The Palgrave Handbook of African Social Ethics

Edited by
Nimi Wariboko · Toyin Falola

The Palgrave Handbook of African Social Ethics

Nimi Wariboko • Toyin Falola
Editors

The Palgrave Handbook of African Social Ethics

palgrave
macmillan

Editors
Nimi Wariboko
Boston University
Boston, MA, USA

Toyin Falola
Department of History
University of Texas
Austin, TX, USA

Cover illustration: ManuelVelasco / Getty Images

Acknowledgments

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Ebenezer Obiri Addo teaches Africana studies at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, USA. He specializes in African religious tradition, politics, literatures, and cultures. His subfield is African diasporan studies. He is the author of *Kwame Nkrumah: A Case Study of Religion and Politics in Ghana* (1997) and co-author of *A Teacher's Guide to Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* (2008).

Abimbola A. Adelakun is an assistant professor in the African/African Diaspora Department, the University of Texas, Austin, Texas, USA. Her areas of research are theater/performance, Pentecostalism/Pentecostal culture, spirituality/religious creativity, Yoruba studies, and black popular culture.

Oluwatoyin Vincent Adepoju is the founder and director of Compcros, Comparative Cognitive Processes and Systems, a research and publication system exploring diverse approaches to knowledge. His focus is on intersections of the visual and verbal arts, philosophy, and spirituality.

Saheedat Adetayo is a doctoral student in Philosophy at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her areas of research include development studies, African philosophy, social and political philosophy, and feminist philosophy.

Adeshina Afolayan teaches philosophy at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His areas of specialization include philosophy of politics, cultural studies, and African philosophy. He is the co-editor of *Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* (2017), co-editor of *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (2018), and the author of *Philosophy and National Development in Nigeria* (2018).

Emem O. Agbiji is a research fellow at the Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa. Her research is on pastoral care, health, and development. She is the co-director of World Arise Initiative, Oklahoma, USA, and has authored academic articles.

Obaji Agbiji is a research fellow at the Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa, and a Leadership and Management consultant in New Jersey, USA. He researches and writes on religion, development, leadership, ecology, and ethics.

Patrick Kofi Amissah is an honorary research fellow at the School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University, UK. His research interests include biblical studies, contextual social justice, political theology, and pastoral care and counseling.

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu is Professor of Contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana. He has written widely on themes ranging from religion in Africa to the intersections in contemporary Pentecostalism and modern media on the continent. Asamoah-Gyadu is a fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Olufemi Ronald Badru teaches philosophy and politics at the Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria. He works within political, moral, and legal philosophy. His recent publication is "An African Philosophical Account of Just War Theory," *Ethical Perspectives*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2019): 153–181.

Sunday Olaoluwa Dada teaches philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. His areas of research interest include development studies, African philosophy, and cultural studies. His publications have appeared in reputable local and international journals.

Bola Dauda is a retired scholar whose works have been translated into Spanish, French, and Chinese. His areas of specialization include the politics of representation, nation-building, bureaucracy-democracy relations, ethics, and governance. He is the co-author of *Decolonizing Nigeria 1945–1960* (2017).

Toyin Falola is the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities and distinguished teaching professor at the University of Texas, Austin, USA. His research interests include African history, African American studies, and Nollywood. Among his many books are *Music, Performance and African Identities* (2012), *Yoruba Fiction, Orature and Culture* (2011), *Facts, Fictions, and African Creative Imaginations* (co-edited, 2010), and *Cultural Identity and Nationalism* (2009)

Samson O. Ijaola teaches in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa, Edo State, Nigeria. His scholarly works have appeared in national and international edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals. His research areas include Christian studies, philosophy of religion, science and religion, gender studies, peace and conflict studies, and African studies. He is also the editor of *SAU Journal of Humanities*.

Polycarp Ikuenobe teaches philosophy at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, USA. His areas of specialization include social and political philosophy and African philosophy. He is the author of *Philosophical Perspectives of Communalism and Morality in African Traditions* (2006).

Georgette Mulunda Ledgister teaches African Christianity at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Her areas of specialization include social ethics, comparative religions, conflict transformation, and gender studies. She provides conflict response training to corporations, civic organizations, and faith-based institutions.

Chika C. Mba is a research fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. His areas of specialization include global justice, African philosophy, Frantz Fanon, and postcolonial theory.

David Nderitu teaches philosophy at Egerton University, Kenya. His areas of specialization include bioethics, African philosophy, and ancient philosophy. Nderitu is a Ph.D. candidate at Moi University, Kenya.

George Kotei Neequaye teaches African philosophy, Christian ethics, ethics and leadership, mother-tongue hermeneutics, and liturgics at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon-Ghana. He is a contributor to the book *Rethinking the Great Commission: Emerging African Perspectives* (2018).

Aliou Cissé Niang is Associate Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York, USA. Niang is the author of *Faith and Freedom in Galatia and Senegal* (2009); co-author of *Text, Image, and Christians in the Graeco-Roman World* (2012); "Catholic Epistles," *Anselm Companion to the New Testament* (2014); "Catholic Epistles," *Anselm Companion to the Bible* (2014); "Space and Human Agency in the Making of the Story of Gershom through a Senegalese Christian Lens," *Forum-Journal of Biblical Literature* (2015); "Islandedness, Translation, and Creolization," in *Islands, Islanders, and Bible: RumInations* (2015); "Christianity in Senegal" in Lamport and Jenkins, *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South* (2018); and "Diola Religion" in Lamport and Jenkins, *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South* (2018).

