University of the Western Cape

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Ph.D. in Ethics

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UNIVERSITY of the
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Thesis title:

How global is the global ethic? Delft and Chionekano as test cases

November 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Ernst Conradie for recognising my potential and nurturing my research skills over the years. I also sincerely thank the Department of Religion Theology at the University of the Western Cape for their invaluable support throughout my studies.

This work would not have been possible without the financial support of the Doctoral completion scholarship, Andrew Mellon "Turning the Tide."

Many thanks go to the community leaders in Delft and Chionekano ward for sacrificing their time to participate in this study.

I wish to thank my twin brothers, Dr. Stenford Matenda, Reverend Stanley Matenda, and my lovely sister, Dr. Sophia Matenda, for their unwavering support throughout this academic journey.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my wife, Grace Chikonyora, and our children, Tsungai and Tafara, for their support and motivation during difficult times.

Finally, Glory be to the Almighty God and my Ancestors.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the youth in townships/*ekasi/Ghetto* and rural areas. I know it's not easy out there but never give up on your dreams.

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DECLARATION

I, Job Matenda, declare that this Ph.D. thesis is my work and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university. All sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by a complete list of references.

Full name: Job Matenda Date: 18 November 2024

Signature:

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ABSTRACT

This study examines two prominent documents on a global ethic namely, The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993) and the Earth Charter (2000). The study investigates the question whether the moral principles articulated in these documents are compatible with the moral directives of community leaders in Delft, an urban township in Cape Town, and Chionekano ward a rural area in Zvishavane district, Zimbabwe. The investigation helps to ascertain whether a global ethic can adequately address the complexities of these local contexts and contribute to justice, peace, conflict resolution, and ecological sustainability.

The study adopts a qualitative research method involving a comprehensive review of literature on the global ethic, with a focus on the two documents and an empirical survey. Information was gathered through semi structured interviews with 10 community leaders in Delft and another 10 in Chionekano ward, selected through snowball sampling. The study uses the concept of "moral directives," to understand the language community leaders use to determine what is right or wrong. Given the diversity of ethical theories and frameworks, a mapping of moral concepts used as a theoretical framework consists of eight ethical categories. These are moral visions, virtues, duties/obligations, values, rights, responsibilities, worldviews and other categories such as rules, norms and principles. Moral directives from community leaders were analysed in form and content based on the mapping of moral concepts using thematic analysis. A mutual critical comparison method was used to capture similarities and differences between ethical principles outlined in the global ethic documents and moral directives of community leaders in the two case studies to addresses the core research question.

This study reveals a dynamic interplay between the moral frameworks upheld by community leaders in Delft and Chionekano and the principles embedded within the global ethic. The findings indicated that the moral directives offered by community leaders in Delft and Chionekano aligned with many principles of the global ethic but differed in key ethical categories. While there is considerable compatibility, certain ethical categories diverge, reflecting unique local realities. The research underscores the importance of global ethical frameworks in addressing the pressing global challenges that strongly affects, and shape local contexts. Key tensions arise, particularly in areas where African communal values and role-based responsibilities intersect with global discussions on gender partnerships and individual rights. Addressing these tensions calls for open, ongoing dialogue that acknowledges both local traditions and emerging global ethical visions. Such dialogue holds the potential to challenge and transform oppressive practices rooted in the proposal

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for a global ethic and in African tradition, thus fostering innovative ethical approaches that resonate with local and global concerns. The global ethic, as articulated in the Declaration Towards a Global Ethic (1993) and the Earth Charter (2000), offers a valuable foundation for these conversations. However, I argued that the process is far from complete and there must be continuous dialogue. Further research is vital to reconcile ethical principles that remain deeply contextual and cannot easily be applied beyond their specific contexts. This pioneering research advances academic discourse on the relevance of the global ethic, particularly within the African context. It enriches the University of the Western Cape's approach to teaching, research of social ethics, and community engagement, offering a fresh perspective on applying ethical theories to local communities.

Keywords: Visions, Virtues, Values, Rights, Responsibilities, Worldviews, Globalisation, Global Ethic, Delft, Chionekano Ward.

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ABBREVIATIONS

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
IAC	Inter-Action Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
AGAPE	Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study is situated in the field of social ethics as influenced by philosophy and religious traditions alike. The focus is on the two major documents that purportedly describe a global ethic namely, The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993) and the Earth Charter (2000). The study investigated the question whether or not the moral directives outlined in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic produced for the Parliament of World Religions and the Earth Charter are compatible with the moral directives offered by community leaders in the township of Delft in Cape Town and Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district in Zimbabwe. Thus, the aim of the study was to test the significance of the global for the local. How global is the global ethic? What ethical theories and categories can best be employed in this regard?

The first step in the study was to critically analyse relevant literature on a global ethic with particular reference to the two documents mentioned above. In the process, the notion of "moral directives" was clarified given the variety of moral concepts and theories. The second step was to conduct empirical research with community leaders in Leiden, Delft and the Chionekano Ward. The perceptions of these community leaders and their guiding moral principles were gathered using semi-structured interviews and a snowball sampling approach. Their perspectives provided a rich basis for articulating, describing, and analysing local moral directives in the theoretical framework, which mapped moral concepts across eight key ethical categories, namely moral visions, virtues, duties and obligations, values and goals, rights, responsibilities, worldviews, and the role of principles, rules, and norms. This approach enabled a critical comparison between the global ethic proposed in the two documents and the moral directives upheld by these local leaders.

1.2 Context and significance of the study

1.2.1 Ethics at UWC

The study emerged from the context of a foundation course in ethics offered by the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape. The module (ETH 111) is entitled

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Introduction to Ethical Theory and Practice and is offered to students from various faculties.[1] It focuses on case studies in moral decision-making and offers an introduction to ethical theory. The theoretical part explores the significance of the following three ethical questions, namely, "What vision for society can we share with one another?"; "What kind of person, people of virtue and moral character, do we require in order to build a good society?" and "What values and obligations should guide responsible decision making?" As a tutor, I became intrigued by the relevance of this course to students. I realised that such theories might help local communities in grappling with concerns for human well-being and for a sustainable environment, for example the Zvishavane district where I grew up and the township of Delft, where I currently live.

Ethical theory often acknowledges the need for a vision for a good society. In the textbook used for this module, the global ethic (epitomised by the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter) is offered as one example of an expression of such a vision for a good society (alongside the Freedom Charter (1955), the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution and the Children Charter, South Africa (1992), and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (Conradie *et al.* 2006 29-34). According to Conradie *et al.* (2006:11), the need for a vision of a good society typically emerges from an awareness of an unacceptable present. Therefore, such a vision for a good society is the opposite of negative perceptions of the future (the future as a nightmare). The emergence of a global ethic has to be understood in the same light in response to global issues that humanity faced in the last decade of the twentieth century.

1.2.2 The notion of a global ethic

The notion of global ethic has been expressed not only in visionary global ethic declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) but also in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993) by the Parliament of the World's Religions and the Earth Charter (2000). The notion of a global ethic is associated especially with the last two of these documents in this study. It responds primarily to three global concerns, namely economic inequality and injustice, as well as various manifestations of violence and environmental concerns. This has to be understood against the background of the so-called Conciliar Process led by the World Council of Churches towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC) since its Vancouver Assembly (1983), culminating in the World Convocation on JPIC in Seoul (1990). These processes must be

[1] Teaching of ethics modules focuses on the moral and religious foundations of society and specifically on the task of moral education and formation towards a human rights culture in the South African context, See https://www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/ART/RandT/Pages/default.aspx.

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understood against political and economic debates on globalisation since the 1980s, especially given the end of the Cold War, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989).

A detailed discussion of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic issued by the Parliament of World Religions (1993) will be provided in Chapter 3. In this introductory chapter, it is helpful to indicate that it was against the background of a world shaped more than ever by disastrous economic, ecological, political and technological problems. It was Catholic theologian Hans Küng (University of Tübingen) who proposed a world ethic if humankind is to survive on this earth (Küng & Kuschel, 1993:7, Küng (1990). Subsequently, in 1997, the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities was developed by the InterAction Council, consisting of elder statesmen, politicians and other leading public figures. This largely recast the Parliament of the World Religions declaration while emphasising the role of global responsibilities in the title.

The Earth Charter (2000) articulates sixteen principles for building a just, sustainable, peaceful global society. These are grouped into four sections: ecological integrity, social and economic justice, democracy, and non-violence and peace. The Earth Charter is concerned with building a culture of respect and reverence for all communities of life through the instrument of a global ethic (Newman 2011:16). A much more detailed review of the Earth Charter's historical background information, its principles and its reception is provided in Chapter 4 of the thesis).

1.2.3 The reception of these documents

Several researchers have reported that the spirit of the global ethics campaign has been successful if measured in such conventional ways as contributing to formulations of global policy by religious and political leaders (Falk 1999; Porter 2001; Hedges 2008). At the same time, scholars acknowledge that the explorations by the Parliament of the World Religions have been one of the most difficult terrains of interreligious dialogue (Sholihan 2017; Hollon 1995). There are concerns about how the project works in practice, raising fundamental questions regarding its rationale.

Hedges (2008:154) raises three objections regarding the global ethic project. Firstly, he argues that the whole Declaration was too Western in orientation. Secondly, the Declaration reveals a generic tension between vagueness and specificity. Thirdly, Hedges regards how faiths are treated as monolithic, especially based on Christianity, as highly problematic. As a result, the global ethic is criticised for continuing a Western colonialist and imperialist agenda of domination. Likewise, Conradie *et al.* (2006:30) argue that the dominant role of Hans Küng begs whether it does not remain his global ethic.

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Nevertheless, the Earth Charter has been considered an important step in finding common ground towards an ecological worldview. International agencies such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) endorse the Earth Charter. It is also supported by thousands of individuals, groups and by several countries. The 2024 Earth Charter conference entitled *Reimagining Education for Ecological Civilisation* was held in person in Florida, United States of America. This indicated an ongoing dialogue and action on the adoption and promotion of the values and objectives of the Charter.

1.2.4 Employing appropriate ethical concepts

The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic employs the terms rights and responsibilities as ethical categories, while the Earth Charter identifies sixteen principles for a sustainable way of life. It is important to understand the significance of such ethical concepts, especially given the need in the study to relate them to moral directives offered by community leaders. This is a matter of conceptual clarity and understanding how the terms employed respond to the challenges associated with human survival and flourishing in an era of globalisation.

After the end of Hitler's dictatorship in Europe and the Japanese military dictatorship in East and South-East Asia, the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was naturally accepted as a foundation for the post-World War II situation (Küng & Schmidt 1993:75). Such a notion of rights could be considered a logical implication of Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics and its emphasis on human dignity. His categorical imperative (which comes in different modes) holds that humans should never be treated merely as a means to an end but as ends in themselves. The notion of human rights emphasises the need to recognise and defend the rights of others but also to allow people to claim their rights against any violation of such rights. Kant's position resisted any emphasis on the consequences of decisions or actions as a basis for moral judgment. Instead, he focused on the purely inner motivation of an agent.

This position was criticised as ethics of conscience by Max Weber, one of the early exponents of an ethics of responsibility (Küng 1990:30; Conradie *et al.* 2006:67). In the period after World War II, this emphasis on an ethics of responsibility had an obvious appeal given the atrocities associated with the war and the enormous new challenges that emerged over the cold war, nuclear proliferation, decolonisation, development and ecological sustainability. There was a recognition that human knowledge and power have been growing immeasurably with extremely dangerous long-term consequences for future generations. The principle of responsibility was perhaps best

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articulated by the German-American philosopher Hans Jonas at the end of the 1970s (Küng 1990:30). This emphasis influenced the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic. Another criticism against an emphasis on human rights came from the Asian context. The argument is that the concept fails or neglects to recognise the need for virtues, obligations, and responsibilities on the part of the individual towards the family, the community, society or the state (Küng & Schmidt 1993:77).

Put differently, an emphasis on rights can easily lead to a culture of entitlement, not least in the African context, where civil responsibility (contributive justice) is underplayed as a result. An ethics of responsibility is, therefore, at odds with the purely inner motivation of an agent who does not bother about the consequences of a decision or an action but with an emphasis on self-determination, self-discovery, self-realisation, and self-fulfilment. On this basis, Küng & Schmidt (1993:75) argue that if everyone pursues her/his rights exclusively and does not accept any obligations and responsibilities, the global situation can deteriorate into hostilities, conflicts and chaos. Without a sense of responsibility on the part of individuals, freedom can deteriorate into the domination of the strong. An ethics of responsibility thus always asks realistically about the foreseeable consequences of our actions and takes responsibility for them (Küng 1990:32).

By contrast, the Earth Charter identifies sixteen principles for a sustainable way of life. The preamble also employs the categories of responsibility, virtues such as solidarity, reverence, gratitude and humility, the need for a shared vision and fundamental values. At the heart of the Earth Charter is an expanded sense of community and moral responsibility that embraces all people, future generations, and the larger community of life on Earth. The Preamble of the Earth Charter states the principle of universal responsibility:

> Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature (Earth Charter 2000).

It affirms sixteen interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organisations, businesses, governments, and trans nations is to be guided and accessed (Casey & Morgante 1997:27). There is no need here to elaborate on the sixteen principles as these will be discussed in more detail in the study. Suffice it to say that not much theoretical clarification is offered on principles. This was simply the ethical term regarded as most widely acceptable across differences of culture, religion and worldview (Dower 2004:15).

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1.2.5 Mapping of moral concepts

The category of moral directive was used in the study to relate the global ethic to the two communities in Southern Africa where the study was situated. This suggested at least some common ground. However, it is important to gain some clarity regarding the ethical concepts that were employed here. In the introductory course on ethical theory offered at UWC, a distinction is made between four ethical concepts, namely the need for a vision of a good society, moral virtues, social values, and duties (equated here with obligations). The last three of these represent diverging ethical traditions in Western philosophy, namely teleological (Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas), practical (Bentham & Mills) and deontological (Kant) approaches to ethical theory.

This distinction is based on a mapping of moral concepts first offered in a book by Larry Rasmussen & Bruce Birch entitled *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* (revised edition 1988). The same map of moral concepts is further developed in Larry Rasmussen's book *Earth Honoring Faith* in a chapter titled *The Ethic We Need: Good Theory* (2013:127-159). The latest version is found in *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation* (2018), co-authored by Bruce Birch, Jacqueline Lapsley, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda & Larry Rasmussen. The latest version of this mapping of moral concepts was used in the study. The distinction between a range of moral categories (which formed the study's theoretical framework) was important as it recognised the legitimacy of conflicting ethical categories. The mapping of moral concepts covers eight categories listed here but is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

These are moral visions, virtues, duties/obligations, moral values and goals, rights, responsibilities, worldviews and the significance of principles, norms and roles as broad moral concepts. The notion of moral directives was used as an umbrella term for the kind of moral guidance that community leaders offered to people in the community. The role of wisdom sayings proverbs, but also for prohibitions/taboos, commands and commandments, was considered. These would touch on responsibilities, visions, duties, rules, values, goals, rights, and principles as the concepts that are used in everyday language. More detailed information on the theoretical framework is documented in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

1.3 Demarcation and methodological clarifications

As mentioned above, the proposed global ethic is compared in the study with what may be called a local ethic. This is articulated and described based on an empirical study of the following two communities in southern Africa, one urban and one rural:

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1.3.1 Delft township

Delft is a township on the outskirts of Cape Town in South Africa. It is divided into six main sub-divisions, namely, Delft South (also known as Suburban), Voorbrug, Delft Leiden, Eindhoven, Roosendal, the Hague and the new Symphony Way Temporary Relocation Area) that functionally forms part of Delft. An observation derived from one member of this new neighbourhood in the book *Morality as a Way of Life* Conradie *et al.* (2006:44) reports that in this area, there is no respect for another person or property, and people have no respect for themselves. These people moved in from informal settlements (shacks) elsewhere in Cape Town and were given houses under the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme. Delft Leiden was selected as a case study area for this research mainly because there do not seem to have been serious attempts from ethicists, particularly in the Department of Religion and Theology, to engage with communities on ethical issues, even though this is an obvious concern. Many projects in Delft at UWC seem to be part of community engagement in service learning, teaching and learning, field education, community service and internship (UWC, 2018). These social and environmental challenges are affecting Delft and many townships and rural areas in Southern Africa. Further demarcation with demographic information, directions, and coordinates are presented in Chapter 5 of the study.

1.3.2 Choionekano Ward of the Zvishavane district

This research site is in the Zvishavane District of the Midlands province in Zimbabwe. It is located in a semi-arid area of Zvishavane, namely in the Runde rural district council, comprising 19 wards. Before climate change's advent, smallholder farming was a significant economic activity in the ward. Due to climate change, most villagers in the ward engage in off-farm livelihood strategies such as artisanal mining of gold. There is also evidence of several moral challenges manifested in violence and environmental hazards, for example, in the scramble for the limited gold and water reserves in the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane District in Zimbabwe. There seems to be confusion facing individuals, particularly the youth, manifested in social challenges.

Like the Delft case study, this one comprised people from an underprivileged background, including them as partners in the ongoing dialogue about ethical issues. Detailed information about this research site is presented in Chapter 6.

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1.4 Statement and explanation of research problem

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology using the abovementioned case studies from two locations facing pressing social and environmental challenges. Including both a rural and urban township helped test the scope of a proposed global ethic, revealing how globalisation often marginalised and affected such communities. This approach highlighted unique challenges and the need for integrating local ethic with the global ethic.

The motivation behind the selection of these two different cases is that I have been staying in Delft, Cape Town, South Africa, for the past 8 years, and Chionekano Ward in the Zvishavane district of Zimbabwe is where I was born and raised, making it easy to engage with the community leaders. Including them in the study allowed the engagement of a wide variety of communities and their leaders to deepen and strengthen the discourse of ethics.

The questions that were discussed in both Delft and the Chionekano Ward were as follows:

- What are the main social and environmental challenges facing this area?
- What do you think are the main root causes of these challenges?
- What do you think are the appropriate moral directives to citizens, i.e. to address what is in your locus of control?
- How do members of the community typically respond to such directives?

The research problem that was investigated in the study may be stated as follows:

> Are the moral directives outlined in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic produced for the Parliament of World Religions and the Earth Charter compatible with the moral directives offered by community leaders in the township of Delft in Cape Town and Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe?

Using the term compatibility in this statement of the research problem requires a description of four sets of such moral directives. To establish whether or not they are compatible, a critical comparison of similarities and differences and an assessment of how significance such differences may be were presented. The comparison was done using a mutually critical comparison approach. On the one hand the global reach of the global ethic was tested to see whether this makes sense in two local communities in the southern African context. Ethical questions in these communities that are overlooked by the global ethic were identified. On the other hand, the moral directives offered by local community leaders were critically assessed with reference to the two documents on a global ethic to unpack moral directives from the local that cannot be extended beyond the Chionekano Ward community or in Delft.

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On this basis, the following research objectives were identified:

- To describe the moral directives outlined in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic produced for the Parliament of World Religions in the light of the available primary and secondary literature
- To describe the principles outlined in the Earth Charter in the light of the available primary and secondary literature
- To map the moral categories employed in these two documents in the context of wider debates in ethical theory on concepts such as a moral vision, moral values, moral obligations, moral virtues, moral rights and moral responsibilities, and to relate that to the notion of moral directives
- To describe the perceptions of community leaders in Leiden, Delft
- To describe the perceptions of community leaders in the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe
- To establish whether or not the directives on a global ethic as issued in the two documents mentioned above are compatible with the moral directives as issued by selected community leaders in Delft and Chionekano
- To establish on this basis whether the global ethic is indeed global in reach and scope and, vice versa, whether the moral directives issued by community leaders can be maintained elsewhere, indeed globally

1.5 Research procedure

The study investigated the research problem using a qualitative research method. This included a review of relevant primary and secondary literature and empirical investigation in Delft and Chionekano Ward. Given the method of research used in the study, the literature review consisted of both primary and secondary sources on the mapping of moral concepts, the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter. Accordingly, the method employed in the study involved a descriptive, explanatory literature study and empirical survey.

To achieve this outcome, the following phases were followed:

Phase 1: Theoretical framework: mapping of moral concepts.

The mapping of moral concepts used as a theoretical framework in the study relied heavily on the works of Birch *et al.* (2018), Rasmussen (2013), and Conradie *et al.* (2006). It emanated from the ethics module *Introduction to Ethical Theory,* that explores the questions on the vision for a good

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society, the virtues needed for a good society and values and obligations for moral decision-making. Classical deontological theories are based on Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), while teleological or consequentialist approaches to ethics rely on Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).

This module forms the basis of ethics programmes taught at the University of the Western Cape in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Department of Religion and Theology. Other ethical categories do not fit in mapping moral concepts but are relevant for the study, including rights, responsibilities, worldviews, principles, norms, and rules. The category of moral directives was used to relate community leader's perceptions to the global ethic since the study was conducted in Southern Africa. Research findings from the literature survey are documented in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

Phase 2: The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic: Parliament of World Religions (1993)

The research's second phase focused on surveying primary and secondary literature on the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic 1993. The main primary sources for this phase were the final report of the Declaration document itself and books by Küng & Kuschel (1993), Küng (1990), and the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities by the Inter-Action Council (1997). Other main sources include Falk (1999), Hedges (2008), Knitter (1995) Conradie *et al.* (2006). Such literature was consulted to trace the historical background of these documents, to analyse the irrevocable directives, the reception of these documents, and to understand globalisation and the need for a global ethic. The research findings of this survey were documented in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

Phase 3: The Earth Charter 2000

Understanding the history, principles, and reception of the Earth Charter document is necessary. The third phase included reviewing primary and secondary literature with a detailed description and analysis of this document. The literature review for this phase includes the following supplementary sources: Earth Charter (2000), *the Earth Charter Initiative Handbook* (2010), Stanger *et al.* (2020), Taylor (1999), Vilela (2006), Bosselmann (2004), Tucker (2008), Bernstein (2007), Mirian & Alicia (2020); Rockefeller (2010); Lynn (2004). This literature survey is documented in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

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Phase 4: Perceptions of community leaders in Delft and Chionekano Ward

This phase entailed an investigation of the perceptions of community leaders to capture the moral directives they offer in efforts to address the challenges they are facing. This investigation required clarification of data collection on several aspects:

For researchers to understand effectively how the subject operates or functions, Yin (1994:13) notes that case studies tolerate the systematically gathering of enough information about a particular person, social setting or event. According to Yin (2009), case study has a distinct advantage over other design methodologies where research questions are of a 'what, why or how' nature, relate to contemporary phenomena, occur in naturalistic settings, and are sensitive to context.

Respondents who participated in the study were selected based on their roles as community leaders. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with such community leaders. School principals, educators, religious leaders, community elders, police, health workers, and leaders of community-based organisations were among the participants.

English language was used as the main language for data gathering in Delft. In the Chionekano Ward, questions were asked in English, but four participants were given room to express themselves in Shona since the researcher understands this language very well. Snowball sampling was effective since such leaders tend to know each other. While snowball sampling offers an advantage to lead the researcher to other suitable respondents, it also has properties that result in bias. In cases where respondents feel uncomfortable mentioning other people with the same attributes, this results in high non-responsive behaviour and the risk of chains ending before they reach their final repetition level (Creswell 2009). Qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Sluka & Robben, 2007:10).

In-depth semi-structured interviews allowed community leaders to explain their perceptions, experiences, voices and insights in detail. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. In the Delft community, a total number of 10 participants were interviewed. Similarly, in the Chionekano Ward, 10 participants were interviewed. Saturation was used in the study as a principle for determining sample size and evaluating its sufficiency (Mason 2010:2; Sim *et al.* 2018:621). Qualitative researchers conducting an interview-based study with a reasonably specific research question reported that little new information is generated after interviewing 20 people

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from one analytically relevant category of participants. The recommended sample, according to Sim *et al.* (2018:621), is 15-30 for in-depth semi-structured case studies.

Based on such interviews, the moral directives to address local challenges were articulated, clustered together (given the mapping of moral concepts as discussed above) and described in depth. The moral directives were outlined in areas where the community leaders may offer advice, e.g. personal habits, money, sexuality, health, waste management, family matters, community matters, violence, security, water management, etc. To probe the theoretical concepts of the study, the kind of moral concepts which are employed or preferred were asked and presented in form and content (see Chapter 5 Section 5.7 reflections on the moral directives in light of the theoretical framework and Chapter 6 Section 6.7).

This was the most crucial part of this research as it helped to later compare them with Delft and Chionekano and then the Declaration and the Earth Charter. These were explored from various moral concepts such as a vision for a good society, moral virtues, social values, duties, obligations, rights, responsibilities, commands, etc. The aim was to find out what is considered good and right and what is considered wrong and what language is used when talking to the community when offering such directives. Although participants could not directly relate to these ethical categories employed in the theoretical framework, it became the researcher's duty as an ethicist to link them with the mapping of concepts. The empirical research findings for this phase are documented in Chapters 5 and 6 of the theses.

Phase 5: Critical comparison of the global and local

This phase constituted the core of the study. It was mainly based on the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, where ethical categories employed in the global ethic and moral directives from the two case studies were compared. I critically addressed the study's research problem using a mutual critical comparison method. The principles of the Earth Charter were compared with principles of Declaration Toward a Global Ethic in form and content. Moral directives from Delft were also compared with those from Chionekano and Delft in form and content. These moral directives from the local were then compared with the global ethic. The research findings for this phase were documented in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

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Phase 5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter of the thesis (Chapter 8) summarises the whole thesis. The needs and dangers of global and local ethic are explained to answer the question on whether we need only the global ethic or local ethic. In this chapter, I also offer contributions to the ongoing search for a global ethic and some concluding remarks.

1.6 Research ethics

Ethical principles of conducting research were observed in the study. Ethics in research intends to deal with beliefs of what is considered right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:142). Ethical norms for empirical research, such as honesty and maintaining respect for the rights of individuals, were adhered to. Other aspects that were maintained include the following:

Permission to conduct the study was requested from the UWC's Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and granted with reference Number HS21/3/21. After obtaining ethical clearance, respective authorities, such as the councillor in Delft and the Headman in the Chionekano Ward, were also asked for permission to conduct data collection in their areas. See the attached draft letter that was used to request such permission.

Participation of key informants in this research was voluntary. They were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study. I explained to participants that there were no financial benefits to participating in this research, and on that basis, participants decided to participate or not. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without explaining their decision. See the attached information sheet.

Each participant in the interviews was asked to sign a consent form in which they agree to participate in the study and to give permission to make audio recordings. See the attached consent form.

Participants were asked how they would prefer to be referred to in the study. Space for this was indicated in the consent form. Some preferred to be mentioned by name and a description in terms of the role or responsibilities (e.g. "a police officer from Delft"). In contrast, yet others preferred a pseudonym (e.g. one participant from Leiden). Those who gave consent received due credit for their valuable information. Such choices, as indicated by participants in the consent forms, were respected.

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Initially, there were no presumed risks associated with a study of this nature regarding the information being gathered. However, in the process, Delft was found to be more dangerous (not safe to move around because of gangsters and (Skollies). Additionally, some participants refused to participate in the study because of fear of sharing information regarding drugs and gangsterism. As a researcher, I was also suspected of being a spy revealing the risk of the information I gathered. I had to use survival manoeuvring tactics since I have experience staying in the township.

Likewise, in the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane, the area is no longer safe due to violence perpetrated by illegal artisanal miners. However, in the rural area where I grew up, I had to gather information on preventive measures needed to be safe. It was to my advantage to collect data in the Chionekano Ward during the COVID-19 lockdown that restricted people's movements and gatherings.

The data that was gathered consisted of audio recordings and notes taken while interviewing those who refused to be tape-recorded. I kept the data in my possession and uploaded it on my OneDrive account for safekeeping for the duration of the study. Further dissemination will be to rework my doctoral thesis into a book for potential publication with Globethics.

1.7 Argument structure

Chapter 1 outlines the background and the context of the study with specific reference to ETH111, the introductory course to ethical theory at UWC. Methodological considerations based on the proposal explaining various issues are addressed in this chapter. These include the theoretical framework, statement of the research problem, research objectives and questions, the case study target population, sampling size and methods, data collection instruments and ethics statement.

Chapter 2 discusses the mapping of moral concepts that form the study's theoretical framework. The aim is to situate the moral categories employed in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of World's Religions and the Earth Charter in the context of broader debates in ethical theory on concepts such as a moral vision, moral values, moral obligations, moral virtues, moral rights and moral responsibilities. This is then related to moral directives used in the African context.

Chapter 3 offers a critical review and detailed analysis of primary and secondary literature on the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic for the Parliament of the World's Religions (1993).

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Chapter 4 is a literature survey and a detailed analysis of available primary and secondary sources on the Earth Charter and how it relates to the notion of a global ethic. Literature on the reception of the Earth Charter is reviewed.

Chapter 5 presents empirical findings from Delft township of Cape Town on the perceptions of community leaders and the moral directives they offer to their community to address local challenges. This is the opportunity to include community leaders as practitioners, ethical reflectors as well as actors This chapter also provides a detailed analysis of the research findings from the moral directives and discusses them in relation to the study's theoretical framework.

Chapter 6 presents the empirical findings from Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district in Zimbabwe. The purpose is to investigate and document community leader's perceptions on the social and environmental challenges facing their communities and the possible root causes of these problems. The moral directives offered are analysed in relation to the study's theoretical framework.

Chapter 7 presents a mutual critical comparison of the findings from Delft and Chionekano Ward with the moral directives articulated in the documents that purportedly describe the global ethic to assess the similarities and differences.

Chapter 8 draws a conclusion from the conceptual literature on a global ethic and existing empirical findings. A constructive contribution to what a truly global ethic may entail is provided in this chapter.

1.8 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 introduced the study, situated in the field of social ethics, focusing on the compatibility of moral directives from two key global documents, the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993) and the Earth Charter (2000), with the moral directives offered by community leaders in Delft, Cape Town, and Chionekano Ward in Zimbabwe. The study explored whether a proposed global ethic is relevant and adaptable at the local level. The chapter outlined the context, including the study's theoretical framework, key research objectives, and questions. The research methodology, which utilised a qualitative approach through literature review and empirical investigation with community leaders, was also described. Ethical considerations, participant sampling, and data collection methods were detailed. The chapter closed with an argument structure summarising the thesis's layout and focus areas, including theoretical exploration, empirical findings, and critical comparisons.

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CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A MAPPING OF MORAL CONCEPTS

2.1 Introduction

Moral categories are typically embedded in distinct ethical theories that reflect the dimensions and forms of human moral experience. This chapter aims to map such moral concepts that will be used in subsequent chapters to articulate the moral directives of community leaders in Delft Leiden and the Chionekano Ward of the Zvishavane District. As mentioned in Chapter 1, such a mapping of moral concepts emanates from the context of programmes in Ethics (understood as the moral and religious foundations of society) offered by the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape.[2] The introductory module "Ethics 111: Introduction to Ethical Theory and Practice" explores the significance of three crucial moral questions, namely "What is a good society (the quest for the common good)?"; "What kind of virtuous person, or people of moral character, do we require to build a good society?" and "What values and obligations can guide responsible decision-making in a given situation?" These three questions correlate with four basic moral concepts: visions (for a good society), virtues, values and obligations. The latter two concepts offer diverging views on moral decision-making as embedded in utilitarian and deontological ethical theories in a Western context.

As mentioned in the introduction above, this mapping of moral concepts is borrowed from a book by Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen entitled *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life* (revised and expanded edition 1989). This mapping of moral concepts is further developed in Larry Rasmussen's *Earth Honoring Faith* in a chapter on "The Ethic we need: Good theory" (2013:127-159). The book co-authored by Bruce Birch, Jacqueline Lapsley, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda and Larry Rasmussen (2018), entitled *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation*, contains the latest version in the mapping of moral concepts.

This chapter will follow the logic of such a mapping of moral concepts. First, literature on the significance of the good society (the common good) and the role of an emerging moral vision will

[2] The modules in ethics explore the moral and religious foundations of society to reflect on the development of a human rights culture. The following questions are typically posed in the field of Ethics: What is an appropriate vision for a good society? What virtues and character traits make one a good person? What are the values, rules, and goals that guide our actions?

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be reviewed (2.2). Then, the significance of virtues and the role of moral formation in moral communities (following Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* 1981) is examined (2.3). Under conditions of modernity there was a shift towards moral decision making (an ethics of doing instead of an ethics of being). Tensions between the two dominant Western ethical traditions in this regard, namely utilitarian approaches (with its emphasis on consequences and the role of moral values) and deontological approaches (the Kantian emphasis on duties following recognition of inalienable human dignity) to ethical theory will be interrogated (2.4 and 2.5).

In addition to these four moral concepts (visions, virtues, values and duties), two further concepts will be explored that are especially important for a global ethic, namely human rights (based on the Kantian notion of dignity) and human responsibilities (given Weber's critique of an ethics of conscience) (2.6 and 2.7). Since all the moral categories mentioned above are embedded in Western ethical theories and the study is being conducted in Africa, the role of culture and worldview as the basis for moral judgements will also be mentioned concerning the notions of ubuntu and ukama (2.8). Other moral concepts, namely, commands, principles, rules, norms and goals, were mentioned but not explored in depth (2.9). Lastly, moral directives will be suggested as an umbrella term used in the study to cover all the above-mentioned concepts (2.10).

2.2 The significance of the common good and the role of emerging moral visions

The search for common ethical values and principles must be understood against the backdrop of the fragmentation of societies and uncertainty over human and ecological well-being. Unprecedented challenges of the 21st century require philosophical, religious, and ethical thinkers to narrate a new story or to retrieve a forgotten moral vision to reorient humanity's moral consciousness (Jenkins 2013:42). Revisiting how the question of the good society was answered in classical communal ethics sometimes referred to as "tribal cultures" may be helpful here for a philosophical clarification of the common good.

In the past, more specifically in tribal traditional communities, the question of the good society was answered concerning the community's well-being. A good person abided by the rules, role responsibilities, and views the community prescribed. These communities shared a largely homogeneous worldview because the society was closely knit. The worldview determined what was good for the community. Many ethicists recognise the declining influence of such historically and communally grounded moral traditions. Closely related to traditional communal ethics is the concept of the common good (the good society), which has played a prominent role throughout the history of Western political thought. Aristotle (384–322 BC) is regarded as a foundational thinker

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on the common good, dating back to ancient Greek philosophy (Jaede 2017:3). An emphasis on the common good prevailed throughout the medieval period. In Catholic social teaching, it is defined by Pope John XXIII as the "total of conditions including food, shelter that enables integral development, the complete formation of human beings" (as quoted in Hollenbach 2017).

The concept of the common good was relevant in classical social, political and economic philosophy, but it lost ground in the modern age. Under conditions of modernity, there was a shift away from an emphasis on the common good to a focus on individual moral decision-making – with the assumption that if all individuals act morally, they will secure a good society. The concept lost its ground when Western philosophy took this individualistic turn, with the predominance of multiculturalism, which excludes any unitary conception of the good (Argandoña 2013:16).

As a result, the language of individualism dominates public discourse by reducing concern for the common welfare to a matter of personal empathy and translating commitment to the common good into an agenda of individual preferences (Schweigert 1999:167; Kim 1999:10; Cheong 2000). This historical social, economic and political disintegration stimulated a breaking down of social cohesion in families, neighbourhoods, work, politics and religion (Schweigert 1999:167; Kim 1999:10).

Nevertheless, the quest for a good society was never abandoned in Western thinking, as illustrated by the French and American revolutions and the dream of progress through science and technological innovation/industrialisation. In recent times, there has been a renaissance of the concept of the common good amongst sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, and theologians.

Jaede (2017:3) maintains that civic networks and courts increasingly refer to this concept to justify their actions. Schlag & Melé (2020:1) emphasise the need to build institutions for the common good to counter egoistic individualism and self-importance. However, the question remains about how we can achieve the common good in a globalised context. A core problem here is the lack of a transnational coercive power (like the state) that can compel peoples or countries to contribute to the common good (Jaede 2017). Given global threats associated with poverty, inequality, nuclear war, ecological destruction, climate change, now the Anthropocene, different thinkers and formalised peacebuilding efforts for a more global inclusive society conceive the common good in terms of concepts such as justice, democracy, sustainability, participatory society, human rights, and equality (Hollenbach 2017:6; Sutrop 2011:536; Thompson 2017:120; Argandoña 2013:16; Ehnberg 2015).

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Rasmussen argues that, precisely amidst such global threats, the question of the common good is enabled by the emergence of a new moral vision. Similarly, Eckersley (2008:12) argues that without a shared vision of a good society, individuals are isolated from each other, and people are increasingly abandoning customary truths, values and ways of life if not only left with their resources to deal with life. Certain practices may be taken for granted in societies for an extended period until common human awareness grows to see things differently. An authentic moral vision of hope can help us to think outside the system, reject absolutist frames and consider alternative possibilities (see Palm 2012:43; Bafinamene 2016:135).

Hope is then born from experiences of suffering and anticipates a new and different future (Conradie *et al.* 2006:19). Moral visions are not frequent, but when they emerge, they capture people's minds. People are persuaded to share the vision and to dream about a world where a new moral vision will be established. Birch *et al.* (2018:129) note that moral vision will see beyond life's private or interpersonal dimensions to the communal and social structure. This means that when human beings imagine who they are in the relationships that shape their lives, the emphasis should be based on the threads that bring them together as human beings (Birch *et al.* 2018:131).

The emergence of a new moral vision requires seeing clearly that something is wrong. Conradie *et al.* (2006:16) call a vision of the good society a typically *moral* vision that can inspire people to dream for a better future that is portrayed based on the well-being of society as a whole, the good life and the common good. In *Morality as a Way of Life,* Conradie *et al.* (2006:23) refer to Martin Luther King (Jr)'s famous speech (1963) entitled "I Have a Dream" as a clear vision of non-racist (good society). This example suggests that such classic visions have the uncanny ability, even after many centuries, to continue to challenge and lure people to dream about a better world. The abolishment of slavery, the collapse of apartheid, the defeat of colonialism and the eradication of polio are other examples of social transformations where human agency and the mobilising of social hope were key factors for change. Likewise, imagining a world with sustainable energy sources could be an emerging moral vision.[3] However, social visions need to be scrutinised because, for example, communism, Nazism, and apartheid are also examples of grand social visions. That suggests the need to approach social visions with some caution.

[3] Moral visions such as an ecological civilization offers an alternative to industrial civilization. Birch *et al.* (2018:190) stipulate that "if an eco-centric ethic displaced the anthropocentrism of the industrial paradigm or if there were an Earth-friendly successor to democratic capitalism, the shift would be as dramatic and far-reaching as abolition."

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2.3 The significance of virtues and moral formation in communities

In ancient civilisations, urbanisation attracted people of different cultures, customs, beliefs, and worldviews, which were related only through economic interdependence. This development prompted a shift in emphasis from a good society to a good person (virtues). In the more cosmopolitan context of early city-states such as Rome, Alexandra and Carthage, various religious traditions and worldviews co-existed. The city-state was characterised by hierarchy. Individuals were ranked according to class.

Institutions such as the state, the legal system, the church or the party emerged, and they demanded loyalty from members. Laws were crafted to deal with issues among people living together and govern relationships. The acceptance of authority was precisely because the institution helped people to cope in a conflicting urban context. These institutions offered a clear ethos amidst conflicting truth claims, although judges manipulated the legal system to protect the rich.

Plato and Aristotle are the founding fathers of virtue ethics in the West, while Mencius and Confucius are the founding fathers in the East. In Greek philosophy, virtue ethics is a crucial concept in moral reflection. It usually goes under the name of *virtue* or *erateic* ethics. *Arete* is the Greek term for "excellence", often translated to "virtue". Thus, virtue is the most common philosophical term that inclines to act in a morally desirable way.

A vice, by contrast, is a character trait or tendency that inclines one to act morally undesirable (Harris 2002:182). Plato (428-354 BCE), in his classic work *The Republic*, discussed four important virtues that are critical to society's government (the Greek polis or city-state), namely wisdom, justice, courage and temperance. Plato's most famous pupil, Aristotle (384-322 BCE), in his renowned work *The Nicomachean Ethics*, distinguished between virtues that may be cultivated by knowledge and training (skills) and moral virtues (aspects of character) that cannot be taught. Aristotle mentioned courage, temperance, generosity, integrity, a magnanimous spirit, kindness, justice, and friendship as fundamental virtues.

At the same time, several tables of vices are available, including addiction, indifference, extravagance, foolishness, greed, injustice, malice, recklessness, self-sufficiency, stinginess, and wastefulness. Humans are not born good or bad by nature, but they can cultivate virtues or engage in vices to become good or bad. According to Aristotle, all the virtues show the necessity for balance, for finding a medium ground between two extremes to maintain a good society (Conradie *et al.* 2006:50).

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Thomas Aquinas offered a brilliant theological reading of Aristotle through the prism of the Christian theological tradition (Herdt 2016:234). There are two characterisations of Aquinas as a philosopher. Firstly, as someone who understood philosophical activity as that of a craft and the chief crafts. Secondly, as someone who carried forward two hitherto independent traditions of thought, merging them into one in such a way as to provide a direction for further development of a new unified tradition (MacIntyre 1990:127). In his famous work *Summa Theologica*, St Thomas Aquinas largely followed Aristotle, sometimes heroically, where Aristotle gave an opinion and where St Thomas is on his own, such as in developing the doctrine of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and in his theocentric doctrine of happiness (Crisp & Slote 1997:118).

Virtue ethics remained the dominating ethical theory in Western moral philosophy until at least the Enlightenment, then went into a brief period of obscurity during the nineteenth century before resurfacing in Anglo-American philosophy in the late 1950s. This was foreshadowed by Anscombe's (1958) in *Modern Moral Philosophy* and two decades later by Alasdair MacIntyre in his famous work *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (1981), which consolidated a growing discontent with the dominant forms of deontology and utilitarianism at the time (Hursthouse 1999). Virtue ethics deals with virtues and vices, motives and moral character (as opposed to an emphasis on action), and with the inner moral life (as opposed to just rational choices). The important question for any virtue ethics is "What kind of people should we be, and how should we live?" (Alzola, Hennig & Romar 2020; Hursthouse & Crisp 2013; Hursthouse 1999).

Due to dissatisfaction with rule-governed (action-centred) ethical systems, virtue ethics became a major ethical theory. This was mainly because the project of modernity and enlightenment to base morality on rationality had to fail. Alasdair MacIntyre set forth this modern criticism of rule-governed ethics in *After Virtue* (1981). MacIntyre argues that modern people have lost, to a great extent, their conception of morality. The only hope in the situation of moral chaos is to turn back to an (Aristotelian) ethics of virtue (Conradie *et al.* 2006:54). Action-centred ethics is being criticised because it over-emphasises the principle of autonomy, neglecting the communal context of morality. MacIntyre (1990) argues that our modern inability to resolve important moral disagreements rationally is rooted in the failures of eighteenth and nineteenth moral philosophy to achieve its self-set tasks. MacIntyre claims that genuinely rational inquiry requires membership in a particular moral community. Liberal political societies are known for denying any space in public discourse for a predetermined vision of the human good, let alone accepting that such a conception should underpin their common life.

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According to the dominant liberal viewpoint, government should be neutral when it comes to competing visions of the human good; however, liberalism promotes an institutional order that is hostile to the formation and maintenance of the types of communal relationships required for the best kind of human life. MacIntyre (2007: xii) argues that when virtue ethics is resurrected, it is always in everyday life, and it is always via the participation of ordinary people in a range of practices, such as those of creating and maintaining families and households, schools, clinics, and local political communities. That regeneration enables ordinary people to question the dominant moral and social discourse modes and the institutions that manifest themselves in those modes (MacIntyre 2007).

Various communitarian philosophers have revived the concept of virtue. It is also recognised in African and Asian moral philosophies as the basis of membership in a particular type of moral community (Metz & Miller 2016:3). Accomplishing the good of all, being committed to the good of others, and being concerned for others' welfare is how virtues are nurtured in Asian and African communities. From these orientations to morality, one's own communal or friendly ties are most important (Metz & Miller 2016:3). The concept of virtue ethics in Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and MacIntyre is developed in Stanley Hauerwas' ethics. Character or moral agency, narrative and community are the dominating themes in Hauerwas virtue ethics (Koopman 2002:33). Hauerwas supports an ethics of character that redirects ethical inquiry away from the question, "What should I do?" to "What kind of person should I be?" (see Bafinamene 2017:2). On that note, Conradie *et al.* (2006:46) also highlight the need to not only ask the question, "What should I/we do?" but "Who am I?/Who are we?/What is my identity?" as the most important ethical question. Hauerwas changed his mind about character in the 1980s, from the concept of the self as an agent to the self as a story to emphasise the importance of habit and the necessity of narratives and tradition in people's lives. For Hauerwas, with his emphasis on *ekklesia*, virtues, like skills, are learned through community practice.

The existing accounts of being virtuous have not been spared from questioning by rationalists. Virtue ethics is confronted with questions such as "Which virtues?" and "Whose virtues?" who sets the standards by which some virtues are praised and others are scorned? Vosloo (1997:305) states that these concerns should not be discarded lightly as they highlight the significance of offering justifications for one's behaviour and preferences to combat ethical arbitrariness. In Vosloo's (1997:306) opinion, it is critical to draw on long-standing moral traditions (including Christian ones) to resist the dangerous dictatorship of virtuousness. Conradie *et al.* (2006:45) likewise note

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that the most significant current discussion in moral philosophy is that, without extensive moral traditions and moral interpretation frameworks, moral communities will perish.

Religious institutions, schools, hospitals, political parties, government and non-governmental agencies, professional and neighbourhood associations, and advocacy groups are all examples of complex social infrastructures that define a community. Moral formation refers to a particular perspective on moral growth. For a community of practice to thrive, its members must share and maintain certain dispositions (Reilly & Stapleford 2018:267). According to Lamb (2016:300), this viewpoint does not require that all members agree on the specific meanings and dispositions needed but rather that they have a shared goal and enough knowledge to keep and build the community of practice.

