LANTAN Scope: Journal of Language Studies
A Publication of the Language Teachers Association of Nigeria

ISSN (P): 3092-9296 ISSN (E): 3156-691X
[Vol-1, Issue-1, October 2026]
Website: www.lantanscope-journal.com.ng

CULTURE AND PARENTING EDUCATION IN THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN SOCIETY: A STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS OF AMINATA SOW FALL AND ALAIN MABANCKOU

Bukola Olayinka Kanumuangi[1*], Temidayo Onojobi[2], Emmanuel Oluniyi Ademola[1], Titilayo Elisabeth Popoola[1]

[1] *Institute of Communication and General Studies, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Ogun State, Nigeria*
[2]*Department of Foreign Languages, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State*

Copyright @ 2026 LANTAN Scope: Journal of Language Studies
This is an Open-Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0) which permits unrestricted Non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

ABSTRACT

Africa has diverse cultural values, but maintain similarities in parenting educational training of their children in the Sub-Saharan region. Thus, the uncultured manner among African youth today questions the parenting system in Africa. This study is a qualitative-research analysis which examines the African parenting system and its impacts on the psychosocial development of children. Four francophone African novels were selected while Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Developmental Theory was adopted. Parenting systems in relation to the social interaction and psychological behaviours of various characters were examined: Grègoire, Garmine in *African psycho*; Moïse, Sabine in *Petit Piment* of Alain Mbanckou; Nalla, Ibrahima, the Salum Children in *L'Appelle des Arènes*; and Lolli, Raabi and the married women in *La Grève des bàttu* of Aminata Sow Fall. Communal, entrust and fostering parenting systems were the prominent system used on most of the characters except Nalla and Grégoire who in addition experienced individualistic system and Raabi indulged only individualistic system. Nalla, Grégoire and Raabi manifest negative behaviours. Lolli and the married women were raised by their biological parents under communal system were less traumatised, hence they developed excellent behaviour and good societal relationship, while those raised at the orphanage with communal system, became traumatised and consequently, manifested bad behaviours like stealing, fighting, indecent dressing, killing and prostitution. This study revealed that parenting system, parenting styles and environment have great role in the child's behaviour. It is imperative for African parents, caregivers, orphanage authorities to consider a suitable and sustainable parenting system in raising their children.

Key words: *Culture, Education, Parental system, Development, Behaviour*

==========

*Corresponding author email: kanumuangibo@funaab.edu.ng

RÉSUMÉ

L'Afrique a une diversité Culturelle avec une éducation similaire des enfants dans la région subsaharienne. Les manières incultes des jeunes Africains remettent en question le système parentale en Afrique. Cette étude est une analyse qualitative qui examine le système parental africain et ses impacts sur le développement psychosocial des enfants. Certains romans africains francophones ont été sélectionnés et la théorie du développement psychosocial d'Erik Erikson a été adoptée. Les systèmes parentaux ont été examinés en relation avec les interactions sociales et les comportements psychologiques de divers personnages: Grègoire et Garmine dans African Psycho; Moïse et Sabine dans Petit Piment d'Alain Mbanckou; Nalla, Ibrahima et les enfants Salum dans L'Appelle des Arènes; et Lolli, Raabi et les femmes mariées dans La Grève des bàttu d'Aminata Sow Fall. L'éducation communautaire, la confiage et l'accueil étaient les principaux systèmes utilisés pour la plupart des personnages, à l'exception de Nalla et Grégoire qui ont également connu le système individualiste, et de Raabi qui n'a connu que le système individualiste. Nalla, Grégoire et Raabi manifestent des comportements négatifs. Lolli et les femmes mariées ont été élevées par leurs parents biologiques dans le cadre d'un système communautaire. Elles ont donc été moins traumatisées et ont développé un bon comportement et de bonnes relations sociales, tandis que celles qui ont été élevées à l'orphelinat dans le cadre d'un système communautaire ont été traumatisées avec des comportements négatifs tels que le vol, les bagarres, le meurtre et la prostitution. Cette étude conclut que le système parental, le style parental et l'environnement jouent un rôle important dans le comportement de l'enfant. Par conséquent, les parents, les personnes qui s'occupent des enfants et les autorités des orphelinats doivent envisager un système parentaux adaptés à l'éducation des enfants.