Nelson Goldpin Obah-Akpowoghaha is a postdoctoral fellow at North-West University, South Africa. His areas of specialization include peace and conflict studies, African politics, comparative politics, and political theory.

Victor Ojakorotu is Professor of Politics and International Relations and the Deputy School Director of Government Studies, North-West University, South Africa. He is a versatile scholar in international relations with numerous books and articles to his credit.

Anthony Okeregbe teaches philosophy at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. His areas of specialization include philosophy of religion and existential inquiries into African lifeworlds. He is the co-editor of *A Study in African Socio-Political Philosophy* (2012).

Oluwatomisin Oredein is Assistant Professor of Black Religious Traditions and Constructive Theology and Ethics at Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX, USA. Her work engages articulations of African feminist and womanist theologies and ethics.

Sanya Osha teaches philosophy at the Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa.

Sheila A. Otieno is a Ph.D. candidate at Boston University's School of Theology, specializing in Social Ethics. Her research centers around personhood, community dynamics, and aspects of belonging on the African continent based on the cultural transfers of African religiosity into social life.

Olayinka Oyeleye is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research areas include ethics, feminist philosophy, and gender studies, among others. Some of her works include "Feminism(s) and Oppression: Rethinking Gender from a Yoruba Perspective" (*Handbook of African Philosophy*) and "Ìwà l'ewà: Toward a Yorùbá Feminist Ethics" (*Yorùbá Studies Review*)

Damaris Parsitau teaches religion and gender at Egerton University, Kenya. Her areas of specialization include religion, women's bodies and sexualities, religion, gender, and sexual citizenship, and African Pentecostalism. She has authored many articles, book chapters, and monographs.

Olufemi Vaughan is the Alfred Sargent Lee & Mary Ames Lee Professor of African Studies at Amherst College, USA. He is the author and editor of many books and scholarly articles, including *Religion and the Making of Nigeria* (2016) and *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s–1990s* (2000).

Comfort Olajumoke (Jumoke) Verissimo is studying for a Ph.D. in English at the University of Alberta, Canada. Her research is on trauma and/as grievance in the Nigeria-Biafra War literature. Her latest work is a novel, *A Small Silence* (2019).

Nimi Wariboko is the Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics at Boston University, USA.

Introduction

Nimi Wariboko and Toyin Falola

The *Handbook of African Social Ethics* (HASE) fills a gap in the study of Africa. There is currently no single companion or handbook on African Social Ethics. There are, however, companions and handbooks on African philosophy, which have limited entries on social ethics. There are one or two books (especially on religion) that come closest to the kind of transdisciplinary engagement in Africa's ethics and society that HASE undertakes. But they are not texts on ethics or philosophy as they are often narrowly focused on religious examination of the issues facing the continent and on certain subjects that contain materials close to what the HASE provides.

The key benefits of HASE over such books or companions are (a) HASE pays special attention to issues pertaining to ethics more generally rather than aided by a religious lens; (b) HASE represents a broader scope of scholarship, attending to the more intersectional and interdisciplinary aspects of African ethos and the moral aspects of African society; (c) HASE includes a wider range of scholars (i.e. not only those in religious studies) who articulate the wide gamut of moral sources available within African cultural experiences and how societies appropriate them for ethical use; and (d) HASE makes allowances for alternative moral sources available right from precolonial time and in substitutive epistemologies, permitting an expansive (and additional) spectrum of previously unconsidered systems of knowledge.

Specifically, this handbook is designed with three basic audiences in mind. First, for mainstream academic African and Africana social ethicists and philosophers in Africa and the African Diaspora who are interested in the direction their discipline needs to take in the twenty-first century. Second, it is meant for

N. Wariboko (✉)
Boston University, Boston, MA, USA

T. Falola
Department of History, University of Texas, Austin, TX, USA

the students of African social ethics who urgently need to know how to link academic discourses of ethics to the lived experiences of Africans and to the promotion of human flourishing on the continent. HASE is also meant for the general researchers in African history and development who are interested in the social-ethical dimensions of the debate on how Africa can truly harness its indigenous ethos and global civilizational patterns in order to make significant sociopolitical progress in the twenty-first century.

We are painfully aware that this Handbook is not as comprehensive as we wanted when we embarked on it many years ago. We wanted to generate many more chapters than what we have here, so we could cover almost all possible areas of African social ethics. We engaged the scholars to produce the relevant chapters, but as this kind of projects often goes, a number of our colleagues did not deliver their chapters even after extending the deadline for submission of chapters multiple times. Yet this Handbook provides excellent perspectives and insightful chapters on social ethics in Africa.