Communities, like friendships, thrive when people come together as individuals who willingly join and aren't just there for convenience. In a world that is unfriendly to the community, friendship helps to forge links of mutual relationship across divides. The goal of the search for structures or patterns of human life in a community is to identify what is wrong, imagine alternatives, and plot ways to improve things so that no one is left out (Vosloo 1997:305; Legge 2004).

Birch *et al.* (2018:112) observe that moral formation or malformation occurs when people are most tender. Moral formation is also the occasion for moral malformation because these societies can be cold and terrible as well as warm and caring, aggressive and protective. The emerging people could be loving, hating, compassionate, fierce, withdrawn, irritable, responsible, irresponsible, or any combination of these and other personality qualities. Commenting on this, Vosloo (1997:305) observes that:

> The emphasis on virtue ethics in the process of moral formation concerning stories, imagination, role models (heroes and saints), social practices (e.g. friendships), and so on provides a plethora of insights that can be used, thus expanding ethical discourse.

Each of these aspects plays a key role in guiding, inspiring and motivating people through processes of moral formation.

According to Birch *et al.* (2018:115), such stories, particularly paradigmatic stories, assist followers in comprehending who they are, where they came from, what they are doing here, and where they are heading. Groups, traditions, and communities of people who live with integrity, honesty and loyalty are created by the conditions of such stories to form people willing to live, embody and practise such traditions. Scriptures and songs operate in moral frameworks, such as the Christian tradition, to disseminate moral formation. However, there seems to be a problem in

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that the narratives, heroes, and traditions that most communities follow are no longer from the Bible or the Qur'an or from the African communitarian philosophy but from television and social media, where vicious people are portrayed as heroes. Vosloo (1997:307) raised a similar question 25 years ago: "How should theological ethicists judge the moral influence of various institutions, films, and literature?"

Without undermining the contributions of theological ethicists in addressing the challenges posed to religious moral formation in a secular context, it can be argued that religions can no longer determine how communities are ordered. Of course, virtues are often drawn into reflection on how to care for the common good of society, but in a world that has lost its cosmological and religious foundations. This world corresponds to the presumption of vices. Whose narratives or traditions are people going to follow?

In response to such a problem of moral malformation, Rasmussen, in his book *Moral Fragments and Moral Community: A Proposal for Church in Society* (1993), discusses the notion of moral community by describing the kinds of communities needed to foster good persons and public-minded citizens. He argues that moral formation begins from childhood, so moral life does not start in reason but in childhood. Overall, there seems to be evidence that moral character must find outlets in public policy and that societal structures should be designed to meet moral demands, such as social justice and environmental well-being. Morality necessitates a constant commitment not only to moulding society's policies, structures, and institutions in ways that promote the common good but also to "checking" or counteracting morally harmful impulses (Birch *et al.* 2018).

2.4 The significance of moral consequences and the role of values

The mapping of moral concepts in this chapter has addressed the vision of a good society in relation to virtuous people. This section returns to the aspect of moral decision-making that was prompted by the shift from a good society to a good person (virtuous person) and, thus, moral actions. In the context of modernity, the core question became where a deed may be judged as moral, immoral or amoral, responsible or irresponsible, right or wrong or not subject to moral concerns. This prompted the development of two major ethical theories in Western philosophy's history: utilitarianism (focusing on desirable consequences) and deontological ethics (focusing on duties – see 2.5).

Numerous representatives of such consequentialist or teleological approaches, with Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) usually regarded as the classic exponents of utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is derived from the word "utility", which means usefulness. Accordingly, an act is morally justified if it helps achieve a desirable or good end. Bentham's

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influential work on utilitarianism was developed as a basis for legal and political reform. He defined utility in terms of pleasure and pain (Hinman 2003:137). Classic utilitarianism is based on two premises: firstly, everyone (perhaps all sentient creatures) experiences pleasure and pain. Secondly, the experience of pleasure and pain is necessarily subjective. Therefore, pleasure and pain serve as an empirical foundation for ethical reflection (Rosen 2005:3). Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that upholds the need for happiness and the reduction of pain as criteria by which an action is considered right or wrong. On such a consequentialist basis, laws, public policies, and social structures could also be assessed ethically (West 2004:3; Mensah 2020:129).

Due to what was perceived as an explicit emphasis on sensual bodily pleasures, Bentham's theory was swiftly criticised. It was even referred to as "pig philosophy" because many people understood it to endorse life's purpose to increase physical pleasures (Almeder 2000:158; Hinman 2003).

Mill inherited utilitarianism from his father, James Mill, and Bentham. In two of Mill's early works, he was critical of Bentham. In his essay "Utilitarianism", he updates Bentham's quantitative analysis of pleasures and pains by adding a qualitative component (West 2004:3). Mill argues that there are different kinds of pleasures, that pleasures differ in quality and not merely as (Bentham had claimed) in quantity. According to Almeder (2000:158), the cultivation of pleasures of the flesh, ignoring cultivating pleasures of the mind, according to Mill, is moral insensitive.

Utilitarianism is generally found in two main forms: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. According to Thiroux (1995:48), utilitarianism is presented in a way that "everyone should perform that act or follow the moral rule that will bring about the greatest good or happiness for everyone concerned". However, in the scope of this section, these two forms of utilitarianism will not be explored in depth.

Rosen (2005:5) notes that the consequences of actions play an important role in all approaches to ethics. Such consequences may be considered in terms of their usefulness or utility. Similarly, Rasmussen (2013:134) upholds that "the heart of morality is not in character and individual free choice but in values that are realised in tangible social consequences and ends, values that are tested by those consequences and ends". This notion requires considering the role of values and consequences in moral judgements and moral theory.

Myyry & Helkama (2002:37) define values as goals and motivations that guide people's lives. Holmes, Blackmore, Hawkins, & Wakeford (2011:30) maintain that values represent broad motivations that influence the attitudes of rational beings and how they act. In ordinary language, the difference between such values is not clearly distinguished from goals and a broader vision for

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a good society. However, goals and values belong to somewhat different ethical theories. Holmes *et al.* (2011:30) distinguish between two categories of values: values that serve individual interests and values that serve collective interests. They also differentiate between different types of values serving individual interests, such as power, achievement, hedonism, and stimulation. Myyry & Helkama (2002:37) identify self-direction, benevolence, tradition and conformity as values that serve collective interests.

Social values are those beliefs and practices practised by any particular society. Society has a way of dictating the beliefs and practices performed either routinely by its members or whenever the occasion demands (Idang 2015:102). Parents, schools, neighbours, and the media, genetic inheritances or predispositions, influence these values. However, values and norms gradually evolve during a lifetime of adult experience (Aaron, Mann & Taylor 1994:7).

One may also distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic values. Extrinsic values are centred on external approval or rewards such as wealth, material success, concern about image, social status, prestige, social power and authority. Intrinsic values focus on inherently rewarding pursuits such as affiliation with friends and family, connection with nature, concern for others, self-acceptance, and creativity in social justice (Holmes *et al.* 2011:20).

Larry Rasmussen discusses the significance of values in a chapter on "The Ethic We Need: Good Theory" in his book *Earth Honoring Faith* (2013:127-159). He illustrates that with a case study from Weihsien Compound during World War II. This example can help to unpack the importance of the concept of values in the study.

When the Japanese invaded China, they rounded up all the non-Chinese, mainly from Europe and the United States. Still, Eurasians, South Americans, and South Africans put about fifteen hundred people in the Weihsien Compound. A community of people little known to one another was formed from scratch, and they were thus given the daunting task of creating a working community. The Japanese soldiers were assigned to control all goods entering and leaving the camp, while the internal administrative tasks were assigned to the detainees. The American Red Cross one day brought 1,500 parcels, each packed with food or clothing, to the compound. In sharing these parcels among the detainees, the Japanese commandant ruled that each United States (US) citizen would receive one-and-a-half parcels and all other prisoners one each. However, since the parcels were from America, 200 Americans (out of 1,450 detainees) claimed the parcels and protested against this ruling. The commandant retracted the verdict and gave them the task of deciding how best to share the goods.

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The discussion on distributing the goods among US citizens included an exchange between two Americans, an elderly missionary named Grant and a young schoolteacher, Gilkey. They reflected on a suitable moral response to resolving this situation. As Gilkey narrates the story, Grant insists that he is arguing from a "moral" point of view because the enemy cannot dictate to them how to share the goods, and there is no virtue in being forced to share. Grant said, "We will share, but not on order from the enemy, for then it would not be moral". Grant wanted the goods to be shared equally among US detainees, and it is upon them to make moral judgements regarding how much they would like to share.

Given this free will to share with non-Americans, Gilkey asked Grant how many Americans would share. He replied, "Each would likely give away at least two". This meant the non-Americans would get less than the parcel apiece the commandant had initially ordered. Gilkey then asked Grant: "Would that be moral sharing when all of us are equally hungry and in need?" Grant's understanding of morality had to do with acting out of free will, choice, and expression is "ethics of being" and conscience. Grant's point of view was based on virtue ethics, while Gilkey argued that morality also required a consideration of the consequences of actions.

The moral theory presented by Gilkey is based on the values realised and tested in tangible social consequences and ends (Rasmussen 2013:130). Equal sharing of critical goods based on common needs is a significant value rooted in the equality of persons and their relationships. For Gilkey, everyone's welfare is placed in the same frame of moral reference and on the same terms as everyone involved, including the US citizens who claimed ownership of goods. The result for Gilkey is that the consequences of a moral action should express genuine care for neighbours, whatever the source and even if compelled (Rasmussen 2013: 132).

This case study illustrated that virtue ethics remains insufficient and has to be supplemented with a reflection on moral values. Likewise, Bok (1995:25) claims that adherence to minimalist values, sometimes rooted in the biological and social survival needs of families, groups and larger communities, makes minimal trust and cooperation possible. Conradie *et al.* (2006:79) add that values must be articulated in line with establishing certain goals. Since not all goals are based on moral values, Conradie *et al.* (2006:80) argue that setting up the desired goals is not easy because goals may sometimes conflict with one another. The possible solution could be that actions should be reflected upon personal and societal priorities to contribute towards achieving the desired goals (Conradie *et al.* 2006:80).

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The categories of values and goals belong to somewhat different ethical theories, and they will not be explored in-depth, but Holmes *et al.* (2011:12) mapping of values identified as consistently occurring human values. Holmes *et al.* (2011) then classified them into ten groups based on their patterns, associations, broad similarities, neighbours and opposites. On the one hand, we have universalism, benevolence, traditions, conformity, and security. On the opposite side is power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction (see Holmes *et al.* 2011:14-15). Nevertheless, the above case study shows the significance of considering the consequences of an action in terms of a moral vision for the good society and the common good. Although values and goals could conflict, these two concepts should be recognised in any adequate mapping of moral concepts.

2.5 The Significance of human dignity and the role of duties and obligations

The concept of human dignity and the role of duties (also obligations) are emphasised in the field of deontological ethics. Human dignity is widely discussed in civil society and especially in legal discourse. However, this section will focus on the duties that follow from that point of view of moral philosophy. The name "deontology" has been derived from the Greek origin name "deon", meaning "duty" (Baumane-Vitolina, Cals, & Sumilo 2016:108). The focus is on the nature of the action itself and also on its motive to figure out if it is right or wrong (Paquette, Sommerfeldt, and Kent 2015:35). Rasmussen (2013:157) adds that "deontological ethics" is derived from the Greek *de* + *ontos* which means "from being itself," "out of being," or "rooted in being".

The founder of classical deontological theories is Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German philosopher from Prussia. He is regarded as one of the major thinkers of the European Enlightenment in the 18th century. Kant's ethical theory is based on rationality, autonomy, dignity, and the duties that follow them. Kant focused on individual moral judgements instead of a vision of a good society. He vehemently criticised the utilitarian emphasis on the consequences of actions. With virtue ethics, he emphasises the need for moral character but maintains that moral judgements can be based on reason alone. In deontological ethical theory, an act is considered moral if it adheres to moral duties or obligations.

For Kant, practical reason focuses on what one must do in the limits of reason alone (thus rationality, not conflicting, coherent, not self-contradictory). Kant grounded morality in reason itself and believes that morality can be discovered through rational reflection (Mangena 2012:4). A moral imperative, therefore, does not rely upon our particular and subjective desires or preferences; it is unqualified or categorical (Paquette, Sommerfeldt & Kent 2015:36).

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Kant formulated three versions of what he termed "the categorical imperative". The first (C1) is "Act only so that your actions can be universalised". This means, for example, that there should be no selective application of the law. The second one, (C2), "Act in such a way that other people are treated as ends in themselves and never merely as means to an end". Basing his argument on the rational nature of all human beings, Kant argues that humans are required to treat each other as ends, not merely as a means to their ends. The third categorical imperative (C3) reads: "Every human being must act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends". On this principle, Kant argues that every person is an end unto himself since he/she is a lawgiver. Therefore, each person is a maker and subject to moral laws (see Mangena 2012:6; Rasmussen 2013:156; Conradie *et al.* 2006:83-84; Pojman 2005:146).

Human dignity is regarded as vague and slippery, with Doris (2012:326) expressing that dignity has no fixed meaning. The fact that human dignity can be interpreted from philosophical, legal, religious, political or pragmatic perspectives made the concept even more elusive. Traditionally, human dignity was understood regarding social status and could be graded. Accordingly, speaking of "dignitaries" and VIPs (Very Important People) is possible. Alternatively, human dignity was understood as a religious concept, especially in the Judeao-Christian tradition, and then it was linked with being created in the image and likeness of God. Accordingly, all humans have an inalienable and equal dignity before God. However, humanistic thinkers secularised the concept since the Renaissance, especially during the Enlightenment.

Borrowing from philosophical understanding, Ward & Syversen (2009: 97) assert that human dignity is a moral concept that signifies human being's intrinsic value and universal moral equality. Arguing from a Kantian understanding of dignity, Kumar (2021:437) claims that human dignity "combines the dignity of the moral law", the dignity of human personhood "construed as rational inner purposiveness," and the dignity attached to humans "taking up the moral law and striving to follow it". Kantian philosophy changed the concept of dignity to become more associated with human freedom and human beings' capacity to shape their destinies through the exercise of reason and a social order based on equality and mutual respect (Kumar 2021:437). The foundational role of the concept of human dignity is evident in moral theories and is inscribed in human rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A discussion of human dignity would be incomplete without mentioning the rule of law, constitutions and a bill of rights as examples of the application of deontological ethical theory. Kant is regarded as one of the fathers of human dignity and the basis of human rights. He maintains that respect is due to all human beings simply because they are human beings (Sporre & Botman

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2003:317). The preamble to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "the recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".[4] There are references to human dignity in various constitutions, including the German constitution of 1949 (rev. 2014), stating that "human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority".[5] The constitution of India on fraternity "assures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation".[6] Similarly, the South African constitution 1996 emphasises that "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected".[7]

The emphasis on the dignity and rights of human beings only raises several concerns. For instance, Rasmussen (2013:127-159) questioned Kant's formulation of the categorical imperatives, "why do there seem to be no binding claims upon us on the part of the generative elements of all life including earth (soil), air, fire (energy), water, animals?" His argument rests upon ethics as the reasoned critique of reigning morality. Likewise, Zuolo (2016) asks, "Does it make sense to apply the concept of dignity to all sentient beings?" This question implicitly criticises the traditional assumption that dignity applies only to human beings. Research in animal ethics has shown that some animals possess a considerable level of rationality, if not some form of moral attitude (Zuolo 2016:1117).

Another concern regarding an emphasis on human rights is that all human beings may pursue their rights exclusively without accepting obligations and responsibilities (to fellow beings, earth, water, air or soil), resulting in hostilities, conflicts and ultimately chaos. A society in which people insist on their rights (taking advantage of their human dignity) against others without recognising their responsibilities towards others cannot be conducive to forming a human rights culture (Küng 1991; Sporre & Botman 2003:317).

Drawing on the work of Sporre & Botman (2003) in the book *Building a Human Rights Culture: South African and Swedish Perspectives,* Conradie (2003:317) argues that we do not only need human rights but what is needed also are rights humans, good citizens of moral character and integrity. Formulating a bill of rights is an incomplete process without a human rights culture with

[4] See https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf (last accessed 15 September 2022).
[5] See https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/German_Federal_Republic_2014?lang=en (last accessed 15 September 2022).
[6] See https://indiankanoon.org/doc/237570/ (Last accessed 19 September 2022)
[7] See https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution/chapter-2-bill-rights#10 (last accessed 19 September 2022)

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the moral will of citizens lured by the vision and values articulated in the Bill of Rights (Conradie 2003:317).

The reality is that although every human being may have such dignity based on reasoning capacity and conscience and are obliged to do good and avoid evil, they do not always act accordingly. This is evidenced by egotistic behaviour, individually or collectively, resulting in classism, racism, nationalism and sexism. Kant's emphasis on rationality and respect for individual persons has also been criticised in African cultures, where the dignity of the community is regarded as more important than the dignity of a mere individual (Mangena 2012:3).

Another important criticism of Kantian ethics addresses its universal morality that serves the interests of a small but dominant group of Western males of the ruling classes. Conradie *et al.* (2006:84) comment that it is not necessarily the case that there are universal rules which may be applied to all situations. It would then be a fallacy for Kant to base his theory on the assumption that all human beings share an underlying rationality without considering that our rationalities are shaped by the categories of social context, language, class, gender and race. Kant's (Western) context in which his ethical reflection is situated raised further questions regarding Western "values" that are tainted with ethnocentrism, racism, patriarchy and classism.

One could contend that the West's emphasis on individualism, reasoning, and autonomy contributed to the enormous economic, social, ecological, political, and moral challenges today. Nevertheless, claims towards universality cannot be easily discarded since affirming a common humanity is necessary to resist racism. Many African philosophers base their claims on a common worldview that is presumably shared by most, if not all, Africans.

Another shortcoming of ethics of attitude (*Gesinnungsethik*) has been raised by Max Weber in calling for an ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*). Weber argues that such an ethical attitude did not address Europe's complex societal problems after World War I. He emphasised the need to consider the foreseeable consequences of one's actions. An ethics of responsibility implies that one has to assess realistically the possible future effects of one's actions and seriously consider what is possible and what is not (Schweiker 2001:18; Conradie *et al.* 2006:98).

2.6 The significance of human rights

The origin of discourse on human rights can be traced from the tradition of natural law and natural rights, but it has been understood in different schools of thought and traditions. Besson (2011:212) notes that natural rights triumphed and re-emerged as human rights after World War II to become

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a normative practice in moral, legal and political discourses. Although human rights have been institutionalised in contemporary society to become the most preferred common language, there persist in several questions regarding human rights discourse. The differences in philosophical reflection on human rights make the subject matter fluid. For example, Catholic moral philosophy is aligned with the natural law tradition derived from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and the West has its own version of rights based on individualism, freedom, and liberty.

In the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape, the focus of its programmes in the field of Ethics (The Moral and Religious Foundations of Society) has been not only on recognising human rights but also on building a human rights culture (see Botman & Sporre 2003). More specifically, the task of moral education is to enable students to understand what is required to form a human rights culture in the South African context.[8]

The philosophical underpinnings of human rights are established using Kant's practical philosophy as the conceptual foundation. Kant's ethics became highly influential in the discourse on human rights, given the role played by the concept of human dignity. Therefore, the emphasis on human rights is often framed as Kantian or heavily reliant on Kant's claim that humans have inherent value (Caranti 2012:35).

It is now widely accepted among moral philosophers, legal experts, political theorists, and the German and South African constitutional courts that human dignity is the fundamental assumption of human rights (Metz 2011:543). In our modern era, the discussion of human rights has unquestionably become a common language used by several non-governmental organisations and other activists to challenge gross violations of human rights (Haule 2006:380).

The understanding of human beings in the Judeo-Christian tradition (created in the image of God) was secularised and started to gain traction with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was influenced by ideas of Enlightenment. The South African Constitution of 1996 incorporates a Bill of Rights based on every person's equal dignity as its most essential point of reference. Recognizing and upholding the dignity of another is a fundamental responsibility not only of the state and its institutions but also of each individual. In this context, human rights essentially have to do with mutual recognition rather than just protection and preventing the abuse of authority.

[8] See https://www.uwc.ac.za/study/all-areas-of-study/departments/department-of-religion-and-theology/overview (accessed 13 October 2022).

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Some would argue that such an emphasis on human rights assumes a view of the human person that became dominant in the West since the 18th century (Huber 2014:122). However, such a Western understanding of human rights has met some scepticism elsewhere. Some East Asian and African philosophers maintain that the group should take precedence over the individual instead of the Western emphasis on individual human rights. Non-Westerners call into question the European Enlightenment, which strongly depends on rationality and the autonomy of the person (Staub-Bernasconi 2011:339). One also needs to consider how certain groups and individuals frequently assert their rights against others without acknowledging their responsibilities, which has caused a prevalence of rights over duties in many people's minds (Küng 1998:108).

Because of economic and strategic interests, the issue of human rights is becoming one-sided because human rights are being used by some Western politicians, especially in the USA, as a battle cry and an aggressive instrument for exerting pressure on foreign policy (Küng & Schmidt 1993:108). More and more people have begun to understand that such an ethics of autonomy, personal conviction, principle, and attitude was frequently harmful and insufficient to address the complex issues facing twentieth-century communities. Numerous philosophers have put out the idea of responsibility as a solution that aids in directing moral discourse.

2.7 The role of human responsibility and the emergence of theories of responsibility

One frequently finds a culture of excessive claims to rights that undermines the goals of human rights rather than the culture of human rights that is sought after. Sporre & Botman (2003:311) argue that such a view of human rights would miss the relational roots of “rights”. I only have rights because of the dignity attributed to me (externally). Additionally, they contend that a moral society cannot be secured through legislation.

Therefore, the formulation of a bill of rights has to be supported by a human rights culture, that is, the moral will of citizens to live by the vision and values articulated in the bill of rights (Sporre & Botman 2003:311). Without a sense of responsibility on the part of individuals, freedom can deteriorate into domination by the powerful. An ethos of responsibility implies the need to always ask about our action’s foreseeable consequences and take responsibility for them. An action where the end justifies the means and where whatever works brings profit, power, or enjoyment stands opposed to the call for global responsibility. This is because calling for global responsibility is, first and foremost, the antithesis of calling for what is merely an ethic of success (Küng & Schmidt 1993:75).

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Küng & Schmidt (1993:75) argue that some people misunderstand that their freedoms mean exercising and implementing their rights and claims without personal responsibilities. The challenge then is that when everyone pursues his/her rights exclusively and does not accept any obligations and responsibilities, a person and state or humankind as a whole can deteriorate into hostilities, conflicts and chaos (Küng & Schmidt 1993:75).

Many theorists in South Africa agree that the notion of responsibility may help to reorient moral discourse. Koopman & Vosloo (2002:74) argue that an ethics of responsibility is imperative. They state that ethics of responsibility considers the available alternatives and possible consequences, stresses individual responsibilities in the face of social issues, emphasises a willingness to participate in society at large and raises hope for dignified future generations.

The theory of responsibility is at odds with the ongoing existence of the human species, which is oriented on the idea of purely inner motivation of an agent but does not bother about the consequences of a decision or an action. Theoretical discourse on the ethics of responsibility usually builds upon Max Weber's speech "Politik als Beruf" (1919). Weber contrasted an ethics of absolute conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*) with an ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*) (Schweiker 2001:18). Weber's speech was made in the context of reconstruction after World War 1, where the prevailing "protestant ethics of conviction/attitude" was challenged. The main thrust of his argument was that individuals should take responsibility for the consequences of their actions, hence the need for a moral society.

Several twentieth-century Western scholars, for example, philosophers such as Hans Jonas, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, and Heinz Eduard Tödt, together with theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Wolfgang Huber, Hans Küng, H. Richard Niebuhr, Larry Rasmussen, William Schweiker & Sharon Welch, to mention only a few, have built on these insights. They each call for an ethics of responsibility, albeit in different ways and from various perspectives.

Scientific and technological advancements stimulated further discussion that prompted theories of responsibility. For example, disputes over nuclear weapons, limits to growth, genetic engineering, and organ transplants prompted philosopher Hans Jonas in his book *Imperative of Responsibility* (1979) to set the tone for this new debate (see also Huber 1993; Huber 2020:185). An ethos of responsibility is based on a categorical imperative that Hans Jonas further developed. He suggested that the consequences of an action or decision should be judged according to its compatibility with the continuation of a fully human existence on earth. Jonas's argument can be premised as follows: human knowledge and power are increasingly being enhanced through science and technology.

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This implies new opportunities for preserving and developing human life and its destruction. Therefore, the ultimate ethical obligation of humankind is to care about the future.

Similarly, the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer acknowledges that concrete responsibility means taking the real-life circumstances of the present seriously by asking, what must we do now, as responsible people, to contribute to a good society in future, one in which our children will be able to live together peacefully in justice (Huber 1993:574; De Gruchy 1999:219). Schweiker (2001:19) distinguishes between responsibility ethics centred on responsibility to others and an ethics of responsibility focused on responsibility for actions. He explains how responsibility encompasses a whole range of concerns regarding freedom and accountability. Schweiker distinguishes between ethics of responsibility (as responsiveness to the other) and responsibility ethics (as responsible for actions).

Yet, in each case, the nature of action, freedom, determinacy, and patterns of ascribing accountability occupy attention. Responsibility for actions, rather than responsiveness to the other, is the centre of ethics. In this respect, we might speak of an ethics of responsibility rather than, as with Levinas, Niebuhr and Huber, responsibility ethics. These are not opposed: every ethic must give some account of ascriptions of accountability for actions; every ethic acknowledges that moral creatures respond to others and their world in various ways. What is at issue, then, is a matter of emphasis in ethics.

Another prominent German social ethicist, Heinz Eduard Tödt (1918-1991), developed a model of responsible decision-making borrowing from Max Weber, Georg Picht, Hans Jonas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Tödt agrees with other responsibility ethicists that new and difficult moral issues are emerging due to the rapid development of modern technology, in which existing duties can no longer resolve all moral dilemmas. He suggests six aspects that have to be considered for responsible decision-making: 1) Seeing, accepting and describing the problem; 2) Analysing the situation; 3) Considering possible available responses; 4) Evaluating applicable norms and criteria; 5) Listening to the opinion of others; and 6) Taking the decision and acting (Tödt 1978:110).[9]

Tödt (1978:110) notes that these aspects do not necessarily follow logically or chronologically but provide an ideal-typical analysis of opinion-forming and decision-making. South African ethicists such as Etienne de Villiers (2013:3) analysed these six steps that can be used in moral judgements.

[9] Tödt's model of responsible decision making is used in the module Ethics 111 entitled "Introduction to ethical theory and practice" offered at the University of the Western Cape to explore examples of moral decision making. See https://www.uwc.ac.za/study/all-areas-of-study/departments/department-of-religion-and-theology/undergraduate (accessed 26 November 2022).

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They concluded that these steps entail a distinctive normative ethical approach that can be depicted as an ethics of responsibility. Additionally, De Villiers (2020:164) strongly believes that a modern explanation of the formation of moral responsibility should contain the knowledge obtained from an ethics of responsibility.

Hans Küng emphasises responsibility further through his call for a global ethic. His proposal and the impact that this had on the Parliament of World Religions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of the study.

2.8 The role of worldviews in moral judgements

In the discussion above, it became clear that the basis for moral judgements is understood in widely diverging ways in the dominant Western ethical theories. These include focusing on a vision for a good society, virtues, values (or goals), duties, and the following rights and responsibilities. Mapping such moral concepts (Birch & Rasmussen; Conradie *et al.*) is helpful from an African perspective, specifically at the University of the Western Cape, because these rival ethical theories continue to shape current discourse and the vocabulary employed in ethical debates. However, such a Western dominance raises the question of what the distinct contribution to the ethical theory of African philosophy may be.

At UWC, this is typically explored in terms of worldview category. The role of worldviews is for examples explored in the module Ethics 121 paper one entitled "Religions, Worldviews and Morality". The argument is that a particular social/cultural context shapes moral judgement and that such a context needs to be understood in terms of the political and economic forces that shape the world, with particular reference to colonisation, white supremacy and patriarchy. The assumption is that moral discourse is shaped by the social construction of reality (the influence of worldviews) and, indeed, by the social construction of ultimate reality (the influence of religion).

The term "worldviews" is used in contrasting academic discourses, which leads to considerable confusion. It is, for example used in the context of scientific cosmologies, the sociology of knowledge, neo-Calvinist philosophy, and African philosophy. At times, one gets the impression that there is no distinction between a worldview and a broad philosophy so that a worldview could be described with adjectives such as "liberal" or "Marxist", "modernist" or "postmodernist", humanist or posthumanist, colonial, postcolonial or decolonial. This becomes less than helpful for the study and this chapter, namely, to offer a mapping of various moral concepts employed.

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Instead, it may be more helpful to explore how the concept of "worldviews" (or "moral universe") is used in the context of African philosophy. Africans throughout the continent have maintained the intellectual integrity of traditional Africa long enough to have developed a distinctive African ethos. According to Conradie (2014:2), a worldview cannot be founded solely on knowledge of the world. It comprises how reality is socially constructed from a specific social embeddedness. In African philosophy, a worldview aids individual in making sense of both cosmic revelations and social systems and moral ambitions, goals, and values. Religion has given African people a way of understanding the world that affects their experience of life. All the questions they ask about their existence and the world's existence and their own experiences of being alive are derived from their culture, tradition, and religion (Mbiti 1997:37).

African religion demonstrates that its core ethical assumptions are centred on how God interacts with humans and the rest of creation on the one hand and, on the other hand, how to interpret good and evil or right and wrong (Magesa 1997:71). The conception of morality in African Traditional Religion is derived from cultural traditions. It brings into play the role of the spirit world, including God as the "Supreme Being", the ancestors (the living dead), human and animal spirits and the rest of nature as animated. The key category for an African self-understanding is life, which also offers the fundamental framework for any interpretation of the universe, people, nature, or the divine. Morality is life-centred, which is the overarching principle that must always be considered. Humans are responsible for upholding the link between the universe's spheres since they are the agents of what is morally good or bad or ethically right or wrong (Magesa 1997:71).

Van der Walt (1997:89) argues that Africans were generally taught a "broken" or dualistic worldview by Western missionaries that led to an estrangement between their traditional culture and their adherence to Christianity. They could not make the Christian faith a reality in their daily lives and maintain a comprehensive worldview that could form the basis of moral judgements. Describing an African worldview, Magesa (1997:72) observes that humans are responsible for upholding the link between the spheres of the universe since they are the agents of what is morally good or bad. Sociability with other people and harmony with the universe is the guiding ethical principle.

Chaos does not just mean a state of fundamental disorder; instead, it raises the possibility of a collision between chaos and order in the cosmos, which would cause enormous pain for the human community. The relationship between totems and taboos in African ethics is based on how they create a moral atmosphere or establish moral laws meant to promote harmony and the universe's natural order. Taboos exist to protect the integrity of the universe's moral order for the benefit of

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humanity. An African perspective on the world and humanity's place is based on the understanding that what is good preserves life and what is bad destroys it (Magesa 1997:35).

An African worldview is not only shaped by religion but also by African culture. The cultural values of people of African descent around the world have been referred to as having an "African-centred worldview" or an "Afrocentric worldview" (Thabede 2008:233). African culture informs an African worldview. African cultural practices include beliefs, values, knowledge, habits, skills, arts, values, and ways of life. Culture influences how people perceive ideas, values, time passage, and how they understand cause and effect. This worldview provides Africans with the framework for comprehending reality, knowledge, morality, and the meaning and purpose of life (Kim, McCalman & Fisher 2012:205). The core of the argument, then, is that Africans have always observed things from the perspective of an African worldview, which is influenced by African culture and religion.

Further attempts to identify a common thread for an African worldview and ethos are signalled by the growing popularity of the notion of ubuntu, which has its roots in Southern Africa. In recent decades, ubuntu, also called Africa's "indigenous philosophy of ubuntu", has generated much interest and controversy. Twikirize & Spitzer (2019:18) note that the term is borne out of the belief that community strength comes from community support and that dignity and identity are attained through the values of mutualism, empathy, generosity, and commitment to the community. A strong sense of belonging to a group, be it the extended family, clan, or community, is the cornerstone of African philosophy. The concept that is closely related to Ubuntu is called ukama. Ukama is derived from an adjective that means being related to or belonging to the same family. I

In Shona and other Southern African cultures, ukama is not usually restricted to people who share the same blood. Ukama is also constructed based on totemic and taboo systems, whereby a person sees himself or herself as related to natural species such as animals, trees, rivers or mountains (Grange 2012:329). The purpose of this worldview is to instil a sense of belonging to the broader environment, the past and the future (Murove 2014:44). Additionally, this principle aims to advance the dignity and worth of every person, focusing on self-respect. Nevertheless, this is not the place to discuss the African philosophy of ubuntu in detail since such a discussion would be far beyond the scope of mapping moral concepts for this chapter.

The question remains: How does one live a good moral life, make responsible decisions and form sustainable moral communities in a changing world where absolutes and universals lose their impact on life's meaning and the universe? In what way do worldviews form the basis for moral

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discernment? This is not immediately obvious as traditional African worldviews have been influenced by Western worldviews shaped by modern science and tended to underplay the role of religion. This has resulted in a clash of worldviews that results in moral uncertainty. Even then, such uncertainty precisely indicates the significance of such worldviews.

It may, therefore, be helpful to comment on this clash of worldviews. Modernists thought that human reasoning and scientific knowledge could all produce a single explanation for all of life's mysteries. Kim, McCalman & Fisher (2012:205) contend that such thinking was not surprising given contemporary science's amazing and rapid development during the 1700s. Applying reasoning, observation, and experimentation, as well as building on the works of other scientists and intellectuals, led to enormous advances in knowledge in subjects like medicine, biology, anatomy, mechanics, and astronomy. Human reason and science seemed to have boundless power that was at odds with faith (Kim, McCalman & Fisher 2012:205). Even though scientific reason and other secular worldviews promised to be able to explain everything, they were unable to answer fundamental existential concerns or moral dilemmas that religious traditions can offer (Magesa 1997:71). By contrast, in an African worldview, the emphasis is on participation and interactions in communities. In contrast, Western worldviews strongly emphasise the individual and interactions are seen through the lens of individualism (Van der Walt 2001:32).

Lent (2021) suggests that for us to live in harmony and sustainably on our planet, we must promote a worldview in which human discovery and experience of meaning in our lives are compatible with the results of scientific inquiry. This requires a deeply integrated and coherent understanding of humanity's place in the cosmos. People's worldview affects almost every element of thinking, values, and behaviour without them even being aware of it, which is why it is so significant. Worldviews lead cultures to respond to their reality in fundamentally contrasting ways. People can see the world in several different ways. Conradie (2014:446) discusses the issue of God and creation, borrowing from Snyder (2007*)*. Conradie (2014:446) described different ways of seeing the world as "warped" views of the world. He argues that some views are highly destructive because humans are often not treated as an integral part of nature. For example, nature may be viewed in a crudely Darwinian way, in terms of a bloody struggle where the motto of the survival of the fittest reigns. Such a way of seeing the world minimizes the importance of peaceful coexistence between species and collaboration in a species. At worst, this strategy permits social Darwinism that could justify elitism, political dominance, economic imperialism, and a sense of cultural superiority.

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Similarly, from a capitalist perspective, nature may be viewed as "natural resources" that can be extracted for economic growth. Therefore, property is the right of the powerful to do what they choose, regardless of economic injustices and inequality or ecological harm, whereas land is real estate. In other contexts, nature is revered. It is sacred, if not worshipped, as something so magnificent that it deserves respect. This might promote an environmental attitude and encourage much-needed restraint. On that basis, Conradie (2014:446) maintains that compared to such alternatives, the ways of seeing the world need to come to terms with how evil has become embedded in social structures to be able to see where such evil comes from and where the power to overcome evil then come from.

Likewise, some questions persist regarding the relationship between worldviews and the global ethics project. Do we need a single worldview for a global ethic? How do we engage with different worldviews if each worldview shapes an understanding of such engagement? Can a global ethic be global if it is situated in conflicting religious traditions and contrasting worldviews? A comprehensive response to address all these questions would divert the focus in this chapter, namely the mapping of moral concepts. One may conclude that the category of worldviews plays a significant role in shaping moral judgements even though this role is not always direct, and one has to allow for conflicting views of the world that shape people's lives, especially in the African context.

2.9 Principles, rules, norms and goals

It has been established in this chapter that moral judgements can be shaped by various categories, namely visions for the good society, virtues, values, duties and obligations, rights, responsibilities, and worldviews. All these are embedded in contrasting ethical theories.

What should one then do with other moral concepts such as commands, principles, rules, and norms? According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, principles refer to a basic idea or rule that explains or controls how something happens or works. principles are fundamental truths or claims that form the basis for a way of thinking or behaving in a certain way. Ethical principles do not guarantee that a decision will be made following them. Instead, they highlight factors that should be considered while making decisions. In the study, the term "principles" will be used concerning the principles of a global ethic and the Earth Charter initiatives that emerged as collaborative efforts to offer a vision of a global ethic that can guide society amid contemporary challenges.

The Earth Charter employs the category of principles in a somewhat intuitive way, probably because this has a wide cultural appeal. But how does a principle relate to the other concepts? It

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sounds like duties and rules but could also refer to values. They are not principles as if this is a starting point, but they describe deeply held convictions about right and wrong. At the heart of the Earth Charter is the assumption that human relations with non-human species and individual living beings involve moral responsibilities. Earth and all living beings have intrinsic worth and require respect and care from moral agents.

Rules seem synonymous with principles but might offer a more clearly defined basis for moral judgments. Moral life may be made simpler by such standards, but there is a risk that they can become overly legalistic given stringent adherence to and application of moral principles. Rules refer to accepted principles or instructions that direct how things are or should be done. Therefore, it is not surprising that rules are employed in contrasting ethics theories, such as rule utilitarianism. Conradie *et al.* (2006:84) observe that it is not surprising that rules, regulations, and codes of conduct are an essential aspect of every household, institutions like homes, universities, hospitals, and churches, as well as the military, businesses, and professional organisations.

A rule may be contrasted to the role of moral goals. Goals are more concrete than a broad vision of a good society. They direct moral agents to the future and energise action. At the same time, goals may become destructive if pursued without the constraint provided by moral rules (Conradie *et al.* 2006:85).

Similarly, norms are understood as morally relevant rules that should be followed in social contexts such as those between family members, friends, communities, societies, etc. Certain types of behaviours are tolerated or forbidden by norms. In other words, norms "regulate" our behaviour or guide us towards avoiding unacceptable behaviour and encouraging acceptable behaviour. Norms function strongly when people remember "how it had been in the past", especially when they expect that the past must continue uninterrupted and that life needs structures one can depend on. People are comfortable with that which has been tested and proved to be dependable in the past.

These four categories (principles, rules, goals, and norms) are used in contrasting ethical theories. They seem to function as necessary moral vocabulary without much conceptual clarity. In the study, the use of such categories by community leaders will be noted whenever they are employed to address various contemporary challenges.

2.10 Moral directives as an umbrella concept

In the study, the term "moral directives" will be employed as an umbrella concept that includes the role of visions, virtues, values, duties/obligations, rights, responsibilities, and worldviews, noting

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references to principles, rules, norms and goals. Using the term moral directives is not aimed at developing a different ethical theory but to capture the role of community leaders in moral formation, community development, counsel, advice, and prohibitions. Community leaders are allowed to offer such moral directives instead of command or instructions. Directives are offered as a form of practical wisdom to give a sense of direction on a wide range of personal and social concerns, e.g., personal habits, money, sexuality, health, waste management, family matters, caring for infants, the elderly and the sick, community matters (e.g. on poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS, addressing criminality, violence, security, water management, etc.).

Their perceptions are described in depth given the mapping of moral concepts presented in this chapter and presented in Chapters 5 and 6 of the study. The aim is to establish what the community leaders consider to be good and right and what is considered bad and wrong. The focus is on the language and ethical categories used when offering moral directives.

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CHAPTER 3

THE DECLARATION TOWARD A GLOBAL ETHIC

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presents a range of moral categories that reflect the dimensions and forms of human moral experience. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic passed by the Parliament of World Religions (1993), based on Hans Küng's work, responds especially to global concerns of economic inequality and injustice, various manifestations of violence and environmental issues. The aim of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive description of these issues and paradigm shifts towards and beyond modernity. Instead, the argument will be developed in five sections.

Firstly, the origin and historical background of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of the World Religions will be traced (Section 3.2). Such historical background would be incomplete without mentioning the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities that was developed by the Inter-Action Council (1997) (Section 3.3). An analysis of the principles of a global ethic and its irrevocable directives highlighted in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic will be presented in (Sections 3.4 and 3.5, respectively). These directives identified moral duties and responsibilities, acknowledging human rights but also speaking explicitly of human responsibilities.

The Declaration has since received mixed reviews. Despite being sympathetic to the efforts of the global ethic project, several analysts believe that the Declaration has significant flaws. Section (3.6 and 37), which forms the most important part of this chapter, will provide an overview of the reception of these two documents. Ethicists believe ethics has an indispensable and important role in globalisation. Implications of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic will be discussed briefly in (Section 3.8) to probe its relevance amidst the complexities of globalisation. By examining Küng's proposal of a global ethic as outlined by the Parliament of the World's Religions followed by the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, the intersection of how ethics counter the ill effects of globalisation is understood. As concluding remarks in (Section 3.9), the contemporary significance of the Declaration Towards a Global Ethic will be outlined, given the assumption that the context has changed but that the need for a global ethic remains the same.

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3.2 Historical background

The history of the Parliament of the World's Religions dates back to 1893 when it was held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Swami Vivekananda is reported to be the most influential man in the Parliament's early-stage development. He was a young Bengali ascetic destined to lead the Ramakrshna Math (an important Hindu revitalisation movement). Hollon (1995) compiled a report on all the events at the 1993 World Parliament of Religions. Commenting on the Parliament of 1893, Hollon (1995:2) observes a good deal of Anglo-Saxon triumphalism. Still, this event marked the revelation of the plurality of religious forces on the domestic and international scenes. The Parliament's leaders also confirmed that "the Parliament is a collective spiritual process through which a widely diversified group has to create a specific space, filled with divine energy where individuals of all classes and creeds can congregate" (Hollon 1995:2). The Parliament was unified in 1988, almost a century later, to carry out a tradition and legacy that dates back to 1893.

The second World Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago in the United States of America from 28 August to 4 September 1993. This event marked the emergence of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of World Religions. The idea was not sudden, but it went through a long process. In planning this event, the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Küng (University of Tübingen) was commissioned to write a draft proposal for a global ethic. The aim was to draft a declaration for a common ethic that could be adopted by the various religious traditions attending the Parliament. Hans Küng devoted much of his intellectual and political energy to promoting "a global ethic" as a key to peace and a sense of a shared human community in an increasingly globalised world that could address the many challenges of that time (Falk 1999:123).

Some of the formidable efforts by Hans Küng in drafting the global ethic was at an interreligious conference at Temple University in 1984. He condensed his thoughts into programmatic theses: "No world peace without peace among the religions, no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions, and no dialogue between the religions without accurate knowledge of one another" (Küng 1990; Brewer 2001:106). Küng's two major books on interreligious dialogue, *Christianity and the World Religions* and *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, were inspired by the above theses. In addition to that, the 1989 UNESCO Colloquium on World Religions, Human Rights and World Peace held in Paris also marked the gradual development of Küng's thought on the concept of a world ethic (*Weltethos*) (Sholihan 2017). The project for a new world ethic was programmatically presented in Küng's book, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. The book's first part outlines the paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernity and deals

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with the threat to world survival and the need for a global ethic. I will not go into detail about these discussions.

Nevertheless, capturing the bottom line of the argument is helpful. According to Küng (1990:6), "After the failure of State socialism, neo-capitalism and Japanism, we are at the end of the great modern humanistic ideologies of political-social revolution and technological evolution". The ideology of progress has been "demystified" in this century of two world wars and the Holocaust. Hans Küng argues that the survival of the world is now threatened by increasing military aggression, hunger, extinction of animal life, world economic catastrophe, depletion of rainforests and increased global warming (Küng 1990:12; Küng & Schmidt:1993:11). Concomitant with these issues, Küng concludes that the world is in a moral crisis. As such, many people no longer know a basis from which they may make moral decisions. The challenge is that people are confronted with personal and social nihilism in every facet of human existence. Therefore, the paradigm change from modernity to postmodernity is disruptive (Küng 1990:12). Brewer (2001:106) notes that Küng's experience in interreligious dialogue and extensive research into the world's religions offers sufficient evidence that the world's religions could supply the moral basis and spiritual resources needed for a new world ethic. The inclusion of non-religious people by Küng was based on the fact that they also have a criterion of distinguishing values and norms between good and evil, which they develop and pursue from their goals and priorities.

As a result, religious and secular people worldwide should work together to develop a moral vision that takes its bearings from human dignity. A coalition of believers and non-believers working in respectful mutuality is indispensable for a common global ethic. Non-believers can join believers in resisting all trivial nihilism, diffuse scepticism and social apathy and devote themselves with conviction to basic human rights (Küng 1990:36; Küng & Kuschel 1993:7; Sholihan 2017:40). Although a global ethic provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world, Küng & Kuschel (1993) premised their argument as follows: 1) a global ethic does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order. 2) A global ethic offers a vision that can lead women and men away from despair and society from chaos. Therefore, there can be no better global order without a global ethic and a basic consensus over ethics. Any society is threatened sooner or later by chaos or dictatorship (Küng & Kuschel 1993:18; Küng & Schmidt: 1993:9).

