017) there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the country's indigenous philanthropy. There are several indigenous groupings in Ghana who practice philanthropy, yet not much is known and documented about the details of the phenomenon beyond anecdotal evidence. This research aims to bridge that gap by exploring indigenous philanthropy in Ghana among the Akan people. The Akan are one of Ghana's most prominent and influential ethnic groups. The thesis seeks to explore the meaning, nature, and practices of Akan philanthropy.

This introductory chapter presents background information on Ghana and the Akan people. The chapter then defines 'indigenous philanthropy' as it pertains to this study, setting the stage for the research focus. The research problem is articulated, followed by the aims and objectives of the thesis. These, in turn, lead to the research questions that guide the study. The scope of the

thesis is outlined, clarifying the inclusions and exclusions within the research and the rationale behind these choices. Finally, before the concluding section, the chapter details the contribution of this thesis to the broader field of knowledge.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Ghana

Ghana is an influential African country located in West Africa and was previously known as the Gold Coast (Gocking, 2005). The first Europeans (Portuguese) entered the territory in the 15th century, and by 1902, the land mass now known as Ghana was fully colonised by the British (Gocking, 2005). In March 1957, it became the first country south of the Sahara to gain independence from the British. Ghana has 92 ethnic groups, many of which are part of four major groups: the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga-Adangme. Together, these four main ethnic groups comprised approximately 87% of the population. The Akan account for more than half of this number (Gocking, 2005) (Figure 1).

1.2.1.1 Pre-colonial Ghana

Pre-colonial Ghana was inhabited by diverse ethnic groups and powerful kingdoms, each with its unique traditions and cultural heritage (Miller et. al., 2009). Although stark differences existed, certain cultural groups shared similarities in history, language and origin leading to the formation of ethnolinguistic clusters or states which could be identified mainly in the coastal, forest and the northern or savanna regions of the Gold Coast. The Akan (Fante, Twi, Bono, Guan) was the most widely spoken language and had by far, the largest geographical scope and spread (Rucker, 2015). The Akan speakers controlled vast forest and open savannah areas and have expanded their dominance in modern Ghana, yet their ancestral origins remain steeped in myth and controversy to this day. Some versions of oral Akan traditions (Bono, Asante) speak of their ancestors descending from the sky or have emerged from sacred holes in the ground, whiles others have made more reasonable claims suggesting that Akan speakers migrated from the savanna regions of the Atlantic Africa to the north, and gradually moved further south into the forest region (Anquandah, 2013; Rucker, 2015). The southern zone of the Gold Coast was mainly occupied by the Ewe and Ga-Adangme states. The Ewe speaking people and the Ga-Adangme are believed to have migrated from Benin and the southern region of Nigeria respectively, both migrations possibly triggered by the expansion of the Yoruba society. The northern zone was also dominated by the indigenous Gur speakers (Dagaaba, Sisaala, Vagala, Konkomba, Tampulma,

Bimoba, Grusi, and Talensi etc) and immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and the Hausaland. The immigrants founded the Mossi, Mamprusi and Dagomba kingdoms, which are still prominent in modern Northern Ghana (Ofosu-Appiah, 1977).

These major ethnic groups have chieftaincy as the indigenous political governance system with some variations influenced by socio-political contexts within each group. For example, most ethnic groups followed the patrilineal system of succession while a few, like the Akan, followed the matrilineal system. Across these groups, chiefs and queen mothers wield traditional authority and govern their communities according to customary laws and customs. Their symbol of authority was either a skin or a wooden stool, northern chiefs traditionally sit on skins and southern chiefs on stools (Oku & Korsah, 2019). The chieftaincy institution can be traced back to the emergence of the early kingdoms on the Gold Coast and continues to be the basis of traditional governance and cultural heritage in Modern Ghana.

Another notable aspect of pre-colonial Ghanaian culture is the celebration of festivals which has persisted till date. Most traditional festivals practiced are deeply connected to long ethnic histories on ancestral settlements, wars, conquest, past tragedies among other significant events. For instance, the *Homowo* festival, celebrated by the Ga people, commemorates their victory over hunger. The *Bakatue* Festival, by the people of Elmina, is also a major harvest festival. The *Akwambo* festivals are celebrated in the Fante communities to mark the historic migration of the people from Takyiman-Bono to the coastal settlements. There are also others celebrated in honour of deities and heroic leaders among others. The traditional festivals also serve as occasions for rich cultural display, communal celebration, religious worship, and social cohesion within communities (Anquandah, 2013). Other notable festivals are the *Kundum* festival of the Ahanta and *Fofie* festivals of the Asante (also known as the Ashanti).

Art and craftsmanship were also highly valued in the pre-colonial period. Skilled artisans produced intricate works of pottery, textiles, metalwork, and sculpture, showcasing the creativity and craftsmanship of the people. The Asantes, in particular, were known for their gold mines and goldsmithing skills. Trade was also a vital component of the pre-colonial Ghanaian society. Ghana's location along the trans-Saharan trade route facilitated the trade of goods such as gold, ivory, salt, ceramics, textiles among others. The records of early Europeans detail the trading

activities between the indigenous people and trading partners from far and near (Anquandah 1982).

1.2.1.2 *Impact of Colonisation*

The arrival of the Europeans (Portuguese) in 1471 marked the end of the pre-colonial period. The Portuguese built their first settlement, the Elmina castle in 1482, from where they traded slaves, gold, knives, beads, mirrors, rum and guns. Subsequently other Europeans traders - English, Dutch, Danish, Prussian and Swedish traders also arrived and build forts along the coastline. The British Gold Coast was formed in 1821 and expanded steadily by the invasion of local kingdoms despite a strong resistance from some like the Asante. By 1901, all of the Gold Coast had fallen under the British colonial rule (Miller et. al., 2009). The colonisation of the Gold Coast begun a different kind of socio-economic development and affected many aspects of the culture of the indigenous people (Edu-Buandoh, 2016).

The introduction of the European model of governance, for instance, eroded the authority of indigenous traditional rulers and chieftaincy institutions. In Ghana today, traditional leaders are primarily regarded as custodians and guardians of cultural heritage with little or no authority in local governance structures. Colonisation has also influenced the education structure of Ghana. In the pre-colonial period, education was largely informal and thrived on apprenticeship to mastery under skilled craftsmen or artisans. The British built several mission schools in an attempt to bring modernization (education) to the local people, and central to this formal education was the English Language. The English language was taught in schools, and years after colonisation remains the most important language in education, which many have argued has relegated the study of indigenous languages in formal education (Edu-Buandoh, 2016).

The indigenous religious beliefs of the locals were also affected with the arrival of the Portuguese, whose mission on the Gold Coast, in addition to establishing new trade routes, was Christian evangelism (Miller et. al., 2009). The Roman Catholic missionaries who accompanied the traders were the first to introduce Christianity. Several other missionaries (Wesleyan, Basel) followed throughout the 20th century (Miller et. al., 2009). They established churches, and built schools, hospitals which also served as extensions for propagating the gospel. This initiated the gradual erosion of indigenous religious practices and beliefs as many Ghanaians converted to Christianity (Miller et. al, 2009). Today, about 71% of the population in Ghana identify as Christians (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022). The missionaries, beyond their evangelistic mission, engaged in

charitable and community development activities. Arab merchants also introduced Islam in the Northern parts of Ghana and among the Asantes (Boahen, 1992).

One of the notable gains from colonisation and trade however has been the introduction of a variety of foreign food crops including cassava, maize, cocoyam, and plantain, which have now become staple food in major ethnic groups in Ghana. Cacao (cocoa) trees were also introduced in 1878, becoming the first cash crop in Ghana and cocoa production still remains a backbone of the economy (Miller et. al., 2009).

Overall, the colonial rule introduced western culture and civilization in the Gold Coast. Western education, healthcare, medicine, religion among others were promoted at the expense of the Ghanaian culture and traditions. The indigenous cultural practices were deemed inferior, leading to a significant shift with many aspects of traditional culture being supplanted by Western habits, norms and values including the adoption of the European the way of dressing. While colonialism undoubtedly eroded aspects of Ghanaian cultural identity, it is worth noting, the Ghanaian cultural heritage - chieftaincy, festival, art, music, dance and folklore was and remains respected by many indigenes.

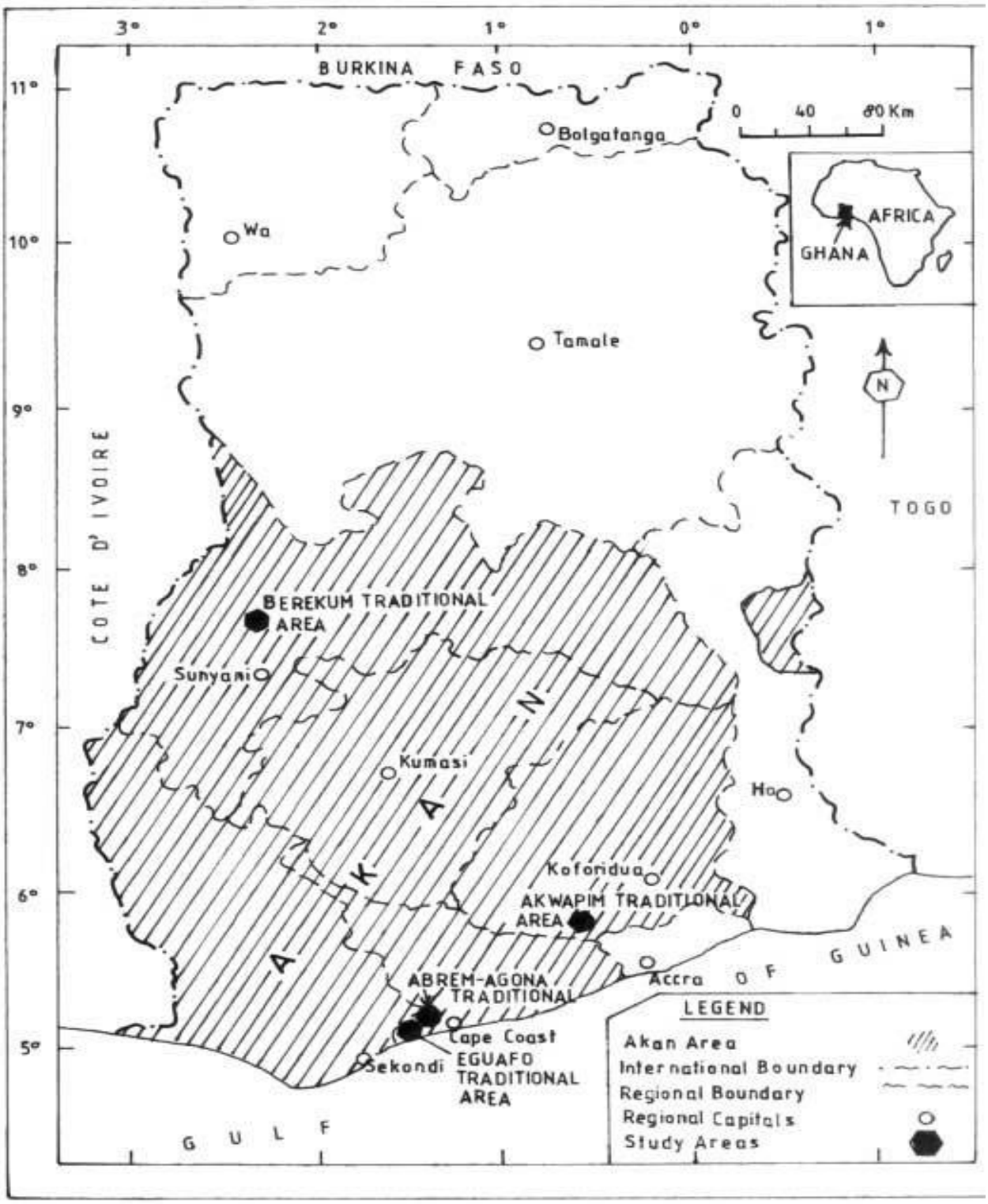


Figure 1: Map of Ghana showing Akan area

Source: Awuah-Nyamekye (2012)

1.2.2 The Akan

The Akan is a dominant ethnic group in Ghana (Agyekum, 2018; Gocking, 2005). Akan culture, language, and traditions have exerted a significant influence on various other ethnic groups within the country, a trend that continues to persist to the present day (Manoukian, 2017). Gocking (2005) describes this phenomenon as "Akanization" (p. 273). Furthermore, the Akan ethnic group has been the subject of extensive research (Agyekum, 2018). Although not representative of the entirety of Ghana, numerous Akan practices, traditions, folklore, and aphorisms have acquired national identity and have been embraced by multiple ethnic groups in the country. Illustrative examples include the *kente* cloth, a vividly woven fabric traditionally reserved for royalty but now employed during ceremonial events, as well as the *adinkra* symbols, which are creative symbols that convey messages (Figure 2).



Figure 2 : Adinkra symbols (left) and Kente cloth (right)
Source: Author’s photographs

These are several Akan cultural and traditional symbols that have become synonymous with Ghanaian identity.

The Akan constitute 45.7% of Ghana's entire population (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022). Nketiah (1969), as cited in Gyekye (1987), asserts: "Not only is their language the most widely spoken throughout the country, but their culture has influenced those of several ethnic groups within the borders of Ghana" (p. 194). "Approximately 44% of the population speak Akan

as non-native speakers" (Agyekum, 2018, p. 9). The origin of the Akan remains uncertain, and besides some mythological explanations, some scholars (Boahen, 1992; Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2010) have endeavoured to investigate their origins. Boahen (1992) suggests that the period of 1500–1800 marked the migration of the Akan to various territories and the division into the distinct sub-ethnic groups that exist today. Some factions migrated to regions of Cote d'Ivoire. Those who settled in the Gold Coast territories (present-day Ghana) became "grouped into the two primary divisions present today, namely, the Eastern and Western Akan" (Boahen, 1992, p. 400).

> Each group is further divided into several subgroups, mainly along political lines. The Eastern Akan are divided into Asante, Akuapem, Akyem, Akwamu, Brong (Abron) or Gyaaman, Wassa, Kwahu, Fante, Assin, Denkyira, and Gomua, all of whom speak almost the same language, Twi. The Western Akan comprise the Anyi, Baule, Nzima, Ahanta, Sanwi (Afema), Aowin, and Sehwi, who speak mutually intelligible Akan dialects. (Boahen, 1992, p. 402)

This study focuses on two of these sub-ethnic clusters: the Asante (or Ashanti, a corruption of the original name 'Asante') from the Eastern Akan cluster, with their headquarters in Kumasi; and the Ahanta from the Western Akan sector, situated in Essikado (part of Sekondi, twin city of Takoradi, the Western region capital of Ghana). The more influential group is the Asante (Danquah, 1952), who held significant political and economic supremacy from the 1600s to the 1800s and contributed significantly to the establishment of what was identified as the Gold Coast (Boahen, 1992; Rattray, 1929; Tordoff, 1962). These two groupings were chosen to offer a balanced perspective based on information derived from the Akan sub-ethnic groups. The Asante from the Eastern Akan contingent, also the most influential amongst the Akan, and the Ahanta from the Western Akan grouping who although not as dominant in the Akan sub-ethnic group, is among one of the more recognizable sub-ethnic groups in the Western Akan division. The Akan sub-ethnic groups possess a shared culture and adhered to their customs and traditions even after migrating to different regions. The Asante, in particular, exerted dominance over the sub-ethnic groups they conquered, thereby ensuring compliance with established norms and traditions. Moreover, Asante culture and traditions were disseminated to non-Akan ethnic groups as well. Those who were forcibly taken as prisoners of war and enslaved, as well as those who voluntarily migrated to the Asante Kingdom for economic purposes, underwent a process of assimilation and conformed to the culture and traditions (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng,

2010; Perbi, 2001). The Asante employed legal means to enforce this integration, employing a constitution comprising 77 laws, including one that made it a taboo to remind another of their origins (Perbi, 1991). The Ahanta, a sub-ethnic group belonging to the Western Akan group mentioned earlier (Amenumey, 2018; Arthur, 2017; Boahen, 1992), hold less dominance.

1.2.2.1 *The Akan – Commonalities*

Some commonalities can be found in all Akan sub-ethnic groups, which distinguish the Akan from other ethnic groups in Ghana. These distinctive traits still exist today, even if they are somewhat diluted because of intermarriages, urbanisation, westernisation, and religious influences (Arthur, 2017; Gyekye, 1997; Hanson, 2004; Korboe, 1992). It is important to note these commonalities because they distinguish the Akan from other ethnic groups in Ghana and also inform their philanthropy. The commonalities that have remained throughout the different eras are as follows. All sub-ethnic groups of the Akan have matrilineal and patrilineal clans (Hanson, 2004; Meyerowitz, 1957). Even though they have patrilineal clans, the Akans are described as matrilineal because [d]escent is determined through the female line (Amenumey, 2018; Amoo, 1946; Appiah et. al., 2007; Rattray, 1923). Every Akan descends from one of eight matrilineal clans: Asenie, Aduana, Oyoko, Asakyiri, Ekuona, Asona, Bretuo, and Agona (Amenumey, 2018; Boahene, 1992). Members of the same matrilineal clan may come from different sub-ethnic groups, but they are still considered part of one matrilineal descent and bloodline – one family (*abusua*). The matrilineal line of succession also determines marriage (Arthur, 2017). Exogamous marriage is a practice, and it is a taboo for a man and woman from the same clan to marry even if they are from different sub-ethnic groups (Rattray, 1923; Sarpong, 1974). They share a common system of inheritance and succession, as well as common social, religious, and political systems (Amenumey, 2018; Arthur, 2017). Members of different sub-ethnic groups that fall within the line of succession can also inherit chieftaincy positions once they are members of the same matrilineal clan (Kwadwo, 2002). Other unique cultural practices and traditions of the Akan (Arthur, 2017, p. 31) are the observance of a 42-day calendar and special festivals such as the *Akwasidae* and *Awukudae* which align with their 42-day calendar (Danquah, 1952, p. 365).

1.2.2.2 *Communal living*

The Akan encourage practices that foster community bonds and the core value of being each other's keeper within the Akan community (Kwadwo, 2002). Some of these were more

pronounced in pre-colonial times but have traits that remain till date.

Today, there are still what are called ‘compound houses’, similar to what existed in pre-colonial times known as *Fihankra* (Arthur, 2007, p. 207), and there are also families in the Akan sense (nuclear and extended) who live together in the same house. Within the domestic arena of the Akan, social relations are as prominent as biological relations (Hanson, 2004). A typical Akan household extends beyond people living under one roof, and its constituent members also change depending on whether the head of the household is in a monogamous or polygamous marriage. It also includes younger and older relatives (Hanson, 2004). Scholars such as Hanson (2004) maintain that a better way to capture the delineations of an Akan household is to ask how many people eat from one *bokyea* (stove/hearth). Rattray (1929), who had written in the colonial era, described the household as the centre of the social system of the Asante (Akan). The household is multilateral and includes members of more than one clan and not only of the clan (which is unilateral). He notes that "it is an axiom in anthropology that without a clear knowledge of the family organisation of a tribe, it is impossible to fully understand their social organisations" (p. 21) and is categoric that the family or what he calls 'the domestic system,' is the fulcrum of the Asante [and Akan] social system (p. 2). Arthur (2017) agrees and also refers to the family (household) as "the centre of the Akan social system" (p. 373).

Today, one can say that this central role of the Akan family is still important, particularly in relation to philanthropic culture and practice. The family (household) system presently has been altered as a result of urbanisation and westernisation, but the constituent members still include members of the extended family and lineage with the obligations in pre-colonial times towards members of the family, still in existence (Gyekye, 1997; Hanson, 2004; Korboe, 1992). 'The household' extends beyond the physical abode. Colonialism, urbanisation, migration, and westernisation may have diluted or weakened the communal spirit, but they have not broken it completely, as demonstrated in the information discovered and provided through this research process.

1.2.2.3 *Akan ontology*

One aspect of the Akan that has persisted from pre-colonial times is their spirituality. One cannot divorce the organisation and functioning of Akan society from spirituality (Rattray, 1929; Gyekye, 1987). Gyekye (1987) describes the Akan as "essentially and primarily spiritual" (p.68). This spirituality of the Akan people is demonstrated in the Akan's interpretation of reality:

physical, metaphysical, and cosmological (Arthur, 2017). Gyekye (1987) explains that "the Akan universe is a spiritual universe; one in which spiritual beings play significant roles in the thought and action of people" (p. 68). Even with the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the traditional Akan belief in the spiritual realm and its significant interaction with the physical realm, which also informs Akan philanthropy, has not disappeared and has persisted throughout all eras. The belief in the supreme God, deities and spirits, and ancestors and their direct relationship with the physical world persists until date.

1.2.2.4 *Akan modes of communication*

The Akan had a predominantly oral culture and modes of capturing and communicating their philosophy, morals, ethics, and values. Sharma (2013) posits that "[t]he retrieval of metaphors, sayings and proverbs, as also of visual symbols from oral tradition, is meant to prove that language does not have to take only a linear written form to convey deep truths arrived at by a people" (pp. 117,119), and this is true for the Akan. Akan philosophies, cultural values, and moral codes can be found in their proverbs, symbols, aphorisms, and folktales (Arthur 2017; Dei 2012; Gyekye, 1987; Wiredu, 1992). Appiah (1979) describes proverbs, for example, as "the verbal shrine for the soul of a nation" (p. xiv). The Akan also use symbols to communicate their values and principles (Appiah, 1979; Arthur, 2017) and they do this by using pictographs and ideograms. The latter is especially used in regalia by chiefs in their palaces (Appiah, 1979; Arthur, 2017). This is not only specific to the Akan but has parallels in many parts of Africa (Dei, 2012). These are still recognised and used until date and have survived colonialism, even though their use seems to have diminished. In this exercise of uncovering Akan philanthropy, reference is made to these proverbs, aphorisms, folktales, and symbols to help understand the values and philosophy that anchor and drive Akan philanthropy.

1.2.2.5 *Akan economy*

In the pre-colonial era, the Akan economy thrived. Farming and hunting were important activities within the Akan economy, mainly for subsistence (Asante-Darko, 2013), with leftovers sold to strangers (Kwadwo, 2002). Gold mining was a major commercial activity due to significant gold deposits found in various parts of the Asante kingdom, which increased as the Akan engaged more European traders. Kola nuts and later cocoa were also traded commodities. Gold and kola nuts served as key elements of trade between the Akan and the North and South of Sudan (Boahen, 1992; Arhin, 1967). Initially, slaves were mainly used as porters, but the Akan began

to trade in slaves as well when the demand from their European trading counterparts increased. This was particularly true for the Asante, who found it lucrative due to their conquests. By the 1700s, the slave trade had become one of the main sources of income for the Akan economy, particularly the Asante (Boahen, 1992; Perbi, 2001). The Akan were also renowned craftsmen, trading in wood, ivory, clay, brass crafts, and weaving cloth (Boahen, 1992; Arthur, 2017). According to Kwadwo (2002), "[i]n those days, there was nothing like unemployment in the towns and villages" (p. 125). The Western Akan group, such as the Ahanta, also engaged in fishing alongside farming (Boahen, 1992). Colonialism introduced capitalism and impacted the gift economy, replacing it with a transactional economy. Modernisation led to urbanisation as people moved away from their communities in search of jobs (Abraham, 1992). Fowler and Mati (2019) describe this disruption and its effect on African philanthropy, stating that “[c]olonial penetration and subordination of the continent’s population brought with it economic, political, psycho- logical and cultural forces, disrupting pre-existing embed- ded relational processes which demanded adaptation, endogenous gifting included ” (p. 731). Although Akan areas in Ghana continue to produce gold and cocoa, which are leading commodities in the postcolonial era, these are now managed by the central government rather than the chiefs and the people. The political systems of the Akan also play a significant role in their philanthropy (Nketiah, 1954), warranting further exploration by this thesis.

1.2.2.6 *Akan governance system*

The formal governance structure of the Akan in the pre-colonial and colonial era was primarily composed of the chieftaincy institution, modelled after the household or family structure (Rattray, 1929). Boahen (1992) provides a more detailed description.

> The Akan... lived in towns ruled by kings and queens and villages ruled by chiefs. Each town or village was made up of families belonging to the eight matrilineal clans into which they are all divided. Each family had an *abusuapanin* (head, leader), and so did each clan (p. 403).

Like the Head of the Family or Clan, the Chief (*Ohene*) is the head of the village or town and plays a similar role (Rattray, 1929). He is the father of the village and responsible for the security and well-being of the village, town, and its citizens. Akin to the head of the family or household "[t]he groups over which he is head is a democracy, but a democracy very different from that in modern Europe. In one sense it is a communistic body, yet in another, the rights of

each unit to individual enjoyment of property are absolute during his actual enjoyment thereof" (Rattray, 1929, p. 2). The Chief is the custodian of traditions and customs and is expected to mediate between the people and the gods, spirits, and ancestors of the village (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2010; Rattray, 1929). The Queen Mother (*Ohemaa*) was the main power and influence behind the state (Aidoo 1977; Rattray, 1923; Danquah, 1952). Danquah (1952) equated her power within the state to that of the supreme being (owner of the universe). Thus, the Queen Mother was the owner of the state, while the Chief was the ruler. She was the one who decided who should be Chief through her nomination, veto, and endorsement. She was the key advisor to the Chief (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2010) and the only advisor allowed to admonish him and senior court officials in public (Aidoo, 1977; Manuh, 1988; Rattray, 1923). To diminish the power of the Queen Mother and her influence was to strike at the core of the Akan system, which is what colonialism did (Aidoo, 1977; Danquah, 1952; Manuh, 1988; Rattray, 1923).

Colonialism disrupted this structure. Through indirect rule, the British gave more power to the chiefs and diminished the authority of the Queen Mother within the state apparatus (Danquah, 1952), but it also weakened the position of the Chief to a great extent in relation to their subjects and considerably undermined their authority (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2010). Chiefs today no longer wield the kind of authority they had over their subjects. The distortion of the state and governance structures and the devaluation of tradition and culture through Westernisation, religion, and modernisation, which also brought about urbanisation and a disruption of the community, their livelihoods, and way of living, have all affected the extent to which chiefs can enforce tradition and customs as they did before or influence their subjects. It has even affected the chieftaincy institution itself and the processes of appointing chiefs, leading in some cases to questionable characters becoming chiefs. It is within the consideration of the historical, cultural, political, social, and economic context of the Akan during the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras (including the present) that this thesis pursued the research journey. While this thesis primarily focuses on the Akan context, its information primarily draws from the Asante, whose history, culture, and traditions have the most comprehensive documentation and are readily accessible. This thesis examines how these beliefs, social norms, political, economic, social, and cultural systems and structures of the Akan have influenced their philanthropic practices.

1.3 Meaning of indigenous philanthropy

Scholars such as Moyo (2013) have expressed discomfort with the characterization of African philanthropy as 'indigenous' or 'traditional', which they argue is both inaccurate and malicious (Fowler & Mati, 2019). They attribute this characterization to the predominantly Western analytical influence and frameworks (Moyo, 2013). In this thesis, the term 'indigenous philanthropy' from the Akan perspective specifically refers to philanthropic practices that are rooted in Akan language, traditions, culture, practices, and knowledge. When referring to Ghana, it encompasses both the geographical and epistemological domains — that is, the physical and knowledge-based spaces of Ghanaians. The exploration of philanthropic meaning, nature, and practice in this study is based on the worldview, traditions, cultures, philosophies, and indigenous structures and systems of the Akan people. In this context, the term 'indigenous' is used to denote the origin of knowledge, akin to Darko's (2014) usage of the term. According to Darko (2014),

> Indigenous knowledge… pertains to the knowledge process, cultural traditions, values, lived-world form of reason, and belief systems entrenched and typical to Indigenous African local peoples' way of life that has evolved over many generations and which provides an understanding of humans' interactions with nature …African Indigenous knowledge is knowledge derived from local or Indigenous African people …people whose socio-economic, political, and everyday lives are determined and regulated by their own customs and traditions, which are fundamentally based on their worldviews. (Darko in Dei & Adjei, 2014, pp. 473-4)

As, Masolo (2003) states

> Like its synonyms (local, native, original) and counterparts (migrant, alien, settler), the term indigenous is an eco-determinant used to define the origin of items or persons in relation to how their belonging to a place is to be temporally characterised, especially in comparison to other contenders in claiming belonging. (Masolo, 2003, p. 22)

Indigenous philanthropy among the Akan people in Ghana, as defined in this context, specifically denotes philanthropic activities originating from the Akan community in Ghana. It is important to note that the philanthropic deeds of the Akan population living outside Ghana, though in the diaspora, are considered within this framework. It is essential to differentiate this

approach from philanthropic acts solely based on one's Akan ethnicity. Merely being of Akan descent, within the scope outlined in this research, does not automatically classify an individual's philanthropic endeavours as Akan philanthropy. The essence, characteristics, and application of philanthropy by an Akan individual must be rooted in and fashioned by Akan knowledge systems, traditions, and cultures to warrant recognition as indigenous Akan philanthropy. This defines the boundary of the current study.

While the use of the term 'indigenous', in the context of this thesis, underscores 'originating from', there exist certain commonalities in the cultural practices and beliefs of indigenous peoples (First Nations) that inform this study. These commonalities include their relational worldview, knowledge systems, and value systems, which will be elaborated on in subsequent sections. The shared history of enduring colonialism and its enduring impacts, even in a postcolonial era, provides a basis for drawing parallels between the Akan context and that of First Nations.

It is crucial to highlight that 'indigenous' should not be misconstrued as synonymous with 'homogeneous', as emphasized by Masolo (2003), who advocates for recognizing the complexity and diversity inherent in local communities. Rather than assuming uniformity, these communities should be acknowledged for their multifaceted, dialogic, and inclusive nature. This study concentrates on Akan philanthropy and does not purport to represent all philanthropic practices in Ghana. Such a claim would perpetuate the dominant narrative that has critiqued Western philanthropy on a global scale. The examination presented here centres on the Akan community, acknowledging their predominant position and impact in Ghana while understanding that other ethnic groups may have distinct philanthropic customs, particularly in specific practices.

Nevertheless, certain cultural norms and practices accepted across various ethnic groups in Ghana and the broader continent can be perceived as intersecting, influencing philanthropic behaviours and traditions. As Wiredu explains,

> Although there are differences of detail and, in some cases, of principle between Ghanaian conceptions and those entertained in other parts of Africa, there are deep affinities of both thought and feeling across the entirety of ethnic Africa [and] it is salutary to note that, as W.E. Abraham points out, ‘It is easy to be unduly impressed by the sheer

> number of ethnic groups, each endowed with its own ethnic heritage, and overlook the repetitive elements and manifestations that they contain'. (Wiredu, 2010, p. 11)

The central focus of this thesis pertains to the illumination of 'indigenous philanthropy,' particularly in the context of Ghana and the philanthropic practices stemming from the cultural, traditional, and knowledge systems of the Akan people of Ghana. This emphasis cannot be overstated.

1.4 Research problem

While a substantial body of literature exists on the global practice of philanthropy, including notable works by Smith (2014), Sulek (2009), Cunningham (2016), Bekkers & Wiepking (2007), Payton & Moody (2008), Mauss (1969), and IIlchman et. al. (1998). Most of these writers, with the exception of Mauss (1969) and IIlchman et. al.,(1998) presented philanthropy from the perspective and philosophy of the West (the Worldwide Initiative For Grantmaker Support (WINGS) Report, 2018). Mauss (1969) and Feierman in IIlchman et. al. (1998) focused on primitive societies and it was only Feireman who made some references to philanthropy in primitive African societies. Recognising this gap, the WINGS report posits that "the knowledge, understanding and practices of philanthropy differ in different cultures and yet these differences and their significance are often not reflected in global literature on philanthropy" (the Worldwide Initiative For Grantmaker Support (WINGS) Report, 2018, p. 5). Clarifying further, the WINGS report states that "Most of the terminology of philanthropy is imported from Anglo-Saxon traditions, irrespective of whether it fits local circumstances.. (the Worldwide Initiative For Grantmaker Support (WINGS) Report, 2018, p. 7)". "Northern and European models," the report argues, are "often used as a reference point, to be opposed, customised or assimilated by others" even though they "are in fact just one part of the picture" (the Worldwide Initiative For Grantmaker Support (WINGS) Report, 2018, p.5).

There had thus been very little attention paid to African philanthropy and even more so indigenous philanthropy in Africa. Scholarship on African philanthropy in general, it must however be noted, is gradually increasing. Writing in 2013, Aina (2013) notes that

> The past decade had seen a flowering of philanthropic activities across Africa…Philanthropy is no longer about narratives of passive, poor and miserable Africans receiving help from rich, fortunate and often Western outsiders. The emerging

> narratives about philanthropy in Africa are about an increasingly confident and knowledgeable assertion of African capacities to give…[and] about the increasing questioning of the role and place of Africans in the world's philanthropic traditions and what constitutes African specificities but also African differences and varieties" (p. xv).

Moyo (2013), in agreement with Aina (2013), notes that in the early 2000s when he

> started writing and talking about African philanthropy…there was little written…Back then there were no sources of data on African philanthropy nor were there any courses offered by institutions of learning on 'civil society', [let] alone philanthropy; and more importantly African Philanthropy. (p. xxi)

He shares that "today, we have a sizable body of literature in the field" (Moyo, 2013, p. xxi). Scholarly efforts have enhanced our understanding of its dynamics on the continent, with works by Aina and Moyo (2013), Atibil (2014), Copeland-Carson (2005, 2007), Everatt et al. (2004), Everatt and Solanki (2005), Fowler (2016); Fowler& Mati (2019); Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), Mati (2016, 2017, 2020), Moyo (2008, 2010, 2013), Wilkinson-Maposa and Fowler (2016), and Wilkinson-Maposa et al. (2005) shedding light on the topic. The philanthropic practices in Ghana, in particular, have been explored in studies by Asante-Darko (2013), Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012), Kumi (2019a, 2019b, 2022), The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017). However, the discourse often overlooks the nuances of indigenous philanthropy. Much of the current research in Ghana generalises philanthropy and focuses more on western models of philanthropy without delving into the rich, indigenous traditions that have shaped the local culture of giving. This gap is also evident in the limited literature on the philanthropic practices of the Akan people, one of Ghana's predominant and well-documented ethnic groups. Surprisingly, despite being one of the most researched and documented ethnic groups (Agyekum, 2018), there is a lack of substantial research on the philanthropic practices of the Akan people. While scholars like Ackah (1998); Agyekum (2010), Asante-Darko (2013), Gyekye (1995), and Sarpong (1974) have touched upon aspects of Akan generosity and philanthropy, their work only provides a partial understanding. Asante-Darko places it within a pre-colonial context, Gyekye approaches it from a philosophical standpoint without explicitly framing it as philanthropy, and likewise Ackah, Agyekum and Sarpong briefly acknowledge it as a characteristic of Akan culture.

This oversight extends to the development terrain, where indigenous philanthropy is seldom

recognised by policymakers as a potential source of development finance, despite its pervasive presence in Ghanaian society (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). The concept remains poorly defined and largely invisible; like the wind—felt but unseen—and as a result, it is often neglected in strategic considerations for development funding (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2017; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Asante-Darko, 2013). The limited exposure and understanding of indigenous philanthropy, especially within the context of the Akan, stand out as a significant gap in the literature and practice, requiring a more profound exploration to inform and enrich the discourse on philanthropy in Ghana.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

The main objective of this research is to gain an in depth understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, with a particular focus on the Akan community – one of the most influential indigenous groups in the country. By doing so, this study aims to fill the existing knowledge gap regarding indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. The specific research objectives include examining how indigenous philanthropy is conceptualized in Ghana from the Akan perspective, exploring the characteristics and patterns of philanthropy within the Akan community in Ghana, and analysing the various forms and expressions of philanthropy within the Akan context. Additionally, this study also aims to identify any potential changes that may have occurred over time and investigate the underlying reasons behind such shifts.

1.6 Research questions

The main research question is, therefore, what is the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy, and the sub-question is: have there been any changes and what caused them?

1.7 Delimitations

This thesis primarily focuses on the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy, with a specific focus on philanthropy within Ghana. Although it would have been ideal to engage individuals from all 92 ethnic groups in Ghana to provide a comprehensive view of indigenous philanthropy in the country, the extent of such an investigation is beyond the scope of this thesis due to the significant resource investment required. As an exploratory study, the aim is to understand the essence of Akan philanthropy by examining its conceptualizations, expressions, characteristics, and practices. Consequently, the study does not measure the scope or impact

of Akan philanthropy.

An additional delimitation to consider is the reliance on indigenous knowledge as the foundation of this thesis. Thus, it was crucial to access authentic indigenous sources to obtain accurate information on Akan philanthropy. However, an important question arises regarding the availability of individuals who can be regarded as authentic bearers of indigenous knowledge, considering the enduring influence of colonialism, Western education, and modernity. The pervasive impact of colonialism and coloniality on Ghanaian and Akan cultures suggests that no individual remains unaffected by it (Gyekye, 1995). Nonetheless, within the Akan culture, particular individuals are recognized as cultural custodians and make significant efforts to preserve the authenticity of indigenous knowledge and culture. The researcher sought information from these individuals.

Although this research is focused on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, it is limited to the Akan perspective and therefore perspectives from other indigenous groups will be excluded. Within the Akan group, there are various sub-ethnic groups, but the study chose to sample the most dominant, the Asante, and one of the less prominent ones, the Ahanta, in order to achieve some balance. It was, however, difficult to find documented information specifically about the Ahanta. There is very little existing literature on the Ahanta culture and tradition, so much of the information obtained for this research was gleaned from participants, particularly in Essikado, one of the research locations. Essikado, also known as Sekondi, is a twin-city of Takoradi, the capital of the Western region. Essikado is the original and traditional name of Sekondi. Most of the primary and secondary data were obtained about the Asante, who not only have a rich culture but are also one of the most well-documented ethnic groups in Ghana (Agyekum, 2018). However, it is important to note that the Akan have uniform traditions and culture, so the collected data can be considered representative of Akan philanthropy as a whole.

Although the focus of the thesis is on understanding Akan philanthropy within the context of indigenous philanthropy, it should be acknowledged that Akan philanthropy encompasses other areas that were not explored in this study. Other forms of philanthropy practiced by the Akan may not fall under the definition of indigenous Akan philanthropy as outlined in this thesis. Research on the enabling environment for philanthropy in Ghana (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017) mentions other forms of contemporary and non-indigenous philanthropy, such as impact philanthropy, venture philanthropy, corporate giving, and alumni giving. It is plausible

that Akan individuals might be involved in these other forms of philanthropy as well.

The objective of this study was to gather information from credible sources that have a long history of preserving indigenous knowledge and systems (Gyekye, 1995). To achieve this, an indigenous methodology (Chilisa 2012, 2019) was adopted. This methodology promoted the use of ethnophilosophy and sagacity, therefore targeting a sample population primarily within the age range of 40 to 100 years. Consequently, the research participants consisted of relatively few youth. This choice reflects the Akan belief that the older generation and traditional elders and leaders possess the most reliable indigenous traditions, culture, and deep knowledge. It is important to note that this does not imply that there are no young individuals who possess authentic indigenous knowledge; rather, they are the exception rather than the rule.

1.8 Contribution to knowledge

Uncovering Akan philanthropy has the potential to contribute significantly to the documentation and exposure of a philanthropic model that is indigenous to Ghana. Furthermore, it will enrich the ongoing discourse on African philanthropy by introducing a credible challenge to the prevailing notion that Western philanthropy represents the global standard. Currently, there is a dearth of major studies on indigenous giving in Ghana. Existing literature on philanthropy in Ghana has predominantly focused on the Western philanthropic model (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Foundation Centre, 2017; Kumi, 2017; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017).

Scholars have criticised the present situation for its tendency to adopt philanthropic definitions from the global North without recognising the diverse philanthropic cultures and practices of developing countries, including Africa (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2010; 2013). Kumi (2019a) further asserts that “despite the growing attention given to African philanthropy in recent literature (Moyo & Ramsamy, 2014; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Fowler, 2016c), empirical research on African philanthropy at the national level, specifically in Ghana, remains limited” (p.1333). Atibil (2014) echoes this and the same point is also supported by Asante-Darko (2013), who proposed that

> Researchers, policymakers, and workers who are directly involved in philanthropic activities in Africa should trace and explore the current belief systems of respective communities to comprehend the values, attitudes, definitions, and significance that these

> communities attach to the practice of aid and philanthropy. This will help enhance the effectiveness of aid by indicating what objectives to prioritise and what programmes to put in place. (Asante-Darko, 2013, p. 95)

The SDG Philanthropy Forum in Ghana also supports this call for further research and advocates for "evidence-based research in total to guide the overall development of the philanthropy ecosystem in Ghana" (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017, p. 49). Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) similarly argue that there is an "urgent need for proper documentation of the nature and features of giving in Ghana" (p. 37). These studies highlight the necessity for in-depth research on philanthropic giving in Ghana. This thesis partially responds to this call by focusing on Akan philanthropy, which could serve as an additional model for sustainable development financing in Ghana and Africa. Fowler and Mati (2019) stress that "what is missing in today's conceptualisation of philanthropy is a profound understanding of African behaviours dedicated to the well-being of others in their own right and, consequently, what lessons they can offer in addressing the continent's manifold challenges by leveraging its inherent potential" (p. 724). Akan philanthropy may hold the key to addressing Ghana's problems if it is given the attention it deserves.

1.9 Conclusion

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the reader to the aims and objectives of the thesis and the problem it seeks to address, the key questions it would be answering, the background context, its scope as well as the contribution it intends to make in the field of philanthropy. Chapter two delves into a review of the extant literature on the subject of philanthropy in Africa, Ghana, and specifically indigenous philanthropy with a focus on the Akan. Chapter three outlines the methodology and methods adopted for the thesis explaining the reasoning behind the choices made as well as the limitations of the thesis and the ethical considerations. Chapter four presents the findings from the research process and these findings are discussed in detail in Chapter five. Chapter six concludes the thesis by re-engaging the research aims and objectives to gauge whether the research helped to answer the research questions and also discusses the implications of the findings for the field of philanthropy. Some suggestions are made on possible areas for future research.

2 CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the scholarly discussions surrounding the concept of African philanthropy, with a particular focus on philanthropy in Ghana. The initial exploration outlines the existing literature that frames philanthropy in Africa and in Ghana, emphasising the insights it provides and the notable gaps in scholarly research, especially concerning indigenous perspectives. This sets the stage for a comprehensive review of the literature on Akan philanthropy and underscores the necessity for further exploration, which constitutes the primary contribution of this thesis.

A structured approach is employed, beginning with a synthesis of established academic discourse and key theories supported by examples from existing literature. Subsequently, this chapter critically examines and articulates the persisting gaps in the field. The theoretical foundations uncovered in this review serve as the cornerstone for developing the theoretical framework that underpin the thesis, with a detailed rationale provided for the selection of these theories.

Moreover, this chapter provides the conceptual framework that will direct the thesis, offering a reasoned justification for its adoption. By integrating existing knowledge and identifying unexplored areas, this work is positioned as a robust and enlightening scholarly inquiry, providing a structured framework for the subsequent arguments and analyses.

2.2 African Philanthropy

2.2.1 Conceptualisation

African philanthropy is not only a common occurrence on the continent but is also a prevalent phenomenon that can be found in all parts of Africa (Aina and Moyo, 2013; Asante-Darko, 2013; Atibil, 2014; Everatt et al., 2005; Everatt and Solanki, 2004; Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mahomed, 2013; Mati, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2010, 2013; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Wilkinson-Maposa and Fowler, 2013;

Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). Philanthropy means ‘love of mankind’ (Sulek, 2009) and is a global and universal phenomenon. However, despite its universality, philanthropy is at its core cultural (Atibil, 2014; Asante-Darko, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019) and plays a significant role in the political, social, and economic lives of Africans. Moyo and Ramsamy (2014) observe that African philanthropy is practised throughout the full life cycle of an African being and as Moyo (2013) notes, “intrinsically embedded in the life cycle of birth, life, and death of many, if not all Africans” (p. 37).

Despite its prevailing existence, African philanthropy has not been given the needed focus in the global discourse on philanthropy, being relegated to the background (Fowler, 2016; Fowler and Mati, 2019; Mahomed, 2013; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005), and labelled as informal (Moyo, 2013; Mati, 2017; Fowler and Mati, 2019). It has been under-researched, marginalised, subjected to other (mostly Western) definitions of philanthropy, and under-represented in existing theorisation and interpretation (Fowler and Mati, 2019). The global perspective of the comprehension of philanthropy is therefore biased and incomplete, and an understanding of Africans’ own conceptualisation of philanthropy is missing (Aina and Moyo, 2019; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017). This challenges the possibility of finding solutions through African philanthropy to some of the problems faced on the continent (Fowler & Mati, 2019). More scholars are now producing research on African philanthropy and have endeavoured to conceptualise it through various categorisations that will be discussed in this chapter. What African philanthropy should be called has been another area of interest for scholars.

2.2.2 Terminology

Over the years, the definition of philanthropy has witnessed significant shifts globally. Sulek (2009) captures this transformation. Initially, philanthropy was primarily defined by its literal meaning, emphasising the ‘love of mankind’ (Sulek, 2009, p. 199). This sentiment was notably prevalent in the first editions of Webster’s dictionary, specifically the 1828 and 1864 versions, where the ‘love of mankind’ was highlighted at the outset of their definitions. However, by the time the second edition in 1934 was released, while the same literal meaning was acknowledged, it was relegated to the end of the definition. The modern online edition of the dictionary has further distanced itself from this original interpretation, omitting it entirely. This evolution indicates a diminishing emphasis on the traditional sentiment of philanthropy as the

love of humanity, especially in the context of contemporary British English.

Another striking evolution in the definition is the shift from viewing philanthropy as the motivation for benevolence to representing tangible acts of benevolence. The essence of philanthropy has transitioned from being a sentiment or will to a proactive effort towards the welfare of humankind. Recent definitions emphasise “active” (Sulek, 2009, p. 199) endeavours to enhance human welfare, underscored by examples like charitable gifts and supporting or funding organisations dedicated to philanthropic causes. Interestingly, whilst modern definitions gravitate towards actionable gestures, they seem to have sidestepped some core principles found in the earliest editions. For instance, the first edition championed universal benevolence, highlighting a commitment to the “whole human family” and a genuine “desire and readiness to do good to all men” (Sulek, 2009, p. 199). This ideal, reminiscent of enlightenment thought, has become fainter in later editions, indicating the ever-evolving nature of the term’s interpretation. Over the centuries, the meaning of philanthropy has changed from “an ideal state of mind to an objective reality in the world and leans strongly towards the latter” (Sulek, 2009, p. 200). It has moved from the nature and habits of the goodness of a man and leanings towards an integral part of universal humanity to their acts of benevolence as individuals and through institutions. This latter version of philanthropy is presented by both Sulek (2009) and Cunningham (2016) as the product of cultural and historical evolutionary events in Europe. This latter version has gained benchmark status for philanthropy worldwide. What constitutes philanthropy and the understanding of the word has not always been accepted wholesale, even in the West. Some of the debates have centred on distinguishing between charity and philanthropy within the global discourse on the subject. Philanthropists such as Carnegie sought to distinguish philanthropy from charity, perceiving the latter as giving for welfare and the former as giving to address root causes (Atibil, 2014; Cunningham, 2016; Mahomed, 2013). However, these are not important distinctions to make for African societies. This is because the African model of philanthropy has evolved within a different cultural setting in which those distinctions do not apply (Atibil, 2014). This may be the reason why authors like Ngondi-Houghton (2006), who tried to make a distinction between the two within African philanthropy, describing charity as addressing welfare issues and philanthropy as tackling the root causes of social injustice, have been criticised by others like Manji (2006) for failing to make that distinction (Mati, 2017). It is because it is a difficult one to make where African philanthropy is concerned.

It is not surprising that the word ‘philanthropy’ cannot be found in an African language (Asante-Darko, 2013). It is not an African word. There are, however, equivalences that are expressed in different ways, and it should be expected that there will be nuanced understandings within different cultural contexts of what philanthropy is (Asante-Darko, 2013). Some of the equivalent words used by writers are ‘giving’ (Aina, 2013; Moyo, 2013), ‘gifting’ (Fowler, 2016; Fowler and Mati, 2019), ‘help’ (Moyo, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa, 2016), or 'generosity' (Atibil, 2014; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa, 2016; Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), 2018), or ‘care’ (Moyo, 2013); solidarity (Moyo, 2013). As one participant in a global conference on philanthropy remarked, in reference to African philanthropy:

> If you are going to use the term philanthropy, you need to be specific about what you are talking about. It is not just rich institutions giving to poor people; it happens every day among ordinary people, and they just do not call it that. People call it charity, they call it help, they use giving, and they also use indigenous terms like Ubuntu or the terms for specific practices like *stokvels*. They use what they know and are familiar with. (Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), 2018, p. 8).

Fowler and Mati (2019) posit that the term 'gifting' is more fitting as it conveys the concept of giving something as a gift, signifying its value that significantly surpasses the act of giving. The benefits derived from gifting can also extend beyond the giver, sometimes not directly benefiting them. The authors argue that 'gifting' is a more precise term compared to 'giving,' as it does not require additional qualifiers (p. 727). They contend that giving can be devoid of a pro-social intention for the welfare of others. For instance, the act of "giving someone the cold shoulder" is highlighted as a form of giving that does not align with gifting (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p. 727). This suggests that giving can encompass a wide array of actions, hence necessitating qualifiers to indicate value. Fowler and Mati (2019) assert that the term 'gifting' effectively addresses this issue. Mati (2017), in his work predating the collaboration with Fowler in 2019, acknowledges the merit of Fowler's advocacy for 'gifting' as a replacement for African philanthropy. However, he observes minimal distinction in the examples provided compared to what is traditionally termed as philanthropy. To quote Mati (2017), who references several other distinguished scholars on the appropriateness of philanthropy as a broader term:

> While some of the existing studies of philanthropy in Africa include various forms and manifestations of giving, including volunteering, there are also many that offer qualifiers,

> caveats, and disclaimers regarding the usage of the term "philanthropy" in the African context. Despite these disclaimers and qualifiers, Moyo (2009a; 2009b; 2010), among others (Atibil, 2014; Copeland-Carson, 2005; Everatt and Solanki, 2004; 2008; Everatt et al., 2005; Habib and Maharaj, 2008; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2005; 2009; 2010; 2011; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014; Ngcoya and Mottiar, 2016a; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005; Wilkinson-Maposa and Fowler, 2009), argue that in Africa, "there is something that can be called 'philanthropy' and it takes primarily two dimensions: indigenous—usually informal; and institutional." Furthermore, expressions of and acts of philanthropy are found among both the rich and the poor alike (Mati, 2017, p.25).

The researcher agrees with this position and therefore prefers to use the term ‘philanthropy’ because she recognises it as an umbrella term which, being cultural at the core (Asante-Darko, 2013), can be termed differently in various contexts but still have a similar comprehension of giving to support others.