Indeed, it contains a robust collection of leading-edge discourses on African social ethics and ethical practices that speak to students, scholars, and educated citizens in the twenty-first century. It focuses on how social ethics as a stand-alone discipline or as a subdiscipline under philosophy hits the ground; that is, how the ethical thoughts of Africans are forged within the context of everyday life and how in turn ethical and philosophical thoughts inform day-to-day living. The goal is to offer bold, incisive, and fresh interpretations of the ethical life and thought in Africa in a style and presentation accessible to the average reader. Designed and published in the formats of print and e-book and as a perpetual online living reference work, *The Handbook of African Social Ethics* creates a cutting-edge moment for cumulating, updating, and extending studies of African social ethics beyond the present and into the future.

The typical handbook on ethics tells the story of ethics as theoretical debates, elucidations, or discursive practices. This Handbook tells the story of African ethics as a dynamic and open social reality that bears the marks of changes, ruptures, contradictions, and passages of time. This is to say that ethics is understood as a historical phenomenon, and it is best examined as a historical movement, the dynamics of ethos of a people, rather than as a theoretical construct. It is ethics as lived, experienced in everyday life, and not ethics as argued in academic tomes.

If we want to focus on ethics as lived, as experienced historical-social existence, how do we organize the discussions or contents of this Handbook? The short answer is that the organizational patterns of life should condition or determine the categories of discourses or entries in a handbook or companion on African social ethics. This is what we have exactly done in this Handbook.

Unfortunately, this is not the usual approach. The typical approach of handbooks of ethics is to divide their chapters or entries according to the subdisciplines in the field of ethics, regions, periods, intellectual developments, or key thinkers. HASE, however, takes a different approach: it is configured around the five major spheres of life—family, polity, economy, creativity, and

dominion (religion). Our approach, centered on life, does not necessarily reject the regnant approach; it only offers a different organizational principle, which is robust enough to incorporate the categories of the regnant method. The concerns, advantages, and sensibilities of the regnant organizational form are embedded in our discourses and configured to yield their insights under the rubrics of the spheres of life. Each chapter approaches ethics as a process that unlocks the power of truth, justice, and harmony embodied in the forms of human sociality or exemplified in the five spheres of life.

Our effort to privilege spheres of life in a sense pays homage to the traditional African conception of ethics as ethos (social practices and discursive practices) that enhances life; promotes harmony between all spheres, dimensions, and forms of life; and encourages human flourishing. This Handbook seeks to demonstrate how Africans have been able to integrate the powers or forces of life that *stand behind* and *stand with* the five spheres of life to create viable civilizations. No civilization or large historical organization of social existence exists without the viable integrations of the forces, energies with their institutional patterns.

The contents of *The Handbook of African Social Ethics* are organized to pay a great deal of attention to the "spiritual and moral energies" behind human flourishing and civilizations in Africa. The five basic spheres of life (family, polity, economy, creativity, and dominion [religion]) are often correlated with five powers—five forms of spiritual energies that invite and even capture people's loyalties (these powers or energies *eros/familial piety*, *mars/violence*, the *muses/ forces of creativity*, *mammon/economy*, and *dominion/*worldview, comprehensive moral vision, religion).[1] These powers not only enable people to move beyond the boundaries and capabilities left to them by their ancestors but also, sometimes, anchor them to antiquated practices, institutions, and beliefs.

"Humans are sexual, political, economic, cultural, and religious creatures. Each one of these dimensions of life involves a certain potentiality and needs an institutional matrix to house, guide and channel its energies."[2] They are organized into *spheres* of life. Eros relates to the family sphere, muses to the arts and mass media, mars (violence) to the political, mammon to economy, and religion to the whole society. Religion defines what is right, good, and fitting in the other spheres and in human relationship with God, gods, or spirits. These spiritual energies not only guide current practices, they are implicated in the human drive toward transcendence and the future.

The Handbook of African Social Ethics aspires to convey a critical sense of African ethics as a longing and practice of human flourishing, the fluid, delicate interactions between the moral and spiritual energies that claim the loyalties of Africans, and the various creative institutional matrices they have created to guide the five powers to engender greater possibilities of excellence (actualization of their potentialities) for better levels of human flourishing in everyday existence.

Overall, this Handbook presents the ethical practices, institutions, and thoughts in Africa as transdisciplinary subject matters that are critical in the

interpretation and understanding of contemporary African societies. Thus, we hope that the readership of *Handbook of Africa Social Ethics* will not be confined to students of philosophy and social ethics alone but will include the wider readerships in the humanities and social sciences—and even beyond.

The implicit view of ethics in the chapters that constitute this book is expansive. Here, ethics points us to ends beyond the existing forms of human sociality. It insists that an existing order can find those ends beyond itself only when its agents rise beyond themselves. Thus, HASE offers analytical insights not for only Africans to engage their inherited moral systems and emergent ethos but also offers resources that can nudge some of them to resist existing orders that absolutize themselves and to forge and strain toward a new window of "else-where" and "else-when."

