

Announcement

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George is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Ethics and Law in the Life Sciences (CELLS) at Leibniz University Hannover, Germany. He obtained his PhD in Philosophy from Leibniz University Hannover with a thesis on the epistemic and moral dimensions of testimony in scientific research. George holds a Masters degree in Philosophy from the University of Ghana.



A Survey of Themes in Bioethics within an African Context

Most themes in bioethics are centered around the question of personhood. In African philosophy, it has been argued that what constitutes personhood is very much tied to one's connection with their community (Menkiti, 1984; Gyekye, 1995; Wiredu & Gyekye, 2010). For instance, the famous Southern African 'Ubuntu' philosophy means the following: 'I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am.' This conception of personhood within an African context is different from what has been argued as an individualistic conception of personhood in most Western societies, as exemplified in René Descartes' famous 'Cogito, ergo sum' – 'I think, therefore I am'.

In this talk, I will provide an overview of various views of communitarianism within an African context leading to what has become known as an 'African Ethics' (Gyekye, 2010; Metz, 2017; 2021). I would then illustrate the implications that such an African ethics has for Beauchamp and Childress' (1979) four principles of biomedical ethics – respect for autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice; and for topics in public health ethics in general.