2.3 The African philanthropy landscape

One of the notable categorisations in African philanthropy proposed by Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) is that there is “philanthropy in Africa with African characteristics" (p. 106) also termed as vertical philanthropy, which is the formalised, institutional philanthropy that takes place on the continent and mirrors the institutionalised Western models of philanthropy, such as private foundations, corporate social responsibility, corporate philanthropy, impact investments, venture capitalism, etc. Then there is "African philanthropy" (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013, p. 106) also known as horizontal philanthropy (Wilkinson-Maposa, 2016), which is more of the indigenous, informal, traditional, non-institutionalised, common, and more prevalent philanthropic practice. The latter, which is "rooted in Africa", Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) note, is

> lived as an indigenous system of helping with interactive dimensions of interdependence between needs and help networks; the range of capitals valued and used in transactions; the conventions and rules employed; the motivations involved; and a normative moral philosophy that guides prosocial behaviour (p. 105).

In addition to the vertical and horizontal dimensions that Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) present, Moyo (2013) introduces a third category: hybrid philanthropy. Moyo (2013) notes that

vertical, formal, institutionalised practices of philanthropy in Africa and the horizontal, informal, indigenous practices rarely meet, and recognises the need for this meeting to happen. He acknowledges some movement in this direction. "Indeed," Moyo (2013) notes, "some of the modern-day practices in philanthropy in Africa are hybrids of pre-colonial and colonial social relations, organisations, and practices and their modern adaptations" (p. 6). This is a development that he finds encouraging (Moyo, 2013, p. 46). These include spin-offs of Western Foundations that are now wholly managed and led by Africans, like Trust Africa, and African initiated funds owned, led, and managed by Africans, like the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF). It also includes community foundations that have morphed from Western style pooled funds into nationally led and driven community foundations, like the Kenyan Community Development Fund (KCDF), or private foundations that have been established by African High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWI) like Mo Ibrahim, the Masiwas, Tony Elumelu, Dangote, etc. This category of individually owned foundations also includes the foundations set up by some past presidents like Nelson Mandela, John Kuffuor, Thabo Mbeki, etc. (Moyo, 2013, pp. 47, 48). For Moyo (2013), it is clear that African philanthropy does indeed include philanthropy with African characteristics. It is therefore not as clear-cut as a binary classification of vertical and horizontal philanthropy. Moyo (2013) makes the point that until recently, philanthropic foundations "were mainly those of international nature" and “were not linked to the cultural and philosophical foundations of solidarity, giving, and helping that Africans expound” (p. 46). These hybrid models presumably change that dynamic.

Horizontal philanthropy is contrasted with vertical philanthropy (Wilkinson-Maposa 2016, Wilkinson-Maposa et. al., 2005; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013), which is a more formal and institutionalised form of philanthropy. Vertical philanthropy is “largely comprised of giving or helping poorer people by wealthy individuals through means such as private foundations, trusts, corporate foundations, family trusts, community chests, and community foundations” (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017, p. 26). As Fowler and Mati (2019) indicate, this form of philanthropy is characterised by formal institutionalisation and a power dynamic that positions “the giver as having greater resources and power with respect to the recipient, as seen in grant making” (p. 728).

The Western philanthropic model, introduced to Africa through colonialism, Christian missions, and modernisation, primarily represents vertical philanthropy (Aina, 2013; Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), 2018). However, it is important to note that these categorisations are not absolute. One could argue that the practice of vertical philanthropy also

exists within African philanthropy. Asante-Darko (2013) describes how high-net-worth individuals in pre-colonial Asante were philanthropists who used their businesses as channels for philanthropy, extending charity sometimes to strangers rather than just kinsmen. Chieftaincy, for example, was one institution within pre-colonial Asante that served as a conduit for philanthropy, particularly for vulnerable members of society (Asante-Darko, 2013; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). This indicates that vertical philanthropy was practised within indigenous philanthropy among the Asante in Ghana. At the same time, horizontal philanthropy is also practised in the West, and scholars like Copeland-Carson (2005), who have written on black philanthropy which is, "the giving traditions mostly of African Americans who were born in the United States" (Copeland-Carson, 2005, p. 77), have often made references to a similar practice of horizontal philanthropy amongst them as well as African migrants. It could be argued that it is the same African culture and social norms that influence African-Americans and Africans in the diaspora, so it is not necessarily where they are located but what culture influences them. Indigenous in this context of philanthropy is not only about philanthropy originating from a geographical but also that from an epistemological or cultural location. Copeland Carson (2005) shares that

> philanthropy among American blacks did not develop in a cultural vacuum. Although victimised by slavery, African peoples transplanted many of their social practices, including indigenous approaches to philanthropy, to the Americas. Americans of African descent adapted their imported ancestral traditions to create new philanthropic practices—part of a distinctly African diasporan approach to giving and voluntary assistance in the New World that has continued to evolve (p.80).

These classifications of horizontal and vertical philanthropy are therefore not as straight-jacketed. The practice of vertical and horizontal philanthropy exists in both Africa and the West and might be quite difficult to separate because of the fluidity of philanthropic practice including that within indigenous African philanthropic practice. How would one categorise giving by the poor to the wealthy in African societies (Asante-Darko, 2013), giving by the wealthy to the wealthy within the context of community support (Asante-Darko, 2013), giving by chiefs to communities (Asante-Darko, 2013), or reciprocal giving within Africa that occurs between the physical and spiritual realms (Sarpong, 1974)? The issue, therefore, for the researcher, lies in which or whose knowledge and practice have been used as the qualifying criteria for defining what should be classified as philanthropy (horizontal or vertical) and which or whose knowledge has been ignored.

In contrasting predominantly horizontal philanthropy with predominantly vertical philanthropy, one also needs to avoid pigeonholing all giving by those in poverty as horizontal philanthropy (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005) or amenable to a single judgement. In addition, one should not categorise all giving by the well-off as vertical philanthropy. There are wealthy Africans who practise horizontal philanthropy and poor Africans who practise vertical philanthropy through religious institutions (as well as traditional hierarchies, royalty, etc.). The state of wealth or poverty of the giver, therefore, does not determine the typology of giving within African philanthropy. African philanthropy is not solely the preserve of the wealthy (Everatt & Solanki, 2004; Everatt et al., 2005; Mati, 2017; Wilkinson-Maposa, 2016, Wilkinson-Maposa et. al., 2005).

A national survey on individual giving was conducted in South Africa in 2003 and published in 2004 (Everatt & Solanki, 2004). It was found that over 93% of the 3,000 people surveyed (in the 12 months preceding the interview) had given either time, money, food, or some other resource to support an individual or a cause. The people surveyed were both rich and poor, which means that giving was also practised by those in poverty. In that ground-breaking research in South Africa and a later one by Wilkinson-Maposa et al. (2005), the myth that philanthropy was mainly practised by the wealthy was firmly debunked, as they demonstrated that among those in poverty, giving was also an integral part of life. Asante-Darko (2013) explains how in the pre-colonial era, the Asante believed that both the wealthy and the poor should be philanthropic. Philanthropic assistance was expected to be provided by everyone. He supports this argument with Akan maxims such as "*Obiara nni ho a new ho so no akwanko*" (nobody suffices unto himself for a journey) [meaning]... riches are not inherent to the rich, nor poverty to the poor" (p. 86). "*Ebere dane: time changes*". "*Bibiara tumi si,* anything can happen; there can be changes in fortunes...". He states that these maxims discourage any condescension from the one providing assistance (p. 86). The maxims suggest that one's financial situation can change from being rich today to being poor tomorrow, and vice versa. Additionally, regardless of wealth, everyone has something to offer. Therefore, we all need each other, and the person you help today might be the same person whose help you need tomorrow. This is a significant difference between African philanthropy and the prevailing Western philanthropic model, which assumes that the wealthy or well-off give to the needy (Wright, 2001). For instance, an OECD report (2018) on Private Philanthropy for Development linked an increase in wealth to a corresponding increase in private philanthropy, implying that philanthropy is tied to the financial success of the giver. This perception of Western philanthropy stems from the history and context of the West

and the role that Western philanthropy played, especially in supporting the impoverished in Europe (Cunningham, 2016).

A similar binary descriptive categorisation along the lines of the vertical and horizontal exists in scholarly descriptions of African philanthropy. Vertical philanthropy is also referred to as 'philanthropy for community' because it is usually done by the wealthy for the community, which unfortunately takes away the agency of the poor. Horizontal philanthropy, on the other hand, is called 'philanthropy of community' (Wilkinson-Maposa, 2016) because it is rooted in the community itself and propelled by it. This form of philanthropy involves giving by many, particularly the marginalised or the poor, to other poor individuals in their community. It is important to note that this type of philanthropy often has both cultural and linguistic underpinnings (Moyo, 2013). The focus of indigenous African philanthropy, however, is not solely on poverty but also on dignity (Asante-Darko, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019).

Apart from the aforementioned attempts to distinguish African philanthropy from others, particularly the dominant Western model, the African Grantmaker's network has developed another model, which divides African philanthropy into four quadrants (Dalberg Research and Dalberg Global Development Advisors, 2013, p. 8). These quadrants are as follows: One to Many (e.g., funding a national entrepreneurship programme); One to One (e.g., paying for the education of a direct acquaintance or family member); Many to Many (raising money for disaster response, even in another community or country); and Many to One (e.g., mobilising a neighbourhood or village to build a local health centre). The African Grantmakers Network (2013) report notes that there is limited information available on practices in the One-to-One quadrant, which is more of what has been labelled as horizontal giving, despite its common nature.

Fowler and Mati (2019) have used a different strategy: they provided an "ontological perspective of gift-giving" in Africa, using the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory model which they explain "is useful for comprehending how social institutions, such as philanthropy, are formed and reformed over time by interacting human agents" (p. 726). They thus produce another categorisation to clarify the distinctions within the African philanthropy landscape. These categories are grouped into two broad areas of endogenous and exogenous philanthropy. They present, through this model, the different kinds of philanthropic practices in Africa in a chronological narrative that shows the different typologies in African philanthropy from pre-colonial times through the postcolonial times up until the current era (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p.

724-735).

Within the band of endogenous 'gifting', they place “gifting as integrated social caring and reproduction” in the pre-colonial column, and this changes to “adaptations as protective/survivalist/resistance mechanisms” during the colonial era (1600-1900). Then, it moves to “normative recovery/self-determination/instrument of ethnic patrimonialism” in the first postcolonial era of 1960-2000. Post-2000 until today, philanthropy has become a “re-inscription/blending of indigenous practices and values plural acceleration”. “Diaspora giving” is placed in both postcolonial periods. Then there is the exogenous philanthropy group that spans the colonial through the current era and includes philanthropic practices like “Caritas” (within the colonial era). “Institutional grant-making and officially aided and private funders” are placed within the postcolonial period, and the 'newbies' which are the “New Age Philanthropies, Mega, Strategic, Venture, Impact, and Catalytic funders” are located in the current era. In the middle is the blended category, which suggests the hybridity indicated by Moyo (2013). From the colonial era, “charitableness” and “customary-modern mixing” are found in the colonial space. “NGO-isms and inter(national) presencing” are situated in the postcolonial phase, and “funded grant-makers, community foundations, and local resource mobilisation” are positioned in the post-2000 to the current era. Of these hybrid versions, “customary-modern mixing”, “inter(national) presencing”, and “local resource mobilisation” fall within the endogenous gifting matrix, indicating that those practices emanate more from within the African continent than without. Fowler and Mati (2019, p. 729) have a disclaimer that this "temporal schema must not be read as transitions, but as successive histo-geographical layering".

Within the literature on African philanthropy, this schema, so far, seems to be the most comprehensive and clearest (in the opinion of the researcher) layout yet of all the different forms of philanthropic practice in Africa or African philanthropy from pre-colonial times till the millennia. One deduction that can be made from the schema is that endogenous gifting is more of what Fowler and Wilkinson- Maposa (2013) call philanthropy that is 'rooted in Africa,' and this is where this thesis aims to focus. The rootedness is what makes the difference. Thus, this thesis will be looking at a philanthropic system that has originated from within Ghana, but the choice is made to use the word 'indigenous' instead of 'endogenous' because the focus here is on the Akan, a particular ethnic group in Ghana, and uncovering their philanthropy from their indigenous knowledge systems, beliefs, and practices. Moyo (2013) describes 'indigenous philanthropy' as "bottom- up" or "grassroots philanthropy … the predominant character of what

has been called 'African philanthropy" (p.8). The following sections will shed more light on institutions and practice within indigenous philanthropy in Africa.

2.4 Indigenous philanthropy in Africa: Institutions and Practices

Moyo (2013) notes that "what is often referred to as indigenous philanthropy comprises grassroots giving and care built on internally derived practices of mutual aid, reciprocity, solidarity, and mutual obligation" (p.8). Indigenous philanthropic institutions or organisations are presented as not necessarily well-structured and quite basic. Moyo (2013) calls them “rudimentary”, and "usually connected to institutions of 'lineage', kinship, or ethnic affiliation" (p.8). He contrasts this with "another group of philanthropic actors" said to be "composed of foreign transplants with distinctive and more intentionally structured organisational forms, values, and practices...[which] were set up specifically as charitable organisations, relief organisations, and human development organisations promoting volunteering, public service, and duty" (p.9). The latter fall within the vertical philanthropy spectrum and the former, horizontal. This difference identified by Moyo (2013) is further explained by Fowler and Mati (2019, p. 728), who add the perspective that "gifting's informal institutionalism is predominantly horizontal in nature between people of similar means". This horizontal kind of giving does not, in the main, use or require organisations or formal institutions as conduits, unlike many Western philanthropic foundations. It is practiced through material exchanges of food, money, and clothes, and non-material exchanges of knowledge, physical or moral support, emotional support, time, and skills (Moyo, 2013). Hyden (1983) calls it the "economy of affection". He defines this as:

> A network of support, communications, and interactions among structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community, or other affinities, for example, religion. It links together in a systematic fashion a variety of discrete economic and social units which in other regards might be autonomous. ... These are 'invisible organisations' (pp. 8-10).

Indigenous African philanthropic practices that are listed in the literature include "cooperatives, rotation and savings clubs, communal collective efforts and burial societies" (Moyo, 2013), and mutual aid (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013; Aina and Moyo, 2013; Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kuljian, 2013; Wilkinson Maposa et. al, 2016, Atibil, 2014, Kumi, 2017; Fowler & Mai, 2019). Volunteerism is also mentioned in the list as a key indigenous African philanthropic

practice (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Fowler & Mati, 2013) "based on the long-established [African] tradition of sharing" (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013, p. 153). Diaspora giving from the African diaspora is also highlighted as part of this category (Aina & Moyo, 2013; Copeland-Carson, 2005; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017; Muzondidya & Chororo, 2013). There have been debates about whether or not African diaspora contributions are just economic transactions or could be considered philanthropic contributions to the development of their communities, and some scholars (Copeland-Carson, 2007; Mukwedeya, 2009, 2012; Tchouassi, 2011; Tchouassi & Fondo, 2010) have argued that they are philanthropic acts (cited in Mati, 2017). Copeland-Carson (2005) notes that:

> Philanthropy is not limited to formal charitable institutions or developed nations. It also includes informal social networks, practices, and traditions that foster mutual aid and reciprocity that have existed throughout history in all societies among people of varying financial means. From this perspective, philanthropy, including practices in the African diaspora, consists of the voluntary means that any culture or social group uses to redistribute financial and other resources for the purposes of promoting the collective good. The institutional mechanisms and social obligations that surround these voluntary practices will vary across societies and their constituent communities and may not be explicitly defined as philanthropic from a conventional Western perspective. (p. 78)

Another category of philanthropy that is highlighted in the literature on African philanthropy is faith-based giving and even though one may question its indigeneity, some attention is given to it in this part of the thesis to clearly establish the non-indigeneity of faith-based giving and highlight the distinction. This differentiation is important because the presentation of faith-based religion in the literature (Habib et.al., 2008; Kumi, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Tijani & Abdallah, 2023) considering the religious nature of the majority of Africans and the consequent magnitude of religious giving could be erroneously included in the category of indigenous giving. However, faith-based giving in Africa is the philanthropic practice of Africans through the institutionalised religions that were introduced into the continent through colonialism and other means (Mati, 2017). Many of these religions have caring for others or Caritas as important aspects of the faith (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2007; Copeland-Carson, 2007; Everatt et al., 2005: Fowler, 206; Mati, 2017). Africans are highly religious (Mati, 2017) and Fowler & Mati (2019) note that “Charitableness … arose as an intermediary blending that was increasingly Africanised as Christian or Muslim religious affiliations grew and became imbued with the use of pre-existing

symbols, references, values and African religious thinking" (p.732). In South Africa, for instance, Mati (2017) cites the study by Habib et.al. (2008, p. 28) which reported that:

> [F]aith-based philanthropy is the single largest component of South African giving. Of the 89 per cent of respondents who profess some sort of religious belief, 96 per cent gave money, time and goods. This figure dropped to 80 per cent for atheists. Eighty per cent of respondents gave to religious institutions, while organisations of the poor followed at a dis- tant second with 29 per cent of respondents privileging them with their resources. (p.47)

Faith-based philanthropy in Africa has a developmental focus as well and the related institutions introduced non-reciprocal practices like formal volunteering practices and the establishment of welfare institutions (Fowler, 2016; Mati, 2017). Mati (2017) notes that

> Many religious institutions in Africa have a development focus. Throughout Africa, from the colonial era to the present, they have played a crucial role in establishing welfare institutions such as orphanages, old age homes, healthcare facilities, and educational facilities. (p. 47)

The practices are also mainly private and adherents to the faith are encouraged to be discreet about their giving. This has contributed to the challenges in collecting data on faith-based giving on the continent (Mati, 2017; Kumi 2019b; Tijani and Abdallah, 2023). This challenge notwithstanding, the role of faith-based giving is acknowledged in African philanthropy.

Fowler and Mati's (2019) categorisation of faith-based giving in Africa as "intermediary blending" (p. 732) seems accurate because even though reference is made to faith-based giving within the discourse on giving by African indigenes, the indigeneity of it, in the view of the researcher, is debatable. The practice may settle more comfortably in the region of hybrid philanthropy but tilted more towards the vertical than the horizontal. While these institutions, which are now based in Africa, and their practices can be considered part of broader African philanthropy, there is a question as to whether they can be truly classified as indigenous to Africa. The origins of these institutions raise a debate, especially when one considers the values that drive indigenous African philanthropy. This thesis argues that the scholarship on African philanthropy so far has not produced information on faith-based philanthropy that is indigenous.

The indigenous African philanthropic practices, particularly the horizontal practices contribute to a number of ways to the communities and societies that practise them. It is first and foremost a way of supporting the welfare and wellbeing of households and communities (Hanson, 2004; Fowler & Mati; Mati, 2017; 2020; Moyo, 2013). Mati (2016) shares that:

> Empirical evidence provided in academic and practitioner literature shows that the income poor give an enormous amount of help to extended family, neighbours, clansmen, and their communities in general [but that rather] in many instances, researchers do not treat these forms of help as volunteering or philanthropic activities, but rather just as obligation. (p. 25)

This contribution of indigenous philanthropy in Africa has remained and is also known as 'non-agonistic' giving (Mauss, 1969; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2020). Mati (2016) notes the "substantial literature suggesting that the mutual aid and self-help orientations of volunteering and giving in Africa are the bulwark in securing the financial and human capital assets of the income poor in Africa (see for example Bebbington, 2010; Everatt and Solanki, 2004; 2008; Everatt et al., 2005; Gillette, 2003; Patel and Mupedziswa, 2007; Wilkinson-Maposa and Fowler, 2009; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005; etc.)", and particularly the fact that many of those who give so much of their time and self are from poor or underprivileged backgrounds (Everatt and Solanki, 2004; 2008; Everatt et al., 2005; Kuljian, 2005; Patel and Mupedziswa, 2007; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005)" (p.25). In colonial times and what Ekeh (1975) describes as a realm of 'two publics', Fowler and Mati (2019) note that "customary legacy and 'Ubuntu' morality of social obligation, reciprocity, and gifting were probably reinforced as mechanisms for economic survival and political mobilisation" (p.732).

It was, however, also used to build social, reputational, and relational capital because identity with the community and respected recognition was connected to one's reciprocal giving obligations (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Kumi, 2017; Moyo, 2013). People gave to support their communities but also gave to enhance their reputation and standing as good members of the community. This other kind of seemingly self-serving giving, termed 'agonistic giving' (Mauss, 1954; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2020),when presented as philanthropy and particularly its altruistic ethos has been questioned (Moyo, 2013; Kumi, 2019a). However, as Fowler and Mati (2019) explain, this was needed in pre-colonial times to build kingdoms because there was the need to have hierarchies and build allegiances and loyalty to authority, and giving was sometimes used to buy that loyalty or, in the converse, curry favour (Fowler & Mati, (2019) citing

Mauss, 1969). There is another explanation that is given by Fumanti (2013) and this is related to the fact that agonistic giving, in addition to non-agonistic giving, strengthened communal bonds and relational ties by establishing community identity and acceptance (Fumanti, 2013). Fumanti (2013) was justifying this in the context of the activities, philanthropy included, of the Akan diaspora in London.

2.4.1 Features of Indigenous African Philanthropy - Values-driven

African philanthropy is anchored in the theory of *Ubuntu* (Atibil, 2014; Dolamo, 2014; Hailey, 2008; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Kuljian, 2013; Mati, 2017; 2020; Ramose, 1999) with certain unique characteristics, principles, and values (Atibil, 2014; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017, 2020; Metz, 2007a; 2007b; 2011). *Ubuntu* is the interconnectedness and interdependency of humanity for human well-being (Atibil, 2014; Dolamo, 2014; Hailey, 2008; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Kuljian, 2013; Mati, 2017; 2020; Metz, 2007a; 2007b; 2011; Ramose, 1999). Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) call it "the philosophy of common humanity" (p. 127). The next few sections will dwell on the subject of *Ubuntu* and its derived values of communitarianism, reciprocity, and moral obligation because of their significance in enabling an understanding of the worldview that Africans have and believe in. It will explore what Africans indigenously perceive as knowledge, the related knowledge systems, and the values and ethics that they live by. More importantly, it will examine how these values and principles anchor and drive indigenous philanthropy in Africa. These parameters will guide later discussions on the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy.

2.4.1.1 *Ubuntu*

Ubuntu, which Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) describe as a "theory of collective self with strong spiritual and symbolic connotations" (p. 121), is about the essence of being human or human being and becoming identified with one's humanity (Ramose, 1999). It is the belief that my humanity is bound up with yours (Mati, 2017, p. 37). It is a fundamental belief in the interwoven nature of humanity. Fowler and Mati (2013), quoting Dolamo (2013), who referred to Broodryk (2008), note that "*Botho/Ubuntu* is the ideal of being human, derived from a worldview based on the guiding principle of *'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'* (I am a person through other persons)" (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p. 730). As the Akan saying goes, "*onipa yieye firi onipa*," meaning "the well-being of a [human being] depends on his [or her] fellow [human being]"

(Gyekye, 2013, pp. 229-232). This Akan maxim points to the fact that for your sustainability and survival, it is incumbent upon you to support my well-being, and vice versa. Therefore, we thrive collectively. Gyekye (1995) makes the case that Ubuntu is parallel to Akan humanism. Instead of ‘humanism’ however, Ramose (1999), however, proposes the use of the term 'humanness' because, in his view, there is a certain continuous development of the Ubuntu concept connected to one's integrated relationship with the ecosystem, an understanding which, in his view, the concept of humanism, which he defines as a Western concept, does not have. So, Ramose’s position is that,

> Humanness is a better rendition of the concept than humanism. The former suggests both a condition of being and the state of becoming of openness or ceaseless unfolding. It is thus opposed to any ism, including humanism, for this tends to suggest a condition of finality, a closedness, or a kind of absolute either incapable of or resistant to any further movement. But motion being the principle of change, it follows that resistance to it is tantamount to resistance to change. This basic difference between humanness and humanism speaks to two different perceptions of and perspectives on reality or being. Humanness regards being or the universe as a complex wholeness involving the multi-layered and incessant interaction of all entities. This condition of permanent, multi-directional movement of entities is not, by definition, chaos. On the contrary, it is both the source and manifestation of the intrinsic order of the universe. Herein lies the ecosophical dimension of the indigenous African concept of *botho/hunhu/Ubuntu*. (Ramose, 1999, p. 105)

Whether or not one chooses the term humanness or humanism to describe *Ubuntu*, there is a consensus that *Ubuntu* is an African philosophical worldview (Gyekye, 1995; Ramose, 1999; Hailey, 2008; Fowler & Mati, 2019), and it is this worldview of interdependence for well-being and survival that anchors and drives African philanthropy. This philosophical worldview is underpinned by certain principles. In his literature review on *Ubuntu*, Hailey (2008), who refers to *Ubuntu* as "African Humanism" notes that

> African humanism should not just be seen through a Western philosophical lens, but as an indigenous process, even an art, related to our humanity and the way our humanness is attained through our engagement with the wider community. It has also come to be associated with the idea of *Ubuntu* ethics which, because of its emphasis on the

> individual and the community, differs from the dominant Western ethical paradigm that is rooted in the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter. (p.4)

This fundamental distinction between a Western worldview and that of the African is important for a discussion on indigenous philanthropy because it explains the rationale behind the understanding, nature, and practices of indigenous African philanthropy. Additionally, it justifies the calls for indigenous African philanthropy to be foregrounded and as equally valued as Western models of philanthropy. They are not the same and indigenous African philanthropy should not be subsumed under Western philanthropy. They have to be placed on the same pedestal as equals in the universe of global philanthropy. They are equal but different. They have different roots and are different trees but they can all be found in the forest of philanthropy and must be acknowledged and valorised equally. It is worth noting that the origins of Western philanthropy emphasised ‘love for mankind’ (Sulek, 2009; Cunningham, 2016). However, over the years, with Western socio-cultural and political evolution, “the economic capitalism model associated with Western philanthropy has somewhat detached it from a 'love of humankind'" (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, p.128). Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa(2013) note that "horizontal philanthropy locates closer to the Latin roots of the term”, which is 'love for mankind', “than today's Western philanthropic industry" (p.125). Speaking of the South African culture, Metz (2011) notes that ‘love’ is core to *Ubuntu* and at the heart of morality. He states that

> To begin to see the philosophical appeal of grounding ethics on such a conception of community, consider that identifying with others can be cashed out in terms of sharing a way of life and that exhibiting solidarity toward others is naturally understood in terms of caring about their quality of life. And the union of sharing a way of life and caring about others’ quality of life is basically what English speakers mean by a broad sense of ‘friendship’ (or even ‘love’). Hence, one major strand of Southern African culture places friendly (or loving) relationships at the heart of morality, as others have tersely summarised *Ubuntu* on occasion. (p. 539)

Ubuntu has been criticised by scholars such as van Binsbergen (2001) who is quoted in Bewaji & Ramose (2003) as "some value system, idealistic, metaphysic, or epistemic construct from a pristine African historical, pre-colonial, pre-apartheid, and pre-Christian civilising past" (p.379). van Binsbergen perceives *Ubuntu* as a recent academic construct produced by African academics who live a schizophrenic existence and expound on African culture through the lens of Western education and urbanisation. He believes they have been motivated by "oppression,

economic exploitation, and cultural alienation, which have been the bane of South African society for over two centuries" (pp.379-380). van Binsbergen asserts that authentic traditional people living in villages did not use or acknowledge Ubuntu, even in their languages, although perhaps aspects of their practice could be referred to as Ubuntu. Consequently, Ubuntu could not be raised to a global standard of practice for all of Africa and is therefore not an African value that informs African philanthropy. Ubuntu, according to van Binsbergen, is as a result, currently non-existent and at best adopted in remote areas and villages through different practices.

In a sharp rebuttal of van Binsbergen's critique, Bewaji (2003, pp.386-387) points out that van Binsbergen's views are "inconsistent and self-contradictory." Bewaji highlights how van Binsbergen dismisses the existence of Ubuntu, other than being a nostalgic fantasy of the African elite, whilst simultaneously admiring the conduct of customary trials. Bewaji explains that van Binsbergen fails to realise that the consensual way of reaching a verdict for the benefit of the community is inspired by the values of Ubuntu in traditional African communities, even today (Bewaji & Ramose, 2003). Bewaji asserts as follows:

> van Binsbergen's views are inconsistent and self-contradictory. He argues that Ubuntu has no local, village, indigenous, or cultural historicity, as African village sages do not espouse it (van Binsbergen, 2001, pp. 64, 78). Rather, it is a new construct by a new intellectual elite group searching for utopia and prophecy. Yet he suggests that traditional Ubuntu controversy resolutions would include fines, sacrifices, and, in dire situations, capital punishment, contrary to the Tutu-led Truth and Reconciliation Commission blanket pardon to apartheid agents (van Binsbergen, 2001, pp. 75, 77). Clearly, van Binsbergen fails to realise that the reason the local villagers still trust the village head's judgement in settling matters is because they believe in Ubuntu, the transparency of the motives of the headman, his relations to his ancestors, and his loyalty to the community (and not his bank account or credit card!). (pp. 386-7)

The main thrust of Bewaji's argument against van Binsbergen's critique is that *Ubuntu* is still very much a part of African culture and tradition and plays a role in the daily lives of Africans, even in contemporary times. *Ubuntu*, as it exists in present-day Africa, is what drives African philanthropy. Scholars like Bell (1991), however, caution that all Western societies should not be categorised as being individualistic or all African societies as being communitarian or communalistic, but rather that there is a spectrum of relationships in both societies. Whilst this

may be true, it is important to bear in mind the point made earlier that the fundamental communitarian characteristics of *Ubuntu*, which anchor African societies and drive African philanthropy, are community-oriented. This does not mean that an individual's autonomy and rights are not respected (Gyekye, 1992, 2013). Rather, the individual is seen as an integral part of the community, and therefore, by taking care of the community and its members, the individual is taken care of. Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) expound on this

> In the African settings investigated, the poor giver is also a receiver in terms of respecting and reaffirming their own identity as a human being. As a previous quotation infers, not to give is to separate oneself from humanity. A crucial implication is that if the moral philosophy of *Ubuntu* as 'the collective self' holds true, giving is an act of 'self-reciprocity', neither selfish, nor selfless. The supposed dichotomy between the two does not hold. (p. 128)

The Akan demonstrate this conjoining of the individual and the community with the *adinkra* symbol of Siamese crocodiles (Figure 3). Even though the crocodiles have different heads, indicating individuality and diversity, they have one stomach, indicating unity and communitarianism. They can eat and enjoy food separately, but it goes into one stomach for their mutual survival. Thus, their survival depends on cooperation for the benefit of each other, even though there are individual experiences towards the achievement of that goal. It is this aspect of mutual dependence for well-being and survival that also makes African philanthropy more of a moral responsibility than voluntary altruism.

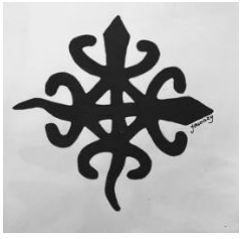


Figure 3: Adinkra symbol: Siamese crocodiles
Source: Artist Yawa Arhin

A dose of realism in the consideration of *Ubuntu* is advised by Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), who noted within the context of their research on help among the poor in Southern Africa that

> As a philosophy of collective self, *Ubuntu* should not be reified or overestimated as a foundation for cooperation. Nevertheless, the respondents' moral framework invites re-interpretation of what self-interest and selflessness mean if 'self' is a collective property. In such a philosophy of collective identity, help is never selfless – which creates problems with the concept of altruism if defined as a selfless act.(p. 121)

This underscores where the focus should be in discussing how *Ubuntu* informs indigenous African philanthropy. It is about the welfare and dignity of the collective self – the community and the self embedded within it.

2.4.1.2 *Community*

Consequently, within the fabric of Ubuntu is the yarn that binds communities, which we will refer to here as communalism. This is the bond that holds the community together, and although the individual is important, their worth and strength are bound to that of the community. This is the essence of the African concept of community and communal well-being. This essential sense of community is what has been described as the "philanthropy of community" (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013). In African philanthropy, there are usually communal or familial ties between the giver and receiver (Moyo, 2008; Atibil, 2014). Kinship in indigenous philanthropic giving in Africa is so important that even when strangers were recipients of philanthropy, it was because they were considered family (Feierman, 1998). Feierman (1998) writes that

> it is not a mere fiction to say that those who received help were relatives. Knowledge of kinship linkages, however distant, was potentially lifesaving. In a world where the gift was both moral and material, giving was a form of incorporation. Strangers became family, and so giving took place within the family (p. 44).

The 'community' here also includes spiritual and environmental beings and elements (Dei, 1999, 2012; Gyekye, 1995, 1996; Mbiti, 1990; Ramose, 1999; Wiredu, 1992). The emphasis is on the well-being of humanity through and together with its cosmic relations. It is, in essence, what Ramose (1999, p. 45) calls the "metaphysics of Ubuntu philosophy". It is three-dimensional and includes the existence of the human being on this earth, the relationship between the living and

the dead, whom he refers to as the 'living dead' or the 'ancestors', and a third dimension, which "is that of the yet-to-be-born. These are beings of the future. It is the task of the living to see to it that the yet-to-be-born are born" (Ramose, 1999, p. 45). *Ubuntu* is thus not anti-supernaturalist (Gyekye, 1995).There is therefore a strong belief in the existence of beings in the spiritual world—the supreme God, the ancestors, deities, and spirits who sometimes inhabit natural elements (Dei, 1999; 2000; 2012; Gyekye, 1995; 1996; Mbiti, 1990; Ramose, 1999; Wiredu, 1992). They are active participants in the reciprocal philanthropic practices within the African community and give and receive for the well-being of the community as a whole (Sarpong, 1974). Rasmussen (2000) shares an alms-giving practice of the Tuaregs in Niger, where they give food to their ancestors through a mortuary ritual with the expected benefit of protection.

> Alms offerings are prominent in ideals and practices surrounding elders, ancestors, and mortuary rituals among the Tuareg people of the Niger Republic, West Africa. Many statements associate elderhood with *takote* (alms), often translated into French by local speakers as *la charité* and *l'aumône*. Elders predominate during the condolence phase of Tuareg mortuary rituals called *iwichJcan,* which feature the *takote* memorial or commemorative meals. These meals are conceptualised as alms offerings and are believed to confer the protection of a religious amulet on the families who host them. (p.15)

This is a belief and understanding of community that Africans share with many Native American or First Nation communities (Mauss, 1969). Kovach in Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 219) calls it "indigenous holism".

> Indigenous holism is about intuition and observation and the relational connection to the universe around us as human beings (Cajete, 1999; Dossey, 1985). The relational dynamic between self, others, and nature is central. Integral to the relational dynamic is a belief in the non-differentiation of spiritual and physical energies. As indigenous philosophers articulate holism, they reference holism as involving the sacred and the mundane and propose integration rather than fragmentation. A marked commonality of the writings is the heightened importance of an interconnected empirical and metaphysical world.

This worldview informs the philanthropy of Native Americans and other First Nation cultures (Kovach, 2018; Mauss, 1969). There is a communal relationship between 'the self and others'

(temporal and spiritual) that involves giving and receiving for holistic sustenance. It differs from the Western Cartesian worldview, and Kovach (2018) notes that "in academia, we do not yet fully understand indigenous holism, as such philosophies were suppressed and left in the shadows through the force of Western science, methodology, and the limitations of the language associated with it" (p. 220).

As a consequence, the global discourse on philanthropy, which has been dominated by Western philanthropy, discusses spirituality in philanthropy mainly within the context of Western religions such as Christianity and also other institutionalised religions like Islam.

In recent times, faith-based giving, particularly within the Church, is criticised by some for the promotion of a philanthropic culture of adherents who are commodified because they seem to be valued for the material they bring rather than for the value they have as humans themselves (Ramose, 1999). Ramose (1999) describes the present state as one where "religion appears to have lost its appeal because, in this positivistic, calculative, and scientistic age, even the Christian God is trapped in the veneration of the dollar on the altar of a deep-rooted materialistic culture. The human being as a *motho*—a being that is of value in itself—has now lost its value except as far as it can be used as a means" (p. 109). This is a far cry from the kind of physical-spiritual relationship that is expected to govern indigenous philanthropy.

The connection within the community is not only between the physical and the spiritual but also between the individual and the community. African philanthropy has therefore been described as "non-individualistic" by Mligo (2021, p.1). Being non-individualistic does not, however, mean that the individual has no autonomy (Gyekye, 1992; Mligo, 2021). Communalism here is not just about living together or doing communal activities together, but also about how each individual perceives each other and their related dependence on one another, and hence their support for one another for their mutual well-being. Consequently, relationships are essential (Mligo, 2021), and Atibil (2014) note that kinship, ethnic and links that individuals and groups have to their places of origin as well as social connections as a necessary characteristic for African philanthropy. Another important aspect is the collective responsibility embedded in *Ubuntu*. Mbiti (1969) expresses this as follows:

> Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his duties, his privileges, and his responsibilities towards himself and other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he

> rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours, and his relatives, whether dead or living. When he gets married, he is not alone, and neither does his wife 'belong' to him alone. So also do the children belong to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only their father's name. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (p.106).

The identity, and with it, the knowledge of the individual is therefore hidden in the collective, and vice versa. This is the reason why identity within the African community plays such a critical role (Appiah, 2005). As expressed by Fowler and Mati (2019), "the philosophy of bonding and exchange in pre-colonial era had a psycho-social effect on human identity. Humanity was conceived and encapsulated in a humanistic (*Ubuntu)* ethic of a profound mutualness of being as humans" (p. 730). Metz (2011) describes this as follows”

> there are two recurrent themes in typical African discussion of the nature of community as an ideal, what I call ‘identity’ and ‘solidarity’. To identify with each other is largely for people to think of themselves as members of the same group, that is, to conceive of themselves as a ‘we’, for them to take pride or feel shame in the group’s activities, as well as for them to engage in joint projects, co-ordinating their behaviour to realise shared ends. For people to fail to identify with each other could go beyond mere alienation and involve outright division between them, that is, people not only thinking of themselves as an ‘I’ in opposition to a ‘you’, but also aiming to undermine one another’s ends. (p. 538)

The importance of this individual identity within and with community still exists in this contemporary era and not only in the pre-colonial times, but in a different form and this is discussed in later chapters.

Ramose (2002), as referenced by Bewaji and Ramose (2003), introduces another dimension into the discussion on *Ubuntu*, which suggests that *Ubu* (being)-*untu* (human) is not just about be-ing human but about be-coming human. He explains that

> the sense of becoming that attaches to *untu* is both ontological, legal, social, and moral. It is the being of the *ubu* or *umu* in particular states and in relation to other *untus*. There

> is a way in which other modes of existence have *ubu*, but the peculiarity of the *ubu* of *untu* separates it from that of other entities qualitatively in the sense of not just being human, but of becoming human. (Ramose, 2002, p. 392)

This concept posits that significance lies not merely in the acknowledgement of an individual's humanity by virtue of being born human and belonging to the human species, but the acknowledgement, acceptance, and validation of one's humanity by the community through one's incorporation into that community (Ramose, 1999). When considering the implications of this perspective for African philanthropy, in accordance with Ramose's views, it underscores the value of aligning oneself with the community and cultivating social capital and a favourable reputation through active engagement in African philanthropic endeavours. It shares similarities with Schervish and Haven (1998)'s identity model but is quite different. Schervish and Haven (1998)'s identity model postulates what they call "the virtue of radical care," which is when "a person identifies with another person in need and subsequently tries to meet the person's needs because he perceives others as valuable" (Rudich, 2007, p. 24). The difference between this position and Ramose's position is a matter of who the 'self' is in relation to the 'community' and who gives recognition to that identity. Schervish and Haven's (1998) position is based on individualism - there is no role for community. The orientation is different. Even though there may be some strands that may seem similar between the two positions, Ramose notes that "[to] discover familiarity between Western and Ubuntu philosophy is not the same thing as to affirm identity between them. The two philosophies are not and cannot be identical since, to be identical, they must dissolve into one philosophy only" (Ramose, 2002, p. viii). Ramose's position gives the responsibility of endorsing identity to the community because the individual does not only exist within the community. Rather, the individuality of the person is made whole in the community through different instances of incorporation in the lifetime of that person which confers on them their personhood.

Scholars (Bewaji, 2003; Gyekye, 1992; Menkiti, 1984; Wiredu, 1992) have debated this postulation of a human being's personhood and whether they attain it at birth or become a person through the recognition of the community. Menkiti (1984) also advances Ramose's (2002) idea that the community has to affirm the individual's humanity, but Gyekye (1992) and Wiredu (1992), later supported by Bewaji (2003), dispute it. The latter argue that Ramose's point would mean that a person may be a human being but is less human than others who have been accepted and endorsed by the community, and that this does not only fly in the face of

human rights but also gives too much power to the community (Gyekye, 1992). As Gyekye (1992) states:

> To explicate personhood in terms of moral capacities is not to imply by any means that it is the community that fully defines or confers personhood, even though it can be admitted that through such activities as moral instruction, advice, admonition, and the imposition of sanctions, the community can be said to play some role in a person's moral life. (Gyekye, 1992, p. 111)

Ramose's point, on the face of it, seems to explain better why African philanthropy is so prevalent and expected in the life of every African and why the community plays such a central role. It would seem from Ramose's viewpoint that an individual's philanthropic way of life increases their likelihood of having their personhood affirmed. Gyekye (1992), however, makes an alternative point in his contribution to the debate. In Gyekye's view, it is not the endorsement of the person as a human being or their personhood, but the welfare and well-being of the individual that are tied to those of the community. For that individual to enjoy that welfare and well-being, their existence is accepted by the community, and their membership in the community is endorsed through several means, not only in life but also in their death (Hailey, 2008). That, rather, is the 'becoming' part of *Ubuntu*. Being recognised and endorsed, however, just makes the individual more fully integrated into that whole, which is the community. That is why there are sayings like *oye nnipa* [he is a human being] to describe a good person within the community who demonstrates the spirit of Ubuntu by seeking the welfare of the community and others within it (Gyekye, 1992). That is not to dispute the person's humanity or rights as a human being but to commend their existence as being beneficial to them and the community. It is about their character and beneficence to the community, not their humanity. Gyekye's position is a better explanation of why African philanthropy is not only ingrained in African communal life but is also expected. It promotes belongingness in the African community which, as already noted, is an essential ingredient for participating in the community's philanthropic activity and its benefits to and through the community. Making a differentiation between *Ubuntu* and Western norms Hailey (2008) puts it this way:

> In the West, we might talk of 'I think therefore I am' whereas the *Ubuntu* version would be translated as 'I am human because I belong'. Thus, *Ubuntu* can be seen as a radical reflection of our humanity, yet it also has the universal appeal of traditional community values (Hailey, 2008, p. 5).

In conclusion, *Ubuntu* is core to the life and culture of Africans. Bewaji (2003, pp. 16–17) captures it as follows: "the concept of be-ing (being) in *Ubuntu* represents what philosophy is about in Africa and, more importantly, what is philosophised. Without it, there would be no language, no culture, no religion, no philosophy, no medicine, no law, no politics—only a vacuum." A derivative of this is that without *Ubuntu*, there would be no indigenous African philanthropy.

2.4.1.3 *Obligation (moral)*

Indigenous philanthropy in Africa is not necessarily altruistic. It is a responsibility and a moral one, and as Fowler (2016) calls it, "obligatory altruism" (p. 9). Mati (2020) explains this with the following example:

> Among the Maasai, for example, cultural mores dictate that people cannot have food when their neighbours have none. Therefore, a wealthy Maasai (by virtue of owning many cows) is *morally obligated* [emphasis mine] to give some cows (p. 8).

The African philosophy of *Ubuntu* emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals within a community. It teaches that supporting a needy family or community member is essential, not just out of generosity, but as a duty. This is because the well-being of one individual impacts the entire community, much like a weak link can compromise the strength of an entire chain. Moreover, there's an underlying expectation that those who give assistance today might receive help in return when they need it. In essence, giving in the *Ubuntu* philosophy reflects one's commitment to the collective good.

As Gyekye (2013) explains,

> There appears to be a conceptual tie, perhaps also a practical tie, between the social ethic prescribed by the communitarian ethos and the ethic of duty mandated by the same ethos. A morality of duty requires each individual to demonstrate concern for the interests of others. The ethical values of compassion, solidarity, reciprocity, cooperation, interdependence, and social well-being, which are among the principles of communitarian morality, primarily impose duties on the individual with respect to the community and its members. All of these considerations elevate the notion of duties to a status similar to that given to the notion of rights in Western ethics (p. 234).

African philanthropy is therefore a moral obligation. Mati (2020) says, for example, that "in the highly communally interconnected Kenyan communities, giving is also part of an individual's duty to self and the community" (p. 7). African philanthropy is therefore not in the spirit of the "voluntary giving … voluntary service … voluntary association" model that Payton and Moody (2008, pp. 16,17) present in their definition of Western philanthropy. Fowler and Mati (2019) cite other scholars like Mauss (1969), whom they say, "argued that gifting in 'primitive' societies was a practice with an integrating function of caring where 'presentations' which bond and tie under a voluntary guise were actually strictly obligatory with sanctions that were private or open" (p. 729). They also mention that there are "examples of similar reciprocal obligation in gifting transactions in African societies …)." (p. 729).

2.4.1.4 *Reciprocity*

Reciprocity is another ingrained aspect of African philanthropy (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017, 2020; Mligo, 2021; Atibil, 2014). Western philanthropy has been defined not only as voluntary pro-social giving but also as selfless altruism, where the giver expects nothing in return (Rudich, 2009; Titmuss, 1970; Wright, 2001). For example, Bekkers (2004) argues that the predominantly non-relational nature of Western philanthropy affirms its altruistic nature and one is unlikely to expect anything from a beneficiary of your gift with whom you have no relation and may not even be aware of (Rudich, 2009). Rudich (2009, p. 16) refers to how "Titmuss coined the term 'Gift Relationship' to describe relationships of pure altruistic giving" and explains that "[a] gift relationship refers to an anonymous gift given without any interest to receive compensation or recognition." Rudich, however, supports the view of other scholars that "it is impossible to speak of altruistic motives apart from numerous egoistic motives that influence giving" (Rudich, 2009, p. 16). Rudich's scepticism about wholly altruistic giving corresponds with African philanthropic understanding although the motives may differ. Ego may very well be one of the motivations for African philanthropy. That cannot be disputed, but the context and purpose is communitarian. African philanthropy is not expected to be unidirectional but reciprocal (Asante-Darko, 2013; Feierman, 1998; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Gyekye, 2013; Mati, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2013; Moyo & Ramsamy, 2014; Muponde, 2013; Schulz, 2018; Wilkinson-Maposa,2016). Feierman (1998) notes that

> Within the kinship group, a framework of reciprocity is held… even between the rich and the poor. These forms of reciprocity did not necessarily involve the equal exchange of goods—five baskets of grain were given, and five baskets received in turn. Reciprocity

> could mean food given and service returned; it could mean political protection given and praise-singing returned. Reciprocity in this sense involved gifts and counter obligations; it involved people tied to one another through the exchange of objects, which established a relationship deeply embedded in social values. The poor were given help, but through this help, they were incorporated or assumed an obligation. This has the potential to be a higher form of philanthropy because, in it, the poor are rarely in a situation where they receive without the opportunity to give in turn. (p. 44)

This is different from the assumption of altruism or generosity expected in Western philanthropy (Wright, 2001), where in reference to Bacon's definition of philanthropy which now predominantly defines Western philanthropy, it is about ‘doing good’ (Sulek, 2009). Schervish and Havens (1998, p. 1) make an interesting point in their article on 'Why people give' about their "identification model" and how different it is from the "altruism model". The main difference, they claim, is that "it is not the absence of self that generates generosity but the presence of a caring self… a caring self is empathetically identified enough with others to care for them by addressing their needs" (Schervish & Havens, 1998, p. 1). Altruism seems to suggest a certain distance between the giver and the recipient of the gift, which, in their view, does not exist. Their identification model, in the researcher’s opinion, still differs from the *Ubuntu* form of giving, which is driven by caring beyond the self and yet not dissociated from the self (Dei, 2012; Gyekye, 1996). This is because, within the *Ubuntu* ethos of African philanthropy, the self identifies with the community and gives for the well-being of the community because of that identity (Gyekye, 2013). This bears some resemblance to what Schervish and Havens seem to be describing, even though it could be argued that in their case 'others' will not be about community but individuals because they were describing philanthropy within an individualistic paradigm.

Through colonialism and its capitalist way of life, the Western model of non-reciprocal philanthropy was introduced into Africa (Fowler, 2016; Mati; 2016). It was alien to Africa (Muponde, 2013). Muponde (2013) highlights the distortions that Western philanthropy's introduction brought onto the African philanthropy landscape using an aspect of Tsitsi Dangerembwa, an African author's fictional story *Nervous Conditions*. The story portrays this non-reciprocal aspect of Western philanthropy and its contrariness to what existed before colonialism and was practised by Africans indigenously. Muponde (2013) depicted this by

referencing an incident with Babamukuru, a character in the story who had benefited from educational support given by the white missionaries.

> Babamukuru can only give to his younger brother's family, not to the white missionary's family. It seems against the grain to return the gift to the authoritative other who enabled one's privilege in the first place. It seems a reversal of roles. A social coup. This is contrary to Shona custom, which says, *'kandiro kanoenda kunobva kamwe'* ('you give to those who give you') or *'ukama igavsa hunozadziswa nekudya'* ('relations are not fulfilling unless there is sharing of gifts and food'). There seems to be something wrong with gifts that flow in one direction: downstream. What they do is create an expectation among the less privileged ... a sense of entitlement to gift-receiving, that they need not give but receive. (Muponde, 2013, pp. 70-71)

Western philanthropy was not always this way though, and Cunningham (2016) indicates, when relaying its history, that it started with reciprocity but changed over the years to its current unidirectional nature (Cunningham, 2016, p. 43). Western philanthropy, he suggests, referencing Hands (1968), "incorporated the notion of a return *'philanthropon'* from its recipients in the form of honours heaped on the donor; it was a form of gift exchange, a quid pro quo". (Cunningham, 2016, p. 43)

In Africa, though, reciprocal giving persists as an indigenous practice because of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* that underpins it. Mligo (2021) notes that "in African religious tradition, the life of reciprocity in the form of the Golden Rule is based on the African philosophy of Ubuntu" (p. 6). The engagement within African philanthropy here is not transactional and the expected returns do not have to be the same or greater in value than what was given. It is this aspect that makes it challenging to accept in part Fowler's (2016) argument for using the nomenclature of 'gifting' to describe African philanthropy. In Fowler's (2016) view, philanthropy (gifting) must be such that "the anticipated social or societal value to the recipient(s) is at least equal to or greater than the economic value to the giver(s). If this is not the case, then the exchange is not a gift but a (social) money-making enterprise... If the social gain cannot be demonstrated or exceeds the financial return, one can better speak of social enterprise than philanthropy" (Fowler, 2016, p. 6). In African philanthropy, the emphasis isn't necessarily on the material value of the gift itself but rather on the demonstration and intent of giving. A recipient might reciprocate with a gift of lesser value, sometimes as a symbolic token of gratitude, as seen in the Akan practice of *Aseda* (gratitude) (Agyekum, 2010; Asante-Darko, 2013; Sarpong, 1974). At other times, a giver might

offer far more than they previously received. Central to this philosophy is the underlying intent to support one another, placing importance on the spirit of giving rather than the exact value of the gift.