The first draft of Küng's global ethic was discussed by the Council of the Parliament and other leaders from various religious traditions. Eventually, Küng's text was accepted by the Board of Trustees (with some minor revisions) as what would become the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (Küng & Kuschel, 1993; Brewer 2001:107). At the second World Parliament of Religions

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held in Chicago, in the United States of America, from 28 August to 4 September 1993, the conveners broadened the membership to include a wider range of representatives from Eastern, indigenous, and alternative religious traditions. Of course, not every religious tradition was represented in this Parliament. Nonetheless, it included representatives from over 115 different religious organisations among more than 6,500 delegates (Porter 2001:112). The delegates attending the Parliament's 1993 convening would discuss and debate the prospects for a global ethic and be asked to endorse the Declaration formally. The real test for Küng global ethic was whether or not diverse religious groups could come to a consensus about a minimum of shared ethical principles. The difficulties in interreligious dialogue were tested as recorded events to prove the difficulties attached to inter-religious dialogue. For example, Hollon (1995:18) reported that the Jewish delegation withdrew because of conflicting political views.

Orthodox Christians also withdrew because of conflicting theological views. Conservative and fundamentalist Christian organisations did not attend because of theological barriers such as claiming that all truth is contained in the Christian tradition. They believed dialogue with other traditions was useless. Similarly, Brewer (2001:106) notes that Evangelical and conservative Christian groups did not attend because they were suspicious of the syncretistic nature of the Parliament of World Religions.

Those events did not stop the proceedings of the Parliament. Before the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic was signed, several objections were considered. Most delegates, including the Dalai Lama, the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Chicago, the Vatican representative, the World Council of Churches, and many other wider-ranging groups and individuals, approved the Declaration (Brewer 2001:108). Over a hundred participants representing more than a dozen faiths signed a declaration outlining a common global ethic (Sholihan 2017:39). The end of a weeklong parliament convening was renowned with closing ceremonies in Chicago's Grant Park hotel. That was the emergence of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic.

Commenting on the Declaration, Hollenbach (2022:362) agrees that the parliament declared action based on a genuinely global ethic essential to overcoming the chaos that leads many individuals to lose hope for our global future. Since the historic 1893 World's Parliament of World Religions in Chicago, modern parliament convenings have attracted participants from more than 200 diverse religious, indigenous, and secular beliefs and more than 80 nations to its international gatherings. These parliament convenings focus on an enduring commitment to justice, peace, and sustainability through interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

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3.3 Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities

Attempts were made to draft the Declaration of Human Responsibilities 1997 in light of the Parliament of the World's Religions adopting a Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993). Common values among the world's religions and non-religious orders based on the universally accepted golden rule remained the cornerstone of a global ethic (Saul 2000:573). Similarly, there have been systematic attempts to arrive at a shared conception of the proper balance between human rights and responsibilities. Another prominent event was the Inter-Action Council (AIC) initiative founded in 1983 by former Prime Minister of Japan Takeo Fukuda.

The IAC is an independent international organisation pledging to find solutions to the political, economic, and social problems facing humanity. Its members were former heads of government and heads of state. They began the search for universal ethical standards with a meeting of spiritual leaders and political leaders in March 1987 at La Civiltà Cattolica in Rome, Italy. Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was the honorary chairman (Saul 2000:565). The council requested a report on international ethical norms from a high-level expert committee in 1996. At its Vancouver Plenary Meeting in May 1996, the council welcomed the report "In Search of global ethical Standards," which revealed many similarities among the world's religions. There was agreement among the council with the recommendation that the United Nations should convene a conference to consider a Declaration of Human Obligations to complement the earlier crucial work on rights.

This initiative to codify responsibilities under the IAC was taken further in 1997, a year before the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The aim behind drafting this document, the Declaration of Human Responsibilities (1997), was to commemorate and complement the UDHR of 1948. The document's drafters called for a shared global ethic that balances the rights of individuals with essential human responsibilities (Del Valle & Sikkink 2017:193). They were much more concerned with duties and individual responsibilities in the age of rights. Hans Küng again played a pivotal role in the formulation of the draft document following the same tradition as the drafters of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (Boot 2017:25). While the draft declaration is the most prominent example of a declaration of human responsibilities, there have also been numerous other attempts to codify human responsibilities in a single document that are beyond the scope of this chapter. These include the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities; City of Valencia (Valencia Third Millennium Foundation) and UNESCO, Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities; the International Council of Human Duties, A Declaration of Human Duties:

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A Code of Ethics of Shared Responsibilities, the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights (Saul 2000:573).

Theoretical discussion of a responsibility ethic typically builds on several twentieth-century Western scholars. These include but are not limited to philosophers such as Hans Jonas, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricoeur, and Heinz Eduard Tödt. T, with theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Wolfgang Huber, Hans Küng, H. Richard Niebuhr, Larry Rasmussen, William Schweiker and Sharon Welch. They all demand a responsibility ethic in different ways and from various directions. Similarly, in academic circles, there have been a number of scholars calling for the logical relationship of human rights that imply duties or even calling for increased attention to duties to fulfil human rights. The claim underpinning the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities is that it will balance freedom and responsibility by encouraging individuals and governments to limit their pursuit of rights where it would harm others, including future generations. It is stated that the "exclusive insistence on rights can result in conflict, division, and endless dispute, and the neglect of human responsibilities can lead to lawlessness and chaos" (IAC 1997).

The key point was that morality is necessary for a society because people ought to be accountable for the consequences of their decisions. Del Valle & Sikkink (2017:193) call for recovering the tradition of individual duties integral to the historical origins of international human rights. The assumption is that increased attention to duties and responsibilities in international politics (most importantly economic, social, and cultural rights) can be necessary complements to promoting human rights. Del Valle & Sikkink (2017:193) noted that responsibilities can be a tool used to address pressing global public policy challenges. The traditional human rights language's failure to adequately address transnational environmental protection has been its major criticism. Regarding addressing environmental crises, Del Valle & Sikkink (2017:193) suggest that it is necessary not only to emphasise a human right to a clean environment but, more importantly, to emphasise the duty of states, corporations, and individuals to protect the environment.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been more frequently criticised because it represents the Western powers' philosophical and cultural background based on European individualism (Saul 2000:573). Thus, the argument raised by the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities (IAC) is that the emphasis on obligation is arguably absent from existing human rights standards despite the fact that many societies have traditionally conceived of human relations in terms of obligations rather than rights. Eastern and African thought are examples of such communitarian relationships. Historically, the concepts of responsibility and

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community have taken precedence in the East/Africa, whilst the themes of freedom and individualism remain prioritised in the West since the 17th century age of enlightenment.

The logic behind the call for international human duties and responsibilities movement is for all people to acknowledge the need to take responsibility. The draft Declaration of Human Responsibilities outlines specific obligations. Despite the diversity in backgrounds and ideologies, the backers of the Declaration agreed that "[All] people, to the best of their knowledge and ability, have a responsibility to foster a better social order, both at home and globally" (Del Valle & Sikkink, 2017:193; Boot 2017:25). For the attainment of a better global order, the drafters held that a global ethic is needed because rights without morality and responsibility cannot long endure. While humans deserve the most freedom possible, they must also develop a sense of responsibility to manage their freedom.

These human duties and responsibilities are outlined in nineteen articles that roughly mirror the rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. The IAC's rationale for proposing a Declaration of Human Responsibilities is founded on several beliefs. Foremost is the view that the global problems accompanying globalisation can only be resolved by "global solutions based on ideas, values and norms respected by all cultures and societies" (Küng 1990). Thus, the draft Declaration is framed as a universal ethical manifesto rather than a series of enforceable legal norms. As Küng & Kuschel (1993:17) argue, a better social order locally and internationally cannot be achieved by enforcing laws, prescriptions, and conventions; it needs a global ethic.

The United Nations General Assembly referred the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibility draft to (UNESCO) and the United Nations Human Rights Commission for consideration and adoption. Although this ambitious but unfulfilled goal seems no longer the highest priority, it is still hoped that the Declaration may find its way into the UN system.

3.4 Analysing the principles of a global ethic

The purpose of this Section is not only to rewrite the principles of the Declaration Toward a global Ethic (most importantly, the irrevocable directives as they relate to the study) but also to analyse and reflect on the key ideas and significance of the Declaration. Ratified by the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993 and expanded in 2018, "towards a global ethic (an initial declaration)," or the "global ethic", expresses the minimal set of principles shared by people, whether religious or not (Renaud & Schweiker 2020:4).

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The starting point in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, inspired by Küng is the argument for the lack of a realistic vision for the future from political thought and cultural space. This vision can lead women and men away from despair and society away from chaos. Promoting a global ethic aims to interact with those in positions of authority and connect their perception of their country's interests to "the spiritual and cultural foundations of humankind". Swart & Venter (2005:205) point out that the Declaration can be interpreted as a social critique, religious self-critique, ethical imperative, and a true prophetic utterance.

Most of its analysis of how the world functions points to the future as a nightmare. The Declaration's existing state of affairs is attributed to the lack of legally binding standards and principles. Global catastrophes in global politics, ecology, and economy are highlighted as the root causes of several problems. These problems include "rising rates of unemployment, poverty, and hunger, the dwindling chances for world peace, the conflict, mass murders and the deaths of children, corruption in politics and business, drug abuse, organised crime, and the ongoing ruthless plundering of the planet which threatens the collapse of the ecosystem" (Declaration 1993; Küng 1990; Küng & Kuschel 1993). In such a dramatic global situation, Küng advocates for a vision where people live peacefully together, with ethnic and ethical groupings and religions sharing responsibility for the care of the Earth (Declaration 1993; Küng & Kuschel 1993).

In his argument, Küng considers the role played by the world's religious traditions. On the one hand, Küng notes that there is no world peace without peace between the religions. On the other hand, he further observes that there is no peace between religions without dialogue between the religions. Therefore, the basis for a global ethic should be derived from the minimal fundamental consensus among religions to develop binding values, irrevocable standards, and basic moral attitudes (Küng & Kuschel 1993:19; Declaration 1993:3).

The first principle formulated in the Declaration, "No new global order without a new global ethic," targets all people, whether religious or not. According to the Declaration, the vision of a good society can only be achieved by stopping the current social catastrophe and bringing about enduring peace through ethical considerations as moral requirements. Considering the ethical theory of responsibility, it is stated in the Declaration that everyone has the responsibility to envision a better global order in which differences cannot hinder religious and cultural traditions. Everyone's involvement should be based on a culture of human rights, freedom, justice, peace and preserving our mother Earth (Küng & Kuschel 1993:20; Declaration 1993:4).

Küng was aware of the challenges of advocating for a global ethic, which may be misinterpreted as a global ideology or unified religion. He then argues that "a global ethic does not mean a global

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ideology or a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, and certainly not the domination of one religion over all others. By a global ethic, Küng pointed out that it means a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes" (Küng & Kuschel 1993:21). Without such a fundamental consensus on ethics, Küng argues that every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship sooner or later.

Küng (1990) considered Kantian philosophy that changed the concept of dignity to become more associated with human freedom and human being's capacity to shape their destinies through reasoning and a social order based on equality and mutual respect (Kumar 2021:437). One can note that human freedom and the capacity of human beings to shape their destinies through reasoning can be twofold. Firstly, reasoning can result in random pluralism that encourages hedonism, consumerism, and indifference, which, in the Declaration, it has been argued cannot keep the global community together. Secondly, since modern democracy permits a range of worldviews and ideologies, Küng suggests that for there to be peaceful coexistence, there must be at least a fundamental ethical agreement, some minimum of shared values, standards, and attitudes (Küng & Kuschel 1993; Declaration 1993).

The second principle expresses the fundamental demand that "every human being must be treated humanely". It is recognised in the first paragraph of this Section that human beings are imperfect with limitations and defects. Nevertheless, beings know the reality of evil. They should use their various religious and ethical traditions to know what is helpful and unhelpful, what is right and what is wrong and what is good and what is evil. Individuals, communities, organisations, states and religions are compelled to express the fundamental elements of the global ethic for global welfare (Declaration 1993). The differences in individual religions should not be a stumbling block to the vision of publicly proclaiming those things which humans already hold in common. The starting point for the urgently needed social and ecological reforms should be supported by the spiritual renewal derived from the spiritual powers of religions. Religions should be used to change the inner orientation, the whole mentality, people's hearts, and a conversion from a false path to a new orientation for life (Declaration 1993). The Declaration uses human dignity as a moral concept that signifies human being's intrinsic value and universal moral equality.

Following Kantian understanding of dignity, the Declaration upholds that human beings possess an inalienable and untouchable dignity that cannot be determined by age, sex, race, skin colour, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin. Therefore, every individual in the state must protect and honour this dignity. The Declaration is totally against using other beings as subjects, objects or means to an end as they are ends in themselves. Denying

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rights through commercialisation and industrialisation in economics, politics, media, research institutes, and industrial corporations is strongly condemned.

As expressed in the Declaration, the global ethic should be inspired by the "golden rule", an ethical consensus that already exists among the world's religions. This principle or rule is expressed as "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others (Küng 1993; Declaration 1993). According to the Declaration, "this should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions."

The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic is against egoism and selfishness, whether individual or collective, whether in the form of class thinking, racism, nationalism, or sexism, as they prevent humans from being authentically human. It, therefore, claims that self-determination and self-realisation can only be legitimate if they are attached to self-responsibility and global responsibility to fellow human beings and the planet Earth (Küng & Kuschel 1993; Declaration 1993).

3.5 Irrevocable directives

The third principle in the Declaration consists of the longest section on global ethic which elaborates on five ethical commitments, also called irrevocable directives. According to Renaud & Schweiker (2020), Küng (1990) describes these as irrevocable, unchanging, and unconditional because they apply to everyone without exception. Nonetheless, Renaud & Schweiker (2020:5) note that they are not intended to serve as moral straight jackets but rather to provide orientation to people faced with ethical quandaries. Each of these directives begins with the phrase "Commitment to a culture of ..." reflecting the document's emphasis on an ethos or way of life that is derived from inner transformation, which translates into new interpersonal and inter-group relationships in every sphere of life (Renaud & Schweiker 2020:6). These are analysed in detail in the following sub Sections.

3.5.1 Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life

The claim made in the first sentence of this directive is that religious people and religions strive to lead lives that are not determined by egoism but by respect for fellow beings. However, one can argue that this assertion is debatable, considering the context and reality of life today. The endless list of challenges named in the Declaration, such as hatred, envy, jealousy, and violence, cannot be attributed only to non-religious people. Being religious does not necessarily mean one is righteous and not involved in evil. The use of violence, drug trafficking and organised crime, often equipped with new technical possibilities, is acknowledged in the Declaration that they have reached global

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proportions. Moreover, as noted in the Declaration, dictators oppress their people, and institutional violence is widespread. These dictators enforce laws to limit individual freedoms. Hostages were killed, journalists arrested, inhumane treatment of prisoners while men and women were mutilated (Declaration 1993:6).

Despite all the challenges mentioned above, Küng insists that upholding the commitment to human well-being centred on the ancient directive "Do not kill" is needed. All religious traditions have in common rules necessary for a global ethos despite many other differences in doctrine rituals. Respect for life is expressed succinctly in the Declaration with the statement, "All people have a right to life, safety, and the free development of personality insofar as they do not injure the rights of others" (Declaration 1993:6). This applies to all the people, states, races and religions to uphold the rights without hate or discrimination. The challenge is that those with political power oppress their people to maintain their power. Several countries are shaken by corruption in politics and business (Küng & Kuschel 1993:18).

Nevertheless, the need to resolve such conflicts without violence in the framework of peace and justice is emphasised in the Declaration. Those who hold political power are encouraged to work in the framework of a just order and commit themselves to the most non-violent, peaceful solutions possible (Declaration 1993:7). It is acknowledged in the Declaration that wherever there are humans, there will be conflicts. Küng suggests that a culture of non-violence can be created only if young people are taught at home or school that violence may not be a means of settling differences with others.

The Declaration extends the directive of non-violence to nature by calling for harmony or unconditional protection of animals and plants which deserve protection, preservation and care. This mandate is directed towards human beings as they are endowed with the responsibility to take care of the Earth and the cosmos, the air, water, and soil, for the sake of future generations (Declaration 1993:7). The Declaration is against the dominance of humanity over nature and the cosmos by exploiting the natural foundations of life, ruthless destruction of the biosphere and militarisation of the cosmos. In addition to that, minorities who have been victims of racial, ethnic or religious discrimination are at the centre of the global ethic's call to be appreciated, tolerated and respected.

3.5.2 Commitment to a culture of solidarity and just economic order

The Declaration considers the hand-in-glove systemic and structural challenges that come without solidarity and with unjust economic systems. The statement "We live in a world in which

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totalitarian state socialism as well as unbridled capitalism have hollowed out and destroyed many ethical and spiritual values" captures the root causes of today's problems. For example, it is stated in the Declaration that "unjust economic order has promoted materialistic mentality, breeds greed for unlimited profit and a grasping for endless plunder and social evil of corruption" (Declaration 1993:8 Küng & Kuschel 1993:19).

As a remedy, Küng (1990) revisited humankind's ancient religious and ethical tradition: You shall not steal, interpreted positively as "Deal honestly and fairly". For Küng, there is no global peace without global justice. Thus, ruthless accumulation of power and wealth leads to feelings of envy, resentment, and deadly hatred and rebellion from the disadvantaged. This results in a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence (Declaration 1993:8; Küng & Kuschel 1993). The directive of commitment to a culture of solidarity and just economic order can be summarised as follows: young people should be educated that ownership of property carries obligation and the world's riches should be used to serve humanity. Whenever there is oppression, it should be resisted with non-violent means.

3.5.3 Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness

All over the world, there is evidence of endless lies and deceit, swindling and hypocrisy, ideology and demagoguery from politicians and businesspeople, mass media, scientists and researchers, and some religious leaders (Küng and Kuschel 1993:18). However, this is strongly condemned in the Declaration Toward A Global Ethic which advocates for the recognition of the ancient directive found in religious and ethical traditions: "You shall not lie but always speak and act truthfully". For those who work in the mass media, the Declaration states that they must respect human dignity, human rights, and fundamental values through accurate reporting.

Reporters do not stand above morality but are entrusted with the freedom to report for truthfulness instead of spreading ideological propaganda. Artists, writers, and scientists entrusted with artistic and academic freedom are not exempted from general ethical standards and must serve the truth. Truthfulness and humanness are the foundation of global justice, compared to dishonesty, hypocrisy, and opportunism (Declaration 1993).

3.5.4 Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women

Respect and love are expressed in the ancient religious and ethical tradition of humankind that supports this directive: "You shall not commit sexual immorality". The call emanates from historical background and today's reality where forms of patriarchy, domination of one sex over

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the other, exploitation of women, sexual misuse of children, and forced prostitution are prevalent (Declaration 1993:10). Although it can be argued that Küng was being a religious fanatic by claiming that religious people strive for equal partnership between men and women, this does not seem to be the case because religions are at the forefront of marginalising women.

The Declaration condemns sexual exploitation and sexual discrimination as one of the worst forms of human degradation (Declaration 1993:10). They repeatedly call for the young ones to be taught at home and in schools that genders are equal and to take responsibility through caring for one another's happiness. Pure humanity, which is desperately needed, can only be expressed from religious and ethical traditions of "mutual respect, partnership, and understanding, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence" (Declaration 1993:10).

3.5.5 Commitment to a culture of sustainability and care for the Earth

Twenty-five years after the 1993 declaration toward a global ethic, Myriam Renaud was tasked to review the global ethic. She assessed whether revisions were warranted to address some of the (1993) global ethic shortfalls. There was consensus among several contributors to the 1993 global ethic and few trustees who knew with the Declaration to add the fifth irrevocable directive. Scholars of religion and ethics worldwide are said to have been consulted for their comments. Social media and electronic communication developed the new fifth directive, "Commitment to a culture of sustainability and care for Earth". The Fifth Directive was inserted into global ethic in June 2018, leaving the rest of the Declaration untouched. This was done after approval from the Executive Committee of the Parliament's Board of Trustees (Renaud & Schweiker 2020:7). The Declaration was further shared with thousands of attendees in Toronto at the seventh international interfaith conference organised by the Parliament in November of 2018. Most thousands of people attending this event approved the global ethic with verbal acclaim (Renaud & Schweiker 2020:7).

This initiative is prompted by recognising the damage caused by the climate change crisis. Climate change strongly affects the poorest populations; although they have the smallest impact, they bear the burden. The Declaration is against the over-exploitation and unjust use of natural resources, increasing conflict and poverty among people and harming other forms of life. Humanity is responsible for respecting and caring for the Earth, and its finite resources should be shared with one human family for sustainability. The Parliament of World Religions advocates for the inclusion of the environment and sustainable living in education and school curricula in every country. This will be supported by developing the human spirit in their traditions, religious, and spiritual beliefs.

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In the process, hostile relationships with each other and the larger living world based on respect, care and gratitude for the sake of future generations are promoted.

3.6 The reception of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic

Scholars have raised different opinions as a response to the global ethic after its endorsement by the Parliament of the World Religions post 1993. This section aims to highlight the reception of these documents, beginning with those who applauded them. Falk (1999:77) observes that Küng's programmatic content for a global ethic seems to fall between stools: either as an irrelevant piety or a utopian dream.

Falk (1999:64) acknowledges and supports Hans Küng's idea of a global ethic based on its task to mobilise the constructive potentialities of religion, politics, and economics. The global ethic can be used as a normative counterweight to the destructive inclinations that would otherwise certainly result in a terrible era of "culture wars" and "religious wars." Falk (1999:64) agrees that Küng's outreach actively fosters a climate of discourse and issuing an urgent appeal to non-religious and religious communities to participate in the lifeworld. As a result, the Parliament of World Religions, the Global Ethic Foundation, and the InterAction Council are beneficial. There is a need to challenge the economic climate brought by the ascendancy of neoliberal ideas about governance and the social disempowerment of governmental institutions. This could be a means to unburden the market by minimising inefficiencies, thereby ensuring maximum economic efficiency (Falk 1999:64).

Other scholars such as Swart & Venter (2005:216) believe that the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic has meaning and importance even without the concept of "development" being put over it. They acknowledge that it is a wonderful vision that stands alone as a social manifesto. It stands as a powerful counterpoint to a pessimistic perspective of religion and marks a high point in the history of ecumenism. The Declaration is strategically significant for self-critical religious actors and reflexive development theorists.

Similarly, Laopipattana (2020:301) agrees that the global ethic idea concentrates on a common understanding of fundamental principles that all religions and philosophies should uphold to create a sustainable global community. Thus, rather than emphasising the creation, agreement, and implementation of specific rules and laws to enforce specific components of that ethic, the parliament's proclamation emphasises the initial formulation and adoption of an ethic. McKenzie (2005:2) also notes that this ethic provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world. Still, it does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order.

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In addition to that, Renaud & Schweiker (2020) claim that the global ethic is still a significant accomplishment in the quest for universal morality after 25 years. According to Renaud & Schweiker (2020), its effort to aid humans in securing world peace and well-being should be regarded as a heroic endeavour to find goals, ideals, and standards held in common by people everywhere, regardless of their religion or non-religious affiliation. Morgan (2011:21) supports the global ethic because its main motivation for the search for a global ethic is to ensure a minimum standard of behaviour that might be expected of humans by the human community.

Given the long and tragic history of human oppression, bloodshed, war, poverty, and other means of causing suffering, some of which were instigated, supported, or accepted by religions, Morgan (2011:21) thinks that a global ethic is desperately needed. Likewise, Gebhardt (2000:506) applauds the global ethic idea because it gives a consensus on some very basic principles, norms, and attitudes rather than instructions on how to act "morally" in particular circumstances. It recommends an ethic, not ethics or morals. Gebhardt (2000:506) claims that while such details cannot be globalised, some fundamentals can, and this is precisely what the global ethic aims to do. People cannot be coerced to adopt an ethic, but principles can be presented for free acceptance whilst this project must regularly undergo multicultural and generational testing. The global ethic does, however, seem to satisfy actual expectations in many facets of life and society, proving that it is a promising school of thought.

The efforts of those who endorsed the affirmation "Yes to a global ethic", as demonstrated by several follow-up initiatives on a global and local scale, should establish a good starting point to further the idea (Gebhardt 2000:508). Dwyer (2001:52) maintains that a moral code that could manage diverse communitie's conflicting claims and interests is desperately needed through a global ethic. The need is exacerbated by globalisation, which opens economic, linguistic, and cultural borders and poses various challenges to cultural and traditional religious belief systems. Amanze (2017:7) examines the concept of the Global Ethic and its applicability to governance, arguing that African societies exemplify how the Global Ethic has been integrated into indigenous legal systems. Emphasizing indigenous spiritualities as the embodiment of the Global Ethic at the local level, Amanze (2017:7) asserts that African societies are grounded in strong moral values, which form the foundation of indigenous legal systems that, in turn, promote social justice, law, and order. Ultimately, Amanze (2017:7) contends that the Global Ethic can be incorporated into international law to foster a more just and peaceful global order.

Nevertheless, the global ethic has not escaped criticism from academics. Sholihan (2017:47) argues that the objectives of the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic have not been realised. This is because

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of the most apparent violence that manifests itself in war and terror happening everywhere. The reality of poverty, where millions of people are suffering in this world, the destruction of natural and ecological resources is getting worse, and gender inequality is still a big problem for some nations are some of the issues raised against the relevance of the global ethic idea. Hence, according to Sholihan (2017:47), the global ethic vision has not significantly contributed to structuring a peaceful world. It has only become a programmatic term. Another issue raised against the Declaration by Falk (1999:64) is the lack of any prospect to implement it. For Hollon (1995:19), the global ethic sets a standard but gives no method to reach that standard. The aim behind the global ethic project is to change how people think and act at a global level but its values have not been disseminated well to the global community since it is still a privilege of only those in academic discourse (Sholihan 2017:47). As a result, its purpose to resolve global crises as well as to structure the peaceful world has not been optimal to provide guidelines for the global community, governments or politicians.

Knitter (1995:222) vehemently criticised the domination of European/Western-centric powers that have not been dismantled but are advanced in different disguised ways. In the same vein, Dwyer (2001:52) provided a critical response to the global ethic idea by questioning Western philosophical and political discourse's tendency to dominate others' cultures instead of fulfilling the possibilities of a genuine balance of power and a culture of ethical equality. Additionally, Hedges (2008:121) raises concerns about the global ethic because it is coming from the perspective of Christian Western worldviews. Christianity is closely connected to an imperialist past and is related to many unethical and colonialist agendas in the current state of the world. It is not far from the truth that the present human and ecological suffering, horrible inequalities between rich and poor, North and South, that continue to increase rather than diminish, are a result of Western domination.

Some objections to the global ethic focus on its purportedly Western nature and anthropocentrism. Other criticisms focus on methodological concerns, such as the idea that it may have been developed “from above” and may not result from a wide-ranging ethical dialogue (Gebhardt 2000:507). The fear is that the Western ethos will be considered a base to which local ideas can be added. Similarly, Conradie *et al.* (2006) argue that the dominant role of Hans Küng begs whether it does not remain *his* global ethic.

These and other issues can be brought up concerning the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic’s principles or irrevocable directives. In addition to being influenced by the cultural, economic and political factors of the West, it is true that these issues have a role in the way we speak and what we believe to be true. For that reason, Knitter (1995:222) points out that interpretations and words

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can obstruct others from asserting and practising their own truths and restricting their understanding of reality. Not only is language constrictive, but it also serves one group's self-interests while oppressing others.

Brewer (2001:110) raises concerns about the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic's five irrevocable directives for human conduct, arguing that they are vague. Each tradition understands The irrevocable directives differently, and there seems to be little genuine progress toward consensus. They lack moral force as they are interpreted and contextualised. The issue is that when moving from the overarching concept to more detailed definitions, interpretations, and practical applications of the directive in many religions and civilisations, irreconcilable disagreements start to emerge (Brewer 2001:110). For example, irrevocable directives, commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women (Küng & Kuschel 1993:29). There is no consensus among Christians, let alone the other world religions, on this equal partnership. On an obvious level, feminist critiques of this tradition have long focused on the fact that many mainstream Christian churches do not allow women to hold leadership positions (Hedges 2008:114).

Another example is directed at Muslims. While it is accepted in Islam that men and women are completely equal before God, women have not historically been held to the same religious obligations as males, such as attending the mosque on Fridays for prayers. Moreover, most African cultures are patriarchal. Women are not allowed to work by their husbands. Already, there is no equal partnership, and what is meant by 'equal' comes into debate.

Another objection raised by Dwyer (2001:54) to the global ethic was against Küng's optimism of the "golden rule" (Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you). He argued that the golden rule is not universally applicable and that extremely unique and particular moralities support different actions, thereby undermining Küng's claim. Ethical intentions based on the Golden rule can be expressed in different ways. Hence, it may be possible to find spiritual or religious communities that will deny it or interpret it differently. Dwyer (2001:57) provides an example in indigenous or premodern societies which condone finding and killing any person from another tribe who may have caused the death of a member of one's tribe was considered a spiritual duty.

According to this belief system, neglecting this duty can become a serious and fatal mistake. On the one hand, Dwyer (2001:57) further argues that "these disjunctions between the moral attitudes and decisions of various traditions leads to a fundamental question about the content of a global ethic in terms of who decides what rituals and beliefs are more moral than others? How? On what

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basis? Why?". On the other hand, Dwyer (2001:57) concludes that the number of signatories to the Declaration itself should be regarded as a generally positive response to the ideals and practice of a global ethic regardless of whether or not the golden rule does or does not appear in various religious traditions.

A broader perspective has been adopted by Knitter's (1995:222) central critique on the global ethic idea of how easily a pluralistic dialogue that invites contributions from all parties can be, or has been, co-opted and manipulated by the dominant power holders of the globe to control others. Knitter (1995:222) is against the call to formulate a global ethic through pluralistic dialogue, which may appear as a noble affirmation of universality. Still, it is an instrument of the dominant economic power blocs. Knitter (1995:222) is against Küng and Swinder's call for open-ended, all-inclusive dialogue through a global ethic, assuming its results will benefit all whilst they tend to forget the ever-intruding realities of economic, national, class, gender, and racial interests. As argued by (Knitter 1995:223), this is as naive and dangerous in the interreligious dialogue as it is in the capitalist (or socialist) system.

Furthermore, Knitter (1995:222) claims that it could be the case that the proponents of global dialogue are not aware or maybe they are aware) of these political realities, but they will not raise uncomfortable questions that would challenge the basic structures of power and the economic system. They can speak the language of the global declaration that Knitter 1995:223) refers to "the language of the angels" and condemn the horrible evils of racism, poverty, sexism, ecological devastation; they can summon all religious believers to assume global responsibility and a new world ethic-but they do so without becoming too specific. Knitter (1995:222) calls for the need to have good-intentioned leaders who are careful and avoid becoming perpetrators or pawns of the oppression or mistreatment of others to protect their jobs.

Knitter (1995:222) suggests that the world's victims, the poor and suffering, and those speaking for the suffering earth should be present and have a privileged place in the conversations about a global ethic. Given the danger of local communities becoming isolated, this enables local communities to learn from such global initiatives. The evidence presented in this Section suggests that all the criticisms of global ethic should be considered for further dialogue. Such concerns or debates are necessary because they would ultimately not be divisive but would raise awareness of the importance of global ethical standards in the age of globalisation.

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3.7 The reception of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities

The Declaration is an attempt to reconcile two approaches: The Western emphasis on the person and his or her rights and the Asian tradition, which considers the community first and focuses on the individual's duties towards the community. Suter (2010:119) asserts that recognition of the equal and inalienable rights of all people requires a foundation of freedom, justice and peace, but this also demands that rights and responsibilities be given equal importance to establish an ethical base so that all men and women can live peacefully together and fulfil their potential. From this perspective, the IAC declaration can serve as a useful element in the debate on the intercultural validity of universal human rights.

At this point, it is well to recall that both declarations, Parliament of World Religions (1993) and IAC (1997), are moral appeals, not juridical documents. A Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities was meant to strengthen and supplement the Human Rights Declaration, thereby contributing to a better society. The draft on human duties/responsibilities aims to promote a shift from the freedom of indifference to the freedom of involvement to strike a balance between freedom and responsibility. It also reconciles ideologies, beliefs and political views deemed antagonistic in the past (Suter 2010:546).

More arguments against the Declaration of Human Responsibilities have been summarised by Saul (2000:578), who observes that since the release of the draft declaration in September 1997, there seems to be relatively little significant international attention, and now it is unclear how much support it has received. Suter (2010:119) argues that this subject has attracted far less attention than human rights, but it is argued that another development is slowly emerging. There is a need to support and recognise human duties/ responsibilities that complement the progress being made in human rights. Australia's position, for instance, is that the draft declaration has not attracted the degree of support required to present it before the relevant organs of the United Nations for possible adoption by the world community. Due to a lack of support, the United Nations General Assembly's acceptance of the draft declaration commemorating the 50th anniversary of the UDHR was changed. Several governments have indicated a willingness to sponsor the draft declaration in the United Nations, but the lack of some Western government support has been a stumbling block (Saul 2000:578).

The reason for the non-involvement of some Western states is that they are concerned with oppressive regimes that may misuse the Declaration of Human Responsibilities. The perception is that regimes may point to human responsibilities as a substitute for advancing human rights. In response, Hans Küng counters, that arguing while responsibilities can be misused, so too can be

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rights (Topić 2023:8). Others suspected that the IAC declaration might lend support to authoritarian leaders wishing to make human rights dependent on the previous exercise of duties towards the community.

This is not how the IAC understands the relationship between rights and responsibilities. (Saul 2000:574 claims that the idea of responsibilities has historically been subject to misuse, and the notion that emphasising duties will lead to the universalisation of human rights law is based on false assumptions about the relationship between freedom and duty in so-called obligation countries. However, as noted in the foundation of the IAC's proposal for a Declaration of Human Responsibilities, the aim is to accompany the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because the problems brought on by globalisation can only be solved by global solutions based on ideas, values and norms respected by all cultures and societies.

3.8 Debates around Globalisation and the Declaration Towards a Global Ethic

Apel (2000:138) maintains that the globalisation process is typically inevitable and irreversible, and it is one of those developments in human history that took place before our reflection. Primarily, globalisation is understood as an international expansion of the economy, or more precisely, a systemic intertwining of financial capitalism and communication technology that seems to exceed any control by the nation-state (Apel 2000:138). Global catastrophes in global politics, ecology, and economy are highlighted as the root causes of several problems (Küng 1990; Küng & Kuschel 1993). As a result, (Küng (2010:337) argues that the economy, technology and communication have been globalised in this context. What is needed is the globalisation of ethics in coping with global problems.

These problems affect the whole of humanity, the whole planet Earth. In particular, the local, rural, urban, national, regional and global are all in constant interaction (Ignatieff 2012:15). The world, according to Peter Singer cited in Ďurčík (2015:68), is characterised by global problems aptly through the concept of global village. In this global village, where everything is interconnected and integrated, humans and non-beings depend on one another. This newly interdependent global society, with its remarkable possibilities for linking people around the planet, gives humans the material basis for a new world ethic (Ďurčík 2015:67).

The assumption is that, through the Parliament of the World Religions, at least in all religious, philosophical and ideological traditions, some simple ethical imperatives of humanity must be used as the basis of a global ethic (Küng 2010:337). This idea of a global ethic is understood differently in the context of globalisation. Some scholars focus on global ethics (in the plural), while others,

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like Küng, maintain the singular global ethic. Following Hans Küng's idea of a global ethic, Ignatieff (2012:15) maintains that the singular means a morality whose object is one world in which all human beings are entitled to equal moral concern and have common responsibilities to the habitat. Nevertheless, the theoretical attempt to search for universal moral principles seems to be a daunting task. Non-Western cultures often interpret such attempts as being a part of the political, social and economic trends of globalisation (Hellsten 2015:86).

They contend that globalisation represents a form of neo-imperialism that assimilates cultural diversity towards mono-cultural practices originally set in place by the Western powers (Hellsten 2015:86). One of the concerns to take note of as asserted by Hellsten (2015:89) is that the global sometimes do not represent the universal human interest, it represents a particular local and parochial interest and culture, which has been globalised through its reach and control, its irresponsibility and lack of reciprocity.

Therefore, ethics in the context of globalisation needs to take into account the local transitional contexts and avoid overemphasising the need for universal value frameworks (Hellsten 2015:89). Similarly, Bloch (2008:625) argues that the Parliament of the World Religions, given its foundational document, offers a limited conversation about globalisation and lacks a seamless sense of glocalisation. Instead, various aspects of the local or global experience are over or underemphasised, and the full range of interrelationships remains unrealised (Bloch 2008:625). Claiming to give voice to the world's oppressed people, the Parliament of World Religions simultaneously appears to ignore crucial aspects of social reality (Bloch 2008:625).

The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic does not challenge the economic climate brought about by the ascendancy of neoliberal ideas about governance and the social disempowerment of governmental institutions (Ďurčík 2015:68). To this end, debates surrounding globalisation and neoliberalism raise a broad variety of issues that are beyond the scope of the study more specifically to this Section.

3.9 Conclusion

The legacy of modernity and the ideology of development that has characterised much of the 20th century is increasingly shaky and is not a sustainable strategy for the future. It has failed to deliver the equitable world hoped for and has generated a range of new social, economic, and political challenges in the 21st century with which we are required to wrestle. The need for a shared common future has been brought home to our species like never before, symbolised most poignantly by the environmental crisis (Palm 2012:7). There are some major paradigm shifts which generated a range

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of new challenges, for example, 1989 in the 20th century and 2001, 2007, 2020 in the 21st century. Stückelberger (2020:16) argues that the rise and fall of empires and related power struggles are among the most threatening imbalances in the current world, especially between the USA and China. This is not a surprise because there seem to be many more social and environmental challenges if there is no new moral vision of a good society.

These periods are often referred to as the landmarks for historic global changes; 1989 was the fall of the Berlin wall, the beginning of the end of the bipolar world and the kickoff of the new phase of exponential globalisation—the suicide terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 against the United States of America. The year 2007 was the beginning of the global financial crisis. The year 2020 marked the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Stückelberger 2020:16). These paradigm shifts have heightened the need for the quest for a moral vision for a good society. This transition of periods in world history are often experienced as periods of fear and insecurity.

The COVID-19 pandemic, floods and droughts as a result of climate change, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel and Palestine's ongoing war and civil unrest are some of the contemporary challenges that have all negatively impacted the world. The context in which Hans Kung advocated for a global ethic is different, but the need for a global ethic seems to remain the same. All these multiple shocks and stressors have emphasised the need to act urgently in promoting strong institutions for peace and justice at a global level that will better withstand future crises. Some may associate capitalism's economic system with globalisation, connectivity, wealth and prosperity, while others associate capitalism's economic system with social and environmental devastation, exploitation, inequality and waste.

A viable economic system needs to assist in resetting everyone's ethical compass. Sporre & Botman (2003:21) raise issues on the conflict between economic globalisation and the restoration of human dignity. They argue that developments in the human rights discourse, namely respect for economic, social and cultural rights, are at odds with most developments in the world's financial markets. As a result, many people today retreat into merely individual hopes for their private lives, abandoning a clear sense of larger social hopes and actively suspicious of ideologies. This indicates a need to engage in projects for social transformation as a sign of hope that we are not merely doomed to accept the challenges with which we are presented but can seek to respond creatively. Perhaps the global ethic idea is one of many ways that can be used to mobilise innovative ethical behavioural science to address pressing societal challenges.

This chapter introduced and explored the concept of a global ethic as articulated in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993, influenced by Hans

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Küng's (1990) and Küng & Kuschel 1993 work. The chapter examined the historical background and development of the Declaration, the core principles it established, and the role it played in addressing global challenges like economic inequality, violence, and environmental crises. The chapter also discussed the complementary Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities developed by the Inter-Action Council in 1997 to balance individual rights with responsibilities.

Key points included Küng's emphasis on interreligious dialogue, the need for a fundamental global ethical consensus, and five core directives: non-violence, solidarity, tolerance, equal rights between genders, and sustainability. The reception of the Declaration was mixed, with supporters highlighting its vision for global peace and critics noting its perceived Western-centric nature, lack of concrete implementation mechanisms, and challenges in reconciling diverse religious and cultural perspectives. The chapter framed the Declaration in broader discussions of globalisation, noting the potential of a global ethic to counterbalance the destabilising forces of economic and political globalisation through shared moral values and cooperative efforts.

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CHAPTER 4

THE EARTH CHARTER

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the Earth Charter (2000), an important document that purportedly describes a global ethic as investigated in the study. The starting point would be to trace its historical background by highlighting how this document was formulated. Who was responsible, when, how, and why are some questions that need to be answered in the historical background. A brief overview of the Earth Charter preamble and its vision and mission will also be provided (Section 4.2). The 16 integrated fundamental principles of the Earth Charter will be analysed based on the four main principles: respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice and democracy, non-violence and peace (Section 4.3). All these principles form the ethical vision for our common future, as the Earth Charter claims.

A review of literature on the reception of the Earth Charter since its formal launch in 2000 will be offered (Section 4.4). This will allow a critical analysis of how the global network of social activists, teachers, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, international law experts, and government leaders are using/ implementing and promoting the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter will further be situated in the context of debates on globalisation and neo-liberalism. Ideologies and the forces propelling ecological, economic, social and political challenges are global, while the local communities are strongly affected. These tensions between global and local factors will be highlighted briefly in (Section 4.5). Finally, the conclusion (Section 4.6) will offer some comments on the significance of the Earth Charter in the contemporary context.

4.2 Historical background

The development of the Earth Charter (2000) has not been an easy task. It was a long, worldwide, cross-cultural dialogue process that aimed to develop common goals and shared values for a more just, sustainable and peaceful world. The earliest attempt to find ways to build global environmental security occurred in Stockholm, Sweden, when leaders gathered for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 (Taylor 1999:159). It is alleged that the Charter also emanated from other significant sources, such as the World Charter for Nature (1982), the Universal

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Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of World Religions (1993).

There were about 50 international declarations (150 declarations from non-governmental organisations) and other treaties adopted since the UN conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 (Taylor 2017:27). The Stockholm meeting prompted the United Nations to establish mechanisms that protect the environment at a global level. Based on the 1987 Bruntland World Commission on Environment and Development report titled "Our common future", the United Nations called for the creation of the Charter that would further set fundamental principles for sustainable development, a new code of ethics to guide states towards sustainable development (Fernández-Herrería & Martínez-Rodríguez 2019:592).

Sustainable development was defined in this report as development that meets present needs while not compromising the needs of future generations (Tucker 2008:116). Another global meeting on environmental security to take note of was the "Earth Summit", convened twenty years later in Rio, Brazil, in 1992. This was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), one of the largest such gatherings in history. The final document produced by this UNCED meeting was called the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, supplemented by Agenda 21 (Stanger, Engelfried, Clement, Kunz, Grasso & Brine 2020:32). This process was impeded by several challenges, with the most notable one at the UNCED in 1992 being that governments did not agree on an Agenda 21 draft document.

While they thought the writing of the Earth Charter would be part of preparing the Earth Summit in Rio 1992, it became clear that an intergovernmental agreement would not be achieved easily since this effort did not materialise. Nevertheless, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 was adopted with moral implications, and also a few solid, morally sound standards for global sustainability (Lubbers & Morales 2009:2; Lynn 2004:5). Instead, the Earth Charter was issued in the parallel Non-Governmental Organisation forum as an ethical document to complement Agenda 21.

At first, the Earth Charter project was a United Nations initiative, but it was carried forward and completed by civil society (*The Earth Charter Initiative Handbook*, 2010). The Earth Charter process was developed because civil society required a motivating and unified ethical vision of core principles that could direct planning, policymaking, and action. It was developed from the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Our Common Future) in 1987 (Stanger *et al.* 2020:32; Taylor 1999:161).

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There were various meetings and workshops held for about a decade in the 1990s to determine the key values and guiding principles that should comprise the Earth Charter (Vilela 2006:72). Maurice Strong, the leader of the Earth Council and Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of Green Cross International, proposed a new Earth Charter campaign in 1994 (Fernández-Herrería & Martínez-Rodríguez 2019:569). The strategy to promote the unfinished business of implementing Agenda 21 resulted in the formation of the Earth Council to implement the UNCED agreements. Another Earth Charter commission was formed in 1997 to oversee the drafting of the Charter. A secretariat was also established for the Commission in Costa Rica (Brenes & Du Nann Winter 2001:158). Steven Rockefeller, professor of religion and ethics at Middlebury University, was the chair of this other Earth Charter Commission that oversaw the drafting of the Charter from 1997 to 2000 (Brenes & Du Nann Winter 2001:158).

Numerous conferences and meetings were held in many parts of the world. National Earth Charter Committees were established in 35 countries from which comments and recommendations were sent to improve the text of the draft (Vilela & Blaze 2008:500). Despite claims by several scholars, for instance, Vilela & Blaze (2008: 500) note that people from diverse religious traditions and different continents participated in the drafting process of the Charter, there seems to be no sufficient evidence to maintain such claims unequivocally. The process may have been dominated by the views and interests of a select few, potentially leading to the exclusion of crucial voices. To avoid such discrepancies, there seems to be a need to give room for the ongoing consultative process with other stakeholders, such as minority groups, local and indigenous communities from Africa, and developing countries that may not have been sufficiently engaged. Nevertheless, it is agreed that the inclusive consultative process was meant to determine the common values and guiding concepts that should be incorporated into the Charter.