Mots clés: *Culture, Éducation, Système parental, Développement, Comportement*

==========

INTRODUCTION

Parents in African societies, are accorded high respect, and children are taught to revere them. These cultural values and norms are transmitted orally, promoting a balanced psychosocial development in children. Lamboy (2009) (Katonva, 2024) highlights the significance of parental involvement in children's education and behaviour, enabling them to identify potential issues and address them promptly. Parents must learn to become involved in their children's education and behaviour, so that they can identify any anomaly expressed, as noted by Veerlan et al. (2014), (Casey, 2025). The importance of effective parenting cannot be overstated. It requires parents thorough understanding of children's rights, their duties towards their children, and the psychosocial implications of their parenting style, (Lamboy, 2009). This knowledge is crucial for promoting optimal child development and mitigating the risk of trauma. According to Houzel (1998), raising a child free from trauma should be a priority for families and the environment.

Africa has a distinct parenting styles and system that are deeply rooted in its cultural heritage, which starkly contrasts with Western parenting approaches. In sub-Saharan African

societies for example, child-rearing is a communal endeavour. Community members of the same age group as the child's parents assume parental role, disciplining and guiding the child without needing formal introduction. This collective parenting approach is evident in how a local elder can discipline any child in the community, even in the absence of the child's biological parents. From a psychological perspective, the child perceives these community elders as parental figures.

In sub-Saharan Africa, children are significantly influenced by their upbringing before the age of 15. However, fathers often have limited time to interact with their children especially the female ones and this can be perceived as strict authority figures (Kanumuangi, 2019; Peatrik 1997). As a result, the parenting system remains largely based on the extended family structure. In some matriarchal societies especially among the Yoruba in the Southwestern Nigeria, uncles at times may even hold more role significance than biological fathers. Although children are well aware of their biological parents, they tend to regard all adults in the family cycle as parental figures. These social parents play roles similar to that of biological parents, and children are expected to show obedience, submission, and respect not only to their biological parents but also to the entire extended family (Pilon & Vignikin, 2006).

Thus, ideology of parenting in African cultures cannot be solely focused on the child's biological parents. Instead, kinship relations play a vital role in shaping his or her growth within the social fabric. In this context, every adult is expected to contribute to a child's education and upbringing, regardless of their biological relationship (Amusa, 2019). This collective responsibility is deeply ingrained in the African collective memory, making it acceptable for any older adult to discipline a child who misbehaves.

This communal approach to parenting training is evident in West African cultures, such as Pulaar and Wolof. In Pulaar, the phrase '*neddo ko bandum*' (meaning 'all men are related') reflects this sense of shared responsibility in Africa (Céssi et al., 2018). Amusa (2019) echoes Céssi's sentiments, while highlighting the same ideology among the Yoruba people in the Southwestern Nigeria. This can be found in Yoruba proverb that states that: 'Ojú mérin lómú omo waye, Igba ojú ló n tó o' meaning that 'the copulation of two individuals results in child birth, but it takes a community to bring up the child. This perspective is reinforced by Mbasso (1993), who asserts that parenting in Africa is a co-supervisory activity, characterised by collective and social responsibility. Education extends beyond the family unit, involving members of the same village, neighbourhood, or ethnic group. This collective approach to parenting ensures that children are socialised within the community, facilitating their integration and sense of belonging.

In this communal setup, each individual is committed to the community, and learning occurs within the social group. Disciplinary rights are collectively shared within the community, emphasizing the shared responsibility of parenting (Bounnet et al., 2012). A Wolof proverb *Jurut du Yërëm* aptly illustrates this point further that: parents are less strict with their children therefore, they are better educated among strangers (Aminata Sow Fall, 1956). This proverb underscores the significance of communal involvement in child-rearing, where children are considered a communal property and are subject to everyone's training and educational efforts.

Base on this backdrop, children receive a diverse range of influences, which converge due to the social group's cohesion. This collective approach to parenting fosters a sense of

community and social responsibility, ensuring that children are raised with values that promote the greater good. In traditional African societies, children can be educated, corrected, and advised by any member of the community. Education is primarily focused on child correction and discipline, aimed at preparing children to become responsible members of the society, such as warriors, who protected the community (Amadou Diop & Aminata Sow Fall, 1956). Historically, attentions are placed more male child boys as they are considered more important, are expected to play a vital role in the society especially in protecting the community and ensuring the family's survival, which required courage and hard work. Consequently, in many Sub-Saharan African societies, male children were highly valued, as they ensured the continuity and stability of the family's lineage (Olaifa, 2017).