Another aspect of the returns from giving within African philanthropy is that it is "transitive" (Vaughan, 2007) and may not necessarily come back only to the giver but is expected to benefit their family and community (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2020). It may also not come from the one who benefited directly. The returns may be expected from the spiritual realm – from God, ancestors, deities, or natural elements (Sarpong, 1974). The practice of reciprocal giving, along with its morally obligatory nature within African philanthropy, has certain benefits for both the individual and the community. It is a glue for strengthening relationships (Mligo, 2021; Mati, 2017), an essential requirement within the *Ubuntu* ethos for the well-being of communities and the individuals within it. Individuals who practice African philanthropy accrue social capital and reputational credit within their community (Fowler & Mati, 2019) and are seen as 'real human beings' (*Oye nnipa paa*) (Gyekye, 1995). This has benefits for individuals, families, and communities. The reverse is also the case. It may be argued that it is to gain this reputation or to avoid the reverse that Africans feel obliged to be philanthropic. This social capital acquisition cannot be discounted as motivation (Rudich 2013).

Reciprocity within African philanthropy also creates a social support system for African societies and security for their political, social, and economic survival (Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2020; Mauss, 1969; Mligo, 2021). Those who benefit from giving are expected to give back and support others to benefit. This is what creates mutual aid practices, for example, people going back to communities that had helped them with education to give back, families supporting those in their family who could excel because they would come back and develop the family and community, etc. (Mati, 2020). This never-ending cycle sustains the family and the community. It is this practice that has sustained several African families and communities during times of disaster as was seen during the COVID Pandemic (Moyo et al., 2023).

Some have expressed concerns about this reciprocal aspect of African philanthropy (Muponde, 2013; Moyo, 2013; Kumi, 2019a). This is because, although couched in a cloak of reciprocity, giving could assume a unidirectional nature, bring about dependencies, and create hierarchies, power, and privileges between the giver and receiver (Muponde, 2013). It then becomes, unlike African philanthropy, unacceptable because it undermines solidarity and bonding, values that align with the communal spirit of Ubuntu. This situation creates resentment. Fowler and Mati

(2019), quoting Aina and Moyo (2013), describe how Harambee in Kenya, for example, was corrupted and co-opted to tax the people. Indeed, Feierman (1988) describes "voluntary giving" in "Sub-Saharan Africa, in the centuries before colonial conquest" as grounded in reciprocity, and yet “where inequalities existed, where kindly help was as double-edged as it is in the philanthropic West - a peculiar combination of caring and dominance, of generosity and property, of tangled rights in things and people, all in a time and place where the strong would not let the weak go under, except sometimes” (p. 12).

Thus, the argument is made that although there is reciprocity, it is not necessarily always egalitarian, as sometimes the rich could give to the poor in a way that makes them beholden to them, and the other instances where there could be giving from one with less authority or power to another with more to curry favour (Feireman in Illchman et. al., 1998; Fowler and Mati, 2019). Fowler and Mati (2019) adopt Mauss' (1969) descriptions and underscore the critical distinction between gifts that serve non-agonistic (collaborative) and agonistic (competitive) functions.

> In the former, non-agonistic exchanges strengthen relationships through modes of sharing that represent mutuality between actors in relation to norms, responsibility, obligations, and indebtedness. In so doing, gift exchanges can be treated as "horizontal," where equivalences between transacting parties are in play. Such transactions can be weaker or stronger in terms of the degree of similarity between the parties involved, examples being their relative assets, sharing a sense of affinity, and so on. Critically, in such transactions, the accumulation of wealth or power does not have primacy. On the contrary, agonistic gifts serve the building, consolidation, and maintenance of hierarchic, "vertical" relations associated with competition for wealth and power. Subordination of recipients is accomplished by, for example, making their access to resources, such as land, beholden to "givers" who are contending for higher status, authority, and recognition (pp. 106,107).

The connotations associated with horizontal philanthropy, which was used to describe indigenous philanthropy, and vertical philanthropy, which was used to describe western models of institutionalised philanthropy, with its focus being the well-off giving to the poor or needy without expecting anything back, change in meaning here. In this "vertical" agonistic relationship, the giving is from the not-so-powerful to the powerful (bottom-up), and with an expectation of favour from the one with authority or means. This is, as presented in the literature (Feierman, 1988; Fowler and Mati, 2019; Mauss, 1969), all part of indigenous (African)

philanthropy, and as they label it, "primitive" or "pre-colonial" philanthropy. Fowler and Mati extend the duration and mention, as confirmed by Muponde (2013), that

> as colonialism drew to a close, African gifting had become basically dualistic and pluralising. Non-agonistic endogenous gifting was by now paralleled by externally driven and codified forms of giving that separated the giver from knowing or relating to the recipient (732),

This ‘externally driven form’ of giving is what has been described as ‘vertical philanthropy’. Agonistic gifting, however, seeped into the postcolonial era. In reference to Ekeh's (1975) framework of two publics, which is about the schizophrenic nature of the parallel lives that Africans live in the postcolonial era, what he termed the public and private realms, Fowler and Mati (2019) note that

> it can be argued that Mauss' two types of archaic gifting—non-agonistic and agonistic—can be seen as mechanisms that connect the polity to a patronage-dependent political dispensation that has strong ethnic sensibilities illustrated in the elections in many African countries. Non-agonistic gifting serves the private realm; agonistic gifting from civic to private realms sustains the positions of elites and socioeconomic hierarchies (733).

The reciprocal nature of African philanthropy could therefore have consequences other than enhancing community welfare and well-being and has on occasion, as Fowler and Mati (2019) have shown, been abused for personal gain. Fundamentally, however, its main function as a form of social insurance, an instrument for social safety, and also a contemporary manifestation of collectivist coping mechanisms, especially for marginalized African communities (Mati, 2017, p.32), remains.

Ubuntu and its derivatives of communitarianism, reciprocity, and moral obligation contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of this research. This will be further discussed in the section on the theoretical framework. This section has provided an overview of established themes in the literature on African philanthropy, key debates, proposed theories, and the existing gaps. Since the thesis focuses on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, the next section will specifically focus on philanthropy in Ghana, using the same parameters employed in the literature on African philanthropy.

2.5 Philanthropy in Ghana

Philanthropic giving in Ghana is equally noted in the literature as a common practice that has existed for centuries (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Sey & Bawole, 2022) and is the "bedrock of the culture" (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017, p. 10). One can describe philanthropy in Ghana in contemporary times as Janus-faced, with indigenous and Western models co-existing (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). The latter is formally acknowledged and primarily recognised, particularly as a key contributor to Ghana's socio-economic development (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017).

Despite the commonality of philanthropy in Ghana, not much documentation can be found on it to enable an in-depth understanding of the philanthropic context, the scope, and the impact of philanthropy in Ghana (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Asante-Darko, 2013). The scholars that have made contributions to the literature note the need for further research and documentation. The existing literature, however, does provide some useful information for this thesis.

The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) notes that there are two types of philanthropy in Africa which also exist in Ghana - African philanthropy, which they describe as African-owned and led, and Philanthropy in Africa, which is non-African owned or led. They also describe the former (African philanthropy) as horizontal and the latter (Philanthropy in Africa) as vertical. The report makes the attempt to name what is considered philanthropy in Ghana, and they include

> the expression of generosity in supporting kinfolk underpinned by the cultural value of reciprocity, transfer of cash and kind in the form of internal and external remittances from Ghanaians in the diaspora, alumni associations providing for the development of their alma mater, corporate philanthropy subsumed under corporate social responsibility, and private individuals and businessmen dispensing financial support to many social causes. (p. 30)

What makes philanthropy Ghanaian, in their view, is that it "imbibes Ghanaian values, principles, cultural practices in a way which varies from the typical western model," but "shares a fundamental element of the age-old construct, which at its core is the use of private resources

for public benefit" (p.30). The latter point is actually one that is debatable, as one could question, in the African context, whether what is given by a philanthropist is always ‘private’. Would the corporate social responsibility of a Ghanaian branch of a multinational, for instance, be considered as Ghanaian philanthropy? What would be those Ghanaian values, principles, and cultural practices that they would imbibe which would differ from a Western model? The construct provided by the SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) to help give some contours to what Ghanaian philanthropy is, is therefore not very clear.

There is, however, agreement amongst the scholars that the most common form of philanthropy and what they refer to as undoubtedly Ghanaian, is the one that is commonly practised and embedded in the different cultures. It is an integral aspect of Ghanaian life and can be seen through individual and community giving (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai- Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) mention that "giving within the kin group is common among both literate and non-literate Ghanaians, and for many, this is part of their charitable giving to support a relative in bereavement, or on the occasion of marriage or birth within the family or indeed sickness. This is often ad hoc and unaccounted for in the expenditure plans of the givers" (p.7). This ad hoc assistance includes humanitarian assistance, mutual aid, and volunteering at the traditional level (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012). They acknowledge though that not all of it is ad hoc, because some aspects of these practices are quite organised, like the "vibrant enduring practice of funeral levies and donations to support each other in bereavement" (p.7). In terms of the influence of this informal giving, which the researcher calls indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, Kumi (2019b) notes that this has been part of Ghanaian historical, traditional, and religious contexts where people give to support the poor in society and that it "is an important tool for addressing poverty and social exclusion because it is considered as self-help" (p. 1089).

Some aspects of philanthropy in Ghana that have seen growth and more visibility include giving by High-Net-Worth Individuals (Kumi, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), and Kumi (2019b) attributes this to the growth of the middle class. This is a claim that Moyo (2013) also makes regarding the increase in foundations in Africa founded by High-Net-Worth Africans. Another active part of the Ghanaian philanthropy scene is faith-based philanthropy (Kumi, 2019b). The 2020 census in Ghana shows that 94% of Ghanaians identify as religious, with 71% Christian, 20% Muslim, and 3% traditional religion and others of unknown or no religion (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022 report). Noted by Mati (2017) as a characteristic feature of Africans, Ghanaians are also very religious. Kumi (2019b) points out that faith-based giving is

a sketchy aspect of philanthropy in Ghana, with little information available on it, and notes that giving is mainly towards the religious institutions and not directly to people. These are mainly through various church practices such as tithing and other gifts to the church and its ministers, and for Muslims, through Zakat and other Islamic practices (Kumi, 2019b; Tijani and Abdallah, 2023).

There is an admittance though that this is one area that could do with more research and yet is one of the most difficult to get information on because most of the giving here is private and is also not information that is easily provided by the religious institutions (Kumi, 2019b; Tijani and Abdallah, 2023) or captured in any database. Apart from individual giving to the faith-based institutions, these institutions themselves give back to the community through the establishment of schools, hospitals, and lately, prisons (Kumi, 2019b; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Tijani & Abdallah, 2023). The question posed in the earlier section on African philanthropy applies in the Ghanaian context as well, and the researcher submits that it is debatable whether the giving done by and to these religious institutions could be classified as indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy. It is philanthropy in Ghana and commendable, but as the findings from this thesis would show, may not qualify as indigenous philanthropy, at least from the Akan perspective.

Kumi (2019a) and the SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) do give some attention, although brief, to Corporate Social Responsibility and its conflation with corporate philanthropy in Ghana. One of the recent phenomena in Ghana is the establishment of Corporate Foundations that undertake development projects in the country (Kumi, 2019a; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). These are in the main, multi-national companies like MTN or Vodafone and there are a few local ones like Tobinco. Their areas of interest usually align with their corporate goals and often their development interventions are perceived as more of branding opportunities for the companies than what they claim to aim at – community development (Kumi, 2019a). Scholars like Kumi have noted the difficulty in differentiating what is just a fulfilment of corporate social responsibility and what is corporate philanthropy. Kumi (2019a) notes that

> Interestingly, the distinction between corporate philanthropy and CSR is fluid because all activities undertaken by corporate organisations outside their operations are interpreted as corporate philanthropy. The lack of a consistent definition and the identity crisis of corporate philanthropy in Ghana is a reflection that it is in its growth phase. Institutionalised CSR was mainly undertaken by larger multinational organisations rather than local businesses in petty trading in retail and primary production. Although some

> local businesses provided in-kind and in-cash donations, they were mostly not recognised as CSR but rather an act of philanthropy. (p. 1341)

In spite of the challenge of making the distinction these private sector actors are acknowledged as playing a role in the philanthropy ecosystem of Ghana. The question though, as asked previously, is whether they can be cited as indigenous Ghanaian philanthropic institutions. It is the researcher's view that they may face a challenge of meeting the test of "imbibing Ghanaian values" (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017, p.30). For most, if not all, their orientation is western.

The most visible, acknowledged, and documented arena within the Ghanaian philanthropic ecosystem is foundations and, by extension, civic or non-governmental organisations. They have been named by Aina & Moyo (2013) and others as active players in the philanthropic sector in Africa. This is also reflected in Ghana. Kumi (2019b) and the SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report mention that in this space, the foreign or external philanthropic institutions are the most active and well-known. Many of these institutions are grant-making foundations and/or service organisations. According to Kumi (2019b), Ghana's "institutionalised philanthropic landscape" is "dominated by external private organisations owned by wealthy foreigners who give out grants and donations to charitable organisations using the interest accrued from their investment. Examples include the Ford Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation". Empirical evidence gathered from interviews with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) reveals that many of these organisations "received financial and non-financial support from external private foundations" (p. 1090). Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) point to other organisational forms of philanthropy introduced with colonialism and the establishment of Christian missions. These include "private voluntary organisations in Ghana... Common among them are the Ghana Red Cross Society, Girls Guides, Scouts, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)" (p.25). In recent times, local foundations have become a part of this ecosystem. These are foundations established and owned by Ghanaians. They mainly support community projects and other special interest projects (mostly national or local) of their founders. These founders are either politicians, High-Net-Worth Individuals, pop-icons, or celebrities (Kumi, 2019b). Kumi (2019b) underscores that this is a fairly recent phenomenon, with the oldest of these foundations found to be registered in 2000 (Kumi, 2019b).

These foundations are set up in the mode of Western foundations, with the only difference being that the ownership and management are Ghanaian. Another type of foundation identified by Kumi is the kind that has morphed from purely donor funds to national foundations (Kumi, 2019b). An example of this is the Star Ghana Foundation (Kumi, 2019b) which transformed from a donor (DFID, Danida, EU) pooled fund and is now entirely owned, led, and run by Ghanaians. All the foundations and organisations discussed in this section have the similitude of the Western philanthropic model of grant-making, service provision foundations, or voluntary/civic organisations, known as NGOs in Ghana.

There is yet another type of foundation in Ghana which was highlighted in Kumi's (2019b) report that can be categorised as the hybrid philanthropic formation because it originated from indigenous philanthropic practices, values, and beliefs and still runs on these tenets but has in addition, formalised parts of its structures so that it can gain a recognised public or formal legal status (Kumi, 2019b). These are community foundations and others such as those instituted by traditional leadership. An example of the latter is the Otumfuo Foundation. This is a foundation set up by the Asantehene (king of the Asante) to support the education and health needs originally of Asantes, but now reaching out nationally to all ethnic groups. Other traditional leaders and communities have set up foundations individually and collectively to support their communities.

One thing that all the scholars (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Tijani, 2022; Tijani & Abdallah, 2023) agree on is that indigenous philanthropy has been practised by Ghanaians for centuries and has been a source of sustenance for communities in Ghana. They also acknowledge that despite its prevalence, long existence, and usefulness, indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is the least documented partly because it is seen as a challenging task to capture data on it due to the informality, private, and ad hoc nature, as well as the dominance of Western-type philanthropy in the formally recognised spaces for philanthropy in Ghana.

The next section will delve a bit more in-depth into what the literature establishes about indigenous philanthropy in Ghana and that of the Akan specifically, showing where there is a gap and why this thesis aims to fill it.

2.6 Indigenous philanthropy in Ghana

2.6.1 Landscape

Indigenous philanthropy, as already noted, is defined in this thesis as philanthropy based on, formed, and driven by indigenous culture, traditions, mores, and practices. There are different ethnic groups in Ghana and, going by Asante-Darko (2013)'s expression that "different cultures perceive philanthropy differently" (p.83), philanthropy is cultural. One cannot categorically state that there is one homogeneous indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy because there are different cultures in Ghana. Even though this may be true, it is also an admitted fact that there are commonalities that cut across and could be said to be indigenous to Ghana because in agreement with Asante-Darko (2013), the researcher admits that "different customs and practices respond to socio-cultural and environmental contexts" (p.83), and there could be a common experience of it across a country. The cross-cutting commonalities in indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is what the literature describes as traditional, informal, indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy. This thesis looks at this phenomenon from the Akan perspective, and to provide the context that serves as the location for Akan philanthropy, this section will now focus on the broad strokes that are painted in established literature.

As noted, the scholars admit that this is philanthropy that is embedded in Ghanaian culture and tradition (Atibil, 2014; 2016; Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) refer to this type of giving as "indigenous cultural giving" (p. 33) and The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report terms it "individual giving," saying it is "the term used to refer to the charitable gifts made by individuals whether at the communal level," and they then include "for an individual or national cause, or by high-net-worth individuals (HNWI)" (p.33). The different scholars agree that indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is a common practice and mainly horizontal. It is not formalised nor institutionalised (Atibil, 2014), is mainly practiced through families, communities, and associational networks (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Atibil, 2014; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform 2017) and is indeed what sustains several Ghanaian families and communities and acts as social security for many (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012).

The associational networks are not only restricted to rural or indigenous communities physically but extend to the internal diaspora (community members that have migrated but are still within Ghana) and external diaspora (community members that have migrated from the community

and settled outside Ghana) (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Atibil, 2014; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Hanson, 2004; Mazuccato et al., 2008; The SDG Philanthropy Platform 2017). They are still connected to their communities through their philanthropic giving. Diaspora giving, especially that of remittances from external diaspora, has received significant focus not only from scholars but also from the Ghanaian government (Kumi, 2019b; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Mazuccato et. al., 2008). Even with this focus, there is still a lot of data on philanthropy from Ghanaians in the diaspora, through their remittances, that is not captured in official data because much of it is said to be information retained within families and through informal channels (Kumi, 2019b). Kumi (2019a) introduces a new terminology into the vocabulary of philanthropy with his description of a certain kind of recent philanthropists in Ghana from the diaspora. He calls them Foreign Development Philanthropists (FDPs) and explains that…

> In recent years, transnationalisation has emerged as an important feature of the Ghanaian philanthropic landscape. Respondents explained that transnationalisation occurs when foreign philanthropists are installed as developmental chiefs and Queen Mothers especially in traditional rural communities. These individuals are normally given the title of *nkosuo hene* or *nkosuo ohemaa* (i.e. development chief/developmental Queen Mother). These foreign development philanthropists (FDPs) are appointed based on their philanthropic gestures and ability to promote development. Although this philanthropy is vertical, it tends to be fluid in nature. In vertical philanthropy, donors give out of altruistic values without any reciprocity. However, for FDPs, beneficiary communities reciprocate by giving them titles, recognitions, and connections in their communities. The phenomena of FDPs in Ghana bring rich empirical evidence of the intersections between horizontal and vertical philanthropy that has been absent in the literature on African philanthropy. (p. 1338)

Traditional leaders and the role that they play in philanthropy in Ghana have also been given some attention in the literature (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Tijani, 2022). The 2022 Global Philanthropic Index chapter on Ghana notes that “this traditional system serves as the primary institution of governance, where chiefs are expected to secure the people’s well-being. The chief’s palaces (houses of traditional leaders/chiefs) serve as centres of charity and humanitarian work. Most of the supplies are from farmers, fines, and the chiefs’ mobilising power for labour on communal farms. The palace also supports funerals and other social needs of the society” (p.8). Kumi corroborates this (2019b, p. 1089).

Indigenous philanthropy in Ghana takes various forms. The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report locates “Ghanaian giving…characterised by notions of burden-sharing and mutual aid” in modern times and notes that “It is common to give money, time, skills, gifts, and other resources towards diverse social and community events such as funerals, weddings, and festivals (p.30). This gives the impression that this is a current occurrence in Ghana but then they also seem to suggest that there are some indigenous philanthropic practices in Ghana that only occurred before independence.

> Prior to Independence in 1957, family giving in Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast due to its large deposits of gold) followed a crowdfunding mechanism set up by families specifically for their male heirs. This involved seeding a revolving fund, which was then provided as a ‘soft’ loan to the first-born male on the condition that he supported his kinfolk upon reaching self-sufficiency. Women practiced a form of microfinance called ‘*susu*,’ which was often the main channel of financial support for families. Ghanaians also commonly give to help less privileged family and kin group members through welfare donations, paying school fees for others, and fostering (taking care of other people’s children, usually extended family). (p.30)

It is not clear if the pre-independence statement is meant to refer to all the other examples, including *susu* (rotating and saving clubs) and support to the less privileged, because other scholars like Kumi (2019a) and Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) do not indicate that there are any of these indigenous philanthropic practices that had a cut-off point post-independence. Kumi (2019a, 2019b) does not give this distinction in the times of occurrence of these indigenous philanthropic practices in Ghana. He presents indigenous philanthropy as part of the current status quo (Kumi 2019a, 2019b). Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) note the familial, ethnic, communal, cultural, and relational nature of indigenous giving in Ghana and indicate that it has 'a long history'. They do not only suggest that it still exists but also add that it has increased since independence. So, the dichotomy in time that the SDG report appeared to make differs from these other positions. This highlighting of the different time suppositions of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is important to note because some scholars like Mauss (1969), Feierman (1988), and Asante-Darko (2013) may give the impression that indigenous philanthropy in Africa and by extension Ghana was a predominantly pre-colonial practice and is thus, in a sense, stuck in time.

Volunteering is another practise that is underscored in indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy. Kumi (2019b) is critical about the lack of acknowledgement of *nnɔbua* and similar indigenous mutual aid and communal practices where the family and community members volunteer their time to support others within the community in the literature on philanthropy and volunteering in particular. He blames this on "the Western-oriented understanding of volunteering [which] fails to capture the complexity of volunteering in Ghana where even the poor in society give their time and energy to support community development" (p. 1094). Kumi (2019b) corroborated the same view on this that Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012), who had written earlier on volunteering, had made. They had indicated that in Ghana, the general context in "which people provide humanitarian assistance has remained largely informal and ad hoc, in spite of the apparent increase in the practise since independence. In local communities, there is a long-established practise of volunteering to give labour assistance to neighbours, known in Akan as *nnoboa* (work together to help each other) and in Ewe *afidodo* (work together to help each other)" (p. 18). They blamed the issue of lack of focus on this important aspect of philanthropy to the absence of a "structured process of acknowledgement, which places value on people's contributions and forms part of the way in which the volunteers are assessed, both formally and informally" (p. 35). There is an interesting model of volunteering in the West, it is worth noting, that seems to reflect a different kind of volunteering – one which acknowledges time and values it as currency. This model is known as time banking.

> Time banking is an international movement that seeks to transform traditional asymmetric social service models into social networks in which members both provide and receive services that are assigned equal value. Time banks have been shown to enhance social capital, and there is some evidence for improved health (Lasker et. al., 2011, p. 102).

This is an interesting volunteering practice that takes cognisance of time invested to help others and reciprocates with that same amount of time when those who have given it need it. Although this time-banking bears some resemblance to the traditional volunteering in indigenous African philanthropy and giving of time done in indigenous Ghanaian communities, it is still different because it is more transactional and focused on the individual, than transformational and focused on the community, which is what indigenous volunteering focuses on – community well-being. The time given in indigenous Ghanaian volunteering does not have to be repaid back in equal value as the western time-banking model expects. What is noted in indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is that time has been given to support another, and when that other is in

need, they will also receive the support they need. How much time it takes does not matter. One could say that there is a time bank in the indigenous Ghanaian philanthropic sense as well, but it just gives different value to the time invested and rather looks at the purpose than the time itself. It is still worth noting that even with the time-banking model of the West, some of the returns are enhanced social capital and improved health. Lasker et. Al (2011), who conducted their research with an organisation in the health sector that implements time-banking services, noted

> The findings that attachment to the organisation predicts health benefits and that members record fewer of their transactions over time both lend support to the idea that time banking contributes to valuable community building and social ties (p. 112).

These benefits also occur with indigenous volunteering in Ghana as well (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012). As Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) and Kumi (2019b) have correctly noted, the time (as well as services) volunteered in indigenous communities to support community well-being need to be given due recognition and consideration in the literature on philanthropy not only in Africa but globally.

The practices that have been referred to as indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy are distinguished from others philanthropic acts in the country not only by the way they are structured but also the values that drive them.

2.6.2 Features of Indigenous philanthropy in Ghana - Values

Certain principles and values are noted by scholars as underpinning indigenous giving in Ghana. The presentation of values as an important feature of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is consistent in the literature. The values of communalism, solidarity, reciprocity, and moral obligation are all drawn from the *Ubuntu* philosophical concept and reverberate in research on philanthropy in Ghana, particularly concerning indigenous philanthropy. According to The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report, variations in giving across cultures and kinship groups in modern-day Ghana are rooted in principles of reciprocity and mutuality (p.30). Kumi (2019a) emphasises the interdependency between individuals, communities, and family members, linking it to the communalistic nature of most African societies. Kumi (2019a) also refers to the obligatory aspect of philanthropy in Ghana, where performing one's responsibilities to family members and community members grants 'personhood' (p. 1342). He notes that this recognition

as worthy individuals within the community makes philanthropic giving not only altruistic but also an obligation, especially for wealthier individuals. The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) highlights that it has been common throughout the history of the continent for community members and families to contribute and donate at various ceremonies and rites of passage. It is seen as an obligation (p.34). This prompts Kumi (2019a) in the quote below to ask questions about the authenticity of altruistic giving due to the obligatory nature of indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy.

> Motivations for giving extend beyond generosity and altruism to include moral obligations. The pressure of meeting customary obligation becomes pronounced especially for individuals with higher social status. Honouring such responsibility enhances individual's reputation and status. This raises questions about whether individuals give to family members based on genuine philanthropic impulse, social expectation or personal interest. (p. 1342)

Giving in Ghanaian indigenous philanthropy is not only an obligation, but the one helped is expected to give back. There is an expectation of reciprocity and "individuals have a social responsibility to support their family members largely informed by the ideals of future reciprocity to themselves or even their offspring" (Kumi, 2019a). Reciprocal giving is embedded in Ghanaian values. Kumi (2019a) shared the findings of his research from ten of his respondents who believed that "individual giving in Ghana was largely influenced by the need for social network, reciprocity and mutual assistance where social relations and norms of reciprocity or counter-obligation are valued in society" (p.1335). It is part of the moral code and expected of everyone who is a good and responsible person in society.

Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) give the specific example of funeral levies found all over the country and suggest that "every Ghanaian belongs to a clan and all clan members, as well as in-laws, are required by custom to pay this levy at the funeral of a relative or an in-law. Adults who violate this convention are often ostracised and their funerals boycotted by the extended family" (p. 18). So, there are social sanctions for non-reciprocity and violating the philanthropic obligation. It is this aspect of indigenous philanthropy, not only in Ghana but also in Africa, that led to questioning from Kumi (2019b), cited earlier but also from other scholars in Africa like Moyo (2013) and Atibil (2014), who inquire whether this reciprocal obligatory nature of indigenous philanthropy does not negate the philanthropic aspect of it. This is a question that is likely to be asked if indigenous philanthropy is being considered in the light of western

philanthropic definitions and components of philanthropy, one of which is ‘altruism’ (Titmuss, 1970) and another ‘voluntariness’ (Payton, 1988; Payton and Moody). It is important not to fall into this trap, however one needs to acknowledge that it is a dilemma and this is what Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), bring attention to – the confusion that could occur when one interprets African concepts through a western lens. A question that Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) ask, which is a pertinent one, is whether there are alternative words for a concept like ‘altruism’ which explain how Africans define or understand it. They pose the question noting that “*Ubuntu* is appearing in the Anglo-Saxon Lexicon” and ask whether “an equivalent for the moral inference of altruism exist[s] on the continent?” (p.127). In response, one could also ask why there needs to be an equivalent for the word ‘altruism’. Rather what should be noted is that for Africans, the values that drive philanthropy include ‘reciprocal obligation’. That is the African belief, culture and practice and that should suffice.

The embeddedness of these values of communalism, reciprocity, and obligation, nested within Ubuntu, in indigenous Ghanaian philanthropic practice is presented in the literature on philanthropy in Ghana as if it cuts across geographical locations because the scholars do not limit it to one ethnic group. Through these values, indigenous philanthropy in Ghana also achieves the purpose of not only giving to support the welfare of communities but also connected to the establishment of identity and strengthening cultural bonds (Kumi, 2019a; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012).

2.6.3 Scope

It is not known what the scope or impact of indigenous philanthropy is in Ghana. The SDG Philanthropy platform (2013) avers that "Individual giving serves as the major source of philanthropic giving in Ghana" (p.34). Kumi (2019b) presents a different position because he notes that

> institutionalised foundations remain the biggest constituents of Ghana's philanthropic landscape with much emphasis on external private foundations (EPFs). This forms part of vertical philanthropy where wealthy individuals and well-endowed institutions give out of altruism to support the 'poor' without any expectation of reciprocity (p.9).

It is the researcher's view that Kumi (2019b) concluded thus because his research focused on what is known, acknowledged and documented and available in literature as philanthropy

(which is mostly the western institutionalised models of philanthropy). This dearth in knowledge on indigenous literature demonstrates the gap that this thesis has identified. The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report provided no empirical findings and seemed to have conclude that individual giving is a major source of philanthropy in Ghana from anecdotal evidence. Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) just note that there was an increase in indigenous cultural giving but are more focused on speaking to the subject on volunteering and do not provide much evidence to back their statement on the prevalence and widespread nature of indigenous philanthropy.

The various authors that have made contributions on philanthropy in Ghana have not focused on indigenous philanthropy even though they have noted its existence, its seeming pervasiveness or commonality, its contribution to the lives and welfare of ordinary Ghanaians, and also how much it has been relegated to the background in the literature. Yet, none of them give this very important aspect of philanthropy in Ghana much focus. The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) report places emphasis on an enabling environment for philanthropy generally in Ghana, Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) focus on Volunteering, and even then not the indigenous forms of volunteering which although mentioned are not given much attention in their paper; Kumi (2019a, 2019b), who is by far the author that has delved more in-depth into philanthropy in Ghana, has been more interested in the institutionalised forms of philanthropy, particularly NGOs and other institutionalised and formal forms, even though he acknowledges the importance and prevalence of indigenous philanthropy. Other researchers in the field, such as Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), who conducted a study on indigenous philanthropy in South Africa acknowledge that their study "required them to grapple with the fundamental conversations needed to establish an African narrative with its own essence" (p.129). They are aware of the "serious challenge of deconstructing the dominant language and implicit worldview that does not align with the morality and lived reality of many on the continent" (p.129). The researcher argues that a similar gap exists in Ghana, which this research aims to fill. It would however be overly ambitious, within the scope of this thesis and the resources available, to gather comprehensive and in-depth information on indigenous philanthropy in all of Ghana, or even for the Akan, to include the scope and impact. However, this thesis contributes to enabling a more informed definition of the contours of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from an Akan perspective and their indigenous knowledge systems and not from a western lens, which is an important aspect of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana that has still not been addressed. The next section discusses the current literature on Akan philanthropy.

2.7 Akan Philanthropy

Only one author, Asante-Darko (2013), has produced an article with some specificity on Akan philanthropy, and he positions this in pre-colonial times. His submission is not on the Akan generally, but on the Asante, a dominant sub-ethnic group among the Akan (Agyekum, 2010). This is not surprising because, as this researcher also found out, information on the Asante is more readily available and accessible and where one has time limitations, most of the material that is likely to be readily available for use is information on the Asante. In spite of the limitations of Asante-Darko's article, produced as part of a compendium in the seminal publication on African philanthropy - *Giving to Help and Helping to Give* (Aina and Moyo, 2013) - he provides information that this researcher found useful and insightful. Other authors have written on matters related to Akan philanthropy but have not called it so. They have mainly addressed these related issues from the perspective of Akan moral philosophy and ethics. These include scholars like Gyekye (1987;1995; 1996; 2010; 2013), Ackah (1988), Arthur (2017), Sarpong (1974), Agyekum (2010) and Nketiah (1954). This section will review what has been presented by these authors, note where the gaps are, and how this thesis hopes to build on what they have done and contribute to filling the gaps.

Asante-Darko notes that the primary principle underlying philanthropy in pre-colonial Asante was "partnership and long-term development, which prioritised some areas for economic and social activity and needing immediate attention and heavy and sustained input" (p. 86). He therefore outlines certain key factors that determined the details and contours of Asante philanthropy. These included the responsibility of the family and matrilineal clan towards the upkeep and welfare of the individual, the gift exchange rather than a monetary exchange economy, which meant that people gave in kind, and the attitude towards giving, which made everyone philanthropists, whether wealthy or not. This is because poverty was perceived differently, and each person was considered susceptible to the changing circumstances of life, such that no condition is permanent. The rich man today could be poor tomorrow and vice versa. Additionally, the dignity of everyone was paramount, and therefore help was given to restore dignity. The person being helped was not expected to stay in that position perpetually but also be in a position to give back one day. He states that...

> Philanthropy in Asante was, thus, halfway between a right and a privilege. This is because even when the causes were attributed to social structures and, therefore, conferring quasi-sympathy or a right of assistance from people other than family, the average pre-colonial Asante generally considered it a humiliation to live on handouts or at the mercy of another. Even disaster relief was accepted with the understanding of anticipated reciprocity – a voluntary and tacit undertaking on the part of the recipient to do likewise should the present donor be in a similar situation in the future. (p. 91)

Finally, one of the factors that Asante-Darko names is the attitude of the pre-colonial Asante state towards wealth accumulation, and he notes that individuals were encouraged to become wealthy and honoured for that achievement which is contrary to the erroneous notion that the communitarian way of life undermined individual progress (p. 86). Gyekye echoes this sentiment but is careful to state that this promotion of individual progress was expected to inure to the communal benefit (Gyekye, 1987). The other authors (Ackah, 1988; Agyekum, 2010; Arthur, 2017; Gyekye, 1987, 1995, 1996, 2010; 2013; Nketiah, 1954; Sarpong, 1974) provide pointers to Akan philanthropy through Akan philosophy, ethics, and values that are communicated through Akan proverbs, symbols, aphorisms, and other indigenous Akan repositories of knowledge.

From the literature reviewed so far, it is fairly settled, even if "with caveats," that "horizontal philanthropy is an expression of Ubuntu, as a philosophy of common humanity" (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013, p. 127). This is where the researcher takes off from to engage the literature that suggests and discusses elements of Akan philanthropy without necessarily stating so expressly. Gyekye (2013, 2010, 1995), Ackah (1988), Sarpong (1974), Agyekum (2010) have intimated that the Akan philosophy is one based on humanism and communalism and that what is perceived as good is what is good for the society as a whole and not only for the individual. Gyekye (2013) notes that "[i]n the Akan moral system (or African moral system generally), good or moral value is determined in terms of its consequences for humankind and human society" (p. 221). Akan ethics and values, therefore, are

> constituted by the deeds, habits, and behaviour patterns considered by society as worthwhile because of their consequences for human welfare. The goods would include such things as generosity, honesty, faithfulness, truthfulness, compassion, hospitality, happiness, that which brings peace, justice, respect, and so on. Each of these actions or patterns of behaviour is supposed or known to bring about social well-being. (p. 221)

Apart from humanism, there are other fundamental Akan values and philosophies that govern their way of life, including their giving. To grasp what these values and philosophies are, one needs to go to the sources where they can be found. Proverbs, aphorisms, and other forms of creative art like folktales, songs (including dirges) (Nketiah, 1954), metaphors, and symbols like the *Adinkra* symbols embody the philosophy of the Akan (Arthur, 2017; Gyekye, 1975, 1987; Wiredu, 1992). This is not only specific to the Akan but has parallels in many parts of Africa (Malunga, 2006). Dei (2012) points out that

> African systems of thought have their own internal logics, local sense-making and augmentation, innovation, Indigenous interpretations of evidence, rationality, reason, and criticality. These knowings are steeped in culture-specific paradigms (e.g., community and communal interdependence conveyed through the wisdom of sages and also laced in local parables, fables, folktales, proverbs, songs, cultural stories, myths, and mythologies) (p. 841).

The following segments highlight the Akan values, principles, and philosophies that inform Akan philanthropy and are portrayed through their proverbs, symbols, and other folklore like dirges (Nketiah, 1954). Appiah, P. (2007), one of the authors of the most comprehensive publication on Akan proverbs until date, "*Bu me bɛ*" (tell me a proverb), notes that

> among the Akan, a truly educated and cultured person is one who can make use of proverbs and whose speech is full of the imagery and innuendo that they make possible. Proverbs contain the philosophy, humour, symbolism, and religion of the peoples who use them. They are imbued with a deep knowledge of the surrounding world, physical and spiritual, and of social realities. No one can appreciate the philosophy and beliefs of the Akan without studying their proverbs (p. xii).

Scholars, like Gyekye, have argued that just like there were Greek philosophers, there were also Akan philosophers. They believe that one can find philosophical nuggets in proverbs, aphorisms, myths, folktales, and beliefs of Africans (Gyekye, 1995). Below are examples of proverbs and the values or mores that they speak to. Apart from what is mentioned in this section, one would find Akan proverbs and aphorisms cited throughout this thesis. This is because one cannot discuss giving or philanthropy by the Akan without engaging Akan philosophy and values, many of which are expressed in proverbs, aphorisms, and symbols (Arthur, 2017; Mato, 1987). The proverbs below and the explanations given have been quoted

extensively from the comprehensive compendium of proverbs "*Bu me bɛ* (Proverbs of the Akans)" (Appiah et. al, 2007), a compilation of over seven thousand (7000) Akan proverbs, which "can be said to be, without question, the most extensive and up-to-date book since Christaller's important publication on proverbs" (Agyemang-Duah, 2007, p. xi). The next section discusses the proverbs, aphorisms and folklore that inform Akan philanthropy.

2.7.1 Akan Concepts in Philanthropy

There are several proverbs on fellow feeling, solidarity, communalism, cooperation, interdependence, and mutual help, a few of which are as follows:

> - (4431) *Onipa baakofuo te sɛ akokofunu* – A single person is like a dead chicken (One person alone does not thrive) (p. 21).
>
> - (1510) *Deɛ adeɛ ato n'ani no, nyɛ ono ara na oyie* – He who has got dust in his eyes cannot blow it out himself (Some tasks you are unable to do yourself, and you must have help to do them. [nobody is independent]) (p. 77).
>
> - (4507) *Onipa nyɛ abɛ na ne ho ahyia ne ho* – A person is not a palm tree that has all it wants. (Human beings can never be self-sufficient) (p. 203).
>
> - (5794) *Nsono na oboa yafunu* – The intestines help the stomach – We are all interdependent within the family (p. 259).

These proverbs underscore the interdependent and communalistic nature of Akan society and show that it is a matter of survival and sustenance for both the community and the individuals that make up a community because their survival and welfare are dependent on others. Giving to support one another then becomes not just an act of charity to someone in need but one of survival and welfare for all. It is connected to the premium value placed on humanity by Akan culture and the belief that humanity's success is bound in each other's progress because, in essence, we are one people. Proverbs like the following are related to this and emphasize the humanistic nature of Akan society:

(4471) *Onipa ne asem. Mefrɛ sika a, sika nnye so; mefrɛ ntoma a ntoma nnye so* – Man is the thing. (If I call money, money does not respond; if I call cloth, cloth does not respond) - People are more valuable than worldly riches (p. 202).

Communalism and prioritising communal values above individualism does not, however, mean that the individual has no rights within Akan society (Gyekye, 1992). Gyekye (1987) notes that:

> The concept of communalism, as it is understood in Akan thought… does not overlook individual rights, interests, desires, and responsibilities, nor does it imply the absorption of the individual into the communal will or seek to eliminate individual responsibility and accountability (p.160).

There are proverbs that point to the individual's role in the family and community, and some indicate the possible challenges of balancing the rights and responsibilities of the individual with prioritising community values and benefits. The proverbs give meaning to the Adinkra symbol of the Siamese crocodiles that have a conjoined stomach.

(2422) *Futumereku ne denkyerɛmereku (won tiri yɛ mmienu na won yafunu baako) se: "Me kakra ntwi wo me men emo, na ma kakara ntwi me deɛ mu, na ne nyinaa nkohyia yafunu- koro mu*." – Stomach mixed up and crocodile mixed up, (their heads are two, but their stomach is one) say: "Let a little slip down your throat and let a little slip down mine, and it will all meet in one stomach" (p. 114).

These acknowledge the dilemma of balancing communalism and individual rights and make the point that there is a need to recognise the need for communal welfare and individual contribution to that. In his book on African ethics, Gyekye (2010) terms this communal feeling and communitarianism, "the notion of common good" (p.229). He defines it as:

> a notion that is conceptually affiliated with the notion of 'community' and is not a surrogate for the sum of the various individual goods. It does not consist of, or derive from, the goods and preferences of particular individuals. It is that which is essentially good for human beings as such, embracing the needs that are basic to the enjoyment and fulfilment of the life of each individual (p. 229).

This "good", he further explains, "is defined by the traditional thinkers in the Akan society in terms of peace, happiness or satisfaction (human flourishing), justice, dignity, respect and so

on" (p.229). Another two concepts related to Akan philanthropy that Gyekye (2010) and others like him who focus on Akan morality and ethics are “humanity and brotherhood” (p. 224). Gyekye (2010) speaks of these in the broader context of African ethics, which, as the researcher has already mentioned, is aligned with Akan ethics. This is seen from the numerous examples from the Akan that Gyekye (2010) uses to explain the different concepts. He notes that "the practical translation of the idea of brotherhood leads to such social and moral virtues as hospitality, generosity, concern for others and communal feeling”. He refers to the Akan maxim, "*Onipa yɛ fɛ sen sika* (the human being is more beautiful than gold)", to emphasise the dignity of the human being. He explains that "to enjoy a human being for his or her own sake means you should appreciate his value as a human being and demonstrate that appreciation by showing compassion, generosity, and hospitality. It means you should be open to the interests and welfare of others and feel it a moral duty to offer help where it is needed” (p.224). Ackah (1998) describes generosity and beneficence as "a prominent Akan virtue" (p. 51). Ackah (1988, p.30) states categorically that "*Ayamye* and *Adoɛ* (this is the Fante spelling; it is *Adɔyɛ* in Twi), are perhaps the commonest virtues amongst the Akan". *Ayamye* means generosity, good-heartedness, benevolence, and charitableness... [and] *Adoɛ* means hospitality, kindness, and benevolence (p.30). Ackah (1988) mentions others like “well-doing and love of fellow men” (pp. 56,57) as well as “cooperativeness and mutual help” (pp. 52,53) where he notes the value of reciprocity as key.

The reciprocal nature of pre-colonial Asante philanthropy is also underscored by Asante-Darko (2013) who, in agreement with Sarpong, 1974, notes that "the Ghanaian expects visible results of what he does to others, and if these will come to him in the form of praise, reciprocal rewards, health, escape from danger, riches, he is conten[t]ed” (p. 89).

Sarpong (1974) also mentions another feature of Akan philanthropy, "the sense of gratitude," which he says is "very closely allied with the spirit of the Ghanaian's spirit of generosity" (p. 67). Thanksgiving or showing gratitude, known as *Aseda* by the Akan, is thus a key feature of Akan philanthropy (Sarpong, 1974; Agyekum, 2010; Ackah, 1988). Ackah (1988) notes that "[f]ailure to render thanks would mean, in the estimation of the giver, that the one who received the gift is an ungrateful wretch and may result in the giver deciding never to make another present to that person" (p. 55). The literature indicates that this expectation of gratitude is connected to Akan philanthropy and, while this may not be expressly stated in other literature on African philanthropy, considering the similarity in African cultural values, this could very well be an expectation in other African cultures. Gratitude is a virtue in every culture, one can presume.

However, it is perhaps the level of expectation given to it in the Akan culture and how it is carried out within the context of philanthropic giving that could make the Akan stand out on this matter. The Akan expect gratitude not only in life but though praises to the dead for their good deeds, which is sang through dirges (Nketiah, 1954).

2.7.2 Akan Philanthropic expressions

Different forms of philanthropic support are carried out by the Akan. Asante-Darko (2013) states that in pre-colonial times, these included "benevolence offered to the needy in… areas including medical services, education, legal reform, and provision of public infrastructure, food supply and defence" (p. 91). Asante-Darko, however, excludes philanthropic activity within the family. In his description of philanthropy in pre-colonial Asante, it seems that he separates assistance to family from assistance to strangers and chooses to call only the latter philanthropy (p. 87). This contradicts the findings of other scholars (Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Mati, 2019) on African philanthropy. These scholars have acknowledged that communitarianism is a strong driver of philanthropy, and that family and kinship are key actors within that community (Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Mati, 2019). Scholars that have written on philanthropy in Ghana all include philanthropic activity within the family as one of the notable practices of indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy. Kumi states expressly, that

> individuals have a social responsibility to support their family members largely informed by the ideals of future reciprocity to themselves or even their offspring. This reflects an Akan proverb: '*wohwɛ obi dehyeɛ yie a na wo nso wo deɛ reyɛ yie'* meaning if you take good care of someone's royal personage, your royal personage will also prosper (Gyasi-Obeng 1996:531). The above statement points to the interdependency existing between individuals and their communities or family members. For this reason, individual giving in Ghana and across Africa in general tends to have relational focus usually framed around morality where individuals have a moral responsibility to support their family members. (p. 1342)

Indeed, even the other scholars who speak about Akan philanthropic practices defined generally in the literature as philanthropic acts but who do not call it Akan philanthropy, do not exclude philanthropy towards the family, especially in a matrilineal society such as the Akan, where family extends beyond the nuclear family to include the clan (Arthur, 2017; Rattray, 1929; Boahen, 1992; Sarpong, 1974). Even when philanthropy is extended to strangers, those

strangers are brought into the communal fold and, as Feierman (1998) describes, become like family. This demonstrates how family is central to Akan culture and practices, one of which is its philanthropy. Asante-Darko (2013) also contradicts himself when he acknowledges the Asante culture and practice of assimilation, aimed at forming a strong, united community that was like a family. Disclosing someone's origins was taboo within the pre-colonial Asante community and was punishable by death because even where people (like slaves) had been brought into the Asante kingdom and were non-Asantes, they were expected to integrate and become a part of the communal whole (Perbi, 1991). This enabled the building of a sense of community and unity. Support for these people (non-Asantes) was still in the spirit of communalism and solidarity. The research undertaken by this study comes up with findings that interrogate this position taken by Asante-Darko and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Other expressions of Akan philanthropy include the upkeep of children, which was not only the responsibility of their parents and family but the whole community (Kwadwo, 2002); households eating together - adult men gathered to eat from the same bowl, women did so, and children as well (Hanson, 2004) so that no one in the household went hungry, whether or not they were part of the nuclear family. A bereavement, marriage, birth celebration, and all other celebrations were participated in by the whole community who gave not only money and material but also volunteered their time (Nkansa-Kyeremanteng, 2010). Keeping the community clean and hygienic was the responsibility of the whole community, and usually, the days that were set aside as non-farming days were used to clean up the community with everyone in the community expected to participate (Arthur, 2017). Community members supported each other on their farms through a process called *nnɔbua* or *enɔbua* where members of a group helped each other on their farms reciprocally to enable people to have bigger farms and better productivity for the benefit of all (Gyekye, 2013; Kwadwo, 2002). Even Akan architecture (*Fihankra*) was developed to enhance communal living (Arthur, 2017, pp. 203-205). *Fihankra* "is a kind of house in which there is a central quadrangle with rooms on the four sides" (Arthur, 2017, p. 846,847)… and has a central open courtyard where several common household activities took place (Arthur, 2017; Yeboah, 2017).

The diaspora also play a key role in indigenous philanthropy, especially in Ghana and among the Akan (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). The World Bank Migration and Development Brief 37 (2022) listed Ghana as the second-highest recipient of remittances amounting to approximately USD 4.7 billion, making up 6.1% of the country's GDP. A large percentage of this goes to Akan communities, and a "2016 study by the International Organisation for Migration of

1,200 households in six selected districts of the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Region in Ghana revealed that 26 percent had received remittances during the 12-month period of the study" (The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017, p. 34). These remittances come from Akan in the diaspora to support their families and communities. The African diaspora plays an important role in the philanthropic practices of the Akan and Africans as a whole (Copeland-Carson, 2007; Kumi, 2019a; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). There is inadequate data on how much goes to families and particularly its impact because of poor data tracking (Kumi, 2019a). However, anecdotal accounts and some statistics, particularly from World Bank reports, give some idea of how much inflow is received and what it is used for. Diaspora communities have thus become one of the most important philanthropic communities for Akan and Africans. These communities are tied to their relatives back home (Atibil, 2014), connecting to "people and place" (Grimm, 1998, p. 25, as cited in Atibil, 2014, p. 426).

Asante-Darko (2013) also notes that traditional leadership played a role in pre-colonial Asante philanthropy (p. 90). As the recognised custodians of Akan culture and traditions, traditional leaders in the research locations participated in the research and shared interesting perspectives of their role in philanthropy. Apart from Asante-Darko, another author who mentions the role that traditional leaders in the Akan community play in giving to their community for the welfare of the community is Rattray (1923, 1929). Nketiah, (1954) shares that

> The chief is expected to be benevolent to his people, to be liberal in giving presents, to offer drinks to those who visit him, to have food prepared in abundance so that visitors might find something to eat. On the morning of the *Adae*, he is expected by custom to give presents to those who go to greet him. Hospitality to strangers is his bounden duty. (p. 35)

The SDG Philanthropy Platform (2017) notes the role of traditional leaders in philanthropy in Ghana as well and Kumi (2019b) indicates that the role of traditional leaders may be one of the few areas where philanthropy in Ghana has distinct features from others in Africa (p. 1089). This is a debatable point, and one is cautious to stake a claim on it because literature from indigenous sources in other parts of Africa may indicate similar practices.

Missing to a large extent from the discourse and literature on philanthropy, not only globally, but in Africa and also in Ghana, even when indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is discussed, is the role of spirituality and the belief in giving to God, deities, the ancestors, and natural elements

that are believed to be abodes for spirits, at the indigenous level and as part of philanthropy. This aspect of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, when mentioned, is placed within the context of Christian and Islamic giving practices (Kumi, 2019; Tijani & Abdallah, 2023). Yet, the communality, reciprocity, and moral obligatory nature of African philanthropy, Ghanaian, and as is being discussed in this section, Akan philanthropy, all feature in this aspect of Akan philanthropy - its spirituality, and not institutionalised religion. Sarpong (1974) writes about the role of the ancestors in reciprocal giving in Akan (Ghanaian) society. Next to Onyame (God), the Earth deity is the most highly revered (Rattray, 1923, p. 124). When the Akan pour libation in prayer and mention the almighty God, the next in line is the "Earth goddess" (Sarpong, 1974, p. 18). The Earth is referred to by the Asante as *'Asaase Yaa' – Asaase* means Earth and Yaa is the name of a female born on Thursday. The Earth deity is recognised as a female and a mother. Sarpong (1974) notes that this was probably because "…the earth provides food, water, trees on which we survive. She is not simply the symbol of fecundity, but she is the fertile woman par excellence… (p. 18)". The people gave to the deities and spirits and believe that they also gave back. They gave back protection, prosperity, an abundance of harvest, recovery from illness, good luck, success in war, revenge on enemies, and all manner of blessings as required from them. (Sarpong, 1974, pp. 16,17). They had "the power to bless and kill" (Sarpong, 1974, p. 16).