> This idea of window points us toward both what is present and what is absent in an extant order. In ethics we are trying to paint a portrait of our community and/ or the subject of our focus. The portrait becomes a space (e.g. a "rectangle") through which the community or the subject is seen. But it also provides the lens, perspective to see what is absent in the community. Like all windows, an "ethical-window" marks the boundary between what is currently obtained (what is inside the house) and what is outside, what we can strive for in the open, unconfined space. Through this window we are trying to see what is outside of ourselves, outside of our current existing order, but it is not always totally transparent; we see through an inherited (though continually reworked) mental representation. We are trying to see the world, the cosmos outside, through our particular *throwness* into the world.[3]

This Handbook is in large part an attempt to provide a window on creativity and an avenue to show how the creative principles at work in African communities and the larger cosmos are harnessed for human flourishing. The expansive view of ethics as exemplified in HASE relates the inner life of social institutions to the invisible rhythms and creative force that sustain and move the universe as grasped by Africans in their everydayness.

Since we are committed to providing an expansive view of social ethics in Africa, the chapters here are not calibrated to either argue that African ethic is communitarian or individualistic. Collectively, they tend to strike a delicate balance between these two extremes, presenting a general view of the themes under discussion. Often in books on African social ethics, scholars present the view that the ethic worth promoting in Africa is communalism (communitarianism); some of them going as far as to argue it is the only authentic African indigenous ethic, or it was only this ethic that existed in precolonial Africa. This is not a correct position. African ethic was not monolithic or static over the ages before colonialism. Historian Moses Ochonu aptly makes this point in a recent book. He argues that too much epistemic visibility has been given to the "incorrect notion of precolonial Africa as a site of subsistent communalism, an undifferentiated societal continuum supposedly unspoiled by the twin capitalist evils of the profit motive and private wealth accumulation…. Evidence…

indicates that a communitarian ethos underpinned and mediated the entrepreneurial pursuits of precolonial Africans."[4]

Philosopher Kwame Gyekye could not be any clearer on this point than what he has declared about Akan social thought. He maintains that communality and individuality coexist in Akan ethos, illustrating it with indigenous art motif of the two-headed crocodile with one stomach. Gyekye argues that:

> The symbol of the crossed crocodiles with two heads and a common stomach has great significance for Akan social thought. While it suggests the rational underpinnings of the concept of communalism, it does not do so to the detriment of individuality. The concept of communalism, as it is understood in Akan thought, therefore does not overlook individual rights, interests, desires, and responsibilities, nor does it imply the absorption of the individual will into the "communal will," or seek to eliminate individual responsibility and accountability. Akan social thought attempts to establish a delicate balance between concepts of communality and individuality.[5]

What Gyekye argues here applies, by and large, to most African communities. There is now a mix of communitarianism and individualism, cooperation, and conflict—two systems or ethos in interaction in modern Africa. The coexistence of the two systems has implication for how social ethicists evaluate African community leaders. In our opinion, good leaders are those who prepare their "communities to allow their members to develop their potentialities in the pursuit of ever-greater common good. How well a community does this will depend on how it allows individuals to develop their unique traits, capabilities, and potentialities and on how well these individual endowments are related to each other in the pursuit of the common good. A [good] community is the one that is adept at combining these two opposite tendencies or processes: a movement toward uniqueness counterbalanced by movement toward union."[6] Ultimately, the overarching perspective that emerges from this Handbook is that African social ethic is a set of social practices that are geared toward the creation of possibilities for community and participation by all its members so that their potentialities can be drawn out for the common good.

The 32 chapters (excluding this introductory chapter) of this Handbook are distributed into five sections, corresponding to the five spheres of life. There are eight chapters in (a) family and Community sphere; (b) eight chapters in the sphere of polity (violence, power, and figures); (c) four chapters in the economic sphere (energies of exchange and market); (d) six chapters in the sphere of culture (creativity, forms of organizing creativity, muses); and (e) six chapters in the sphere of religion (comprehensive worldview). Collectively, they offer us an insightful examination of the ethos of present-day sub-Saharan Africa.

> Ethos concerns the operational morality of a people, their deepest presuppositions, the inner guidance system of their society that defines the mutual responsiveness of citizens to one another, that conditions the kind of relationships deemed

appropriate between leadership and institutions, and evokes the necessary loyalty of citizens to leaders and systems. It is ethos that shows what is the "fitting" thing to do in a situation and the "proper" expectations, roles, and functions in any given environment. What is the "proper" thing to do by institutions or leaders requires what anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls "thick descriptions." Those morally formed in a particular society have the "thick descriptions" of any interactions at their fingertips. They orient their behaviors, legitimize their actions, and condition their spiritual energies.[7]

These 32 chapters interrogate the current state and future possibilities of contemporary ethos of African communities, offering a window into social practices that ground normative behaviors and in turn gives us a comprehensive survey of the ground norms that anchor social practices. The lessons contained in this book are significant for understanding how citizens, leaders, policymakers, and scholars might go about generating restructuring, remoralizing, and renewing African communities for socioeconomic development.