Aminata Sow Fall's novel, *L'Appel des arènes* (1956), provides an insight into how boys received collective education and underwent spiritual initiation to become traditional wrestlers. This collective education was a crucial aspect of their upbringing, as it prepared them for their future roles in the society. In contrast, girls were taught domestic skills, such as cooking, hygiene, and obedience, by their mothers, in preparation for marriage (Pole, 2016). Clearly, parenting in African cultures extends beyond biological parents and relatives, involving the entire community in educating and preparing children for integration into the larger society. This preparation encompasses physical, moral, cultural, and spiritual aspects, ensuring that children develop into capable and responsible members of their communities (Case A. et al., 2004).

In the Sub-Saharan African parenting system, every family, community, and ethnic relationship is taken into consideration, emphasizing the interconnectedness of individuals within their social context. This approach fosters a sense of trust and belonging, as children develop strong bonds with their environment. However, these interactions can also have detrimental psychological effects on some children (Tourrette, 2018). As children navigate their surroundings, they begin to explore their own minds and psyches, seeking to understand the underlying reasons for certain processes and behaviours. This self-discovery process continues throughout their lives, influencing their performance and shaping their identities (Tourrette, 2018).

Furthermore, understanding adult behaviour requires examining the complex entities that shape childhood experiences, as these experiences ultimately explain adult behaviour (Freud, 1856-1939, as cited in Tourette, 2018, p. 27). This ideology underscores the significance of childhood experiences in shaping individual development and highlights the intense psychic construction that occurs during this period. The major purpose of this work is to examine the parenting system practiced in African society and also to determine its impact on the psychosocial development of a child.

METHOD OF STUDY

The study adopted qualitative method using the exploratory approach design, as described by Palinkas et al (2015), to understand the concept, opinions or experiences underlying the collection of meaningful data from the selected novels in order to generate new ideas for the research. The characters in the selected novels were studied and the content analysis of the texts was carried out, including the identification of data on the forms of parental system practices which include communal, individualistic and mobility or entrust system. Specifically, characters such as Grégoire and Germine in *African Psycho*; Moïse, Bonaventure

and the twins in *Petit Piment,* Nalla, Diatou in *L'Appel des Arènes*, Lolli and the other married women in *la Grève de Bàttu* were analysed.

The study highlighted the behaviours and psychological problems presented by these characters, providing insight into the impact of parental system that they were subdue to. Erick Erikson's psycho-social developmental theory was used as a means of analysing the psychological development of the characters (the population targets) that manifest bad behaviours, inability to establish good relationship with others.

COMMUNAL SYSTEM OF PARENTING

The communal system is a well-known form of parenting system in the African society where child-rearing is the responsibility of the community. This system is projected in Alain Mabanckou's and Aminata Sow Fall selected novels. The system examines the dynamics of parental control over children's behaviours and development of emotions towards both biological parents and elders at parenting stage in the community at large. Additionally, this system enables parents to delegate their responsibilities to other caregivers or guardians.

The author, Aminata Sow Fall tries to exhibit the practice in Senegal through the channel of parenting system undergone by Nalla and Diatou in *L'Appel des Arènes*, Lolli and the other married women in *la Grève de Bàttu*.

> Lolli is sincere in saying these words. Her mother had taught her this, and all her aunts, uncles, close and distant relatives had repeated the same litany of recommendations to her on the day of her wedding, then on the night she was to enter the marital home, and finally on every occasion. Obey your husband; look for nothing but his happiness, because your destiny and above all that of your children depend on him.... *La Grève de Bàttu*. (p. 38)
>
> Lolli est sincère en disant ces mots. Sa mère le lui a appris, et tous ses oncles, tantes, parents proches et lointains lui ont répété la même litanie de recommandations le jour de son mariage, puis la nuit de son entrée au domicile conjugal, et enfin à chaque occasion. Obéis à ton mari, ne cherche que son bonheur, car de lui dépendent ta destinée et surtout celle de tes enfants.... Mais la mère de Lolli, la vielle Sanou Cissé célèbre pour sa vertu et sa probité, est venue pour le conseiller. *La grève des bàttu* (pp. 38-46)

This community system was effective at the time because the tradition allowed and encouraged it. So, ideology and culture were on the same track when it came to educating or training children. It could be said that the community system encouraged an authoritarian style of parenting because the tradition demands that a child had to obey all instructions from adults even when it is against their interest. So, a child who receives orders at any time from different adults will develop psychological problems; he will always obey until old age, even when his life is in danger. However, parent who use democratic style in a community system of parenting stand upper chance of having children with little or no defects in development as seen in Mame Fari, André and Kanni system of parenting.