Asare-Opoku, 2010, describes how the Akan preserved nature and the environment within the context of their spirituality. He shares that

> Characteristic of our traditional culture is reverence for nature and a deeply-held belief in our oneness with it. To enforce this reverence, there were many prohibitions aimed at preserving nature, for “Nature is not just an object but a tangible reality from which humanity derives its sense of wholeness and well-being” (WCC Report 1978:14). Fishermen do not go fishing on Tuesdays and this gives the ocean a day of rest to replenish itself, the fishermen also get a day of rest to mend their nets. Fishermen are expected to “sacrifice” some of their catch to *Bosompo,* the divinity of the sea, after each fishing expedition before returning home. The fish that are sacrificed must be live ones not dead and an Akan maxim that supports this ritual says: “*Bosompo ankame wo nam a, wo nso wonkame no abia”* – if *Bosompo*, the divinity of the sea, does not begrudge you his fish, you do not begrudge him of your catch. The fish the fishermen sacrifice to *Bosompo* will continue to breed and there will continue to be fish in the ocean, if this ritual is

> observed. It is therefore taboo for fishermen not to make a “sacrifice” of their catch and the concern for the environment expressed in the ritual sacrifice of fish is quite self-evident. The fish thrown back into the ocean is for future generations and the idea of sustainability can be seen to be firmly embedded in the fishermen’s tradition dating back to centuries. (p.18)

This did not only apply to the fishing areas like the Western region where the Ahanta inhabit but also the forest areas where the Asante live. Asare-Opoku (2010) also adds that

> In the farming areas, too, it is taboo to bring back home a whole bunch of palm fruits from the farm. One is expected by custom to cut a bit of the palm fruits and leave the nuts in the forest before returning home. The idea behind this practice is that every palm fruit that is brought home is going to be boiled or cooked and the kernels will not germinate and grow into palm trees and provide food not only for the present generation but also for future generations. Those who did not observe this taboo were regarded as a threat to human society and were dealt with accordingly in the past. (p. 19)

This is a clear demonstration of a reciprocal relationship of giving as the Akan give back what the earth and sea give them expecting to receive again from these elements as they give back.

As shown from the above, there is some literature albeit scant and scattered that is related to indigenous Akan philanthropy. The only scholar (Asante-Darko, 2013) who actually focuses his writing on Akan philanthropy limits it to the Asante and also to the pre-colonial era. The others who make several references that strongly relate to Akan philanthropy and particularly to the values that drive it as well as the practices do not engage them in the context of philanthropy but more from the moral philosophy and ethics perspective. There are also aspects of indigenous philanthropy such as the spiritual aspects that have had limited focus or a skewed religious focus (mainly religions that were introduced into Africa such as Christianity and Islam). Akan philanthropy needs more exploration and exposure. These are the current gaps that this thesis is contributing to addressing.

2.8 Theoretical framework

There are a number of theories that have been used to conceptualise and explain indigenous philanthropy in Africa and, by extension, Ghana. The ones that stand out are *Ubuntu*, an

indigenous African theory, which has been adopted to explain the values that ground and drive philanthropy in Africa and differentiate it from Western philanthropy (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Kuljian, 2013; Gyekye, 1978, 1995, 2010). *Ubuntu* has been argued to also be moral deontological theory by scholars like Metz (2007a, 2007b, 2011). Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), as previously indicated have also referred to *Ubuntu*, which as a "theory of collective self with strong spiritual and symbolic connotations" (p. 121). According to Metz (2011) in explaining the Ubuntu moral theory,

> To sum up, the maxim 'A person is a person through other persons', which is fairly opaque (at least to English speakers), admits of the following, more revealing interpretations: 'One becomes a moral person insofar as one honours communal relationships', or 'A human being lives a genuinely human way of life to the extent that she prizes identity and solidarity with other human beings', or 'An individual realises her true self by respecting the value of friendship'. According to this moral theory, grounded in a salient Southern African valuation of community, actions are wrong not merely insofar as they harm people (utilitarian- ism) or degrade an individual's autonomy (Kantianism), but rather just to the extent that they are *unfriendly* or, more carefully, fail to respect friendship or the capacity for it. Actions such as deception, coercion and exploitation fail to honour communal relationships in that the actor is distancing himself from the person acted upon, instead of enjoying a sense of togetherness; the actor is subordinating the other, as opposed to co-ordinating behaviour with her; the actor is failing to act for the good of the other, but rather for his own or someone else's interest; or the actor lacks positive attitudes toward the other's good, and is instead unconcerned or malevolent. (p. 540)

As extensively discussed in Chapter 2, African philanthropy is seen as an act that honours communal relationships and is tied to the identity of the individual's embeddedness in the community and what Metz, (2007a, 2007b, 2011) calls 'solidarity' which is

> for people to engage in mutual aid, to act in ways that are reasonably expected to benefit each other. Solidarity is also a matter of people's attitudes such as emotions and motives being positively oriented toward others, say, by sympathising with them and helping them for their sake. (p.538)

The researcher agrees with this presentation of *Ubuntu* by Metz (2007 a; 2007b; 2011) as a moral theory, which is supported by Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013). She suggests however that the communal relationships that Metz (2011) refers to goes beyond mere friendships. Consequently acts like Akan philanthropic acts towards the welfare and benefit of the community are not just friendly acts but a recognition of a communal bond, deeper than friendship. That being said, the presentation of *Ubuntu* as a moral theory is endorsed in this thesis.

Another is the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory developed in 1968 by Walter Buckley (Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019) which is employed by Fowler (2016) initially to explain the "ontological perspective of gifting [in Africa] as an evolution of a universal human predisposition, with observable acculturated mores, values, and practices" (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p.727); and Mauss (1969)'s system of total prestations which has been used to explain gift-giving practices, particularly in archaic or primitive societies (Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017).

Finally, decolonial theory is adopted more as an approach than a theory for this thesis. The need for adopting such an approach comes from the need to address an incongruence in global philanthropic discourse and practice, which can be inferred from the literature of several scholars in the field of African philanthropy. They bemoan the hegemony of Western philanthropy within the global discourse on philanthropy, the marginalisation and dismissiveness of African philanthropy, and its relegation to the background. They call for African philanthropy to be as valorised as Western philanthropy, even as they underscore the need to have a narrative on philanthropy that is authentically African (Aina & Moyo, 2013; Aina, 2013; Moyo, 2013; Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Asante-Darko, 2013, Mati, 2017, 2020; Atibil, 2014; Kumi, 2017, 2019; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), 2018; African Grantmakers Network (2013); Mahomed, 2012; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014). That is calling for the decolonisation of philanthropy.

All these theories play a significant role in helping to comprehend and map the landscape of philanthropy as a whole in Africa. The CAS theory used by Fowler (2016) and Fowler and Mati (2019) produces, as noted before, one of the clearest models of African philanthropy from pre-colonial times till the millennium and helps to understand the social evolution and human interactions that created, changed, and positioned different forms and practices of philanthropy in and of Africa through a selective and adaptive process within the different eras. That framing, although useful for the purpose that it was adopted for by Fowler, is not going to be used within

the theoretical framework (see Figure 4) of this thesis because the focus of this thesis is different. Firstly, this thesis is narrowly focused on indigenous philanthropy, not only in Africa but in Ghana, and zooms in on a specific ethnic group, the Akan. Secondly, this thesis delves into much more than the practices and how they evolved and looks also at the meaning and nature of Akan philanthropy. It goes beyond an ontological perspective and includes epistemological and axiological perspectives. Thirdly, this thesis is considering Akan philanthropy from the lens of its indigenous knowledge systems. Mauss' system of total prestations is also too narrowly focused on primitive societies, and even though some of the concepts proposed in that theory would be helpful in understanding Akan societies, especially in pre-colonial times, a subject that Asante-Darko (2013) has made a scholarly contribution to, this thesis would expand beyond the pre-colonial comprehension and practice of Akan philanthropy. Mauss' theory does not also emanate from Akan indigenous epistemology. The theory that is best suited for this thesis and helped respond to the research questions is the *Ubuntu* theory and this is because of its alignment with the Akan humanism theory, an indigenous Akan theory (Gyekye, 1995). Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), who were among the pioneer scholars (in addition to others like Everatt et al., 2005 and Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005) to do a study on indigenous philanthropy in South Africa, noted after rigorously engaging the subject, mainly from the lens of horizontal philanthropy, that

> in sum, from a 'limited horizontal lens capturing the daily lived reality of a large proportion of the continent's population, a conversation and narrative about African philanthropy, or philanthropy with African characteristics, could usefully address at least four fundamental concepts. These are: deeply-rooted appreciation of being human; an identity of collective self; self-reciprocity as an embedded trait of African 'gifting'; and the nature of choice in the mosaic of motivations and associated rules (p.129).

The theory of *Ubuntu* and the values of communalism, reciprocity, and moral obligation that derive from it will help address these four concepts and more. Thus, for a thesis that seeks to understand indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective, the theory of *Ubuntu* is adopted but with a twist. It adopts the Akan version of *Ubuntu*, what Gyekye (1995) calls "Akan Humanism". This helps to craft a narrative that enables an understanding of the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy.

2.8.1 Akan humanism

Akan humanism is an indigenous moral philosophical theory of the Akan (Gyekye, 1995). As suggested in previous sections, the concept of *Ubuntu* underpins African philanthropy, and it can be deduced from Gyekye (1995) that Akan humanism is the Akan equivalent of *Ubuntu*. Akan humanism is thus used as an anchor and navigator for the exploration of the concept of Akan philanthropy in this thesis. Gyekye (1995) describes Akan humanism as follows:

> The preoccupation of Akan moral thought with human welfare. The concern for human welfare constitutes the hub of the Akan axiological wheel. This orientation of Akan morality takes its impulse undoubtedly from the humanistic outlook that characterises Akan traditional life and thought. Humanism, the doctrine that sees human needs, interests, and dignity as fundamental, thus constitutes the foundation of Akan morality. Unlike Western humanism, however, Akan humanism is not anti-supernaturalistic. By contrast, it maintains rigid supernaturalistic metaphysics. (p. 143)

Akan humanism is based on Akan ethnophilosophy, which is the core epistemological basis to help unravel Akan philanthropy. The use of ethnophilosophy asserts that the proverbs, aphorisms, songs, poems, folktales, folklore, and symbols of the Akan depict their worldview and are not only vessels that hold their knowledge but are also vehicles of communication for that knowledge (Appiah, 1979; Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Dei, 2012; Dei et al., 2000; Dzobo, 1992; Gyekye, 1975). Emagalit (2001) defines ethnophilosophy as “a system of thought that describes, analyses, and tries to understand the collective worldviews of diverse African peoples as a unified body of knowledge" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 131). Visible elements of ethno-philosophy consist of non-philosophical elements: customs, proverbs, beliefs, adages, and so on. Invisible immanent elements of ethnophilosophy consist of the critical factors or thoughts that give birth to visible elements, such as epistemological, ontological, and ethical principles. Ethnophilosophy has its critics (Hountondji, 1996; Appiah, 1998; Attoe, 2019) but they often ignore the immanent elements, focusing only on the visible elements (Imafidon et al., 2019). As Gyekye (1995) notes:

> Modern African philosophers cannot afford to neglect the concepts and values in traditional African life and thought, which, after all, constitute the background of the modern African cultural experience. They should therefore critically examine such concepts and values as humanism, communalism, altruism, consensus, and others as they function in African socio-political life and the social, non-individualistic character of traditional African ethics, the traditional African conceptions of the value of man and the

> relationships between people in a society, and the sense of community, solidarity, and mutual social responsibility. These are in harmony with the contemporary cultural ethos and can provide an adequate basis for contemporary social and moral philosophy (pp. 40-41).

This advice is adopted in this thesis to explain the phenomenon of Akan philanthropy not only in the past but also in the present. Another aspect of ethnophilosophy is sagacity. Sagacity is, simply put, the wisdom of the elderly (Ochieng, 2002; Oruka, 1983). As Gyekye (1995) indicates:

> In Akan, as in every African community, there are certain individuals who are steeped in traditional lore. These individuals are regarded as wise persons in their own right. They stand out in their own communities and command the respect and esteem of their townsfolk...they are generally tradition-bound in their intellectual and general outlooks (p. 53).

These are the people Oruka (1991, p. 177) refers to as "sages". Gyekye (1995) agrees that "the proverbs, like the maxims, can be explained rationally by the *anyansafo* (sages, philosophers) of the Akan community, who, in fact, were the originators of the proverbs because it is they who engage in reflective thinking" (p. 19). In the quest to understand the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy through the interpretation and engagement of proverbs and aphorisms, sages in Kumasi and Essikado, two of the research locations, were purposefully engaged. This focus on the 'elderly' also informs the age range of the sampled participants for this thesis.

2.8.2 Decolonial approach

On the consideration of decolonial theory as an approach, one issue that runs through the literature on African philanthropy and philanthropy in Ghana, and thus affects its philanthropy and related practice, is the hegemonic status given to Western definitions, characterisations and models of philanthropy. This is reflected in the documented information and data, and the literature on it, to the detriment of indigenous philanthropy in Africa. This is in addition to the disparaging connotations given to indigenous philanthropy in the existing literature with tags such as 'informal', 'ad hoc', 'non-institutionalised' (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh; Copeland-Carson, 2005; 2007; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b;

Moyo, 2013). This denigration of African philanthropy has also affected philanthropy, particularly indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. Ghanaians' indigenous philanthropy is present but not given due recognition (Asante-Darko, 2013; et al., 2012; Kumi, 2019a; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017).

What is acknowledged as philanthropy in Ghana is the Western model of institutional giving through foundations, churches, bilateral and multinational institutions like the United Nations, corporate institutions, voluntary associations (most of which are formally registered non-profit organisations), social enterprises, venture capital, and impact investment vehicles, and volunteering through formal institutional mechanisms (Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). Indigenous philanthropy in Ghana remains in the shadows. The need to decolonise philanthropy in Ghana and bring to the fore the information on its indigenous philanthropy remains pertinent, and this thesis aims to contribute to it. The decolonial theoretical aspect, therefore, will mainly be considered as a crosscutting approach, instead of an adopted theory, throughout the exploration of Akan philanthropy and in the endeavour to understand its meaning, nature, and practices and how colonialism may have affected it.

A decolonial approach agrees with aspects of postcolonial theory, such as the recognition of coloniality, its continued existence through other forms, and the effect on indigenous knowledges. The point of departure, however, is to de-link from anything connected to the *theo* (religion-centred) and *ego* (individualistic) politics of the West and forge ahead with many truths and knowledges (Mignolo, 2007). It approaches the world through the researcher as an instrument of seeking knowledge and truth from different sources without placing more value on one over the other and frees the investigator to explore different knowledges rather than being confined to one discipline. Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) explain that

> instead of studying or analysing the existing postcolonial and neo-colonialist phenomena and processes, be it diaspora, exile, nationalism, bio-politics, etc., and instead of maintaining the divide between the known object and the knowing subject, the decolonial approach allows for a specific epistemic, political, and ethical instrument for transforming the world by transforming the way people see it, feel it, and act in it. The decolonial option places the problem or problems to be addressed (and not the object or objects to be studied) in the foreground. By doing so, it leads any investigation through the scholar,

> intellectual, or researcher into the world, rather than keeping him or her within the discipline (p. 131).

A critical aspect of the decolonial approach advocated by proponents such as Mignolo is pluriversalism: the appreciation of all knowledges. What is interesting and, to some extent, different from the position of some postcolonialists is the recognition by decoloniality theorists that one should not romanticise the pre-colonial past nor completely bastardise Western knowledge. Rather, they push for a melange of knowledges defined by those labelled as 'the other' within their context (Mbembe, 2015; Mbembé, 2001; McEwan, 2019; Mignolo, 2007). Earlier work by Smith, Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) explains that,

> Decolonising research is not necessarily postcolonial research. Decolonisation is a process that critically engages at all levels: imperialism, colonialism, and postcoloniality. Decolonising research implements indigenous epistemologies and critical interpretive practices that are shaped by indigenous research agendas (p. xiv).

A decolonisation lens will be utilised throughout the research design and implementation. The power wielded by the colonisers and imperialists (in the past), and currently channelled through global development agendas and the institutions that support them (in the present), has informed the dominant understanding of philanthropy and its practice in Ghana and backgrounded indigenous philanthropy (Aina & Moyo, 2013). There is, therefore, a need to decolonise what seems to be the accepted truth about philanthropy. The hegemonic power of these developments and how this has affected the dominant knowledge and understanding of philanthropy are important issues to be considered. As indicated by Dei and others, "[i]f colonisation is understood as a particular way of doing things…, when we open the space for multiple ways of knowing and understanding, we begin to undo colonial knowledge regimes" (Dei, 2012, p. 825). This decolonisation stance distinguishes the approach employed in this study from Western research approaches that ignore the role of imperialism, colonisation, and globalisation in the construction of knowledge (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 8-9).

Although the decolonial approach presents a critical aspect in the approach to this research, it is not appropriate as the epistemological fulcrum for this research because that positioning emanates from critical theory (Denzin et al., 2008) and does not have at its core indigenous epistemology. Kovach (2019) aptly states that "[w]hile a decolonising perspective remains necessary and can be included as a theoretical positioning within research, it is not the

epistemological centre of an Indigenous methodological approach to research" (p. 127). Hence, the need to use indigenous theory like Akan humanism for a study like this one with indigenous Akan philanthropy as its focus. The decolonial approach is reflected in the methodology for this thesis and is considered in more detail in the section on the conceptual framework.

The theories that inform the thesis are Ubuntu, Akan Humanism and Decolonial theory (as an approach or a position) but what is fully adopted as the key driver to help address the research questions and understand the phenomenon of Akan philanthropy is Akan humanism, an indigenous theory. Figure 4 depicts this theoretical framework for the thesis.

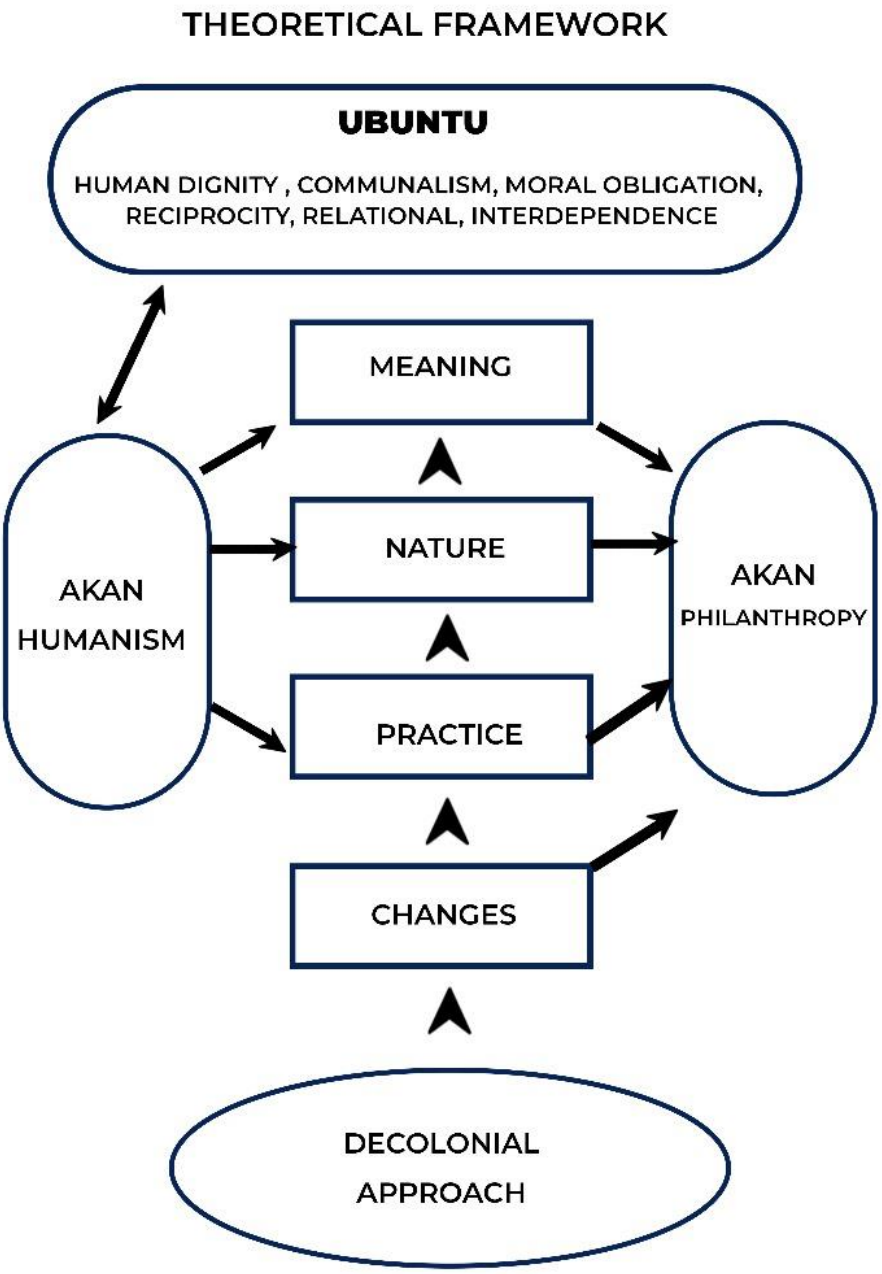


Figure 3: Theoretical Framework

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The postcolonial indigenous paradigm informs the conceptual framework for this thesis and is the most appropriate in addressing the exploration of the phenomenon of philanthropy in a country that has gone through and continues to suffer the effects of colonisation and neo-colonialism, like Ghana, and from one of its indigenous perspectives, that of the Akan. The postcolonial indigenous methodology confronts coloniality and valorises indigeneity. It is a relational methodology, meaning the worldview (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology) and values (axiology) underpinning it are fashioned, driven by and understood through relationships. The conceptual framework structures the methodology and methods which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

2.9.1 Relational ontology

Relational ontology recognizes social reality as one of the connections between the living, non-living and the cosmos; the temporal and the spiritual (Chilisa, 2012; Gyekye, 2013; Gyekye, 1995; Wiredu, 2002). Within the spirit of Akan Humanism, one of the key values that guide indigenous philanthropy is the collectivism, communalism and the I/We relationship which includes within 'community', the spirits and ancestors (Chilisa, 2019; Dei, 2012; Dzobo, 1992; Gyeke, 1996). This forms a critical acceptance of what is reality (ontology) in the culture and traditions of the Akan (Gyeke, 1996; Gyekye, 1995; Wiredu, 2002). Unlike the positivist and post-positivist paradigm that is objectivist and separates reality from human consciousness of reality, social reality within the postcolonial indigenous paradigm is constructed through the "relationships between human beings and other human beings, between the living and the non-living, between the temporal and the spiritual" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 20; Dei, 2012, p. 829). The positivist paradigm places emphasis on the individual (Babbie, 2010, p.33), but the postcolonial indigenous paradigm privileges the communal and constructs knowledge based on the individual's relationship with others within that community (Chilisa, 2012, p. 21). Positivism presents the search for one reality by scientific processes and presents a reality that is independent of the researcher (Babbie, 2010). The postcolonial indigenous paradigm, on the other hand, makes room for different realities that could be sought from and validated by the people for and through whom that reality has been constructed (Chilisa, 2012, p.21). This is a position that is supported by the interpretivist paradigm which is subjectivist and constructs

reality based on the individual's experiences and interpretation (Neuman, 2003). There are some differences that are addressed in this study.

Akan Humanism aided in searching for the answers to the research questions with the knowledge and understanding of philanthropy obtained through the Akan's construct of her world - one of a relationship within herself (body, soul and spirit) (Dei, 2012, p. 830; Gyeke, 1996, p. 30), relationship with her community and environment (Dei, 2012, pp. 831,836; Gyeke, 1996, pp. 23,35) and with the cosmos and the spiritual (Dei, 2012, pp. 833-835; Gyeke, 1996, pp. 13-19). This relational ontological perspective of the Akan manifests in their philanthropy and is presented through the findings and discussions in this thesis.

2.9.2. Relational Epistemology

"Epistemology is the science of knowing" (Babbie, 2010, p. 4). According to McDougal (2014), it involves the study of the nature of reality; the definition of truth; the relationship between the seeker of knowledge, the one giving the knowledge and the knowledge itself; what can be revealed as knowledge; and how to treat the knowledge once acquired or known. It is also about coming to know what people consider knowledge and truth from their cultural perspective and positioning.

A postcolonial indigenous paradigm that is African-centred demands an epistemology that is relational and also informs the connection between the researcher and the researched (Dei, 2012; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). The distance that a positivist paradigm requires between the researcher and researched, will therefore not exist in this research undertaking. In the spirit of the framework adopted here, the researched are very much an integral part of the research as much as the researcher is.

The relational epistemological nature of this paradigm also enquires into the nature of knowledge and truth related to Akan philanthropy based on their "systems of knowledge [which is] built on relationships" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 21), in this case, the relationships defined within their relational ontology. These should be an indigenous construct within the Akan context and should come from their recognized and accepted sources of knowledge. This is where the postcolonial indigenous paradigm differs from the interpretivist paradigm - from the contextual definitional position. For the interpretivist, that context remains western and individualistic and

indigenous culture is often treated as exotic (Chilisa, 2012, p. 35; Denzin et al., 2008, p. 6; Smith, 2013). The postcolonial indigenous paradigm discourages this. Instead, the researched are rather the bastions of knowledge and their knowledge systems, sources and methods are to be acknowledged and appreciated in the quest to find what is knowledge (Thayer-Bacon, 2003) as much as other knowledges are valued. The knowledge systems, processes, methods, repositories, sources and structures of the Akan on indigenous philanthropy were thus explored in this study and given the same value as any other knowledges on philanthropy.

2.9.3. Relational axiology

These are the values that guide the daily experiences of the subjects of the research and relate to what they accept as valid knowledge, drawn, from their social reality. The values of Akan Humanism, which are akin to *Ubuntu* values of respect, accountability to each other, acknowledging rights and responsibilities and reciprocity, taking into consideration one's position within the society and a respectful way to engage other members of the society (Tutu, 1999, p. 33), were key guiding principles in this research process (Chilisa, 2012, p. 21). Chilisa, (paraphrasing Louis, 2007) lists these values as " relational accountability, respectful representation, rights and regulations during the research process and reciprocal appropriation (Chilisa, 2012, p. 22)". It includes respect for the researched; cooperation between the researcher and the researched; values that promote respect for both the living and non-living, the temporal and spiritual; values such as the respect for elders and deference to them as the custodians of culture; the respect for indigenous sources of knowledge that may not include written literature but be captured in song, dance, poetry, symbols, artefacts, sayings and stories.

Apart from being relational, the postcolonial indigenous paradigm is also a decolonial methodology. This means that it confronts the challenges of coloniality, and in the case of indigenous philanthropy this presents itself as the dominance of the western philanthropic model and the relegation of indigenous philanthropy like that of the Akan. A decolonial methodology is also pluriversal and therefore values all knowledges. It can therefore make use of both indigenous and non-indigenous methods as was done in this thesis.

Consequently, it has two key areas of focus - the use of indigenous theory, which is Akan humanism for this thesis, and the use of indigenous methods (ethnophilosophy and sagacity, conversational methods, observation, community group discussions). Through the use of this theory and methods, this seeks to address the problem of a lack of in depth understanding of

indigenous philanthropy in Ghana through an Akan perspective and fill the gap in knowledge on the meaning, nature, practice as well as changes of Akan philanthropy in Ghana today.

A diagram of the conceptual framework (Figure 5) is presented below.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

POSTCOLONIAL INDIGENOUS PARADIGM

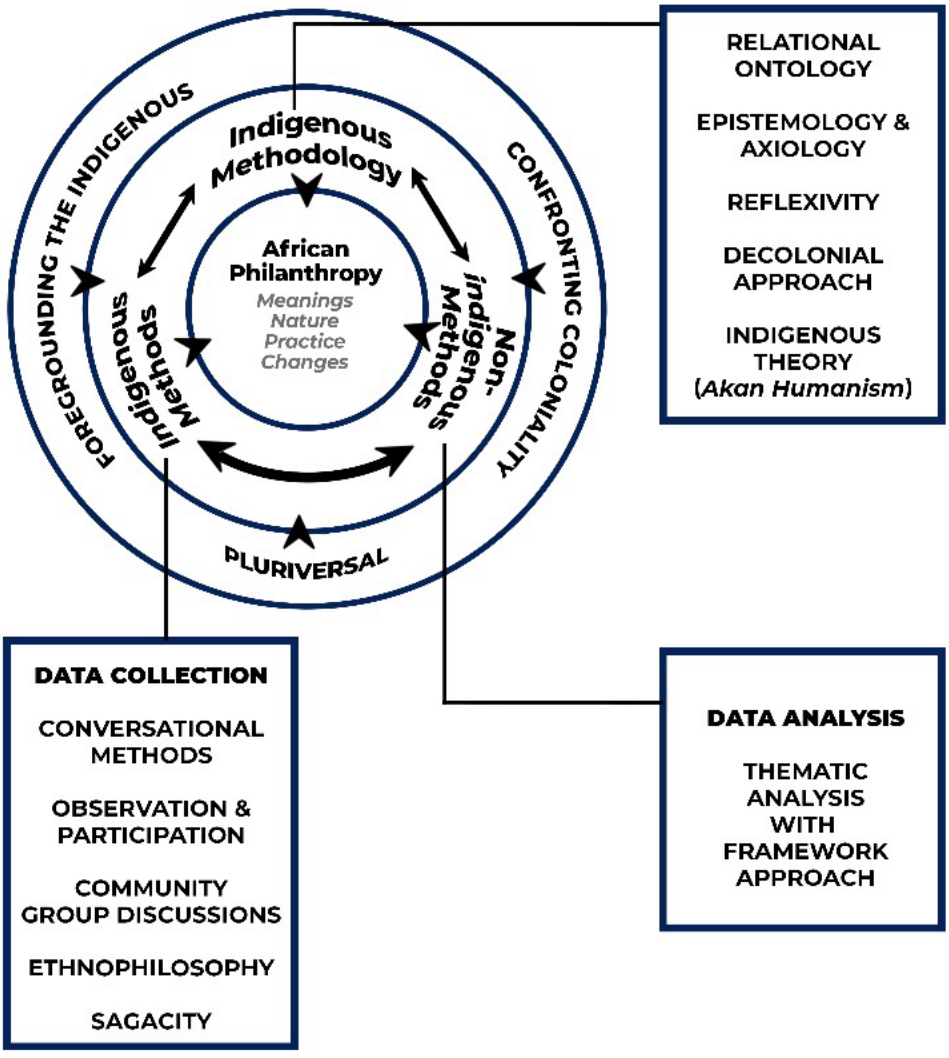


Figure 4: Conceptual Framework

3 CHAPTER THREE- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used to find answers to the research questions posed. It will provide more detail about the conceptual framework presented in the last chapter by discussing the adopted paradigm and the philosophy supporting its adoption for this particular thesis, the chosen methodology to understand the phenomenon, and the methods chosen to align with that methodology. Additionally, it will discuss the ethical considerations and limitations of this thesis. This study is an indigenous research project and includes the following components outlined by Chilisa (2012):

> 1) It targets a local phenomenon instead of using extant theory from the West to identify and define the research issue.
> 2) It is context-sensitive and creates locally relevant constructs, methods, and theories derived from local experiences and indigenous knowledge.
> 3) It can be integrative, that is, combining Western and indigenous theories.
> 4) In its most advanced form, its assumptions about what counts as reality, knowledge, and values in research are informed by an indigenous research paradigm. (p.13)

3.2 Research Paradigm

The indigenous research paradigm for this thesis is the postcolonial indigenous paradigm (Chilisa, 2012, 2019). Kovach (2019) describes an indigenous research paradigm as "a nest in a research project that incorporates an indigenous methodology; the paradigm (nest) would be indigenous knowledge with specific contextual knowledge assumptions emerging from a particular tribal knowledge base" (p. 125). An indigenous methodology is relational. The relational ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the postcolonial indigenous paradigm are in tandem with what Dei (2012) refers to as an African-centred paradigm, which,

> is mainly oriented towards ideas and principles embedded in local cultural values, norms, and ethical practices highlighting the essence of African humanness (e.g. ideas of community, social responsibility, respect for elderhood, ancestorhood, spirituality and

> cultural history - all as part of the totality of African peoples' lived realities and contributions to global knowledge… [it] expresses an indigenous ontology that values wholeness, connections, and the interrelationships of self, group and communities as well as the nexus of body, mind, soul and spirit in coming to know. (p. 6)

3.2.1 Relational Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology

Relational ontology for the Akan acknowledges social reality as a network linking the living, non-living, and the cosmos, integrating both temporal and spiritual dimensions (Chilisa, 2012; Gyekye, 1995, 2013; Wiredu, 2002). It is guided by Akan humanism and is manifested in Akan culture as collectivism and communalism, respecting the community, ancestors, and spirits (Chilisa, 2019; Dei, 2012; Dzobo, 1992; Gyekye, 1996). This contrasts with positivist paradigms by embracing a reality co-constructed within communal relationships (Chilisa, 2012). African-centred postcolonial indigenous epistemology necessitates a relational understanding between the researcher and the subject (Dei, 2012; Denzin et al., 2008), valuing communal knowledge and the collective over the individual (Babbie, 2010; Chilisa, 2012). It explores Akan philanthropy within this relational framework, seeking knowledge from Akan proverbs, aphorisms, and folktales (Gyekye, 1995).

The research also upholds relational axiology, prioritising accountability, respectful representation, and reciprocal relations during the research process (Chilisa, 2012). The researcher's engagement with the Akan community was conducted with cultural sensitivity and without incentives, adhering to ethical and community protocols. Conversational research methods were employed, allowing story-sharing and knowledge exchange consistent with indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2019).

The relational ethos of the postcolonial indigenous paradigm makes it antithetical to Cartesian philosophy, which emphasises the individual (Dei, 2012). The mind-body duality captured in Descartes' phrase: 'I think therefore I am' is the foundational epistemological base for conventional research paradigms such as positivism, post-positivism, and even interpretivism (Chilisa, 2012), where knowledge is found, acquired, and owned by the individual. Knowledge may be obtained objectively through scientific methods as proposed by the positivists or subjectively as proposed by the post-positivists, interpretivists, and constructionists, but it is the individual that holds the knowledge.

There are some parallels within the transformative paradigm, which differs from the others in the sense that it emanated from scholars who criticise the individualistic appropriation of seeking knowledge and instead seek to empower and facilitate the agency of the research subjects, acknowledging their rights to their knowledge. It serves, therefore, as a useful ally in the implementation of indigenous research methodology, as its proposed methods like participatory research fit well within the relational ethos of indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2010). There is still a difference, however, because the postcolonial indigenous paradigm, unlike the transformative paradigm, centres on indigenous epistemology. In the case of this thesis, the indigenous epistemology is Akan humanism (Gyekye, 1995). Indigenous methodology has certain unique characteristics that must be present in any research that adopts it:

> evidence of tribal epistemology, integration of a decolonising aim, acknowledgement of preparations necessary for research, space for self-location, a clear understanding of the purposefulness and motivation of the research, guardianship of sacred knowledges, adherence to tribal ethics and protocol, use of Indigenous methods (such as conversation and story), and giving back (Kovach, 2019, p.129).

These characteristics informed the research design and guided the implementation of the research process and these characteristics are reflected in the description of the research design and process in subsequent sections.

3.3 Research Design

The quest to answer the question ‘what is the meaning, nature, and practice of philanthropy from the viewpoint of the Akan in Ghana’ requires a qualitative inquiry, which has been generically defined as studying things in their natural settings in an "attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 10). Indigenous methodology is associated with and located within the broad framework of qualitative research methodology because of the number of similarities between the two, such as their interpretive/constructionist nature, the subjectivity involved in the research process because of its relational nature, and the need for reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Kovach, 2010; Chilisa, 2012; 2019). According to Kovach (2010), qualitative inquiry enables the interpretive nature of meaning-making and is therefore a comfortable partner of indigenous methodology, which identifies with interpreting meaning through indigenous epistemology. The

epistemological source is the key differentiator between qualitative research methodology and indigenous methodology. Indigenous methodology must have indigenous epistemology (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2013). In the case of this thesis, it is that of the Akan.

One key limitation of the indigenous methodological framework is the challenge of acceptance in mainstream academia of its analytical rigour to meet the current standards of reliability and validity required for a good research project. Standards that have been developed in the main, through western paradigms and lenses. The challenges with this have been well-documented by several scholars who have mentioned this as one of the justifications for decolonising research (Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Denzin et al., 2008; Kovach, 2010; 2019). Marrying indigenous research methodology and qualitative research methodology from Western tradition or borrowing aspects of the latter as needed is therefore a strategy employed in this thesis because congruence in some areas is one of the ways to overcome this challenge. This marriage of indigenous research methodology to qualitative research methodology is described as a "hybrid paradigm," which Denzin and Lincoln (2018) suggest is beginning to emerge "alongside new geographies of knowledge and new decolonising epistemologies" (p. 1). The hybrid approach combines indigenous research methods, such as the conversational method (Azenabor, 2009; Kovach, 2019), to gather knowledge and interpret it, and conventional qualitative research methods such as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; Smith & Firth, 2011), to analyse the findings. It is an approach that places value on both content and process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and aligns with decoloniality positioning, which promotes a mixture of knowledge and pluriversality (Dei, 2012; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009). It gives equal prominence to and places value on all knowledge, romanticising none and privileging knowledge for functional reasons. Combining indigenous methodologies with the established qualitative inquiry process requires a mixture of methods (Botha, 2011). A mixed method in this instance is not mixing quantitative and qualitative methods (Wagner et al., 2012) but rather "the … pragmatic mixing of research techniques at the level of practice, which considers issues of explanation and justification of methods at an epistemological level to a lesser extent than mixing methodologies would do" (Botha, 2011, p. 323).

Qualitative methods (indigenous and non-indigenous) may have to be mixed because there are still aspects of research that can only be conducted within the currently acceptable forms of research in academia (Botha, 2011; Chilisa, 2019). These relate to some forms of data collection or data analysis (Kovach, 2019) where an appropriate method has not yet been found

with indigenous epistemological foundations. In this thesis, it had to do with the latter – data analysis. It must be noted that what is essential in an indigenous methodological approach is that the methods adopted align with the indigenous philosophical orientation and culture and centre the knowledge of the indigenous rather than the specific methods themselves (Kovach, 2019).Therefore, the methods employed in this research have been carefully selected to align with what is recognised by the Akan as knowledge, as well as who is recognised as having knowledge and where it can be found. It aligns with the ethnophilosophical orientation, which emphasises indigenous knowledge from proverbs, aphorisms, folktales, symbols, social norms, and the lived experiences of a people within their culture (Emagalit, 2001; Gyekye, 1995; Imafidon et al., 2019; Mangena, 2014a, 2014b) and sage philosophy or sagacity, which consists of the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community (Ochieng, 2002; Oruka, 1983, 1998). This informed the sampling for this research process.

The qualitative methods that were mixed here were the indigenous methods for data collection, as well the interpretation process (conversational method (Kovach, 2019), observation, ethno-philosophy, sagacity (Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Ochieng, 2002; Oruka, 1983, 1998), and a non-indigenous data analysis model: thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) particularly the framework approach (Gale et al., 2013; Hackett & Strickland, 2018; Smith & Firth, 2011). The latter was used to organise and analyse data using Atlas Ti Software.

3.3.1 Research Context

Chapter One provides detailed information on the research context and particularly the Akan for two reasons. The first is that it enables a better appreciation of who the Akan are and gives deeper context and reasoning reason for the theoretical and methodological choices made for this thesis - who to speak to for this research on the Akan with an indigenous focus, and why the indigenous knowledge sources chosen were chosen. Additionally, for a qualitative research project like this that uses a small sample and which cannot be generalised, to enable transferability, a deep and rich description of the context must be provided (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

3.3.2 Sampling

3.3.2.1 *Population*

The Akan constitute the largest ethnic group in Ghana. The 2020 Ghana national population census reference put the percentage of Ghanaians who are Akans at 47.5% and the percentage of Ghanaians who are non-Akans but speak the language at 44%. The Akans occupy the greater part of southern Ghana, and Akan languages are spoken as native languages in approximately ten of the 16 regions of Ghana (Agyekum, 2018). Kumasi, Effiduase (on the outskirts of Kumasi), Essikado, and New Takoradi (on the outskirts of Essikado) are all Akan traditional areas. Kumasi, with a population of 443,981, is the home of the Asante or Ashanti and the capital city of the Ashanti region (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022). The Ashanti region is the most populated region in Ghana next to the greater Accra region, which hosts the capital city of Ghana, Accra. Essikado, with a population of 140,545 people, (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022) is the home of the Ahanta and is part of Sekondi, the twin city of Takoradi, which is the capital of the Western region in Ghana. The Western region is the sixth most populated region in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2022). Both the Ashanti and Western regions are Akan. Kumasi and its environs were chosen for the research because the Asante are the most dominant group amongst the Akan, and Kumasi hosts the palace of the king of the Asantes, the Asantehene, and many of the prominent traditional leaders and Akan culture experts in the region. Essikado was chosen because it is the home of the Ahanta, who are a minority sub-ethnic group amongst the Akan and relatively little known to create some balance in the information gathered on the Akan.

It was important for the information acquired to be rich enough to answer the research questions and provide for an in-depth analysis. Depth, more than breadth, was required (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). The number of participants sampled was adequate to reach saturation. 21 individual participants were interviewed in addition to two groups made up of six and 11 people, respectively. Table 1 provides the details.

3.3.2.2 *Purposive and snowballing sampling*

Purposive sampling (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013; Merriam & Grenier, 2019), employing sagacity (Ochieng, 2002; Oruka, 1983; Chilisa, 2012, 2019), was used to target relevant individuals and groups that provide the necessary information to gain the understanding and knowledge that this study seeks. The samples are not representative and what determined their selection is their relevance to the research topic instead of their representativeness (Davies & Hughes, 2014; Neuman, 2014). A study that seeks to present a representative sampling of the different

constituencies that engage in indigenous philanthropy in Ghana would have been too expensive and could not be resourced by this particular research project.

In addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was used to help reach relevant people (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The researcher received further recommendations on the participants with the requisite knowledge from those who were initially engaged. This was accomplished with the consciousness of being inclusive. Guided by the indigenous methods of ethnophilosophy and sagacity as key sources of Akan epistemology, these participants had to be "persons of authority in Akan indigenous society" (Ackah, 1988, p. 19), such as traditional leaders, sages, or specific elderly people who have in-depth knowledge of the customs and traditions of the Akan and experts in Akan tradition and culture (Ackah, 1988; Chilisa, 2012; Dei, 2012; Gyekye, 1995; Rattray, 1923). The endorsement of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, and the Paramount Chief of Essikado, Nana Kwabena Nketia V, facilitated access to these knowledgeable people and spaces. They assigned influential people to help find the people. Through the latter, the researcher had the opportunity to have a conversation with others who were not royalty or necessarily experts in Akan culture and tradition. This enabled the researcher to get the common Akan perspective on Akan philanthropy as well as that of the traditional chiefs and elders of the community. Engaging the *susu* groups also helped obtain the average Akan's view on the subject matter.

The researcher also held conversations with two community rotational savings groups, popularly known as *susu* groups. There was a challenge in obtaining a reference from the people assigned by the traditional leadership to facilitate getting the participants, as far as finding *susu* groups is concerned. In the end, this was achieved through contacts who worked with organisations that supported *susu* groups, either through women's empowerment or community programmes, one being a for-profit organisation and the other a non-profit organisation.

Table 1: Numerical Table of Respondents

Location	Traditional leaders	Akan indigenes	Experts (Academics/ Researchers)	Group	Gender susu groups not included) F	Gender (susu groups not included) M	Total

Kumasi (Asante)	4 (including lady in waiting)	4 (including man at Manhyia)	3	1 made up of 11 members in Effiduase, close to Kumasi	7	4	11 + 1 susu group
Essikado (Ahanta)	6	3		1 made up of 6 members in New Takoradi, close to Essikado	6	3	9 + 1 susu group
Accra		1	2		3		3
Grand Total							25

*Groups are presented as one participant because they are a collective voice.
Source: Field data 2023

Since the purpose of this research was to find answers to the research questions and not to prove an already conceived hypothesis, the data collection continued until it reached a saturation point, where the researcher had rich and adequate information and did not get any new information from additional interviews or engagements (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Wagner et al., 2012).

3.3.3 Data collection methods

The following strategies were employed for data collection in this qualitative enquiry: interviews (herein referred to as 'conversations' (Kovach, 2019, Azenabor, 2009)) and observations (Wagner et al., 2012). These different data-gathering techniques with individuals and groups (Wagner et al., 2012) were done within an indigenous Akan context. The relational nature of this context differs from the traditional Western understanding (Chilisa, 2012; 2019). Interviews are therefore perceived as conversations with certain peculiarities and expectations (Kovach, 2019), and observations are made in alignment with cultural protocols (Chilisa, 2012; 2019). The group discussion within an indigenous research methodology adopted for this thesis was the community focus group interviews with the *susu* groups. Community group interviews within the indigenous setting do not differ significantly from "western-based focus group" (Chilisa, 2012, p.

212) discussions apart from the fact that there is more flexibility in terms of who joins and leaves and how the facilitation is done (Chilisa, 2012; 2019).

3.3.3.1 *Conversational method*

The conversational method (Azenabor, 2009; Kovach, 2019) was the most appropriate for this indigenous research process. Although the conversational method is similar to interviews in the Western research tradition, the difference is seen in certain unique characteristics that are spelt out by Kovach (2019) as follows:

> It is linked to a particular tribal epistemology (or knowledge) and situated within an indigenous paradigm; it is relational; it is purposeful (most often involving a decolonising aim); it involves particular protocol as determined by the epistemology and/or place; it involves an informality and flexibility; it is collaborative and dialogic, and it is reflexive. (p. 128)

The approach used involves storytelling and privileges "the orality of indigenous knowledge" (Kovach, 2019, p. 127). The participants consented to be recorded and signed informed consent forms. The groups consented orally, and the researcher did not compel them to provide signatures on the consent forms, as some of them were not literate in the English language and comfortable with signing documents and may have found that offensive. Instead, their oral consent participate in the discussions was recorded. The relational and participative process of the postcolonial indigenous research paradigm requires that the search for knowledge within the research process is not extractive but rather collaborative and participatory (Chilisa, 2012, 2019). Many participants waived anonymity and are acknowledged in the relevant section of the thesis. Within the main content, to ensure consistency and fairness, no participant is named. The anonymised participant list with reference numbers (Appendix 1) is used.

The ethnophilosophical characteristic of the thesis is revealed not only in the use of ethnophilosophical sources in understanding Akan philanthropy but also in participants' responses, as they made several references to aphorisms, symbols, proverbs, and folktales in their narration of stories of Akan philanthropy and their explanation of the different aspects of Akan philanthropy. In different chapters and sections, the *adinkra* symbols and proverbs and aphorisms speak to different issues discussed.

All interviews, apart from those held with expert informants, were in Twi and/or Fante (both Akan languages), unless the participants preferred otherwise. Even in the instances with experts, there were portions of their interviews where they spoke Twi. This was to ensure that the information remained as authentic as possible to the Akan context and the expressions of indigenous Akan philanthropy. Being half-Akan and with the ability to speak Twi fluently, the researcher facilitated and conducted the conversations. Fante speakers understand Twi, and the researcher understands Fante and so this was also helpful in the researcher's communication with Fante-speaking participants. Each conversation was recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed. Twi and Fante language experts helped translate the recordings into English. However, as much as possible, where meanings could be lost, both Twi and Fante words and their English meanings are presented in the research findings. This helps to address the challenge of losing meaning when translating material from indigenous languages (Twi and Fante, in this case) into English, one of the biggest challenges faced by indigenous researchers (Ackah, 1988).

The venue for the conversations with two participants in Accra, who were academic experts in Akan culture and traditions, was their institutions, and a third was by telephone. With the experts in Kumasi, it was mostly in the environs of the Manhyia Palace (the palace of the Asantehene), and in the case of one of the experts in Kumasi, the only academic in the Kumasi expert group, it was in her home. All the chiefs and queen mothers (traditional female leaders) were met in their homes and not at their palaces, enabling conversations to be more informal and flexible (Kovach, 2019). In most cases, during the conversations, people were usually going in and out, and sometimes, during the interview with one of the Queen Mothers, she had her lady-in-waiting (an aide to the Queen Mother) with her, who sometimes interjected with her own opinion or said something to remind the Queen Mother about one point or another. In one instance, in Kumasi, as the researcher was preparing to interview one of the respondents at the Manyhia Palace, they were joined by others, including two gentlemen who were visiting the Palace to learn more about the Asante culture. An interesting conversation ensued about who the Asante worshipped, which the researcher was permitted to record and use. Another instance occurred when a planned interview with a Queen Mother in Essikado turned out to be an interview with an additional Queen Mother, Chief, and linguist. The interview was scheduled on a day that the traditional court had sat to listen to a marital dispute, so she invited the other chiefs and Queen Mothers who were present to join her in the conversation with the researcher.

All conversations lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. An aide-memoire (Appendix 2) was used for the unstructured conversations which were the individual conversations, to ensure that key informational prompts needed for the data responding to the research questions were covered. A semi-structured guide (Appendix 3) was however used for community group discussions with the *susu* groups. Although the guides for both the individual and group discussions were useful, the conversations were dialogical and fluid; there was a lot of storytelling involved. This was a confirmation of the relational nature of indigenous research interview processes (Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Kovach, 2019).

3.3.3.2 *Community group discussions*

The researcher conducted two community group discussions (Chilisa, 2012, 2019) in New Takoradi (near Essikado) and Effiduase (near Kumasi). These were for the *susu* (traditional rotational savings) group. The New Takoradi group was made up of six women, and the Effiduase group had 10 participants (three men and seven women). The researcher had an assistant who helped with organising the groups and capturing the information gathered from the conversations by hand, in addition to the recording. As noted earlier, a semi-structured interview guide was used to direct the flow of these group conversations. The meeting with the New Takoradi group was held in the home of the leader of the *susu* group who was a well-respected businesswoman in the community. The Effiduase group met in the open-air at a usual meeting place in the community. This created some distraction for members but most of them sat through till the end of the conversation. Some of the distractions included hawkers selling their wares and a funeral procession that passed by on foot that some of them, being members of the community, had a responsibility to be at and support. The meeting therefore started with 10 people and ended with 9. One person left just before the meeting ended because she had to attend a funeral where she was playing a supportive role.