NOTES

1. See also Nimi Wariboko, *The Principle of Excellence: A Framework for Social Ethics* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2009), 35–36; Max Stackhouse, "Introduction" in *God and Globalization: Volume 1: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, ed. Max Stackhouse with Peter Paris (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 35.
2. Max Stackhouse, "Introduction" in *God and Globalization: Volume 2: The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, ed. Max Stackhouse with Don S. Browning (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 5. In another place, he wrote:

   [P]eople carve out spheres of social activity, clusters of institutions that house, guide, and constrain, and in certain ways, permit, even encourage, these powers to operate. Each sphere is regulated by customary or legislated rules, and each is defined by its own specification of ends and means, as these accord with the nature of the activity and its place in the whole society or culture. Each sphere develops methods of fulfilling its own standards, ways to mark accomplished goals, definitions of excellence, and standards of success. (See Max Stackhouse, *God and Globalization*, vol. 1, 39)

3. Nimi Wariboko, *Methods of Ethical Analysis: Between Theology, History and Literature* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 21–22.
4. Moses E. Ochonu, "Introduction: Toward African Entrepreneurship and Business History" in Moses E. Ochonu (ed.) *Entrepreneurship in Africa: A History Approach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018), pp. 1–27; quotation from p. 16.
5. Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 160–61.
6. Wariboko, *Principle of Excellence*, 8.
7. Nimi Wariboko, *Ethics and Society in Nigeria: Identity, History, Political Theory* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2019), 131.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gyekye, Kwame. 1987. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochonu, Moses E. 2018. Introduction: Toward African Entrepreneurship and Business History. In *Entrepreneurship in Africa: A History Approach*, ed. Moses E. Ochonu, 1–27. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Stackhouse, Max. 2000. Introduction. In *God and Globalization: Volume 1: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, ed. Max Stackhouse with Peter Paris, 1–52. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.

———. 2001. Introduction. In *God and Globalization: Volume 2: The Spirit and the Modern Authorities*, ed. Max Stackhouse with Don S. Browning, 1–36. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.

Wariboko, Nimi. 2009. *The Principle of Excellence: A Framework for Social Ethics*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

———. 2013. *Methods of Ethical Analysis: Between Theology, History and Literature*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock.

———. 2019. *Ethics and Society in Nigeria: Identity, History, Political Theory*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.

Family and Community (Eros as in Belonging, Togetherness)

Ethics of Family, Community and Childrearing

Victor Ojakorotu and Nelson Goldpin Obah-Akpowoghaha

Introduction

In the African traditional setting, parenting or childrearing is perceived to take different patterns, which is able to build the child to be a responsible person. Though there are various parenting styles, there are ways in which the African parent brings up a child in order for the child to imbibe the cultural values of the land and also be a responsible adult. Some of these forms of parenting are through storytelling (folk tales), the extended family, traditional rites and the mother's care, attention and love. One may ask: are these cultural practices still in vogue or have been impaired and distorted by external forces? (Amos 2013: 6; Ganga and Chinyoka 2017: 38).

Available literature and academic discourse on ethics and childrearing in Africa have stressed certain ancient practices in the continent of Africa undermining the impact of colonial system, Western and European modernisation in recent time (Caldwell and Caldwell 1987; Goody 1982; Lloyd and Blanc 1996 cited in Madhavan and Gross 2013). Africa as continent is endowed with valuable norms, cultures and values that serve as finest mechanism for community, childrearing and a body of ethics. But these qualities were massively eroded during slavery and colonial systems that seem barbaric to colonial masters. Colonial masters introduced Christianity, certain strange cultures and belief in Africa, and these have occupied the centre stage of childrearing and ethics of family in the continent. This has been properly captured by work of Patricia Mawusi Amos (2013), who revealed that "Research shows that majority of books concerning infancy are from the western world (Tomlinson & Swartz, 2003 cited in Amos 2015). In view of that African cultural values as far as

V. Ojakorotu (✉) • N. G. Obah-Akpowoghaha
North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

11

parenting is concerned are being forgotten and the western practice is rather adopted" (Amos 2013: 65).

The erosion of African values vis-à-vis ethics of family and childrearing have been intensified by the doctrine of globalisation centre on imperialism. Globalisation and imperialism have to do with integrating nations and individuals into global cultures and values with the purpose of capturing, subjecting other cultures and values in the international system. This has been evident in the area of language, eating habit, ceremonies, marriage, salutation, manner of greetings, worshipping and so on. In order to be a part and parcel of modernisation and benefit from the residues of globalisation, most African countries have aligned with Western, European and other cultures. This and among others have affected numerous families and communities in the continent of Africa in relation to childrearing. In line with this thought, Ganga and Chinyoka (2017: 38) argued that before the introduction of Western and European system of education in Africa, there existed traditional ways of child-rearing patterns. "Clear-cut roles, obligations, rights, expectations and sanctions were prescribed" (Durojaiye 1996 in Mwamwenda 2010 cited in Ganga and Chinyoka 2017: 38). With the advent of formal education and the influence of different cultures, the traditional parent-child relationships and child-rearing practices have been altered. Few traditional African communities still retain certain aspects of the rearing patterns intact, but many have been diluted by the Western culture (Ganga and Chinyoka 2017: 38).

Modern African child has been reared based on Christian, Islamic doctrines and foreign technologies. For those within Christian faith revolved around the lifestyle of Christians in Western and European societies, and while those within Islamic faith pattern their life style along Islamic nations.