After this global consultation and drafting process, the official launch of the Earth Charter was held at the Palace of Peace in the Hague on 29 June 2000. Thousands of people and hundreds of groups from different regions, cultures and sectors of society all over the world reached consensus on common values articulated in the Charter (Vilela & Blaze 2008:500). According to Bosselmann (2004:64), the Earth Charter represents a significant advancement in the search for a legal framework (soft law instrument) for environmentally sustainable development. Its ground-breaking principles include ecologically defined notions of justice, rights, and sustainability. The document's inclusive, ethical vision recognises that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible (Earth Charter 2000).

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4.3 Principles of the Earth Charter

4.3.1 Respect and care for the community of life

This is the first broad principle as outlined in the Earth Charter. The community of life that needs to be respected is Earth and life in its diversity. Section 1(a) of the Charter upholds that human beings should accept the interdependence between them and every form of life. Rather than human beings using their intellectual, artistic, ethical and spiritual potential to destroy mother earth, it is affirmed in the charter that such capability based on human dignity should be used to respect earth and the diversity of life. In other words, this principle affirms the mutual relationship that should be maintained between human beings and the Earth. An observation by Tucker (2008:117) aligns with the Earth Charter's first principle: that the community of life (including soil, air, plants, and animals) must be taken care of and respected. The Charter identifies other species as part of a large life family with humans. The interdependent quality of the Earth community is celebrated in the Charter. Rasmussen (2013), in his book *Earth Honouring Faith*, argues that there is a need to move from ego- to ecosphere. This refers to a seismic shift in the moral universe and our industrial/post-industrial way of life. Against this background, Tucker (2008:117) blames the unsustainable linkage between the environment and people as the main challenge that results in unhealthy ecosystems and failure to eradicate poverty. This failure of reciprocity is attributed to modernity's critical flaw.

Nevertheless, it can be noted that modernity has an impact to African environmental ethics despite numerous cultural communities in Africa acknowledging that there is no distinct separation between humans and the broader natural world. Instead, they perceive an inherent and inseparable connection, constituting a complex and interdependent web of existence where human diversity is intricately intertwined with the natural environment (Kelbessa 2022). Without such a basis for healthy ecosystems, Tucker (2008:118) argues that there can be no long-term foundation for the continuity of human life. Modernity has been characterised by increased freedom, power, and knowledge of human beings, while the Charter aims to promote the common good. Human beings are reminded in Principle 2 of the Charter to balance their rights to own, manage and use natural resources with their duty to protect the environment and safeguard the rights of people.

A commitment to build democratic societies that are just, sustainable, and peaceful is at the centre of Principle 1 (3) (Earth Charter 2000). This is viewed as a gateway that leads to communities' guaranteed rights and freedom and a way for everyone to fulfil their full potential. Tucker (2008:117) notes that a broader ethical perspective on economic growth needs to be redefined to

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address ecological and economic concerns. Bosselmann, Engel & Taylor (2017) describe the current global situation as unprecedented ecological disintegration fuelled by autonomous economic growth and declining public morality. The Charter emphasises the need to promote social and economic justice that enables everyone to secure and achieve a meaningful, ecologically responsible livelihood. This alternative vision for the future is stated in the Charter as follows, "secure earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations". According to this new vision articulated in the Charter, human beings should be guided by the understanding that future generations will rely on mother earth. As a result, institutions, values, and traditions that support the long-term flourishing of earth's human and ecological communities must be passed to the young generations (Earth Charter 2000).

4.3.2 Ecological integrity

The second principle of ecological integrity is interconnected with protecting and restoring the integrity of Earth's environmental system. This can be achieved by adopting sustainable development plans and regulations at all levels to rehabilitate and conserve the environment. Recently, there has been a realisation that a new paradigm shift is needed in environmental management. For example, China in 2017 enshrined ecological civilisation in the constitution and is being promoted by the highest levels of government, national and provincial. Environment issues are now managed politically to restore ecology as opposed to the previous worldviews geared towards industrial and agricultural civilisation (Xue, Han, Li, Gou, Yang, Thomas, & Stückrad 2023:1).

It is emphasised in Principle II 5(b) that nature and biosphere reserves, such as forestry and marine areas, need to be established and safeguarded to preserve natural heritages, maintain biodiversity and protect the Earth's life support systems. As stipulated in Principle 5(b), endangered species and ecosystems must be recovered. Measures such as controlling the introduction of genetically modified organisms harmful to such species should be implemented. Renewable resources such as water, soil, forests, and marine life should be well-managed in ways that do not exceed regeneration and protect the health of ecosystems. Usually, the extraction and use of non-renewable resources can cause serious environmental damage, but commitment 5 (f) counters such tendencies and calls for proper management that minimises depletion.

Principle number 6 and its sub-principles offer precautionary measures to prevent harm and enhance environmental protection. It entails a theory of responsibility that holds those responsible accountable. According to the Charter, human beings are not only to change nature but to take

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responsibility by protecting, respecting nature and developing integrated solutions to the new generation to survive global challenges. Decision-making should avoid human activities with long-term direct or indirect global consequences. Hazardous materials that harm the environment, such as military activities, must be prevented. Those responsible for activities that significantly harm the environment should be held accountable (Earth Charter Principle 6b).

A comment by Bernstein (2007:3) regards the Earth Charter as a comprehensive framework for addressing environmental challenges, development, democracy, and peace. These principles seem repeated differently, but they all emphasise adopting production and consumption patterns that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities, upholding human rights and community well-being. Thus, while the first four principles of the Charter demand that beings must "respect and care for the community of Life", this demand seems to fit in a series of principles and commitments that stress the flourishing of humans as well as the natural world in the Charter (Lynn 2004:2).

Recycling of materials used for production and consumption systems and ensuring that ecological systems can assimilate residual waste must be promoted (Earth Charter Principle 7a). Principal 7b highlights the need to consider alternative renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. In this technological and digital era, the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of sound environmental technologies is strongly encouraged in the Charter. Additionally, universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health, responsible reproduction and the adoption of lifestyles that do not destroy the quality of life is emphasised in the Charter. A human-centred anthropocentric perspective should no longer dominate decisions and activities that potentially impact the environment.

Advancement of the studies that promote ecological sustainability through open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired is another strategy to achieve environmental integrity, as highlighted in Principle 8. Principle 8(a) is inclusive in that it supports international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability with special attention to the needs of developing nations. Indigenous knowledge systems and spiritual wisdom of all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being are acknowledged in a way that should be recognised and preserved as stipulated under Principle 8(b). The tendency to monopolise information that is important to human health and environmental protection is strongly discouraged in Principle 8(c). Accordingly, the Charter calls for making information available in the public domain.

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4.3.3 Social and economic justice

The Earth Charter's third broad Principle (III) focuses on social and economic justice. Commitment 9 stipulates that eradicating poverty should be an ethical, social and environmental imperative. Social and economic justice entails that citizens should be guaranteed the right to clean water, food security, clean air, shelter, uncontaminated soil, and safe sanitation through the allocation of national and international resources required (Principle 9b). According to Principle 9(c), human beings can be empowered through education as social security means to sustainable livelihoods. This would be another way to protect the vulnerable and those suffering and enable them to develop their capacities.

Social and economic justice can be achieved by ensuring that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development equitably and sustainably. While developing countries attempt to raise their standard of living with unrestrained industrialisation and rapid modernisation, there is an inevitable impact on the environment and natural resources (Tucker 2008:116). Thus, the Charter Principle 10(c) advocates for the distribution of wealth more equitably in and among nations to support economic justice. Progress for developing nations can be hindered by international debt. It is proposed in the Earth Charter Principle 10(b) that intellectual, financial, technical and social relations should be enhanced for developing nations so that these countries can be relieved from international debt.

The Earth Charter raises concerns regarding unfair trade deals that may result in environmental degradation and fail to meet labour standards. Similarly, Tucker (2008:116) observes that there is usually controversy between environmental protection and economic development that increases conflict between the developed and developing world. Consequently, the Earth Charter aims to promote multinational cooperatives and international financial organisations to act transparently for the public good and to hold them accountable for the consequences of their actions. Social and economic justice, according to the Charter (2000), can be achieved through trade support, sustainable resource use, environmental protection and progressive labour standards.

Concerns over gender inequality are not new. The Charter affirms gender equality/ equity, universal access to health care, education, and economic opportunities as prerequisites to sustainable development. More importantly, there is a call to the end of violence against women and girls and the protection of human rights in Principle 11(a). Historically, women have been marginalised, but the Charter strongly condemns such practices by promoting their participation in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social and cultural life. According to Principle 11(c), women should be

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recognised as full and equal partners, decision-makers, leaders and beneficiaries. This is another way of strengthening families and ensuring the safety of all family members.

Equality is extended to indigenous communities and minority groups as specified in the Earth Charter Principle 12. This principle aims to ensure that everyone's rights, regardless of their background, are protected with special reference to the rights of Indigenous communities and minority groups. According to the Earth Charter, these people need access to a natural and social environment that fosters human dignity, physical well-being, and spiritual fulfilment. Discrimination is usually rooted in race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, ethnic background and national origins. Nevertheless, the Earth Charter is against all the practices that promote discrimination. Concerns over the conditions of indigenous people have a long history that can be connected to the United Nations.

There is an urgent need to recognise, uphold and advance indigenous peoples' rights, particularly those to their lands, territories, and resources, which are derived from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories, and philosophies, as well as their political, economic, and social structures (Earth Charter 2000). Upholding the rights of all is further advanced through the call to honour and support young people, enabling them to fulfil their essential role in creating sustainable societies.

This is in line with the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007), which appeals for recognising and respecting Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices that promote sustainable development, equity, and effective environmental management. Protecting and restoring outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance is needed, as outlined in the Charter. In the same way, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Natural Resources initiative aims to protect the Sacred Natural Sites. The (IUCN) work with custodians, traditional knowledge holders, conservationists, academics and others to support the conservation and revitalisation of sacred natural sites and territories (Verschuuren *et al.* 2021:5).

4.3.4 Democracy, non-violence, and peace

The forging of a global movement for a culture of peace has become an urgent pursuit of humanity, as acknowledged in the Earth Charter Principle IV. This Principle recognises that democracy, nonviolence and peace are necessary for a sustaining and flourishing future (Earth Charter 2000; Tucker 2008:126). To achieve this goal, according to the sub-Principle, there is a need to strengthen democratic institutions at all levels. In addition, there must be justice, transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation, and decision-making. The Earth Charter offers a set of normative Principles that can be utilised to promote democratic participation and

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governance processes in sustainable development. These principles were drawn from various worldwide and nationally recognised policy frameworks. Brenes (2008:10) also argues that sustainable human development offers an alternative approach to fostering a global culture of peace by tapping into the positive dimensions of an integral peace concept. Imperatives of the human rights framework are subsumed in a broader shared ecological imperative towards the integrity of Earth and the community of life.

Civil society, at a local, regional and global level, needs support for all individuals and organisations' participation in decision-making. Protecting the right to freedom, such as opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly, association, and dissent, is at the forefront of Principle 13(c) to institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures. The purpose of these institutions will be to redress and provide remedies to environmental harm and threats to such harm. The call to eliminate corruption at all levels in public and private sectors in the Earth Charter seems to have emanated from the urgent need to address the corruption problem. The implication of the claim is to eliminate corruption in all public and private sectors and improve corporate governance in the private and government sectors.

Local communities and governments are responsible for protecting the environment in Principle 13(e). Education is one of the tools that can be used to increase awareness and conscience about the factors that contribute to unfavourable situations, as noted by Lum (2013:216). The Earth Charter, Principle 14, “integrating into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life”, articulates how the Charter can be used for consciousness-raising, personal development, application of values and principles, call for action (see Brenes 2008:11-12). Hence, one can note that Principle 14(a), “providing the youth and children with educational opportunities that empower them”, is an asset that can be used to contribute effectively to sustainable development and aims to advance such initiatives.

Tucker (2008:116) argues that the endless list of environmental and development problems is well known. However, what is becoming ever more self-evident is that they cannot be solved by science, technology, law, politics, or economics alone. The Earth Charter Principle 14(d) promotes the transdisciplinary enterprise of sustainability science to bring about worldwide, beneficial social and environmental change. This means that social sciences, humanities, and the arts can all contribute significantly to this shift by helping to address the complex issues relating to culture, institutions, and human behaviour. Similarly, in the Charter, a sustainable Earth can be built through sustainability research that interacts with society and creatively uses all the knowledge sources at its disposal.

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There is an emphasis on Earth Charter Principle 14(c) to enhance mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges. The Earth Charter also encourages a loving and caring attitude toward wild creatures as necessary moral support for preserving ecological integrity and habitat (Mackey 2004:76). To protect ecological integrity, respect and protect wild animals, it is necessary to reorient human endeavours toward new production and consumption patterns as well as a commitment to leaving space for non-human beings. This principle is against all hunting methods, such as trapping, that cause severe pain to animals, bearing in mind that animals must be protected from suffering. It is understood that the Earth Charter provides links between initiatives that advance a culture of peace and sustainable development.

Given that it provides a comprehensive value framework, the Earth Charter is a great tool and directive for fostering a culture of peace and nonviolence (according to Vilela 2006:72). It promotes "mutual respect, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples, as well as between and in nations". A culture of peace can be achieved through several variables, such as implementing comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflicts and using collaborative problem-solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes (Earth Charter Principle 16(b).

Beyond any reasonable doubt, wars have catastrophic social, economic, and environmental consequences that exacerbate global warming. Using weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons, which consume a lot of energy and emit a lot of carbon, is strongly discouraged in the Charter (Earth Charter 2000). In addition, the Charter calls for the demilitarisation of national security systems so that those resources can be converted to peaceful purposes of ecological restoration (Earth Charter Principle 16c). Ending wars becomes a precondition to moderate global warming. However, the vision in the Earth Charter seems to be the opposite of the current global situation. Since 2022, the state of wars and conflicts globally has been alarming. Ukraine-Russia geo-political and territorial disputes and the long-standing Israel-Palestine territorial disputes are some examples that come to mind when discussing the Earth Charter's significance in reducing wars. Can the Earth Charter do justice to these and many other war-related complexities? One may argue that at this point, reading the Earth Charter principles as an intervention to stop wars is like a dog barking at an elephant. Ideas in the Charter's Principles make sense, but the implementation is challenging. Principle16(e), acknowledges that good relationships, other cultures, other life, mother earth, and whole life can create the wholeness of peace.

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4.4 The Reception of the Earth Charter

The reception of the Earth Charter has been a mixed bag, with supporters and critics offering various perspectives on its significance, impact and weaknesses. Mirian & Alicia (2020) argue that the significance of the Earth Charter resides in its function as a platform for contemplation and conversation. The Earth Charter serves as a forum where this diversity strives to identify common values to formulate timely solutions for safeguarding the planet. There are a number of writers across the globe from different disciplines who have tried to promote the Charter as the solution to environmental problems since 2000.

The Charter has been increasingly recognised as a soft law instrument in legal, education and scholarship as well as a tool to inform policy making (Bernstein 2007:8). Bosselmann (2004:62) investigated the significance of the Earth Charter in searching for global law. It was argued in the study that the Earth Charter marks an important step forward in the search for a legal framework for ecologically sustainable development. Among the principles of the Earth Charter are ecologically defined concepts of sustainability, justice and rights of human welfare, and the wider community of life (Bosselmann 2004:62).

Modernity, Western legal traditions that are anthropocentric and largely hostile to ecological principles have been blamed for promoting laws that mirror environmental ignorance. Bosselmann (2004:62) maintains that the Earth Charter's ethics can make a difference in law. Palmer (2004:97) explores the idea of respect for nature in the Earth Charter and agrees that the Charter is based on a holistic environmental ethic where, in conflict situations, species are given ethical priority over the lives of individual sentient organisms. However, as Palmer (2004:97) argued, understanding the term "respect" is open to many conflicting interpretations. For example, a closer look at the two forms of "respect" urged in the Charter, that is, respect for Earth in its all forms of life and respect for individual living beings, conflicts emerge. Realistically, human beings claim superiority over animals. While Principle 15(a-c) focuses exclusively on animals rather than plants and other living things, there seems to be no holistic understanding of "respect" (Palmer 2004:97).

Rockefeller (2010:71) also reflects on some issues related to altering the text or adding amendments to the Earth Charter. This was influenced by developments in civil society organisations internationally, calling for the need to protect the rights of animals and ecosystems (dignity of non-human beings). Rockefeller (2010) argues that supporting the amendment of the Earth charter for legal rights of nature would greatly complicate the effort to win wide governmental and business support for its ethical vision. Similarly, Casey and Morgarte (1998:26) maintain that rights language was not used concerning non-human species to avoid unproductive controversy.

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However, the idea of the rights of nature implies that human relationships with non-human species and individual beings involve moral responsibility.

The ethical principle of respect for Earth and all life in the Charter is sufficient to promote human civilisation's ecological, ethical, and spiritual transformation. The issue of global warming, which was not explicitly mentioned in the Charter, is another cause of concern for altering the Earth Charter text. Rockefeller (2010) defended the Charter, arguing that this issue was discussed during the drafting process and that it was agreed that the text needed to be short and precise. Therefore, not all global problems were mentioned, but they were described in general terms in the preamble under the theme of "global situation". Although global warming was not explicitly mentioned in the Charter, the Earth Charter's ethical framework can guide nations and organisations grappling with how to deal with global warming (Rockefeller 2010:71).

Tucker (2008:14), who played an integral part in the drafting process of the Earth Charter, had this to say, "The Charter exemplifies an important contemporary trend toward identifying an integrative global ethics". She believes it provides an empowering context of values and practices that will steer the human community toward the enhancement, not the diminishment of life.

Some scholars discuss ecological integrity based on a previously prescribed scientifically unhealthy modernity condition. For instance, Mackey (2004:76) suggests a need to call for the protection of ecological integrity that re-orientates human endeavours towards new patterns of production and consumption which accommodate wild nature. Kim (2007) supports the Earth Charter document because it is about a paradigm shift from economy (anthropocentric-short-term as influenced by modernity and scientific discoveries) to ecology (ecocentrism ethic-long-term). This statement implies that the Earth Charter provides additional moral impetus to protect habitat in its entirety for the sake of ecological integrity. Likewise, Lynn (2004:3) observes that the ethical principles of the Charter can inform our understanding of global problems because these series of principles and maxims can influence the flourishing of humans and the natural world.

Reflecting on the differences between eco-centric and anthropocentric worldviews, Tladi (2004:29) proposes a model of sustainable development with the potential to ensure the plight of the poor and marginalised while protecting ecology. The argument for Tladi (2004:29) is that although the Earth Charter appeals to those who hold eco-centric and anthropocentric views, it does not place economic growth at the same level as the important imperatives of ecological integrity and human well-being.

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The Charter gains popularity mainly because of its inclusive, ethical vision that seeks to integrate the well-being of human beings with that of the planet. These scholars appreciate the Earth Charter mainly because it recognises the value of every form of life regardless of its worth to human beings. Bernstein (2007:3) agrees that the Earth Charter provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the environment, development, democracy, and peace challenges and offers a basis for developing integrated solutions to the new generation of global survival challenges. The Earth Charter also received strong support from various environmental, social, and civil society organisations, including the United Nations, Greenpeace, and Amnesty International. These groups view it as a valuable framework for promoting environmental sustainability, social justice, and human rights (Bernstein (2007:3). Each of the principles builds upon, interconnects, and expands the ethical vision of these other international declarations and covenants.

Despite claims by several scholars that the vision of the Earth Charter is undeniably admirable, its full implementation and realisation have not been sufficient enough to adequately challenge the contemporary unjust, unsustainable and violent international order (Taylor 2017:43; Engel 2006:38; van den Berg & Rep 2016). Likewise, Brown (2017:1) asserts that considering numerous challenges in the contemporary world, the Earth Charter has not effectively prompted most nations to embrace policies aligned with its inspiring ethical principles.

A potential factor contributing to the current global situation could be the failure to thoroughly pinpoint the global crisis's underlying causes, dynamics, and indicators. Brown (2017:1) blames the Earth Charter initiative leadership, arguing that they fail to adequately influence the change needed to significantly alter the free-market ideology to address inequality between the rich and the poor. Countries persist in formulating national strategies for global environmental concerns primarily guided by economic self-interest rather than fulfilling their ethical obligations to foster a sustainable world (Brown 2017:1).

Although it proclaims principles of ecological integrity, economic and social justice and non-violence, Engel (2006:38) claims that the Earth Charter shies away from explicit advocacy of revolutionary principles such as those of equality, redistribution of wealth, limits to growth, population reduction and organised political resistance that are required to challenge and replace the contemporary unjust, unsustainable and violent international order. Brown (2017:2) opposes instrumental rationality, which solely focuses on finding efficient means or scientific facts without considering the goals or objectives that policies should achieve. According to Brown (2017:1), the issue with instrumental rationality lies in the absence of ethics-trained personnel in many

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governments' environmental agencies, as lawyers, engineers, scientists, and economists predominantly staff them.

Bosselmann, Engel, & Taylor (2017) express concerns regarding the Earth Charter text and its association with other global documents, manifestos, and declarations. They posit that the abundance of global ethical drafts and declarations might have resulted in competition among them, potentially leading to a broader sense of declaration fatigue. This, in turn, could disengage the overall influence and impact of the Earth Charter initiative, as per their argument. Hassan (2005:30) is concerned that the Charter is not a legally binding document for states. This could be equivalent to the same weakness that made the Universal Declaration of Human Rights not so effective.

Hassan's understanding is that the principles of the Earth Charter can only achieve its full potential if it is implemented as a legally binding obligation to states, non-states and all the people worldwide (Hassan 2005:30). The question to think about as asked by (Engel 2006:38) is "how can the Earth Charter now serve as a platform for building an international movement with sufficient power to dismantle the global economic system that is racing to exploit the ever-shrinking natural resources of the planet and in the process causing ecological havoc, unprecedented levels of inequality and increasing military conflict?"

Brenes (2008:11) suggests that the Earth Charter can be used at least as an educational tool to raise people's conscience about the massive environmental, social and economic problems facing the world. Many individuals, universities, and organisations have embraced the principles of the Charter and incorporated them into their activities and initiatives. The Charter can be used for educational purposes considered fundamental to meet the goals and objectives of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Brenes 2008:12). In support of this claim, Liu & Constable (2010:193) note that Education for Sustainable Development aims to achieve many of the principles laid out in the Earth Charter through the development of knowledge, skills and values conducive to sustainable development. The Earth Charter has been widely recognised in Asia as a tool that can be used for environmental awareness.

Hassan (2005:29) is convinced that it is a useful pedagogical tool for the next generation to promote a values framework for businesses, communities, and nations. A study by van Harmelen (2003:124) aimed to reflect upon the Earth Charter vision in the Southern African context, considering the historical role of colonisation in education. van Harmelen (2003:124) notes that while there is much value in the principles of the Earth Charter for guiding educational practice, accepting it in education without any critical reflection would be tantamount to accepting a more invidious

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colonisation than the previous one. If education is to have a role, it ought to develop critical thinking and learners who can question and challenge.

The Earth Charter's significance for environmental educators, as outlined by Jickling (2005), hinges on the varied interpretations of education, individually and collectively. The determination of whether it offers a challenging vision or a salvation narrative is influenced by how the Charter is conveyed in educational settings. Bernstein (2007:8) points out evidence of the increasing number of states and governments who have formally adopted the Earth Charter as a guide to policy. The Earth Charter guides the development of education materials and programmes on the principles of action research, experiential learning, transdisciplinary and collaboration in Costa Rica.

Corcoran (2003:9) notes that the Earth Charter was used to formulate a local vision to integrate sustainable, ethical principles and values into the daily work life of the city employees in the city of San Jose in Costa Rica to support the use of the Charter and to inform public policy at the municipality level. Rolston (2020:196) believes that the Earth Charter values need to be infused in education without disbanding local culture, belief systems and indigenous knowledge systems of local people to create knowledge, values and skills for sustainable development. van Harmelen (2003:138) studied the implementation of an environmental ethics program in South Africa at Rhodes University, focusing on the Rhodes/Gold Fields Participatory Certificate Course in Environmental Education and Advanced Certificate in Environmental Education. A theoretical framework for teaching rooted in an ethics-based epistemology, environmental pragmatism, situated learning, and deliberations in a socio-ecological context was presented.

In both instances, the Earth Charter has been utilised in modest yet impactful ways to encourage profound and thoughtful contemplation on environmental and sustainability issues. Its role fosters critical thinking and facilitates connections between global initiatives, such as the Earth Charter, and local environmental education practices. This approach has significantly influenced ways to engage with the Earth Charter as a fixed code of conduct or rules dictating behaviour and as a scrutinised pedagogical method. The aim was to foster critical thinking about environmental ethics questions related to organisational strategy, environmental issues and pedagogy (van Harmelen, 2003:138).

Eaton (2014:928) proposes new visions to respond to ecological dilemmas affecting our globally interconnected world. The Earth Charter exemplifies a global vision and common ground for bio-democracy to withstand postmodern pressures. At the University of the Western Cape in South

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Africa, the department of Religion and Theology offers a module (ETH 111) entitled *Introduction to Ethical Theory and Practice*. One ethical question in this module is, "What vision for society can we share?". The Earth Charter is expressed as a contemporary vision of the good society in this module (see Conradie 2006:34). Eaton (2014:928) claims that the Earth Charter signals a vision change and a new moment in human history with an ethical appeal and vision for the common good of humanity while diminishing an anthropocentric bias and strengthening the notion of a planetary ecological community.

Swee-Hin & Cawagas (2010:167) explore how the Earth Charter can be used for peace education, education for sustainable development in a way that empowers members of all societies to overcome militarisation, direct violence, local and global injustices, human rights violations and ecological destruction. In this exploration, it was found that there are potential linkages in the Earth Charter that complement a common vision to build a nonviolent, just and sustainable world and respect all human rights for all peoples. Contini and Pascual (2010:26) note that the Earth Charter offers a comprehensive framework of sustainable development values and the entire United Nations strategy to promote behavioural change, preserve the future integrity of the natural environment for the present and future generations so that they can enjoy social justice, equity, peace and economic sustainability. Dower (2005:25) concludes that the Earth Charter principles represent coordinated efforts applicable to all people as the basis for a reasonable ethic to deal with common issues and threats to the conditions of human well-being worldwide.

The challenges of implementing the principles outlined in the Earth Charter have been attributed to conflicting interests, political resistance and economic pressures. Unlike many scholars who are singing praise to the Earth Charter as the document that represents a plurality of worldviews, Ruiz (2010:81) argues that for the Earth Charter to remain a living document, it is important to stimulate questions, self-reflection and renewed critique. Highlighting the dangers that the Charter may face, Ruiz (2010:81) contemplates that the Charter can better fulfil its function if people question the full relevance of its content than if they mechanically repeat the paragraph like a catechism.

Despite claims that the Earth Charter reflects the combined wisdom of many stakeholders, Ruiz (2010:81) believes it is not divine or infallible. Similarly, Stanger, Engelfried, Clement, Kunz, Grasso and Brine (2020:36) raise concerns about the 23 prominent figures of the Earth Charter Commission who are said to have represented all nations in the drafting process. These authors question whether this process truly allowed meaningful representation of marginalised communities from all over the world. It may be the case that powerful people created the Earth Charter document for the world without including disempowered voices.

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Dower (2006:28) argues that countries with the most people active in international meetings and institutions are likely to control the ethical agenda. As a result, they say it is difficult to determine whether the final product represents voices from a broad spectrum of the global population (Stanger *et al.* 2020:33). Following the principles of the Charter blindly without any critique runs the risk of it being used to impose a mystical, fundamentalist spirituality that is full of ideological manipulation and devoid of political critique (Ruiz 2010:81). Hence, there must be appeals primarily to the human heart to identify actors who might exploit people and the environment. For Ruiz (2010:81), attempts to maintain the Earth Charter's spirit need no owners, priests, prophets, or spokespersons. Otherwise, educators, pedagogues, and communicators must construct a shared intellectual and moral direction that will generate open cultural practices and institutional arrangements.

According to Weakland and Corcoran (2009:151), a central challenge in implementing the Charter is to quench human beings thirsty for material gains while preserving the integrity of Earth's biosphere. As such, Ruiz (2010:81) calls for a balance of political institutions, power struggles and morality as outlined in the Earth Charter's environmental ethic. Human beings are interdependent in the greater ecological system. Violations of the biosphere and biodiversity of nature have made poverty more widespread. As such, poverty itself may lead to ecological issues. According to Kruger, Le Roux, & Teise (2020:207), efforts to combat environmental degradation should go hand in glove with opposing exploitation of the poor.

Drawing on an extensive range of sources, Lynn (2004:7) believes that human development and environmental conservation can be extended through the largely economic and technocratic conception of sustainable development. In the same way, the Charter set out the different ways in which ethical components fit into the moral-political concept of sustainability. Similarly, Tucker (2008:115) proposes a broader understanding of sustainable development, including economic, ecological, social and spiritual wellbeing. She believes that world religions can serve as a foundation to uphold virtues for human flourishing and a unique way of rethinking sustainability (Tucker 2008:115).

Reflecting on the concept of sustainable development and ecological integrity, Lynn (2004:2) has demonstrated how the Charter is thus principally concerned with securing an equitable human community, especially in the face of undemocratic and inegalitarian globalisation trends. Given all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that a broader pattern of Eurocentric imperialism, colonialism and militarism of the modern age, the foreign policy of the United States has substantially contributed to the misery and oppression of many people more especially in the

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developing world (Lynn 2004:7). Stucker, Beirute & Alamoosh, (2009:44) ask the question "what worldview is the Earth Charter promoting?"

In response to the question, they argue that the Charter fosters the fundamentally anthropocentric, capitalist vision that permeates mainstream Western culture. One of the Earth Charter's most critical flaws is its failure to oppose contemporary capitalism by adopting a robust ecocentrism where plants, animals, and other lifeforms are celebrated for their intrinsic nature (Stanger *et al.* 2020:45). Yet the Earth Charter initiative is unable to rationalise the power required to change the course of world history substantially. Failure to adequately identify the global crisis's root causes, dynamics, and symptoms may be one reason for this failure. More specifically, there have not been serious attempts by those who hold positions of leadership to the movement to courageously challenge free market ideology and inequality between the rich and the poor (Bosselmann, Engel & Taylor 2017).

A large and growing body of literature investigated the relationship between the Earth Charter and Education for Sustainable Development in line with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The link between Education for Sustainable Development and values in education was found to be a contested theme. Stanger *et al.* (2020:31) are concerned about perpetual problematic narratives and ask about the relevance and usefulness of the Earth Charter as a useful framework for informing environmental education since its publication. Using critical discourse analysis methodology and social justice lenses, the study examined the value of the Earth Charter as an educational tool in the Anthropocene epoch. Stanger *et al.* (2020:31) find that the Earth Charter reinforces dominant oppressive myths of sustainable development and excludes concerns voiced by marginalised populations.

Considering that the concept of sustainability development is slippery and needs to be used with caution, van Harmelen, (2003:125) raised a similar concern regarding environmental education and sustainable development. van Harmelen (2003:125) suggests that the Earth Charter in education should at least find an ethical framework that helps individuals to subscribe or discard the understanding of environmental issues based on an informed and reasoned choice.

The dominant question regarding Education for Sustainable Development values is 'which values' and 'whose values' would be promoted in education? Preston (2010:190) maintains that sound values education respects the learner's autonomy. In other words, this means that a well-developed moral formation requires owning and acting on a value system that is internalised rather than merely adopted because an external authority prescribes it. Ruiz (2010:81) claims that the Charter

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cannot be confined to educational events; it needs the convergence of multiple paths to bring about the re-education to which we aspire.

An Earth Charter that is joyfully celebrated in events and workshops but stays silent in the people's everyday lives will not be worth much. Stanger *et al.* (2020:44) believe the Earth Charter does not go far enough in framing effective, inclusive education that opposes institutionalised educational practices. The Earth Charter is accused of being out of touch with developing trends in environmental education practices because it uses exclusive terminology inherent in standardised education. In addition, Stanger *et al.* (2020:36) argue that the Earth Charter

> does not sufficiently address problematic deficit approaches to marginalised people, especially indigenous perspectives. Their rights, values, epistemologies or worldviews, knowledge, and the stories are not considered relevant in today's educational climate.

Additionally, the slow progress toward achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development goals has been attributed to the failure to reflect on the need for ethical and spiritual values in the development process. Fundamental principles embedded in the Earth Charter possess the potential to contribute essential ethical components that speak to cultural and ecological diversity, indigenous knowledge, human rights, and the rights of nature, which may have been overlooked (Clugston & Corcoran 2023).

However, some scholars think that the Earth Charter provides critical content for the development of curricula and teaches values and principles for sustainable living (Swee-Hin & Cawagas 2010:167; Corcoran 2003:9). Advocates for educational, innovative movements that draw on the conceptual and pedagogical implications of enhancing a shared vision and mission of building a world infused with nonviolence, justice, respect, reconciliation and sustainability values maintains the Charter is the answer. For Corcoran (2003:9), the Earth Charter provides an integrated ethical framework of shared values, and it must be established as a guideline toward the common good for the effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda at all levels.

Swee-Hin & Cawagas (2010:179) noted that individuals, communities and institutions should use these existing linkages through a critical education process to promote engagement in personal transformation and systematic societal and structural changes. Corcoran (2003:9) suggests that divergent views on values in education can be accommodated if the values are life-affirming, promote human dignity, advance environmental protection, social economic justice, ecological diversity and integrity.

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In Brazil, the Charter has been used to promote sustainable development in teaching university courses, training workshops, and environmental conferences as a strategy to implement Agenda 21. It is used as an awareness-raising and decision-support tool among all actors in government, civil society, and business (Bernstein 2007:8). Although there seems to be limited literature that focuses on the Earth Charter in Africa, tremendous effort was made by Razeena Waiget to achieve environmental and ethical awareness. Razeena used the Earth Charter to develop the National Environmental Education Programme for General Education and Training (NEEP-GET) and in the South African National Parks (SANParks) staff training related to Principle 14 of the Charter. The principles and values of the Earth charter were integrated into curriculum policy, materials resource development, professional development, and school-based implementation. According to Razeena (2011:2), the Earth Charter proved to be a very useful mechanism in the (NEEP-GET) in terms of developing the values, attitudes, skills, and behaviour between people and the Earth. It has also been integrated into environmental education programmes over the past two years.

Bernstein (2007:12) reported that in Mexico, the Ministry of the Environment and the National Council for Sustainable Development led to the endorsement of the Earth Charter by 16 municipalities, 23 educational institutions, some private institutions, and thousands of individuals. By 2007, it was reported that over 130 academic institutions in Mexico had endorsed the Charter, including every technical institution in the country (Bernstein 2007:16). The Earth Charter offers the European Union and other nations searching for an integrated set of ethical guidelines to make the fundamental transition towards sustainable development a redefinition and identity. It provides a comprehensive framework for addressing environment, development, democracy and peace challenges (Bernstein 2007:16).

By examining the traditional Chinese philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, Liu & Constable (2010:193) examine the relationship between the Earth Charter and education for sustainable development (ESD) with local culture, belief systems and indigenous knowledge. The study attempts to link the local and global to foster knowledge, values and skills for sustainable development at the individual, institutional and societal levels through formal, non-formal and informal learning settings. Liu and Constable conclude that the "experience in China demonstrates that drawing on the Earth Charter as a global framework and linking it with the local context and traditional values facilitates the application of global values through local actions, which will contribute to a more sustainable, just and peaceful world" (Liu & Constable 2010:193).

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4.5 Globalisation and the Earth Charter

Globalisation represents a hot, simmering debate in secular and ecumenical circles. The assumption for neoliberalism is that good governance occurs when governments use dollarisation, privatisation, or legally binding 'free trade' agreements to free markets and limit their sovereign authority to set their policies (Alternative Globalisation Addressing People & Earth, 2002:11). It is argued in this AGAPE document that the prevailing ideology promotes and seeks to legitimize neoliberal capitalism and neoliberal globalisation as a way to concentrate multifaceted power structures.

The project of economic globalisation maintains domination, and expansion of power can be achieved through an interlocking web of international institutions, national policies, and corporate and investor practices. Be that as it may, the impact of neo-liberalism on the Earth gives urgency to the call for a just interaction between creation and humanity. Boesak (2009:646) summarises all these realities and concludes that the elephant in the room is the empire's challenge. Using the Accra declaration lenses, Boasak (2009:646) maintains that from this point of view, our current world order might be a New World Order for the powerful, opening up opportunities hitherto unknown for the beneficiaries of the empire. Yet, for the suffering masses, it is a disorder, a cruel and unjust system of domination and exploitation.

The forces of globalisation constitute a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their interests. They are cohesive and mutually reinforcing systems that work together to achieve self-interested goals for the wealthy nations of the world and the wealthy elites in developing nations. In the same lines of thought, Eaton (2014:930) argues that it is conspicuous that most postmodern discourses avoid engaging with and largely ignore the Earth Charter or other similar initiatives that are envisioning the global in a new manner. The prerequisites for an ecological future include the development of a global-local alliance with a unique language and a common understanding that the global must be ecological, planetary, and Earthly (Eaton 2014:932). Likewise, it is argued in the Green Cross International and the Earth Council (2002) that a genuinely democratic and just global framework is needed to translate ethical principles into meaningful law and policy, supported by effective regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

Nevertheless, it is not far from the truth that what has materialised is a system that facilitates grossly unbalanced distributions of wealth and the domination of profit over ethics. Globalisation-related forces have been created by this insufficient and undemocratic regulation of the global economy, which depletes the environment for temporary gains and disproportionately affects the world's poor while permitting large private enterprises to exercise their ever-increasing power largely unchecked. Today, globalisation's ecological and social costs fall largely on those who do not enjoy

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its benefits. Specialising in the enforcement of power in the name of self-interest, it becomes evident that neo-liberal attitudes and policies ensure that the empire is alive and well, despite the counter-balancing power that could be mustered from in civil society (Boasak, 2009). The challenge has been determining institutions that should be supported and what values should inform them. In a world shaped by globalisation and neoliberalism, the Earth Charter provides a counterbalance, urging individuals and institutions to prioritize ethical considerations in their actions and policies (Earth Charter 2000).

4.6 Conclusion

Literature reviewed thus far provides evidence that the Earth Charter upholds the value of the intergenerational equity concept and challenges human beings to design human lifestyles that ensure the full flourishing of all life for future generations. Several authors have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Charter in this literature survey. This information can be used as stepping stones towards improving how the Charter can be promoted as a vision for a good society. The Charter helps build people's capacity in all walks of life by fostering knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life. There seems to be little published research in Africa that relates the Earth Charter as a global ethic as proposed in the study. A literature survey revealed that some scholars doubt the inclusion of all stakeholders in the drafting process of the Charter. Indigenous people, minority groups who may not have been consulted, must be considered in this ongoing consultative process. The study will make a more specific contribution by critically engaging the Earth Charter and the challenges affecting the two case studies to check if there is compatibility regarding the Earth Charter principles and moral directives offered by community leaders.

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the Earth Charter (2000), a key document articulating a global ethic. The chapter began with a historical background tracing the formulation of the Charter and the processes involved in its creation. An overview of the preamble, vision, and mission of the Charter was presented, followed by a discussion of its sixteen fundamental principles, categorised under four main themes: respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, non-violence, and peace. A review of the reception of the Earth Charter since its launch, including its influence and limitations, was also conducted. Additionally, the document was situated in the context of globalisation and neo-liberalism, highlighting tensions between global and local dynamics.

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CHAPTER 5

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY LEADERS IN THE CHIONEKANO WARD

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical data collected from community leaders in the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district in Zimbabwe, with information about this research site presented in (Section 5.2). Research proceedings are presented in (Section 5.3). This chapter aims to understand the perceptions of community leaders on the social and environmental challenges affecting this rural area and the moral directives they offer. The findings are structured around five pivotal themes emanating from the thematic data analysis, each offering insights into the challenges. The first theme presents several social challenges and possible underlying root causes that generated five sub-themes (Section 5.4.1).

The second theme emanated from the environmental challenges and their potential root causes that will be covered in (Section 5.4.2). Transitioning from external challenges to internal moral compasses, the third theme focuses on the moral directives offered by these community leaders (Section 5.5). The final theme was generated from the community's response to the moral directives offering insights into the prevailing reality (Section 5.6). In (Section 5.7), reflections on the ethical theoretical concepts commonly used by community leaders are presented following the theoretical framing presented in Chapter 2 of the study. This will help capture the ethical concepts they use to guide people on right or wrong in their moral directives. Lastly, concluding remarks will be presented (Section 5.8).

5.2 Research site

The coordinates of the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane District, Midlands province in Zimbabwe, are 20° 20' 0" South, 30° 2' 0" East. It is situated in the Runde rural district council, with 19 wards. Chionekano Ward, also known as (Ward 2) is located about 18 km to the north of Zvishavane town and falls under the jurisdiction of Chief Masunda and Headman Matenda. This ward is named after Chionekano Mountain in Zimbabwe. It is north of Chamhini School and northwest of Hombe

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Mountain, with an elevation of 1,202 metres above sea level[10] (see Matenda 2019). Some other wards are also named after mountains, like Guruguru and Hombe. This is the rural area in which I was born and raised. According to data from the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency census (2022), the ward's total population was 3,363, with 1,562 males, 1,801 females and 839 households[11]. Prior to the onset of climate change, the primary economic activity in the ward was smallholder farming. Due to climate change, the majority of the ward's people now rely on non-farming sources of income, like illegal gold mining.

5.3 Research proceedings

Data were collected in July and August 2021. This was when South Africa, among other countries worldwide, was in lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Immediately after the migration restrictions were loosened to allow cross-border travelling, I took advantage of travelling to Zimbabwe for data collection. Ethical clearance from the Human and Social Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Western Cape was already in place and granted on the 21st of May 2021. I must acknowledge that this was quite a rushed idea because I had two missions: firstly, data collection, and secondly, renovating and building a kitchen at my late parent's homestead. These ideas were influenced by the fact that as a family of 4 boys and one girl, we had somehow abandoned our rural roots due to migration to the city and South Africa.

Abandoning the parent's rural homestead is a disgrace to the family legacy in the Shona culture. It came to our senses as a family, and I volunteered to go and do the job in Zimbabwe. The family covered all my travel expenses from Cape Town to Zvishavane. They provided me with materials such as masks, sanitisers, and a power bank for data collection. After arriving in Chikafu village, of the Chionekano Ward in Zvishavane, where I was born and raised, I did not have accommodation problems since I could stay at my parent's homestead. I had two missions, balancing data collection with renovating the houses. Two days after some rest, I visited the headman within walking distance of the same village to seek permission to collect data. The youngest son of Headman Rabson Matenda (now late), Blessed Matenda, was in control because the father was too old and sick and unfit to lead. They had to place his son as the substantive headman. The son granted permission without hesitation, just the beginning of my mission. Although there were lockdown

[10] See www.wiki.polskibreivik.pl/page_Municipalities_of_Zimbabwe.html (accessed 15 March 2020).
[11] See https://zimbabwe.opendataforafrica.org/fujalme/population-distribution-by-district-and-wards ZimStat 2022 (accessed 15 June 2024).

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restrictions, this did not impact my research activities, but it was to my advantage since people were not busy during that time. Schools were closed, and it was not planting season for the subsistence farmers, so several people were free except the youths who could go for illegal mining.

The absence of some youths did not impact my research because all my potential participants were readily available, including teachers from Matenda Primary School, Korogwe secondary school and other community leaders. I started visiting them at their households and meeting others at Matenda's local township centre to make appointments. It was easy for me to build relationships with teachers after informing them that I was busy collecting data for my PhD project. Mr Collen Mudongi, a long-time serving teacher at Korogwe secondary school, was very proud of me, saying, "You will be the first one to obtain a PhD in all my classes."

It is crucial to note that the research proceedings were not without setbacks. The biggest blow was when I lost my uncle (younger brother to my father), whom I was named after as Job Mutindivari Matenda. He stayed in Harare, the capital city, for the rest of his life and was the only father we had left in the family. This incident touched and affected me because we had to stop the data collection and renovation project to bury him since he was transported from Harare to Matenda for burial. We had to comfort ourselves at his burial, saying that we were celebrating his life because he lived long and died at the age of 90. Besides my uncle's death, another challenge was that we did not have electricity in the village, so we had to travel up and down to charge the power bank and the phone at the nearby secondary school for tape recording purposes and communication.

Although I was not financially strong, my confidence and ambition helped me adjust and manage the community's expectations of anyone coming from the city, such as buying beer for them at the local township. Sponsorship from my family helped cover the gap so that I looked like someone who had money coming from South Africa and I could renovate and build a kitchen for my late parents. At the back of my mind, I knew very well that I had little money (like someone who had registered for a self-funded PhD, working as a tutor at that time).

I did not have anything to show off like other youths do when they come from the city, South Africa or even illegal gold mining. Nevertheless, the elders were very proud of me, seeing the legacy of my parents being kept alive by renovating their houses. I could go for the data collection whilst the builders were busy with construction at home. This afforded me a front seat. I realised that I was actually in charge of all the proceedings. Finding participants for my study became very easy with a variety of options. Usually, when building at any homestead in the village, it is a tradition for other villagers to pass by with greetings and to lend a helping hand. As such, several people

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thronged our homestead to help. In that process, I started to hear different stories affecting the community.

More astonishing of all the events that they were talking about was the other youths who terrorised the community at some point in 2019, stabbing whoever they met along the way, which resulted in one dead and five others who survived at Zvishavane district hospital with injuries all over their bodies. These youths, a gang of five, became wild. It is believed that they were coming from the illegal gold panning in Shurugwi and call themselves the bulls (*mashurugwi*), a well-known merciless machetes and small axes-wielding gangs who rob people of their hard-earned gold in the pits. It was surprising that they came to their home area to terrorise people, this left the whole community speechless, and it was unbelievable, although they were later arrested. This indicated that the field site was relevant and that the actual task of gathering data had started. I used the following guiding questions for data collection:

- What are the main social challenges facing this area?
- What are the main environmental challenges facing this area?
- What do you think are the root causes of these social and environmental challenges? On social challenges? On environmental challenges?
- What do you think are the appropriate moral directives to citizens, i.e. to address what is in your locus of control?
- How do members of the community typically respond to such directives?