3.3.3.3 *Observation (and participation)*

The researcher participated in and observed two funerals, particularly the philanthropic aspects, to aid her understanding of indigenous Akan philanthropy by seeing the philanthropic aspect of Akan funerals in practice. Observation, as a data collection tool, helps the researcher see how the people under observation behave and respond to issues related to the phenomenon under discussion within their setting. It also helps to know what questions to ask as one interviews

them and to glean what information can help answer the research questions (Schensul et al., 1999; Wagner et al., 2012). Owing to the relational nature of this research process, the researcher used an observer-participant method that enabled relationship building. The researcher was therefore both a participant and an observer (Wagner et al., 2012). Not being a member (insider) of the group she observed, however, made it easier for her to observe as an outsider.

The data was obtained from observations through the understanding and lenses of the researcher, and therefore it had to be checked for accuracy with the participants. She engaged participants as she observed the funeral ceremonies to explain certain aspects that needed some clarity or when she needed to ascertain if the information she had was accurately captured and interpreted. She also used methodological triangulation (Chilisa, 2012) to compare the information gathered from observations with data gathered from the interviews and the ethnophilosophical sources, such as proverbs, aphorisms, symbols, and folktales. One of the challenges anticipated in using the observation method was time constraints. To mitigate this, the researcher observed key activities, which were the two funerals, and even then, she participated in and observed the most relevant aspect where giving was done. Instead of trying to capture everything that happened, the researcher used a checklist (Appendix 4) to enable her to capture what was essential to the research topic (Wagner et al., 2012) of Akan philanthropy. Biases that could have been a challenge (Wagner et al., 2012) were acknowledged and noted. The researcher designed a checklist to allow objectivity as she observed the activity and captured what she observed (Ratner, 2002).

3.3.4 Data Analysis

In alignment with the pluriversal nature of the decolonial approach adopted for this thesis which embraces all knowledges and equally values them, and the acknowledgement of the usefulness of mixing indigenous and non-indigenous methods where needed as required by the postcolonial indigenous paradigm, the researcher used a non-indigenous data analysis model for her data analysis and employed the use of Atlas Ti software to facilitate the process. The literature notes three methods or approaches to qualitative analysis: "socio-linguistic methods that explore the use and meaning of language, such as discourse and conversation analysis; methods that focus on developing theory, typified by grounded theory; and [and] methods that describe and interpret participants' views, such as content and thematic analysis" (Smith & Firth

2011, p. 3). The latter, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012), is the one that was the most suitable for analysing the data collected for this thesis.

3.3.4.1 *Thematic analysis*

Thematic analysis is the most suitable data analysis method because of its flexibility, adaptability to any research paradigm, and lack of fastidiousness to any epistemology or ontology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). This enables adaptation to this thesis, which is based on indigenous theory. Another benefit of using thematic analysis is that it is compatible with indigenous methodology because it is an inductive qualitative inquiry and some of its distinctive characteristics, such as its flexibility to allow the researcher to draw out themes with inbuilt reflexivity and positionality aspects that are in complete alignment with the self-in-location (Kovach, 2019) process, a key aspect of indigenous methodology.

The flexibility and adaptability of thematic analysis are however criticised as lacking analytical rigour because of subjectivity, lack of clarity in theme development, a superficial nature, and the possibility of not dealing with the phenomenon being studied holistically (Smith & Firth, 2011). The framework approach adopted in this thesis, therefore, addresses this and respond to this criticism by providing an audit trail of the analytical process. Byrne (2022) refers to this approach as one of "codebook approaches" (p. 1393). He explains:

> Codebook approaches, such as framework analysis (Smith and Firth 2011) or template analysis (King and Brooks 2017), can be understood to be something of a midpoint between coding reliability approaches and the reflexive approach. Like coding reliability approaches, codebook approaches adopt the use of a structured codebook and share the conceptualisation of themes as domain summaries. However, codebook approaches are more akin to the reflexive approach in terms of the prioritisation of a qualitative philosophy with regard to coding. Proponents of codebook approaches would typically forgo positivistic conceptions of coding reliability, instead recognising the interpretive nature of coding (Braun et al. 2019).

One other critique of using thematic analysis, a non-indigenous methodology, within indigenous methodology, is that it forces one to extract the information given and dilutes the richness. The researcher is compelled to pull out from the rich stories that are told, the key strands that respond to the research questions, and, in the process, some of the richness in the narrative is

lost (Kovach, 2019). The framework approach was therefore chosen to counter that challenge. Central to the analytical processes within the framework approach is a series of interconnected stages that enabled the researcher to move back and forth across the data until a coherent account emerged (Smith & Firth, 2011). That helped to prevent the loss of the rich data gathered for this thesis and enables the reader to see the story woven from the data and how it emerged.

The framework approach is "particularly suited to the analysis of cross-sectional descriptive data enabling different aspects of the phenomena under investigation to be captured" (Smith & Firth, 2011, p.4). For this thesis which considers interview transcripts, observation notes, proverbs, symbols, and folktales, from literature, it was ideal. In addition to this, for a relational research methodology, “the transparency of the researcher’s interpretations of participants' experiences” (Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 4) was essential and the framework approach enables that. It also facilitates "the processes that guide the systematic analysis of data from the development of descriptive to explanatory accounts" (Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 4).

The researcher analysed the data using inductive and deductive methods, and the framework approach supported the use of both methods. This is because it is not a wholly inductive approach like grounded theory but its "aims and objectives are highly focused and researchers work with structured tour guides in order to identify patterns within the data" (Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 2). An indigenous methodological process values the meaning given by participants to the phenomenon being studied; in this case, Akan philanthropy (Chilisa, 2012) and the framework approach facilitates that process because it helps to explore meanings and experiences and interpret participants' views without being wholly subjective even though some level of that is required (Byrne, 2022; Smith & Firth, 2011). This subjectivity must be expressly stated through a reflexive process, which is something that the framework analysis allows (Byrne, 2022; Smith & Firth, 2011).

The relational nature of research conducted within a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm, such as the one undertaken in this thesis, means that the researcher has an additional responsibility to show that their findings are not biased and coloured by the relationship with participants and the research topic itself (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Denzin et al., 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Kovach, 2010). This requirement is addressed by using an approach such as the framework approach because it enables the researcher to

explore the data in depth but also maintains some level of objectivity and transparency. Smith and Firth (2011) quote Ritchie and Lewis (2003) as follows:

> The principles of the framework approach can be used to undertake qualitative data analysis systematically. This enables the researcher to explore data in depth while simultaneously maintaining an effective and transparent audit trail, enhancing the rigour of the analytical processes (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Ensuring data analysis is explicitly described enhances the credibility of the findings. (p. 2)

The next section gives the details of the data analysis process that birthed the findings presented in Chapter 4.

3.3.5 Data analysis process

The translated transcripts and observation notes were analysed using the framework approach of the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; Smith & Firth, 2011). A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was used. A code framework (Table 2) created from the research questions, as well as the two interview guides (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) and the observation checklist (Appendix 4), which were also based on the research questions, provided the material for the deductive approach. The code framework had four main areas of inquiry: the meaning (M), nature (N), and practice (P) of Akan philanthropy and what the changes (C) and causes for the changes were.

Eleven general codes in these four areas provided a framework for analysis. Subsequently, using Atlas TI software, the researcher applied the framework to each of the transcripts and observation notes and indexed relevant quotations that corresponded with each of the 11 general codes accordingly. This was an inductive, open-coding process. The deductive approach provided a framework for the interrogation of the data, and the inductive approach (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) helped to obtain the key quotations emanating from the data that responded to any of the 11 general codes. Useful quotations that did not fall under the main code categories were grouped under 'Others' (O). Most of these turned out to be on Akan beliefs and culture. A 12th general code, O: The Akan People and Beliefs, was therefore added to the main codes. Table 2 presents the framework developed.

Table 2: Code Framework

Code Key Guide	Code
Meaning (M)	M-Names
	M- Purpose of giving
	M-Understanding
Nature (N)	N- Characteristics and motivation
	N-Ways
	N-Social norms
Practice (P)	P- Expressions
	P- Relationships
	P-Actors
Changes and Causes (C)	C- Changes
	C-Causes
Others (O)	O-The Akan people and beliefs

Source: Author's construct

For each of the 12 main codes, sub-codes were indexed using transcript quotations from the conversations with the individuals and the *susu* groups and the observation notes. After several iterations, which included merging some of the subcodes, the overall coding process produced 12 main codes and 94 sub-codes. The results are presented in Table 3: Code and Sub-codes

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Table 3: Code and Sub-codes

	Codes (12) and Sub-codes (94)	Number of quotations
1	**M-Names (4 subcodes)**	**61**
	- *Adɔyɛ* - Love and/or sympathy	34
	- *Aseda* - Thanksgiving	6
	- Giving (generic)-*ɔma*	13
	- Mutual Aid – *enɔbua*	12

2	**M-Purpose of Giving - community wellbeing (1 sub-code)**	**46**
3	**M-Understanding (6 sub-codes)**	**66**
	- Benevolence	11
	- Beyond the physical	3
	- Identity	9
	- Communal-community	18
	- Concepts (harmony and equilibrium)	2
	- Values ---- Merger of M-understanding: reciprocity; M-understanding: *Ubuntu*; M-understanding: moral responsibility; and M-Understanding: gratitude	35
4	**N- Characteristics and motivation (9 sub-codes)**	**41**
	- All Akans no matter sub-ethnicity practise giving	4
	- Giving comfort and security within the circular space of life	1
	- Giving develops families	6
	- Giving develops people	8
	- Giving fosters unity	2
	- Giving is done out of love- charity is part of love	7
	- Giving is without remuneration	1
	- Giving occurs throughout the life cycle	5
	- Giving sustains the community	14
5	**N- Ways (8 sub-codes)**	**55**
	- Communal living	12
	- Giving occurs throughout the life cycle	5
	- Giving out of free will	2
	- Giving was the norm	9
	- Nature, society and individual	1
	- Not giving without expectation	1
	- Obligatory	7
	- Reciprocal	23
6	**N-Social Norms (6 sub-codes)**	**24**
	- Giving was the norm	8
	- Life is eternal – physical and spiritual – never ends	3
	- Matrilineal	2
	- Proverbs on *Ubuntu* and our need for each other	3

	- Reputation and reciprocity	7
	- The circularity of life and how it affects our giving	1
7	**P-Expressions (11 sub-codes)**	**94**
	- Giving adulthood-livelihood	3
	- Giving to family - matrilineal system	10
	- Giving to nature	2
	- Giving to strangers/foreigners	13
	- Giving to the chieftaincy institution	5
	- Giving to the church	3
	- Giving to the community	31
	- Giving to the destitute	9
	- Giving to the spirit world	9
	- Giving-childhood into adulthood	9
	- What is given	27
8	**P-Relationship (11 sub-codes)**	**42**
	- Chief and community	9
	- Church – church members	1
	- Diaspora-community	2
	- Foundations – relationship or not	2
	- Giver-recipient	2
	- HNWI-needy	3
	- Individual-society relationship	7
	- Matrilineal family relationships	4
	- Migrant/foreigner/stranger-native relationship	6
	- Mutual aid and peer support	2
	- Society and the vulnerable	7
9	**P- Actors**	**68**
	- Benevolent individuals	4
	- Churches	2
	- Community	8
	- Diaspora	3
	- Everybody gives – rich or poor	14
	- Family	6
	- Foundations	4
	- Nature, Society and individuals	1
	- Spiritual beings, including ancestors	11

	- The chief/ queenmother	20
	- Women	3
10	**C- Changes (14 sub-codes)**	**72**
	- Chieftaincy institution undermined	3
	- Church replacing family and community	1
	- Commercialisation -transactional giving	6
	- Fewer resources for Chiefs	1
	- Focus on the nuclear family system	4
	- Giving has diminished	7
	- High cost of living	1
	- Individualism – less communalism	15
	- Lack of trust	15
	- Less eating together	3
	- Less reciprocity	2
	- Living arrangements changed	3
	- Values destroyed	27
	- Visitors abuse and control indigene space	2
11	**C-Causes (7 sub-codes)**	**55**
	- Capitalism	3
	- Christianity	24
	- Colonialism	13
	- Migration	2
	- Partisan politics	2
	- Population increase	3
	- Western education or Westernisation	12
12	**O- The Akan People and Beliefs (6 sub-codes)**	**53**
	- Akan giving-recommendations	2
	- Akan governance	6
	- Akan spirituality and beliefs	17
	- Life as eternal	2
	- Proverbs- express Akan philosophy, values and custom	5
	- The Akan	22

Source: Codes from Interview transcripts and Field notes analysed with Atlas Ti

Through the iterative process required by the framework approach in thematic analysis, new codes were identified, some merged, and some changed along the way. After coding and

recoding, the next step was to draw out the themes and cluster them. Several themes emerged and were clustered in response to the research questions, with one general cluster emerging on the Akan context. This cluster was labelled as 'Other' and became an integrative theme. It included cross-cutting information from participants, particularly concerning the Akan culture and tradition. The next stage was to extract key findings from the five thematic clusters. Four key findings emerged and this is presented in Chapter 4.

3.4 Credibility, Dependability, Transferability and Confirmability

Chilisa (2012) offers recommendations from scholars such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2009) that

> the validity and reliability of qualitative research studies should be judged using different criteria than those used in quantitative research. The suggested terms to describe validity and reliability in qualitative research are credibility for internal validity, transferability for external validity, dependability for reliability, and confirmability for objectivity (p. 165).

This is the framing adopted for this thesis. The postcolonial research paradigm and indigenous methodology based on Akan epistemology have a peculiar characteristic: their relational nature (Chilisa, 2012, 2019). This requires non-conventional methods of inquiry, such as the conversational method. The conversational method is based on building a relationship and trust with participants, close collaboration with participants, deeper involvement with participants, situating oneself within the research, and the relationship between the researcher and the content and process of the research. All of these enhance the subjectivity of this project and therefore demand an equally high level of rigour to ensure the credibility, dependability, and transferability of data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

In addition to using a framework approach for thematic analysis, the researcher used other methods in this study to ensure rigour and trustworthiness. These methods include "triangulation of methods and data" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 167; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The researcher triangulated the data from her conversations with individual participants and groups with what she observed in the two funeral ceremonies, as well as the proverbs, aphorisms, folktales, and symbols accessed from the literature to assess congruence. As the findings will show, these elements align well with each other.

The researcher also employed member checks, cross-checking with participants to ensure that what had been captured in the conversations accurately represented their views and contributions. In one instance, the researcher had to remove a part of an interview as requested by a participant, a chief, who then validated the edited recording before its use by the researcher, in alignment with being a guardian of privileged knowledge obtained from the participants. The Centre for African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at the Wits Business School, the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR), and the CLM Postgraduate Centre at Wits University provided opportunities for peer scrutiny and feedback through workshops, seminars, and retreats to ensure some objectivity in the review process and prevent a biased perspective. This was particularly helpful given the relational nature of the inquiry.

The last method used was the provision of rich contextual descriptions (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), hence the detail on the Akan provided under the ‘research context’ (Chapter 3.31). This provides knowledge and understanding of the context within which the research was conducted. Since this is a qualitative inquiry where depth more than breadth is required, the researcher could only work with a small sample of participants (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). The findings cannot be generalised; however, the in-depth information provided on the context can help anyone interested in transferring the findings to a similar context (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). For this reason, the context of the Akan, which informs their philanthropy, is provided in significant detail.

3.5 Ethics

Merriam and Grenier (2019) propose that good qualitative research should be conducted ethically. This is mainly based on the ethics of the researcher. While this may be an important element, qualitative research conducted within the postcolonial indigenous paradigm and the Akan epistemological frame goes beyond the ethics of the researcher to focus on the ethics of the researched and their values, which should guide the research (Chilisa, 2012; Dei, 2012). Chilisa describes these ethical principles as "relational accountability, reciprocal appropriation, respectful representation, and rights and responsibilities" (Chilisa, 2012, 2019). These will now be considered in more detail.

3.5.1 Relational accountability

This means respect for the participants' protocols and beliefs, and the researcher accounting for what is written. This research engaged traditional leaders and community leaders; therefore, the researcher respected the cultural protocols for engaging such leaders but also had to align with the University ethics requirements. There were some conflicts with the requirements of Akan traditional protocols, particularly for engagements with traditional leaders such as chiefs and Queen Mothers. In these engagements, there is an expectation that the person seeking an audience would bring gifts as a sign of respect and honour. However, the University's ethics requirements forbid the presentation of anything to research participants that may be perceived as incentivising them to give information. This could affect the credibility of the data and its trustworthiness. The researcher, therefore, respected the "adherence to tribal ethics and protocol" (Kovach, 2019, p. 219) in every aspect apart from presenting drinks to traditional leaders. The participants' deference to the Asantehene and the Paramount chief of Essikado, who granted permission for the research, gave the researcher access that would otherwise not be granted without the exchange of drinks. Showing necessary respect by offering drinks would still be done, but after the research is complete and presented to the chiefs. Giving a gift after the research process would not infringe on the University ethics requirements or create any perception of tainting the data. Therefore, in line with the traditional protocol of *aseda* (gratitude), the researcher will return to the traditional leaders and elders who freely shared their thoughts about Akan philanthropy with gifts to express appreciation. This act would also acknowledge the contribution of the participants in the research.

The researcher also used member checks to ensure accountability. She engaged with participants to cross-check the credibility of the findings with the knowledge they provided, as well as the information she gave.

3.5.2 Reciprocal appropriation

Research on indigenous knowledge needs to be aware of the appropriation of indigenous knowledge in the past and counter it by co-producing research with indigenous knowledge that rightfully acknowledges the contribution and ownership of indigenous knowledge by the research participants (Dei, 2012; Denzin et al., 2008; Smith, 2013). Critical to this is the responsible use of the collected data and giving back to the community as a contribution to the research. Bringing indigenous knowledge of Akan philanthropy to the fore and highlighting its equal value to Western models of philanthropy is core to this thesis, as is the right attribution of

the knowledge gathered for its production. The researcher agreed with the participants that she would keep them updated on the progress of the thesis. The researcher would also submit copies of the thesis to the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II and the Paramount Chief of Essikado, Nana Nketiah V, for their palace libraries.

3.5.3 Respectful representation

The researcher engaged participants' voices, especially in the data collection and data analysis process (Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Dei, 2012; Dzobo, 1992), and at all times during the process, respected and acknowledged their contributions by first ensuring that they were very clear about the purpose of the conversation and agreed to contributing to it, also knowing that they were not bound and could leave at any time they wished. Additionally, the researcher ensured that she got their validation of what she was capturing, sometimes immediately, or a bit later and also not enforcing signatures to demonstrate consent in the case of the women's group in New Takoradi and also in Effiduase where the group included people who could not read or write English.

3.5.4 Rights and Responsibilities

As she researched, the researcher was expected to do no harm with the knowledge obtained. She was inclusive as she sought knowledge and addressed any power imbalances between the participants and the researcher or among the participants (Chilisa, 2012, 2019; Dei, 2012). She did this by publicly acknowledging the superiority of knowledge related to Akan philanthropy that the participants had and why they had been purposely chosen. She deliberately requested that she be directed not only to men but also to as many women as possible to ensure a balanced representation of voices in the dialogue and of knowledge and experience. She was also careful in getting information on Akan philanthropy not only from the traditional leaders but also from non-royal Akans in the community so that the different perspectives could be captured.

3.6. Limitations

3.6.1 Representation

Although the thesis tells the story of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana through the eyes and mouths of the most dominant ethnic group, the Akan, it has to be acknowledged that the

research cannot be said to be representative of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana *in toto* but only that of the Akan. The rich contextual description provided enables people to deduce what philanthropy could look like in similar contexts, but there is a limitation to it being described as representing philanthropy in Ghana as a whole.

3.6.2 Scope of the Study

This study is also limited to findings on the 'what' of indigenous Akan philanthropy—meaning, nature, and practice. It is not a detailed scoping study. The motivations for philanthropy even though touched upon in the thesis, the measurement of the value of Akan philanthropy in Ghana, even among the Akan, or its impact on Ghana's development are not the focus of this study. It is hoped that further research in these areas will be undertaken later by researchers or others with an interest in this area.

3.6.3 Limitation of methods – ethnophilosophy and sagacity

Scholars have raised concerns about the limitations in the use of methods such as ethnophilosophy and sagacity, which emphasise the interpretation of proverbs, symbols, aphorisms, folktales, and information from sages (Gyekye, 1987, 1995; Oruka, 1983, 1998). These include possible difficulties in translating traditional African concepts found in proverbs caused by interpretation through a religiously altered lens, such as Christianity or Islam, and interpretation through a Western lens by the person translating.

Additionally, there is the fact that a foreign language is used to interpret concepts, and there are possible challenges that could arise if there are diverse and sometimes incompatible views that emerge from interviews and discussions with traditional thinkers, proverbs, and other sources (Gyekye, 1995). This possible incompatibility was not the experience of the researcher in this case. Rather, the researcher found congruence when she triangulated the data. The assertions about Akan philanthropy made in the interviews have been affirmed by proverbs, symbols, aphorisms, and folktales analysed and corroborated by the ceremonies that she observed.

Another limitation with the focus on sagacity is that the sample targeted exclude the youth to a large extent. The current statistics on the Akan population indicate that there is a large percentage of youth. Their views on Akan philanthropy will be worth researching into further.

The focus of this thesis and its insistence on conducting this research through an indigenous research model that emanated from the Akan constrained it to the use of ethnophilosophy and sagacity and an engagement of those that are custodians of Akan culture and tradition. These are predominantly above 40 years of age.

3.6.4. Language

Translating and transcribing the interview and other data originally in Twi or Fante into English may have caused some loss of meaning, which the researcher tried to guard against. Ackah (1988) notes:

> The concepts that exist in a particular language determine what can and cannot be said in that language. It was, therefore, very important that when Akan ideas were translated into English, care was taken to ensure that the meanings given in English are as close as possible to both the denotations and connotations of the Akan terms (p. 20).

The researcher partly addressed this limitation by having Twi and Fante language experts translate and transcribe the interviews held in Twi and/or Fante. As a native Twi speaker, she then constantly and consistently checked to ensure the alignment of meaning in the translations from Twi and/or Fante into English.

3.6.5 Contextualisation of some indigenous terms

Another limitation related to the meaning-making of indigenous terms and concepts is their placement within the context. Some terms, such as proverbs, can be meaningless without context (Ackah, 1988; Dzobo, 2005). Therefore, it is recommended that some of these terms not be examined in "abstract isolation" (Ackah, 1988, p. 21). The researcher addressed this limitation by triangulating information collected on the proverbs and meanings from different sources, such as literature and participant interviews to get the assurance that the terms were being used in the right context.

3.6.6 Researcher’s positionality

The researcher is half-Akan, and her knowledge of the language and customs of Akan was advantageous in obtaining access to and information from participants. However, as a woman

born into a Christian, multi-ethnic family (both Akan and non-Akan), nurtured in an urban, cosmopolitan setting, and having completed all her formal education within a westernized educational system, the researcher was acutely aware that she approached this research with certain biases and opinions. Her position shifted within the research context, where she was sometimes an insider as she identified with the stories told by the participants, and sometimes an outsider (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019) who was now learning from experienced indigenous knowledge holders. She had to take into consideration the fact that there was a likelihood of interpreting the indigenous knowledge that she gathered through her own-coloured lenses and to ensure the accuracy and validity of the information, member checks and triangulation of data sources were done.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the indigenous research pathway that this exploration adopted, using a postcolonial indigenous paradigm with an indigenous relational methodology and mixed qualitative methods. This mixture comprised the indigenous methods of conversation, observation, community group discussion, ethnophilosophy, and sagacity for data collection, and then the non-indigenous method of thematic analysis with a framework approach for data analysis. The ethical considerations taken into account during the process and the limitations of this thesis were then highlighted. The adoption of this methodology and methods produced findings, which are discussed in the next chapter.

4. CHAPTER FOUR- FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the synthesised results from the data obtained through various qualitative methods are outlined. The data encompasses insights gathered from in-depth conversations with Akan cultural connoisseurs and authority figures, insights from group dialogues, and observational notes from the two funeral rites observed and participated in. The chapter begins by setting the stage with a demographic overview of the participants, providing context that enhances the understanding of their insights. The findings are then systematically presented to align with the research questions that have underpinned the study from its inception, ensuring coherence between the research objectives and the findings shared herein. Table 4 (presented below) provides a holistic view of the research question, the thematic cluster that addresses the research question from the framework thematic analysis, and the key findings.

Table 4: Research Questions, Themes and Findings

Research question	Themes	Finding
1 (a) What is the meaning of Akan philanthropy?	- *Adɔyɛ,* demonstration of love - The community and the wellbeing and development of all its constituents is the aim. - Way of life.	Akan philanthropy is *adɔyɛ* and embodies the expression of love, manifesting as various forms of generosity, support and help that are ingrained within the cultural ethos. It is characterized not merely as occasional acts of charity but as a sustained way of life, fundamentally oriented towards fostering the long-term welfare and progress of the community.
1(b) What is the nature of Akan giving?	- Communal - Relational - Reciprocal (including thankfulness) - Obligatory - Values that can be seen in the proverbs,	The nature of Akan philanthropy is deeply interwoven with the communal fabric of the society, where giving is inherently relational and reciprocal. This reciprocity is not merely transactional but is imbued with a sense of gratitude and thankfulness, reflecting a cyclical exchange of support and solidarity. Such philanthropic actions are considered obligatory, stemming from a moral imperative that is reinforced by the rich repository of Akan proverbs, aphorisms, and symbols, which collectively embody and transmit the enduring values of the community's philanthropic ethos.

	aphorisms, symbols of the Akan.	
1(c) What is the practice of Akan giving?	- Horizontal - Wealth is not a determinant of who is a philanthropist. - Philanthropy occurs in various activities throughout the life-cycle. - Traditional institutions are vehicles (family, community, chieftaincy). - Practices include giving within the family, giving to and through the community, giving to strangers and foreigners, giving to the spiritual world and giving through	For the Akan, the practice of philanthropy transcends the mere possession of wealth; it is not the affluence of an individual that defines their capacity to give but rather a shared cultural responsibility that permeates all aspects of life. Philanthropy is a dynamic practice, evident in a variety of activities throughout the life cycle of an Akan individual, from birth to death. It is facilitated through traditional institutions such as the family, community groups, and the chieftaincy, which serve as conduits for philanthropic expression. The forms of giving are diverse, extending within families, to community members, strangers, foreigners, as well as to the spiritual realm. This practice has shown resilience and adaptability, maintaining its presence and relevance in contemporary Akan society despite the inevitable changes brought by modernity.

	traditional leadership. - Akan philanthropy even though it may have adapted to suit changing circumstances, still exists in contemporary times.	
2. What changes have occurred since the pre-colonial period in Akan giving and why?	Colonialism, Christianity, and Western education changed Akan philanthropy, but it still exists in other forms even though modified.	Historical influences, including colonialism, Christianity and western education, have affected Akan philanthropy. These external forces introduced new ideologies, disrupted traditional practices, and challenged the communal nature of Akan society, thereby impacting the expression and visibility of philanthropy. Despite the influences of these historical factors, Akan philanthropy has persisted and rather adapted to the changing sociocultural context.
Cross cutting theme	- Akan giving is informed by the philosophy, worldview, beliefs, culture, traditional norms, customs and folklore, political,	

	social, and economic systems of the Akan.	

Source: Field data

The findings, discussed from section 4.3 , follow the structure of the research questions.

4.2 Demographics

The participant cohort is comprised of a diverse array of individuals who are either traditional leaders, experts (academic and non-academics) in Akan culture and tradition, average Akans, or members of a *susu* group. There were five experts, of which three were engaged in Kumasi, including one curator of the Manhyia Palace museum and the leading researcher for the Palace, alongside a distinguished retired female academic. Complementing the Kumasi contingent, two prominent academics based in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, and widely recognised for their scholarly contributions to the study of Akan culture and tradition, were also engaged. Their inclusion brings a scholarly depth and a broader academic perspective to the research.

The study also involved seven average Akan indigenes, each providing a unique perspective. This subset included a middle-class professional man in his fifties or sixties from Accra with Akan royal familial connections, a senior Akan woman in her sixties or seventies recommended by a chief for her extensive knowledge, and an Akan man and personal assistant to a notable chief from Essikado in his forties or fifties. Also, from Essikado were a former diaspora resident, a man aged between sixty and seventy, and a nonagenarian woman with substantial diaspora experience. Two men in their sixties or seventies, self-identified as researchers in Asante culture, contributed their insights as well. There was also a man who is an aide to chiefs at the Manhyia palace who was not engaged in a one-on-one interview but was part of a chance discussion on Akan spirituality whose views the researcher included (with consent) in the data collected.

The traditional leadership from Essikado was represented by six individuals, including two queen mothers, three chiefs, and one linguist. From Kumasi, four traditional leaders participated, consisting of a chief, a queen mother, and a lady-in-waiting of one of the Queen Mothers who only interjected a couple of times in the interview.

The study further included members from two traditional rotational savings clubs, known as *susu* groups. One group, based in New Takoradi (near Essikado), was an all-women's *susu* group made up of six women. The other, located in Effiduase (near Kumasi), was a mixed-gender *susu* group made up of eleven individuals and established with the assistance of an international Christian NGO.

The study considered 23 distinct entities with two additions, making it 25 in total. The additional two were more of interjectors than deliberately planned interviews, and these are the man at Manhyia and the lady-in-waiting (an aide to the Queen mother), both in Kumasi. Each *susu* group is treated as a single unit as they represent a collective voice. Table 1, which shows this demographic data, and was presented earlier in Chapter 3 is reproduced here for ease of reference.

Table 1: Numerical Table of Respondents

Location	**Traditional leaders**	**Akan indigenes**	**Experts (Academics/ Researchers)**	***Group**	**Gender (**susu groups not	**Gender (**susu groups not included**)**	**Total**

					included**)** **F**	**M**	
Kumasi (Asante)	4 (+ lady in waiting)	4 (+ man at Manhyia)	3	1 group made up of 11 members in Effiduase, close to Kumasi	7	4	11 + 1 susu group
Essikado (Ahanta)	6	3		1 group made up of 6 members in New Takoradi, close to Essikado	6	3	9 + 1 susu group
Accra		1	2			3	3
Grand Total							25

*Groups are presented as one participant because they are a collective voice.

Source: Field data 2023

4.3 The meaning of Akan philanthropy

The first part of the main research question searches for the meaning of Akan philanthropy, and the finding is that the meaning of Akan philanthropy is ***adɔyɛ*** and embodies the expression of love, manifesting as various forms of generosity, support, and help that are ingrained within the Akan cultural ethos. It is characterised not merely as occasional acts of charity but as a sustained way of life, fundamentally oriented towards fostering the long-term welfare and progress of the community.

4.3.1 Adɔyɛ

Responses from participants suggested that Akan giving is given different terminologies, most of which are descriptive of the act being done, such as *enɔbua* (mutual aid), or *aseda* (thanksgiving or gratitude), or *akyɛdeɛ* (gift). But the one that each of them referenced or used consistently as more encompassing of Akan philanthropy in their conversations with the researcher is *Adɔyɛ*, which can be translated literally as 'love demonstration'.

Participant 02, a 60–70-year-old academic and an expert in Akan culture and tradition, said when asked about the kind of giving by the Akan that sees to the welfare and well-being of people,

> Akans will refer to that...as *Adɔyɛ*. (Personal communication, 1 April 2021).

Participant 18, a 60–70-year-old Akan woman whom a chief recommended as knowledgeable on matters of Akan culture and tradition, described ***adɔyɛ*** further as follows:

> Sometimes, some people decide to go out of their way to show this type of benevolence or act of kindness towards orphans (*me kɔ yɛ agyanka adɔyɛ*) or show benevolence or act of kindness towards widows by giving them gifts (*me kɔ yɛ akunafoɔ adɔyɛ*) or showing kindness and love to people in need by presenting them with gifts (*me yɛ adɔyɛ ama mmɔbrɔwa fo*), (*me yɛ wɔn mo adɔyɛ*) showing love or kindness towards someone, (*yɛ ama, ɔma*) means you loving someone through your acts. Yes, that is the meaning, love goes with action, (*wo dɔ obi a na wo yɛ ne ayɛ*). To love is to act accordingly" (Personal communication, 10 March 2021).

Adɔyɛ places emphasis on intent and the purpose of the philanthropic acts and the target beneficiary. It is all for and about the community. The main aim of the demonstration of love is for the welfare and well-being of the community. Participant 16, a 60–70-year-old Akan tradition and culture expert and leading researcher at Manhyia Palace (the Palace of the Asantehene), shared that

> Mostly the Akans, especially the Asantes, have it in mind that any help being given at any point in time is being accumulated for you. It is believed that it is not you, the person helping, who is going to benefit. You may not be the immediate beneficiary, but rather, in the future, the (*ɔman*) community you are living in will benefit. Also, your children, grandchildren, and your family will also benefit from it. (Personal communication, March 12, 2021)

This was affirmed by Participant 14, a 60–70-year-old Akan man who described himself as an Akan culture and tradition researcher. He noted succinctly that

> The motivation of [Akan] giving is future prosperity for the whole clan and state. (Personal communication, January 14, 2022)

Significantly, *adɔyɛ* goes beyond a mere practice or activity for the Akan and is an integral part of their identity and way of life. As the curator at the Manhyia Palace Museum, Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old Akan man, noted,

> Giving has been with us [Akans] since time immemorial…giving is a part and parcel of us. When you do that [give], you fulfil your mandate as a citizen…that is how it should be. So, that is how I see giving; it has been and will always be. To me, the true Akan and Asante people understand what I am telling you now. Asante was founded on giving." (Personal communication, March 10, 2021)

Participant 16, the expert researcher at the Manhyia Palace, agreed with this view, noting that

> *Adɔyɛ* is actually part of Akan culture… it is embedded in the culture…this is what makes you an Akan." (Personal communication, March 12, 2021)

In conclusion, Akan philanthropy is *adɔyɛ* and is motivated by the principle of love, which governs acts of giving that are intended to assist others and ultimately contribute to the

communal welfare over the course of an Akan's lifetime. These actions are not sporadic or isolated, but rather deeply embedded in the lifestyle and identity of the Akan individual as an essential member of their community. The essence of this philanthropic culture is further supported by the research findings discussed in relation to the second research question.

4.4 The nature of Akan philanthropy

The second part of the main research question enquires about the nature of Akan philanthropy. The finding from the analysed data is that the nature of Akan philanthropy is deeply interwoven with the communal fabric of society, where giving is inherently relational and reciprocal. This reciprocity is not merely transactional but is imbued with a sense of gratitude and thankfulness, reflecting a cyclical exchange of support and solidarity. Such philanthropic actions are considered obligatory, stemming from a moral imperative and values that are reinforced by the rich repository of Akan proverbs, aphorisms, symbols, and folktales. Collectively, these embody and transmit the enduring values of the community's philanthropic spirit.

4.4.1 Communal and relational

Akan giving is communal and relational. The community thrives when each member, through the different relationships that exist within the community and the roles played in those relationships, contributes to the health and wealth of the community. This understanding holds that the benefit of the community also benefits the individual, as the individual is embedded in the community. The community's health and wealth are that of the individual as well.

Participant 02, a 60–70-year-old male Akan expert and academic, attributes this Akan way of life to an African communal culture.

> Africans operate what we refer to as a communalistic society … because we live as a community, and community involves almost everybody, which we sometimes refer to as a collectivist society … because ours is communalistic, we are ready to go beyond ourselves to help each other (Personal communication, 1 April 2021).

Another academic, Participant 01, a 70-80-year-old man who is also an expert in Akan culture and tradition, expanded on this further and underscored the existing interdependence within Akan communities. He suggested that

> to understand 'giving' in the Akan context, you cannot merely look at the word 'giving'. You should also look at the word 'co-operate' or even the whole idea of the African concept of equilibrium and harmony. All these are fundamental to the Akan notion of the human being and society. For instance, *hew meni so mame nti na otwe nam ebien*…blow the mote from my eye is the reason why two antelopes walk together. In other words, there are some things that you cannot do for yourself, and some things will have to be done by somebody else…Akan society is based on this notion of equilibrium and balance. When you take a proverb like *hew meni nso mame nti na otwe ebienu nam* [blow the mote from my eye is the reason why two antelopes walk together], it is because when something falls into your eye, you cannot remove it yourself. Somebody will have to do it for you and so it becomes necessary for us to live together so that we can do things for each other that we cannot do for ourselves and that is very basic to our understanding of existence in society. (Personal communication, 27 May 2021)

The research found that this communalism and relational nature of the Akan community have its roots in certain key values derived from the philosophy of Akan humanism (Gyekye 1987), which is the variation of *Ubuntu* adopted by this thesis. An important finding here is that out of Akan humanism flows the communitarian nature of the Akan that has already been mentioned and the values of human dignity, interdependence, reciprocity, moral obligation, and gratitude.

4.4.2 Human dignity and interdependence

Akan humanism, which promotes the dignity of the human being and the interdependence and interconnectedness of humanity for survival and sustenance, is fundamental to Akan philanthropy and also informs the character of Akan philanthropy. Participant 20, the 50–60-year-old Akan curator at the Manhyia Palace, mentioned it in the following dialogue with the researcher:

> Participant 20: They [Akans] have an adage that says, 'I am because we are and since we are, therefore, I am'.
>
> Researcher: Do we have it in Akan? I know the South Africans have *Ubuntu*. Do we have it in Akan?

> Participant 20: Yes, we have it. '*Enipa ena ɛma, Onipa ye nnipa'.* (Personal communication, 10 March 2021)

'*Enipa na ɛma onipa yɛ nnipa*' means it is a human being that endorses the humanity or human dignity of another human being. Participant 01, the 70–80-year-old Akan culture and tradition expert, and academic, buttresses this point with an Akan proverb:

> *'Nnifa gware benkum na benkum no gware nnifa'* [The right washes the left and the left washes the right]. The idea is that however big or long the right hand may be, it cannot wash itself, and however big or long the left hand is, it cannot wash itself. But if the right hand is to become clean, then the left must do it for the right, and the right must do it for the left. Then both hands will become clean. There is almost a sense of necessity - then human needs are met and there is elimination of want, suffering, and need because we are there for each other. (Personal communication, 28 May 2021)

The message here is clear. For the Akan, their fellow community members' well-being is vital to their own. Without each member of the community caring for the other, they are not whole and the whole community, indeed their humanity, suffers. One discovers another finding from this, which is that inherent in Akan humanism, is another value – reciprocity. The right hand must go back to wash the left hand, and the left must go back to wash the right.

4.4.3 Reciprocity

The finding suggests that this interdependence for the well-being of the Akan community is sustained by reciprocity, and even though one did not necessarily give because there is an expectation of being paid back, there is still some level of expectation that there would be a reward or similar support when needed. The returns on the support given are not necessarily ones that the Akan giver expects to come to them directly, but there is an expectation of being blessed either directly or indirectly. It could go to one's family or community. As shared by a member of Participant 25 of the New Takoradi *susu* group,

> The other thing about helping people is that we may not benefit from it directly or immediately, but maybe it is our children who are going to benefit from it. If you do good to someone and help them when they get to a good place, they will not forget it and will always want to reciprocate that goodness. (Personal communication, January 19, 2023)

Participant 20, the 50–60-year-old curator at the Manhyia palace museum, gave the example of philanthropy and the generally expected reciprocal benefit for the broader community from the philanthropy of Akan cocoa farmers. He noted that

> The cocoa farmers in those times [colonial era] were supporting people too because they knew that one day, by helping them, that person will come back and support the community ... those times, the cocoa farmers were the rich people, so they were supporting the community in education. (Personal communication, March 10, 2021)

This understanding of reciprocal giving is fundamental for individual and community wellbeing and vice versa, making it a moral responsibility or obligation for the Akan. Participant 19, a 60–70-year-old Akan expert and Akan indigene, however, highlighted this – that reciprocity for the Akan goes hand in hand with obligation because as she said,

> There's reciprocity, even though it is not written anywhere, but if you don't do it, people will whisper. You are not obliged, but in a way, you yourself will feel it [the responsibility]. (Personal communication, 9 March 2021)

4.4.4 Moral responsibility or obligation

There is, therefore, an expectation of a philanthropic nature and behaviour from every Akan, which negates voluntariness as an aspect of Akan philanthropy. Participant 01, a 70–80-year-old Akan expert, described Akan philanthropy as "mutual obligation" (Personal communication, 28 May 2021). Giving a specific example, Participant 19, a 60-70-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and a retired academic, said:

> Our society is a sharing one, and even though you give without the expectation of getting back, it is usually reciprocal. The people who attend funerals in your family, you feel obliged you have to also pay back when it is their turn. (Personal communication, 9 March 2021)

There are social repercussions when one does not meet this obligation. A member of P.25, the New Takoradi susu group, said:

> If you are fond of not attending other people's programmes, then you can be assured that no one will attend yours. But if you attend the programme for others, you can be

> assured of a massive turnout of our members when you organise a programme... If you do not go for other people's programme because you are busy, who should leave their duties behind and come and follow you? If you support people, you always get massive support. This hand washes this one and the other washes the other. When you support others, you will also be supported." (Personal communication, 19 January 2023)

Also perceived as part of the reciprocal obligation in Akan philanthropy is *aseda* – giving thanks or gratitude.

4.4.5 Gratitude – *Aseda*

Giving thanks or gratitude (*aseda*) is another underpinning value of Akan philanthropy that is both reciprocal and obligatory. Participant 03, a 50–60-year-old man with links to Akan royalty, shared that:

> Within our [Akan] culture, you have to say 'thank you' when someone does something for you. (Personal Communication 9 April 2021)

Participant 19, a 60–70-year-old expert in Akan tradition and culture and a retired academic, explained *aseda* further:

> The recipient [of a gift in Akan philanthropy] has a responsibility to accept formally and publicly, and we do this by what we call aseda, which came about because it was a way of recording the offer and acceptance of a gift in what was a wholly oral tradition in the olden days. (Personal communication, 9 March, 2021)

The publicity of the act of gratitude was therefore to enable documentation of the philanthropic act. This public display of gratitude is still practised, as observed in the two funeral ceremonies that the researcher participated in Kumasi and Takoradi. This is where donations and the different forms of support given to the bereaved family were publicly announced, and family members of the deceased thanked the donors publicly through announcements made by the Master of Ceremonies. A delegation from the family also went physically to where the donors were seated to thank them in the view of everyone else.

The findings suggest an additional reason for the publicity attached to Akan philanthropy. This is

the demonstration and confirmation of the Akan identity of the philanthropist and also as a sustainability strategy for community sustenance. The publicity demonstrated with Akan philanthropic acts increases the reputational capital of philanthropists, thereby affirming their identity as members of their Akan community and also acted as a form of encouragement to the philanthropist and to others in the community to emulate their good deeds. Participant 02, a 60-70-year-old Akan culture and tradition expert and an academic notes that

> What encourages giving is showing gratefulness and gratitude, mentioning their names and saying things like, *'meti ne soa, na ma sore'* [I rise when I sit on them, meaning, I am elevated when I have to depend on them- they are reliable] mentions their names in public and say, 'if it weren't for this person I wouldn't have done ABC; minus him, all my kids will have remained in the village, minus him, we wouldn't have even bought a shelter even for ourselves. Yeah, they will say God bless you and use all kinds of praises, when you praise them, it encourages them to do it more. (Personal communication, April 1, 2021)

He is supported by Participant 16, the 60–70-year-old expert researcher at Manhyia palace, who referred in jest to the publicity that accompanies Akan philanthropic acts as "show off," a description sometimes given by others to these publicised Akan philanthropic deeds. He said that

> Akans actually engage in 'show off' to teach people a lesson to learn to do the same, so we do it and we, in other words, are encouraging others to copy their acts or do likewise, that is the reason why we usually ‘show off’. The act I am exhibiting personally is not to show off but a cultural practice I am adhering to, it is rather the observer who sees it as a show off. I am actually through this act broadcasting or announcing as well as reminding everybody that we have been commanded to do something, and I am doing it. (Personal communication, March 12, 2021)

Participant 09, a 60-70-year-old chief in Essikado, however, thinks that there may be other motivations for some of the publicity stunts around Akan philanthropy. As he puts it

> Some also just give to show off - to show that they have and that they have arrived. (Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

Participant 09's contribution suggests that there may be more focus on self-centredness in relation to publicity, rather than a community-oriented incentive as suggested by other participants who discussed this topic. However, the key point here, despite the differing viewpoints on the publicity surrounding Akan philanthropy, is that it is a noteworthy aspect.

The findings on the nature of Akan philanthropy indicate that it is communal and relational in nature, with values rooted in Akan humanism and places emphasis on human dignity and interdependence. These values include reciprocity, obligation, and gratitude. Another aspect that emerged from this finding is that publicity is a significant part of Akan philanthropy for various reasons, as previously mentioned. This leads to the presentation of the finding in response to the third research question.

4.5 The practice of Akan philanthropy

The third part of the main research question engages the practice of Akan philanthropy. The findings suggest that for the Akan, the practice of philanthropy transcends the mere possession of wealth; it is not the affluence of an individual that defines their capacity to give, but rather a shared cultural responsibility that permeates all aspects of life. Both the rich and poor give. Philanthropy is a dynamic practice, evident in a variety of activities throughout the life cycle of an Akan individual, from birth to death. It is facilitated through traditional institutions such as the family, community groups, and the chieftaincy, which serve as conduits for philanthropic expression. The forms of giving are diverse, extending within families, to community members, strangers, foreigners, as well as to the spiritual realm. The practice of Akan philanthropy has shown resilience and adaptability, maintaining its presence and relevance in contemporary times despite the inevitable changes brought by modernity.

4.5.1 Who gives?

The findings suggest that every Akan gives, and wealth or status does not matter in Akan giving, as everybody could be a giver or recipient. According to Participant 02, a 60–70-year-old male expert in Akan culture and tradition and an academic,

> If we are about ***adɔyɛ*** it is not only the rich who give." (Personal communication, April 1, 2021)

Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, had already spoken along the same lines, stating,

> Everyone among the Akans is very hospitable and generous irrespective of their financial status, from the poorest person to the most affluent, they all give." (Personal communication, March 11, 2021)

4.5.2. When do they give?

The findings suggest that philanthropy among the Akan is a lifetime affair. It begins from birth, through the different stages of life and till death, and even after death, it extends to the spiritual world. Participant 03, a 50–60-year-old businessman with Akan royal linkages, shared that

> growing up, the type of things we saw in terms of *adɔyɛ* included the 'rites of passage' and revolves around everyday life." (Personal communication, April 9, 2021)

Participant 03's contribution which has just been shared was about giving to the living, but Participant 08, a 40–50-year-old chief in Essikado suggested that Akans give beyond the realm of living and gave reasons why this is so. He explained that

> We sometimes believe in reincarnation in our traditional setting because you can give birth to a particular child and notice that their behaviour and attitude are just like an elderly relative who has died. Apart from that, we pour libation for them and also prepare food (*ɛtɔ / ɔtɔ*) which we present to the ancestors. These are things we do for them because when we do good deeds for them, they will, in turn, remember us by saying, 'This is a good person who ought to be remembered.' They sometimes say, 'This person is so good so I need to come back to them through childbirth,' also known as reincarnation, and yes, we believe in that. (Personal communication, June 29, 2021)

Several examples given by respondents of Akan philanthropy support these findings.

4.5.3 What do they give?

This finding here suggests that the giving of money, materials and also time are all acknowledged and appreciated gifts within the Akan community. Participant P.12, a 40-50-year-old aide to a chief in Essikado, explained, for example, that:

> Giving comes in various forms... When we are in a community and someone loses a loved one, as a community, we all will go there and help the person, especially during the funeral period. We will all go and help the person mount the canopy, arrange chairs, bring items from various places, while others will also bring him food stuffs. At the end of the day, people during the funeral service will also give donations, and these are all part of giving. (Personal communication, July 2, 2021)

This understanding of what Akans value as gifts was affirmed by a member of the Effiduase *susu* group who also said, with several members nodding to this submission:

> It is not only the giving of physical items which is ***adɔyɛ***. Any act of looking for the well-being of your neighbours can also be classified as ***adɔyɛ***. (Personal communication, January 28, 2023)

The gift given could therefore be any form of support to members of the community, tangible or intangible.

4.5.4. How do they give?

The findings suggest that there is giving through community solidarity and support at various stages in the Akan's life. Participant 22, a 50-60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, gave an example of support for children:

> An instance where parents can't support a brilliant child's education, the community comes in to help. It's also a form of giving. An affluent person in town can take care of all his/her expenses in school for him/her to become prominent in the community." (Personal communication, 11 March, 2021)

Several participants gave similar examples.

Another community philanthropy practice that the findings suggests is mutual aid, and one example in particular was mentioned and reiterated. This is ***enɔbua ,*** a mutual aid practice. Participant 20, the 50-60-year-old Manhyia palace museum curator, recounted that:

> *Enɔbua* is a system whereby, because they did not have big machines for big farms, a group of five (5) or ten (10) would decide to come together for their own good. Today, we

> help you; tomorrow you also do the same. As a result, it enables them to farm or obtain a big farm because money was a problem or was very difficult to come by at that time. The only way they could do it was to help each other and provide support without exchanging any monetary value. Like I indicated, "I am because we are," so when somebody is in need today, you might also be in need tomorrow. Therefore, I am helping you, assisting you, and giving whatever I have to you, not in exchange for anything, but because I know that as a human being, I may go through a similar situation one day. Whatever I have, let me also assist you. That is it. (Personal communication, 10 March, 2021)

The principle behind ***ɛnɔbua*** is supporting those who need help with the expectation that the same support will be extended when the giver needs it, which is the principle behind traditional rotating savings clubs, known as *susu* in Ghana. The practice of *susu* (rotational savings clubs) has been noted by some scholars as a philanthropic practice. However, it seems that not all members of the *susu* groups view it as Akan philanthropy – ***adɔyɛ***. Through the adopted snowballing sampling method, the researcher requested recommendations of *susu* groups that could be interviewed about their practices in relation to ***adɔyɛ***. Participant 22, a 50-60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, did not believe that *susu* groups considered what they were doing as ***adɔyɛ***. She noted, in reference to the *susu* groups, that

> They do not see it (rotational savings scheme) as ***adɔyɛ***. Because if you say '*susu*' they rather pay to support each other. They save as personal savings (Personal communication, March 11, 2021).

The members of the susu groups also gave different responses to the question of whether their *susu* practice was ***adɔyɛ***. The all-women's *susu* group in New Takoradi believed that *susu* was an avenue for ***adɔyɛ***. Here are some quotes from the members of Participant 25, the all-women's susu group in New Takoradi:

> *Member 1*: This *susu* is very good because it has helped our businesses a lot as well as our personal lives.
>
> *Member 2*: For me, anytime I get my money, I use it to purchase more items and add it to my business, and it is helping my business capital base grow.