The argument in this piece is that there is no absolute ethics and values in contemporary African states in childrearing. Existing families and communities in Africa, particularly the family of the rich or elites, absorbed what is at play in advanced countries, and which form the pattern of childrearing in communities and families in Africa. "Evidence from some African countries shows that there are no clear-cut child-rearing patterns but rather a combination of both African and Western styles"(Siyakwazi and Siyakwazi 2014 cited in Ganga and Chinyoka 2017: 38). The act of greetings or salutations, singing, marriage, building confidence in a child, eating and dressing, these and among others have been modified in the continent of Africa. In some African communities and families, there is absolute doctrine of assimilation of foreign norms and values. Most average African families hired the services of nannies, house help and other alien childrearing values in bringing up their children. In this case, the house help (caregiver) bath the child, feed and mode the child based on what is in vague on social media. Gay, lesbian practices and sex education have been accepted in some families in Africa, and parents have considered it as a duty to inform their children what it means. Sex education whatever the forms and pattern is a taboo in African families before colonialism and likewise a child who cannot greet and speak in her mother's tongue. Consequently, the

twenty-first-century African communities and families are facing series of challenges in relation to childrearing due to an increase in knowledge from the advanced countries made available through science. The goal of childrearing entails nurturing, indoctrinating and socialising the child based on the ancestral traditions and values in that community, but most communities in Africa seem to be losing what constitute the norms and values of childrearing. It is on this note this chapter points out the challenges in childrearing in Africa and provide a way forward in reviving the handed-down childrearing norms and values in communities in Africa.

However, the arrangement of this chapter builds on the discussion of items such as ethics and the child, family and the community, the attachment theory, brief overview of African culture and practices of childrearing, science and information and communications technology (ICT), and we draw the conclusion. The methodological approach is premised on content analysis, arising from secondary sources of data collection.

Conceptual Review

Ethics and the Child

The philosophy of ethics vis-à-vis the child is anchored on caregivers to honour the cultural values, perspectives, beliefs of the immediate community and points the child to the beauty of life. The United Nations (UN) through her agencies, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) roll out plan to Care for Child Development (CCD) towards parenting practices and the good behaviour demonstrated in the course of the process. Some of its ideas on the rights of the child are premised on the child's desires and the parents should strive to fulfil it; in other words, the child's rights are more paramount over the parents, and this seems absurd in most African communities. African families are intertwined, child and the parents are shared same bold; and the notion of given a child separate identity on the grounds of specialised code of conduct in bringing up the child seems problematic.

Studies have identified that the general idea of UNICEF is to develop the innate ability of the child and create an atmosphere of holistic development in order to be a better person free from the gene of domestic violence characteristics. The population of study of the CCD is at the poor communities and low-middle-income level whose ethics of fairness and justice is inadequate to give the best to the child. A study by Jolly (2007) revealed that more than 200 million children under the age of five years in the aforementioned societies are not fulfilling their potential due to nutritional deficiencies, spread of uncontrollable diseases, environmental toxin and so on. The study placed emphasis on addressing biological and psychological risks of the child as a process of giving the best to the child. Again, on a similar note, Nutrit (2017) argued that

placing more emphasis on the child over the parents in caregiving can cause ethical concerns in most communities and families.

Most of these new ideas about caregivers are Western and European inventions that are suitable in those societies and vividly made explicit by US research institutions and other English-speaking countries (Henrich et al. 2010). Although the works of Keller and Kartner (2013) recommended universal standards that recognised communities' values and norms, the point of implementations has generated behavioural academic discourse towards the parameters of children and parenting on its adoption.

Another study conducted in Senegal-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) Tostan by Weber, Fernald and Diop (2017) identified that most of the CCD interventions in the country rarely give adequate attention to people due to the Western patterns of lifestyle and practices, premised on one-on-one practices and playing mood using a discourse which is at variance to the Senegalese caregiver system of parents and child relationship. A critical knowledge of CCD ideas exposed the families belonging to low-income communities into a stigmatised situation and making them second-class citizens in their own communities upon these Western styles of caregivers.

Family and the Community

Family values provide cultural template for the child's development and life decisions, especially career, mode of operations, selections and reactions to the world. Introvert or extrovert parents genetically and socially affect the actions and inaction of the child. The essence of the activities of UNICEF in CCD is to make the child see beyond his/her family's incubations and environment. The family teaches the child the culture, norms and traditions of his/her nation; studies have identified that the intervention programmes of UNICEF to Care for the Child and Development (CCD) in low-income societies have created an ethical challenge, whereby the child experienced total assimilation of the Western and European cultures besides his/her family values and tradition. An investigation performed by Jolly (2007) on the Senegalese serves as a reference point. In most African communities, in addition to regional language or mother tongue, the child speaks fluently other languages such as English, French, and Portuguese. Similarly the mode of dressing and eating has been codified and re-socialised in line with Western and European norms and cultures, and these have elicited unanswered ethical questions about the suitability of UNICEF interventions to Car for the Child and Development (CCD) (Gilda et al. n.d.). Arising from this pitfall, the United Nations through UNICEF has expended her programmes in the developing countries that make provisions for involving communities' leaders and chiefs towards recognising the child's trait, culture and norms. Also the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2011), in its Code of Ethical Conduct, Statement of Commitment and embraced by the Association for Childhood Education International and Southern Early Childhood Association

utilised by the National Association for Family Child Care put up certain principles in position of the child, families and community towards given the best in the development of the child. On the child's ethical responsibilities, it says that:

> Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children's self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical well-being. (NAEYC 2011)

The above assertion on the place of the child in caregiving can be associated with the initial setbacks accompanying the CCD initiatives in low-income societies that are predominantly living in Africa. These families and communities seem to be stigmatised being regarded as poor and tied to out-dated beliefs and lifestyle (Gilda et al. n.d.). In view of this, NAEYC (2011) has re-echoed and advocated strongly with respect to ethical responsibility towards families that:

> Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.