In *L'Appelle des Arènes* by Aminata Sow Fall, there are two systems of parenting. The first is the community system practised by Mame Fari, Kanni (Birama's mother) and her neighbours. They allow the children to feel at ease with each other at leisure *L'Appel des Arènes*

P.58. André's family (nuclear and extended) also observe the communal system. They live in a large house where they train many other children from the community together.

> He went to see André in a vast house made up of thatched huts. The house was always full. All sorts of visitors flocked there all day long. They came to chat about grilled meats in the shade of the giant cheese tree that stood in the middle of the courtyard, or to play a game of cards, or to watch the very young children who were already learning the art of wrestling. *Appel des arènes* (p.31)

> Il se rend chez André dans une vaste maison composée de cabanes au toit de chaume. La maison ne désemplit pas. Toutes sortes de visiteurs s'y pressent à longueur de journée. Ils venaient discuter de grillades à l'ombre du fromager géant qui trônait au milieu de la cour, ou faire une partie de cartes, ou encore observer les très jeunes enfants qui s'initiaient déjà à l'art de la lutte. *Appel des arènes* (p.31)

This community system allows adults to exercise their parental obligations to other children. This gives André the opportunity to teach Nalla many values, traditions, culture, morals and the importance of education, even without knowing his parents. It was observed that André exercise a democratic style of parenting.

> And every Morning at the same time Nalla waited impatiently for André; and André arrived...and the conversation began again carrying Nalla over there, in the saalum among the peaceful farmers who in the evening in the moonlight, feast on couscous and fresh milk...all the parents wanted to send their children to school...knowledge is one thing...it's fashionable...it's useful to study. When you will be a great man with a lot of diplomas don't forget me. *Appel des arènes* P.28

> Et tous les matins André à la même heure Nalla attendait impatiemment André ; et André arrivait...et la conversation reprenait portant Nalla là-bas, dans le saalum parmi les paisibles paysans qui le soir au clair de lune, se régalent de couscous et de lait frais...tous les parents voulaient envoyer leurs enfants à l'école...le savoir c'est une chose...c'est à la mode...c'est utile de faire des études. Quand tu seras un grand homme avec beaucoup de diplômes, ne m'oublie pas. *Appel des arènes* (p.28)

Nalla, the main character in the novel *L'Appel des Arènes*, is brought up with a communal system and democratic parenting style by his grandmother in the village. He plays with his friends and engages in tasks together with other children and as soon as his biological mother (Diattou) who returns from Europe picks him up, he experiences a system of individualism that his biological mother acculturates from Europe and this new system traumatised Nalla. This is captured in the following passage:

> He was entrusted to grandmother. At Mame Fari's house, he could run around barefoot and bare-chested, playing hide-and-seek with the village children in the bushes greened by the rains...the older boys go to gather dead wood for Mame Fari's fire...I could enjoy a morning meal of couscous from the previous

> day washed down with fresh milk...no question of having those heavy foods for breakfast which, according to her, were bad for your health. After a tale, the grandmother would say to him: sleep my little one, and wake up tomorrow in peace *l'Appele des Arènes* (pp. 54-55)
>
> Il avait confié à grandmère. Chez mame Fari, il pouvait gambader pieds et torse nus, jouer à cache-cache avec les enfants du village, dans les buissons reverdis par les pluies…les garcon plus âgé qui allaient ramasser du bois mort pour le feu de Mame Fari…je pouvais me régaler matin du couscous de la veille arrosé bon lait frais…pas question de prendre au petit déjeuner ces mes lourds qui, selon elle, détraquent la santé. Après un conte, la grandemère lui disait : dors mon petit, et réveille-toi demain en paix *l'Appele dea Arènes*. (pp. 54-55)