Member 3: For me, it really helped because at a certain stage, I got sick and was admitted to the hospital. I was discharged on Tuesday, and on Thursday, my child came home for school fees. My husband and I became very worried because all the money had been spent on paying off the hospital bills, and we didn't know what to do. I called Auntie C and discussed my predicament with her. Although it wasn't my turn to collect the money, she discussed my problem with the one whose turn it was to receive the money, and they all agreed to give it to me. Our payment was done every ten days, so as soon as we reached the tenth day, the money was given to me. If I had not gotten involved with this *susu* group, I would have had to go begging people for money." (Personal communication, 19th January 2023)

The mixed-gendered one in Effiduase, however, did not perceive their *susu* practice as ***ɑdɔyɛ*** because *susu* is, for them, a savings and credit scheme – what they perceive to be a financial transaction for their own benefit as individual members of the group and not for the community. With Participant 24, the *susu* group in Effiduase, the following dialogue ensued:

Researcher: Do you think joining the *susu* group has been of any help to you?

Member: It has been incredibly helpful to us in this *susu* group. If any of our members need financial help and they approach us with the situation, we give them the needed help. However, this is refundable. This decision was arrived at by all twenty members of the group.

Apart from this, community members sometimes come to us and seek financial help. We then assess the situation, conduct a background check to see how credible the person is, and then give them money if they turn out to be trustworthy. The amount received is repayable with interest. We show love by helping the person out of whatever predicament they have found themselves in, but giving the amount as a gift is a 'no-no,' and a stipulated time is given for the amount to be paid. The *susu* is not ***ɑdɔyɛ*** because we take it back. It is a transaction. (Personal communication, 28th January 2023)

As a group, however, both *susu* groups in New Takoradi and Effiduase believe that there are other activities they do or can do (which fall outside the savings scheme) to support other members and/or their community. In New Takoradi, one member of the group (Participant 25)

gave examples of how they offered their time and resources (outside the savings scheme) to support each other during social events such as funerals and marriages.

> The other thing that we do in our group is that when someone is going to get married, we, the group members, come together and contribute money, rice, tomato paste, oil, and all sorts of foodstuffs and other items towards the marriage ceremony to support our member to have a successful marriage ceremony. Also, group members physically go and support their members in times of bereavement, outdooring, marriage ceremonies, etc., to cook as well as help them set up the place for the programme. (Personal communication, January 19, 2023)

In Effiduase, Participant 24 mentioned a previous intention to have separate welfare funds to cater to community needs and the challenges they faced because some members did not support the proposal. The reason was that those members were of the opinion that it fell outside the scope of the savings and credit scheme, their main reason for becoming members in the first place. Unlike the New Takoradi all-women's susu group, one female member of the mixed-gendered Effiduase group (Participant 24) bemoaned the fact that

> In our group, there is no such thing as helping ourselves by contributing towards funerals and other social functions. (Personal communication, January 28, 2023)

The findings suggest that apart from community giving, there is also giving through the family, which includes the clan, and for the Akan, this is through the matrilineal lineage. Participant 13, a 70–80-year-old chief in Kumasi, recounted his personal story:

> When I was a child, for instance, my dad was not really interested in my education, but my uncle from my mother's side was interested... that is how the Akans do it. He was interested, so he was the one who paid my fees and everything, whereas he had his own children... my uncle did very well by helping me... giving me a gift, all the money he was giving me I wasn't paying back. They weren't loans... they were gifts, and he was doing that because he knew someday because he knew... we are from the royal family, and someday we will need somebody to lead the family... and that guy could be the person... he was the one who particularly helped me. And so, it is in the Akan family; the uncles help their nephews... So, it is a traditional thing." (Personal communication, 9th March 2021)

An additional giving practice indicated by the finding is giving to the spiritual world. Participants highlighted the spiritual aspect of Akan philanthropy in their descriptions of the direct reciprocal giving relationship between the physical members of the Akan community and their ancestors who are perceived spiritual beings, believed to be actively involved in the Akan community, particularly their families and clans. Participant 01, a 70-80-year-old academic and expert in Akan tradition and culture, talked about the Akan practice of giving food and drink to ancestors. He explained:

> The relationship between the living and dead is a form of reciprocity. Our role is to feed them and give them food and drink to sustain their lives. Just as we eat food and drink to sustain our lives, we also give them food and drink to sustain their lives, so this maintains the reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead. (Personal communication, 28 May 2021)

One example of this that came up was the gift exchange process that occurs during certain traditional festivals like the *Fofie* for the Asante and the *Kundum* for the Ahanta. Participant 12, an aide to a prominent chief in Essikado, the home of the Ahanta, shared that:

> When you take the Kundum festival, there is a day where they go to the cemetery and come back with the ancestors. That is when the drums are coming home for the beginning of the actual festival before the *apa*, it is believed that we prepare food for our ancestors to come and eat, after which they believe the ancestors will come and bless them, and so...it is a give and take affair. Also, after the traditional rites on Tuesday, on Wednesday they will prepare *ɛtɔ*, offer prayer and present the food to the ancestors as you said. This is also a form of giving to the dead which and the prayers is to ask them to come and bless the living. So that is also part of the festival. (Personal communication, 2nd July 2021)

Another aspect of the Akan philanthropic practice which has spiritual connotations is the relationship and reciprocal philanthropic practice between the elements of nature or the environment and the Akan because of the belief that these elements embody deities. This was one of the philanthropic practices that was spoken about as a practice in the past and one of the ways that the Akan preserved their environment and their own health.

Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old expert in Akan tradition and culture and the curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum shared as follows:

> *Participant 20*: I never experienced a mosquito bite when I was growing up at my hometown, a typical village. We never heard of malaria in that place because it was neat. You never see people littering. You dare not. You dare not. You go to the riverside; you dare not pollute the riverbank.
>
> *Researcher*: How come?
>
> *Participant 20*: Because they have the belief that, there is a spirit in that river, that it is against that thing, it is a taboo to do that. So, people were made to understand if you do that, the gods will punish you. It was then working well. And also, we depended heavily on the streams. So, they know that if you pollute the rivers at the end of the day, the entire community is going to suffer. So, if I see somebody polluting the rivers, I will arrest and send the person to the palace and I will be honoured for doing that. Because the consequences would not have been borne only by the person who was polluting the river but the entire community. So, in a way people were very vigilant and united in everything. (Personal communication, 10 March, 2021)

One key finding in relation to this Akan philanthropic practice is that the Akan do not have a named religion but are spiritual and therefore their philanthropy, as an integral part of their culture and tradition is not tied to institutionalised religion. Participant 14, a 60-70-year-old who described himself as a researcher of Akan culture and tradition, describes the Akan as "spiritual people." He explained:

> That is why we are the Ka people... Ka has been proved to be the ancient Egyptian word for 'spirit'. The hieroglyphic sign of the ka is the two hands of a praying man pointing upward. The word 'Akan' is a corruption of the word A Ka na, so we are A ka na people. That word na means 'people of'...so we are 'people of the spirit' or 'spiritual people'. (Personal communication, 14th January 2022)

This spirituality of the Akan people, according to Participant 01, a 70–80-year-old academic and expert in Akan tradition and culture, reflects the Akan's understanding of reality, which includes the physical, metaphysical, and cosmological.

> For us [the Akan]," he says, "life is constant, and life has no end for us ... For us, the opposite of life is not death. Life has no opposite; the opposite of death is birth. Birth is the entry gate, and death is the exit gate through which life passes (Personal communication, 28th May 2021).

Consequently, philanthropy, as a way of life, never stops in the life of the Akan, whether in this life on earth or the spiritual world. It is transcendental and extends beyond earthly life into the spiritual. Spiritual beings play an active role as philanthropists and recipients within the Akan community. The researcher also observed the giving of gifts to the dead for their journey into the spiritual realm at the funeral in Takoradi that she participated in and observed (Observation notes, 21st January 2023) when the deceased was given several items and messages to take into the afterlife to support his life there.

There was some scepticism expressed about giving to the spiritual world by two of the participants, Participant 10, a 90–100-year-old woman from Essikado, and Participant 11, a 60–70-year-old man from Essikado, both of whom had spent some decades living in the diaspora. Participant 10 was firm in her position on giving beyond the living. In response to a question on what she thought about Akan giving to ancestors and deities, she said emphatically:

> I do not believe this. The person who is dead, why would you give them gifts? To take where? Gifts should be given to the living who need help. In addition, it is not only poor people who need help. We must remember that funerals entail the costs which must be paid .(Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

Neither Participant 10 nor Participant 11, despite their scepticism, disrespected the beliefs held by others, though. They admitted the existence of these beliefs and accepted the fact that people were entitled to them. Participant 10 said,

> I am not disputing the existence of the spiritual world, no; because I don't know how I came into this world. (Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

The findings indicated another Akan philanthropic practice of giving to foreigners and strangers in pre-colonial times to support them to settle, especially where they were migrants. Participant 02, a 60–70-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and an academic, shared this as an Akan philanthropic practice.

> *Adɔyɛ* went beyond funerals to even giving out parcels of land to people, especially migrants. A new person comes and stays in the community and if it is farming season, we can give the person a portion of land to establish themselves here. The family head may say there is an ideal parcel of land available, so we would give you a portion from it. This way, you can have your daily bread and become a peasant farmer instead of relying on us. We are therefore giving you land to till. (Personal communication, 1st April 2021)

This hospitality to strangers the findings suggest, was not only in the pre-colonial days but is an expected part of Akan culture even in contemporary times. It is also connected to the Akan's spirituality and their desire to live on good terms with the spiritual world. Participant 16, an expert researcher on Akan culture and tradition at the Manhyia palace, explained that

> Someone may come to you dressed wretchedly and ask for help. If you don't find a place in your heart to respect and help that person, there may be spiritual consequences when they leave. Therefore, Akans are advised on a daily basis to help someone in need because it may be a deity or God manifesting themselves. By helping them, it will bring blessings. Regardless of how someone is dressed, they believe that the person could be from the spiritual world and needs help. So, you should happily and wholeheartedly help the person without any prejudice. (Personal communication, 12th March 2021)

The findings just presented suggest the different ways in which Akan philanthropy was practiced not only in pre-colonial times but also in the present. In addition the findings indicate the key institutions employed to enable and implement Akan philanthropy, which the following section would now present.

4.5.5 Key Akan Philanthropy institutions

One important finding on the practice of Akan philanthropy is the use of traditional institutions as the vehicles for delivery. Individual actors are recognised as part of one or any of these institutions which include the family, the community, and chieftaincy.

4.5.5.1. Community and family

The community and the family, as a basic unit of the community, were mentioned as significant

actors that play a critical role in Akan philanthropy. Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, explained the role of the community as follows:

> I always tell people that it is the community that has helped nurture you, whether you like it or not. For instance, someone paid for your schooling, and someone advised you to learn harder. All of these are forms of Akan philanthropy. The one who enlightens you on how to dress decently or the one who warned you to be chaste or informed your mother about your bad behaviour is also a kind of philanthropy in a different form. So, it is the community that helps nurture us to become who we are as Asantes. (Personal communication, 11th March, 2021)

Participant 13, a 70–80-year-old Chief in Kumasi, noted that "if it is in the family then it is in the community" and explained the family's role as follows:

> It is the family's responsibility to look after their own needy ones. They must do this by themselves. This is the reason members of the family step in to take care of a family member who is a bright person within the family so that the person could become their philanthropist. (Personal communication, 9th March, 2021)

Several participants gave examples of the philanthropic role of the family in the life of an Akan, from birth through death and even in the afterlife. The latter was also observed in the two funerals that the researcher participated in Takoradi on January 21, 2023, and in Kumasi on 28th, January 2023.

4.5.5.2. Chieftaincy

Responses from mostly those with intimate knowledge of the chieftaincy institution, including all the traditional leaders interviewed, identified the chieftaincy institution as a key actor. Participant 12, a 40–50-year-old aide to a Chief in his Essikado, said:

> The chieftaincy institution is always giving because anybody who needs something and does not get will definitely come to the chief's house. If they want food, they want money for healthcare they will be there. Their perception is that the chief has everything. Therefore, anybody in need and not finding it will definitely go to the chief's house because they believe once they get there, they will get that which they are looking for. (2nd July 2021)

Participant 05, a 60–70-year-old Queen Mother at Essikado, gave an instance of this demand on traditional leaders by the community from her experience as a Queen Mother.

> Sometimes in the morning as early as 5.30am and very late at night, you see us receiving visitors. Actually, *adɔyɛ* is Ahanta, and Ahanta is *adɔyɛ*. The chieftaincy institution is noted for playing an active role in the act of giving. There are times when someone will come and request that you help them pay the school fees of their ward. Some will say, 'My child has been admitted to hospital, and if you don't help me pay the bill, my child will not be discharged', or they will say, 'I am attending antenatal clinic this morning and I need money to help me pay my bill'. For me, anything related to children, I make sure I help. For example, I help pay their school fees to enable them to stay in school so that they will become responsible people in the future. (Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

Sharing some of his philanthropic work towards his subjects and even beyond his community, Participant 21, a 50-60-year-old chief in Kumasi, narrated the following:

> If I look at my chieftaincy these past 6 years, I see some of the things I have done. I have rebuilt the palace within 1 year and 3 months. I have been able to renovate a school building. I am building the biggest community centre in the Ashanti region. I am building the biggest museum in Ashanti with earth buildings that will have residences. I have given 300 plots of land to people from the diaspora. Any African American who wants to build there gets a good deal. For each plot of land you buy, you get an extra one. Then there is a process for accepting them into the community…I also sit in state on key occasions, *Akwasidae, Awukudae, Fofie*, and other key occasions. I do this at least four times every month, and each time, I give a lot of money to the community. (Personal communication, 10th March 2021)

Other participants who did not have intimate knowledge of the chieftaincy institution did not mention it as a priority institution in Akan philanthropy.

4.5.5.3 The church or mosque is a philanthropic actor, but not indigenous.

The cursory reference to the church and the mosque as an active Akan philanthropic institution is worth noting. One participant, Participant 10, a 90–100-year-old Akan woman, mentioned

giving to the church as a form of philanthropy but did not cite the church itself as an institution for philanthropic giving. Participant 12, a 40–50-year-old Akan man and aide to the chief in Essikado, on the other hand, did refer to the church as sometimes taking the place of the matrilineal family, in contemporary times particularly in the volunteering of time to organise social events like funerals. However, he was the only person to mention this. Almsgiving in Islam was commended by Participant 18, a 60–70-year-old woman who was recommended by a chief in Kumasi as knowledgeable in Akan culture and tradition, as a practice that was more aligned to Akan philanthropy and seemed to do slightly better than Christianity in encouraging philanthropic giving to the other and not to the religious institution itself. Even then, that point was not given much emphasis and she was the only one who mentioned it. Rather, there seemed to be heavy criticism of the church's role in particular, especially the contemporary charismatic churches, in undermining Akan philanthropy. Participant 16, a 60–70-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and a lead researcher at the Manhyia palace, spoke about how

> there are two types of churches. One believes that whatever is done for the church has been done for the community, hence church members are giving more to the church than they are doing for the members of their communities. Our mothers can go to the farm and harvest the very matured plantain and give it to the church because they are having a harvest [a church function]. It is the same act of giving but this goes to the church instead of the home or community. Another church, in recent times known as the charismatic church, claims that when you give to somebody, they may be witches and they will rather bring evil your way or harm you. This particular one has come to spoil everything. (Personal communication, 12th March, 2021)

On a number of occasions throughout the conversations, participants referred to 'the olden days' and 'in the past' when making their contributions to the understanding of the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy. However, there was also unanimous recognition and an acknowledgement from different examples and stories, some of them already mentioned, that Akan philanthropy was very well and alive in present-day Ghana.

4.5.6 Contemporary Practice

It was found that despite the influences of historical factors (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section), Akan philanthropy has endured and adapted to the changing

sociocultural context. It has taken on various contemporary forms, including foundations, community development initiatives, and various support networks, aligning with the present realities of Akan identity and lifestyle. Although participants expressed concern about the various changes caused by Christianity, colonialism, Westernisation, and modernisation, they felt that Akan philanthropy was still alive, even if demonstrated differently in some instances. Some examples given in these efforts include the establishment and operation of foundations.

4.5.6.1 Foundations

The formal, institutional, western-modelled foundations (Kumi, 2017, 2019; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012), as we have them now, may not have existed in pre-colonial times, but there were forms of it. Participant 16, a 60–70-year-old Akan expert researcher at the Manhyia palace narrated how his father had supported the education of several of his friends and other children in the community with whom he had no blood relations. He did not set up a formal foundation to do this but executed acts that could be equated with that of a formal foundation.

> When [an Akan] extends [giving] outside too, he may realise that ... some children in the neighbourhood may be doing so well academically but unfortunately are poor. He may take upon himself to pay for the education of those children. Our own father did the same thing. While we were in school, when you bring your classmate home and he or she is intelligent, he would take care of him/her. He actually took care of a lot of such people who became doctors, lawyers, and businessmen. (Personal communication, March 12, 2021)

This practice still exists. Participant 08, a 40-50-year-old chief in Essikado shared his personal story as well,

> The person who opened the gate for you is my adopted child and not my blood. He is in no way related to me and I don't know any of his relatives. He came to work here, and I recognised that he had a good character. I noticed he wanted to further his education and his family resides in Obuasi. He was working with one of the security companies here but one thing I noticed about him was that he was young and also very respectful, after speaking to him I promised to help further his education, so I sent him to a boarding house, and so since then, anytime he vacates, he comes back here and so, I am now responsible for his upkeep. There is also another girl here who I am also taking care of.

> It's the same thing for her. There is a lot of this in our community. (Personal communication, 29 June 2021)

There is also a formalised foundation model which existed in Asante during the colonial period with the advent of formal education. This was the scholarship fund set up by Otumfuo Nana Prempeh II, Asantehene, who supported the formal education of Asantes, and Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old curator at the Manhyia palace museum, stated that many benefited from this scholarship fund. This was a precursor to the current Otumfuo Fund, which has Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the current Asantehene, as its Chief patron.

> Before the Otumfuo Education Fund, they had the Asanteman scholarship during the time of Nana Prempeh II. Most renowned historians and entrepreneurs benefited from it. They saw that there was a need to contribute to a common fund that would support the education of the people. So yes, they called it the Asanteman scholarship, and today it is the Otumfuo Educational Fund. (Personal communication, 10 March 2021)

The current scholarship fund supports not only Asantes but also other needy students from all over Ghana. The Otumfuo Fund also supports several other projects in health, in addition to education.

There are other foundations set up in Akan communities by wealthy Akan indigenes that are modelled on the Western foundation models. Participant 19, a 60–70-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and a retired academic, and Participant 18, a 60–70-year-old Akan woman recommended by the chief in Kumasi as knowledgeable on Akan language and culture, gave the examples of the Kessben Foundation and the Despite Foundation. Kessben and Despite are two Akan High-Net-Worth-Individuals that have registered and established individual foundations to address the needs of some communities that they have decided to support. The fact that the beneficiaries of these foundations were not necessarily people that the founders knew or were related to was acknowledged.

> *Participant 1*9: Examples of modern institutions, check the Kessben Foundation. Traditionally, it would be the *ekuo* (community groups), which is more between peers. Traditionally, the chiefs were there, fathers, parents, locals from the community. If you have a disabled child, for example, you gave them to the chief if the family doesn't want people to know about their calamity.

In a separate conversation with Participant 18, the researcher enquired,

> *Researcher*: Is it possible to help someone you do not know?
>
> *Participant 18*: Oh yes, even Kessben and Despite give to people they do not even know.

In contemporary times, some traditional leaders have also set up NGOs. Some of the foundations have been set up by traditional leaders. Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, spoke of the NGO that she set up to support her community. It is a registered NGO with a board. She supports this with her own resources (not stool funds) and mentioned that several others contribute to supporting the work that her foundation does. Some of this work included different forms of support that she provided to her community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

> During this pandemic, I personally made Veronica buckets and placed them at every vantage point, and people emulated it to help the community. I put it on my status on social media. I had many people support it and want to emulate it. I have an NGO. This is for school children in deprived communities. I provide exercise books, mathematical sets, and pens for students in deprived communities. As we speak, we are about to produce hand sanitizers and nose masks. Others call on me privately to find out about the projects. Otumfuo is also doing his best through these educational funds and on his program called 'Thank you Otumfuo'. He takes computers and books to deprived areas and spends time with the kids for the day. Traditional leaders are playing a role, and so they are making the best of who we are and trying to incorporate our culture into the people. Whether we like it or not, we have been affected by Western culture, so we have to make do with what we have got. (Personal communication, 11 March 2021)

Participant 21, a 50–60-year-old Chief in Kumasi, also shared how he had supported his community during the COVID pandemic, even though he did not do it through an NGO but through his office as Chief - through the stool.

In Participant 22, the Queen Mother's view, the institutions structured on the model of Western foundations offer some level of security because they are impersonal, considering some mistrust that currently exists within communities. She said that

> Sometimes because of our modern religion, Christianity, people, especially the generous ones, become fearful in exhibiting their generosities, but when it is a bigger platform like our foundation, they will feel safe to exhibit it because the foundations will put their resources to good use. (Personal communication, 11 March 2021)

4.5.6.2 Community Networks

Community networks, even if not modelled according to Western corporate governance structures, exist within communities. These are the *ekuo* (community groups) that Participant 19, the 60–70-year-old academic in Kumasi, referred to in her quote as being active in Akan philanthropy. Currently, there are community-organised practices like communal labour in pre-colonial times, where people volunteer their time to support community development projects. Participant 13, a 70–80-year-old Chief in Kumasi, noted the efforts of traditional leaders in collaboration with local government authorities, namely the District Assemblies and their members who represent the community. He shared the following:

> We do projects for the community every year...we call it '*Mpapre*' (communal labour). These are big projects, and we are currently building a library. At the beginning of the year, we gather the elders, including myself, all the assemblymen, and the unit committee members for a meeting. During this meeting, we discuss and select the project we want to embark on, as well as how to fund it - whether it is me or the stool. We document all the details. If it involves the Assembly, the Assemblyman is present at the meeting and takes it to the Assembly. If it is communal labour, we clarify that. At the end of the year, we review the project. We discuss whether we completed it, and if not, what challenges we faced. We have been doing this every year since I became a chief...for over 35 years. (Personal communication, March 9, 2021)

Participant 16, the 60–70-year-old expert in Akan tradition and culture and lead researcher at the Manhyia palace, also cited other philanthropic activities stemming from the community.

> I remember some time ago, with cousins, brothers, and sisters, we decided to go abroad for schooling. We were admitted to some schools. Sometimes, out of the blue, an uncle (*wɔfa*) would inform you that they had bought a plane ticket for you. Unfortunately, about three of the group members were not privileged enough to receive such support. So, we came together to raise funds to help them acquire their tickets. For example, we

> approached small business owners, showed them the visas the students had acquired, and asked them to support with any amount they could. You'd be surprised - we received more than enough help. They would say, 'Oh, you have passed and have received admission to a school abroad', and then they would help. This was in the mid-80s. (Personal communication, March 12, 2021)

This is an example of indigenous crowdfunding in the 80s.

4.5.6.3 Diaspora

The findings suggest that Akan communities in the diaspora also provide support for the welfare and well-being of their families and communities. Participant 11, a 60–70-year-old man who has lived in the diaspora for more than 40 years, shared the following:

> In the USA, we have things like party associations. We have the Gas, the Adas, Ashantis. They all have their little groups where they form associations, and some of them contribute regularly because they have dues that they collect. Some of them help their communities way back home by sending books and laptops, just to name a few. Some of them also help hospitals by sending beds and all. I used to be a part of this. (Personal communication, 29 June 2021)

There are also other constituencies in the diaspora – African Americans mostly – who want to reconnect with their African roots and do so by finding and becoming part of a community, in this case, an Akan community. Participant 21, a 50–60-year-old Chief in Kumasi, has found a way of encouraging African-Americans who wanted to do so to connect with and be adopted into his community. He explained this as follows:

> I have given 300 plots of land to people from the diaspora. Any African-American who wants to build gets a good deal. For each plot of land you buy, you get an extra one. There is a process of accepting them into the community. They are cleansed with river water early in the morning, given a white and red cloth and an egg, and then given a traditional name with their certificate. They are also adopted by families in the community, and they adopt families too, so everybody has a family to which they are attached. There is a basket with family names and people then put their hands in and choose one. The family they choose takes them home and accepts them as their own.

> This adopted family relationship continues and they take care of each other. If something happens in the family, the member in the diaspora contributes, and sometimes they support children in their family with some of their education costs. Every year, they sometimes bring shoes, school bags, books, etc., and send them to the community. They send gifts at Christmas.(Personal communication, 10 March 2021)

As an important constituency within their communities, the diaspora, both native and adopted, play an active role in Akan philanthropy.

The practice of Akan philanthropy is suggested from the findings as one that does not require a wealthy philanthropist and is expected from all Akan, rich and poor. It takes place throughout the lifecycle of the Akan, and gifts given could be tangible items such as money or materials, or intangible items such as time. These philanthropic practices are undertaken by individuals, but through the family, community, or chieftaincy institutions. The beneficiaries of Akan philanthropic practices include the family and clan, the community, foreigners and strangers, and inhabitants of the spirit world, which include God, deities, and ancestors. What is perceived as indigenous Akan philanthropy still exists but has adapted to suit the postcolonial life and culture of the Akan, and manifests in different forms, including foundations and community networks both in Ghana and in the diaspora, and through new family structures and formations, not necessarily matrilineal only.

4.6 Changes and cause of changes to Akan philanthropy

The focus of the subsidiary research question is to find out whether there had been any changes to Akan philanthropy since pre-colonial times, and if so, why. Part of this question was elaborated upon in the discussion on contemporary practices to show how Akan philanthropy has evolved but there are reasons why this evolution has taken place and this section will address it in response to the subsidiary question. The findings indicate that historical influences, mainly colonialism and related to it Christianity, western education, and modernity, have affected Akan philanthropy. These external forces introduced new ideologies, disrupted traditional practices, and challenged the communal nature of Akan society, thereby impacting the expression and visibility of philanthropy. There were two main areas that were affected and these were the undermining of values that informed Akan philanthropy and the weakening of institutions such as the community, family and chieftaincy, that are pillars of support and vehicles for the practice of Aklan philanthropy.

4.6.1 Undermined Values

Participant 09, a 60–70-year-old chief in Essikado who has ruled for 31 years, said that

> Today, the communal spirit has been destroyed. It is now each one for himself, God for us all. People have become self-centred. These effects can be attributed to Christianity, Education, and Civilisation. Formal education introduced a different concept of life, eroding the sense of belonging. Educated individuals tend to look down on the less educated and view them as beneath their social class. Civilisation brought the influence of certain cultures, particularly Western, leading us to adopt their way of life and perceive our own as outdated. This has resulted in a loss of the sense of unity and belonging. The West is often seen as superior, and those who have had interaction with their system through education or living there tend to hold them in high regard and easily accept their misguided ideas. Christianity has also contributed to divisions, as different cultures and ideas from the Bible have caused rifts among people…The maternal and matrilineal system has also been impacted, as the nuclear family structure discourages uncles from caring for their nephews, as the reciprocal benefits may no longer be present. (Personal Communication , 29th June 2021)

Participant 22, a 50-60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi had earlier spoken on similar issues. She noted that,

> Westernisation has brought about changes because people are now very close within their small circles and the modern family, influenced by the whites, has distorted our culture. We were once very generous and hospitable. So today, if your brother attends school and comes to you for help, you instruct him to go to his parents. In those days, after building a house, you alone could not reside in it unless the whole family resided with you because you had become rich. But now, you avoid your relatives and stop them from coming to you. So, we install security cameras and build fenced walls, unlike the olden days when we had neither gates nor walls and call out aloud the names of our relatives to check on them because your home was my home. When you needed salt, you just shouted to the neighbour, "Do you have some salt?" and they gave if they had. But now things have changed. Colonisation has affected us negatively and polluted our culture. (Personal communication, March 11, 2021)

In relation to giving within the family, in particular, Participant 12, the 40–50-year-old aide to the prominent Essikado chief, had a slightly different view. He felt that there were still traditionalists who held on to the values of matrilineal kinship and benefits accruing thereof but argued that formal western education had affected the thinking of some Akan and made them more focused on their nuclear families rather than the extended.

> Even though it [Akan philanthropy within the family] is changing a little, but it is still there because of the matrilineal system. Your uncle knows very well that you are going to inherit from him, so he needs to make sure you are in a position to take care of things when he is not there. Currently, the nuclear family system is trying to destroy that culture, but it has really not been able to achieve that. This is because we have people who are traditionalists, and that's the way they think. But those of us who have been to school, things are changing. We want to make sure our nuclear families are taken care of before we think of our nieces and nephews. (Personal communication, 2nd July 2021)

These quotations above point fingers at Christianity, colonisation and westernisation as the cause of undermined Akan values that underpin Akan philanthropy.

4.6.2 Weakened institutions

Another significant change that occurred with colonialism and affected Akan philanthropy is that the traditional institutions of family, community, and chieftaincy that were pillars in the practice of Akan philanthropy have had their authority weakened, even if not completely eroded. For the chieftaincy institution, for example, Participant 06, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Essikado, noted that:

> Today, when the Chief gives an order or decree, they [subjects] choose not to obey. Others have the audacity to even insult the whole *Omanhene* (Paramount chief) and go scot-free without being punished. Others also say that one is not compelled to honour the *Omanhene's* summons and that the choice is yours. They say that when a Chief compels a subject, one can sue the Chief. (Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

The family's central role as the primary philanthropic channel through the matrilineal system has similarly been affected, and Participant 09, a 60–70-year-old Chief in Essikado, complained:

> The matrilineal system has also been affected because the nuclear system now does not want to take care of a nephew, as reciprocity is no longer there, and it may not come back to benefit the family. In fact, families limit their children's contact with the extended family so that they stay with their mother, father, and siblings and the benefits stay there. (Personal communication, 29th June 2021)

The family is the basic unit of the community, therefore, if its role in Akan philanthropy has been weakened, this will likewise affect the community's role. This is what has happened. Participant 09, a 60–70-year-old Chief, was of the view that the "community and its attendant giving practice is dying out." In the view of some participants like Participant 06, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Essikado, the changes in the way people live and interact with one another have affected the community and the role it plays in Akan philanthropy. She pointed out:

> Now when you go to other places in our community where people live, they mind their own businesses in gated communities... In the olden days when we used to live in houses with no gates, no secrets were kept, so it helped with giving support to people who needed it. The Ashantis have an adage that goes like this: 'If your parents have not returned from the farm and you say they have enough, you go hungry'. It means that if a particular parent goes to the farm and has not returned, it becomes another's responsibility to take care of you or give you food. (Personal communication, 29 June 2021)

These were some of the changes that colonialism, Christianity, and westernisation brought, but as has been discussed, Akan philanthropy has adapted. There are also deliberate attempts to prevent the culture from further erosion and reviving aspects that may have faded.

The current status quo of Akan philanthropy may have evolved to some extent from pre-colonial times. However, as the findings shared in the previous section demonstrate, indigenous Akan giving is being sustained in contemporary times through various means. Participant 13, a 70-80-year-old chief, gave an example that was already mentioned in previous paragraphs about how he and his elders were working with the local governance system. Other attempts highlighted in previous paragraphs include diaspora giving, the continued practice of community giving to members for different social events in their life such as birth, marriages, bereavement, etc. The support to family, both nuclear and extended, persists despite increased attention to the nuclear family. Support is also provided through traditional leaders and the structures they have

established, as well as to strangers and the spiritual world. Regarding the latter, the researcher observed in both funerals that she attended not only the community's support to the bereaved but also the gifts given to the deceased to take with them into the spirit world. These gifts include both material items and messages to ancestors (observation notes, Takoradi, January 21, 2023, and Kumasi, January 28, 2023).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis of transcripts of both individual and community group conversations and observation notes. Thematic analysis was conducted using a coded framework, with the application of Atlas Ti software. The findings address the research questions on the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy, as well as any changes that may have occurred and the causes behind them. The next chapter will further explore the findings, discussing them in relation to the literature reviewed on the subject and the theory of Akan humanism. It will also consider the indigenous knowledge systems of the Akan, including their proverbs, aphorisms, and symbols. Furthermore, it will analyse the issues through a decolonising lens to align with the adopted indigenous methodology.

5 CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings presented in Chapter 4 are discussed to explain how they contribute to the overarching goal of this thesis. The main objective of this research is to gain a profound and focused understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective, thereby addressing the existing knowledge gap on this subject.

The findings are examined in relation to the research's key objectives, which include exploring the meaning of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan viewpoint, uncovering the nature of philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective, and studying the practice and expressions of philanthropy within the Akan community. Additionally, this chapter examines the findings in relation to the research's minor objective of identifying any potential changes over time to Akan philanthropy and the factors that have led to these changes.

Drawing on the existing literature on the topic and the adopted theory for this thesis, namely Akan humanism, this discussion will critically engage with the findings and their implications for the main research question: "What is the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy?" Additionally, it will address the subsidiary question: "Have there been any changes, and what are the reasons behind them?"

5.2 Summary of Findings

Regarding the first research question, which explores the meaning of Akan philanthropy, the data highlights that Akan philanthropy entails demonstrating love through actions (*Adɔyɛ*) as a way of life for the betterment of the community. In response to the second research question, which delves into the nature of Akan philanthropy, the findings reveal that it is deeply rooted in the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which, for the Akan, is translated as Akan humanism. This nature is characterised by communalism, interconnectedness, reciprocity, moral obligation, and emphasises the significance of gratitude, public recognition, and acknowledgment.

Turning to the third research question, which examines the practice of Akan philanthropy, the data suggests that the financial status of the philanthropist is not the primary factor, and

philanthropic acts can involve tangible or intangible contributions. Furthermore, philanthropy is an integral part of an Akan's life cycle, impacting various aspects of their life. The practice of philanthropy involves active participation from all members of the community, both physically and spiritually. Traditional institutions, such as family, community, and chieftaincy, play crucial roles in facilitating philanthropic endeavours.

Lastly, the findings pertaining to the subsidiary research question regarding potential changes and their causes indicate that while Akan philanthropy has been influenced by Colonialism, Christianity, and Westernisation, it has demonstrated resilience by adapting to changing circumstances while retaining its indigenous philanthropic practices, albeit in modified forms. These findings will now be discussed in greater detail.

5.3 The meaning of Akan philanthropy

5.3.1 *Adɔyɛ*

The findings suggest that *Adɔyɛ*, which means the demonstration of love as a way of life for the well-being of the community, is in tandem with the original meaning of philanthropy, ‘love for mankind’ (Cunningham, 2016; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Rudich, 2009; Sulek, 2009; Moyo, 2013; Payton & Moody, 2008). The origins of philanthropy are traced to the Greek mythological story of Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods, brought it to mankind because of his love for mankind, and suffered for that (Martin, 1961). The Greeks, therefore, referenced philanthropy as 'love for mankind' (Cunningham, 2016; Rudich, 2009; Payton & Moody, 2008). Today, the prevalent notion of Western philanthropy, which is what has been used as the benchmark for philanthropy globally, is that of wealthy people who voluntarily give money or material gifts to a needy person or group out of their benevolence (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013). This is done either by individuals or by individuals through an institution or by an institution that addresses issues affecting needy people in society (Rudich, 2009; Salamon & Anheier, 1992). This perception of philanthropy, Sulek (2009) says, "is generally taken as a given by most scholars of philanthropy today" (p. 201). Over the centuries, the meaning of philanthropy has changed from "an ideal state of mind to an objective reality in the world and leans strongly towards the latter" (Sulek, 2009, p. 200). It has moved from the nature and habits of the goodness of a man and the leaning towards an integral part of universal humanity to their acts of benevolence as individuals and through institutions. The meaning of Akan philanthropy,

however, resonates with the original meaning, which is more about a state of mind and being and a way of life, a habit of love that was then demonstrated towards humankind (Sulek, 2009). The findings align with the position of Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) that "this embedded system of helping corresponds more directly with an etymology understood as the 'love of humankind' than today's western philanthropy operating as a dichotomized private/public redistributive industry" (p. 127). As Metz (2011) indicated, love is at the very core of *Ubuntu* which for the Akan, is Akan humanism and anchors their philanthropy.

Philanthropy for the Akan, the findings indicate, is who they are, and not only what they do. Acts of philanthropy are viewed as expressions of core values and beliefs that reflect the fundamental nature of who they are. It is integral to their being, and that is what is reflected in their doing. Generally, their worldview, way of life, values and beliefs, perception of a human being's worth, and contribution to life and well-being have philanthropy at their core. In explaining the Akan humanism theory adopted by this thesis, Gyekye (1987, 1995) emphasises that "The concern for human welfare constitutes the hub of the Akan axiological wheel," which is an "orientation of Akan morality [that] takes its impulse undoubtedly from the humanistic outlook that characterises Akan traditional life and thought" (p. 143). This implies that Akan philanthropy is embedded in their culture and way of life, and not just sporadic acts by individual Akans. Akan philanthropy should not, therefore, be described as it has been by some scholars (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012) as "ad hoc" (p. 7). When one focuses on the do-ings in philanthropy, as Western philanthropy seems to have done with the definition of philanthropy as "voluntary giving," "voluntary service," and "voluntary association" (Payton, 1998; Payton and Moody, 2008), then Akan philanthropic acts would be described as ad hoc. However, this cannot be the case if philanthropy is a culture and way of life. A way of be-ing rather than do-ing.

An example is the support that communities give to each other in times of birth, bereavement, marriage, etc, as recounted by several of the research participants and mentioned by scholars (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b, SDG Philanthropy Platform). Although the events may be ad hoc, the support given is not. It is already a way of life and expected. Akan philanthropy is therefore defined on the basis of the intent and purpose of ***adɔyɛ***, which manifests in their way of life and culture, rather than the specific act of philanthropy or, as would be discussed later, the status of the person doing the philanthropic act.

The findings also suggest that community well-being is the aim of Akan philanthropy. Well-being has been a fairly elusive concept (Moyo, 2013), and scholars have over the years tried to define

what well-being is for societies (Deneulin and McGregor, 2010; Sen, 1983, 1999; Moyo, 2013). Amartya Sen, a development economist, is well known for redefining well-being away from what had been a usual utilitarian approach in global economic development discourse towards a capabilities framing. To measure economic success, he focused on what the individual was capable of doing instead of what he had (Sen, 1993, 1999; Deneulin and McGregor, 2010). Sen's framing has however been further developed by Deneulin and McGregor (2010), who critique Sen's capabilities approach as being useful but too individualistic. They note that "Sen's formulation of the capability approach holds the expansion of individual freedoms as the central objective of societal development, but a social conception of human well-being reinforces the view that these are always defined and realised through our relationships to others," and that socially constructed meanings are essential for all human life and are what enable people to translate their 'doings' into states of 'being' (p.501). This expansion of the meaning of well-being is essential for understanding ***adɔyɛ*** because it foregrounds well-being that is defined through and for the benefit of the community. Well-being is therefore not only about living well but “living well together”, which includes “consideration of the social structures and institutions that enable people to pursue individual freedoms in relation to others" (Deneulin and McGregor, 2010, p. 501). This is what community well-being is about. That is the purpose of ***adɔyɛ*** - Akan philanthropy. Moyo (2013) holds the view that "in the African context as elsewhere, the concept of well-being is not static" and "it adapts to new contexts and their demands," which are "determined by political, economic, cultural, and social developments." He thus advises that "our view of philanthropy's role in this regard should be one that addresses different dimensions in different ways and over very different time frames" (p.43). While this may be true and the advice a good one, the findings show that Akan philanthropy is fairly settled on what well-being means for the Akan community, and it aligns more with "living well together" (Deneulin and McGregor, 2010, p. 501). This expanded meaning of well-being is more aligned with Moyo’s (2013) statement that "the link between well-being, development, and philanthropy is best nuanced by the values of solidarity, reciprocity, and caring that African societies espouse" (p. 43). Gyekye (2013) notes that

> The sense of community is a characteristic of Ghanaian life and African life generally; it can be said that this characteristic defines our Africanness. In the social context of the community, each member acknowledges the existence of common values, obligations, and understandings and feels a commitment to the community that is expressed through the desire and willingness to advance its interests. Members of the community are

> expected to demonstrate concern for the well-being of others and to do what they can to advance the common good (p. 173).

This common good is what Akan philanthropy aims for. Gyekye (2013) explains that "in Akan moral system (or African moral system generally), good or moral value is determined in terms of its consequences for humankind and human society… actions that promote human welfare are good" (p. 221). These goods would include such things as “generosity, honesty, faithfulness, truthfulness, compassion, hospitality, happiness, that which brings peace, justice, respect, and so on. Each of these actions or patterns of behaviour is supposed or known to bring about social wellbeing” (p. 221).This social well-being is the goal of Akan philanthropy and is community-focused. It puts into perspective the contributions of several participants presented in the Findings section about the vital role of ‘community’ in Akan philanthropy.

The literature reviewed on indigenous philanthropy in Africa, specifically Ghana, as well as existing studies on Akan philanthropy, indicate that community well-being is paramount. This differs from the Western models of philanthropy as their focus is primarily on individual well-being (Mati, 2017). It is important to bear this in mind as, particularly in contemporary times, emerging hybrid formations of philanthropy that have African ownership, management, and cultural underpinnings, blend with Western formalised structures. Scholars have noted examples of these formations in Ghana (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). It is crucial that the Western focus on individual well-being in philanthropic practice does not override the importance of communal well-being in the purpose and focus of these hybrid organisations. As Moyo (2013) states, "[o]ur understanding of well-being rests squarely on the African creed: 'I am because you are'" (p.42). Moyo (2013) further notes that Africa has unique philosophies and cultural foundations that underpin different expressions of philanthropic practice, and Africans' well-being cannot be separated from these cultural and philosophical foundations. The findings of this thesis regarding Akan philanthropy and its aim for community well-being corroborate this position on African philanthropy. The next section will discuss the findings related to the nature of Akan philanthropy, delving deeper into the cultural and philosophical foundations referred to by Moyo (2013).

5.4 The nature of Akan philanthropy

The findings suggest that Akan philanthropy is communal, relational, obligatory, and reciprocal, and that gratitude and publicity are key features as well. It also valorises human dignity and

interdependence. Apart from gratitude and publicity, the literature on African philanthropy and Ghanaian philanthropy also recognises the other components (communal, relational, reciprocal, and obligatory) as integral to African philanthropy. The aspects of gratitude and publicity in Akan philanthropy, which came out in the findings, are not mentioned by the scholars who have written on Ghanaian philanthropy (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), apart from Asante-Darko (2013) who writes on pre-colonial Asante philanthropy. One could infer from this that gratitude and publicity, as key components of philanthropy, are a possible addition from Akan philanthropy to the discourse on indigenous philanthropy, not only in Ghana but in Africa as a whole.

5.4.1 Akan humanism

Several references have been made to the *Ubuntu* philosophy and its foundational importance to African philanthropy (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013, Kumi, 2019a, 2019b). *Ubuntu* has been referred to as 'African Humanism' (Hailey, 2008). Its Akan version, which anchors Akan philanthropy, is Akan Humanism (Gyekye, 1987, 1995). Offshoots from this theory explain not only the worldview of the Akan but also how their knowledge systems (proverbs, aphorisms, symbols, and folktales) form their epistemology and inform their axiology (Gyekye, 1987, 1995), the fulcrum of Akan philanthropy. Akan humanism is fundamentally a moral philosophy theory (Metz, 2007a; 2007b; 2011) that speaks most directly to the matter of Akan philanthropy. It is well positioned to respond to understanding the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy. As Gyekye (1995) explains:

> The concern for human welfare constitutes the hub of the Akan axiological wheel. This orientation of Akan morality takes its impulse undoubtedly from the humanistic outlook that characterises Akan traditional life and thought. Humanism, the doctrine that sees human needs, interests, and dignity as fundamental, thus constitutes the foundation of Akan morality. (p. 143)

5.4.2 Communal and Relational

The Akan are an integral part of the community that they come from and live within (Gyekye, 1992, 1995; Arthur, 2017). The individual gives to the community, and the community gives back to the individual for the common good as shown by the *Adinkra* symbol *Nkonsonkonson*

(Figure 6) which signifies unity and human relations and contributing to the good of the community. There is a mutually beneficial relationship that is closely connected to the act of giving oneself to the whole and the whole giving back to the one (Gyekye, 1992). The findings demonstrate the importance of the Akan community in the life of the individual Akan and vice versa. As already indicated, this idea is not only applicable to the Akan but to the African people as a whole. Abraham (1992) expresses this idea more clearly:

> The success that must result from communal or corporative living greatly depends on each member of the community demonstrating a high degree of moral responsiveness and sensitivity to the needs and well-being of other members. This should manifest itself in each member's fulfilment of their duties. Furthermore, the common good, which is a prominent goal of communitarian moral and political philosophy, necessitates everyone's contribution towards the welfare of all. The social and ethical values of social well-being, solidarity, interdependence, cooperation, compassion, and reciprocity, which can be said to characterise communitarian morality, primarily impose on the individual a duty to the community and its members. (p. 119)



Figure 5: Adinkra symbol - Nkonsonkonson, a symbol of unity and human relations and contributing to the good of the community

Source: Artist Yawa Arhin

In the quotation below, Gyekye (1995) makes the connection between Akan humanism and communalism, which is about the communal and relational nature of Akan society and its association with human welfare. This connection is essential to Akan philanthropy.

> Communalism, which is a doctrine about social organisation and relations, is an offshoot of the Akan concept of humanism... One way in which the Akan concept of humanism is made explicit is in its social organisation. Ensuring the welfare and interests of each member of society - the essential meaning of Akan humanism - can hardly be accomplished outside the communal system (p. 154).

At every key stage in the life-cycle of a person, the Akan community plays a key role in supporting individual growth and welfare, and it is expected that the individual will give back to the community accordingly. This is also reflected in indigenous African philanthropy and has been described in the literature as the 'philanthropy of community' (Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Obadere, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013; Sy & Hathie, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). Mati (2016) defines this as "horizontal and involving members of a community (especially the poor) giving help to each other" (p. 32). Community belongingness and the collective responsibility for the welfare of its members are demonstrated through communal living and the respect for communal values. This communal way of life is an "enduring feature of African social life" (Gyekye, 1996, p. 35). This does not mean that individualistic efforts and choices are not encouraged. Gyekye (1996) provides a good definition of communal values.

> Communal values are those that express appreciation for the worth and importance of the community, underpinning and guiding the type of social relations, attitudes, and behaviours that should exist between individuals who live together in a community, sharing a social life and a sense of common good (p. 35).

He gives examples of these values, which include "sharing, mutual aid, caring for others, interdependence, solidarity, reciprocal obligation, and harmony" (Gyekye, 1996, p. 35). The individuals' need for community and lack of self-sufficiency is expressed in Akan aphorisms such as "one finger cannot lift a thing" and "if one person alone scrapes the bark of a tree for use as medicine, the pieces fall to the ground" (p. 35). Individualism is discouraged, and maxims such as "solitariness [walking alone] is a pitiable condition" (Gyekye, 1996, p. 35) communicate this.

The community and the well-being of the community, with the individual as an integral part of that community, are therefore central to Akan philanthropy. The findings indicate that Akan giving is not being done to benefit oneself but is founded upon and nurtured through the community and communal solidarity for the benefit of the community. Several examples can be found in the findings from this research, of philanthropy through communality that also reverberate in the literature on African and Ghanaian philanthropy. These include practices such as community support for major social events in the lives of community members such as births, bereavement, marriage, etc.; philanthropic activities connected to festivals; mutual aid; nurturing children; living together and so on. These were and are still evident in some of the practices of

the Akan that persist in contemporary times. Another of such practices is eating together. There is an artifact at the Manhyia Palace Museum called the *Abusua Ayowa*, an earthenware pot from which communities and families ate together. This is an example of a communitarian way of living in Akan in pre-colonial times. Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old Akan curator at the Manhyia Palace museum, explained in detail the function of this pot and how it represented the communal way of life of the Akan.

> '*Abusua ayowa'*… In those times, in compound houses, we had about three, four, or five families living in the same house, and [for] the evening food, you know what happens: all the men eat from a common bowl. So, if one family cannot cook, nobody will know. So, it's a way of also giving .... They call it *ti koro enko edzina*, literally meaning 'two heads are better than one'. So that we eat together, we discuss together, and everything together, as if we are from one family, one blood. It tells you and me that what one man cannot do, together we can do. Also, all the children will be eating from the same bowls, and it doesn't have to be only your biological siblings. We are all one, as long as we live in the same house.

Hanson (2004) confirms this and states that in the present-day Akan household, "a key element that ... binds constituent members together is the act of eating together" (p. 38). Eating together in Akan households as a strong feature of the Akan communitarian ethos was also referred to by Participant 23, a 50–60-year-old woman and lady-in-waiting to a Queen Mother in Kumasi, who said, "In the olden days, we [Akan] never served food separately. All relatives ate together so that you would have shared responsibilities. This was how the value of sharing was taught, so that when one grew up, you already knew how to share". Even though she referred to this practice as being "in the olden days", it is still a common practice in contemporary times. This picture (Figure 7) below of people eating a typical Akan meal (fufu and soup) from one traditional earthenware bowl was taken at a Christmas family gathering of an Akan household in December 2021. Eating together from one bowl is still a very common feature in many Akan households.



Figure 6: Eating from one bowl

CREDIT: KWABENA KRODUAH, DECEMBER 2021

It is not just the communal act of eating together that is significant here, but the fact that it was a way of providing food for anyone who was present when it was available, and in so doing, giving food to someone who might be hungry. At the same time, it has a bonding effect and strengthens relationships. Another point to be noted here is that this is an existing practice that has prevailed since pre-colonial times and was highlighted by the research participants as an Akan philanthropic practice, yet this is not one of the practices mentioned in the literature on indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy.

In addition to being communal, the findings suggest that the nature of Akan philanthropy is relational. This is equally a reflection of indigenous African philanthropy as a whole. Scholars (Atibil, 2014; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Asante-Darko, 2013; Everatt et al., 2005; Everatt & Solanki, 2004; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017, 2020; Mottiar & Ngocya, 2016; Moyo, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005) agree that kinship and familial relationships, as well as a "connection to people and places" (Atibil, 2014), are key distinguishing factors of African philanthropy, and as the findings show, Akan philanthropy as well. The connection of an individual to a community, which is the ultimate beneficiary of Akan philanthropy, is key. Apart from referring to it as a 'philanthropy of community' (Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Obadere, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013; Sy & Hathie, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005), the other term that these relational connections are called, signifying the connection as well as its benefits to the community, is Hyden's (1983) 'economy of affection' which is defined as

> a network of support, communications, and interactions amongst structurally defined groups connected by blood, kin, community, and other affinities, for example, religion' which tend to be ad hoc and informal, rather than regular and formalised. (Hyden, 1983, p. 82, cited in Mati 2016, p. 31).

Relationships are what determine wealth for the Akan, and the findings indicate this. The 'poor people' amongst the pre-colonial Asante (an Akan sub-ethnic group) were

> usually urban dwellers with little or no access to land and no skills to enter any profitable economic ventures. Their rural counterparts were also people who worked as bonded labour on mines and farms which predominantly benefited others. *Usually, such people had no relatives or had long severed their link with the extended family whose responsibility it was to cushion their woes.* (Asante-Darko, p. 87) (Emphasis mine).