Corroborating the above observations, NAEYC has added that the immediate community is sacrosanct to the early childhood programmes, which are enshrined with the family and other institutions that show care to the development of the child. It further stated that their duties to the immediate community are anchored on the provisions of an enduring programme that catered for the numerous demands of nuclear families, in cooperation with designated institutions and specialised bodies that look after the needs and well-being of the child and the community as a whole (NAEYC 2011). The body reiterated that:

> As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. (NAEYC 2011)

The above declaration revealed some thoughts in parental literature, which have stood the test of time. The methods of creating emotional and psychological bonds between the child and the caregivers (mother) help in building the child's confidence, stability, refinement, and so on into his/her adulthood. In other words, there are scholarly works that have revealed unique ways of building a bond between the caregiver and child towards securing good environment for communication (Vivian and Danya 2006). This helps in the growth and proper development of the child that are seen as nonverbal devices, which include actions such as facial expression and eye contact demonstration.

This involves warm smiles which influences the entire day of the child leading to good sleep. Second is feeding; here, the caregiver has to observe the child and deduce when the child is hungry and also identify the best ways of the feeding process: holding the child close while breastfeeding gives emotional and psychological attachment; the caregiver has to introduce a memorable process so that the child will be zealous to feed and feel secure with the caregiver. Likewise, the bottle-feeding process should also go through the same mechanism with the breastfeeding whereby holding the child is an important device of ensuring emotional peace and secure mood of the child. Third, gentle handling entails avoiding harsh handling of the child, and if the child is very young in his/her age, a support in the head shows love, care, secure mood and the child feels safe in the hands of that particular caregiver. Fourth, rhythmic movement—it entails swinging, gentle jiggling (not shaking), dancing with the caregiver and rocking, leading to happy health of the child. Fifth, a soft soothing voice implies singing or talking to the child. The child enjoys the whole process; it serves as a source of building a distinctive language and skills, and the sound of the caregiver's voice activates his/her secure attachment mechanism. These observations have been found in Bowlby's attachment theory of the child and parental development. The work of John Bowlby on the child's development has attracted global attention and which has been introduced by health workers and other scientists towards making the child a better person in any community around the world.

Attachment Theory

The term attachment was coined by a paediatrician William Sears in one of his publications in 1993 where he identified certain variables such as preparing for pregnancy, birth and parenthood; feeding with love and respect; responding and reacting with sensitivity; nurturing devices; ensuring safety in bed rest and in environmental and psychological aspects; providing reliable and loving caring process; engaging in event rewarding discipline process; and ensuring balance in personal and the family life as a whole. In bringing up a child to his or her best form requires emotional and physical tie or bond formed with the child's primary caregiver—normally the parents—but it may be the nanny (house help). This has been observed as biological instinct to always be close to

the caregiver for the sake of normal growth and development within the context of safety. However, the works of John Bowlby (1969) and Mary Ainsworth are notable and instructive, which tend to establish three attachment variables such as secure, resistant and disorganised. It has been argued that babies who experience secure attachment enjoy caregiver's company, thereby cry less, are happier, look healthier and cooperate more. Ainsworth et al. (1978) revealed that caregivers who are securely attached to the child tend to be highly sensitive and responsive to the child's desires. She added that when the caregivers serve as an embodiment of security and safety to the child, the atmosphere tends to be beautiful to the child, who readily explores and fearlessly launches into various units in societies. Literature has indicated that if this bond is not secure between the child and the caregiver(s), the mother who usually serves as the caregiver will experience psychological trauma and depression, that is, inadequate parenting skills can result in future dilemma for the child (Vivian and Danya 2006).

Argument on What Attachment Theories Constitute

Scientists first discovered cases of disordered attachment during the 1930s and 1940s when these groups of scholars identified the strange consequences of raising children in certain units. Scientists like Kleinina and John Bowlby who were psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, respectively, started to see from the perspective of the adverse influence on development of few maternal help and sought information on acute distress of children below the age of five years who are separated from their primary caregiver. He further observed that a close mother-infant relationship was essential for socio-emotional adjustment, which is strategically important for the mental development of a child that entails warmness, intimacy and continuous relationship with the mother leading both to maximum satisfaction (Bowlby 1953).

Recent developmental studies have come up with different kinds of challenges to attachment-based theories of child development, as the occurrence of longitudinal findings reveals the need to see the consistency and validity of attachment-based theory, Sroufe, Egeland, and colleagues' (Roisman et al. 2002), sequence to a chart of high-risk and lack of caregivers to children to adolescent, reveals considerable inconsistencies between expectations based on primary child's evaluation of attachment and adolescent appearances. Their discoveries provide information that attachment is feasibly present over some time, experiments, attachment evident or its representations are prone to hard and confuse life styles which weak in predictive power towards futuristic space of a child that needs care (Weinfield et al. 2000).