In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 10 participants. There was one primary teacher from Matenda Primary School and four secondary school teachers from Korogwe secondary school, all males. In addition, the sample comprised the headman and one village head, two community older women from the Methodist church and one middle-aged women youth leader from Johane Masowe echishanu apostolic church (an African Independent Church). I explained the purpose of the research using the information sheet, and then after they agreed, every participant signed a consent form in which they would agree to be tape-recorded. All the participants agreed to be tape-recorded and indicated in the consent form that they wanted to be acknowledged by their names and responsibilities. A copy of the semi-structured interviews was provided in the interview process. The interviews were conducted in English with three exceptions of three participants. I had to accommodate the headman and two older women in the research by using Shona's vernacular language, which was later transcribed into English.

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5.4 Perceptions of community leaders

Community leaders were pivotal in understanding and addressing their communitie's pressing issues. Their insights provided valuable perspectives on the intricacies of the Chionekano Ward's social and environmental challenges and the possible root causes. In this section, the reflections and viewpoints of these community leaders are presented. The following section will present the social challenges and their possible root causes, followed by the environmental challenges and their root causes in the next section.

5.4.1 Social challenges and possible root causes

When asked to identify social challenges, most participants were dismayed, especially with the reality in the area of Chionekano Ward. They reported feeling a strong sense of negativity, helplessness, despondency, and even anguish regarding the issues that were predicted in the area and the world. They would comment that life was much better in the past than the current reality. These social challenges generated sub-themes that will be presented in detail below, namely, school dropouts, violence, unemployment, leadership crises that result in nepotism, the high crime rate of theft and murder, early marriages and teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, moral decay among both the elderly and youths. These identified challenges are presented with the possible root causes in the section below.

a) School dropouts

All the participants out of the ten interviewed identified school dropouts as the main social challenge strongly affecting the Chionekano Ward. They raised concerns about the number of learners who drop out of primary and secondary school. Mr Hakunavanhu, the deputy headmaster at Matenda Primary School, explains:

> *Learners start to drop out of school at approximately in Grade 5 at the primary level. After dropping out of school, you hear that the child is now staying home, the child has joined brothers in illegal gold mining, and the child is married.*

The challenge of school dropouts, as the majority of participants think, breeds a cycle of more challenges. One participant said, *"When they drop out of school, they get married, some fall pregnant".* Mr Moyo, a secondary school teacher at Korogwe High School, shared the same sentiments, pointing out, "*Learners are not coming back to school as they end up involved in artisanal mining, teenage pregnancy and early marriages*". Artisanal mining or illegal gold

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panning is a major livelihood strategy for most people in the Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district.

Usually, illegal mining, popularly known as *chikorokoza* in the Shona language, is practised along the Runde River. For example, Mr Moyo notes that at Korogwe High School, around ten learners drop out of school per term. Mr Mwene, another high school teacher, observes that this problem has been there for a long time, but it has been worsening due to various aspects, for instance he said

> *these days we are talking of COVID-19, where these students are no longer active. They are spending much more time at home, doing nothing, they are idle, then they end up in these sexual activities.*

School dropouts are symptomatic of underlying root causes, as Mr Hakunavanhu noted that today's children are easily attracted by money. He commented:

> *In this area, we have a lot of gold panning around, so if someone buys you, let's say, a packet of sweets or biscuits, then the child is lured. The young boys' learners admire those who come from illegal gold panning with money, in most cases like their fathers who also dropped out of school. As a result, they will fall into the same trap of dropping out of school because there is no one to encourage them in pursuing education. All they know is that they will make a living out of illegal gold mining.*

Mr Hakunavanhu opined that poverty contributes to school dropouts, but he thinks that the lack of discipline among these children could be the main cause. He further observed that some children from well-off families are easily lured by money or the way Makorokoza spend money. The Shona word "Makorokoza" refers to informal, artisanal miners involved in small-scale mining operations. The term carries connotations of a rough or haphazard lifestyle and children influenced by these miner's flashy or conspicuous spending habits.

In agreement with other participants, the lack of discipline in the family is the root cause of these cycles of challenges. Another problem highlighted was that some parents of these school kids are very young. They do not care much about their children, meaning no one can mentor or teach them at home. They no longer value education at all. There were reports from teachers that some parents could not even pay $5 for school fees, which could be an indication of two possibilities. It could be the effects of poverty or sense of irresponsibility whereas parents do not execute their duties to educate their children.

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All the teachers interviewed believed that the advancement of discipline in schools and at home significantly hinged on corporal punishment. The prevalence of misbehaviour among school children posed a substantial obstacle to maintaining commendable good citizens. Corporal punishment had generally been used as a disciplinary measure for ill behaviour in Zimbabwe before it was outlawed in 2017 through a High Court ruling that Article 60(2) (c) of the Educational Act was unconstitutional (Chitakunye & Mahiya 2020:26). In addition to that Mr Hakunavanhu thinks that new laws that abolished corporal punishment at schools are another contributing factor that makes it difficult to discipline children. He asked, "*How, then, are we going to discipline them?"*.

Half of the participants believed that corporal punishment was the best method of disciplining children because the older generations were well-mannered due to the use of corporal punishment. In the words of Mr Mwene, *"It is very difficult to control someone's child or your own because you end up in jail"*. Community norms dictated to everyone long ago that anyone older should become your brother, sister, mother or father, depending on the age. As a result of the new developments that abolished corporal punishment, the participants believed that these changes have produced more self-centred people who don't care about the other.

b) Leadership crisis

As the headman in the Chionekano Ward, Chieftainship was a contested position. A headman is an individual who, due to ancestry, occupies a clearly defined leadership position in an area to provide societal, political, economic and religious functions for local communities (Bishi 2019:382). Contestation emanates from a background whereby some other people not from original royal families rise to claim chieftainship and headman positions when it is not their turn. Elsewhere in Africa, chieftainships are subject to contestation and power struggles between competing houses and individuals (Bishi 2019:386). Most participants expressed that there seemed to be a leadership crisis in this area. Some families claimed that their forefathers died without being given a turn to rule, and now it was their turn. Those in leadership positions were accused of hijacking the position as well. This problem worsened when the late headman gave the position to his other son (because he was sick and old) for the second time. The first son ruled for a year but was removed because of corruption and theft. They then gave the position to the youngest (the current substantive headman) in their family, with everyone in the community doubting the qualities of his becoming a good leader.

The community had lost respect for him because he was connected with selling sacred land wetlands, theft, and drunkenness. As one of the participants said, "*In this community, the problem*

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is that everyone is fighting to be a leader. Hence, it's difficult to govern people who respect one and disrespect the other". Another participant claimed that leaders (including the village heads or *sabhukus* and village development committees (VIDCOS), of which the headman was at the helm) in the Chionekano Ward had lost their moral compass completely because they were not leading by example in this area.

The majority of participants complained that these leaders only act when the perpetrator is not close to them. One of the participants used the Shona proverb to explain, saying, "*Nhaiwe gakanje, ungagodzidzisa seiko mwana wako kufamba wakati tasa iwe uchifamba nerudyi?*" meaning there is no one who can teach others good morals whilst that person is always doing wrong things. Moreover, Mr Moyo explained the situation using a proverb, "A fish starts to rot from the head", meaning the challenges in the ward mirror the bad leadership. These leaders were accused of nepotism. Another participant had this to say, "*We have seen the learners who come from local community rulers are the ones on the forefront of committing theft, murders, so it's difficult to confront a son of a leader, to say your son has committed this*". The explanation for this was that there is now a cycle or perpetual continuity of these crimes because, surprisingly, in some instances, when these youths are arrested, in 2 weeks, you see them back, boasting that even the police cannot do anything to them.

c) Violence

The Chionekano Ward has become the most dangerous and unsafe place to live in the view of some participants. A lot of these bad things, such as violence, prostitution, poisoning when drinking beer and so forth, happen at Matenda local township. Mr Mudongi believes that the primary reason is greed. Explaining further, he notes,

> *Many times, we realize that there are quite a number of our people who have an insatiable thirst for money. So once that demon takes over one's soul, what it basically means is that one will do anything to grab all that is in his vicinity. Amongst the illegal gold miners popularly known as (Makorokoza in Shona Zama Zama in Isizulu), there use violence, and the ruthless always win the day. For example, when a weakling finds a profitable deposit of gold, the powerful use violence to rob others.*

In support of this view, Mr Moyo put it this way, *"let me tell you, there are some makorokoza who don't want to dig or work, but they use machetes to rob those that may have found more gold. That is how violence starts".* Mr Mudongi shares the same opinion that illegal gold panning is the call of the day in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. This makorokoza called themselves the bulls

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(*mabhuru/mashurugwi*), which contributed immensely to violence in the area. They brought violent behaviour from the pits to their homesteads or at Matenda local township. The other cause of violence identified by the majority of participants was that at home, no one could reprimand them to say, "*No, we do not want this kind of behaviour*". This situation was because the one who brought money home had the power to dictate how things should work. As a result, they were ungovernable, whether they had the money or not. All the participants acknowledged that the kind of behaviour amongst the illegal gold panners even the police could not contain was tearing apart the community's social moral fibre.

The majority felt that the mabhuru/mashurugwi and the overconsumption of alcohol are the main possible causes of violence. Mr Moyo, on violence, reiterated that illegal mining of gold has also caused many injuries and deaths to others. These perpetrators popularly known as (*mabhuru or mashurugwi)* machetes wielding gangs) were well known for their violent, merciless behaviour, and the participants were worried that their numbers were increasing. One participant explained, *"In most cases, when they are spending their dirty money at the local shops drinking alcohol and smoking, they end up fighting with anyone or even among themselves"*. Half of the participant's explanations were supported by an example of another artisanal miner whose hand was cut with a machete at the local township after a quarrel over beer. All the participants agreed that these people become bad role models to the young ones because the news of their evil deeds spread very fast, and the young ones think that being a *bhuru* (Shona for a bull) is admirable.

Similarly, Mr Hakunavanhu commented that violence was caused by drunkenness. There was too much alcohol abuse among artisanal miners. They usually engaged in irresponsible behaviour and violence when they were drunk. In addition, Mr Mwene thought violence was exacerbated by the overconsumption of illicit beers, which were very cheap but most dangerous.

Besides makorokoza, Mrs Muzhira thought that violence is prevalent in the area because people don't seem to respect each other nowadays. She blamed Western culture because people did not practice the norm of greeting each other. People were supposed to greet each other properly a long time ago depending on age differences. Mrs Muzhira blamed the language used by some youth when greeting elders as contributing to the lack of respect for each other. She gave an example of unacceptable behaviour of youth greeting an elder using Shona slang "*Ndeipi ndeip, bholato bholato",* loosely translated to "What's up? Whats up? and "All is well" or "We're good". The phrase is a casual, friendly greeting. However, for Mrs Muzhira, this was disrespect leading to violence one day because there was no respect for elders in terms of the age difference in the first place.

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Mrs Machingauta shared a different understanding that causes violence emanating from different religious beliefs. In the Chionekano Ward were stories of children fighting with their parents or brothers in families. In such cases, she blamed the prophets and traditional healers whom people consult to find the root causes of their problems. Prophets from independent African churches such as Johane Masowe Echishanu and traditional healers could prophesy that one is bewitched by their biological parents or brothers for them not to prosper in life. Mrs Machingauta was strongly against such beliefs as they bred hatred, but family members resorted to the use of goblins and witchcraft to make themselves rich. She argued,

> *Could it be possible for me to bewitch a child that I gave birth to and took care of from childhood? Why would I want to kill you now? If I wanted to kill you, I could have done that when you were a child.*

In such cases, it seemed that poverty and witch-hunting become the possible causes of violence. Consequently, brothers in families, those successful, were usually pointed as witches who perhaps had goblins that made other families poor while they were doing well. All in all, witch-hunting resulted in extreme hatred and fighting that resulted in people killing each other.

d) Moral decay among leaders, elders and children

A common view amongst participants was that leaders and elders had all lost their moral compass. The majority of the participants were calling for revisiting how a good society was formed in tribal communal ethics as opposed to 21st-century philosophical, religious and ethical thinking. Mrs Machingauta was so concerned with circumstances where she witnessed children as young as 12 years doing unimaginable things that they did not understand as parents. Elders are blamed because they have lost their morals, too. Mr Mudongi highlights moral decay among our elderly and the youth as the main problem in this community. He put it as follows:

> *I would say we no longer have platforms or rather avenues that would assist both, as I've said, the elderly and the youth to coexist in harmony. So, in other words, they don't have anyone to look after. It appears we are slightly going into what I might term a dog-eat-dog kind of coexistence where nobody gives a damn about the next person's feelings or the next person's expectations, or rather, we no longer have people who have time to mould, especially the youth, to make them grow up into responsible social human beings.*

One participant commented, "*Long ago, it was better because it was every elder's duty to reprimand not only one's biological children but everyone who is a child*". This comment

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corresponded with the saying, “It takes the whole village to raise a child”. All the participants strongly believed that such norms and values were used to keep the whole community intact. On the one hand, the majority of participants felt that the challenge nowadays was that the elders were at the forefront of wrongdoing, and they were not leading by good example. Even when an elder tried to reprimand a child for doing wrong things, these children did not listen. Explaining that issue,

Mrs Machingauta reiterated that it was difficult to reprimand children, she said,

> *As an elder, when you tried to reprimand these youngsters of today, you may have regretted the day you were born after being told hurtful words. For example, when you tell these youths, please stop what you are doing is wrong, they will tell you in your face that, what do you want to tell me, you are not my mother.*

They could also ask difficult questions like, “*Why would you tell me not to cut this tree? You can’t be the same age as this tree.”* Unsure of the causes of such rude behaviour, one participant commented, “*I do not know, maybe it is human rights or the new curriculum they are being taught at school as the root cause*”.

Discussions with all the participants in the ward related to the challenges somehow connected with the country’s economic situation. For Mr Mudongi, the problem in life was that people were simply waking up and going out to fend for themselves, specifically illegal gold panning. As a result, most individuals, especially the youth, spent more time looking for gold. In the gold mining pits, they were exposed to immoral behaviours that they returned to their communities. Another possible cause of moral decay among the elderly and the youths for Mr Hakunavanhu was that children were living with their grandmothers, and families were child-headed households. There was no father, no mother, no grandmother. A 15-year-old might be leading a family. There was no one to mentor these children. Mr Hakunavanhu emphasised parental accountability and authority:

> *For example, I have a 15-year-old daughter, and she has the right to play. If she comes home late as a parent, am I not going to ask where you were because she has rights? I think as a parent I also have the duty and the right to ask the child where you were and what were you doing.*

Mr Hakunavanhu thought there was a need to interpret human rights appropriately in the African context. He said, *“I don’t think rights means that I must not reprimand my daughter because she has the right. When she comes home at 9 o’clock, 12 midnight, I must ask as a parent”.*

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e) Unemployment

Most participants who identified unemployment as a social challenge attributed it to the dysfunctional economic system in Zimbabwe. Given the high population density of unemployed youth in the Chionekano Ward, Mr Hove said that unemployment is the first social challenge, which emanates mainly from the country's economy: "*Most of the youth are not employed in this area. They find solace in smoking dagga/ marijuana or any illicit drugs, including alcohol, usually with a feeling that such drugs help them to momentarily forget the problems that confront them".* The majority then resorted to crime and illegal gold mining. *"Illegal gold mining is not very certain, sometimes they don't get what they expected to get, and as a result, there is a lot of crime again, which is associated with that. Some youth, when they get the money from illegal gold mining, in most cases, it is spent recklessly at the local township on alcohol and prostitutes".*

Highlighting the cause of unemployment, participants blamed the new curriculum that the Ministry of Education had been trying to implement without enough resources. For them, the challenge in implementing the curriculum lay primarily in insufficient resources. Despite ongoing efforts, the process remained slow, spanning ten years, leading to teacher burnout, exacerbated by inadequate remuneration. Mr Hove had this to say:

> *So, when it comes to education, the question is, is our education pragmatic? Do we apply what we have learned in the classroom to the community? Are we bridging the gap between the classroom and the community? So those things may be learned, but to what extent are they being taught at school?*

In other words, the government and the Ministry of Education failed to pay teachers well enough to execute their duties wholeheartedly and produce quality students who were employable or could create employment for others.

Mr Mwene strongly believed that the root causes of unemployment were economic. He said:

> *The economic system is not functioning very well to the extent that it is failing to sustain the needs of the people economically. You realise that most of the youths, they are actually unemployed and when they are unemployed then there is a tendency of them becoming idle and when they are in the community then, you know, they are not occupied by anything, so obviously, an empty mind is the devil's playground.*

Similarly, Mr Moyo blamed the Zimbabwean economic situation as the main contributing factor to challenges. As a teacher, he highlighted that the salary they were being paid monthly was

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insufficient, saying, "*Look at me right now, I am forced to side hustle so that I can feed my family. I am selling clothes to the artisanal miners along Runde River"*. The implication of this was that teachers were not motivated at all, which could be the reason why the pass rate of learners was dropping at Korogwe High School. One teacher explained,

> *As teachers, we have become a laughingstock, artisanal miners boast that they make better money than us. Education has been devalued in this community and that's the reason why we have so much unemployment.*

The perception among the majority of participants was that education was not only there to guarantee somebody a job but to open up learner's mindsets so that they could think for themselves to start their businesses instead of simply becoming illegal gold miners.

f) High crime rate in terms of theft and murder

Participants reported high crime rates such as theft, violence and murders in this area. Participants, including Mr Moyo, acknowledged the high crime rate at teacher's houses at Korogwe High School, where five chickens were stolen from him. At Mr Mudongi's house, thieves stole a car battery, school uniforms and chickens. According to Mr Moyo, most of these crimes were committed by school dropouts. He explained:

> *If you trace the biography of culprits, you find out those perpetrators were raised by their grandmothers. They dropped out of school. So, the children lack parental guidance, nurturing and care. Most of the grandmothers, I think, are failing groom or to support them financially so that these learners can complete their ordinary level. Most of them drop out of school because there is no support or mentoring at home.*

Children who grew up with grandparents were reported to be the main perpetrators because usually the elderly were asleep at night, and no one was going to monitor if their grandson or daughter was in his/her room. A participant declared, "*No one is going to ask where did you sleep? Why did you drink alcohol tonight?"*. This cycle of challenges was linked to early marriages and teenage pregnancies. One participant explained:

> *Let's say a learner is married at a young age. There is a high probability of having children whom she will not be able to take care of. They leave their children behind, and the child is going to be treated like an orphan because there are no financial resources such as sending them to good schools. The mother will be away, leaving the child with uncles or grandmothers. As a result, the child is going to be affected*

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psychologically and socially because these children usually disrespect those guardians because they are not their biological parents.

g) Gender-based violence

The participants identified gender-based violence as a serious challenge affecting the community as influenced by different issues. The lockdown induced by the COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted as a contributing factor to this challenge. Mr Hove put it as follows:

> *Due to this COVID-19 lockdown, the issues of gender-based violence are increasing in this community. Families are now spending more time together at home, and they end up fighting. Resources are strained, people are no longer going out to fend for their families, so in such a constricted environment, we have found out that there is a lot of gender-based violence.*

In addition to that, half of the participants maintained that African patriarchal cultural beliefs were found to exacerbate challenges as well. In the Shona culture, a man cannot claim to have been abused by a woman. Hence, the participants shared their perceptions with regard to women despite the fact there were also men who women were abusing. One participant explained:

> *Because when it comes to this gender-based violence, the panoramic aspect, the scope is so large to include psychological, physical, or sexual abuse. It may be a man being denied his conjugal rights, being denied even the role of being a father.*

Some of the participants thought that there were cases where men were abused by their wives in one way or the other. Mr Mudongi perceived,

> *We are facing issues of gender-based violence day in day out, despite there being calls for gender equity equal rights and so many workshops being conducted by so many organisations. At the end of the day, we are witnessing an ever-rising number of cases of this so-called gender-based violence.*

The participants shared reasons behind this surge outside economic challenges. One participant explained,

> *You realise that whenever a husband has nothing to take home, there tends to be some animosity between the husband and the wife. The wife expects the husband to provide, at the same time, the husband will be having nothing.*

Another participant stated,

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> *As you can see, in our area, we do not have industries, there have been a number of retrenchments, most individuals are now co-existing with their wives, and they have nothing. Usually when there is no food, there is no money to take home. Obviously, there won't be peace in the house.*

Another issue identified by two participants was that of infidelity when there was not enough in the house, be it food or sex. Both women and men tended to solicit extras outside the home. This infidelity, once discovered, led to gender-based violence.

The participants claimed that the Chionekano Ward was where individuals clung to traditional beliefs where a man was regarded as the head of the family. They explained that the man's wishes had to be followed, and a woman could not tell a man what to do. Women were expected to play a secondary role and submit to their husband's wishes and demands. However, clashes were beginning to occur as women became more aware of their rights. Mrs Muzhira agreed, noting that women were oppressed in households:

> *As women, we endure the ill treatment, be it physical or emotional abuse. Sometimes, we end up staying in these marriages for the sake of children. Maybe we can say women were created to be abused or what, but we are being abused. For men, they think whatever they say or do is always right. Is it not that a household is made stronger because of men and women sharing ideas? The problem is that as a woman if I share my ideas, men accuse me of being too fast (wakuda kuvona maningi). Men always claim that they are the ones who call the shots in the house. Women are only expected to dance according to their tune. This is how the challenge of gender-based violence is unfolding in the Chionekano Ward.*

Participants noted that religion had contributed immensely to the challenge of gender-based violence. They observed differing views on this issue, influenced by the various denominational religious beliefs present in the community. In the Chionekano Ward, dominant mainline churches included the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church, Pentecostal churches such as ZAOGA, and African Initiated Churches like Marange and Johane Masowe eChishanu. Additionally, some individuals did not attend church. Thus, this community was composed of people guided by their respective religious and church doctrines, which shaped their definitions of gender roles. The participants believed that problems arose when individuals introduced ideas of gender equality while their churches taught that men and women were inherently unequal.

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Mr Moyo provided an example of the Johane Marange sect. This apostolic group encouraged girls to become mothers at a young age, with many marrying into polygamous relationships before reaching the legal age of 18. In such scenarios, participants observed that even when believers were educated on gender equality, they often adhered to their denomination's doctrines. This highlighted how gender-based violence had become institutionalised in certain religious contexts.

Mrs Machingauta expressed that, in her view, the best way to maintain peace in a household was for a wife to be submissive to her husband. She said, *"In houses where a wife wants to be in charge, and a husband also wants to be in charge, there won't be peace in that household. It will be fighting each and every day"*. She acknowledged that, as women, they were being abused, but the balance comes when a woman knows her boundaries. She gave an example of how she had been abused as a woman in her marriage. In the Chionekano Ward, almost 25 years ago, subsistence farming was flourishing. They usually had bumper harvests and sold their surplus of maize to the Grain Marketing Board. Now Mr Machingauta (the husband) took all the money and went to spend it all with prostitutes, then came back home with nothing. She narrated,

> *As a woman, if you ask, you can be beaten because of that. The husband would say, you do not have the right to ask me. Have you forgotten that I am the father of the house? This is how gender-based violence unfolds in many households. Men do not respect their wives and do not accept their mistakes.*

h) Teenage pregnancies and early marriages

All the participants agreed that there was an increase in the number of learners who dropped out of school because of teenage pregnancy, with a sizable number of girls getting married at a young age. Mr Moyo was worried that these learners were now involved in unprotected sex and the community was losing future leaders. He said,

> *Imagine a 12 or 13-year-old girl being pregnant. Some of them, even if they get married, that marriage is not going to last, which means we are increasing poverty. They are unable to work for themselves. They will end up venturing in prostitution and all these illegal mining activities.*

Mr Hove pointed out that Zimbabwe's economy was the root cause of these teenage and early marriages. He explained, "*So we have got a generation of youth who are always idle. Most of them spend their time in drugs, in prostitution, in all illegal activities*". Mr Hakunavanhu blamed the illegal gold panners for spending money on these young girls at local shops. He explained, *"School girls are attracted by the money they bring, and they end up falling in love, and some are*

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impregnated". Education was not valued anymore in this area. Schoolkids admired makorokozas more than teachers or other professionals who needed education because illegal gold mining money was quick. One needed only strength and courage.

5.4.2 Environmental challenges

The participants identified a series of pressing environmental challenges, which responded to the research question, "What are the environmental challenges affecting the Chionekano Ward?". These challenges were delineated into sub-themes, highlighting issues like drought, deforestation, and illegal gold mining. Each of these sub-themes represented a critical area of concern, reflecting the diverse and interconnected nature of environmental threats faced by the community.

a) Drought

Participants reported that drought was the main environmental challenge, affecting the Chionekano Ward and the entire Midlands Province. They explained that rainfall patterns had shifted compared to what they had been 15 to 20 years before. One participant reflected that they could relate to this change by comparing life now with what it was like growing up 15 years before. Subsistence farming had been a primary means of survival for their parents, who used to sell surplus maize to the Grain Marketing Board; however, it was no longer sustainable.

One participant, Blessed Matenda, the headman, stated, *"The rains we receive nowadays are not sufficient enough to fill in the dams and for us to have a bumper harvest".* The people of Chionekano Ward once heavily relied on farming maize, groundnuts, round nuts, millet, and sorghum. Due to changing rainfall patterns, however, large-scale farming became untenable, leading to frequent crop failures despite hard labour. The empty dams and rivers limited horticultural practices, such as growing vegetables, tomatoes, and onions.

Community leaders believed that drought created a cycle of challenges in the area. Another participant remarked, *"The viable option for the majority to sustain their families is to try illegal gold panning".* In mineral-rich areas like Zvishavane, where subsistence farming was severely impacted by high temperatures, erratic rainfall, and prolonged droughts, many locals turned to artisanal and small-scale mining as an alternative income source.

Participants noted that most people relied on government or non-governmental organisations for food aid, but this help was insufficient. The headman, who oversaw food aid distribution, explained, *"You find that we receive food for 300 people whilst we have over 1,000 persons in this ward. People will now start to fight for this food, some even stealing or taking it by force".* This

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scarcity of resources led to tension, hatred, and corruption, as people resorted to theft when faced with hunger. Livestock such as goats and chickens were often stolen, with thieves blaming wild animals like wolves and hyenas.

Participants explained that water scarcity during droughts intensified tensions. People would fight for water at Gwamakwari, a well-known well near Chionekano Mountain. Mrs Muzhira, a resident of Chikafu village, believed that drought was exacerbated by immoral behaviour in the community, suggesting that it angered the ancestors.

b) Illegal gold panning

Gold mining activities had overwhelmed communities with massive environmental threats despite it being the livelihood strategy for many. All the participants expressed dissatisfaction with numerous deep, open, unsecured and un-rehabilitated mining pits, most of which were water pools along the Runde River. Illegal gold miners were leaving not only pits around rivers but also polluting the water, which resulted in fish and all other animals dying. First-hand information was reported by Mr Moyo, who, the previous week before the interview, had witnessed a bull worth over USD10 000 trapped in a 15-metre pit. The environment had become a threat to both humans and animals. Mr Hove explained, *"It's very risky to travel at night along the Runde River because you can end up falling in these pits"*.

Half of the participants reported that other illegal miners are using mercury and cyanide to process gold along the Runde River, polluting the water on which fish, cattle and humans rely. Mr Mudongi said,

> *Where there is illegal gold panning, there is a high rate of environmental degradation. Makorokozas simply dig for gold, uprooting trees destroying both the flora and fauna without any reclamation. This has affected communities negatively.*

As a result, most people and animals did not benefit because makorokoza did not pay taxes to the government or local council since their activities were classified as illegal gold mining. Participants noted that these challenges were interlinked, as successive droughts drove the majority of people to engage in illegal mining. Some participants believed that the root cause of this challenge was the absence of proper mining initiatives, such as regulated claims for these gold mining activities.

One of the illegal gold miners who participated in the research mentioned that they were being exploited by buyers who offered low prices for the gold, stating as follows:

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> *Gold mining is not an easy job; you have to work very hard, but these buyers seem to rob us. For example, buying a 'point' of gold for US$ 4.00 is daylight robbery. These buyers are stealing from our hard-earned gold while they go and make more money out of our sweat. We end up selling to them because sometimes we desperately need money to buy sugar. We need a dollar to go to the grinding mill. The prices are not fair.*

All the participants shared the perception that the environment and the community did not benefit from illegal gold panning. They reported that there was a significant increase in prostitution along the Runde River, where the *makorokoza* were mining, and that people were losing their livestock to pits created by mining activities, as well as drinking polluted water contaminated by cyanide from mining operations. Participants noted that some people relied on fishing for food and livelihood, but illegal mining had filled large rivers with sand and stones from mining residues, disrupting their food security. Water pollution and pits scattered along the Runde River were among the challenges highlighted by participants. Some participants pointed out that a lack of community education was a root cause of issues related to illegal gold mining. Mr Mudongi notes the unequal distribution of wealth, where politically connected individuals or groups take control of areas with significant gold deposits:

> *While almost everyone yells and yearns for equitable distribution of whatever God has given us, apparently, there isn't an equal distribution of the God-given wealth to both humans and the environment. Wherever there are huge deposits of gold discovered, the big guys, more politically connected invade the area and take away everything. Eventually, it will be their claim, leaving the community and the environment with little or nothing. The big dogs come and take every piece.*

c) Deforestation

All the participants identified the cutting down of trees as a significant challenge. Chionekano Ward had been affected by massive deforestation, the disappearance of wetlands, and land degradation caused by human activity. One participant explained, *"There is too much cutting down of trees for firewood, brick moulding burning, poles for fencing and making cattle kraals".* Despite rules established by the headman requiring individuals to obtain permission before cutting down a tree, all the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the rate at which trees were being cut in the area. One participant, Mrs Muzhira, explained, *"There are rules that instruct us to avoid cutting big*

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trees, encouraging us to cut only branches of trees, not the whole tree, but people continue cutting down trees. As a result, we now have deforestation".

Further explanation was offered by Mrs Machingauta, who stated, *"We used to know that such big trees are not supposed to be cut because they provide shelter to the ancestors and territorial spirits, but nowadays, they are cut deliberately for firewood".* Mr Hove added that trees were becoming extinct because they were regarded as a primary fuel source.

d) Water shortages

All participants identified water as central to the Earth's well-being, prosperity, sustainability, and survival, including human beings, animals, and all living organisms. In the Chionekano Ward, water availability that could sustain diverse users with the correct quantity and quality was a significant challenge. Despite water being strongly linked to soil, forests, wildlife, and the broader environment, the community of Chionekano Ward had suffered from a water crisis for many decades. Explaining this challenge, Mrs Muzhira commented that 2021 had been a better year in terms of water availability compared to previous years, during which residents had to travel nearly 10 kilometres to fetch water from the Runde River using wheelbarrows, with some women carrying 25-litre containers on their heads. Livestock also had to cover the same distance for drinking water. All other water sources would dry up, leaving only the Runde River and a few distant boreholes as the primary sources.

At Matenda Primary School, water had been a significant challenge for a long time until a non-governmental organisation drilled a borehole. Mr Hakunavanhu explained, *"ARDRA installed water pumps, and as you can see, we can now access water from the tap. We have gardening projects with learners and a fish pond for fish farming".* However, he noted that community members not affiliated with the school were prohibited from using this water, as instructed by the donor, who stipulated it was for learners only. This restriction led to tensions, with community members disliking Mr Hakunavanhu for enforcing such rules. He defended his stance by explaining, *"If the whole community comes to fetch water here, then the learners will not have enough water, some of which we use to cook food under the feeding scheme and for other school projects such as gardens and fish ponds".* This statement highlighted the ongoing water scarcity issue in the area.

Investigation revealed a persistent lack of clean drinking water. Mr Moyo, a secondary school teacher at Korogwe High School, explained, *"The nearest source of clean water for the teachers is 7 kilometres away".* Besides drought, many participants pointed out that underground granite

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rock made it difficult to drill boreholes. Even when boreholes were successfully drilled, they often yielded only about five buckets of water per day.

e) Sacred land and day of rest

The interconnectedness between humans and nature emphasises the importance of respecting non-human entities in a mutually beneficial relationship. In African traditional worldviews, harmony between humans and the environment is strongly valued and rooted in a complex metaphysical belief system conveyed through folklore, taboos, and traditional knowledge (Taringa 2006). Therefore, the African perspective integrates three fundamental elements: the spiritual realm, the human realm, and the natural realm. According to Taringa (2006), water bodies, including wetlands, are considered sacred and are associated with abstinence.

This stance implies that people should approach these sacred waters cautiously and adhere to taboos. Nevertheless, this was not the case in the Chionekano Ward, as one participant explained:

> *We have an environmental threat of land that is being sold by the headman in the grazing lands for cattle and also sell land in wetlands. As a result, there is so much soil erosion, and gullies are formed.*

Participants reported that deals involving the headman (*sabhuku*) and the VIDCO are responsible for local development initiatives and comprise a chair (the headman),vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, and three additional members. This structure played a crucial role in managing and became more prevalent in the Chionekano Ward, where they were selling land. They noted that it was unclear whether the authority to sell or allocate stands in the area belonged to the Headman, the Chief, or the Rural District Council. Environmental degradation was highlighted as a serious concern, with major rivers being filled due to siltation.

Another significant concern raised by the participants was the violation or lack of respect for the traditional day of rest, known as *chisi*. All participants acknowledged the importance of this day, noting that it was a tradition passed down through generations. Two elderly women participants expressed dissatisfaction because the rest day had been changed from Thursday to Wednesday. They argued that these changes might have contributed to the consecutive droughts in the area. The sacredness of this day was emphasised by Mrs Machingauta, who recounted a story of a mother who defied tradition by cultivating the day of rest.

The following morning, the woman found her entire maize field eaten by baboons. Mrs Machingauta explained, *"The fields are located where the baboons have to pass through households from the mountains, but there was no explanation for how they reached her field and*

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ate only her maize". She noted that elders used such stories to illustrate the sacredness of the day of rest and the consequences of defying it. Participants remarked that defying established rules led to consequences that affected individuals and the broader community.

Another participant, Munyaradzi Gwiringwi, a retired soldier, attempted to mine gold in the Chionekano mountain, after which a well (*gwamakwari*) that the community relied on for water dried up. This event, they pointed out, was another example of the repercussions of defying tradition. They emphasised that such actions led to consequences for individuals and the wider community. In her own words, Mrs Machingauta stated, *"Let us respect the day of rest and revert to the old Thursday to please the ancestors and territorial spirits in the area".*

5.5 Moral directives offered by community leaders

Moral directives were used broadly in the data collection process to encompass ethical categories such as visions, virtues, values, duties, rights, responsibilities, and worldviews, including references to commands, principles, rules, norms, and goals. Using the term "moral directives" was not an attempt to introduce new ethical categories but to highlight the role of community leaders in shaping morality community development and providing guidance, advice, instructions, and prohibitions. Community leaders offered these moral directives on environmental issues like illegal gold mining, equitable sharing of natural resources, and preservation of the environment, including trees, the sacred day of rest and wetlands. Community leaders were also allowed to offer moral directives on various personal and social issues, such as gender roles and partnerships between men and women: personal habits, finances, sex, health, children, youths, leaders and the elderly and broader community concerns like poverty, crime, and violence.

In the past, meetings with village heads for those over 18 served as forums to instil and discuss community roles and norms. However, the COVID-19 lockdown rules prevented such gatherings from occurring. Similarly, the headman was expected to hold meetings with other community leaders, but these activities were also suspended during the data collection period due to lockdown restrictions. Nonetheless, in his moral directives, the headman encouraged communities to participate in such gatherings as platforms for preserving their norms, traditions, and customs.

5.5.1 Sustainable gold mining practices

Participants reported that intermittent droughts had significantly affected subsistence farming. High unemployment rates in the Chionekano Ward led many young people to turn to artisanal and small-scale mining as a more lucrative alternative. However, they noted that illegal gold mining

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had brought numerous challenges to the area. To address these issues in the locus of community control, participants strongly believed that community leaders should visit areas where illegal mining was prevalent to observe what was happening firsthand. Most participants suggested that artisanal miners be encouraged to close the pits after digging to protect the environment. They believed that registering the pits would provide a means of accountability and help trace those who did not adhere to regulations. All participants emphasized that illegal gold miners should take responsibility for closing their pits, noting that they must be made aware of the dangers the pits posed to both humans and animals. Mr Moyo expressed this sentiment: "*Whoever made a pit must take responsibility to close it at the end".* Participants agreed that this approach could help protect the environment, animals, and human beings, particularly in consideration of future generations.

Since stopping people from mining gold would be challenging, participants suggested that planting trees could help revive the ecosystem, prevent further land degradation, and encourage responsibility. They also highlighted the dangers of using dangerous chemicals in gold mining, noting that such substances threatened human health, animals, and water-dependent flora and fauna. One participant stated, *"People must be encouraged to desist from using dangerous chemicals to process gold because these chemicals pollute water and kill other species that live in waters".* Another participant explained, *"Artisanal mining must be monitored continuously to check if they use correct chemicals. Those who are against the law or rules must be arrested so that they can face the consequences of their actions".*

Participants identified the challenge of illegal gold panning as inherently problematic, given its illegality. Thus, community members were encouraged to take whatever actions they could in their control to minimize environmental harm without involving law enforcement. Mr Hakunavanhu referenced the Bible, stating that human beings were given the task of being stewards of the Earth and all that belongs to it:

> *As human beings, God gave us the natural resources so that we can survive out of them. It is our duty to protect the environment because if we do not do that, we are destroying the life of our future generations. Where would our children get the fish or clean water if we keep on destroying our land? Of course, there are economic challenges in our country, but the government will not protect our land for us but ourselves. My point is that let's use proper chemicals which do not pollute our water and kill all the fish. Let's close the pits or at least do something. That's what I think could be the best way to protect our land.*

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Mr Mwene believed that the Environment Management Agency (EMA) should deploy personnel at the ground level, even inwards, to monitor and recommend best practices for proper mining. Participants noted that inadequate legal regulations governing gold exchange among unregistered, illegal miners had enabled illicit black market transactions and exploitation of these miners. They highlighted that Zimbabwe's artisanal gold mining sector was characterised by chaotic and unregulated operations, largely due to political factors and a lack of political will to formalise the industry and implement effective governance frameworks.

Governance of the sector was described as fragmented, with legislation split among different government agencies without adequate coordination. Historically, participants pointed out that Zimbabwe's artisanal gold mining sector had been plagued by conflict, corruption, violence, patronage, and environmental degradation (Hlungwani, Yingi, & Chitongo, 2021). Mrs Muzhira suggested that there should be authorised gold buyers offering fairer prices to prevent the continued exploitation and enrichment of a few individuals in the black market.

5.5.2 Equitable sharing of natural resources

The main natural resources in the Chionekano Ward are land, water, and gold, usually mined illegally.

The majority of community leaders interviewed stated that an inclusive and workable formalisation of gold mining would revolutionise the gold industry if implemented correctly. They desired a less burdensome formalisation process emphasising equity rather than political affiliations. Participants noted that the lawlessness characterising gold mining areas was akin to a "*law of the jungle*," resulting in a dramatic increase in violence and murders (Dzimunya *et al.*, 2018). One participant remarked, "*If artisanal mining could be done formally, it would be most welcome".* Mr Mudongi added

> *A well-defined policy that accurately reflects the realities of makorokoza and clear guidelines would undoubtedly reduce the corruption, exploitation, and violence currently prevailing in the sector. There is no way in which we can talk of sharing gold equally, considering that, first of all, the gold panning is illegally done, which means there is no framework or there is no law on who gets what. So, if it is illegally done, what it means is that the one who has got the energy is the one who is going to get it.*

Gold has passed through various stages without contributing significantly to the economy. Participants' responses revealed many instances when gold was abundant in the community, yet

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they did not benefit because influential politicians, particularly from ZANU PF, would intervene and take control. This situation led to discontent among the impoverished, often resulting in conflict. These points are supported by Hlungwani, Yingi, & Chitongo (2021:37), who observe the following:

> The level of impunity in the gold mining areas in Zimbabwe is alarming whilst authorities have chosen to let go the whims and caprices of the off-hook gold diggers, popularly known as machete-wielding gangs called "mashurugwi".

At one point in the Chionekano Ward, local people had benefited from a particular mineshaft, only to find later it fenced off and controlled by an outsider. In this context, Headman Blessed Matenda stated,

> *People must organise themselves in small groups so that they can follow procedures to acquire a claim and do legal gold mining. Women also need to be empowered to have their small claims of gold mining. The youth must be empowered with other projects so that they do not only rely on illegal gold mining.*

5.5.3 Preservation of the environment

Moral directives aimed at safeguarding trees, water, and sacred places stemmed from rules established in the ward and enforced by the headman. On this matter, the headman strongly encouraged community members to adhere to these rules. For example, regarding the sacred day of rest, Headman Matenda emphasised that everyone must respect the day, regardless of religious differences. He stated, *"A sacred day is a day to remember our ancestors; no one is allowed to plough in the fields or do anything that disturbs the Earth and soil".* People generally accepted this day as a day of rest, alongside Saturday and Sunday for Christians. Exceptions for working on this day were made only in cases of death or other emergencies. The day was respected for practical reasons and because it was part of rules set up by community elders and guided by territorial spirits. Violating this rule resulted in a fine, often a goat, imposed by the headman.

The headman's directives focused on rules (*mitemo*) to preserve trees and forests. Subcommittees were tasked with monitoring adherence to these rules, and community members needed to seek permission from these groups to cut trees, such as for building cattle kraals. These rules specified what and how trees could be cut. For instance, no one was allowed to cut down a large tree, but branches could be trimmed so the tree could continue to grow. Although some community members were non-compliant, the headman encouraged everyone to follow these rules to preserve the environment.

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Regarding river protection, the rules prohibited bathing in rivers. Instead, people were encouraged to fetch water in buckets and move at least 500 metres away from the river to bathe or at home. Women were also not allowed to wash clothes in the rivers. The rationale behind these rules was to maintain clean water for drinking, as water shortages in the area often required digging into riverbeds for water. Bathing in the river would make the water dirty and potentially cause illness.

Mr Hove believed there was a need to reduce reliance on firewood by adopting alternative renewable energy sources, such as biogas. Given the prevalence of tree-cutting in the area, finding alternative fuel sources was seen as an effective way to preserve trees.

Mr Mudongi declared the following:

> *It is up to every community member to safeguard whatever little we have in the community in terms of both flora and fauna. People must not wait for national organisations such as EMA and the like to protect our own environment. We should do basic policing ourselves as individual community members so that we always educate the next person who is seen to be violating the proper ways in which to profitably exploit the environment. It is our duty as well to help each other to carry out land reclamation by planting trees. I would like to say it is not only up to the community leaders or the national leaders or whoever in authority to actually safeguard what we have in our environment, but it is our duty from the young ones to the elderly to take care of the environment.*

Regarding observing and protecting the sacred day of rest and tree preservation, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with changing the day of rest from Thursday to Wednesday. They argued that this alteration was an abomination that might be causing the community to experience frequent droughts. Their moral directive was to restore Thursday as the traditional day of rest rather than continuing with Wednesday, which had been newly implemented.

The moral directive for community leaders, including the headman and village heads, was to enforce rules impartially, without favouritism or nepotism. One participant illustrated this by recounting an incident involving a well-known individual connected to the headman's family, who had killed frogs and a fish at a sacred well known as *tsime Gwamakwari*. Although the headman was informed, he did not take any action due to their close relationship. All participants emphasised the need to avoid selective application of the law and called for such issues to be addressed publicly, with appropriate punishment for offenders to set a strong example.

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5.5.4 Negotiating gender roles

Participants emphasised that moral directives regarding gender roles and partnerships between men and women involved encouraging open communication through dialogue. Mr Mudongi articulated this idea, stating,

> *When we look at certain issues that lead to violence, there is a lack of dialogue and openness. People need to discuss issues seek help where necessary. So, it is lack of dialogue that mostly leads to some of these forms of violence. If ever we can cultivate a culture where if one is encountered by a challenge, we seek guidance from the next person, or simply openly talk to your wife or your husband and hear each other out, I think we can improve our community.*

Blessed Matenda's stance was that traditional gender roles in the family should be respected to maintain peace in the household:

> *At home, the mother must make sure she cooks for the husband and children. As a man, they must fulfil their duty to provide for their families. Each and every family must respect each other's role, the husband respecting the wife and children also respecting their parents. This can be the only way of maintaining peace in the house.*

Mrs Machingauta emphasised the importance of couples working together, respecting, and helping one another. Regarding equal rights, she commented, *"Nowadays we are talking of equal rights 50/50, but this needs to be understood carefully in the African context because it may result in more misunderstandings and violence in these households".* She added the following:

> *Married couples must not deny each other conjugal rights because this would cause fighting in the household. It creates tensions in marriage that results in one or the other cheating looking for sex outside. It creates problems associated with health as well because extra marital affairs that will bring HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. A husband must be honest to his wife and a woman must also be honest to her husband.*

All the women interviewed expressed the sentiment that girls and boys should preserve their virginity and abstain from sexual activities before marriage. Mrs Machingauta provided a personal example, sharing her pride in marrying her husband as a virgin. Now part of an older, healthy couple, she encouraged the youth to follow this example.

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Before offering his moral directives on equal partnership between men and women, Mr Mwene acknowledged that this topic was debated. At the community level, he believed that women should be empowered to hold leadership positions in churches, cooperatives, or clubs that involved community participation but were traditionally dominated by men. While duties were historically assigned based on gender, Mr Mwene saw the challenge as maintaining traditional roles while incorporating the modern principles of equal partnership and rights between men and women.