In effect, the absence of relations and social connections was equivalent to poverty. Moyo (2013) notes the same about African philanthropy when he states that "in most African societies, one is defined as poor only if one does not have relatives or people he or she calls relatives – social or biological – and not because one lacks money" (p. 39). One has to be a part of the Akan community to participate in Akan philanthropy. As Atibil (2014) underscores, "African indigenous philanthropy is characterised by, among other things, the connectedness of individuals and groups to their places of origin, their kin, and ethnic groups" (p. 459). This differs from Western philanthropy, where communal bonds and relationships are not necessary (Payton, 1988; Payton & Moody, 2008). Gyekye (1992) explained the Akan's relatedness and interconnection with the community as follows:

> The fact that a person is born into an existing community suggests a conception of the person as a communitarian being by nature, even though some people insist on the individuality of the person. The communitarian conception of the person has some implications: it implies (i) that the human person does not voluntarily choose to enter into human community, that is, that community life is not optional for any individual person; (ii) that the human person is at once a cultural being; (iii) that the human person cannot, perhaps must not, live in isolation from other persons; (iv) that the human person is naturally oriented towards other persons and must have relationships with them; (v) that social relationships are not contingent but necessary; and (vi) that, following from (iv)

> and (v), the person is constituted, but only partly, by the social relationships in which he necessarily finds himself (p. 105).

This echoes an Akan maxim which states "When a person descends from heaven, he descends into a human society (*onipa firi soro besi a, obesi onipa kurom*)" (Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992, p. 105). Therefore, among the Akan, the individual cannot be dissociated from their community. Two things that affirm the individual's connection to the community and are therefore important where Akan philanthropy is concerned are one's identity as a member of the community (in the land of the living and the afterlife) or affiliation with the community (physically or spiritually), and one's social and reputational capital within it. This is in agreement with Metz's (2011) point that there are two recurring themes in the description of the nature of an ideal African community: 'identity' and 'solidarity'. Gyekye (1995) underscores the importance of these factors. He notes that

> It is implicit in communalism that the success and meaning of the individual's life depend on identifying oneself with the group. This identification is the basis of the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the group. It is also the ground of the overriding emphasis on the individual's obligation to the members of the group; it enjoins upon him or her the obligation to think and act in terms of the survival of the group as a whole. In fact, one's personal sense of responsibility is measured in terms of responsiveness and sensitivity to the needs and demands of the group (p. 156).

There are Akan proverbs on the importance of identity and belonging to a family for the Akan. A couple of them and their meanings from the most up-to-date compendium of Akan proverbs – *Bu me bɛ* (Appiah et al., 2007) are cited as follows:

> - (759) *Obi anwo wo, onni wo* – If someone has not given birth to you, they do not know you (you are only known properly to members of your own family) (p. 45).
>
> - (379) *Obi a ne din da wo soo na wo ne no dware asukuro mu* – It is the person whose name you bear that you bathe in the same water with (you do things in common with your relatives and intimates) (p. 29).

Among the Akan, family and community identity were given or conferred through the following means: the naming of new born children to affirm their acceptance from the spirit world into the human family and community (Arko-Achemfuor, 2018; Arthur, 2017; Participant 01, a 70–80-

year-old academic with expertise in Akan culture and tradition, personal communication, May 28, 2021) and, in pre-colonial times, the assimilation and integration of people who settled in the community, either through peaceful means such as emigration or forceful means like slavery. To ensure the assimilation of these groups of people, there was a law that no one could/should reveal the origin of another (Perbi, 1991; 2001). Everybody was considered to be Akan and part of the community once they settled with them. Feierman (1988) writes about philanthropy in the pre-colonial African societies that he explored:

> It is not a mere fiction to say that those who received help were relatives. Knowledge of kinship linkages, however distant, was potentially life-saving. In a world where the gift was both moral and material, giving was a form of incorporation. Strangers became family, and so giving took place within the family.(p. 44)

This kinship and relationship to the community, as the findings show, was not only important in pre-colonial times but is still the case today, and several examples were given by the research participants. There is also a spiritual aspect to it, as the Akan believed, and still do, that a stranger could be a deity in bodily form. Hospitality to strangers therefore translates into possible hospitality to a deity (Sarpong, 1974). This was corroborated by the findings.

Some connection to the community – physical or spiritual – is therefore a requirement in Akan philanthropy. The findings on this particular aspect of spirituality expose a gap in the current literature on indigenous African philanthropy. Spirituality does play a role, and yet none of the known writers on African philanthropy place much emphasis on this aspect, even when they do write about indigenous African philanthropy. When spirituality is discussed, it is placed in the category of faith-based giving and the practices of religious institutions, mainly Christianity and Islam (Moyo, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Tijani and Abdallah, 2022). This may be an interesting area for future researchers. The current silence in the literature on spirituality in indigenous African philanthropy, though, is quite deafening.

The findings also suggest that, connected to this requirement of identity and its affirmation in Akan philanthropy, is the need for social and reputational capital within the community. Gyekye (1995) states that,

> In a communal social order like that of the Akan…the individual feels socially worthy and important because his or her role is appreciated. The system affords the individual the

> opportunity to make a meaningful life through his or her contribution to the general welfare. It is thus part of the doctrine of communalism that the individual can find the highest good—materially, morally, and spiritually (psychologically)—in relationship with others and in working for the common good. (p. 157)

This value of social and reputational capital in philanthropy is also confirmed in the existing literature on indigenous philanthropy in Africa and in Ghana (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017). Social and reputational capital is important for the acknowledged philanthropists, not only for their benefit but also for that of their families. Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) note that in the philanthropy of the community,

> The network involved is shaped by the interplay between the type of need and the nature of affinity—blood and social identity or physical proximity between the actors—as well as individual reputation. (p. 119)

Glanville et al. (2016), writing on the theory of social capital, note that "[s]ocial capital refers to the idea that certain social relations can facilitate the production of individual or collective goods" (p. 528). They quoted Hanifan's (1916, pp. 130–131) explanation of how social capital leads to generosity.

> I do not refer to real estate, personal property, or cold cash, but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for the most in the daily lives of people. Namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit... If he may come into contact with his neighbour, and they with other neighbours, there will be an accumulation of social capital that may immediately satisfy his social needs and bear enough social potentiality to substantially improve living conditions in the whole community. The community, as a whole, will benefit from the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of help, sympathy, and fellowship from his neighbours (Glanville et al., 2016, p. 529).

Hanifan (1916) may well have been referring to Akan philanthropy and how social capital is a key motivator for it. Closely aligned with the accumulation of social capital, for the Akan, as indicated in the findings, is reputational capital. Philanthropy, for the Akan, does not only earn

them good standing in the community during their lifetime but also in the afterlife. Individuals who were seen as members of the community in good standing and who did not die through unnatural means like accidents or societally unacceptable means like suicide are venerated as ancestors and continue to be part of the community (Arthur, 2017; Sarpong, 1974). Thus, they continue to be acknowledged as active members of the community and are called upon to participate in important community events through libation (Arthur, 2017; Rattray, 1923; Sarpong, 1974). They continue to be active participants in Akan philanthropic practice as they are celebrated and given food and other items and are expected to give back blessings and protection for the family and community (Sarpong, 1974). Additionally, the Akan believe that ancestors can be reincarnated and born back into the family. This means continuity for the family bloodline (Arthur, 2017, Participant 21, a 50–60-year-old Chief in Kumasi, personal communication, 11th March 2021; Sarpong, 1974). For the individual and the family they belong to, having a good reputation in the community is critical, and someone who practices ***adɔyɛ*** receives this recognition.

Likewise, in African philanthropy, indigenous philanthropy for the philanthropist, even amongst the so-called poor, builds social and reputational capital. Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa (2013), writing on the giving of the poor in Southern Africa, note that 'philanthropy of community' helps “poor people satisfy a reputational requirement to give no matter how little – the act is as important as the content value – which maintains eligibility for assistance, social cohesion, and network access” (p.119).

The discussion here suggests the individual and the community are integrated. The ultimate purpose of Akan philanthropy, ***adɔyɛ***, is the well-being of the community, and every individual who benefits from ***adɔyɛ*** has to be connected to the community. A mother's womb feeds the baby with oxygen and nutrients, and the mother also receives what is known as foetal cells from the baby (Khosrotehrani & Bianchi, 2005). So too, the individual who benefits from Akan philanthropy is fed by the community even as they feed the community. Thus, the well-being of the individual is important for the community, and vice versa. Ultimately, maternal health is the most important factor for both the child and the mother. It is the same for the community and the individuals that form part of it. A mother cannot feed and nurture a baby in another woman's womb but only hers. The interconnection and relationship between the recipient of and giver in Akan philanthropy and the community must therefore exist in one form or the other. Finally, the motivation for Akan philanthropy, just like African philanthropy, is not only the welfare of the

community which also benefits the individual, but additionally the social and reputational capital that accrues to the giver and his relations.

5.4.3 Reciprocity

The findings suggest that reciprocity is a key value that emanates from Akan humanism. As discussed, this theory asserts that every person's survival in the community and the well-being of the community as a whole depend on the well-being and welfare of everybody in the community. This interdependence and interconnectedness, and the benefit that derives from it, can only be sustained when each person demonstrates love in action towards other people in the community by giving back, even as they are given to. Thus, in essence, love circulates in the community through different actions and does not only stay within the community but keeps it surviving and thriving. A similar reciprocal nature of African philanthropy is mentioned by every author who sheds some light on indigenous African philanthropy (Atibil, 2014; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Asante-Darko, 2013; Everatt et al., 2004; Everatt & Solanki, 2005; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017, 2020; Mottiar & Ngocya, 2013; Moyo, 2013; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). It is one of the main distinguishers of African philanthropy from Western philanthropy. The findings on Akan philanthropy in relation to this are therefore in alignment with what African scholars say about indigenous African philanthropy.

The Akan proverb about the right hand needing the left hand to wash it to stay clean and vice versa has been referred to not only in the literature (Gyekye, 1995, 2013) but also by research participants. That proverb explains the Akan's understanding of the need for reciprocal giving in a community for the holistic benefit of the community. When one gives, one is given back, and the cycle continues. This can also be tied to the concept of the circularity of life, which Csaki (2015) says is "a central aspect of reality [that] must inform our metaphysical and ontological understanding of the world" (p. 52). Csaki (2015) was referring to the Native American understanding of what constitutes reality. Participant 01, a 70–80-year-old Akan academic and expert in Akan tradition and culture, echoed this reality also for the Akan and used this analogy to explain why reciprocity, a cyclical function in Akan philanthropy, was an integral aspect of Akan philanthropy and mimicked a fundamental universal principle.

> The symbol for the universe is a circle …. Everything is round, and there are no rectangles in nature. So, the moon is round, the sun is round, the body, the eye, the

> head, the mouth – it may not be round but elliptical, but there are no rectangles, so everything is in a circle. (Personal communication, 28 May 2021)

He was supported by Participant 14, a 60–70-year-old man who considers himself a researcher of Akan culture. According to him, "the *Adinkra* symbol that stands for God and life is a circle. It has no place where it starts or ends" (Personal Communication, 14 January 2022). He was referring to the *Adinkrahene* (the king of all *Adinkra* symbols) (Figure 8), an *Adinkra* symbol with three concentric circles, which also stands for leadership, charisma, and greatness or supremacy.



Figure 7: Adinkra symbol- Adinkrahene

Adinkrahene (the king of all adinkra symbols) stands for Leadership, Charisma, and Greatness

Source: Artist Yawa Arhin

Brokenleg and James (2013), two Native American authors, give further explanation to this circularity concept in reference to the Native American culture:

> We function not only in circles; we also live in cycles. Intergenerational, for instance, when commemorating our ancestors or our children. Seasonal, like the cyclical changes in weather—spring, summer, fall, and winter. Birthdays, special events, or other days of remembrance. These are all occasions when we re-balance by recycling the past as we celebrate the present and think about the future. Life is always circular and cyclical—not linear. Our challenge to maintain personal balance must reflect the fluctuating and circular context in which we interact. (p. 52)

This circularity concept, some research participants explained, is inbuilt in Akan culture and also informs their philanthropic culture and practice. As Participant 01, the 70–80-year-old academic and expert in Akan culture and tradition put it, "This idea of reciprocity—of giving and taking—is built into the very structure of the universe, and we must look at it that way so that nature becomes our tutor and our instructor". It is important to state, though, that 'circularity' or 'cyclical'

here is not about the geometrical shape per se (Csaki, 2015) (even though that may also manifest in symbols, like the *Adinkrahene* or in the architectural design of indigenous Akan dwellings – *fihankra* (Arthur, 2017), but about the philosophy or conceptualisation of life as a connection of events and patterns that have no end or beginning and flow one into another sometimes with a certain regularity and involve both the temporal and the spiritual (Csaki, 2015).

Akan philanthropy, the findings show, through its reciprocal nature, maintains this circularity which is fundamental to the Akan worldview of life and their core beliefs. Reciprocity is therefore required in ***adɔyɛ***, and this sustains the community as a whole. A community member who lives out ***adɔyɛ*** receives reciprocal support from the community. The ***enɔbua*** mutual aid practice is an analogy of this cyclical reciprocal practice within Akan philanthropy. Reciprocity also occurs in the reverse. Individuals in the community who do not do ***adɔyɛ*** do not receive ***adɔyɛ*** either. As explained by one of the participants in the New Takoradi susu group (Participant 25) “If you support people, you always get massive support. This hand washes this one and the other washes the other. When you support others, you will also be supported” (Personal communication, January 19, 2023).

Some scholars have questioned reciprocity in philanthropy, indicating that it disqualifies an act from being labelled as philanthropy when you expect to receive something in return. Philanthropy is described by those who have this understanding as wholly altruistic; therefore, one should not expect anything (Rudich, 2009; Titmuss, 1970). This is questionable, and Schervish and Havens (1998), for example, dispute that one could give without expecting any value back, saying that even self-gratification for the act of giving is getting something back. Heyd (2005) discusses the paradox of the concept of altruistic giving without a reciprocal gift, highlighting the positions of Derrida and Mauss on gift-giving as follows:

> Derrida's fundamental critique of Mauss is that gifts cannot be a form of exchange. If a gift is genuine, it must be totally gratuitous, and any expectation of a reward would undermine its point. Mauss is aware of the difference between free giving and economic exchange, yet he insists on the rationality of giving and counter-giving as a mode of non-economic exchange, a symbolic expression of altruistic intention, and personal honour. Derrida believes that subjecting gifts to any principle of mutuality defeats one of the main purposes of the gift but admits that there is no escape from some sort of tacit expectation of a reward. Hence, the statement that gifts are 'impossible'. One of

> Derrida's elegant formulations of the paradox of giving is that, on the one hand, for an act of true giving to succeed, it must be recognised as a gift by the donee, that is to say, be accepted as a token of altruistic intention in the donor; on the other hand, once the gift is seen as a gift, it imposes a duty on the recipient to reciprocate; that is to say, it is no longer a pure gift. (p. 150)

Derrida's position of total altruism as the only validation of philanthropy is different from what was practised in the early days of philanthropy, according to scholars like Cunningham (2016). Cunningham (2016) notes that during the "first stratum" of philanthropy in ancient Greece, "the Greek word philanthropia incorporated the notion of a return, *philanthropon*, from the recipients in the form of honours heaped on the donor; it was a form of gift exchange, a quid-pro-quo" (p.143). This is similar to what Mauss (1969) describes as a gift exchange and is akin to what occurs in Akan philanthropy. The variation for the Akan, as explained before, is that what is exchanged is much more than a gift, and the value is not necessarily placed on what is exchanged but rather on the intent and purpose—given as a demonstration of love through actions which are a way of life, for the benefit of the community. Some African scholars have also posed the same question about the supposed altruism of philanthropy and the reciprocity found in indigenous African philanthropy (Moyo, 2005; Everatt et al., 2005; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005; Copeland-Carson, 2005; 2007; Kumi, 2019b). Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) confess that

> the interpretation of the phenomenon [of reciprocity within the context of *Ubuntu*] creates a dilemma in terms of altruism. A logical conclusion is that the concept is not appropriate to understand African help aspirations and norms. But Africa should not be seen as lacking 'altruism' as conventionally understood. (p. 128).

Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa (2013) therefore advocate for "… a narrative about African philanthropy…[that considers] self-reciprocity as an embedded trait of African gifting" (p.129). That is what the finding here has sought to do by giving the narrative from the Akan perspective.

Another important finding about the nature of reciprocity in Akan philanthropy is that what the philanthropist gives does not have to be returned at the same value, nor does it need to come back to the person who gave it (Asante-Darko, 2013). This is what (Vaughan, 1997, 2007) describes as the transitive nature of giving in the gift economy. This kind of giving is expected to benefit the community in the long term. It is not the kind of business practised in a transactional

exchange economy, and as Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old expert in Akan tradition and culture and a curator at the Manhyia Palace noted, it is not "transactional" and one "does not expect money to be paid". Vaughan (2007) sheds some more light on this. 'Gift-giving', she says,

> which is not assimilated to exchange, produces reciprocity in which this relation of mutuality is not cancelled by the return gift but is maintained and enhanced. Sometimes, an additional gift is given, not as 'interest', as happens with debts in the exchange mode, but as another unilateral gift, demonstrating that the return gift was not a cancellation but a turn-taking 'imitation' or follow-up of the first, by adding more. (p. 481)

It is a different type of reciprocity—one that enables equilibrium and balance in the community for the benefit of all. What is received back, if it is *aseda* (gratitude), is to show appreciation and document the gift given (Asante-Darko, 2013; Sarpong, 1974; Participant 19, 60-70-year-old retired academic and expert in Akan culture and tradition, personal communication, 9 March 2021). There could also be reciprocal giving in Akan philanthropy that has expectations of other benefits like blessings from God or the deities when one gives to strangers (Personal communication with Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum and expert on Akan culture and tradition, 10 March 2021; Personal communication with Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, 11 May 2021; Sarpong, 1974).

5.4.4 Moral Obligation

Closely connected to reciprocity as part of the nature of Akan philanthropy is moral obligation. The findings suggest that the Akan perceive reciprocity as an imperative and critical aspect of *adɔyɛ*. This also aligns with what scholars have noted about African philanthropy (Fowler, 2016; Fowler and Mati, 2019; Moyo, 2013; Mati, 2017, 2020; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005), including Ghanaian philanthropy (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), and is a key aspect of Akan humanism (Gyekye, 1995). For the Akan, the end game for philanthropy is the well-being and welfare of the whole community for the benefit of all members of the community. This goes beyond individual gratification. Philanthropy is cyclical and integral to the life cycle, and there is no end to it. It is a continuum that sustains life and well-being. Its main purpose of survival, sustenance, and well-being in life therefore makes it a moral imperative (Gyekye, 2013). Feierman's (1998, pp. 9–10) presents an apt description of this in pre-colonial Africa:

> Reciprocity... involved gift and counter-obligation; it involved people tied to one another through the exchange of [gifts of material goods and time] which established a relationship deeply embedded in social values. The poor were given help, but through this help... they assumed an obligation.... Reciprocity was a form of exchange within which the rich were led to caring for the poor. But the care was given within a moral framework very different from a European one which emphasised... self-abnegation. (Cited in Atibil, 2014, p. 460.)

Atibil (2014) mentions that Akan philanthropy, with its reciprocal obligatory aspect, still existed in rural Africa, and from the findings, it still exists but not only in rural areas. It is also in urban areas and transpires across borders, such as the philanthropic practices of those in the diaspora. With examples from participants, the findings indicate that Akan philanthropy was expected from anyone who identified as an Akan and that there were social repercussions when one failed to live up to the expectation. This corroborated the example that Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh (2012) gave of the social repercussions that one received when one did not meet the philanthropic obligations within indigenous Ghanaian philanthropy.

> Every Ghanaian belongs to a clan, and all clan members, as well as in-laws, are required by custom to pay this levy at the funeral of a relative or an in-law. Adults who violate this convention are often ostracized, and their funerals boycotted by the extended family. (p. 19)

Kumi (2019a) also notes that "individual giving was largely influenced by the need for social network, reciprocity, and mutual assistance where social relations and norms of reciprocity or counter-obligation are valued in society" (p. 1335). This obligatory requirement in Akan philanthropy differs from Payton and Moody's (2008) definition of philanthropy as "voluntary action for public good" (p. 16), which includes 'voluntary giving,' 'voluntary service,' and 'voluntary association' (p. 17). Philanthropy is not voluntary for the Akan. The question is whether that then disqualifies Akan philanthropy from being philanthropy because it is an obligation.

Gyekye (2013) answers this question with the explanation that seeking the welfare and well-being of a community and the individuals within it, particularly within an ethos of Akan humanism, cannot be something that one chooses. For two reasons: one, it is morally wrong to do so, and two, going by the logic of Akan humanism, it would also mean that one is choosing to

administer self-inflicted injury (Gyekye, 2013). Neglecting one's community's well-being and welfare by choosing whether to demonstrate love in actions that ensure the community's welfare and well-being is denying one's welfare and well-being. Therefore, it goes beyond choice and becomes not a legal but a moral obligation. Gyekye (2013) notes that:

> The concern for human welfare may be said to constitute the hub of the African axiological wheel … [and] the natural sociality or relationality of the human being that would prescribe social ethic … would also prescribe the ethic of duty. The natural rationality of the individual immediately involves one in some social and moral roles in the form of obligations, commitments, and duties (or responsibilities) to other members of his or her community which the individual must fulfil… [and] people fulfil – and ought to fulfil – duties to others not because of the rights of these others, but because of their needs and welfare. (pp. 234, 235)

Fowler (2016) calls this "obligatory altruism" (p. 9). This is one of the main differences between Western and Akan philanthropy. The latter is a moral choice, not an option. Gyekye (2013) captures it as follows:

> given our common humanity and the natural relationality of human beings, morality must be weighted on duties, which should trump rights. Suprerogationism as a moral theory must be rejected. Duty-oriented morality should not make a distinction between a morally obligatory act and a morally suprerogatory or optional act, on the grounds that no act that is morally good and will conduce to the well-being of the human individual should be considered morally optional. Furthermore, a vision of a moral conception of personhood is articulated, which is that there are certain basic moral norms and ideals to which the conduct of a human being, if he or she is a person, ought to conform (p. xxiv).

Akan philanthropy is one such 'basic moral norm and ideal'. The question 'Can it be called philanthropy if it is not done voluntarily?' is therefore the wrong question to ask. Posed this way, it presumes a single definition of philanthropy. Considering the underpinning philosophy of *Ubuntu*, where Africans are concerned, the responsibility of taking care of one another's welfare and well-being, and ultimately that of the community, is essential to the nature and practice of pro-social support for each other – whatever form it takes. This is the essence of Akan philanthropy. It may differ in philosophical orientation from Western philanthropy, but that does not deny its equal value, nor should it deny its equal recognition as a philanthropic model.

Another key aspect of this is that "an indigenous, pro-social practice such as *Ubuntu* operates on the basis of trust and reciprocity and is not just about altruism" (Mati 2017, p. 34). Philanthropy should therefore be viewed as a concept that incorporates different versions within it. One version is the Western version that considers philanthropy to be voluntary and non-reciprocal, and another is the African version and, by extension the Akan version that considers philanthropy to be morally obligatory and reciprocal.

This "reciprocal obligation dynamic" (Mati 2016, p. 1) of African and Akan philanthropy plays a critical role in the welfare of communities on the continent. That is what sustains African communities, and the same applies to the Akan community. As noted previously, Participant 16, a 60–70-year-old Akan expert and lead researcher at the Manhyia Palace, indicated that Akan philanthropy was the social security mechanism for a society that did not have contemporary social security structures in pre-colonial times (personal communication, 12 March 2021). Akan philanthropy continues to play that role even in contemporary times because in many places, government social security systems do not adequately provide for citizens' well-being (Fowler & Mati, 2019). As Mati (2017) notes on philanthropy in Kenya:

> Socioeconomic precariousness predisposes Kenyans to practice strong reciprocity as social insurance against adversity. As such, those supported through school, for example, are expected to support others in return. The result is a generalised reciprocity that has also strongly influenced the emergence and character of institutionalised self-help and mutual aid practices that fill important socioeconomic gaps, such as providing education, housing, and medical care for those who would not receive help from the government. Embedded in the "economy of affection" (Hyden, 1983, p. 86), the widespread reciprocity helps people to get by despite their social and economic precarity and is inscribed in everyday language phrases like *mtu ni watu* (Swahili for an individual's well-being is predicated on the well-being of the collective) (p. 8).

As previously indicated, one of the new entrants to the discourse on African philanthropy as a whole, from the findings, is the contribution of two notions to knowledge on indigenous African philanthropy, which are key components of the nature of Akan philanthropy. These are 'gratitude' and the 'publicity' that goes with it.

5.5.5 Gratitude – *Aseda*

The findings, as presented in Chapter 4, indicate that gratitude, for the Akan, is a key aspect of their philanthropic practice and is expected of all who are recipients of any philanthropic act. Agyekum (2010) writes that "thanking is an institutional act performed in accordance with the societal, organisational, and institutional demands of the Akans. The indigenous education and acculturation emphasise the essence of gratitude and appreciation for services and gifts" (p. 81). It is known as *aseda.* Asante-Darko (2013), quoting Sarpong (1974), describes how important gratitude was as part of the pre-colonial Asante philanthropic practice. He explains in relation to reciprocity in Asante philanthropy that "what was expected to be paid back was the assurance of friendliness, goodwill, and gratitude rather than any certain and tangible material gain" (p. 89). This is not just a pre-colonial practice; however, the findings indicate that it still exists. Writing on contemporary as well as past practices, Agyekum (2010) notes that:

> Gifts and services followed by thanks are signs of deep and affectionate relationships, especially when they are between peers. Gifts and services may also reflect the issues of status and hierarchical relationships. Normally, people of the lower ranks render services to their lords and masters, especially chiefs, and receive gifts and thanks in addition.

What is given as *aseda*, is only a token of appreciation and not a direct repayment of what the recipient received from the donor as would be expected in a transactional interaction (Participant 19, a 60–70-year-old retired academic and expert in Akan culture and tradition, Personal communication, March 9, 2021; Participant 09, 50–60-year-old chief in Kumasi, Personal communication, March 11, 2021). Agyekum (2010) describes the process as follows:

> Once a gift is accepted or services are rendered, the recipient must as a rule thank the donor or service provider, irrespective of its nature and the magnitude. The next day, one has to ask friend(s) to accompany him/her to thank the benefactor. Some period after that, the recipient may thank the donor by saying *Eda no meda wo ase*, 'thank you for the other day'. Sarpong (1974: 67) states that, 'the recipient of a gift may have to thank the giver more than twice for one and the same gift and may have to make the good gesture of the donor known in public. He may have to ask other people to accompany him to render thanks'. Refusal to do this indicates that the beneficiary is not

> appreciative and well educated in the Akan culture and is looked on with scorn. To refuse gifts without any tangible reason is a clear manifestation of enmity between the participants.(p. 81)

There were three main reasons, from the findings, for *aseda* in the Akan culture. One was that it acted as a form of documentation in the then oral culture of the Akan and secondly, it encourages both the giver and other witnesses of *aseda* to continue the philanthropic deeds. The third is the accumulation of social and reputational capital for the philanthropist in the community, an essential ingredient for communal affirmation for the Akan as discussed previously. These purposes require that *aseda* be made with publicity. This introduces another integral aspect of the Akan philanthropic culture - Publicity.

5.5.6 Publicity

The findings indicate that the love demonstrated through various actions for the well-being and welfare of the community must be evident, recognised, and acknowledged. This is how the reputation of the philanthropist and their family grows as respected members of the community. Participant 16, a 60-70-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and the lead researcher at the Manhyia palace, notes that the publicity around Akan philanthropy, which may seem like 'showing off', is actually intended to encourage others to follow the philanthropist's example. Ultimately, Akan philanthropy aims to benefit the entire community, even though the individual and their family may experience an increase in their reputation and social capital. This is because the more community members are encouraged to practise *adɔyɛ*, the greater the overall benefits for the community and everyone connected to it. The act of philanthropy also helps strengthen the individual's bond with the community, which is essential due to the communal and relational nature of Akan society. Fumanti (2013) explains in a relevant quote about Akan in the diaspora that

> …'showing off' works ontologically by enabling Akan migrants to reposition themselves and reclaim their space in the world... In doing so…they reconstitute themselves as visible and distinct to themselves and to significant others in an otherwise alien context and assert their embedded- ness in meaningful relations. The presence and distinction is achieved…in the course of many cultural events and celebrations, in which Akan migrants in London re-establish, reinforce, and recreate relations with kin and friends both in Ghana and in the diaspora. The weekend round of celebrations thus enables

> them to reclaim the spaces in which to assert their presence as distinctive, recognised and dignified human beings, rooted in meaningful relations with significant others and in mutually shared meanings. Indeed, 'showing off' helps to gain distinction that is always relational and intersubjective; it needs others for recognition. As Marlene de Witte has argued in relation to commercialisation of Asante funerals, 'consumption and money exchanges at funerals are not only a matter of showing individual power and status but happen within existing patterns of social relations and obligations' (2003: 556). Showing off is not an act per se but remains inscribed within a system of obligations regulated by reciprocity, exchange, redistribution, and care. These link Akan in London and, transnationally, with Ghana (Mazzucato et al. 2008). (p. 204)

Some of the acts of publicity that go hand in hand with *aseda* obligations connect Akan in London with Ghana and other transnational ties (Mazzucato et al. 2008).

Additionally, acts of publicity for philanthropy often include proverbs or sayings coined in praise of the philanthropist (Asante-Darko, 2013). For example, the praise of philanthropists in dirges played and sung for them when they die. Nketiah (1954) in his seminal publication on Akan dirges records some of these. He notes that

> Benevolence is one of the qualities the Akan expect of people and one that is frequently mentioned in dirges. The chief is expected to be benevolent to people, to be liberal in giving presents…His praises on the drums and later in his dirges and laments incorporate this. The common people are also expected to be benevolent in a number of ways, particularly in the sharing of food and in giving hospitality to strangers…a mourner who has received presents from a deceased or who has grown to depend on him or has noticed his benevolence to others would include this in her dirges, using expressions of her own or “stock” expressions such as the following: The slender arm full of benevolence (*abasateaa (abasayirifie) a adɔyɛ wo mu*); Fount of satisfaction (*mee-mee a ne ho wo mee*)…; Grandmother, the big cooking pot that entertains strangers (*nana senkesee gye ahohoo*); You are a mighty tree with big branches laden with fruit. When children come to you, they find something to eat (*Wo ye dua tantam: w’abaa so*. *Woaso wosowosow: Mmofra ba w’ase a, woanya bi di*). (p.35)

These are some of the public ways of showing gratitude and they have the effect of elevating the philanthropist and honouring them, boosting their social and reputational capital but they are

also a way of encouraging others to emulate them and give for the community's well-being. It is also a way of establishing the identity of the philanthropist within the community that benefits from their philanthropy. Nketiah (1954) shares, in reference to dirges, for example, that it is

> ..,.sung in honour of the deceased person, to mourn him, to elevate him, to adore him, to cherish his name. In doing this, the links between the present and the past, between the living and the dead as well as lineage sentiments, are expressed through the choice of themes and expressions. (p. 18)

In Ghana or in the diaspora, the publicity that the Akan attach to their events, including their philanthropy, is to connect them to the Akan community and establish their identity within it.

Publicity for philanthropic acts was also practised in Europe in the 19th century and made it attractive (Cunningham, 2016). Speaking about Western philanthropy, Cunningham (2016) mentions that "it was one of the attractions of this form of philanthropy that …the benefactor's name often became attached to the donation" (p. 50). The difference between publicity for Akan philanthropy and that for Western philanthropy is that the latter is for the individual philanthropist's benefit and not for the community's benefit; the latter is core to Akan philanthropy.

From the discussion above, one can conclude that the nature of Akan philanthropy, based on Akan humanism, aligns in many aspects with how the literature on African philanthropy and Ghanaian philanthropy has described the nature of indigenous African philanthropy. It is anchored on the fundamental philosophy of *Ubuntu*, contextualised as Akan humanism, "I am because you are," and is thus interdependent, enhances human dignity, is communal, relational, reciprocal, obligatory, and for the Akan, one needs to add the essential components of showing gratitude and publicising it.

5.6 The practice of Akan philanthropy

The findings on Akan philanthropy suggest that most of the practices are what scholars on African philanthropy have termed 'horizontal philanthropy' (Aina, 2013; Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kuljian, 2013; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Mati, 2017, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2013; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Wilkinson-Maposa & Fowler, 2009; Wilkinson-Maposa et. al, 2005) which includes traditional practices that have existed from pre-

colonial times till date. The other type of Akan philanthropy that comes up in the discussions with research participants is 'hybrid philanthropy' (Fowler & Mati; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017) which includes more contemporary practices. This section delves more in depth into the findings and adopts the same outline used to present the findings: who gives, when do they give, what do they give, and how do they give.

5.6.1 Who gives?

Similar to Moyo's (2013) description of who gives or receives in African philanthropy, the findings indicate that every Akan, no matter their economic circumstances, is active in *adɔyɛ*. According to Moyo (2013), "Philanthropy is intrinsically embedded in the life-cycle of birth, life and death of many, if not all Africans" [and] "At any one given time, one is either a philanthropist or recipient of one kind or another of benevolence" (p. 37). This differs from the definition of philanthropy as a benevolent act of the rich for the benefit of the poor (Sulek, 2009). This version is the dominant western version which is an outcome of the cultural and political evolutionary processes in Europe and America that affected their philanthropy (Cunningham, 2016; Rudich, 2009; Sulek, 2009).

According to the findings, for the Akan, the wealth or social positioning of the philanthropist is not the priority for several reasons. The reasons include the focus on the intent and purpose of philanthropy instead of the act as discussed in the previous section in this chapter on the meaning of Akan philanthropy; the traditional channels for Akan philanthropy - mainly the community, family, the chieftaincy which prevent exclusivity to a large extent; as well as the philosophy anchoring Akan philanthropy – Akan humanism with its core principles of common humanity and dignity. This last point is buttressed by what Asante-Darko (2013) notes about the Asante perception of poverty. He highlights here the Asante's acknowledgement of the ephemeral nature and impermanence of time and people's status or situations in society, as well as their focus on relationships to measure wealth instead of money. Even though it seems as if most of indigenous Akan philanthropy is what has been described in the literature on African philanthropy as 'horizontal philanthropy, the researcher suggests that the dichotomy presented in the literature between vertical and horizontal philanthropy cannot from the findings, be strictly applied in the instance of Akan philanthropy because the rich give to the poor, the poor give to the rich, the rich give to the rich, and the poor give to the poor and everything in

between. Mati (2017) notes in reference to Atibil, (2014); Everatt et. al., (2005); Kuljian, (2005) and Wilkinson-Maposa et al. (2005) that

> Horizontal giving and self-help among the poor is one of the most widespread forms of indigenous African philanthropy but is usually overlooked by many development approaches and contributions because, in the eyes of dominant Western notions of philanthropy, the poor are not seen as philanthropists (p. 35).

This is partly supported by the findings as some aspects of Akan philanthropy do fall into the category that the literature presents as horizontal philanthropy. However, there is also an additional point that comes up here as this thesis' sample did not focus on the poor or even people of the same means. For the Akan therefore, horizontal philanthropy does not completely define their philanthropy. The researcher hereby proposes that instead of using the horizontal/vertical lens, Akan philanthropy, and others like it, should be categorised as 'circular philanthropy,' which seems more fitting. This considers the circular nature of Akan philanthropy and the recognition that people's positions in life and their relational positioning as actors in Akan philanthropy (horizontal/vertical) could change at any time within the Akan philanthropy context (Asante-Darko, 2013). Kumi (2019a), for example, raises this issue when he mentions the Foreign Development Philanthropists who are given traditional chieftaincy titles by communities and also invest in those communities. Kumi (2019a) notes that

> These foreign development philanthropists (FDPs) are appointed based on their philanthropic gestures and ability to promote development. Although this philanthropy is vertical, it tends to be fluid in nature. In vertical philanthropy, donors give out of altruistic values without any reciprocity. However, for FDPs, beneficiary communities reciprocate by giving them titles, recognition, and connections in their communities. The presence of FDPs in Ghana provides rich empirical evidence of the intersections between horizontal and vertical philanthropy that has been absent in the literature on African philanthropy (p. 1338).

FDP practices are a clear example of Akan philanthropic practices that are circular. Another example, shared by Participant 21, a 50-60-year-old chief in Kumasi, is the adoption of African Americans into families in his community who also give support to the community, similar to Kumi's (2019)'s FDP example. They may not be given chieftaincy titles but they get benefits of 'family and community membership' from the families and communities that adopt them. They in

turn give gifts, sometimes personally and sometimes through the formal institution of the stool.

One may ask how one would be able to categorise different acts of philanthropy if both vertical and horizontal philanthropy within indigenous philanthropy were to be put in one ‘circular’ pot. The answer to that, the researcher suggests, would be that to differentiate the different practices within circular philanthropy, the functions (intent and purpose) of the philanthropic acts could be used. That is where Fowler and Mati’s (2019) suggestion, borrowing from Mauss's (1969) definitions of 'agonistic' philanthropy (competitive) and 'non-agonistic' philanthropy (collaborative), could be usefully employed. For easier reference, the relevant quote that explains the meaning of and differences between non-agnostic and agnostic philanthropic acts, from Fowler and Mati (2019) is provided here:

> non-agonistic exchanges strengthen relationships through modes of sharing that represent mutuality between actors in relation to norms, responsibility, obligations, and indebtedness. In so doing, gift exchanges can be treated as "horizontal," where equivalences between transacting parties are in play. Such transactions can be weaker or stronger in terms of the degree of similarity between the parties involved, such as their relative assets, sharing a sense of affinity, and so on. Critically, in such transactions, the accumulation of wealth or power does not have primacy. On the contrary, agonistic gifts serve the building, consolidation, and maintenance of hierarchic, "vertical" relations associated with competition for wealth and power. Subordination of recipients is accomplished by, for example, making their access to resources, such as land, beholden to "givers" who are contending for higher status, authority, and recognition (pp. 106/7).

In summary, the proposal advanced here, based on the findings, is that circular philanthropy best describes Akan philanthropy because of the changing relational positions of the actors who may be ‘horizontal’ today and ‘vertical’ tomorrow. The differentiator would be the function that the philanthropy performs. If it is given in a way that could be hierarchical and competitive involving building allegiances and currying favour, it can be described as agonistic philanthropy. Where it goes towards a more collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship, it could be called non-agonistic. These would all be in the context of circular philanthropy. The players could change, but in the spirit of ***adɔyɛ***, their intent and purpose would help us determine how to classify their philanthropic acts.

There is a different consideration when it comes to the 'hybrid' category. This is because hybridity, as has been discussed, is mainly with regard to the mixture or blending of western forms of philanthropy and indigenous forms (Fowler & Mati, 2015; Moyo, 2013). The 'vertical' when hybridity is discussed, is mainly western models of philanthropy and not just the description of a hierarchical relationship in philanthropy. The hybrid philanthropy classification comes from the perspective of placing western forms of philanthropy in the vertical category and indigenous philanthropy, what Atibil (2014) calls traditional giving, in the horizontal category. The hybrid is then a mixture of the two, where indigenous philanthropic practices take on some aspects of western philanthropic models (Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013). The philanthropic practices that have been placed in this hybrid category include community foundations, including those led by traditional leaders, which were part of the findings of this research; High-Net-Worth - Individuals from the indigenous community that have set up foundations such as Despite and Kessben who were mentioned in the findings; and NGOs set up by indigenes to respond to the community's needs such as the one set up by one Queen Mother in Kumasi. These are emergent forms of philanthropy in these contemporary times that have indigenous aspects. Apart from the ones that emerge from the community like community foundations grounded in the community and sometimes led by traditional leaders, the researcher suggests that many of them tilt more towards the vertical western forms of philanthropy rather than the indigenous. One argument in support of these emerging hybrid organisations is that considering the changes brought about by colonialism, Christianity and westernisation, hybridity may present a plausible way of maintaining the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy to ensure that it still remains relevant to the needs of indigenous communities. However, to be true to indigenous claims, it does seem from the findings that these hybrid institutions must foreground their indigeneity and anchor their values and operations on the tenets of Akan humanism or the values and principles of the relevant indigenous group. To echo Moyo (2013), "human well-being has many dimensions, and only an approach that values cultural and social dynamics can adequately respond to the needs of the African setting" (p. 46), and by extension, the Akan setting.

5.6.2 When do they give?

The findings indicate that Akan philanthropy is evident throughout the life cycle of the Akan people and at any point in their lives where there is a need to demonstrate love for the benefit of

the community. It is, in fact, a way of life. This aligns with what has been said about African philanthropy, which extends from birth to death (Moyo, 2010; 2013; Moyo and Ramsamy, 2014; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), and as Akan philanthropy has shown, even beyond death (Sarpong, 1974). The examples from the findings cover philanthropic behaviour and actions at different stages of life such as birth, puberty, marriage, adulthood, livelihood, death, and the spiritual realm. In the spiritual realm, deities, spirits, and ancestors play a role in Akan philanthropy, and they are offered gifts during festivals and community and family ceremonies, with the expectation that they will bless the families and communities. Apart from the aspect of engagement with the spiritual realm, literature on African philanthropy mentions all the other practices as examples of indigenous philanthropy (Aina, 2013; Atibil, 2014; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kuljian, 2013; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Mati, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2013; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Wilkinson-Maposa & Fowler, 2009; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005).

There seems to be a lack of discussion within the literature about philanthropic practices between the spiritual realm and the realm of the living. This aspect was, however, highlighted by the participants. Akan humanism, as a theory, is not a dictate from any spiritual realm, but it is not anti-supernaturalistic, especially considering that the Akan worldview includes the spiritual realm and their active participation in the lives of the Akan (Gyekye, 1995). This is similar to Ubuntu, which also has a metaphysical aspect (Ramose, 1999). Therefore, the question remains as to why this aspect is not included in the list of indigenous African philanthropic practices. Visibility has been given to philanthropy towards and by established religious institutions in Ghana and other parts of Africa (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh; Everatt et al., 2005; Everatt & Solanki, 2004; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Habib et al., 2008; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013). However, as the findings show, the Akan people do not have a religion but have a spiritual aspect to their philanthropy. This is likely true for many other indigenous African cultures that are based on *Ubuntu* values and principles. Therefore, it appears that the story of who gives and when in indigenous philanthropy in Africa is incomplete.

5.6.3 What do they give?

Again reflecting the fact that it is a microcosm of African philanthropy the findings suggest that both tangible and intangible gifts are included as gifts within Akan philanthropy. This aspect of African philanthropy has been noted by several scholars (Adelkarim-Chikh, 2007; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry et al., 2009; Atibil, 2014; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Everatt et al., 2004;

Everatt & Solanki, 2005; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Kuljian, 2013; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Mati, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2013; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Wilkinson-Maposa & Fowler, 2009; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). Examples given included volunteering time to support family, community members, community activities, and fellow susu group members in different events. One participant in the New Takoradi *susu* group, Participant 25, even suggested that visiting people to spend time with them... what he called 'greeting' people was giving of one's time and can be classified as adɔyɛ (Personal communication, January 28, 2023). Some participants even suggested that one could give another his children to support someone who needed children, and Participant 20, a 50-60- year-old man and curator for the Manhyia museum, for example, spoke about his personal example where he grew up with an uncle, his father's brother, to whom he was given as a gift because his father's brother had no child. Participant 09, a 60-70-year-old chief, for instance, made reference to how the Akan community considered a child as a gift to the community as a whole and not only to their parents. That is where the aphorism 'it's a village that brings up a child' comes from because the whole community was expected to take care of and ensure that the child grew up to become a responsible adult who would give back to the community. What is given in Akan philanthropy aligns totally with what scholars have written on African philanthropic gifts, distinguishing it from the emphasis on giving of money in particular which is where the focus is within the global philanthropic discourse (Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013).

Indigenous African philanthropy practices, including those of the Akan community, have been referred to as ad hoc, informal, and unstructured. However, from the findings, this is not necessarily the case. There are formalised structures within the community that serve as vehicles for Akan philanthropy, and that will be the given some attention in the next section.

5.6.4 How do they give?

The findings suggest that there are three key traditional institutions that act as vehicles for Akan philanthropy. These are the community, family, and chieftaincy or traditional leadership.

5.6.4.1 Traditional institutions

The community, as indicated, is the cocoon where the Akan individual is formed, grows, matures, and draws her worth from, and then gives back. There is a symbiotic and cyclical relationship that, according to the theory of Akan humanism and its understanding of the Akan worldview, is eternal. Many of the philanthropic acts that are performed to demonstrate love for

the well-being of the community, therefore, take place through community structures. These are community associations and networks at different levels, including family. These are not ad hoc, unstructured groups that are formed, but organised forms of kinship and relational bonds that exist and respond where and when the need arises. The community is mentioned as an active participant in African philanthropy. Moyo (2013), for example, lists "cooperatives, rotation and savings clubs, communal collective efforts and burial societies" (p. 44), and this is corroborated by others (Atibil, 2014; Copeland-Carson, 2005, 2007; Everatt et al.2005; Fowler, 2016; Fowler and Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Mati, 2017; 2017; 2020; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., 2005). The findings support these examples, and similar ones were mentioned by several research participants and can also be found in the literature on philanthropy in Ghana (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). Considering the communal nature of Akan philanthropy as informed by Akan humanism, this is not surprising.

The family is one of the organisations within the Akan community. The Akan family structure is well-organised and is matrilineal and extended, including clans (Arthur, 2017; Boahen, 1992; Rattray, 1923; Sarpong, 1974). Asante-Darko's position that Asante philanthropy was outside the family contradicts the findings. Asante-Darko (2013) states that he considers a "philanthropic act among pre-colonial Asante to be one in which there are no nuclear or extended family relationship between the beneficiary and the benefactor" (p.87). This is not only contrary to the findings but also different from the position of other researchers who have written on philanthropy in Ghana and touched on the indigenous aspects (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). They all include the family as a key actor as well as a beneficiary of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. The findings are very clear on this, with several examples given by participants indicating the important role of the family in Akan philanthropy. The extended Akan matrilineal family was and still is a major actor in Akan philanthropy. It is the main vehicle through which individuals, families, clans, and whole communities had and still have their welfare taken care of. Hanson (2004) describes how Akans who have migrated away from their birth communities still continue to be part of the extended family household and perform their philanthropic duties accordingly.

Yet another actor is the traditional leadership of the Akan, the chiefs and Queen Mothers, and this was part of the finding. Traditional leaders play an important role in Akan philanthropy, and this is mentioned in the literature on philanthropy in Ghana (Asante-Darko, 2013; Kumi, 2019b;

SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017; Tijani, 2022). The role of traditional leadership in indigenous African philanthropy is not mentioned by other scholars whose literature the researcher reviewed. Kumi (2019b) suggests that this may be something unique to Ghana. The reason may be that philanthropy is cultural (Asante-Darko), and therefore, the literature on philanthropy in Ghana highlights the role of traditional leaders because of their relatively more visible role in the country, particularly amongst the Akan. It is noteworthy, however, that apart from the Chiefs and Queen Mothers and participants who work closely with the chieftaincy and were interviewed, none of the other participants mentioned chieftaincy, even in the examples they gave, as one of the main channels of *adɔyɛ*. Even those who mentioned this, including some of the Chiefs themselves, bemoaned the corruption of the institution and how this had affected their philanthropic role because instead of giving to the community, some Chiefs took for themselves or benefited more from resources like community land rather than ensuring that it benefited the whole community.

The role of rulers in philanthropy is not new. Cunningham (2016) describes how "the Greek word *philanthropia* originally referred to the relationship of the gods to humans ... [and] came to be applied to rulers who were generous to their subjects, and then to the wealthy more generally" (p. 43). Mauss (1969) describes the giving behaviour of indigenous tribes (which he calls 'total prestation' in his seminal publication 'The Gift') and mentions that it is done through "the intermediary of its chief" (p. 1336). Colonialism weakened the authority and influence of traditional leaders (Aidoo, 1977; Rattray, 1923), and this has affected the role they play in Akan philanthropy. This was mentioned by some of the chiefs and Queen Mothers who participated in the research. This weakened authority may be one reason why their role as a formally structured institution in indigenous philanthropy has not received the recognition needed. Hence the current situation where they are still treated as an informal institution in indigenous philanthropy in Ghana.

There is significant focus on faith-based institutions as a key institution for African philanthropy, and some like Kumi (2019b) include it in the list of indigenous philanthropic institutions. This was, however, not the finding from this research. Rather, the church in particular was seen, in the main, as an obstruction to the growth and sustenance of indigenous philanthropy. The church does still play a role but was just not considered to be one that enhanced Akan philanthropy.

5.6.4.2 *Contemporary adaptations*

Despite the influences of historical factors, like a chameleon, Akan philanthropy has persisted and adapted to the changing socio-cultural context. It has taken on various contemporary forms, including registered charitable community organisations, community development initiatives, and support networks, adapting to the present realities of Akan identity and lifestyle. Philanthropy through community and communalism still exists, but in different forms, because the idea of community has itself morphed over the years. In a discussion paper on philanthropy in Africa that Bhekinkosi Moyo, under the auspices of Trust Africa, authored for the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) and the Global Fund for Community Foundations, he mentions:

> A large proportion of all remittances are for extended family needs, but it might be argued that this is an extension of the philanthropy of the community system. Other than family and extended family, remittances tend to be focused on clan, tribe, hometown, or particular institutions, again emphasising the philanthropy of the community. However, the emerging research on the African Diaspora also points to the linkage between the Diaspora and organised political movements, the development of new institutions (health, education), support for legal and rights organisations, and so on. The suggestion emerging is that just as the notion of 'community' is stretching, so too is the very notion of philanthropy of community; in other words, while for citizens of a particular place dealing with the daily struggles of an often brutal life, giving is an essential coping strategy, for their friends and family who travelled, giving represents first an obligation and second a chance to forge change (Moyo, 2008).

Community formations have changed and are no longer strictly based on family and clans but also on other affiliations such as religious institutions, social clubs, educational institutions, and diaspora connections. The subsequent sections highlight these and their role in Akan philanthropy in contemporary times.

5.6.4.2 (a) *Diaspora*

The communal ties amongst the Akan extend beyond borders and this came out evidently in the findings with examples given of the role that Akan living in the diaspora play to support their families and communities back home. The literature on philanthropy in Ghana, clearly outlined the diaspora constituency as one that was seen as a major philanthropic actor but due to the

nature of the remittances, not all of them could be tracked. (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). This is one philanthropic constituency in Ghana that the government of Ghana has paid some attention to (Kumi, 2019a). However, apart from creating an administrative structure for diaspora affairs, not much is known about how the government is strategically engaging the diaspora in the development plans of Ghana. The contribution of the diaspora is however important and the organised Akan associations in the diaspora and the contribution that they make to their different communities was mentioned by participants who had stayed in the diaspora and been part of these groups. Some of the research participants who are traditional leaders attributed some of the developments in their communities to remittances from the diaspora.