Sroufe et al. (1999) have advanced that the problem of applying attachment theory to forecasts: Initial encounter is not a function of later pathology in a rectilinear way; however, it contains an important process, which is complex, systemic, and transactional nature of development. And they further added that the involvement of roles like selection, engagement and interpretation of

succeeding knowledge and applying natural things as an aid for advancement. More so, in difficult cases where the child is apprehensive from the beginning of attachment, this doesn't represent a primary infect of psychopathology but is an initiator of conduits probabilistically associated with later pathology.

Other findings reveal no precise evidence of a point that cut across psychological problems in older adopted children and insecure attachment relationships in a child. Singer et al. (1985) established a comparable value of attachment between biological and non-biological (adoptive and non-adoptive parents). They discovered that for average middle-class parents, absence of early contact with a non-biological child does not forecast anxious adoptive mother to child attachment. The investigations further revealed that higher amounts of psychological and learning problems among non-biological adopted child(ren) cannot be identified to insecure attachment styles between adoptive parents and children in infancy.

Another study by Juffer and Rosenboom (1997) unveiled that less than 80% of the adopted infants were securely attached to their caregivers regardless of the history of whether caregivers have given birth or not. These revelations suggest that the adoption experience itself, and all that the pre- and post-adoptive experiences may mean for the child and caregiver, is not a predictor of negative parent-child relationships, outside of other factors such as early expressive or bodily deprivation.

A Brief Overview of the African Culture and Childrearing Before Western and European Incursion

The way of life of group of persons of a particular ancestral lineage has been described as culture. In African states, after the advent of colonial system, numerous cultures strived to live together as a nation state, which has distorted some cultural values, especially those tribes of minority in terms of population. This has resulted owing to the need for national integration and nation-building whose aim is to collapse ethnic nationalities and royalties in support of a national identity (Obah-Akpowoghaha 2018). But generally, there are certain basics in African cultures that are dominant and connect Africans together (O'Neil [2006 cited in Amos 2013]). Children are meant to respect and greet elders at all times; virginity is a pride and must be preserved by the girl child with support from the community, which includes external family; and so on. Consequently, the African continent is rich and endowed with beautiful cultures and traditions that have been systematically put down from one generation to the other. This process takes the form of folk tales, storytelling, symbols, signs and other creations. A folk tale in African traditional system is an effective means of inculcating the virtues in children (Gyekye 1996 cited in Amos 2013). "It is obvious from the explanations given and their examples that these folk-

tales carry with it values and morals which are being handed from one generation to the other. It teaches good morals which helps in parenting the child so (s)he will learn to be a responsible adult" (Amos 2013: 71).

However, the act of childrearing in Africa from infancy to adolescent or adulthood (i.e. marriageable age) is an interesting process characterised with the display of cultural heritage and enormous support from the man's nuclear and extended families, and likewise the woman. "Childrearing is a process by which parents transmit, and the child acquires, prior existing competence required by the culture to assume valued future tasks in the society" (Ogbu 1981 cited in Okafor 2003: 6). When a child is born into a family, he/she receives support and care from both families, and even in communities (Okafor 2003). Varieties of celebrations define the process and beautiful gifts of all sort, food items, clothes and other items that are given to the baby, and as the child grows up, the mother breastfeeds the child over a year. It is a belief that this act of nurturing makes the child morally healthy and strongly bonded with the immediate mother. The mother is not left alone in this care and love; the grandmothers, especially from the women's side, come around and stay in the house for some months to assist and nurture the child. For example, in West African countries, particularly in Nigeria, the child is seen as a very precious gift from God that reveals connections between ancestors of the past and mysteries of life that lies ahead. "The birth of a child is highly celebrated with flavour in all Nigerian cultures, and children are held in high esteem" (Okafor 2003: 6).

When the child is eight years old, most cultures circumcise the child. In some cultures the circumcision of the girl child is done when she reaches puberty and starts experiencing menstrual cycle. During this period, the mother will inform the father and the elders in the community, leading to ritual of some days and celebration whereby she will be taught what constitutes womanhood and the opposite sex. After strict observation of the rituals that involve bathing her in the river or stream and confirming her virginity before the elders, she is open for any man to come for her in marriage according to the cultural rules and regulations (Amos 2013).

The African child from the period of infancy to the adolescent age is trained by the relatives. The act of childrearing is not predominantly the work of the immediate parents, and this virtue is embedded in African cultures (Adinlofu 2009 cited in Amos 2013). This is evident when a child loses his or her parents as a result of natural disaster or epidemic. There are holistic care and love that strengthen the morale and vision of the child in achieving his or her dream in life. Outside the incident of death of child's parents, it is the cultural duty of the extended family to show love and care. The male child is trained in the act of war, bravery, governance, respect for women, and language power, and in some cultures, the priest or deity is also involved in the act of childrearing. The priest gives certain instructions to the parents, especially when there is prophecy concerning the child. In Africa, the male child attracts much interest and attention because of his utility in area of defence and protection of the com-