Some participants advocated for a return to traditional ways, where duties and roles were defined according to gender, while others supported empowering women with equal rights. One participant envisioned a shift in mindset to eliminate traditional gender roles in favour of equality between men and women. He explained, *"It starts with the leadership roles at various levels in communities. We need to have female chiefs in this area as well".*

5.5.5 Maintaining good health

The participants offered different perspectives on their moral directives on health. Reflecting on how different religious beliefs and doctrines shape knowledge on health matters, one participant said,

> *Due to the fact that, in our community, we've got different church denominations, there are some churches who do not allow their members to seek medication from health centres. For example, in the case of COVID-19, others are not willing to be vaccinated, or immunised, take antiretroviral (ARVs) because they believe from their church doctrines that it is satanic, so it's not allowed. They will easily believe in myths such as if you get vaccinated, you are going to die in five years. So those people will end up being carriers of the diseases, spreading these diseases affecting others and some of the children who are not immunised die. Other diseases which might be prevented end up killing people unnecessarily.*

Hence, the majority of participants encouraged community members to at least trust medical experts trained to save lives. One participant explained:

> *Education must be provided about the importance of seeking medical help despite religious doctrines. I think people need to be educated at each every local meeting about the benefits of, for example, being vaccinated or immunised.*

Over half of the participants' moral directives on health were centred on self-discipline, another way of promoting good health. Community leaders used examples of HIV and COVID-19 to

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illustrate the importance of self-control. They all believed self-discipline could prevent these diseases.

Participants highlighted the importance of protective measures to prevent HIV, emphasising that individuals should avoid engaging in unprotected sex with multiple partners. Similarly, for COVID-19, they stressed the importance of adhering to health experts' advice, such as sanitising, getting vaccinated, and wearing masks. All participants underscored the need to follow guidelines the Department of Health set forth to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Mrs Muzhira emphasised cleanliness and healthy eating, stating, “The best way to take care of our health starts with individual cleanliness; our bodies need to be bathed, and we need to eat healthy food”. She encouraged residents of Chionekano Ward to take advantage of the naturally growing, God-given health foods available in their fields and forests, noting, We are blessed in this area because we have indigenous vegetables, mushrooms, and indigenous fruits that are readily available during their season without needing to buy them”. She advised community members to work diligently to gather these foods and preserve them for future use:

> *People must eat such kinds of food to maintain health and so that they can live long. Although children sometimes do not like these kinds of food, my advice is to encourage people to eat them because they are good for health.*

Participants acknowledged the presence of a local clinic at Matenda township as a valuable resource for the people in Chionekano Ward. Most participants encouraged community members to utilise this facility. Additional suggestions were made for creating platforms to discuss important health-related issues that benefit the community. Mr Mwene provided an example, saying, *“Women must cook for their husbands before they go for a drink; they can take responsibility for monitoring the way a husband is drinking and say something if there could be overconsumption”.* All the teachers at Korogwe High School expressed satisfaction with the Department of Health’s efforts in providing health campaigns, including guidance and counselling education for learners.

5.5.6 Guidelines for bringing up children

The moral directives provided by almost all participants focused on instilling values that should be nurtured from childhood. Mr Moyo explained:

> *Children must be taught good citizenship, what is to be a good human being, values expected, life skills, cash generating project, gardening, farming so that after*

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finishing education or in either case if they drop out of school, they are going to practice what they learnt to improve their life.

All the participants emphasised that good values must be taught at home and then at school. One participant explained:

I would like to emphasise that morals must start to be taught in the household and then at school. The parents must make sure that they educate their children at home more, especially mothers, because children spend most of their time with mothers whilst the fathers are away looking for means to provide for their families.

All participants emphasised the importance of teaching children good morals to mitigate negative influences from troubled families. Elders were expected to lead by example in their households since children through socialisation. Mrs Muzhira elaborated on how children should be taught to grow into positive examples. She explained, *"I am teaching the young ones, my children, and those in our church to greet elders. If you meet an elder in the morning, you say 'good morning.'"* Greeting was considered a norm in the village, and no one was allowed to pass an elder without acknowledging them.

Participants expressed concern over the influence of modernity and elements of Western lifestyles that had become prevalent in the area. Children were accused of failing to greet elders and justifying their actions by saying their duty was limited to greeting their biological parents. Most participants lamented this change, recalling how such practices were upheld. One participant described how, traditionally, when young boys and girls were in conversation and saw an elder approaching, they would scatter, fearing punishment.

Participants noted that reprimanding children had become challenging. Nowadays, some children might respond to elders with defiance, saying, *"What do you want to tell me? You are not my mother".* Additionally, some parents would defend their children if reprimanded by others, even confronting or fighting the adults involved. Despite this, most participants emphasised the need to return to respecting norms, which they believed kept the community cohesive. One participant explained, *"For me, I always tell others that if you see my child doing wrong, beat her. I know she will not report because she knows that I can even beat her worse".*

Some community leaders attributed the erosion of traditional values to Western culture, human rights discourse, and even evil forces, arguing that *"the devil is at work".* They all agreed that the foundation of morality should be respect for norms and values, such as the belief that *"it takes a village to raise a child".*

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Another participant illustrated how family structures had deteriorated, noting, *"Hatred is being influenced by parents who tell their children that their uncle is a bad person who is bewitching us. Such teachings breed hatred and are unacceptable".* Most participants stressed that children should be taught to respect all elders, referencing Christian teachings that say, *"Respect your father and mother so that your days may be added on Earth".* An example given was, *"When you see an elder carrying heavy luggage, a child should help, but nowadays they just pass by".*

The moral directives for children emphasised the need to revisit ubuntu ethics, which focus on togetherness and community, captured in the phrase *"I am because we are,"* as opposed to the individualistic values that had created confusion among children. All participants directed their moral teachings toward children, urging them to listen to and respect their elders. Mr Hakunavahu put it this way:

> *Normally, I always say to them, do what I'm asking you to do. If I say don't smoke, don't do it because I don't want you to get addicted. Even if I smoke, but maybe as young children would say, why are you doing it? So I have the audacity to say, no, no, no, no, no, I did it because no one ever told me that this is wrong and I can no longer live without it.*

Mr Mwene added:

> *Children should be taught or to be made aware of the importance of education. Once they are aware of that, what it means is that they grow, aiming for a purpose or willing to achieve something in life. They will have to establish goals, you know.*

All participants identified a significant challenge in the area: Education was no longer valued. There was a prevailing belief that even if students dropped out of school, they could still find ways to make money, such as through illegal gold mining, which did not require formal education. Despite education losing its perceived value as a path to financial success in Zimbabwe and particularly in the Chionekano Ward, all participants believed children needed to complete at least Form 4. Although the context and realities made persuading children to continue their education challenging, all participants agreed that learners should be encouraged to finish school.

5.5.7 Youth empowerment

The youth constituted the majority of the population in Chionekano Ward, and most participants called for the government to establish policies on youth empowerment. Mr Hove explained,

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> *If these youths are not empowered, the community will be sitting on a time bomb that will explode one way or the other, making it difficult to escape the consequences of these youths being idle.*

As a teacher with over 16 years of experience in rural areas, he emphasised the government's responsibility to track the progress of school graduates. Some participants felt that the youth were not being heard and, as a result, focused solely on themselves. All participants agreed in their moral directives that the government and community leaders should listen to and engage with the youth. They observed that the youth lacked support and funding while they were filled with ideas and ambition. One participant explained, *"An idea that is not funded will remain redundant".* Another participant stressed the importance of prioritising the youth by asking, *"Remember, they are prime and energetic. But where would they spend their energy if they don't have anything to occupy them?".*

Participants suggested various projects such as nutrition gardens, poultry, fishery, and vocational courses in garment construction, bricklaying, joinery, carpentry, and welding to keep youth occupied. They also advocated for providing the youth with the necessary tools and resources to start their projects. To ensure that the youth did not feel neglected, participants highlighted the need for community support, such as purchasing their products to strengthen their market base and promoting their positive activities. However, community leaders in Chionekano Ward identified a challenge: many of the few existing projects had been taken over by politicians for their political gain, often sidelining those not affiliated with the ruling ZANU PF political party. The moral directive was clear: projects should not be distributed based on political affiliation but for the entire community's benefit.

When addressing the influence of human rights, over half of the participants warned that the youth should not misinterpret their rights. It was observed that upon reaching 18, some youths became more defiant, justifying their actions by invoking human rights and claiming that no one could dictate their behaviour. In their moral directives, participants felt that the youth were adopting a Westernised interpretation of human rights, which was out of sync with their cultural context. One participant remarked,

> *We don't need a Western definition of human rights; we need the word 'human rights' to be a product of our culture in the African context because sometimes it is the word 'human rights' which is being abused.*

Another participant added,

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> *Human rights should not be interpreted to mean doing whatever you want. I believe that youth should be taught that their actions have consequences and they need to be responsible for their actions.*

Most participants emphasised that every right carries a binding obligation and should align with the African philosophy of ubuntu.

One participant, in his moral directives to the youth, stressed the importance of providing financial support and creating an environment conducive to youth success:

> *We can give these young men advice, but as long as there is no financial support or if there is no conducive environment for them to bloom no space for them to showcase their talents, then it just remains mere advice. Even the Bible says that, in a multitude of words, there is poverty. When people just talk and talk without implementing what they are talking about, it just remains rhetorical.*

Offering moral directives to the youth, Mr Mudongi stated the following:

> *Participation of youths or empowerment starts with involving them in the structuring of rules and regulations that govern community resources. We should involve the young ones whenever we sit down as elders to come up with guidelines as to how we are going to manage whatever we have in the community. And we also have to involve them in issues of decision-making. Because it is when you make decisions that you can empower the next person. Many times, when you decide things for someone who is absent, you tend to forget that person's interests. So, if they are involved in decision-making, they can add their views on how they want to be assisted. Once their views are co-opted into our decisions, it means we have opened avenues for them to come aboard and have a say in whatever is in our community.*

Most participants agreed that the youth should avoid rushing into sexual activities. Mrs Muzhira explained, *"Some boys would want to use these girls, and when they get sex, they just leave them, either pregnant or with diseases. Girls think that sleeping with a boyfriend is showing love".* She argued that today's youth had lost their moral compass, noting that when she was growing up, a boyfriend was not even allowed to touch her shoulder or body parts, as they were expected to wait for marriage. Mrs Muzhira encouraged youth to abstain from sexual activity before marriage, warning that sex before marriage could lead to marital issues, especially if the person who broke one's virginity were not their spouse. She elaborated that when a girl visited her parents in another village, her husband might become suspicious, believing she was visiting her ex-boyfriend. All the

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women participants shared the moral directive of encouraging girls to preserve their virginity until marriage.

5.5.8 The leaders and the elderly: The need to lead by example

There were a number of moral directives offered to the leaders and elders because they were not leading by example to their followers and the young ones. The majority of participants strongly believed that leaders in the Chionekano Ward need to be educated. Mr Moyo expressed it this way:

> *These leaders, starting with the headman, must be provided with the education because people say when the fish is rotting, it starts from its head. It's difficult for the leader who is not knowledgeable about a problem to address a problem or to teach someone else to prevent the problem. So, the leader first must know what is happening in their communities and how to address the challenges wisely. They can be educated through workshops or hiring specialists to come to their homesteads.*

Mr Hove advised, *"Community leaders need to up their game by giving the youth a sense of belonging and ownership. Again, it is also the duty of the elders to listen to the concerns of the young people".* Headman Blessed Matenda emphasised, *"The elders have the duty to preserve our traditional practices and customs".* Some participants argued that colonisation and Christianity had eroded the community's traditional beliefs and customs. Nevertheless, the headman encouraged community members to participate in traditional ceremonies, such as rain-making rituals, without abandoning their Christian faith. For instance, if people could not brew beer for the ceremony, they were encouraged to contribute a meal. Rules were in place to ensure community cooperation at these ceremonies despite differing Christian denominational beliefs.

Most teachers interviewed, as community leaders, highlighted the need to bring back corporal punishment to discipline learners. Mr Hakunavanhu cited the Bible, saying that sparing the rod spoils the child. He further elaborated, *"There's a difference between disciplining a child and abusing or murdering. Using just a small stick can be an effective way of disciplining the child".* Traditionally, children were seen as belonging to the entire community, not just their biological parents. One participant explained: *"Everyone who sees a child doing wrong, anything that goes against societal norms, must take responsibility for disciplining the child. They must be able to reprimand them and say, 'This is wrong.'"*

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Participants identified a challenge from parents who resisted having their children disciplined by elders who were not their biological parents, viewing it as a contributor to misbehaviour. For example, *"If, as an elder, you see a child stealing and say, 'No, no, no, you must not steal,' when the child reports this to their parents, the parents may come and say, 'No, no, no, even if he steals, I will pay.'"* Such responses were seen as encouraging theft, potentially escalating from stealing a mango today to stealing livestock. Participants agreed on the importance of maintaining traditional norms, values, and community cohesion.

There was consensus that community leaders and elders must uphold the rules and laws of the community without engaging in selective application or nepotism. Mr Mwene, in his moral directive, stated,

> *I think that the leaders are sort of reluctant and not carrying out their duties to their capacity. They are the leaders custodians of our culture, traditions, and customs, so they need to really direct people without favour, meaning perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions.*

5.5.9 Spending money wisely

People tended to like shortcuts and quick ways to make money. Mr Mudongi's advice was that people must learn to work for their dreams in the dictates of the law. He said,

> *I would also want to encourage those on top to accommodate those who are trying, to give them a chance or assistance wherever necessary. They must also be given hints and tips on how they made it. I would urge my fellow community dwellers to live in their means. Because normally, it is when you expect more than what you can afford when you tend to do unimaginable things. Be satisfied with what we have, and we should live with this up until such a time when the economy opens up or the gods of the land somehow bless us.*

All the participants were strongly encouraged to use hard-earned money wisely. One participant explained,

> *Money should not only be used on alcohol and drugs. The youths must at least try to buy food first, invest in buying cattle, and build their own houses. Buying beer the whole night at a township before buying food at home is being irresponsible.*

These moral directives were offered in the context of illegal gold miners to understand that gold money is hard-earned cash and it must be used wisely. Mr Hove explained:

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> *We have seen circumstances where some makorokoza buy cattle, but later on you hear that after they spent all the money, they start selling everything they bought as investments to quench their thirst for beer. I do not encourage the youth to behave in that way because they are our future leaders, and they must fulfil their duties and learn to be responsible.*

Participants offered suggestions on making clean money such as to consider farming. It could be a garden where they can grow tomatoes, vegetables or onions and sell them. They emphasised the need to work hard for the money because there is nothing for free. The perception was that communities could flourish if everyone found something to sell and buy from others. Another participant explained:

> *Buying and selling have been our means of survival since time immemorial when our grandparents used to survive through batter trade. If I have a goat and someone has a chicken or tomatoes or maize, we can exchange or sell these products so that we can buy those we do not have. If you have a garden, your household will be food secure. Sell the extras. You will be able to buy shoes for school kids.*

Other moral directives encouraged people not only to think of illegal gold mining as the only livelihood strategy but also to try other means, such as farming. Mrs Machingauta added,

> *If one is unemployed, for example, in this area, one can try farming, have a garden, piece jobs (maricho) and invest the money in buying, for example, chickens or goats.*

These were words of advice on ensuring that money earned was clean and ethically obtained. Participants emphasised the importance of parents taking responsibility by questioning their children about the source of their income, particularly when they bring large sums of money home. They believed this would help parents and guardians ensure that their children continued to uphold the values and virtues instilled in them from a young age. Mr Mwene highlighted the need for financial literacy in the community. He suggested, *"I think there is a need to engage the local leadership to introduce financial literacy lessons that may assist even illegal gold miners".*

The context for these moral directives stemmed from observations that many illegal gold miners, upon acquiring substantial sums of money, tended to spend it unproductively. As a result, most participants advocated for financial literacy training as a necessary tool for improving economic responsibility and productivity.

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5.6 Community responses to moral directives

Participants were asked to share their perceptions of how the community responded to the moral directives. The study aimed to capture the reality on the ground because people can accept advice differently. The majority of the participants acknowledged that despite a number of bad stories coming from the Chionekano Ward, a large number of people appreciated advice. Three-quarters of the participants maintained that, in terms of percentages, about 80% accepted moral directives offered, with about 20% exhibiting resistance and were difficult or stubborn (*nhubu* or *nyanya* in Shona).

> *Unfortunately, we also have some elements, especially amongst the youth, who feel they want to do it their own way. They can't always follow what is said by someone else, but I think this is common in human nature. That's why we have those social outcasts who are involved in day-to-day violence and the night. So, for my own assessment, we have quite a number who have taken up, and we have tried to follow what we give as advice. These people who take advice prosper in life. They now have stable homes, raising their own kids to be proper responsible citizens as well. So, all in all, it means if we can come up together and work towards a particular vision of the society that we want to see for the future generations, it's possible because people they accept, they are tolerant, they listen.*

From the headman's perspective, most people followed the rules. They respected nature and the sacred days due to the enforcement of rules and the potential for fines if caught violating them. However, the headman acknowledged that difficult individuals, bad apples, always corrupted others through clandestine meetings. Participants suggested that providing opportunities for community discussions could help address challenges and promote good citizenship.

One participant highlighted the community's response to moral directives by explaining:

> *Rules are sometimes difficult to follow or maintain because, for example, even Moses was not able to follow the Ten Commandments. While some people follow the rules, there are always those who act cruelly. For example, on a day of rest (chisi), we are not allowed to gather firewood. When people disregard these rules, they invite problems for the entire community. We believe in the territorial spirit (mhondoro) of this area, and those who break the rules and act improperly upset these spirits. Leaders, such as headmen and village heads, are selling wetlands and grazing lands*

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for cattle. Some communities abide by the rules, but others, claiming to be chiefs, do as they please without facing consequences.

Some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the legal age of majority at 18, noting that those reaching this age often refused to listen to guidance. Mrs Machingauta observed, *"Nowadays, when they reach that age, it becomes very difficult to control them, and they refuse to listen. They often say, 'I am educated, what can you tell me?'"* However, she acknowledged that not all children behaved this way. Some from strong, value-driven families behaved well, while troublemakers often came from dysfunctional households. Mr Hakunavanhu emphasised that discipline was a gradual process requiring patience, stating,

They may not take the advice immediately, but I believe it is a process. When the child repeats the same mistakes, we should continue counselling. In the end, we usually succeed, and most of them accept the advice. Only a few cases involve those who don't listen at all.

Another participant stressed the importance of patience, explaining,

There is a positive intake of advice from the learners and community at large, but it is very bad to label or judge people as bad before trying to give directives (hee vanhu vekwaMatenda vakahodai). Those who don't listen must be dealt with patiently; otherwise, they can negatively influence others. There is potential for improvement and community unity, as I would estimate that about 55% of the people are good, while 45% are not.

Participants highlighted the slow response of the community, particularly regarding girls who were given moral directives but still dropped out of school due to pregnancy. One participant pointed to a simple message written in Shona in a Blair toilet (a pit latrine) at Korogwe High School, *"Regera bonde mwana uite zvechikoro,"* meaning "*Stop indulging in sexual activities so that you focus on your schoolwork".* Despite such efforts, the community continued to lose girls to early marriage or pregnancy, and boys were increasingly dropping out for illegal gold mining.

The majority of participants blamed Zimbabwe's economic challenges for these issues, as the lack of employment opportunities undermined the value of education. One participant explained:

The Zimbabwean bad economic situation is contributing a large percentage to these challenges. We have those who passed A-level went to universities with degrees and diplomas, but they are unemployed. There are no industries to absorb them, so there

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is no inspiration for education. Learners ask, 'Even if I complete my education, there is no employment. Why would I waste my time?'"

Economic conditions discouraged learners from focusing on education, making it difficult to convince them to value and pursue it.

5.7 Reflections on the moral directives considering the theoretical framework

The term "moral directives", an umbrella term in the study, captured the community's social priorities regarding right and wrong. Data collection was grounded in mapping moral concepts presented in Chapter 2 for a theoretical framework of eight categories: visions, virtues, duties, values, goals, rights, responsibilities, and worldviews. Other moral concepts, such as commands, principles, rules, and norms, were highlighted in Chapter 2.

In this section, the moral directives are examined in terms of their content and their form. Content refers to the substance of moral directives, such as gold mining, discipline, authority, money, health, gender roles, and environmental preservation. Form refers to the categories through which moral directives are conveyed. The headings in the section below highlight the categories.

5.7.1 The significance of moral visions

Empirical data from Chionekano Ward in Zvishavane reveals a fragmented society in several social and environmental challenges. There is evidence of ambiguity surrounding the well-being of humans and the environment that calls for shared ethical standards and principles. All the participants interviewed in the study felt a strong sense of negativity and helplessness because of the social and environmental issues affecting the Chionekano Ward. This uncertainty shows that there is lacking a shared moral vision in this community and the world. The majority of participants recognised the declining influence of historically communally grounded moral traditions where a good person was simply one who abides by the rules, role responsibilities and views prescribed by the community. Community members exploit nature and its natural resources, failing to take environmental responsibility to protect land, forests and its different life forms. Leaders keep selling land, reducing the possibility of humans coexisting with nature for future generations. This is an indication that the 21st century posed so many challenges that needed a new moral vision to reorient humanity's moral consciousness, as noted by (Jenkins 2013:42). There is so much moral disintegration in the Chionekano Ward that has resulted in individuals to be more vulnerable and the community less cohesive. These findings correspond with an argument raised by Eckersley (2008:11) that many people have lost a strong belief in anything that transcends the material world,

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and that might sustain them in the face of its dangers and disappointments. This lack of a common vision for our society to nature individuals as a unifying force is a fundamental flaw in contemporary Western civilisation (Eckersley 2008:11). The importance of an altered moral vision for a good society that has a transformative effect on society has been noted in previous studies. This vision can affect virtues, actions, relationships and responsibilities (Rasmussen 2013:127-128). Certain wrong practices identified from the social and environmental challenges are being taken for granted in the Chionekano Ward. A moral vision, perhaps from the community leaders' moral directives, will raise common human awareness and encourage the community to think differently. Community leaders acknowledged that there are about 80% of people (see community response to moral directives Section 5.6) in the Chionekano take the good advice they offer, which is an indication that what is needed in this area is a moral vision that can guide virtuous citizens to embody, implement and practise such a vision.

5.7.2 The significance of Virtues

The moral concept of virtues in the Chionekano Ward were rooted in communal values, social harmony and collective well-being. All the community leader's moral directives emphasised the need to prioritise the community relational aspects of human life instead of individual priorities. Virtuousness is defined as the processes and practices that uphold the best aspects of the human condition, the excellence and essence of humanity (Arjoon, Turriago-Hoyos, & Thoene 2018:143). The reality in the Chionekano Ward is that it is now difficult to reprimand someone else's child because of the influence of modernity and Westernisation that seems to be prevalent. An assertion that children can shout at an elder saying, *"What do you want to tell me? You are not my mother"*, all points to the influence of modernity. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants interviewed highlighted the need to maintain communal virtues of solidarity and cooperation since they are crucial to fostering a sense of belonging in the community and collective responsibility. Despite the influence of individualistic moral attitudes, the participant's vision in their moral directives was to maintain traditional virtues such as solidarity, respect, honesty and communal solidarity. The community leaders still want to maintain the common traditional understanding that it takes a village to raise a child. The young generation has to listen and follow the guidance from elders. At the practical conceptual level, there was evidence showing that there are no clear structures to guide the young generations because the majority of people now live in a state of moral uncertainty. The elderly, youth and children lack the conceptual, moral framework for making moral preferences. Elders and leaders hold a significant position in most African communities. Moral decay among them has taken away their responsibility to use their experience and knowledge as invaluable for

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maintaining social cohesion and moral order. They are regarded as custodians of wisdom and tradition who should narrate traditions and stories for the young ones to follow, but they do not lead by example. These leaders and elders were called to implement justice and fairness to promote social stability. Honesty, integrity and fairness were the basis of moral virtues that the leaders and elders should cultivate in communities.

There was also a strong emphasis on other virtues, such as patience, tolerance, and reconciliation, as their value is maintaining harmony and preventing and resolving conflicts in a community. Vices like lying, witchcraft, laziness, corruption, and injustice have undermined good moral conduct like truthfulness, working hard, temperance, fairness, and respect. In their moral directives, the participants maintain that a good society can be achieved if only structures that promote virtues as opposed to vices are nurtured from childhood at home and school. While human virtues build fellowship, vices destroy fellowship. The study found that the vice of greed promotes violence in the community. As a result, the community should not venture into vices to contribute to the human community's growth (Ikechukwu 2023:12). The virtues were centred around fulfilling what the community accepted and affirmed. These findings concur with (Metz & Miller 2016:3) findings that in African and Asian communities, virtues are nurtured through being committed to the good of others and being concerned with the welfare of others.

5.7.3 The significance of role responsibilities

It was challenging to provide a theoretical framework for investigating ethics of responsibility in the Chionekano Ward as it was closely interconnected with the category of duties. However, role responsibilities were identified. An ethics of responsibility entails a deeper level of moral accountability by taking into account the consequences of one's action to others and society as a whole. In contrast, role responsibilities are limited to fulfilling the specific duties associated with a given role. Responsible ethics emphasises individual obligations in the face of societal concerns, emphasises participation in society at large, considers available options and potential repercussions, and fosters hope for future generations that will live in dignity (Rubbers 2020:2). The role itself defines these responsibilities and is often embedded in social norms. They are tied to the function and purpose of the role. In the Chionekano Ward, like in many other traditional African societies, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and are to be respected by the community and family systems. These roles are based on the age, gender and social status of the community members. Chiefs have the role as custodians of culture and traditions. Elders, family heads, and children all have clearly defined roles that come with responsibility. For example, a parent who sees a child

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doing wrong things or doing something that is against society's norms must take responsibility for reprimanding or disciplining the child to say this is wrong. Fulfilling role responsibilities guides this community's thought processes and decisions.

5.7.4 The significance of worldviews

The category of worldviews emerged from the thematic analysis as a concept that gave meaning to the people of Chionekano Ward. There were aspects of African traditional religion and Christianity in community leaders' religious worldviews and moral directives. A community leader's understanding of life is rooted in cultural, traditional, and religious experiences. Answers to the challenges affecting the community were derived from culture, religion and tradition. Everything is interconnected based on the belief that the world is made up of unseen and supernatural realities. All living things, humans, plants, and animals, belong together. Reflecting on the use of worldviews from selected theological discourses, Conradie (2014:10) concludes that Magesa's use of the term worldview is closely related to the role of religion and the maintenance of the social and moral order. The community is the social embodiment of a certain set of values and virtues that bestows roles and responsibilities that individuals use as a moral framework to develop moral identities (Adebowale & Onayemi 2019:57).

The basic moral tenets of community leaders' understanding were centred on how God interacts with humanity through ancestors, territorial spirits and the rest of creation. These belief systems help distinguish between good and evil and right and wrong. Magesa (1997:1) summarised major themes which emanate from Africans and their view of the universe. The results of the study correspond with Magesa's (1997:1) findings, which showed that African traditional societies' worldview is centred around the sacredness of life, respect for nature, respect for human beings, more importantly, the elders, family and community with an emphasis on solidarity, participation as well as sharing through friendship, healing and hospitality.

Likewise, in the Chionekano Ward, the themes of respecting nature, solidarity, family clan, community, and sacredness of life were dominant in the moral directives offered by community leaders. This worldview determines the aim of existence and the value system. Those who violate the sacred day of rest cut big trees that leaders believe provide shelter for territorial and ancestral spirits and disrespect elders all miss the goal of existence. Some of the participants derived their moral directives from Christian worldviews on matters of protecting the environment. Referring to the Bible, they believe that God gave human beings the responsibility to care for the environment

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and all that belongs to it. In terms of respect, they quote the Bible saying people must respect their fathers and mothers, not biological parents but everyone who is older for them to live long.

Such a worldview has an impact on the ethical behaviour of community members. The concept of ubuntu and ukama is prevalent in the Chionekano Ward. Local inhabitants believe that human beings are all related by nature of being human beings. Ukama was found to be not only restricted to people who share the same blood but can also be constructed on totemic and taboos that incorporate animals, rivers, trees or mountains. Worldview was used to determine how people relate to the world around them. Consequently, most of the community's moral choices were not made consciously but reacted automatically based on worldviews, understanding reality from the norms and rules of the community.

The goal of life is to contribute to its continuation and flourishing. Drought was understood to be a punishment from God and the ancestors for transgression, such as selling land reserved for cattle grazing, occupation of wetlands, cutting down of big trees, and disrespecting the sacred day of rest. The people of the Chionekano Ward worldview and their understanding of the visible and invisible world are different from the Western notions of science that can only help people to explain what happens and why it happens but cannot uncover the invisible meaning of an event (Conradie 2014:12).

5.7.5 The significance of rules and norms

Diverse ethical theories use principles, rules, goals, and norms. Rules and norms were dominant in the moral directives of community leaders. They serve as essential moral concepts employed by community leaders and elders. Social norms are rules and standards that serve as a benchmark for social behaviour without the need for legal authority (Essien 2020:51). They represent rules of behaviour valued or reinforced by the culture of a particular people. For example, the Chionekano Ward shares the norm of greeting each other and respecting elders or leaders with the majority of African traditions. There are also rules enforced to protect the environment, such as stating that no one can cut a big tree. Virtues of respect and solidarity to human beings and the environment are cultivated through such norms and rules. As noted by Akor (2023:2), ethics in the traditional African context relates to the norms, values, principles and moral standards that regulate the behaviour of community members. They help people realise improper behaviour by preventing people from doing wrong things and helping them focus on what is encouraged in the community. Community leaders in the Chionekano Ward believe improper behaviour always has consequences for an individual perpetrator, the community and nature. Certain behaviours, such as disrespecting

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the sacred day of rest, murder, stealing, infidelity, etc, are forbidden. Essien (2020:61) notes that this is a way of conscientising individuals to use their moral responsibilities and common sense to interpret and apply norms and rules to different circumstances.

5.7.6 The significance of moral values

The study revealed that values are elusive because the value attached to some things (social goods) is hidden behind the value itself. It was difficult to categorise values from community leaders' moral directives because they were closely related to virtues. Values have been defined in the study as goals and motivations which serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Myyry & Helkama 2002:37). They represent a variety of motivations that influence the attitudes of rational beings and how they act.

Values, then, serve as a guide for an individual's conduct and show the priority that an individual places on certain behaviours, activities, experiences, or events (Ikechukwu 2023:54). Rasmussen (2013:134) contends that morality is defined by values that are realised in concrete social consequences and ends. In reality, such values are tested by those consequences and ends rather than by character or free will. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values is that intrinsic values are inherently rewarding to pursue, whilst extrinsic values are centred on external approval or rewards (Holmes *et al.* 2011:20). For Holmes *et al.* (2011:24), changing a set of values brings a wealth of opportunities and systemic change hence it is important to address structures and policies.

Context and reality play a pivotal role in the values and attitudes maintained by people. It was found in the study that the values emphasised by community leaders in Chionekano were deeply connected with communal life as intrinsic values that are inherently rewarding to pursue. It is important to highlight that despite efforts to practice collective interests based on conformity, benevolence and tradition in the Chionekano Ward, some individuals' and families' values were inclined towards opposing values, such as the destruction of the environment. There may be some unexpected outcomes from this interaction. For instance, it has been discovered that people are more inclined to support pro-environmental legislation when reminded of generosity, self-direction, and family than when reminded of financial success and status without bringing up the environment (Holmes *et al.* 2011:24). These people, including some leaders, are negatively impacting the community's ability to function properly. As a result, there is a lack of ethical leadership and group accountability in the Chionekano Ward. Lajul (2018:95) maintains that monetary value is gradually taking precedence over the intrinsic value of the human person, which was fundamental in traditional African ethics. As a result, social hierarchies are now being shaped

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by new criteria and value systems, replacing the traditional emphasis on age, integrity, and years of dedicated service to the community.

Such developments are encouraging unethical behaviour in communities. The moral directives offered by community leaders in this area advocated for changing value systems, preferring the community to prioritise intrinsic values of ubuntu/ukama, conformity (politeness, self-discipline and respect for elders). These societal and individual values are believed to be very important as they guide individuals and their ethical reflections. Goals are then used to measure and classify what individuals and communities aim for in life linked to moral values.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented community leader's perceptions of the social and environmental challenges affecting this rural area in Zimbabwe's Chionekano Ward of Zvishavane district. In the process, the moral directives they offered were presented and how the community typically responded to the moral directives. Based on the challenges presented, the reality in the Chionekano Ward indicated the relevance of this case study in testing how global the global ethic is. As an ethicist, I reflected on the moral directives they offered to capture the ethical categories they employ because community leaders use these ethical categories loosely. The aim is to compare them later to see if they are compatible with the Earth Charter and Declaration Toward a Global Ethic by the Parliament of the World Religions. The question is, "Can these moral directives offered by community leaders in this area be employed elsewhere?".

The findings revealed moral uncertainty in this area, and the economic situation in Zimbabwe fuels some of the challenges. Sometimes, their conscience is suppressed by the need to survive; hence, they do not think of the consequences that come with their actions, such as joining machete-wielding gangs, engaging in illegal gold mining, destroying the environment or dropping out of school, deforestation and so on. While there is an opportunity for improvement in ethical behaviour among community members, there seem to be a number of issues that need attention, most importantly addressing the leadership crisis and calling upon elders to fulfil their roles responsibly and be held accountable to address these challenges. The influence of globalisation on local communities resulted in tensions between global ideas and local values, more specifically around globalisation, which introduced new ideas of gender equality, environmental protection, and human rights. Local, diverse cultures are slowly being replaced by these new ideas that challenge traditional customs and practices, particularly among the youth, who may adopt more globalised values over traditional ones. For example, there is a clash between individual autonomy and

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freedom over community collective responsibility, contributing to the challenges affecting this community. This rural community is strongly affected by global challenges such as climate change and COVID-19, and there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The moral directives by communities represent a degree of resistance to these global patterns, and now, they can be used to engage in dialogue with the global community.

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CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY LEADERS IN DELFT LEIDEN

6.1 Introduction

Delft township was used as another case study to test the significance of the global ethic. This chapter aims to present empirical data collected from Delft to understand the perceptions of community leaders on the social and environmental challenges affecting this township. A brief explanation of Delft Leiden as the research site will be presented in (Section 6.2) followed by an explanation of the research procedure in (Section 6.3). Social challenges and possible causes will be presented in (Section 6.4.1). The environmental challenges and possible causes for them are presented in (Section 6.4.2). The moral directives offered by community leaders and the community's response will be presented in (Sections 6.5 and 6.6), respectively. Section 6.7 will reflect on the ethical categories employed by community leaders guided by the theoretical framework of eight categories, as presented in Chapter 2. A conclusion will be provided in Section 6.8.

6.2 Research site

As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, introducing the research site, Delft is a township on the outskirts of Cape Town in South Africa. It is divided into six main sub-divisions, namely, Delft South (also known as Suburban), Voorbrug, Leiden (Delft Central), Eindhoven, Roosendal, the Hague and the new Symphony Way Temporary Relocation Area) that functionally forms part of Delft. From the University of the Western Cape, going to the south direction along a distance of 3,8 kilometres, Delft is marked by Symphony Way (MI71) and Stellenbosch Arterial (M12). Symphony Way marks the boundary between the Cape Town International Airport to the east, while Stellenbosch Arterial (M12) is a boundary between Belhar and Delft Central to the West.

The (M12) Stellenbosch arterial connects with the R300 main route heading to the south, which leads to the intersection with the N2 National Route and the symphony path at the boundary of Delft South. This area is called Delft with the GPS coordinates: 33.9734 S, 18.6393 E. The study focused on Delft Central or Leiden with the satellite coordinates of latitude 33°57'55" S and longitude 18°38'39" E (Statistics South Africa 2011). The 2022 census data for Delft had not been released yet. However, according to Statistics South Africa (2011), the total population in Delft,

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including all its sub-divisions, was at 152 030, and the number of households was 39 576[12]. At the same time, there has been an increase in backyard structures built on the grounds of formal houses. This suggests that the population in this area could have doubled, as indicated in the 2022 census that the South African population grew by 19,8 per cent between 2011 and 2022, from 51,7 million persons in 2011 to 62 million persons in 2022, recording the largest percentage change in population size since 1996. Delft Leiden became one of the first places in which the post-apartheid government used housing development as a mechanism for racial integration by allocating houses on a 50/50 basis to Coloured" Afrikaans-speaking people and Black, mainly Xhosa-speaking people, respectively. These people have moved in from informal settlements (shacks) elsewhere in Cape Town and were given houses under the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme.

I have stayed in this community for eight years while studying at the University of the Western Cape. There is ample evidence of social and environmental challenges such as poverty, economic hardships exacerbated by COVID-19, homelessness, occupation of all open spaces, building of shacks in wetlands, gender-based violence, daylight robberies, irresponsible water use practices, alcoholism, just to mention a few. These social and environmental challenges are affecting Delft and serious challenges in many townships and informal settlements in Southern Africa.

As an ethicist, I was appalled by these social and environmental challenges, hence the need to engage community leaders and capture their perceptions of the challenges they face from an ethical perspective. The fact that this area comprises people from diverse cultures, ethnicities, and racial backgrounds will give room for different views on moral directives offered by community leaders. Hence, they must be included as partners in the ongoing dialogue about ethical issues.

6.3 Research process

Empirical data were collected in the township of Delft Leiden in February and March 2024. I have been staying in Delft for the past eight years. Although I moved from Delft Leiden to Delft the Hague in 2022, I still had good relationships with Delft Leiden community members, specifically at a small Section called Mandela Park, where I stayed for six years before moving to the Hague. The starting point in the data collection process was to seek permission to collect data from ward

[12] See https://census.statssa.gov.za/#/ (accessed 26 June 2024)

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13 Councillor Michelle Adonis. The day I went to her office, I found many people with various problems waiting to see her.

When she arrived at her office around 11 a.m., I presented my ethical clearance and information sheet, informing her that I am a University of the Western student seeking permission to collect data for my research. She quickly browsed through the papers and granted me permission with a warning that Delft is a dangerous place because of gangsters. She said, "*Yes, you can go ahead and do your data collection, but you must be careful of gangsters. They will demand tax from you*". Efforts to arrange an appointment to interview her were fruitless, as she said those words while walking to her office to serve other people with different housing and water issues who were eagerly waiting to be served.

Indeed, she had a lot of work to do, and participating in research was not a priority as many people had more pressing issues. Through my experience of staying in Delft, a warning was not a surprise because walking or driving in Delft is dangerous. There is no freedom; people live in fear of one another, and one must always be extra vigilant. After being granted permission to collect data, I knew that the mission had just begun, knowing that gathering data in Delft is like attempting to catch a tiger by the tail. It is more like diving into shark-infested waters to retrieve a lost treasure.

Following research ethics procedures and the rules of the Mandela Park area in Ward 13, I had to seek permission again from Mr Jada, the chairperson of the area. I had lived in this area for six years before, so it was easy to connect with him since we had known each other for a while. After interrogating me with many questions, he agreed to participate in the interview. However, Mr Jada, a politician, questioned me about how my research would benefit the community. He argued that the leadership was aware of Delft's challenges, but nothing was being done to rescue such communities. He wanted to know how my research was going to make a difference. After some explanations, he understood that empirical data collection was part of my research at the University of the Western Cape's Department of Religion and Theology to engage the community from an ethical perspective. Since he knew me as someone committed to furthering my education, he became more interested in participating in the research when I mentioned it was part of my studies and necessary for earning my PhD.

I informed him that my research might not induce immediate change but would make a difference in the process, considering the role of universities in research and development. I arranged an appointment with him for the following day. Snowball sampling, as proposed in the study, was useful when Mr Jada directed me to six other well-known community members after the interview.

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It was encouraging how he accommodated me, as I could interview three other participants who lived in the same area.

Among the six, one potential participant postponed the appointment until I eventually gave up. Two other women refused to participate, citing fear of discussing such issues, but at least suggested other potential participants. I was then forced to seek participants outside of the Mandela Park area. This began a nightmarish experience, as described in the following section, which details my challenges.

I went to the other part of Delft Leiden, near a traffic circle in Section 23, to make an appointment for an interview with another police officer. It was in the afternoon, around 15h00, on my way there riding a bicycle, when a gang of six youths, one coloured individual and five black Xhosa-speaking men, stopped and attacked me when I was just 100 meters away from my destination. They demanded a cell phone I did not have because I had left it at home since I would make an appointment.

The gang leader, a black Xhosa male, who was in front of me while five others surrounded me, punched me in the mouth with a fist as part of his frustration that I did not have a phone. The blow was heavy, I bit my lips, and blood started spilling to the ground. While I was still in shock, he searched me and found a wallet. When he found only 50 rand in the wallet, I was given another blow to my mouth for not carrying more cash. They took away the 50 Rands and gave back my wallet and bicycle. The gang leader shouted at me, saying, "*Next time, you must move with a phone and money. Otherwise you are going to be hurt*". Surprisingly, all this happened in daylight with community members watching.

This is a challenge in Delft because people are robbed in broad daylight in front of people without their help. There is no communal responsibility in this community. The gangsters who robbed me were well-known in the area, but the community could not stop them. When I arrived at the police officer's house and explained the situation, we decided to recover my 50 rand. Community members who had witnessed the robbery identified the suspects and directed us to the shebeen, where they were drinking beer. Fortunately, when the other gang members recognised the police officer from their area, they quickly returned my 50 rand and apologised, saying they had robbed me because they did not know me. Of course, we recovered the money, but the damage to my mouth could not be undone. I was very angry that I wanted to fight with the gangster that hurt my mouth, only to be reprimanded by the officer.

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My experiences with *amaphara*, the petty criminals who adopt a distinctive sideways walking style associated with *ekasi* (township) culture, skollies (thugs), and gangsters in Delft were challenging. On one occasion, I had to fight off two drunken skollies who were harassing me, and fortunately, they ran away. On two other occasions, I managed to escape by running away quickly. I knew that fleeing is often the best option in dangerous situations, and I am a fast runner. At times, I could avoid trouble from a distance by staying vigilant and constantly scanning my surroundings. Navigating Delft requires constant awareness and looking in all directions. The challenges of collecting data in Delft became especially clear when I was caught off guard by six gangsters. There were moments when the trauma and persistent sense of danger made me consider quitting the data collection process. However, I chose to persevere and push through like a soldier.

Another challenge I encountered was that some people started to be suspicious of me as a spy seeking information that might have endangered their lives if the gangsters found out they shared information about their activities. Out of fear, two other potential participants refused to participate because they did not want to discuss such issues since community members were involved. Three participants agreed to participate but declined to be tape-recorded for fear of evidence of interviews. However, they allowed me to take notes during the interview.

During interviews, I was forced to avoid discussing gangsterism and crime. My findings revealed the uncertainty and fear that participants and researchers experience in Delft. A survival strategy for many people in this area was not to trust anyone. It became clear that it was not easy to collect data from townships. A car could have kept me safe but would have raised suspicions and led to danger. I had to lie low because of fear, maintaining tactics of walking vigilantly, dressed in old clothes and avoiding walking at night.

Ultimately, I managed to interview 10 participants using in-depth semi-structured questions. These included three police officers, one male and two females. One retired male educator, one Rastafarian, and three community chairpersons. One health care worker, One founder of a non-governmental organisation. Nine participants were interviewed in English, while one participant mixed English and Xhosa since I can speak and understand Xhosa. Seven participants consented that I can refer to them in the study by their names and responsibilities. Pseudonym acknowledged the three participants who refused to be tape-recorded. Tape-recorded interviews were transcribed using TurboScribe software. For one participant, the parts of Xhosa were translated into English.

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6.4 Perceptions of community leaders

In a township like Delft, community leaders directly or indirectly represent the community's interests. Although they may represent certain populations according to their roles, their perceptions are useful in understanding the reality in any community. The following section presents the social and environmental challenges affecting Delft and their root causes, as explained by participants.

6.4.1 Social challenges

Several well-known social challenges, some community leaders referred to as social ills, were identified. The study found that these challenges are closely related and form a cycle. These include dysfunctional families, school dropouts, alcoholism, crime, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, drug abuse, overcrowding, food insecurity and unemployment, as presented in the following sections.

a) Dysfunctional families

The participants highlighted that several social challenges in Delft were exacerbated by dysfunctional communities, which stemmed from dysfunctional family structures. They stated that at home, many children lacked role models to guide them, as parents and guardians themselves might be victims of alcoholism and poverty. One participant elaborated that it was the upbringing of children at home that gave rise to a myriad of challenges, as she explained:

> *I think the social challenges in Delft emanate mainly from the upbringing of young children in the house and from the streets. The majority of children here live with single parents, grandparents, and absent fathers. Usually, in such households, there is no order. As a result, children from these households become disrespectful to their neighbours, the people in the streets, their peers, and nearly everyone. It's starting from inside the house. These children are now getting attention from the streets, where through peer pressure, they are now influencing each other, teaming up, playing with other children from dysfunctional families. They can't talk with their parents inside the house because some parents are abusing alcohol or drugs. Some parents are absent, maybe parents died in gang violence, some parents are girls who fell pregnant at a young age now leaving their children under the care of old grandparents as guardians.*

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The participants observed that grandparents often struggled to monitor their grandchildren's activities, as described by another participant:

> *Grandparents don't always have the control over that child because I can speak from experience. My mother used to raise my sister's boy child. The moment he turned into a teenager, my mother didn't have any control over him anymore. He started doing drugs and stealing from the neighbours, disrespecting everyone.*

This participant shared that the child began creating issues for the entire community, yet the grandparents were blamed. Half of the participants echoed similar sentiments, noting that children under grandparental care often did not respect their caregivers. The findings were consistent with a study by the South African Institute of Race Relations, which reported that many children in South Africa grew up in fractured families, often without one or both parents. Poverty and unemployment exacerbated family life challenges (Holborn & Eddy 2011:9).