The friendship of André and Nalla is another example of community parenting. Andre taught Nalla a lot about the African tradition and culture - an aspect of life that Nalla misses so much since his parents regain custody of him from his grandmother. Exposure to nature, local drinks and lessons of life are some of the things Nalla learns from André as depicted in the extract below:

> What's it like there, in the Saalum? It's a great place to live. Fields stretch as far as the eye can see. There are evergreen trees. Trees of all kinds...Nalla listened, opening his eyes full of admiration...do you know the ditax tree? It's that tree which, when the breeze blows, is full of brown fruit in the shape of balls... No, Nalla, don't go away, you mustn't flinch. Conkom is as pleasant and sweet as coconut water. Conkom is even better than coconut water… A boy shouldn't be afraid of anything, I've already told you. Fear dishonours...do you understand that, *Nalla? l'Appèle des Arènes* (pp. 24-26)
>
> Comment c'est là bas, dans le Saalum? Là bas il y fait bon vivre. Des champs s'etendent a perte de vue. Il y a des arbres toujours verts. Des arbres de toute sortes…Nalla ecoutait en ouvrant des yeux pleins d'admiration…connais-tu le ditax? C'est cet arbre qui, au moment des brises, regorge de fruits marron en forme de boules…Non Nalla, ne tress aille pas, tu ne dois pas tressaillir. Le conkom est Agréable et douce comme l'eau de coco. Le conkom est même meilleur que l'eau de coco. Un garcon ne doit avoir peur de rien, je te l'ai déjà dit. La peur déshonore…tu comprends cela, Nalla? *l'Appele des Arènes* (pp. 24-26).

Nalla is able to establish relationship with others due to the love and affection he receives from his grandparent and his parents as infant before they travel to Europe. He makes friends easily and is able to maintain good relationship. The author reveals how his grandmother shows him love and how the boy misses the pleasant moments in the village that he describes as paradise. All the affections that Nalla received at tenser age contributes to his ability to trust others and established good relationship with others.

> Nalla missed Meme Fari and the beautiful stories whispered at night beside the oil lamp as he was snuggled up close to her. He especially missed his childhood and undertook a moving quest to return to the lost paradise. *l'Appele dea Arènes* (p. 55).
>
> Nalla regrette Meme Fari et les belles histoires chuchotées le soir près de la lampe à huile, alors qu'il est blotti contre elle. Son enfance lui manque particulièrement et il entreprend une quête émouvante pour retrouver le paradis perdu. *L'Appel des Arènes* (p. 55).

ENTRUST, FOSTERING/PSEUDO FOSTERING, AND MOBILITY SYSTEM OF PARENTING

This system of parenting is known to put a child under several caregivers who are mostly non-family member without any legal documentation but with or without mutual agreement. It can be seen as African adopting method. The author of *Petit Piment* and *African Psycho* effectively shows the current system of entrustment in the Congolese's society. In both Alain Mabanckou's works, children in the likes of Grègoire, Moïse, Germine, Sabine and Angoualima are often placed in institutional care settings, such as orphanages, foster homes, and convents, which means that their upbringing and care are entrusted to non-biological caregivers, rather than their biological parents alone.

Moïse experiences the entrust system when his mother abandoned him at the orphanage's gate. He was being care for by unqualified personnels, maltreated by the director of the orphanage. In the novel, the children experience a new administrative regime where they are always under the dictatorial instructions of their head. All decisions are made without regard for the children's opinions or emotions (authoritative parenting), and they have no opportunity to choose or complain about anything that happens to them at home.

> When I reply to Sabine Niangi, I can't erase the image of the woman who was there first when I was trouble... between the ages of seven and ten, when the headmaster was whipping me with his vine and I was struggling like the devil, I saw a woman a few steps away who was following the scene, her face very dark, and her dejected expression showed that she didn't appreciate the methods of Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako who, despite the blessed name that Papa Moupelo had given me, continued to believe that I was the son of the devil, that I used my intelligence skillfully to organise most of the dirty tricks that occurred in the boys' dormitory or in the canteen when the boarders threw pieces of manioc at the girls *Petit Piment*. (p. 89)
>
> Quand je reponse à Sabine Niangi je ne peux effacer l'image de la femme qui avait été là en premanance lorsque j'étais difficulté…entre sept et dix ans, lorsque le directeur me fouettait avec sa liane et que je me débattais comme un diable, j'apercevais à quelques pas de lui une femme qui suivait la scene, le visage très sombre, et sa mine dépitée montrait qu'elle n'appréciait pas les méthodes de Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako qui, malgré le nom béni que papa Moupelo m'avait donné, continuait à croire