As stated in Mati, 2017*,* "the motivations for these [diaspora] associations to fund community development projects in places of origin of their members include both altruism and obligation" (p.40). Just like the nature of gifts given in the indigenous communities , what is given by members of the community in the diaspora are both tangible and intangible like "expertise through the provision of skilled personnel and networks in improving upon social development in their communities in areas like health and education" (Kumi, 2019a, p. 1338). The interesting phenomenon in Ghana that was identified by Kumi, the foreign development individuals, who are mainly from the diaspora and accepted into the Akan kinship, either by adoption (as one traditional leader disclosed) or conferring some honorary title on them, thereby granting them 'citizenship' confirms the requirement of connection to be an active participant of indigenous philanthropy. It is important to note that these are usually foreigners and not only African Americans. This practice of assimilation as has been discussed is a strategy that is used by the Akan from pre-colonial times. This has its advantages and aligns with the requirement of relationship and "connection to people and places" that Atibil (2014) notes as an important indicator for indigenous African philanthropy. The flip-side is what Fowler (2016) suggests – the economy of affinity. The connection then may not necessarily be kinship, even though the bonds of a community would still be needed; but there may be no need to confer a kinship identity. What will be important could be the cause that people could rally around. The diasporan community has already shown that this is possible and this is something that should be encouraged.

5.6.4.2 (b) *Family*

The family, as one of the communities of philanthropy for the Akan, has also changed in form; yet Akan philanthropy through the family and clan still exists. Through intermarriages, which increased with the migration of other ethnic groups into Akan areas, particularly for economic reasons (Boahen, 1992), and the migration of the Akan into other areas due to urbanisation, education, and other reasons, the Akan family no longer remains exclusively Akan. These differences make it challenging to perpetuate a one-culture system because of multiethnicity. Such families usually choose to follow their own traditions, adapting what is suitable for different occasions.

One consistent thing, though, is the obligation to the family and lineage. It still exists regardless of the ethnic configuration of the family once an Akan blood lineage is included. This is not exclusively an Akan practice and can be found being exhibited by different ethnic groups in Ghana (Kumi, 2017; Gyekye, 2013). Gyekye (2013) suggests:

> It would be correct to say that cultural interpenetration through cultural contacts, exchanges, and borrowing of values, ideas, practices, and institutions has resulted in the emergence of common or shared cultural values and practices that would justify one's talking of 'Ghanaian cultural values. (p. 161)

This philanthropic obligation to the family has persisted even though there have been migrations and changes to communal living because of urbanisation (Gyekye, 1997; Hanson, 2004; Korboe, 1992). The concept of the family as being both nuclear and extended has remained despite colonial interruptions. This is the case not only for the Akan but for all African societies in general. Mligo (2021) notes:

> In an African point of view, a family can be categorised into two groups, namely the nuclear family (the father, mother, and children) and the extended family (the grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other relatives of both sides). Children born into the nuclear family belong to both the nuclear family and the extended family. Regardless of the various social changes facing Africa, such as migrations from villages to cities, industrialisation, and inculturation, to mention but a few, the sense of family as comprising both the nuclear and the extended family has not been totally lost among Africans. (p. 16)

The changes to the traditional form of the family therefore did not affect the family's role in Akan philanthropy.

5.6.4.2 (c) *Community groups*

There was one interesting finding in relation to ***ɑdɔyɛ*** through community groups like the *susu*. The finding indicates that there isn't necessarily agreement amongst the Akan that *susu*, the traditional rotational savings scheme, is an Akan philanthropic practice - ***ɑdɔyɛ***. This is contrary to its presentation by different scholars in the literature (Adelkarim-Chikh, 2007; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry et. al, 2009; Fowler & Mati, 2013; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Moyo, 2013; Mati, 2017; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). There were a number of things that were different about the two *susu* groups interviewed that may have contributed to the differences in answers. The issues fell beyond the scope of this thesis, and so the researcher could not focus on them, but these may be areas for future research. The differences were as follows: the group that supported the notion that *susu* was an ***ɑdɔyɛ*** practice (Participant 25, the New Takoradi susu group) was an organically formed women's group who supported each other outside the main savings and credit scheme function. The group that did not see their *susu* group as a philanthropic practice (Participant 24, the Effiduase *susu* group) but a purely transactional business was a mixed-gendered group that had been set up by an international non-governmental organisation, and the group did not support their members outside the functions of the credit and savings scheme. One of the women in Participant 24 complained that the aspect of solidarity building and mutual support for each other beyond just collecting the savings was an aspect that she believed was lacking and encouraged the organisers to do more in this area. They mentioned that there was little support from some members when they wanted to support activities that fell outside the scope of the savings scheme, such as supporting members of the scheme in other ways or supporting the community in general. The members who opposed the idea believed that this was not the purpose of the rotational savings scheme.

Adelkarim-Chikh's (2007) paper on rotational savings groups in Senegal supports the view that the traditional rotational savings scheme is a philanthropic practice. The paper focuses on all women's groups in Senegal who find support from each other through the community that they have formed with the susu group. They also support each other outside of the pure *susu* transactions. This may be something worth researching further. The findings suggest that the indigenous African philanthropic aspect of these traditional rotational savings schemes may not necessarily be the schemes themselves, but rather the community formed around them. It

seems that the philanthropic aspect is not inherent in the model itself, as in the traditional *enɔbua* (mutual aid) schemes, for instance. It depends, it seems, on how the members use the scheme to create the communal bond cemented by the values of Akan humanism (interdependence, interconnectedness, solidarity, benevolence, reciprocity, communalism, gratitude, moral obligation, and a common concern for each other's individual and collective welfare). Could the fact that it was an all-women's group be a factor? This is also another aspect that can be further explored in research. Adelkarim-Chikh's (2007) article suggested that for the women, solidarity, mutually empowering relationships, and the recognition of being part of the banking network gave them what they found to be beneficial. This was an all-women's group that had deliberately decided not to include men because: "We are not feminists, but we know that there is a problem of power. If we accept only one man and we are 300 women, all the rules are going to be changed" (Adelkarim-Chikh, 2007, p. 6562). For them, the banking network "works well, but it is only about the relationships; it is not about the money" (p. 6571).

The community formed around the *susu* schemes, as seen with the New Takoradi all-women's *susu* group (Participant 25), also underscores the need to recognise time given in volunteering acts for community well-being as philanthropy because that is what these women acknowledged as *adɔyɛ*. This was the gap pointed out by Kumi, (2019b) and Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) in the literature on philanthropy in Ghana. More attention, as indicated needs to be given to the indigenous time-banking practices as much as is given to the established volunteering practices. Here again, the invisibility of indigenous volunteering is due to the dominance and recognition in the literature and in practice of western models of volunteering and using them as a benchmark for what is considered volunteering and what is not (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019b).

5.6.4.2 (d) *Foundations*

Foundations, as the findings indicate, are also a part of the philanthropic landscape of the Akan (Aina, 2013; Kumi, 2017; Moyo, 2013; Participant 18, a 60–70-year-old woman who was recommended by a chief as an expert in Akan culture and tradition; Participant 20, a 50–60-year-old expert in Akan culture and tradition and curator at the Manhyia palace museum; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017). There are also new institutions (community foundations) or remodelled ones such as the Otumfuo Foundation, or models such as the hybrid formation that the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) supported in Kenya (Aina & Moyo,

2013). The specific example of foundations was cited as a modern vehicle for giving by the participants who mentioned the two Akan high-net-worth individuals that had set up individual foundations. The traditional leaders interviewed gave examples of the foundations established and run by traditional leaders. As noted the foundation model is not particularly new to the Akan. The example provided was the Otumfuo Foundation, a foundation set up by the Asantehene [King of the Asante] and supporting not only Akan indigenes but also several needy Ghanaian citizens in the areas of health and education This is an example of a foundation that has existed as a vehicle for demonstrating the love of the traditional leader for the community through his function as an occupant of the stool. It has morphed into a more contemporary foundation model similar to the Western philanthropic model, with a board and administrative staff. It provides support in education and health in accordance with the wishes of the Asantehene, not only for the Asante or the Akan but also for any needy Ghanaian who goes through an application process and qualifies to receive support. The Asantehene still has significant influence on what the Fund supports. This may seem similar to the Western foundations where the founders have significant influence on the strategic direction of their foundations, for example that belonging to the Soros' as George Soros or Bill Gates (Moyo, 2008; 2013). The situation is however different in this case. The Asantehene derives his authority and mandate from his people (Rattray, 1923; Boahene, 1992; Arthur, 2017) and is accountable to them. This is not the same as High-Net-Worth-Individuals such as Soros and Gates.

Other examples of modern foundations mentioned by participants were the Kessben and Despite foundations, High-Net-Worth-Individuals who have established their own foundations (Participant 19, a 60–70-year-old Akan expert; Participant 18, a 60–70-year-old woman). These foundations, structured like the dominant Western models, represent relatively recent additions to the philanthropic landscape in Ghana, as observed by Kumi (2017). The query that the researcher raises pertains to potential distinctions from the Western foundation model. The indigenous characteristic worth noting may be the founders' origins and the individuals overseeing these foundations. Given the fundamental principles of Akan philanthropy unveiled in this thesis, a pertinent question emerges: do these foundations that are set up by Akan indigenes uphold the values, intentions, and objectives of *adɔyɛ*? This could serve as a litmus test to ascertain their indigeneity within the Akan context. This does not take away from the fact that they are doing good work and must be commended for it. The discussion here is about whether or not they can be considered as indigenous Ghanaian philanthropic organisations just

because of the origins of the founder or on the basis of their values and orientation. It is the opinion of the researcher that the focus should be on the latter.

An aspect of these modern foundations worth discussing, that differs from the indigenous Akan philanthropy model mentioned in this thesis is the non-requirement of community membership or the relationship between the giver and the beneficiary. Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, suggested that this may not be such a bad thing. In her opinion, the anonymity associated with modern foundations like Kessben's and Despite's may be a way to give comfort to those who, because of their modern 'Christian' idiosyncrasies, have become suspicious of family or other Akan community members and consequently any philanthropic actions through those traditional channels. She claims that

> Sometimes because of our modern religion Christianity, people especially the generous, once become fearful of exhibiting their generosity; however, when it is a bigger platform like our foundation, they will feel safe to exhibit it because the foundations will put their resources into good use." (Participant 22, Personal Communication, 11 March, 2021)

She was referring to foundations such as hers, as a Queen Mother who has an NGO and uses it as a conduit of support to her community. This is a debatable point as Kumi (2019b) has shown clearly from one of his articles on the efforts of Ghanaian NGOs to raise money locally that:

> There was a recurrent theme among respondents. For example, twenty-five respondents explained that individuals preferred giving to friends and family members rather than supporting NGDOs directly as illustrated by the following quotations: People don't have that spirit of giving directly to NGOs. And even those who benefit from NGOs' programme, they don't have the giving back attitude. It's quite difficult because individuals giving directly to NGOs is not part of us. People do not see the need to give to third parties like NGOs." (p.1335)

Sey and Bawole (2022) attribute this to a lack of trust. It raises some questions about the suggestion made by the Queen Mother, Participant 22. One could argue that going down that route of impersonal connections and a lack of relationships is contrary to the ethos of *Ubuntu* and Akan humanism and that this may move people away from identifying with and strengthening their culture. Community and relationship building, as well as identity affirmation, are core to who the Akan are and thus central to their philanthropy. Take that away, and that

could be equivalent to watering down their identity. This is similar to what colonialism, Christianity, and Western education have been accused of doing to Akan philanthropy by research participants. They have increasingly stripped the Akan of who they are and their pride in what they have and encouraged a substitution with Western knowledge and culture, which was touted as a better option (Awoonor, 2006; Gyekye, 1996, 2013). Atibil, 2014 notes the importance of maintaining the African relational aspect in indigenous philanthropy when she states that

> According to Hyden (2006, p. 56) "in societies where face-to-face relations and primary forms of reciprocity prevail, there is no need for . . . impersonal authorities to enforce social action. Communities take it upon themselves to enforce rules." In other words, whereas modern professionalized philanthropic institutions, such as community foundations, trusts, and women's funds, act as impersonal intermediaries between givers and recipients, with the aim of making giving more efficient and targeted toward wider societal benefit (Frumkin, 2006; Lenkowsky, 2002), African indigenous giving values the social relationships and norms of community, trust and reciprocity created from direct personal interaction; norms that are often lost when philanthropy is conducted through institutional intermediaries (Frumkin, 2006). The implications of the reciprocity, trust, and relationship-building features of giving in African traditional communities for social capital building and civil society have hardly been explored. (p. 460)

Instead of encouraging impersonal foundation models, the suggestion of a hybrid (Moyo, 2013), with a practical example of the one implemented in Kenya by the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), could be a better option. This arrangement still provides an active role for the community in decision-making and monitoring and yet introduces a neutral aspect of non-familiarity in the pooled funds and their disbursement through a community foundation.

The challenge with foundations that have been set up, especially by High-Net-Worth-Individuals, is that they are modelled after Western foundations and are therefore not guided by indigenous philanthropic values and principles but by Western ones. The founder, a wealthy individual, is usually the main source of donations targeted at their special interest projects (Kumi, 2019b), which may not necessarily respond to the community needs but theirs. Additionally, such foundations because they are driven by individual interests, are not owned by the community. It

creates dependency instead of the interdependence encouraged through the *Ubuntu* philosophy. There is a downside to this dependency. Having foundations, even if set up by indigenes, modelled solely on western philanthropic foundations and not having the Akan humanism ethos repeats a disconnect between western foundations, NGOs that have similar structures (Fowler, 2022; Kumi, 2022) and the indigenous communities that they want to help.

This has unproductive consequences. Although the western foundations are currently the ones that drive the development discourse and support development projects, especially those implemented by NGOs (Aina & Moyo, 2013), in many developing countries, including Ghana (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b), what governments and development actors see as a useful philanthropic resource for development projects in communities differ from what the communities perceive as the philanthropy that sustains their communities. There is therefore a lack of ownership of the community in interventions that aim to address their development challenges. The philanthropic responsibility has rather been taken up by Western philanthropic organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are also perceived in the same Western philanthropic light (Kumi, 2019a); what Payton and Moody (1998) call "voluntary associations" (p. 17). They are not organic to the communities, and the critical communal identity and relationships required for indigenous philanthropy to thrive and contribute to community development are missing in the interventions of these organisations (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; 2022). The resultant effect is that communities do not own or identify with the said community development projects and NGOs also depend rather heavily on external Western philanthropic donations instead of those from indigenous communities (Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; 2022). The sustainability of development interventions is therefore threatened. If individual foundations established by Akan indigenes tow the same line, it will not yield the needed results for community development as envisaged by *adɔyɛ*.

The hybrid foundations with indigenous roots, based on indigenous values and culture, present a promising option for Akan philanthropy. The foundation established by Asantehene could serve as an example of this hybrid model. This foundation receives support from several people, including the Akan, and has been established for the benefit of the Akan community and other members of Ghanaian society who require support. The foundation belongs to the stool, which in turn belongs to the community, and it has been set up to serve the interests of the latter. As a result, institutions like the chieftaincy can still be utilised to promote Akan philanthropy. Although the authority of chiefs and queens has been weakened, they still possess some influence and can organise special events to revive the communal spirit. There may be concerns that

foundations set up by traditional leaders could be subject to their whims and personal desires. However, ideally, this should not be the case for the Akan, as the stool has been established to serve the people, and the Chief is expected to listen to his council of elders, who speak on behalf of the people. The Chief can be deposed if he acts against the interests of the people to their detriment (Boahen, 2003; Rattray, 1923, 1929). The community can also be more involved through their elders.

In addition to using foundations, some traditional leaders have employed other strategies to encourage their communities to give back for the development of the community. Participant 22, a 50–60-year-old Queen Mother in Kumasi, shared the following:

> Your culture is for yourself; once you realise that you are losing a certain part of it, you try to find ways to modernise it and bring it back.… While you have realised that you are losing a certain part of your culture, you try to incorporate certain things to bring it back through the foundations, Easter rallies, etc .... We advise people that it is by grace that you are rich, so we should return and restore our culture."

Participant 22, Participant 13, a chief from Kumasi and Participant 08,a chief from Essikado all traditional leaders, provided different examples of the efforts they were making to engage individuals who no longer reside in their communities but are connected to them through family or clan, in community activities and giving back.

In addition to the kinship models, Fowler's (2016) suggestion about morphing from an 'economy of affection' (Hyden, 1983) to an 'economy of affinity' (Fowler, 2016) is worth considering. He argues that modernity, westernisation, and globalisation have affected the societal formations that existed in pre-colonial times, making it easier to form close-knit kinship groups with strong bonds. Therefore, it might be better to consider different formations that are more aligned with a community linked "to a cause, to an institution, to a faith, to a population group" and he calls this new formation "economy of affinity" (Fowler, 2016, p. 23). It does not take away the 'affection' one may argue, but it does make room for more expanded formations beyond the kinship or familial networks. Fowler (2016) notes that

> there is a need to take into account the socio-economic stratification, geographical dispersion, the shifts in corporate thinking, and a pluralising evolution in philanthropic practices that are now underway, all of which are attracted by something worth gifting to.

> Put another way, the affections of kith and kin around which socio-political life revolves are being incorporated into a broadening to affinity—to a cause, to an institution, to a faith, to a population group. As a working idea, an economy of affinity may be a useful concept to hold together the disparate nature of this dedicated field of study, now influenced by rapid movement in philanthropic forms, norms, and practices (p. 23).

This may be where one can place the diaspora networks that are already strong actors in philanthropy from postcolonial times and are even better organised and engaged with their local communities back in Ghana. Some of these communities expand beyond small localities and may span across vast ethnic groups (Mazuccato, 2008). The Akan diaspora in different countries all over the world, which is made up of several Akan ethnic groups, is one such group. These do not necessarily connect to one particular location but identify with the ethnic group and coalesce around a cause that they can support. Perhaps this would be the avenue to also expand the principles of Akan humanism in Akan philanthropy, across the world. The findings indicate that the Akan diaspora plays a key role in Akan philanthropy and has been very active in supporting several communities. Despite the challenges in collecting data on diaspora remittances (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), there is unanimity amongst the scholars that the diaspora plays a critical role in indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. This is echoed across the continent (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Aina and Moyo, 2013; Aina, 2013; Moyo, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013).

Another example of this economy of affinity can be seen in how the current Asantehene has expanded the Otumfuo Fund to provide much needed support to non-indigenes as well as Asantes or Akans. The goal is the cause – enhancing education and health and supporting at a national level, not only Asantes and Akans but others who need the support but may not be affiliated by ethnicity or kinship. That is the kind of economy of affinity that Fowler (2016) is referring to. The model of an economy of affinity may also be the one that enables the channelling of more indigenous philanthropy towards not just welfare causes but also social justice causes.

Akan philanthropy has been affected by colonialism, Christianity, and Western education because the values, beliefs, identity, institutions, and way of life of the Akan were undermined. Instead of completely vanishing, though, as has been discussed, it has rather morphed to adapt

to the changed political, social, and economic situation of the Akan. What informed these adaptations will now be discussed.

5.7 Changes and causes

The findings pertaining to the second research question regarding changes to Akan philanthropy and their underlying causes clearly highlight one key message: colonialism has had a detrimental impact on Akan philanthropy, resulting in its marginalisation and relegation in global philanthropic discourse and its consideration in national development planning. Nonetheless, Akan philanthropy still persists and has adapted to the prevailing circumstances when necessary. This is the basis for the call for decolonising philanthropy, which resonates throughout scholarly works on African philanthropy (Atibil, 2014; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Mati, 2017; 2017; 2020; Mahomed, 2013). The research reveals that colonialism and its introduced elements, such as Christianity and westernisation, have had several effects. It weakened Akan traditional institutions, disrupted communal and relational ways of life, undermined the values of Akan humanism, and ridiculed the Akan worldview.

These pillars, as we have discussed, form the foundation of Akan philanthropy. By targeting these foundations, colonialism weakened the organisational aspects of the practice, particularly through traditional leadership, and undermined the significance of Akan philanthropy in promoting well-being.

Even among the two different Akan groups that are the sample populations for this thesis, there was an acknowledgment that the extent of colonial influence that a group like the Ahanta suffered was proportional to the impact on the practice of Akan philanthropy, as defined by the participants, among the Ahanta. The Ahanta, being closer to the coast, were more susceptible to colonial invasion since many colonists arrived by sea (Micots, 2010). On the other hand, it was more challenging to attack those in the forest and inland areas like the Asante; colonial conquest of the Asante took much longer compared to the Ahanta who were located near the sea (Boahen, 1992). The Ahanta felt the impact in their weakened institutions and the matrilineal system. However, the Ahanta research participants insisted that despite being weakened, their practice of Akan philanthropy remained intact.

Rattray (1969) wrote:

> Mention has been made of the Ashanti Forest; this has not only served these people as a natural stronghold against their enemies … but has also reared itself as a barrier against culture and influence from without. (p. 17)

The colonial influence on the Ahanta, as some participants from Essikado inferred (Pt. 12, a 40–50-year-old aide to a chief; Pt. 08, a 40–50-year-old chief), was therefore much stronger. Thus, although the Ahanta are also Akan, the traditions and customs, such as the strong governance structure and the matrilineal family system, which enhanced and sustained Akan philanthropy among the Asante for a long time and still persist, are weaker for the Ahanta.

The marginalisation of indigenous philanthropy and overemphasis on Western forms of philanthropy introduced by colonialism, westernisation, and modernisation have resulted in the lack of recognition and attention accorded to Akan philanthropy, not only within philanthropic literature, but also in the discourse on national development (Kumi, 2019a, 2019b). This is evident, for instance, in the absence of any references to indigenous philanthropy in contemporary development strategies such as the current Ghana beyond Aid strategy paper. In a 2019 blog published by RightsCoLab, the researcher urged the government of Ghana to consider various indigenous philanthropic sources within the strategy, including donations from High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI), remittances from the diaspora, member donations to religious bodies, and individual donations (Afadzinu, 2019).

The dominance of the western model of philanthropy is evident in global discourse and was introduced to African countries, including Ghana, through colonialism and associated developments such as Christianity (Aina, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014; Fowler & Mati, 2019). Euro-North American modernity penetrated Africa through mercantilism, the slave trade, and colonialism. It also infiltrated spiritually through Christianity, economically through capitalism, and epistemologically through education. This hegemony of European-centric knowledge displaced, subjugated, marginalised, and outright ridiculed other knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). Globalisation, democracy, and human rights were used to perpetuate this modernity, leading to long-term consequences for Africa, including epistemicides and a re-articulation of modern history (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). Indigenous knowledge on philanthropy in Africa fell victim to this epistemicide. Describing the transformation that occurred, Fowler and Mati (2019) state that "Colonial penetration and subordination of the continent's population brought with it economic, political, psychological, and cultural forces, disrupting pre-existing embedded relational processes which demanded adaptation, endogenous gifting included" (p. 731).

This condition persisted in the post-colonial period in Africa. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2014) explains that "Coloniality exists through long-standing patterns of power that consistently work to define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (p. 35). Aina (2013) further illustrates the impact of this on philanthropy and notes that, akin to the colonial period, the state sought to appropriate, manipulate, or exclude several key institutions, groups, and modes of organising available to society at large. Philanthropy, particularly the indigenous forms employed and embraced by the majority of the people, was not exempt from this process (p. 25).

The economic decline in the 1970s, which led to the intervention of "Bretton Woods institutions (in particular the World Bank and International Monetary Fund)," brought about "a battery of conditionalities, including reforms around deregulation, liberalisation, and withdrawal of the state." These were seen as immediate solutions (Aina, 2013, p. 28). Furthermore, the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s presented an opportunity for political liberalisation, introducing a wide range of African and international non-state actors, including local and foreign philanthropic institutions (Aina, 2013, pp. 28–29). However, this organised philanthropy, based on the Western model or transplanted from the West, involved a process known as foundation building (Aina, 2013, pp. 29–30). This model of philanthropy, cultivated in the West, was thus transmitted through colonialism and continues to be perpetuated through coloniality in the present. As Mati (2016) astutely notes, "Visible, formal philanthropy is loud but small by economic comparison (e.g., diaspora financing is already dwarfing official aid and it is set to increase)" (p. 52).

The consequence of colonial intervention is the displacement of indigenous philanthropy such as ***adɔyɛ*** by the dominant Western concept of philanthropy. This has resulted in its characterization as informal within academic discussions on a global scale (Moyo, 2013), including among Ghanaian scholars who have contributed to the discourse on philanthropy (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2017; The SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017).

Rudich (2009) describes a key part of Western philanthropy as private actions carried out by individuals or organisations fulfilling the desires of individuals. This form of philanthropy encompasses

> voluntary endeavours aimed at advancing various social causes across sectors such as welfare, education, culture, and health. It achieves its objectives through direct financial contributions to public causes or by backing semi-private and semi-public foundations and organisations tasked with disbursing the funds. Moreover, philanthropy is established as a cultural institution shaped by social and economic elites, involving the formal donation of significant sums of money and assets, as well as volunteering to assist organisations through involvement in their steering committees and public administrations (p. 16).

This diverges across different levels from the concept of Akan philanthropy, which traditionally involves the reciprocal and morally mandatory expression of affection by all members within a community toward others, including one's relations (both physical and spiritual), through one's way of life and existence for the ultimate benefit of the community as a whole.

The demonstration of affection, viewed by the Akan as an inherent aspect of their existence, is manifested through the way individuals live their lives in consideration of others, encompassing not only outward gestures but also internal motivations of love. This practice has now evolved to emphasize the value of the object being donated and the identity of the donor as an individual, as outlined by Fowler (2016) and Smith et al. (2006). Payton and Moody (2008), along with additional scholars such as Smith et al. (2006) and Rudich (2009), propose that philanthropy should entail the giving of money or services and the establishment of organisations aligned with one's altruistic goals, placing significance in these aspects. This perspective is currently predominant in academic discourse, public dialogue, and policy development, as noted by Aryeetey and Opai-Tetteh (2012) and Kumi (2017).

In contemporary notions of philanthropy, the figure of the philanthropist is commonly associated with wealth or affluence, viewing the less fortunate in society as recipients of her/his philanthropic acts. This contrasts with Akan philanthropy, which regards every individual, irrespective of their financial means or societal status, as both a giver and a receiver. The principles of reciprocity and moral duty inherent in Akan and broader African philanthropic practices have faced scrutiny, as highlighted by Mati (2017, 2020) and Moyo (2013). While scepticism about the altruistic nature of philanthropy persists (Rudich, 2009; Smith et al., 2006), the ideal of ~~entirely~~ selfless philanthropic acts is upheld. Contemporary expectations of philanthropy stress voluntarism rather than the moral obligation seen in Akan philanthropy (Gyekye, 1987, 1995, 1996). The emphasis has shifted towards a consideration of individual

rights and interests over communal well-being, a viewpoint echoed by Rudich (2009) and Salamon (1992) in contrast to the emphasis on community welfare in Akan philanthropy (Gyekye, 1987, 1995; Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992).

The spiritual dimension of philanthropy has often been overshadowed by religious frameworks dictating philanthropic norms based on particular interpretations of scriptures and theology, excluding those who do not adhere to the same beliefs. Christianity, in particular, has attracted criticism in this regard.

The traditional Akan philanthropic institutions, now viewed as informal (Kumi, 2017; SDG Philanthropy Platform, 2017), have experienced a decline in influence, diminishing their historical role in the philanthropic landscape among the Akan people. It is worth considering Fowler and Mati (2019)'s points on the formality or informality of institutions, to discuss the way traditional institutions have been characterized. Fowler and Mati (2019) note the following:

> Institutions exhibit a variety of 'presence' in society. Often inspired by faiths and beliefs or secular reactions to them, some institutions become deeply embedded as values allied to habituated rules and normative expectations lived as a second nature, not requiring conscious thinking (Kahneman 2011). *Institutions also function in the form of networks and sites of social heritage, whose rules and sanctions are 'formal' for those belonging to them while remaining 'informal' in the sense of not seeking public recognition or registration and functioning according to their own rules.* Formal institutions are typically registered entities accorded administrative or legal status within a jurisdiction. Another feature of institutions is their rules 'nesting' within others as social complexity gains scale, requiring hierarchy to maintain order and coherence (Ostrom 2005: 38). For example, constitutions overlay laws, which overlay regulations, which can overlay social conventions, etc. These layers are not separate silos but co-exist in shaping people and their institutions in any given society. As a self-organised, self-sustaining behaviour, the institutional expressions of gifting can be understood in this way. (p. 726) (emphasis mine)

This discussion on the classification of 'formal' and 'informal' helps in understanding why Akan philanthropy should not be categorized as informal. The distinction in formality or informality seems to have been primarily developed within the framework of colonial perceptions of formal establishments – those sanctioned and overseen by written laws and governmental entities,

distinct from cultural and traditional institutions. Akan philanthropy, recognized and embraced by its natives who engage in it through indigenous structures, is considered formal only if the philanthropic patterns and native establishments are given equal significance within the philanthropic dialogue, duly acknowledging their contributions. Therefore, the evaluation of its formality or informality should not rely on Western legal frameworks and organizational models integrated into a system influenced by colonial legacies. This highlights the necessity for a shift in how philanthropy is conceptualized and approached, emphasizing the importance of embracing decolonisation efforts in this domain. The imperative to decolonise the meaning, nature and practice of African philanthropy remains relevant to truly give visibility and global acceptance to indigenous philanthropy like that of the Akan.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that despite marginalisation, Akan philanthropy endures, with various new forms emerging, as discussed earlier, alongside efforts to preserve traditional practices.

5.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the discussions point out many similarities between Akan philanthropy and African philanthropy which demonstrates that it is indeed a microcosm of the former. Some new additions have been introduced by Akan philanthropy into the African philanthropy discourse and specifically the values underpinning it and this is gratitude and publicity within Akan philanthropic practice. There is also a suggestion to consider the use of a new terminology ‘ ‘circular philanthropy’ instead of vertical or horizontal for Akan philanthropy and others like it aspects of it do not fit into the vertical or horizontal category. The need to place emphasis on the indigeneity of hybrid organisations where they claim indigeneity is also highlighted in this chapter. Traditional institutions such as family, community, and traditional leadership play a crucial role in upholding Akan philanthropy and the discussion shows that their role is not given the needed acknowledgement in the literature and this has to be done. The importance of decolonising philanthropy is also highlighted showing the various aspects, through the findings and the literature that need to be decolonised to truly make philanthropy global.

6 CHAPTER SIX- CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter re-examines the aims and objectives of this research and demonstrates how these have been addressed. The significant conclusions derived from the findings and discussions are emphasised and examined. Subsequently, a section is dedicated to exploring the potential implications of these highlighted conclusions. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research directions.

6.2 Research aims, objectives and conclusions

The aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, specifically from the standpoint of the Akan ethnic group. The intention is to address the existing gap in academic knowledge concerning indigenous philanthropy in Ghana. The research objectives encompass investigating the meaning of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective, unravelling the nature of philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan viewpoint and examining the practice and manifestations of philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan position. Additionally, the research aims to identify any potential changes that have occurred over time and explore the reasons behind them.

The primary objective of attaining more profound insights into indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, specifically from the Akan perspective, has been largely achieved. This is predominantly due to the utilization of indigenous methodologies and approaches to inform the research design. Moreover, the adoption of the theory of Akan humanism, which is rooted in indigenous knowledge, guided the analysis of data and the subsequent discussion of findings. The data collection process incorporated indigenous knowledge systems, such as proverbs, aphorisms, symbols, and folktales. The method employed to gather information involved consulting custodians of tradition and culture, as well as individuals knowledgeable about Akan tradition and culture. Therefore, the understanding of philanthropy is based on indigenous knowledge rather than Western conceptualizations of philanthropy. This research endeavour responds to the call from scholars in African philanthropy for further investigations to be conducted from an indigenous and cultural perspective, including research focused on Ghana (Asante-Darko, 2013; Aina & Moyo, 2013; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Mati, 2017;

Moyo, 2013; Mottiar & Ngocya, 2016).

In terms of the specific objectives, the conclusion regarding the meaning of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective asserts that it revolves around the concept of 'love for mankind'. It is exemplified by acts of love, which serve as a way of life aimed at enhancing the well-being of the community (Gyekye, 1987; 1995; 2010; 2013). Akan philanthropy is community-centred, considering individuals as integral parts of the community, deeply embedded within it. The essence of Akan philanthropy lies in intent and purpose rather than the individuals involved or the material possessions being given. It is an integral part of Akan culture and way of life (Gyekye, 1987; 1995; 2010; 2013). Therefore, ***adɔyɛ*** (Akan philanthropy) aligns perfectly with the original Greek definition of philanthropy (Cunningham, 2016; Rudich, 2009; Sulek, 2009), while placing greater emphasis on the community aspect. Rather than ‘love for mankind’, it can be called ‘love for the community’. This is due to the fact that the Akan community extends beyond the physical realm of humans and incorporates the spiritual dimension.

On the nature of indigenous philanthropy from an Akan perspective, it can be concluded that it is rooted in the concept of Akan humanism, which is the Akan adaptation of *Ubuntu*, and emphasizes human dignity and interdependence. As a result, Akan philanthropy is characterized by its communal, relational, reciprocal, and morally obligatory nature (Atibil, 2014; Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh, 2012; Kumi, 2019a; 2019b; SDG Philanthropy Platform). Additionally, Akan philanthropy places value on gratitude and the publicity associated with it (Ackah, 1988; Agyekum, 2010; Asante-Darko, 2013; Fumanti, 2013; Sarpong, 1974). These values reinforce each other and serve as reliable indicators to assess whether a philanthropic practice is considered ***adɔyɛ*** or not. Although the public display of Akan philanthropic acts (even if it involves competitive or agonistic giving) and the act of giving *aseda* (Fowler & Mati, 2019) may initially appear to be aimed at accumulating individual social and reputational capital, they ultimately contribute to the long-term sustainability of the community by fostering stronger relationships and inspiring emulation of ***adɔyɛ's*** good practices. Quoting Fowler (2016), indigenous African philanthropy can be understood as a "complex, adaptive relational system . . . gifting is an obligation tied to identities that underpin biological kinship and social belonging . . . gifting is a form of 'obligatory altruism' that serves both cohesion and hierarchy" (cited in Mati, 2017, p. 37).

The practice of indigenous philanthropy from an Akan perspective, it is suggested, should be considered as circular philanthropy instead of horizontal or vertical philanthropy (Atibil, 2014; Fowler, 2016; Fowler & Mati, 2019; Fowler & Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013; Mati, 2017, 2020; Moyo, 2013). This term aligns with the relational dynamics of Akan philanthropy, which is not fixed but rather dynamic, and can shift between horizontal and vertical orientations. Circular philanthropy also resonates with the Akan worldview of the cyclical nature of life, which influences their approach to philanthropy. By employing descriptive indicators such as non-agonistic (collaborative) philanthropy and agonistic (competitive) philanthropy (Mauss, 1969; Fowler & Mati, 2019), a more distinct way of differentiating the functions of Akan philanthropic activities is proposed, rather than relying on the horizontal and vertical categorizations that primarily focus on the actors and their relational positioning, which is not constant for the Akan people.

Actors involved in Akan philanthropy exhibit both temporal and spiritual dimensions (Gyekye, 1995, 2013; Sarpong, 1974). The philanthropic activities of the Akan span various stages of their life cycle, encompassing both physical and spiritual realms, with an intertwined relationship between the two (Sarpong, 1974). There seems to be a suppression of the spiritual aspects of indigenous philanthropy and a focus on faith-based philanthropy but the latter does not include indigenous philanthropy. The findings indicate that the environmental degradation, for example, may be a consequence of the disrespect for the environment which did not exist when there were taboos against degrading the environment because of the deities. The environment still has to be given due respect and the faith-based organisations can take up that role of bringing back the respect for the environment. It is still God's creation and there is a spiritual aspect to it that must be brought back into the religious discourse and more specifically the practice of philanthropy within it. The faith-based institutions have to interrogate their philanthropic stance and align it to indigenous principles and values to truly benefit communities. Faith-based philanthropy must benefit the community more than the religious institutions.

Contrary to portrayals in existing literature on African and Ghanaian philanthropy that depict Akan traditional institutions, such as family, community, and chieftaincy, as informal, ad hoc, and unstructured (Aryeetey & Opai-Tetteh; Kumi, 2019a, 2019b; Mati, 2017; Moyo, 2013), they are, in fact, well-established conduits and active participants in Akan philanthropy, possessing regularity, organization, and formal structures, which may not always be documented but are respected. Additionally, alongside these traditional institutions, other entities have emerged, either within communities or as initiatives of individual Akan indigenes, including foundations and NGOs (some of which are established by traditional leaders). However, further research is

needed to thoroughly examine and determine the genuineness of the Akan identity of these institutions, utilizing indicators derived from this exploratory study on the meaning, nature, and practice of Akan philanthropy as defined by indigenous systems of knowledge and practice.

Based on research findings indicating that trust and relationships remain pivotal for communities to engage in philanthropic endeavours (Kumi, 2019b; Sey & Bawole, 2022), this study concludes that the existence of impersonal foundations would indeed undermine Akan philanthropy. Instead, adopting Fowler's (2016) concept of an ‘economy of affinity’, which emphasizes not only kinship or ethnic connections but also shared causes, while still upholding communal and relational aspects, may be a more appropriate approach. Such an approach aligns with the practices already observed within diaspora networks, known for their active involvement in Akan philanthropic communities (Copeland-Carson, 2007; Fowler, 2016).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Akan philanthropy shares not only similarities with indigenous African philanthropic practices, given the strong commonalities across various African cultures, but it also exhibits significant resemblances to indigenous First Nation cultures and traditions (Csaki, 2015; Mauss, 1969).The conclusion regarding the ultimate goal of changes in Akan philanthropy is that colonialism, coupled with the influences of Christianity, Westernization, and modernization, did have an impact on Akan philanthropy. However, it is worth noting that Akan philanthropy has displayed resilience and continues to persist, albeit in a weakened and less visible state within national and global discussions.

6.3 Implications for research

These findings have several implications for current research and the global discourse surrounding not only Ghanaian and African philanthropy, but philanthropy on a global scale.

Further researchers investigating indigenous phenomena should consider utilising indigenous methodology and methods to explore these phenomena from indigenous knowledge sources, in addition to relying on other dominant knowledge sources. This research addresses a gap in the field and underscores the necessity for more studies of this nature. Philanthropy is a cultural phenomenon (Asante-Darko, 2013), and it is essential to deepen our understanding of its diverse manifestations across the world.

This research also reveals, in agreement with the position of other scholars, that philanthropy is a comprehensive concept that should not be exclusively associated with dominant Western philanthropy, as has often been the case. This biased focus has resulted in a limited perspective in the literature and discourse. Philanthropy should be viewed as inclusive of various forms from different cultures, all of which should be equally valued. However, there is a common thread uniting all forms of philanthropy, which brings us to the next important point.

This research suggests that the fundamental essence of philanthropy is reflected in its original meaning - love for mankind. Therefore, it is crucial to re-examine and prioritise this original meaning in the context of global philanthropy (Fowler and Wilkinson-Maposa, 2013). This calls for what the researcher would refer to as a Sankofa moment for philanthropy on a global scale. *Sankofa* means 'go back and get it' in Twi, an Akan language and it is depicted with an *Adinkra* symbol of a bird facing forwards with its head turned back to pick up something precious (Figure 9). It signifies going back to the past to pick up lessons that would help build a better future.



Figure 8: Adinkra symbol – Sankofa (go back and get it)
Source: Artist Yawa Arhin

Gratitude and publicity represent recent additions to the existing set of indicators outlined in the literature on indigenous African philanthropy. In the Akan culture, alongside principles such as human dignity, interdependence, communalism, relationality, reciprocity, and moral obligation, gratitude and publicity are also deemed crucial and interrelated. This is an introduction of additional indicators for indigenous philanthropy in cultures such as the Akan's.

Programmes and interventions aimed at utilising indigenous philanthropy for development, such as the recent endeavours of NGOs engaging in local fundraising within Akan communities to support development work (Kumi, 2019a; Kumi, 2022), should ensure alignment with the underlying values and principles of Akan humanism. These initiatives should prioritise

community building and emphasise that the philanthropic acts are not mere arbitrary and sporadic transactions but rather deeply ingrained in a relational culture between organisations and communities. The evidence of communal, relational, reciprocal, and obligatory practices, coupled with the inclusion of gratitude and publicity, must be demonstrated. Additionally, local traditional institutions should be respected and empowered to fulfil their role as conduits and facilitators of philanthropy within the community.

It is crucial to recognise and respect traditional institutions such as the family, community, and chieftaincy as well-structured entities that play a significant role in philanthropy within Akan communities. Overemphasis on Western institutions (Kumi, 2019b; Mati, 2017) as formal, organised, and better-structured, while perceiving traditional Akan institutions in philanthropy as ad hoc, negatively impacts their standing. However, these traditional institutions possess valuable contributions to make. While hybrid institutions may assist with adapting to the modern world, it is essential to exercise caution so as not to excessively adopt Western practices and forsake their indigenous roots, thereby jeopardising their authenticity.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the categorisation of indigenous philanthropy be expanded to include a new category known as circular philanthropy, alongside the existing horizontal, vertical, and hybrid forms. This addition would better capture the essence of indigenous philanthropy as practised by the Akan. The reasoning behind this suggestion has been previously elaborated upon in earlier sections.

It is also proposed that the spiritual dimension of indigenous African philanthropy be acknowledged in references to philanthropic actors and practices within the existing literature, as it is currently noticeably absent.

Presentations in the literature on traditional rotational savings groups, commonly referred to as susu groups in Ghana, need to adopt a more nuanced perspective. This research implies that the effectiveness of these groups as philanthropic practices for their members goes beyond the mere structure of the scheme itself.

The process of decolonising philanthropy entails recognising traditional institutions like the family, community, and chieftaincy as the primary actors in philanthropy, rather than marginalising them. Moreover, it involves acknowledging the volunteering of time and services within indigenous communities as genuine forms of volunteerism, regardless of whether they

align with Western frameworks.

Further exploration of the concept of an "economy of affinity" as proposed by Fowler (2016) could yield valuable insights to inform practical applications and pave the way for the emergence of philanthropic communities that may lack kinship or ethnic ties but still embody the principles of Akan humanism, which are fundamentally synonymous with Ubuntu.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Due to the limitations of this research, as mentioned in previous chapters, there is a need for further research to expand the understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, Africa, and globally. Additionally, the research has identified other areas that could be explored in future studies. The proposed areas for further research are as follows:

1. Conducting further research that incorporates the perspective of the youth on Akan philanthropy. The methodology adopted for this thesis only included Akan individuals aged 40 years and above. Expanding the scope of the research to examine philanthropic practices within indigenous hybrid institutions or the philanthropic practices of affinity economies, such as diaspora groups, would also be valuable.

2. Conducting more comprehensive research on the traditional institutions of Akan philanthropy, namely the family, community, and chieftaincy, to gather more data on their role and contribution to indigenous philanthropy would be a worthwhile research venture. Additionally, exploring indigenous philanthropy from the perspective of other ethnic groups beyond the Akan would enrich the existing literature on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana.

3. Considering the similarities between Akan philanthropy and Native American philanthropy, as identified in the literature review, conducting a comparative study using indigenous methodology may yield interesting findings, as well as furthering the exploration into other indigenous communities, especially in Africa.

4. This research primarily utilised qualitative methods. However, measuring the scope and impact of Akan philanthropy, which was not the focus of this thesis, could be better achieved through quantitative or mixed methods research. Therefore, conducting further research using

these methods would provide more wide-ranging information on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana from the Akan perspective.

5. The researcher adhered to university ethics requirements but faced limitations in fully respecting certain traditional protocols to avoid any perception that the interview data may be compromised. There is an opportunity for further research and practical follow-up action to align ethics requirements with traditional and indigenous ethics where indigenous methodology is adopted. Future researchers that use indigenous methodology would not then be placed in a position where they cannot respect indigenous protocols fully, even when they are aligned with the ethics of the indigenous people.

6. More research utilising indigenous and other relevant methodologies is needed to document indigenous philanthropy, particularly in Africa. This would amplify the culture and practices of indigenous philanthropy globally and challenge the current skewed perception of philanthropy.

By considering these suggestions, additional knowledge could be contributed to the field of research on philanthropy.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has endeavoured to show how the aims and objectives of the thesis have been achieved, despite certain limitations. It suggests that it does not only contribute to filling the existing gap in the understanding of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana by highlighting the Akan perspective but also provides new insights regarding indigenous philanthropy in Africa and in the global context. It emphasises the importance of decolonising philanthropy and recognising its diverse forms. Moreover, suggestions have been made to promote the use of indigenous methodologies in research related to indigenous phenomena, as well as addressing limitations and proposing future research directions and practical actions.

From all the findings, it is evident that indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, particularly from the Akan perspective, does not only exist but also shares similarities with indigenous African philanthropy. Indigenous philanthropy, as discussed, has the potential to contribute significantly to the broader discourse on philanthropy, not only in Ghana or Africa but globally. The lack of visibility and informality of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana is primarily due to its assessment

through a Western perspective. Therefore, it is crucial to intentionally decolonise this perspective and focus more on philanthropy originating from Africa, rooted in indigenous African, Ghanaian, Akan, or other cultural values and systems. This thesis aims to contribute to the knowledge on indigenous philanthropy in Ghana by emphasising this key objective.

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Appendix 1: Participant List

No.	New	Descriptors	Location	Mode
1	Participant 01	Male, 70–80 years, expert in Akan tradition and culture, Academic	Accra – in his office	Face-to Face (FtF)
2	Participant 02	Male, 60–70 years, expert in Akan tradition and culture, Academic	Accra- in his office	FtF
3	Particiopant.03	Male, 50–60 years, middle-class businessman with Akan royal links		Via phone
4	Participant 04	50–60 years, Chief in Essikado	Essikado Palace	FtF
5	Participant 05	60–70 years, Queen Mother in Essikado	Essikado Palace	FtF
6	Participant 06	50-60 years, Queen Mother in Essikado	Essikado Palace	FtF
7	Participant 07	Male, 70–80 years, Linguist, in Essikado	Essikado Palace	FtF
8	Participant 08	40–50 years, Chief in Essikado	Essikado-In his home	FtF
9	Participant 09	60–70 years, Chief in Essikado	Essikado-In his home	FtF
10	Participant 10	90–100 years, Akan in Essikado, lived in diaspora for many years	Essikado-In her home	FtF
11	Participant 11	Male, 60–70 years, Akan in Essikado. lived in diaspora for many years	Essikado-In his home	FtF

No.	New	Descriptors	Location	Mode
12	Participant 12	Male, 40–50 years Aide to chief in Essikado	Takoradi-Hotel	
13	Participant 13	70–80 years, Chief in Kumasi	Kumasi-In his home	FtF
14	Participant 14	Male, 60–70 years, and self-acclaimed Akan culture and tradition researcher	Kumasi-Manhyia Palace grounds	FtF
15	Participant 15	Male, 60–70 years, and self-acclaimed Akan culture and tradition researcher	Kumasi-Manhyia Palace grounds	FtF
16	Participant 16	Male, 60–70 years, expert in Akan tradition and culture and lead researcher at Manhyia Palace	Kumasi-Manhyia Palace grounds	FtF
17	Participant 17	Male, 40–50 years, aide to chief at palace participated in chance meeting	Kumasi-Manhyia Palace grounds	FtF
18	Participant 18	Female, 60–70 years, recommended by chief as expert in Akan culture and tradition	Kumasi-Nana Hemanhene's home	FtF
19	Particiapant.19	Female, 60–70 years, expert in Akan culture and tradition and retired academic	Kumasi-In her home	FtF

No.	New	Descriptors	Location	Mode
20	Participant 20	Male, 50–60 years, expert in Akan culture and tradition and curator at Manhyia palace	Manhyia Palace grounds	FtF
21	Participant 21	50–60 years, Chief in Kumasi	Kumasi-In his home	FtF
22	Participant 22	50–60 years Queen Mother in Kumasi	Kumasi- In her home	FtF
23	Participant 23	Female, 50–60 years, Akan indigene, Lady-in-waiting to Queenmother	Kumasi- In Queen Mother's home	FtF
24	Participant 24	Effiduase *Susu* Group set up by Christian INGO – mixed gender	Effiduase	FTF
25	Participant 25	New Takoradi *Susu* Group – organically set up, all women	New Takoradi	FTF

Appendix 2: Aide Memoire

My name is Nana Asantewa Afadzinu. I am a PhD student at Wits University. My research aims to understand the meaning, nature, and practice of indigenous philanthropy in Ghana, with a focus on the Akan. If you agree to participate, I have an informed consent form for you to sign. It will indicate that you have agreed to participate and have received all the relevant information about the study. I also need your permission to record the interview. It will help me transcribe it and do a general analysis together with all the other interviews. Please let me know if this is okay with you as well.

Themes for discussion

- Concept of Ghanaian philanthropy amongst the Akan and the name or names given to it.
- Nature of Akan philanthropy
- The practice of Akan philanthropy
- Ethnophilosophical basis
- Actors – Givers and beneficiaries
- Significance
- Evolution (if any)
- Any outstanding matters not covered in the interview

Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

My name is Nana Asantewa Afadzinu and I am a PhD student at Wits University. My research topic is **Understanding indigenous giving in Ghana from an Akan perspective** and aims to understand the meaning, nature, and practice of indigenous giving in Ghana, with a focus on the Akan. If you agree to participate, I have an informed consent form for you to sign. It indicates that you have agreed to participate and have received all the relevant information about the study. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be documenting your name or any identifying information unless you choose otherwise and want to be identified or named. I also need your permission to record the interview. It will help me transcribe it and do a general analysis together with all the other interviews. Please let me know if this is okay with you, as well.

Questions

Meaning

- Would you say that there is the existence of Akan giving?
- Is there a name for this phenomenon you have described and what is that name?
- What makes this phenomenon Akan?

Nature

- Can you describe what in your view, is Akan giving?
- Are there different types and what are these?
- Are there any specific things in Akan culture that encourage or discourage Akan giving and what are these?
- Can you give examples from Akan proverbs, songs, sayings, rituals, folktales, or symbols?
- If there was one ritual or ceremony that you think I should observe to get more information on Akan giving, which one would it be?

Practice

- Who practices Akan philanthropy and who benefits from it?
- Has Akan giving changed in any way from pre-colonial times till now?
- How beneficial is Akan giving to the community and its members?
- Would you describe the activities of this community group that you are a member of as Akan giving?

- Why would you describe it as such?

Other matters

- Are there any other types of giving amongst the Akan that you would like to talk about?
- Is there anything about Akan giving that you would like to share with me that we have not discussed?

Appendix 4: Observation Checklist

Checklist Observation Guide

This was used in addition to field notes for data collection as the researcher acts as an observer- participant in relevant Akan ceremonies or rituals that speak to Indigenous Akan philanthropy.

Date:

Ritual or ceremony:

Participants involved:

Setting:

Acts of giving / Philanthropic activities undertaken
Key actors in philanthropic aspects of the ceremony
Relationship between giver and beneficiary
Other relations with the cosmos, nature, or community and how expressed
Any related Akan cultural or traditional symbolisms, use of proverbs etc.
Significance of philanthropic act/s