A recurring theme from all participants was the significant influence of communities and families in shaping young people's social lives. However, when a high percentage of families were dysfunctional, many young people grew up believing that swearing, violence, and various forms of abuse were normalised. A policewoman participant, who preferred anonymity, shared an example of a household led by an uncle caring for four grandchildren. In this case, the children exhibited problematic behaviour:

> *Among these grandchildren, one dropped out of school at Grade 4, and the 7-year-old son has never set foot in a crèche or grade R. They are well known for asking for R2 from people on the streets while shouting obscene language at those who don't give them money.*

Participants agreed that children from dysfunctional families negatively influenced their peers in the streets and at school. According to Mr Jakie, a retired educator, many children were being raised by weak or absent fathers who failed in their protective roles:

> *They don't play their role to protect their family names. They give the role to discipline children to the mother.*

Mrs Johnson added that mothers, too, were responsible for disciplining children. However, some parents mistakenly equated spoiling their children with money, phones, and clothing with love while neglecting to pay attention to their children's behaviour.

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Participants highlighted that disciplining children should not be left solely to schools; it must begin at home. Many parents were criticised for sending children to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, exposing them to negative influences. A participant explained:

> *Sending young children to buy cigarettes is a problem that exposes them to bad habits of smoking at an early age. As they grow up, they would want to experiment; today, it's cigarettes, tomorrow, marijuana, and then drugs. When they are addicted and lack money, they start to steal from the house, neighbours, and the entire community. It becomes a cycle of challenges rooted in dysfunctional families.*

Another cause of dysfunctional families, as noted by two participants, was related to women's empowerment and shifting traditional roles, sometimes leading to marital discord and single-parent households. Male participants emphasised traditional gender roles, seeing men as primary breadwinners and disciplinarians.

The prevalence of illegal alcohol sales in Delft was highlighted as a contributing factor to family dysfunction. One participant stated:

> *In some households where they are illegally selling alcohol, there are teenage girls at risk of falling in love with customers who spend more. Some customers take advantage of these young girls by offering money and gifts. Drunk patrons shout obscene language, and some single parents, mainly women, invite boyfriends into the household.*

Participants agreed that ubiquitous shebeens caused significant harm, leading children to seek refuge in the streets due to a lack of parental supervision.

Regarding school dropouts, all participants noted an increasing number of learners leaving school. Pregnant girls and boys facing various challenges often left school, perpetuating cycles of poverty and crime. Community leaders expressed concerns over parents' inability to guide their children, while Desai, Magan, Ruiter, Reddy, & Mercken (2024:1) reported differing gender-specific dropout reasons. Participants also described additional challenges like bullying and lack of educational support, which drove some children to abandon school.

This extensive exploration of community and family dynamics highlighted significant challenges in Delft, with participants underscoring the need for cohesive support to address dysfunction and enhance youth development.

b) Alcoholism

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The increasing number of shebeens in Delft was indicative of the prevalent issue of alcohol abuse among community members. Participants observed that the widespread availability of alcohol at many shebeens contributed significantly to its misuse. Some shebeens operated 24 hours and sold alcohol to young children as long as they had money, disregarding the legal prohibition against selling alcohol to individuals under 18. Despite the high cost of alcohol, both teenagers and adults were observed to abuse it. Some participants expressed concern over their children, who resisted drinking until their teenage years, only to become unmanageable after their first experiences with alcohol. They noted that in Delft, individuals who abstain from alcohol are often seen as dull, creating a peer-pressure dynamic that influences teenagers' behaviour. This shift often led to smoking, excessive drinking, and dropping out of school. One participant mentioned that children receiving government grants would sometimes demand their grant cards from their parents and, upon receiving their payments, would host parties and drink throughout the night. In such scenarios, young girls were at risk of becoming pregnant, dropping out of school, and continuing the cycle of alcohol overconsumption.

A study by Matiti (2020:16) linked teenage drinking to both personal and environmental factors, such as dysfunctional family dynamics and community norms that viewed alcohol consumption as socially acceptable. The study also found that despite government policies aimed at curbing teenage alcohol abuse, liquor sellers and community members frequently ignored regulations. Participants criticised the influence of older alcoholics, arguing that the youth mirrored their behaviour.

Low self-esteem issues were also seen as contributing factors to alcohol abuse, as one participant explained:

> *Some people have degrees, some are professionals, they have matric certificates, but they get caught up with the wrong friends. They would drink so much because they lack the confidence to speak to people when they are sober. They use alcohol to gain confidence in shouting and to take out their frustrations.*

Participants cited personal issues, such as marital conflict, divorce, unemployment, and family problems, as reasons people turned to alcohol. One participant noted:

> *Sometimes, people drink out of personal problems such as conflict in marriages, divorce, unemployment or family matters. People are going through a lot, and they are trapped to consume alcohol from the little money they have.*

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The majority of participants highlighted the connection between alcohol abuse and increased crime, violence, and road accidents in the community. They emphasised that alcohol-related stress often exacerbated problems, leading to job loss and violence. As one participant illustrated:

> *When others get paid, usually on Mondays, they come up with excuses to avoid going to work. However, they may end up dismissed from work because companies do not want to lose.*

The addictive nature of alcohol left many struggling to quit, and some residents found themselves trapped in debt due to their desire to buy alcohol. Shebeen owners often extended credit, causing individuals to spend their wages repaying debts owed for alcohol.

c) Crime

Crime was identified as a pressing issue in the Cape Flats, closely tied to poverty, marginalisation, isolation, unemployment, drugs, and powerlessness (Bowers Du Toit 2014:1). Participants in Delft expressed fear of crime, noting high rates of gangsterism, daylight robberies, housebreaking, and theft. Mr Jada remarked on the link between drugs and crime, stating,

> *Wherever there are drugs, the crime rate is very high. This challenge is affecting everyone, and the situation is terrible. We live in fear every day of walking to the taxi or buying food from the shops. Those who wake up early going to work are strongly affected.*

Another participant elaborated on the safety concerns for women:

> *Women are not safe here; it's very difficult to live in these circumstances, but we have to do it because we do not have an option. We cannot run away. This is our community.*

Crime was not limited to Delft Leiden but affected other areas such as Nyanga, Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain, and the Eastern Cape. Residents near Mandela Peace Park described it as a space now overtaken by criminal activities, with one participant lamenting:

> *There is no park anymore. It's a camping place for criminals to hide in those trees that they supposedly get a shade on. No one is using the park for recreational purposes anymore. It's dangerous even to cross through it during the day. That's how terrible it is. There were water pipes to water the trees, electricity cables for lights, braai fireplaces in the park, but they all have been vandalised. There were more trees,*

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but now people are cutting those trees for firewood and selling them to those who braai meat (shisanyama).

Participants identified drug use, limited law enforcement, and poverty as major contributors to crime. Poverty often forced community members into criminal activities, including theft and vandalism, to provide for their families. One participant explained:

As long as one is poor, that person can end up being a thief, a gangster, or a prostitute for the sake of providing for the family. Crime won't stop here because people are hungry, and they want to put food on the table. On Television, they advertise crime scenes more, especially on soap opera mini-shows such as Uzalo showing on SABC 1. In the streets, gangsters are admired. I can say the system is giving us more than we can't bear. A rich man's well is a poor man's hell; we are deputies here, and there are the bosses of the bosses who will never be arrested. They use us to do their dirty work, and we end up fighting among ourselves.

The study's findings were consistent with Bowers Du Toit (2014:1), who observed that powerlessness, whether social, economic, or political, often led the impoverished to be exploited by the wealthy and feel hopeless. This environment made gangsters appear as powerful role models, perpetuating crime and violence in the community.

d) Food insecurity

Some participants reported a growing food gap among impoverished households due to the rapid increase in food costs. According to one participant, food prices were perceived as prohibitively high, preventing many from affording basic staples such as bread, sugar, and rice. Some participants discussed food insecurity, noting households surviving on snacks for supper and children begging for small amounts of money on the streets due to lack of food at home. Bread, a staple for many households, had become more expensive. The health of young children was a significant concern, with a healthcare worker noting disparities in their growth patterns, with some showing rapid weight gain. In contrast, others experienced stunted growth, attributed to the quality of their diet. Children spending prolonged hours begging were seen to purchase unhealthy foods without any guidance, compounding the negative impact on their health.

While a few participants directly referenced food insecurity, the majority attributed it to poverty, recognising that food access is closely tied to income levels. The primary food sources for many households in Delft were reported to be heavily processed and lacking nutrients, often purchased from street vendors and informal markets. Load shedding was also identified as a factor preventing

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households from preparing proper meals, leaving some elderly individuals, particularly those with chronic conditions like diabetes, unable to afford or prepare adequate food.

e) Overpopulation/Overcrowding

Participants from Delft Leiden raised significant concerns about overpopulation and overcrowding in their area. Homes were densely packed, with backyard structures built for rent, often occupied by foreign nationals. The population density led to over ten individuals per household in many cases. Mr Jada illustrated the impact of this lack of space on children:

> *We are living in a squatter camp, if I can put it that way. Houses are too close to each other. There is not enough space. Our children are frustrated with the lack of space inside, the rooms were built small without ventilation. Children get frustrated inside the house and prefer to play outside in the streets. They take their frustrations to the streets, where there is too much peer pressure. It's even very difficult to raise children here.*

The proliferation of informal settlements during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people moved from rented accommodations or family homes to build shacks, exacerbated overcrowding. Participants noted tensions between different racial groups, particularly Coloureds and Xhosas, which they attributed to poor settlement planning by the government.

f) Teenage pregnancy

Participants highlighted teenage pregnancy as a pressing issue, with many citing specific examples from their community. Teenage mothers were often trapped in poverty, as explained by Chantel:

> *When these girls fall pregnant, they drop out of school in most cases. This will affect their chances for furthering their education and finding employment. It's not easy to stand up for the negative social effects such as lower status in the family and community, stigma, rejection and abuse from peers, family, and partners.*

Participants noted that teenage girls were impregnated by older men who exploited their economic vulnerability. A lack of youth centres and other resources was seen as a contributing factor. Children from dysfunctional families were viewed as particularly susceptible to early pregnancy due to inadequate parental guidance and support. Technology, such as smartphones, was also identified as a potential risk factor, exposing teenagers to adult content.

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Several participants believed that teenage girls became pregnant to access a child support grant, though this grant was insufficient to support a child. Holborn & Eddy (2011:1) found that risky sexual behaviour often emerged from children raised in dysfunctional families, supporting participants' observations that the Child Support Grant may inadvertently incentivise early pregnancies.

g) *Drug Abuse*

Drug abuse was cited as a pervasive problem in Delft, contributing to crime, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, and violence. The availability of drugs was widespread, and participants feared discussing this issue due to its sensitive nature and the involvement of local gangsters. Drugs were seen to have a debilitating impact on youth, leading them to reject employment opportunities. The police and politicians were accused of complicity with drug dealers.

h) Unemployment

Unemployment was highlighted as a critical issue, particularly among youths and school dropouts. Many young people lived with their parents or grandparents in overcrowded conditions. Participants described a lack of job opportunities and the need for companies to prioritise hiring qualified candidates, leaving unqualified locals jobless. South Africans were perceived as unwilling to work, often missing workdays due to hangovers. Mr Lessley commented:

> *There is no employment, no opportunities for work here. There is no economic development that creates a conducive environment for people, especially the poor who stay in Delft to prosper. Another problem is that the majority of youth lack education. The schools in which the blacks and coloureds are educated do not offer quality education. The South African educational sector is not up to standard if compared to developed countries.*

Participants noted disparities between public and private education, with public schools often failing to equip students with practical life skills. Graduates from technical and vocational training institutions frequently struggled to find employment due to corruption and limited opportunities. Mr Jakie, a retired educator, expressed the frustrations of unemployed graduates:

> *These youths were told education is the key but after graduating, they struggle to get employment because the government cannot create employment for them. Some are business-minded but do not have funding to implement their ideas. It is very difficult*

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for the poor to take advantage of the few opportunities available because there is so much corruption.

6.4.2 Environmental challenges

Rural-to-urban migration has contributed to overpopulation in cities. Issues like illegal dumping, closely linked to increasing urbanisation and the growth of informal settlements surrounding cities, are not unique to South Africa. Managing waste has become a major environmental concern in townships. Environmental threats from waste pose risks to public health, social welfare, and ecosystems. This study presented environmental hazards affecting Delft Leiden from the perspectives of community leaders, including illegal dumping/littering, sewage bursts, air pollution, and lack of biodiversity.

a) Illegal dumping/ littering

One pressing environmental challenge in Delft Leiden is the volume of garbage and solid waste illegally disposed of in open spaces, along road verges, and parks. All participants expressed frustration at seeing diapers, plastics, dead animals, construction debris, and other waste scattered around Delft despite efforts by the municipality to maintain cleanliness. The majority of participants perceived community members as unwilling to take responsibility, blaming the City of Cape Town Municipality for inadequate service delivery. While a minority mentioned that many households either dump or burn their waste due to insufficient waste management services, all agreed that community members are also not taking personal accountability. Chantel criticised community members, noting that some view dumping as job creation:

> *Some people who dump or litter intentionally call it job creation. They will throw their plastics everywhere; if someone says pick up the paper, they say, "No, it's job creation, I'm creating jobs for people". That's why there is littering all over.*

Participants generally agreed that the municipality collects refuse weekly, with occasional interruptions. For low-income residents lacking transportation, the absence of regular waste collection leaves few options beyond illegal dumping. Mr Jada explained:

> *Sometimes, when the refuse collection comes on a Thursday instead of Friday, they confuse residents, and we end up not knowing their exact time. Sometimes, they come early in the morning, and sometimes during the day. If you leave a dustbin outside, they steal it. When the bin is full, people end up dumping in the park or any other open spaces.*

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Participants attributed illegal dumping to the expansion of informal settlements. For example, the settlement called COVID-19, opposite Mandela Peace Park near Delft Technical High School, has exacerbated dumping issues. One participant noted:

> *They don't have toilets, drainage systems, or legal water and electricity connections. As a result, they dump everything in the park and along the streets. Residents in informal settlements have not received waste receptacles, as they settled illegally. They simply find a spot to throw waste anywhere.*

Mr Jackie acknowledged that littering is a significant problem, arguing that weekly refuse collection is insufficient for the growing population. Before weekly pickups, bins often overflow, leading to illegal dumping. Participants expressed concerns over Mandela Peace Park, which was intended as a recreational space but turned into a dumping ground and crime hotspot. The cities support programme of township economy development strategy project for Delft (2022) raised similar concerns noting that the playground equipment, braai stands and fencing in the park have all been vandalised. People illegally dump waste in this space. Schenck, Grobler, Blaauw & Nell (2022:1) studied reasons for littering from lower income communities in South Africa and concluded that the South Africa citizens represent unique reasons that relate directly to the characteristics/indicators of socially disorganised communities.

b) Sewage

Blocked drains and leaking sewage were found to be serious problems in Delft, with residents forced to live alongside overflowing sewage. Children often play in contaminated water, posing health hazards. Some participants blamed the City of Cape Town for failing to upgrade outdated infrastructure, while others criticised residents for flushing inappropriate items down toilets, contributing to blockages. One participant commented, "*The sewage infrastructure is old and needs to be upgraded to meet the increasing population".*

Participants raised concerns about slow municipal responses to sewer blockages, with one participant stating,

> *There is no urgency in fixing sewer bursts in Delft compared to other, more affluent suburbs. It can take two or three days—or even weeks—for the council to address these issues.*

A health worker explained:

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If you go to Delft Technical High School, there are fruit and vegetable markets and braai stalls in the same street where sewage overflows. This contaminated water poses health risks and creates a polluted environment.

c) Air pollution

All participants identified air pollution as a major public health hazard. Contributors included the stench from sewage and illegally dumped garbage, dead animals, and public smoking. Mr Jackie noted:

We do not breathe fresh air in this area; traffic, public smoking, and burning fires all contribute to air pollution.

Additional causes included tyre-burning fires, smoke from braai stalls, and emissions from old, unroadworthy vehicles. Participants reported fatigue and other health problems from breathing polluted air. Burning waste and cables for recycling were also found to contribute to air pollution.

d) Informal settlements/overcrowding

Participants highlighted the overcrowding caused by densely clustered houses and the proliferation of informal settlements in Delft. This has resulted in a lack of trees and open spaces, with most land occupied by housing or tarred roads. One participant remarked, *"It's possible to count all the trees in Delft Leiden"*. Human activities and inadequate urban planning have worsened biodiversity challenges, with houses encroaching on green spaces that could support wildlife.

6.5 Moral directives offered by community leaders

Community leaders gave moral directives on various issues, such as partnerships between men and women, the environment, money, health, and guidelines for young children and elders. The aim was to understand the concepts they used when offering guidelines or principles dictating what individuals ought to do or refrain from doing in various situations. These moral directives were based on various ethical categories discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter Two, namely visions, virtues, obligations, values, responsibilities, rights, and worldviews. Commands, principles, rules, norms, and goals also formed broad ethical categories.

6.5.1 Dialogue on gender roles and partnership between men and women

Moral directives addressed gender disparities and a transformed partnership between women and men. The notion that men and women may work together to enhance society reflected a new

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paradigm that transcended traditional gender roles and encouraged cooperation for societal good. The essential component was sharing responsibilities in families, partnerships, and communities, promoting an equitable distribution of obligations and a healthy balance between work and personal life.

A recurring theme in the moral directives emphasised mutual respect, equitable opportunities, and shared responsibilities in gender interactions. Mr Jackie highlighted the importance of understanding in relationships:

> *A wife and husband must have a good understanding of each other. They must speak one language to the children. For example, when the father says no to a child, the wife must not say yes. When the father gives a child 50 Rand, the mother must not add 100 Rand on top because the father knows that is enough. Adding more money means the child will have extra money for luxuries.*

Mr Jada stressed that mutual respect should be the foundation of partnerships between men and women, with married couples cherishing the moments that brought them together. Another participant underscored the role of love, quoting the Bible:

> *Those in love should love each other unconditionally, as commanded by God. Women have to submit to their husbands. Although it is challenging, both partners must avoid cheating and fulfil their roles in the household.*

Another participant emphasised,

> *Think of your duty to love each other and avoid being controlled by emotions. Do not be ruled by the demands of the flesh, such as lust. Cultivate emotions of love and care rather than jealousy and mistrust. Spying on each other's phones and monitoring interactions creates problems. There must be no secrets in relationships, and trust should be maintained.*

An educated woman interviewed called for gender equality:

> *As women, we insist on 50/50 gender equality. I cannot tolerate my husband cheating while I am expected to be faithful. In such cases, divorce is a justified option. We live in a modern world that differs from our mothers' era. Today, women must stand against abuse, infidelity, and violence. Men must also be held accountable.*

The four women interviewed agreed that the patriarchal mindset, where only men provide for families, no longer fits modern society. They urged women to work and contribute financially to

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their households. Several participants perceived traditional gender roles that assign household chores exclusively to women as oppressive:

> *Men must assist with household chores; it cannot always fall on women to do dishes, wash clothes, etc. Everyone gets tired, including housewives. Paying lobola should not imply buying a maid but appreciating the parents who raised one's spouse.*

Ngohengo (2021:110) conducted a historical review of how modernity has reshaped African gender relations, finding that contemporary perceptions of inequality reflect Western liberal influences that contrast with traditional African practices of mutual respect and agreement across gender roles. A male participant emphasised women's involvement in economic development, stating,

> *Women play a crucial role in economic systems and should participate in every aspect of life. Men often make flawed decisions, while women make thoughtful, intelligent choices.*

6.5.2 Humans and the natural environment

Participants identified the occupation of open spaces in Delft for informal settlements as an environmental challenge. Mr Jackie noted,

> *Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, informal settlements have increased, making residents vulnerable to environmental hazards, especially during the rainy season.*

Community leaders argued that the government should assist by providing proper housing to restore biodiversity in these areas. While participants acknowledged that planners of Delft had not prioritised parks and open spaces, they advocated for tree planting, community gardens, and parks to create breathing space for people. Littering and illegal dumping were highlighted as significant environmental threats. Participants called for educational campaigns to raise awareness of the negative effects of dumping on the environment and suggested,

> *The City of Cape Town must educate citizens about the consequences of littering. Providing waste bins at every street corner and designated dumping spots would help maintain a cleaner environment.*

Participants agreed on the need for stricter enforcement of laws and fines for illegal dumping and improved waste collection services to accommodate the growing population. Mr Jada proposed,

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The population increase requires more frequent refuse collection. Weekly collection is insufficient; increasing the frequency to two or three times a week is necessary.

6.5.3 Means of earning money and spending it wisely

Participants were asked to offer moral directives on how to source money and use it wisely. Working hard for clean money was a recurring theme from all the participants. One participant explained,

> *People can't just rely on the government. They cannot lay on the government's neck all the time. People must learn to create jobs for themselves so that they can be able to pay for food, education, and health services. There is always a way, it could be recycling or any small business. Don't wait for the government to do that for you. Take the challenge yourself because the government is also challenged to look after the whole country.*

Similar points were expressed by other participants who said, *"take it as your duty to look after yourself not relying on the government."* Mr Jada encouraged community members to start small businesses that do not need more capital like fruit and vegetables markets at their homesteads. He said:

> *When it comes to unemployment it's easy to start a small business. You can take maybe 100 or 500 Rands, go to the fruit and vegetables market, buy bags of potatoes, onions and fruits. Make small packets and sell it back to your own community. Instead of the community going to the retail shops to pay more money, they will start to support small businesses.*

In terms of using money, there was consensus that people must budget. Chantel put it this way, "*I would say it's very important to work with a budget and avoid expensive lifestyles. Overspending may force you to borrow money from money lenders."* Money lending and debt was found to be prevalent in Delft more specifically to the beneficiaries of social grant and some workers too. They would spend that money before they even get it. When paid, the money is paid to money lenders with interest. Reflecting on this issue, one participant suggested that people in the township should reduce spending more money on alcohol, cigarettes and drugs to save money.

Some participants were against people who always have a negative mindset that results in low self-esteem. Encouraging community members to be positive, Chantel said:

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Some people here in Delft are ashamed to start a small business. There's nothing to be ashamed of, that's where self-esteem issues also come in now when people start to doubt themselves. They would start to ask questions like, if I start a fruit and vegetables market, what are the people going to think of me? I'm going to be embarrassed now, no one is going to support me, how can I do this for a living and all of that. I urge people to change that negative energy. Tell yourself, if I don't have this money, no one is going to give it to me for free, I need to work hard. Once they have money, it must be used wisely working with a budget.

Half of the participants discouraged community members from buying stolen goods that are being sold cheaply by thieves. The moral directive was that everyone must come up with principles or rules of desisting from buying stolen goods. Those buying stolen goods could buy a phone which cost R 5000 for 500. The point was that communities need to collectively agree that they must stop buying stolen goods so that the thieves will not get the market for their stolen goods.

6.5.4 Nurturing responsible children and youth

There was consensus among participants that fostering an atmosphere that will encourage children and youth to consider education could be the most effective means of reducing poverty. Chantel explained,

I encourage youth to stay in school and finish up to at least matric level. Tor the teenage girls, don't fall pregnant. Focussing on boyfriends who like to talk sweet for nothing can make you fall pregnant. These boys would want to have sex and leave you. Empower yourself by changing your family's poor background circumstances. Be the one that's going to break that generational curse. Don't be the one that's going to just continue with the pattern. Despite all odds, don't drop out finish your school. Go get your driver's license. Enrol for a short course, get the knowledge and work for yourself.

Mr. Jada suggested that children and youth should have access to facilities such as youth centers, where they can spend time learning life skills after school, as most learners lack other activities to keep them engaged. He explained,

If children can be educated from the age of five, it will serve as a valuable investment in their future. This approach addresses the root cause of many challenges, which is the lack of education. Therefore, it is essential for civil society to collaborate with the

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government in this effort. We need to ensure these children are educated, particularly about sexual and reproductive health. This requires working collectively with organizations that can provide platforms for such education. Instead of going door to door, we need accessible spaces where these topics can be discussed openly. Children must know where to seek help, and as leaders, it is our responsibility to provide that support. They should be encouraged to focus on completing their education and to wait for the right time to engage in such matters. The necessary help and guidance must always be within their reach.

All participants emphasized the need for the government to collaborate with civil society and social development initiatives to create spaces where youth and children can learn essential life skills. Community leaders interviewed highlighted the importance of organizations like 'Love Life' in Delft, which serve as platforms to inspire young people to value life. They also expressed a desire for specialists from the health department, including those specializing in HIV education and counselling, to be available in Delft. Another participant said,

The problem here in Delft is that we do not have centres or sports grounds that can be used for fun and learning, causing these young generations to spend so much time in the streets. At adolescence, children should be taught how to handle changes to their bodies. Teach them about the dangers of sex before marriage or the consequences of unprotected sex, depending on the age group, because sometimes they cannot discuss that with parents. It's easier for a child to open up problems to social workers than their guardians. Children need to be kept busy, we need proper structures, not the gangster structures. We need investment to get our sports going again. Without sports facilities, we're not going to have that beautiful footballer to play for Manchester city. There is so much talent in the townships that is being suppressed due to lack of facilities and exposure.

All the participants shared the same perception that children must be exposed to sports and other recreational activities after school or during holiday to keep them busy. Regarding the parents who do not dictate the rules of the house to their children, all of the participants maintain that children need to listen to their parents and guardians. One participant explained:

Teenagers should not claim rights where they are not needed. A child cannot play until midnight claiming rights. As a parent, I can give rules that by 6 o'clock you must be in the house. I am not taking away your rights to play but I am protecting you. I know the dangers of life in a township, it's a way of protecting them.

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Phola suggested that:

> *Youth need career guidance so that they do not enrol on useless certificates, diplomas or degrees that are not marketable in terms of getting a job. They must enrol in something they are interested in to avoid disappointment when they do not find a job. This will reduce the number of unemployed graduates. They need to be trained in skills so that even if they do not secure a job, they can start their own companies instead of just thinking of working for others.*

Half of the participants suggested that young people should be equipped with vocational skills. They emphasized the need for funding to support entrepreneurship among unemployed youth, school leavers, and tertiary graduates. Others opposed the requirement by some companies for five years of work experience, arguing that such criteria should be abolished as they create a barrier for recent graduates seeking employment

6.5.5 The role of elders and parents

Children's mental health development needs a supportive and healthy home environment. Children can acquire healthy behaviors in a safe and supportive environment when there is harmony, cohesiveness, open communication, and good interpersonal ties between parents in the family. The reality in Delft points to a picture where a number of households were reported to be dysfunctional. Children growing out of these families struggle to make it in life. Commenting on this issue, Mr Jackie opined that charity must begin at home, he said, *"stronger families will automatically lead to better communities. If the elders and parents are supportive and apply discipline to the children in a correct way leading by example, that is a promising starting point for the wellbeing of children."* All the participants agreed that the challenges affecting Delft emanates from elders and parents who are not good role models to the family and community.

The elders and parents are respected members of the society who are looked up for advice and whose status is associated with roles and responsibilities. While evidence suggests that the role of elders is clearly defined in African traditional societies, in urban townships, their roles seem to have been compromised. Some elders still have wisdom and are regarded as leaders through life experiences whilst others have lost their dignity because of their failure to be good role models. The dominant view among participants was that being elderly or a parent means some sort of responsibility. All the participants maintain that the duty and responsibility of elders is to support their children and the community at large. One participant commented:

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> *I would say to the elderly people, support your children not only in terms of money but also guidance. Believing in that child makes a difference. Some elderly and parents turn their back on the child and they end up feeling neglected. So, if there's one person in the household that can believe in a child, motivate the child to be better, the child's life will have a strong upbringing foundation. Invest in your child's potential, don't give up on your child. Push the child to be better nurturing young children is like planting a seed, you water it every day and see it growing, spreading the roots in the ground, now you know the seed is strong in the ground. It's the same with the child, the foundation must be strong. My parents took the last 100 Rands to pay for my learner's licence and I managed to get the job as a police officer. Elderly people must believe in their children.*

The key participants in the study emphasised that parents should love their children as a complementary role in keeping stability in their children's life. Mr Jackie, a retired educator shared the perception that the elderly should not only take responsibility to mentor only their biological children. Their duty is to voice out whenever they see something wrong happening. The day we met for an interview with Mr Jackie, there were school children smoking while waiting for transport. On my watch, Mr Jackie took some time to teach those learners that smoking was not good for their health and ordered one of the boys to throw away the cigarette. At first, the boy wanted to resist but after some negotiations, he listened. He then explained his gesture during the interview saying:

> *Did you see how I persuaded that young boy to stop smoking, I tried in a nice way and he listens. I don't mind, they can be rude, but as long as I get my message over. I cannot only be a parent to my children. I am also a parent outside on the street.*

Nevertheless, he acknowledged that the children of today are very rude; they don't want to listen to elders, even their biological parents. All the participants recognised this challenge in Delft but they maintained that elders have a role to negotiate peace and wellbeing not only to their biological children but to everyone who is young and needs help. Participants mentioned qualities such as patience, wisdom, and solidarity as crucial to all the elders and parents. A recurrent theme was that elders and parents need to set up rules and principles for themselves before imposing their rules on children and communities. There was a strong belief that parents should earn respect not only because of being a father or mother but also because they exhibit good moral conduct to the family and community. In support of this statement, Phola said:

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> *The government and non-governmental organisations must come together in an effort to protect the elderly. There are some parents who are struggling with addiction of alcohol and smoking. They need to have facilities where they can get help on how to overcome addiction.*

The point was that even elders and parents in Delft need to be taught how to drink responsibly or help to quit drinking or smoking. This moral directive was offered in a background where there seems to be a challenge with the elders and parents who are trapped in poverty through overconsumption of alcohol. Participants raised concerns over the abuse of elders in townships reporting that some are being robbed of their pensions and RDP houses. For that reason, all the participants in their moral directives called for the protection of the elderly. On another note, parents were encouraged to monitor their children reprimanding them from playing outside randomly because they may be exposed to contaminated water from sewage leaks, either within or outside of buildings.

Parents elders were assigned a role and responsibility to their children when they start to engage in drugs, gangsters or using firearms. Chantel explains, *"you will find many parents who know that their children are smuggling drugs inside the household but they keep quiet. They would say we don't want to disrupt anything."* The participants maintain that the community is there to look after one another and members of the community cannot exist without a community. Communal responsibility was understood for example, when the community identifies a need in the household and come together as a community to help financially and emotionally.

Mr Jackie maintains that the role and responsibility of elders and parents is to nature children at household and at school. They cannot rely on teachers to discipline their children while they do not play their role as well. He put it this way:

> *You can't expect teachers to discipline your children or to teach them discipline. It must begin at home. In other words, some other parents say it is the teacher's responsibility to teach children. I do not agree with that mentality, it is wrong. Charity begins at home because some teachers teaching these learners do not stay in townships. They are not so familiar with reality hence the starting point must be in the household.*

6.5.6 Maintaining good health

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People living in townships such as Delft often had limited resources to maintain good health, and health was frequently not prioritised until someone fell ill. Community leaders provided moral directives encouraging residents to care for their bodies to fight disease and manage stress. All participants agreed that, despite the dangers of being outside in Delft, time must be made for exercise. One participant explained that many people preferred junk food, excessive alcohol, and drugs without considering the detrimental effects on their health. Phola noted, *"People should exercise, although it may not be safe to run on the road, they can steal your shoes".* Chantel added, "*Personal hygiene is crucial; take a bath regularly, wash your clothes, and ensure enough rest. It is your duty to care for your body".*

Participants emphasised temperance in food, alcohol, and all activities. A health worker noted,

> *Do not overeat or abuse alcohol; every person must have limits and principles concerning food. You cannot eat fat cakes or fried chips bought from the streets or fast food daily. People should learn to prepare decent meals at home*.

Communities that adopted unhealthy habits, including smoking, consuming unhealthy food, and gradually reducing physical activity, faced increased risks of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Half of the participants believed educating residents about the harmful effects of unhealthy eating, such as consuming fat cakes and fried chips, would be the most effective deterrent. They anticipated that, once informed about nutrition, consumers would stop buying unhealthy meat from vendors, who would, in turn, adapt to selling healthier options. Despite limited space, two participants encouraged residents to grow vegetables like carrots and onions in their backyards rather than relying solely on store-bought produce.

6.6 Community members' response

Community members' response to moral directives revealed a dysfunctional community due to the socio-economic and environmental challenges facing Delft. Participants acknowledged that residents, as victims of systemic and structural issues such as gangsterism, crime, and informal settlements, found it difficult to accept moral directives. Half of the participants noted that some citizens genuinely sought to improve, but the majority dismissed community leader's advice. As one participant stated, *"These people have been exposed to structural poverty and are now compelled to survive by any means necessary".* Community leaders acknowledged the difficulty of raising children in this context, attributing it to external pressures that forced residents to compromise moral values. Poverty, unemployment, and socio-economic issues thus framed youth resistance to moral directives.

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Bowers Du Toit (2014:2) argues that pre-apartheid "street gangs" evolved into sophisticated criminal organisations post-1994, controlling extensive networks of illicit activities. Despite the church's role in fostering moral character, participants agreed that it had been overwhelmed by violence and crime in townships. Consequently, living a decent life in Delft without adopting a "tsotsi" mentality was challenging (Bowers Du Toit 2014:2).

Suggestions to create centres for children, youth, and elders nurtured responsibility and offered hope for structural change. However, participants recognised that the lack of familial support posed a significant barrier to children accepting moral directives. The prevalence of individualism illustrated the loss of community cohesion, as evidenced by residents' passive responses to public crimes and children's disregard for parental advice.

Participants found that reprimanding youths engaged in illegal behaviour was ineffective. In some cases, youths displayed inhumane behaviour, rejecting moral directives. As one participant explained, "*You cannot reprimand these youths with a soft voice; they only understand violence. To be heard, elders must shout obscene words".* Most participants expressed concern that using harsh language exacerbated structural violence. One noted, "*Mothers often shout obscenities at their children, perpetuating the cycle of violence".* It appeared challenging for community members, particularly youth, to accept and follow moral directives without strict enforcement or forceful measures.

Two community members cited examples of their children adhering to moral directives. One leader said, "*If children are disciplined at home and given rules, they will listen. This is my children's experience".* It was evident that troublemakers often lacked parental discipline. Children who did not listen to their parents or guardians were unlikely to heed advice from others. This highlighted the critical importance of positive role models in families. Parents with behavioural issues, such as alcohol dependence, struggled to instil discipline in their children. Ultimately, community responses to moral directives were interlinked with family dynamics. Dysfunctional families often perpetuated community-wide issues.

6.7 Reflection on moral directives

The term "moral directives" was used as an umbrella term to understand the ethical language used by community leaders in their moral directives. In Delft, ethical categories from the moral directives were not readily visible as they did not directly fall into the mapping of moral concepts used as theoretical framework in chapter 2. It became the duty of the researcher as an ethicist using thematic analysis to categorise dominant ethical categories (in form and content) which they

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employ in their moral directives. In content, issues of partnership between man and women, families, money, clean environment, children and youth, the elderly and parents, and health were used to convey moral content. In form there were six dominant ethical categories that helped to provide conceptual coherence to the perceptions of community leaders and their moral directives. These include the significance of emerging moral visions, the role of virtues in moral formation, the significance of duties or obligations, role responsibilities, the significance of worldviews and the role of principles and rules.

6.7.1 The significance of emerging moral vision

The quest for a good society was not clearly articulated by the participants in their moral directives. However, the reality in Delft as illustrated from the social and environmental challenges call for the need to reflect on the significance of emerging moral visions. A moral vision emerges when there are certain practices that may be taken for granted in societies for a long period of time until common human awareness grows to see things differently. Highlighting some characteristic features of the vision for the good society, Conradie *et al.* (2006:20) note that the emergence of a moral vision is often prompted by an acceptable present. Such an awareness emerges and grows in times of suffering and need. Being robbed in front of people in daylight cannot be said to be a vision for the good society that any human being can dream of. Walking in fear all the time going to the shop was not a moral vision that the government had when they built RDPs houses for people in Delft. Inside their own houses, residents are being held captive. Environmental destructive patterns such as cutting down of trees, illegal dumping or flushing foreign objects in the sewer are all human practices that may need to force people to start thinking for the future of young generations asking questions like "what kind of earth will our children and non-human beings inherit from us in years to come if we do not start now to learn to take care of our earth?." How can a society where all men live and interact happily without fear of being stabbed in the back (if there could be one) be established?

Sekhaulelo (2021:6) raises similar concerns disturbed by the number of young people being pushed out of the education system merely to be left out on the streets, jobless, frustrated, bored and dangerously idle. Bhuda, Motswaledi, & Marumo (2023:2) note that South Africa's moral situation is rapidly getting out of control, and unless drastic actions are taken to stop this trend, the future seems bleak. Sekhaulelo (2021.5) observes that cities are like battlegrounds where people are fighting every day. There is evidence of opposing worldviews, value systems, and lifestyles that are not coexisting. Destructive and negative energies that wreak havoc on the environment and on

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human life seems to have been normalised. Palm (2012:43) argues that an authentic moral vision of hope can help people to think outside the system, reject absolutist frames and consider alternative possibilities. One can argue that other visions for the good society in different modes of moral discourses like the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that attempted to reconstruct South Africa by strengthening civil society, the South African constitution, and Moral Regeneration Movement (calling for a return to traditional/ pre-colonial values for example, ubuntu or human dignity) with a commensurate rejection of Western individualism and materialism) all have not been able to capture the minds of the people in such a way that they dream about a world where the new moral visions will be established.

Schlag & Melé (2020:1) remind us of the necessity of creating institutions for the common good in order to combat egoistic individualism. Udokang (2014:269) asserts that there is an urgent need to revive our cultural values, traditional ethical principles and institutions restoring social order and stability in African communities. Similarly, Sekhaulelo (2022) maintains that social institutions such as families, schools, colleges, clubs, sports, civic societies, local communities, labour unions, professional groups, and churches are extremely important for the much-needed moral regeneration. All the participants shared the same perception that there is a need to have institutions that can help children, youth and elders through collaboration with civil society and government. The challenges facing children and youth in moral positioning can be changed from moral inevitability which entails that growing up in Delft meant a reflection of township norms around violence, drug use, alcoholism and crime. A moral vision can influence people to change that mentality. A thorough awareness that can influence community members to effectively co-exist with the environment is necessary. Undoubtedly, individuals possessing a suitable ecological perspective and emulating ecological attributes are still required to participate in conscientious and environmentally conscious decision-making, as well as to elucidate the pertinent societal priorities (values) in this context (Conradie 2003:135). This will serve as the social glue that holds our society together and to make a positive impact in the areas of politics, education, culture, the environment, the economy, and combatting crime, a shared moral vision is needed.

6.7.2 The significance of virtues

Different contexts within which the ethical categories (in chapter 2) function were subtly adapted to fit in the context of Delft according to moral directives offered by community leaders. The category of virtue ethics was found to be of considerable importance in explaining moral behaviour as highlighted by the perceptions of community leaders. It was difficult to easily translate virtue

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ethics because they are embedded in a variety of cultures, worldviews and they are contested even within that social context. Modern virtue philosophers, such as Anscombe (1958) or MacIntyre, (1981) have tried to discover the source of moral actions through virtue ethics. Unlike consequentialism, which stresses the consequences of actions, or deontology, which emphasises duty instead of consequences, virtue ethics places an emphasis on virtues, or moral character. Virtues are those tendencies that support us in maintaining particular behaviours and producing positive results by empowering us to resist negative effects, threats, temptations, and diversions, as well as by deepening our awareness of the good and ourselves (MacIntyre 1981). Since virtue theories focus on human's actual character traits and the development of moral dispositions, it was found in this study that there is a thin line to separate virtue ethics with moral values. Virtue ethics alone is also insufficient, and it has to be supplemented by moral values.

In a community like Delft where people's moral lives are less a matter of choice and more a matter of survival even when one knows good morals, it seems the social context is corrupting many mindsets. Families are the foundation of any community to nature virtues. According to Vosloo (1997:305) virtues need role models and saints to serve community members to restrain themselves from certain actions because of their families, clan, churches. Community leaders in Delft emphasise the need to create platforms such as youth centres and sports where children can be taught life to avoid them from spending more time in the streets. It could be within these social practices where young people can be told stories, find role models, make friendships that provide a plethora of insights that can be used to expand ethical discourse. Each of these aspects play a key role in guiding, inspiring and motivating people through processes of moral formation. Nevertheless, in Delft, a number of families are dysfunctional with absent fathers, a sizable number of families under grandparent's care. In a context like this, institutions such as the gangsters and churches are all demanding loyalty from members. As noted in Chapter 2, urban areas prompted a change from a vision for the good society (whereby a good person had to live with the dictates of the society) to a good person (virtues). At the same time, the dominant role of vices as highlighted from the social and environmental challenges is something that makes this whole discourse of virtue ethics tricky because vices are being turned into virtues. Being a gangster is becoming admirable. Participants in their moral directives expressed the need to cultivate virtues such as courage to start businesses, wisdom from parents to take care of their children and temperance on the use of alcohol, food and drugs. The challenges identified points to a dysfunctional community that is making it difficult for people of good moral character (virtues) to practise their virtues while vices seem to be promoted. People are being forced to abandon basic morality for survival tactics.

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Vices associated with alcohol overconsumption, crime and more are becoming recreational activities in Delft. Kunhiyop (2009:72) blames individual rights and freedoms as legitimate reasons for children to rebel against parents, guardians and the elders. Individuals commit shameful acts without a feeling of shame or accountability to the group or community.

There is no more community because of the overemphasis on individual rights and freedom. Delft has unstable and complex social realities that form an important part of young people's moral formation. Participants maintained that cohesion in Delft can be promoted by virtues like respect, trust, and cooperation. For example, cooperation was understood in terms of intervening to help dysfunctional families financially or emotionally. When community members put these virtues into practice, the community becomes more cohesive. Encouraging virtues like nonviolence and respect for others helps reduce crime and violence, making the community a safer place for everyone to live. Characteristics like empathy, understanding, and kindness strengthen bonds between people, which strengthens families and relationships as emphasised by participants. Community leaders and respected figures were encouraged to model virtuous behaviour.

Virtue ethics is again recognised as an ethical concept that can be used to address environmental challenges. Tete & Ariche (2021:86) note that virtue ethics became a vigorous growth area in moral philosophy and has also made its appearance in environmental ethics. Participants offered moral directives on environmental challenges such as rapid cutting down of trees appealing to virtues of respecting trees encouraging community members to halt vices of being greedy and manipulative by exploiting nature. They all maintained that love, respect, and care for nature as human environmental virtues and maintained that such conduct is essential for human flourishing. The vices of being insensitive to nature and behaving rudely is self-defeating. In support of this assertion, Conradie (2003:135) maintains that environmental problems can only be addressed adequately by ecological people, people of good moral character, people who embody ecological virtues.

6.7.3 The significance of human responsibilities

Participants often referred to the category of responsibilities to individuals, communities and organisations in different ways. Their moral directives with regards to human responsibilities were somehow intersecting with role responsibilities where they called upon a balance of duties or obligations to the potential consequences of their actions. Ethics of responsibility upholds that responsible decision making is not only about acting upon principles but brings the importance of considering the consequences and to be accountable. While role responsibility puts emphasis on

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the duties and obligations that follow from a specific role or position within a family, community organisations. The ethical category of responsibility helps people in making moral choices that fit their responsibilities and ensure that they act honourably and thoughtfully about the consequences of their choices. It was found in this study that a number of problems in Delft are as a result of dysfunctional families without parents or guardians who can play their role to teach their families to become responsible citizens. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2024:250) observe that a dysfunctional home environment increases a child's inclination to seek an environment where he or she is accepted and valued. This notion brings the significance of role responsibilities that are assigned to each and every one. Eddy, Thomson-de Boor, & Mphaka (2013:2) note that responsible and engaged fathers, who do their share of parenting work, are beneficial to the development of children and to building families. In Delft, the widespread absence of responsible fathers, mothers, grandparents have detrimental consequences for families and for society. Despite the fact that their presence does not guarantee positive outcome in moral development, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2024:251) uphold that children raised by parents or guardians with warm and responsive care are more likely to develop optimally than children raised by applying harsh, dysfunctional and punitive discipline methods. A family is assigned a role with responsibilities to raise their children properly. Fathers have historically been seen primarily as providers. Nevertheless, it was found in Delft that women are entering the workforce and a new fatherhood paradigm has arisen. Women can now provide for the family and they call upon fathers to get involved in daily child care on extracurricular or educational activities, and to be emotionally present for the child.

Community leaders in Delft strongly believed that individuals, families or organisations must take role responsibilities for their actions, more specifically considering actions that affect their individual lives and the community at large. Actions performed by individuals, as consumers and citizens, have aggregate negative consequences for the environment. This raises the possibility that humans have obligations to the larger ecosystem that extend beyond the welfare of themselves and society. Ethics of responsibility deals with the nature of this obligation and the underlying ideas that support it. Participants called upon responsibility to issues such as throwing litter on designated areas instead of illegal dumping. For example, each and every household must take responsibility to take out refuse bins on the collection schedule. The same applies to institutions like the government and municipalities, their role is to provide services to communities and as such they have a responsibility to do so. The city of Cape Town has the responsibility to collect refuse every week in Delft but they must also consider the ethical consequences of not fulfilling this role. As a result, ethics of responsibility and role responsibilities categories helps individuals or organisations

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to act and make decisions based on their duties and obligations. Another example in content from the moral directives relates to the issue of employment and community members who rely on the government to provide jobs. For instance, the moral directive to address the challenge of unemployment was that, in cases where there is no employment, individuals must play a role to create employment for themselves or to work hard. However, creating jobs through littering diminishes the role responsibilities when people do not consider the consequences of littering to the environment and health. Fahlquist (2009:109) acknowledges the evasiveness on the concept of moral responsibility because it can be used in different contexts for diverging purposes.