> que j'étais le fils du demon, que j'utilisais habiliment mon intelligence pour organiser la plupart des coups fourrés qui survenaient dans le dortoir des garçons ou à la cantine quand les pensionnaires balançaient des morceaux de manioc sur les filles *Petit Piment*. (p. 89)

The expression above shows that children in orphanage especially the government orphanage are not well care for. Moreover, the nepotism that seems to be at play, with appointments based on family ties rather than merit, further exacerbates the issue. Dieudonné, for example was proud of their patronymic inherited from the director's paternal line, they look down on everyone even though they obtain their positions by the sole grace of their uncle and have no experience in the education of children whom they consider to be foolish. *Petit Piment*. (p.15).

The sentiment of nepotism that the government indulges in while employing brought about the unqualified personnel at the orphanage and this contributes to parenting failure. Hence, Moïse escapes from the orphanage putting himself under the care of some older street children. In order to survive, he starts stealing and fighting to keep his position in the community of market criminals who were once orphanage children. The author shows this in Moïse's words when he flees with the twins from the orphanage to Point-Noire, where the Grand Marché becomes their new home:

> If the twins managed to take control of the Grand Marché at the expense of the other gangs, it's because most of the characters we found there were their former comrades at the Point-Noire orphanage.... *Petit Piment*. (p.126).

> Si les jumeaux parvinrent à prendre le contrôle du Grand Marché au détriment des autres bandes c'est parce que la plupart des personnages que nous avions trouvés l'étaient leurs anciens camarades à l'orphelinat de Point-Noire…. "*Petit Piment*. (p:126).

Alain Mabanckou tries to expose a very important aspect of the orphanage children. He reveals what the children endure and the consequences of their experience on their behaviour.

> After a year and a half of doing all sorts of jobs - stealing mopeds and car tyres, robbing Blancas in the town centre, ambushing lovers on the Martys bridge to steal their wallets - I felt more and more like their deputy. I was proud of the name Petit Piment, because it meant they recognised I wasn't a coward *Petit Piment*. (p.133)

> Après une année et demie à vivre sous la protection des jumeaux et à executer toutes sortes de besognes- voler des mobylettes ou des pneus de voitures, détrousser les Blancs du centre-ville, tendre des embuscades aux amoureux vers le pont des Martyrs pour leur piquer leur portefeuille, je me sentais de plus en plus comme leur adjoint. J'étais fier de mon surnom de Petit Piment, car cela voulait dire qu'ils reconnissancaient que je n'étais pas un poltron. *Petit Piment*. (p. 133)

First of all, the children at the orphanage are placed under unqualified authority at the end of the period of colonisation: 'At first, he has to work as a gardener and storekeeper, and then he is appointed janitor of the premises' (*Petit Piment* p. 111). This explains how the caregivers

who play the role of parents are unable to care for the children appropriately especially at the adolescence period which is stage five of human development that the children needed to be guided into adulthood.

Later, due to the motherly care and affection shown to Moïse by Maman Fiat de 500, he decides to abandon the life of crime and put himself under the care and guidance of Maman Fiat de 500. He lives with her for some years, acquired managerial skill at the seaport and became responsible and productive before the political crises separated them which eventually leads to his mental disorder.

> After our mutual confession, Maman Fiat 500 served me a dish of cassava leaves with mashed bananas, a speciality of her native Zaire. That was the day I slept for the first time in the living room of her flat... (p.159). I was sixteen when I started living with Maman Fiat 500 (p. 165)… I didn't see Maman Fiat 500 and her daughters anywhere. I took the bus back to my hut, which I now saw as the only link I had left with this little family, who were probably on their way to Zaire. I was going round in circles in this little parcel of land. I didn't know what to do... and it was probably from that moment on that I started to feel gaping holes in my head. Petit Piment (pp.159-177).
>
> Après notre confession mutuelle, Maman Fiat 500 m'a servi un plat de feuilles de manioc avec de la purée de bananes, une spécialité de son Zaïre natal. C'est ce jour-là que j'ai dormi pour la première fois dans le salon de son appartement... p159. J'avais seize ans quand j'ai commencé à vivre avec Maman Fiat 500 p. 165... Je n'ai vu Maman Fiat 500 et ses filles nulle part. J'ai repris le bus jusqu'à ma case, que je voyais maintenant comme le seul lien qu'il me restait avec cette petite famille, sans doute en partance pour le Zaïre. Je tournais en rond dans cette petite parcelle de terre. Je ne savais pas quoi faire... et c'est probablement à partir de ce moment que j'ai commencé à sentir des trous béants dans ma tête. Petit Piment (pp.159-177).

In agreement with Erik Erikson ideology of ability to rebuild failed developmental stage, it can be established that the above character was able to rebuild his life positively and became productive, meaning that, his failure at the early stage of development due to lack of motherly affection and guidance which result to bad behaviour like stealing, fighting, illiteracy, was corrected when he was shown affection, care and guidance.

Garmine is another character that experienced entrust and mobility parenting. The owner of the hotel where Garmine rents a studio with three other girls, like a hostess, also typifies an authoritarian style. The girls had to give the hotel manager a percentage of the money they earned from prostitution every day, because refusal to do so would have resulted in verbal and physical abuse on them. The situation is clearly shown when Garmine's money was stolen by the other girls because of jealousy. This revealed the exploitation that the girls are subjected to. Her discussion with Grégoire exposes this authoritarian and exploitative style and the pain in the girl's heart in the text quoted from the novel.

> After a moment's silence, she glanced over at the counter where the manageress was busy scolding her again, muttering some nasty words. I'm in mess as you can see me. - In any case, you can see it!... - And the manageress, I saw that she

> was showing you a chair and that you...it's ok, that's something else. We have things together, and she always rolls me over... *African psycho* (p. 176-177)
>
> Après un moment de silence, elle a j'été un coup d'œil vers le Comptoir où la patronne s'activait à recompter sa caisse en maugréant des paroles méchates. Je suis dans la merde la où tu me vois. En tout car, ça se voit! Et la patronne, j'ai vu qu'elle te montrait un cahier et que tu… ça c'est autre chose. On a des trucs ensemble, et elle me roule toujours… *African psycho* (p.176-177)

She later entrusted herself (pseudo foster) to Grègoire again because of the little concern or affection she got from him. She moved in with him as a mistress to sexually please him without any financial charges attached. One can trace this attitude of hers to the way she was brought up. In the novel, Garmine's parents' negligence and irresponsibility drove her to prostitution in a neighbouring country. Their lack of supervision and support failed to provide her with positive life skills or guidance. As a result, Garmine engaged in prostitution - a profession marked by risk and violence, which took a toll on her emotional well-being. Eventually, her prostitution work led to her untimely death.

The pain and hardship Garmine experienced are evident in her narrative, highlighting the devastating consequences of parental neglect. This portrayal underscores the importance of supportive parenting in shaping a child's future and well-being.

> I'm here because I haven't had the chance to do anything other than what I do. I have no parents to rely on, so it doesn't matter how much I earn. I earn it this way says Garmine African Psycho (p.177)
>
> Je suis ici parce que je n'ai pas eu la chance de faire autre chose que ce que je fais. Je n'ai pas de parents sur qui compter, alors le peu que je gagne, je gagne comme ça… *African Psycho* (p. 177)

Also, Sabine Niangui's parents' negligent style of parenting towards their daughter when she got impregnated as a result of rape by the postman at the age of 17, contributed to her downfall in life. She decided to live with her friend (pseudo foster) and struggled to finished her secondary education. With the secondary school certificate, she secured a job at the Louago orphanage where she worked diligently, contributing and making a positive impact on the lives of the orphans. If she had been supported by her parents after she lost her pregnancy, she would have gotten a university degree. This establishes the fact that parents have a crucial role to play in shaping the future of their children and the society.

INDIVIDUALISM SYSTEM OF PARENTING

It can be said that, right from the independence of African countries, parents (the father and the mother) became solely responsible for the formation of the child's etiquette, commercial and formal education, so that he turns out responsible and productive in the society. Regardless of the parenting style, parents are to be responsible in their parental obligation. Grègoire was adopted into a European family at stage five of psychosocial developmental stages. This is the adolescence period which is between the age of 12 and 20 years. He lived

under an individual system of parenting which is not the ideology of African tradition. It was noted that the couple was often not available to monitor and guide him and so his adoptive brother often abused him verbally, physically and sexually. Consequently, he fled the house to the streets where he found refuge with some older street children. Alain Mabanckou's novels shows that individualism system of parenting is not an African way of life.

Raabi is another character in *La Grève de Bàttu* whose upbringing is based on individualism Her upbring is restricted to her parents alone; there is no interference from the other members of the family. However, the different parenting styles adopted by the two parents pose a major problem for Raabi. Mour adopts an authoritarian style (which values obedience to rules without children's interest) towards his children and his first wife Lolli, while Lolli employs a democratic style and manifests a warm, empathetic and supportive character. These are revealed in the way they exercise their parental roles on their children.

CONCLUSION

It is established fact that Alain Mabanckou was able to portray the communal system and entrustment system the orphanage and adopting system of the Congolese culture, which show case the negligent parenting styles of the people. The cultural system leaves parental obligation to the government. Meanwhile, Aminata Sow Fall was able to portray the communal parenting system as a mutual voluntary effort of the extended families and community members, who are saddled with the training of a child, before integrating into the society.

Children who experience entrust or mobility parenting system are mostly at risk due to exposure to violence at their foster homes and several parenting styles especially the authoritative and negligent parenting style. Also, most of the children in orphanages lack parental guidance and support at the personality formation stage five of human development (age 12 to 20) as documented in the characters; Gregoire, Moïse, Garmine and Angoualima. Consequently, the children raised at the orphanage were not able to be positively productive in the society as majority of them became criminals.

It was also confirmed that individualism system of parenting is foreign to the African culture. Characters like Gregoire and Nalla were not able to conceive it psychologically. Those raised by their biological parents and the community suffered little psychological trauma of loneliness, due to the introduction of individualism system on a child who was previously raised through community parenting. However, with the return of the communal parenting on the child, they develop good behaviour, and become responsible and productive in life.

In conclusion, one can say that communal system and democratic parenting style are better parenting systems on children in Africa than individualism, entrust, fostering system and authoritarian parenting styles in Africa. This study recommends communal and democratic parenting in Africa societies in order to raise less traumatised children and also preserve the African culture and traditions. In addition, African governments should make policies that will make the masses to produce the number of children that they will be capable of giving the best training.

REFERENCES

Amusa, K. B. (2019). *Proverbs, myth and parenting in precolonial Yoruba land*. IntechOpen. https://doi.org/10.5772/56967

Casey, A. E. (2025). *The role of parental involvement in students' academic achievement*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. https://www.aecf.org

Case, A., Paxson, C., & Ableidinger, J. (2004). Orphans in Africa: Parental death, poverty, and school enrolment. *Demography, 41*, 483–508. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2004.0019

Cissé, R., Fall, S., Adjamagbo, A., & Attané, A. (2017). *La parentalité en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre*. Institut de recherche pour le développement. https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/divers18-01/010071748.pdf

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. (n.d.). Psychology Notes HQ. https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/erikerikson

Fall, A. (1982). *L'appel des arènes*. Les Nouvelles Éditions du Sénégal.

Fall, A. (1979). *La grève de Bàttu*. Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines.

Katonva, K. (2024). Parental involvement and education outcome of their children. *Applied Economics, 56*(48), 5683–5698. https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2024.2314569

Lamboy, B. (2009). Soutenir la parentalité: Pourquoi et comment? *Devenir, 21*(1), 31–60. https://doi.org/10.3917/dev.091.0031

Mabanckou, A. (2003). *African psycho.* Le Serpent à Plumes.

Mabanckou, A. (2015). *Petit Piment*. Éditions du Seuil.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Peatrik, A.-M. (1997). Ménage et famille en Afrique: Approches des dynamiques contemporaines. Du ménage à l'unité domestique: Un décalage fécond entre la démographie et l'ethnographie. *Les dossiers du CEPED*, (15), 32–38. https://core.ac.uk/download/39851222.pdf

Pilon, M., & Vignikin, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Ménages et familles en Afrique subsaharienne*. Éditions des archives contemporaines.

Tourette, C., & Guidetti, M. (2018). *Introduction à la psychologie du développement du bébé à l'adolescent* (4e éd. revue et augmentée). Dunod. https://www.dunod.com/sites/default/files/atoms/files/9782100777006/Feuilletage.pdf