Community leaders in Delft extended the role of nurturing children to schools as communities of learning and improvement of character. At family and community level in emphasising the significance considering consequences, community members were encouraged to mobilise one another, and not merely wait for the government to clean the streets or to plant trees. These were the roles and responsibilities that should be embraced at individual, family, school, community, government and civil society organisations. The best way to counter negative individualism, as noted by Kunhiyop (2009:68), is to limit the individual freedom of doing as one pleases without holding oneself accountable or responsible. Participants were against shameless morality which has no regard for responsibility and respect to the total community, thus the significance of ethics of responsibility and role responsibilities.

6.7.4 The significance of moral values

The concept of values is slippery because it has multiple meanings. Moral values revealed in this study could be easily equated to virtues. There is a thin line to separate these ethical categories because they are closely related. While some people frequently prioritise other values, some are less likely to value them. Clearly, then, various aspects of our society may constrain people from expressing the values they hold (Holmes *et al.* 2011:26). The values that are relevant in specific circumstances are likely to be influenced by education, the media, and social pressures. The normalisation of anti-social values of people who may vandalise the same facilities which should serve them is an indication that there are constant chances or limitations in our lives to pursue and develop particular values. Community leaders believed that schools, churches, parents, community centres will certainly strengthen values such as harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. As a result of that exposure to different facets of society, people will start to share and recognize each other advancing the common good. Moral values need to be articulated with certain moral goals which individuals or societies wish to see established (Conradie *et al.* 2007:18). It was

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found in this study that in Delft, there is no conformity. People's actions are inclined towards impulses that are likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. Values are significant in pushing for change because they represent a strong driving force behind human attitudes and behaviours. Examining these values more closely reveals some deep connections between seemingly different issues and a wealth of opportunities to bring about lasting, systemic change (Holmes *et al.* 2011:26). Therefore, the values people appeal to provide for the expression of different values; and policies that help to reinforce certain kinds of values, with important effects on people's attitudes and behaviours (Holmes *et al.* 2011:33).

The call by participants to protect nature and biodiversity, and have sports facilities for the youth in Delft reflect on moral values they want to be promoted in their communities through such facilities. The majority of participants expressed that these institutions are important to people because they may fulfil intrinsic values such as understanding, tolerance and the protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. It is the value attached to these things that is important, not for example soccer itself from having sports facilities.

Delft is manifested with a myriad of social and environmental challenges in which community leaders emphasised moral values in their moral directives. They seem to be difficult to implement but these leaders believed if communities can work together in promoting such moral values, they can serve a great purpose in achieving a better society. In the mapping of values, Holmes *et al.* (2011:13) articulate the different kinds of things that people find valuable. These include but are not limited to intrinsic values, aesthetic values, scientific values, moral values and so forth. According to Shafer, Fukukawa & Lee (2007:273), research in the social sciences has found that values do affect a wide variety of attitudes for instance, attitudes toward civil rights, international affairs, religion and behaviours in line with church attendance, political activism, classroom cheating, choice of academic major. Holmes *et al.* (2011:33) categorise values and identified ten value types that are present and related to each other in consistent ways across people of different cultures. These are universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction. Similarly, Shafer, Fukukawa & Lee (2007:273) suggest that the ten value types can be further collapsed into four value categories namely self-transcendence, self-enhancement, openness, and conservation. Firstly, self-transcendence includes the altruistic value types of universalism and benevolence (associated with support for ethical and socially responsible behaviour). Values such as honest, helpful, loyal, responsible, forgiving, meaning in life, and a spiritual life, reflect an orientation toward ethical and altruistic behaviour. Values such as promoting biodiversity, protecting the environment are also closely associated with

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social responsibility issues. Secondly, self-enhancement includes the more egoistic values relating to personal power and achievement. Thirdly, openness consists of three values types, self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism. Fourthly value orientation, conservation, includes tradition, conformity, and security. All these values were expressed in different ways by community leaders in Delft.

6.7.5 The significance of worldviews

Worldviews are defined as convictions about the essential elements of reality that shape the beliefs of people and their relationships with the physical, natural, and spiritual realms influencing individual's perceptions, feelings, ideas, and actions (Cleaver, Whaley & Mwathunga 2021:647). Worldviews play a critical role in communities because they shape the values, beliefs and behaviour of individuals and groups who adhere to that worldview. Worldviews are often divided into categories by various literary works, including Christian, Western, scientific, indigenous, and neoliberal. Worldviews are dynamic; they can be conflicting and are not always internally consistent or integrated (Cleaver, Whaley & Mwathunga 2021: 648). Delft, like many other urban communities has a variety of worldviews because of diverse people mainly Xhosas, Coloureds and African migrants. Consequently, it was found in this study that sometimes these worldviews clash. A Xhosa would look down upon a Coloured and vice versa while they all team up to degrade foreigners. This challenge emanating from different worldviews was found to undermine the role of ubuntu ethics. Worldview shapes personal identity. A person's worldview is extremely important since it influences practically every aspect of their thinking, values, and behaviour without them even realising it. Cultures react to reality in fundamentally different ways depending on their worldview. As a result, it can be said that worldviews do have a big influence on moral judgments, even though this influence was not always direct particularly in Delft.

Moral tension or conflict can occasionally result from the plurality of worldviews, particularly when distinct groups hold divergent opinions on important subjects such as gender roles, partnership between men and women. For example, a Xhosa man would not regard someone who has not gone through circumcision initiation to be a real man. This belief influences the behaviour of Xhosa against other men or women. Tradition and culture which form part of worldview guide moral behaviour. On the issue of partnership between men and women, the found that different perspectives shared by community leaders were shaped by religion and traditional beliefs. Two of the participants kept on referring to the bible pointing out that a woman must be submissive to her husband. The traditional understanding of a man's role as a provider and a woman's role as a

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caregiver and cook appears to be shaped by cultural codes that reflect a specific worldview. However, an educated woman may reject this traditional perspective, arguing that societal changes have led to competing worldviews. The clash of these perspectives often creates moral uncertainty. Such tensions or conflicts can arise from the plurality of worldviews, particularly when different groups hold contrasting views on significant issues. Yet, this diversity can also offer opportunities for moral growth to individuals or groups open to learning from one another. This potential, however, is not always immediately evident, as Western worldviews, shaped by contemporary science, have influenced traditional African worldviews, which often emphasise the importance of religion.

6.7.6 The significance of duties and obligations

Deontological ethical theory is rooted in the works of Immanuel Kant who emphasises duties (also obligations) and respect for human dignity. In deontological ethical theory an act is judged to be moral if it adheres to moral duties or obligations. Additionally, a discussion of human dignity would be incomplete without mentioning the rule of law, constitutions and a bill of rights as examples of the application of deontological ethical theory. Duties and role responsibilities from the moral directives of community leaders were closely related and could mistakenly be categorised role responsibilities. In Delft, it was found that although every human being may have dignity based on reasoning capacity, conscience is obliged to do good and avoid evil, but community members do not always act accordingly. There is evidence of egoistic behaviour based on freedom, autonomy and human rights that is undermining collective responsibility. Some people do as they please resulting in situations whereby the dignity of the other or community at large is underplayed by the dignity of an individual. Several participants expressed a shared perception that the government and municipalities have a duty to ensure access to essential services, including proper housing for those living in informal settlements, waste collection, and the provision of bins and refuse bags. Some participants criticized the government and township planners for undermining human dignity by constructing small, poorly ventilated houses in densely populated areas, which they perceived as akin to creating new squatter camps. This view reflects the community's belief that the government is obligated to provide housing that meets adequate standards and respects human dignity. Participants widely agreed that it is the government's responsibility to ensure access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing for all citizens, thereby addressing homelessness and preserving the dignity of those in informal settlements.

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Another theme that emerged from the moral directives was that police and law enforcement forces have the duty to uphold the law protecting rights of all citizens without corruption or favour. The moral directive was that the police must treat all individuals with respect and avoid discriminatory practices that result in selective application of the law. The police have the duty to arrest drug dealers selling drugs despite the consequences. On the issue of addressing the challenge of dumping, community leaders think it is the obligation of city of Cape Town municipalities to collect and clean the environment. Although there was an overemphasis of community members who depend on services provided by the government and municipality, some community members were of the impression that citizens also have duties to manage waste, reduce pollution and promote biodiversity. Human actions of dominating nature were found to be a pressing issue thus the need for residents to think differently about maintaining their duty to protect the ecosystem. Duties are important because human beings consistently engage in ideological twists and turns meant to serve their limited interests (Birch *et al.* 2018:188). Community leaders alleged that citizens also have a duty to stop littering or illegal dumping and protect the environment for current and future generations. The application of deontological ethical theory by community leaders in Delft involves a commitment to fulfil moral duties (from individuals to institutions) and respect the inherent dignity of every individual. They maintain that this approach promotes fairness, justice, and inclusivity, leading to more equitable and humane urban township. Other duties and obligations at individual to community level include reducing pollution, managing waste, and promoting green spaces. Both values and obligations emerge within and are shaped by larger interpretative frameworks such as context, reality, worldview and religious traditions (Conradie *et al.* 2006:77).

6.7.7 The significance of rules and principles

The category of principles and rules were used synonymously by participants in a somehow narrow sense but applied in personal daily lives. Rules were understood as those fundamental truths or claims that form the basis for a way of thinking or behaving in a certain way. Rules are closely related to laws understood as instructions that help to keep people safe, help to maintain order in a society through good behaviour that protects properties or individual interests. Legal systems are used to support more informal rules, for example laws that prohibit dumping in undesignated areas. Perception of community leaders in terms of applying rules in daily lives was that a functional household must have certain rules for children on times they are allowed to play outside and time to be inside the house instead of playing randomly in the streets. Rules seem to be used synonymously with principles but they might offer a more clearly defined basis for moral judgments. Participants maintained that individuals, households and institutions should all come

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up with rules and principles that safeguard the family and community interests. It is not always the case that decisions will be made in line with principles and rules but they are used to draw attention to elements that need to be considered. Principles were used in personal lives on issues like personal discipline. Principles sound a bit like duties and rules but could also refer to values. Rules, regulations, and codes of conduct are an essential aspect of every household, institutions like homes, universities, hospitals, and churches, as well as the military, businesses, and professional organisations (Conradie *et al.* 2006:84). Implementing rules such as banning of public smoking in certain areas is based on the idea that such rules will lead to greater public health and safety. Cities can establish just, secure, and encouraging environments by incorporating rules and principles into daily operations, thereby balancing ethical theory with real-world applications.

6.8 Conclusion

Researching Delft's social and environmental challenges was akin to opening a can of worms. The experience revealed the daily fear and horror community members faced, often comparable to a living nightmare. The pervasive fear and insecurity endured by residents were disconcerting. While there were still good citizens in Delft, a minority of individuals contributed to making the lives of others intolerable.

The perceptions of community leaders on Delft's environmental and social challenges, the potential root causes, the moral directives they offered, and how the community typically responded to these directives were explored in the study. Reflections on the ethical categories leaders employ in their moral directives, as rooted in the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, highlighted the significance of emerging moral values, the role of virtues, role responsibilities, moral values, obligations and duties, and the role of principles and rules.

Like many places, Delft was not immune to the global issues impacting humanity. Economic globalisation prioritised profit over people, marginalising the poor and rendering them seemingly irrelevant in the global economy. This process drove poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Some individuals resorted to crime in a desperate bid to acquire wealth within the township of Delft. The prevailing socioeconomic conditions often failed to preserve the dignity of those living there.

Community members in Delft were culturally colonised through the forces of globalisation, contributing to a rise in moral decline. Consequently, crime, prostitution, alcoholism, gangsterism, and other social vices were prevalent. The findings from this chapter, particularly the ethical categories that emerged from the moral directives, will be critically compared with the Declaration

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Toward a Global Ethic 1993 and the Earth Charter 2000 to evaluate the global applicability of these ethics or whether the moral directives from this case study can be adapted to other contexts.

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CHAPTER 7

HOW GLOBAL IS THE GLOBAL ETHIC? A CRITICAL COMPARISON

7.1 Introduction

The perceptions of community leaders from Chionekano Ward and Delft were presented in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on and address the research question: Are the moral directives offered by community leaders of Chionekano Ward in Zvishavane (rural) and Delft (township/ekasi) in Cape Town compatible with the moral directives outlined in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter? This question is explored through a critical comparison to capture similarities and differences in ethical categories.

The comparison is structured into three steps. Firstly, the ethical categories found in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic are compared in form and content with the ethical principles of the Earth Charter (Section 7.2). This comparison will clarify concepts while assessing the ethical frameworks' ability to address the challenges of human survival and flourishing in the age of globalisation. Secondly, the moral directives offered by community leaders in Chionekano are compared with those from leaders in Delft to identify similarities and differences (Section 7.3). Lastly, in the third step, moral directives from community leaders in Delft and Chionekano are compared with the ethical frameworks presented in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter (Section 7.4). This comparison will facilitate evaluating whether these global ethics can be applied beyond their specific contexts. The chapter concludes with (Section 7.5).

7.2 A comparison of ethical principles in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter

The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter represent formal peacebuilding initiatives seeking to create a more inclusive global society. These documents articulate the need for a shared vision. On the one hand, the Declaration highlights that there is a lack of a realistic vision for the future, hence there is a need to promote a global ethic as an emerging moral vision that would serve as a foundation for the spiritual and culture of humankind. On the other hand, the Earth Charter proposes a new vision that is needed to respond to ecological challenges affecting the interconnected world. The Earth Charter may be seen as a global vision and a shared foundation for sustaining bio-democracy against contemporary challenges. The two documents serve as an

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ethical appeal and a vision for the common good. The common good is understood in terms of concepts such as justice, democracy, sustainability, participatory society, human rights, and equality, duties, responsibilities. The "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" did not primarily focus on the ecological challenges but mainly had an anthropocentric bias while the Earth Charter is an ethical appeal that extends the vision focusing on planetary ecological community. A new vision for the common good of humanity. Twenty-five years after the 1993 Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, revisions were made to address its shortcomings, particularly its failure to acknowledge the climate crisis, which disproportionately harms the poorest populations. The Earth Charter opposes an overemphasis on rights without responsibilities by recognising the value of every form of life regardless of its worth to human beings. According to this new vision, human beings should be guided by the understanding that there are future generations that will rely on mother earth. These documents expand the ethical vision found in other international declarations and covenants. Global threats associated with poverty, inequality, nuclear war, ecological destruction, climate change, and now the Anthropocene all prompt the need for emerging moral visions. In a rapidly changing world, a moral vision offers a systematic approach to explore a range of plausible futures. The Earth Charter compliments a common vision to build a world that is nonviolent, just, sustainable, and respects all human rights for all peoples. Nevertheless, the need to scrutinise visions is considered in this comparison. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic is criticised of fostering the fundamentally anthropocentric, capitalist vision that permeates Western culture (see Bosselmann, Engel & Taylor 2017). The Earth Charter, however, does not seem to fall into the trap of anthropocentric capitalist vision but in its vision of implementation, it does not sufficiently oppose the contemporary unjust free market ideology that is unsustainable international order (see Taylor 2017:43; Engel 2014:3).

Human dignity and the role of duties as moral concepts forms the ethical basis in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic and the Earth Charter. The emphasis on the intrinsic value and universal equality of human beings is followed by the duties and obligations of individuals and governments (see Suter 2010:119). The Earth Charter explicitly states that dignity is applicable not only to human beings but also non-humans. Human rights are derived from the concept of dignity in philosophical discourses. The Declaration's emphasis on human rights is that all human beings should not pursue their own rights exclusively without accepting obligations and responsibilities to non-humans as well. The difference between the Earth Charter and the declaration seems to be that the declaration is anthropocentric (see Gebhardt 2000:507) while the Earth Charter is strengthening the notion of a planetary ecological community (Eaton 2014:928). The declaration's

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primary focus is on human beings emphasising that they should not be regarded as subjects or means to an end since they are ends in themselves. There seems to be no emphasis on the dignity of other forms of natural environment like animals, soil, air and plants in the declaration. The basic principle of the Earth Charter is that humans must respect other species as part of a large family together. In order to strike a balance between freedom and responsibility, the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities (1997) complements the declaration of a global ethic by encouraging individuals, and governments to limit their pursuit of rights that may result in hurting others and future generations (see Del Valle & Sikkink 2017:193). For example, they should not only claim their right to live in a clean environment, but these individuals, states and corporations are obliged to protect the environment. The Declaration focuses a lot more on obligations and personal accountability in the era of rights whereas the Earth Charter maintains universal responsibility to all forms of life. Although these ethical categories appear to be reiterated in different ways, they all stress the importance of protecting the earth's regeneration capacity, respect human rights, and promote communal well-being.

The two documents approach the objectives of fostering a more ethical, sustainable peaceful world from slightly different worldviews. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993) is dominated by Jewish-Christian and more specifically Western categories based on Hans Küng idea of interfaith dialogue. It emerges from within the context of world religions upon an argument that there is ethical consensus among different world traditions sharing values and the "golden rule" (see Hedges 2008:121). The scope is that despite theological differences, there are common moral codes that can unite humanity including those non-believers. By contrast, the Earth Charter (2000) reflects a more ecological worldview based on the interdependence of all forms of life. In order to maintain ecological balance, this more scientific and ecological worldview demands that social, political, and economic structures should promote values of sustainability, respect for nature. The ethical categories of virtues predominate in both documents are overlapping but prioritised differently. These two documents are rooted in moral and religious fundamentals of non-violence, justice, and mutual respect in human and non-being's relationships. The ethical framework of virtues, closely related to values, is expanded in the Earth Charter environmental responsibility through preservation of the ecosystem and all living forms. There is a significant dedication to justice and peace in both texts. The Earth Charter emphasises environmental sustainability as a fundamental value, solidarity, reverence, gratitude and humility.

The ethical category of basic principles is used in the Charter. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the concept of "principles" is not given much theoretical explanation. It appears that this was just

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the moral category that was thought to be most generally accepted despite differences in worldviews, religions, and societies. The emphasis on the Earth Charter is on the importance of non-violence and respect for all forms of life expressing concern about economic inequality and the need for justice while the Declaration focuses on fairness between people and nations, stressing economic justice, equal partnership between men and women from a human-centred perspective. The Declaration specifically calls for equal rights and partnership between men and women whilst the Earth Charter requires human beings to strike a balance between their obligations/duties to preserve the environment, defend human rights and their rights to manage natural resources. The Earth Charter takes a broader approach by connecting economic justice with environmental sustainability and resource equity. It puts a strong emphasis on ethical behaviour, truthfulness, and tolerance in interpersonal and intercultural relationships. The Earth Charter connects these to governance and environmental decision-making, suggesting a more systemic approach to global challenges.

7.3 A comparison of moral directives in Chionekano and Delft

The moral directives offered by community leaders in the case studies highlighted the critical importance of emerging moral visions. Findings from Delft and Chionekano revealed communities grappling with dysfunctionality, necessitating a reassessment of moral values to address current challenges. As communal values declined and individualism rose, a fractured sense of community has made people fearful of one another. Without an evolved moral vision, the future in these areas could become even more distressing and traumatising. Economic hardships have driven individuals to harm, rob, and even kill each other, along with degrading the biophysical environment. Gang violence, compounded by escalating drug and alcohol use, exacerbates this fear. This dire reality underscored the need for a renewed moral vision that can address challenges locally, globally, and systematically.

Community leaders in Chionekano and Delft called for promoting virtues such as solidarity, respect, honesty, communal responsibility, courage, wisdom, and temperance. Both emphasised communal responsibility over individual interests. In Chionekano, traditional communal virtues were deeply rooted due to shared cultural and religious beliefs. In contrast, Delft displayed heightened individualism and an overemphasis on personal freedom. Although virtues can be cultivated through narratives and role models (Vosloo 1997:305), challenges arose in both cases due to failures of family guardians and leaders to lead by example. Churches, sports, and civil

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society organisations were suggested as platforms to promote virtues. However, widespread vices, driven primarily by economic pressures, were admired.

Globalisation was reshaping societal values, promoting consumerism and materialism. Both case studies showed a prioritisation of wealth, status, and material success, leading to values of greed, competition, and self-centred behaviour supplanting generosity and cooperation. Additionally, the study found that mass media frequently romanticised risk-taking and vice-driven lifestyles, making them appear desirable. As a result, in both cases studies, vices of violence and gangsterism seemed fashionable, reflecting a broken society where high moral standards struggled to prevail amid survival strategies.

Role responsibilities were a dominant theme in the case studies. In Chionekano, roles were traditionally defined by age and gender, whereas in Delft, traditional roles were contested due to modern influences, social context, and evolving worldviews. Urbanisation had shifted the mindsets of youth, elders, and women in Delft, challenging traditional role assignments. While men in Chionekano retained their roles as household heads and breadwinners, educated and working women in Delft had prompted a shift, with men participating in household chores. Women earning more than their husbands rejected the notion that they had to be submissive, as quoted in biblical teachings, while in Chionekano, women adhered to traditional roles to maintain harmony. However, community leaders called for their empowerment. Children and youth in both contexts exhibited a lack of respect for elders, a duty they were expected to uphold. Individuals, families, community organisations, schools, and government institutions were responsible for mentoring good moral citizens and protecting the environment.

The Chionekano ward was dominated by a traditional worldview shaped by African traditional religions and Christianity, with some modern Western influences. Conversely, Delft displayed conflicting worldviews due to diverse ethnic groups. While some adhered to Christian perspectives, others emphasised traditional beliefs and culture. These differing worldviews affected interpersonal and environmental relations. For example, in Delft, respect for race among Coloureds and Xhosas often led to discrimination against other groups, including migrants, undermining the concept of ubuntu (humanness). In Chionekano, the concept of ukama (extended relations) encompassed non-human beings, promoting harmony, whereas, in Delft, it was largely confined to close family, fostering division and environmental destruction.

Rules and norms were deeply embedded in Chionekano's culture and tradition, with violations leading to direct consequences, such as punishment by leaders or spiritual forces. In Delft, rules were loosely applied to daily life to support legal frameworks but lacked strong consequences.

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Moral directives highlighted values like universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, and achievement in both contexts. However, modernity and globalisation had shifted priorities towards self-enhancement, egoistic values, and personal power in the two case studies. Economic pressures influenced values, as evidenced by a rise in individualism and weakening communal values.

7.4 A comparison of the global (the global ethic) and the local (moral directives in Chionekano and Delft)

This section compares the moral principles in the global ethic with the moral directives offered by community leaders in the local communities of Delft and Chionekano. The significance of the global for the local is more nuanced than is commonly understood. There is a need to grasp, from an ethical point of view, this complexity of attempts to reframe the idea of a global ethic. A significant challenge for scholars interested in this discourse is to understand the interactions between much more localised configurations and the global diffusion of neoliberal policies and ideologies (Eaton 2014:927). Many ecological problems cannot be grappled with contextually and locally because the challenges are global in scope (Boesak 2009:646). Few significant ecological problems reside only within local contexts, immune from global economic pressures or effects. In the midst of great diversities, humanity and the larger community of Earth life share a common destiny. Nevertheless, it can be argued in this study that it is important to understand these changes within a context of local, national, and regional and global differences. There should be compatibility with the existing cultural political systems of local people which can be used as structures of social resilience. Moreover, it's reasonable to say that the global have been overemphasised at the expense of the local. The distrust of the global and the emphasis on the local reveal conflicts between local and global variables.

To test the significance of the global ethic to the local, ethical concepts used in these documents will be compared in terms of both form and content. The opening statement in the declaration and the global situation reiterated in the Earth Charter points paints a world that is in agony, without peace and destruction of the environment. It is also clear that development benefits are not shared equitably widening the gap between the rich and the poor. There is widespread injustice, poverty and violent conflicts, resulting in the suffering of many people in the world including those in the local communities of Delft and the Chionekano ward. For global partnerships, there needs to be a global vision, an ethical foundation, shared values, and common ground. It seems apparent that the need for a shared vision articulated in the global ethic is compatible with the vision needed in

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Southern Africa or Delft and Chionekano to be specific. The incompatibility emerges when such a vision is scrutinised. It has been argued in this study that the drafting of these documents seems to represent the voice of powerful people, institutions who then dictate solutions to local people's problems. Perhaps the starting point would be to consider this vision while being able to adapt it to fit in local context, their traditions, culture and indigenous knowledge systems. The challenge is what institutions should be adopted and whose values, virtues, worldviews should inform them. This implies that the moral directives are compatible in content rather than in form.

Capturing the perceptions of community leaders on the social and environmental challenges in Delft and Chionekano helps us to see and understand the challenges through the eyes of the powerless and suffering people. The moral directives offered by community leaders in the two case studies in terms of role responsibilities are not compatible with each other. The global ethic strongly emphasises equal partnership between men and women whilst in the traditional Chionekano they maintain traditional assignment of role and responsibilities. The traditional understanding of partnership between men and women is not compatible with the global and cannot be applied elsewhere or other urban settings besides in their specific contexts. At the same time, the global pressures of equality from external forces in the form of modernization and globalization are changing the worldviews of many other local people This is evident for example from the Western influence of individualism that is undermining traditional community's culture and communal responsibility. Whilst the declaration emphasises preservation of local people's cultures, tradition and indigenous systems, the influence of modernity is undermining such practices. Delft and Chionekano is experiencing a frightening increase in teenage pregnancy, sexual promiscuity, and other violent crimes. The impact of modernity is eroding traditional ethical values at an unprecedented rate. The emergence of globalisation through the mass media is exposing teenagers to harmful practices.

The Parliament of the World's Religions through the Declaration Toward a Global ethic emphasises several ethical principles that they purport to be "universal". These includes non-violence and respect for life to uphold peace, human dignity, solidarity and a just economic order, tolerance and truthfulness, equal rights and partnership between men and women. The Earth Charter further advocates for respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice. While conceptually straightforward, it is significantly more challenging to implement these ethical principles in local community's daily lives because of global pressures. Although community leaders maintain ubuntu, communal responsibility, respect for elders and harmony with nature, there seems to be forces hindering the promotion of their ethical categories.

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In Delft township again, there is a mix of traditional African ethics that is much more influenced by modernity and Western individualism. Socio-economic factors have forced the majority of people to maintain survival strategies of self-reliance. Community leaders in their moral directives encouraged community solidarity where they can help each other and to respect cultural values. However, the influence of media and technology destabilise the youth and young generations to adopt more Western individualistic values. As a result, from Chionekano to Delft and the global ethic, there are tensions between traditional communal ethics to a more individualistic, survival-driven ethic making this whole discourse much more complicated.

There is compatibility between the virtues and values in the Earth Charter emphasis on respect to the environment and its forms of life with the moral directives from Chionekano based on Ubuntu and Ukama meant to respect each other and preserve the environment. Although there are climate and economic pressures forcing people to venture into illegal gold mining destroying the environment, there is a traditional understanding of ecological integrity and respect for nature in Chionekano. Similarly, in Delft, environmental concerns of informal settlements are a result of economic challenges. In Chionekano community leaders were able to identify economic and climate challenges as the root cause to a myriad of these challenges. They all called upon government institutions to take responsibility in promoting economic justice, respect for human dignity and alleviate poverty. Leaders also have the responsibility to ensure community welfare.

The aggressive promotion of a global human rights legislation based on allegedly Western values have resulted in tensions between the West, East and African countries. Moral directives offered by community leaders were based on the identity of people and institutions in their local, cultural, religious, economic and political contexts. Moral directives in the global and those from the local are two poles that are mutually exclusive and contradictory in some cases. Hence there is a need to consider power structures to avoid the global ethic of dominating other cultures, religions and values. The question here is whether the global ethic as prescribed, is it compatible with the moral directives of community leaders. Some of the moral directives in form, mainly those based on role responsibilities, values, worldviews are incompatible, with the directives in the global ethic. These directives become isolationist if they remain local and are not linked to the global ethic. African values, for instance, have contributed to global values through the belief that everything in reality is a continuum, ranging from the spiritual to the human to the animals and plants. Ethical categories employed by community leaders in Delft and Chionekano are crucial components of the resistance against Western nation's perceived attempts at political and economic dominance. They preserve cultural authenticity but also have consequences for the potential dialogue through a global ethic.

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These issues are raised in African and Asian societies alike. Local communities may well perceive the global ethic as the return of colonialism because of its claim of universal moral principles and their international application through legal mechanisms. Nevertheless, this cannot take away a common vision for the future articulated in the global ethic that is compatible with the local ethic. This compatibility can be an alternative to address such challenges.

Several global challenges emanate from the global economy, global politics, and global ecology (see Küng 1990). It's important to keep in mind that, on occasion, the global does not represent the interests of everyone, particularly the poor; rather, it represents a particular local culture that has been globalised because of its reach, control, irresponsibility, and lack of reciprocity (Hellsten 2015:89). Ehnberg (2015:81) argues that a tenable global ethic needs to present normative arguments that amount to relevant social and political guidance, in terms of norms, principles or values, suitable for the global situation. Similarly, in this study, one can argue that the global ethic would not be global if it does not engage in dialogue with economic theory and incorporate social and political structures capable of critically evaluating morality. Similarly, Bloch (2008:625) argues that, given its founding statement, the Parliament of the World Religions only offers a superficial analysis of globalisation and fails to present a cogent concept of glocalisation. Instead, various aspects of the local or global experience are either over- or under-emphasised, and the entire spectrum of interrelationships is not understood (Bloch 2008:625).

7.5 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the moral directives articulated by community leaders from the two case studies are partially compatible with the principles of the global ethic. However, certain moral directives (for examples, on gender roles) are not compatible with the principles of the global ethic. There are tensions when it comes to the moral directives on partnership between men and women and the individual nature of human rights against communal responsibility that is dominant in African traditional societies. The global ethic idea seems to be global in terms of identifying pressing issues that are problematic in local communities. However, the challenge is to reach consensus on the ethical categories employed in form. In content, moral directives offered by community leaders for example, on youth empowerment, preservation of the environment, the elderly, children all resonate well with the principles of the global ethic. The challenge is that the economic environment created by the emergence of globalisation and neoliberal notions of governance is not directly contested by Global Ethic. As a result, local communities are marginalised but strongly affected by global pressures. All these dynamics makes the relationship

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between the global and the local complicated. Using ethical categories such as visions, virtues, values, worldviews, responsibilities to formulate a global ethic seems to be a daunting task because of several different types of changes that pose challenges for ethical theory including scientific developments, globalisation, global financial crisis which automatically influence values. Tensions emerges in terms of whose vision, values, rights, virtues, or worldview? This could be the reason why the Earth Charter uses the concept of principles and the declaration uses irrevocable directives. In this study, moral directives were used as an umbrella term. Perhaps these moral directives should expand to address global concerns at the very least, to avoid adopting ethical categories that seem to be coming from one region possibly classified as Western. This could address the conceptual divide between the global and the local.

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CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter comprehensively summarises the entire thesis (Section 8.2). The central question, namely, how the global ethic relates to local ethics and whether a global ethic alone is sufficient or if local ethics are equally necessary, is explored by unpacking both the needs and potential dangers inherent to global and local ethics (Section 8.3). Section 8.4, entitled *In search of a global ethic*, offers my contributions to addressing the question: If a global ethic is necessary, what form should it take? Concluding remarks are presented in the final section (Section 8.5).

8.2 Research overview

As indicated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the study was to determine whether the moral directives articulated in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic 1993, produced for the Parliament of the World's Religions and the Earth Charter 2000 are compatible with the moral directives offered by community leaders in Chionekano Ward and Delft. This comparison was intended to evaluate the significance of a global ethic concerning what may be termed local ethic. Seven interlinked objectives were formulated to achieve this aim, including describing moral directives in both documents, mapping the moral concepts, capturing leaders' perceptions in Chionekano Ward and Delft, and establishing the compatibility between local moral directives and those articulated in the global ethic. Ultimately, the study sought to determine whether a global ethic indeed possesses global reach and applicability or whether local moral directives must remain context-specific.

A qualitative methodology was utilised, employing in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 participants, ten from each case study. While some participants declined to be recorded, most consented and allowed identification by their names, roles, and responsibilities. Data on moral directives from the case studies were compared with the principles in the global frameworks through a mutual critical comparison method, analysed in the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 introduced the theoretical framework, centred on mapping moral concepts. The category of moral directives was utilised to link the global ethic with community leaders' perceptions in two Southern African communities, focusing on moral visions, virtues, values, duties and obligations,

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rights, responsibilities, worldviews, and categories such as principles, rules, norms, and goals. This mapping emerged from the ethics programmes offered by the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape.

Chapter 3 provided a historical context and analysis of the principles and irrevocable directives in the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic 1993" drawing upon primary and secondary literature. Chapter 4 focused on the Earth Charter 2000, tracing its historical background and analysing its reception. It was demonstrated that the Earth Charter's principles embody ecologically focused concepts of sustainability and common values formulated to protect the planet. However, criticisms exist regarding its limited identification and addressing of the root causes and dynamics of the global crisis.

Chapters 5 and 6 presented community leaders' perceptions in Chionekano and Delft concerning social and environmental challenges and their proposed moral directives for addressing these issues. The findings were compared in form, based on the mapping of moral concepts, and in content, referring to the actual moral directives. Chapter 7 employed a mutual critical comparison to evaluate the compatibility of local and global moral directives, revealing that while their principles often align in content, they diverge in form, notably due to the Western emphasis on individualism contrasting with the African communitarian ethic.

Individualism, autonomy, and freedom were seen to undermine collective responsibility. The concept of role responsibility, particularly in partnerships between men and women, emerged as a contested ethical category in the global and local contexts examined. In the following section, I will explore how global and local ethics relate by considering their needs and dangers.

8.3 Relationship between global and local

There is an intricate, interdependent relationship between a global and local ethic, shaped by the pressures of globalisation that directly impact local communities. Although local communities often confront these challenges without directly influencing global structures, the complexities of this relationship become evident through examining both the needs and dangers inherent to global and local ethic.

8.3.1 Need for a global ethic

As explored in the study, a global ethic represents a contemporary vision for achieving a good society. The module ETH 111 *Introduction to Ethical Theory* emphasises the need for a articulated

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vision in today's interconnected world, which faces a myriad of social and environmental challenges, including pandemics like COVID-19, climate change, droughts, floods, and conflicts with global repercussions. These challenges significantly affected the local communities examined in this study, underscoring the need for a global ethic.

The study's findings aligned with observations by Küng & Kuschel (1993:7) that global politics, worldwide technology, global economics, and global culture have a greater influence on the world today than ever before. Collectively, the findings from Chapters 5 and 6 highlighted the role of emerging moral visions, framed in the perspective of a global ethic, in efforts to promote a fundamental ethic common to all humans. Hans Küng's idea of a global ethic is rooted in human dignity, rights, and responsibilities without emphasising the consequences of actions, while the Earth Charter outlines 16 principles for a sustainable lifestyle.

Küng & Kuschel (1993:7) argue that without a new moral vision, the global situation fosters hostilities, conflict, chaos, and domination by the powerful. Thus, a global ethic may serve as a coordinated effort to heighten ethical responsibility towards humanity and the Earth. The vision proposed by a global ethic offers a path to uniting diverse ethnic and religious groups to build a peaceful and just world. It also provides moral guidance to reinforce cultural and religious pluralism.

Despite the challenges posed by cultural diversity and religious differences in a globalised world, there is a need for a global ethic that recognises universally accepted moral principles while preserving cultural differences. Prioritising principles such as mutual respect, nonviolence, and dialogue can foster conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence (Falk 2001; Sholihan 2017). The question of what kind of world future generations will inherit is a powerful reminder of the urgency for a global ethic. The interconnectedness of society requires a shared sense of responsibility for the welfare of others, encompassing efforts to address global disparities, environmental protection, and the promotion of universal well-being (Earth Charter 2000). A global ethic offers the moral guidance necessary to fulfil these obligations inclusively and equitably for all members of humanity (Conradie *et al.* 2006).

8.3.2 Dangers of a global ethic

Several potential dangers emerge especially when the global ethic is applied to diverse local contexts. A significant critique of a global ethic is its potential to impose morality that is Western-centered because of its claim of universality. Rasmussen (2013:130) argues that the global corporate capitalism economy is such a powerful force in the modern world that is fostering a

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strong culture that discourages or rejects certain values and virtues while encouraging and rewarding others. By rewarding certain market behaviors, it successfully establishes its own morality and alters attitudes. This system produces moral outcomes that influence our perceptions and behavior in the world as moral beings. The danger is that the global ethic can contribute to Western colonialist and imperialist agenda of domination. While the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic clearly advances Western philosophical traditions with a strong emphasis on individual autonomy, rights, and responsibilities, the Earth Charter does not directly fall into this trap. Critics contend that these frameworks run the risk of forcing modern Western values unto local communities contradicting African and Asian communal ethics. The adoption of Western ethical standards may undermine indigenous customs and beliefs, which place a higher priority on social harmony and community over individualism (Akor 2023:16). Global norms often reflect Western political and ethical ideals, potentially marginalizing local customs and epistemologies. Local moral frameworks are shaped by a variety of cultural, historical, and social factors, all of which are frequently overlooked by the global ethic. For example, the human rights framework that serves as the foundation for many international ethical charters is in conflict with African communitarian ethical framework, which prioritizes community welfare over individual rights (Udokang 2014:266). If a global ethic is applied without taking these contextual realities into account, a form of ethical imperialism may result, with regional traditions and customs being written off as archaic or incompatible with contemporary values.

As a result, cultural diversity may be eroded as found in this study that local communities are lured by global pressures to surrender traditional customs in favor of modern Western norms that are claimed to be accepted worldwide. For instance, it was found in this study that in both Chionekano and more in Delft, there is a shift to focus on individuals thereby overshadowing traditional values of reciprocity, respect for elders, and communal responsibility. Arguments raised in this study is that the drafting process of the two documents may represent the voices of the powerful elites who disguise themselves in ethical rhetoric to undermine genuine moral engagement. This may result in political dominance. For example, this could be the Western powers used human rights to legitimize interventions in the global South that primarily serve their political interests (Metz 2011:532). The global ethic might also be inconsistently enforced because certain nations do not have the political will or means to put these principles into practice.

8.3.3 Need for a local ethic

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The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of enormous social and environmental challenges facing a South African township and a Zimbabwean rural area. The moral directives offered by community leaders can be used as an alternative way to collectively address these challenges. Although some judge the global ethic project to have been fruitful dialogue between people from different traditions, it was argued in this study that the dominant role of Hans Küng begs the question whether it does not remain *his* global ethic. One way of responding to this critique is to bring in a local ethic as investigated in this study capturing the perceptions of community leaders. The moral directives offered in the Chionekano ward were embedded in the traditional, cultural identity of local people influenced by modernity to a lesser extent. In Delft these perceptions were somehow influenced by modernity with the main challenge being a place with people from diverse backgrounds whose cultural and traditional understanding of life was being slowly eroded. Recognising ethical categories rooted in the particular cultural, social, and environmental conditions of a community is a necessary step towards appreciating the necessity for a local ethic. This is especially crucial because traditional values in Chionekano and Delft communities can be compared with global ethical principles. The findings from this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge on a need for a "local ethic", engaging with secular or multi-faith communities based on the ethical categories of visions, virtues, obligations, worldviews, values, rules, principles and norms, that direct decisions and actions. The findings from this study help to establish the need for a local ethic given the danger of local communities becoming marginalized in a globalised world.

At a deeper level of analysis, one may further opine that a local ethic resonates with the experiences of people in their communities. Two different local communities used as case studies are facing certain social and environmental challenges that may not be adequately addressed by a global ethic. These challenges need context-specific measures to solve them and the solutions can be derived from a local ethic. For example, in the Chionekano ward, environmental challenges such as drought and illegal gold mining can be managed through certain, indigenous knowledge systems, rules and norms from cultural practices of local people thus the need for a local ethic to meet these specific requirements. Environmental sustainability can be promoted by international frameworks such as the Earth Charter, but local communities require moral frameworks that reconcile these ideals with their unique ecological and socioeconomic realities, like preservation of the environment and management of natural resources. From my analysis of the global ethic and its dangers, globalisation runs along the risk of cultural imperialism. In this regard, an investigation of a local ethic enables local communities to maintain their cultural identity. Despite the fact that modernity

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is imposing Western values upon local communities, it is significantly important to maintain indigenous customs. To ensure that ethical behaviors are both locally significant and internationally accountable, a local ethic helps to identify tensions and opportunities for possible dialogue with the global ethic. My study suggests that these themes may well be appropriated in an articulation of a local ethic. The need for a local ethic becomes evident as it provides a bridge between the vision of the global ethic and the lived experiences of communities such as Chionekano and Delft.

8.3.4 Dangers of a local ethic

Examining the dangers of a local ethic entails realising that, despite the obvious advantages of establishing ethical frameworks in local contexts, there are risks involved, particularly in a dialogue with the global ethic. This study revealed tensions between local moral directives on the partnership between men and women whilst the global ethic emphasises equality between men and women. Put differently, it was found in this study that there are oppressive local ethical practices on gender issues and role responsibilities that are being justified in the name of local cultural and religious traditions (see chapter 6). Injustices like discrimination, child marriage, and gender-based violence were tolerated in the Chionekano ward because they are perceived as part of the localised religion, custom and cultures. In attempts to reconcile the global and the local, the danger is that local communities may result in chaos when community members adopt equal partnership advocated in the global ethic resulting in gender-based violence. It was established in this study that some cultural practices on role responsibilities between men and women were meant to promote harmony in families. For example, a man is regarded as the head of the house. Some cultural traditions that were once useful in a specific historical context, may become barriers to development. This is problematic in both Chionekano and Delft, where exposure to global ideas might conflict with entrenched local practices

Global pressures in local societies on economic and environmental issues would not be sufficiently addressed by a local ethic alone. These pressures would make community members victims trapped in their communities without being able to adequately meet the demands from their local ethical practices. In this way, the danger is that local ethics would make sense to its people but circumstances beyond their control force them to do whatever means for survival. Rasmussen (2013:133) maintains that in a time when technology, culture, society, and even nature is changing at an accelerated rate, lifestyles and their morals are under threat from both within and the outside. Society collapses when morality fails, that would be the danger for a local ethic. The study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of African communities and how they can

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use their traditional cultures to distinguish themselves from each other. Strong emphasis on exclusivity in local communities has the risk of making it uncomfortable or exclusive of those who don't fit the mold, which is often harmful to pluralism and social diversity (Nyongesa 2018:7). Knowledge of differences emerges as ethnic communities interact. As a result, they start to realise weaknesses in each other's cultural, ethical and traditional practices. For example, in Delft, a traditionally circumcised Xhosa man disrespect a Coloured uncircumcised man. Circumcised men see themselves as superior to others. The study has confirmed the findings of Bhabha (2012) in his work, "*The Location of Culture*" which found that sticking to past histories and cultures would bring about dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities and it would deny people insight into experiences beyond the borders. The needs and dangers of a global and local ethic helps to understand how the global relates to the local. The question remains, how then should the global ethic look like?

8.4 In search of a global ethic

The main aim of this section is to search for a tenable global ethic guided by different ethical categories employed as a theoretical framework in Chapter 2. In this study, the global ethic is understood in a forward-looking sense as the kind of moral principles that can be accepted globally and locally. Drydyk (2014:254) observes that there are some global challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic that may have been caused by globalisation through the increased international travels while some other challenges remain highly local. The findings of this study revealed that challenges like illegal gold mining, gender-based violence, dysfunctional families, moral decay among elders and children remain local but they call for both local and global cooperation to mitigate their risks. Thus, the task of a global ethic is not the search of a new ethic but the need for cross-cultural search for commonalities in the moral intuitions of humankind. The search for a global ethic can provide the resources that can meet the global and local crises. Evidence of opposing worldviews, responsibilities, value systems, virtues vs vices in the global and local ethic needs to be considered.

The global situation explained in the global ethic and the reality in the two case studies reveals communities manifested with a variety of challenges resulting in fragmented societies facing uncertainty over human and ecological well-being. The starting point for a global ethic would be to recognise the significance of the common good and the role of emerging moral visions. A clear distinction of moral concepts used in Chapter 2 namely, moral visions, virtues, values and obligations, responsibilities, worldviews, principles, rules and norms are all important to the recognition of conflicting ethical theories. Nevertheless, on the basis of the discussion above, the

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significance of the common good and the role of emerging visions, in this regard may be understood as the source of a global ethic, as well as a platform in which academic discussions are challenged and used to reflect the differences between the local and the global. The role of emerging moral visions for social change in this study is acknowledged for having an impact in the world. A clearly articulated moral vision would lure people to dream about a better world. Searching for a common vision of the future which goes beyond our current concerns and preoccupations, advancing towards the creation of a global ethic should not be dominated neither by the East nor by the West, but dedicated to the ideals of both. Therefore, as argued by Murove (2014:36), a truly global ethic can only be achieved if non-Africans begin to take seriously the rich and incredibly long-standing ethical tradition of Black Africans. It should be clear from the debate thus far that the pursuit of a global ethic requires inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Cisneros & Premawardhana (2011:151) maintain that a thorough and empathetic comprehension of a local ethic is needed. The focus of this study was to recognise pertinent ethical solutions in a globalising world including a comprehensive examination of moral issues on a global and local scale as well as a plan for where to address these issues in terms of workable institutions, networks, or forums.

One may argue that in searching for a global ethic, the dignity, not only of human beings but all forms of life must be considered. Commenting on the importance of dignity, Ehnberg (2015:224) observes that there must be sincere efforts to alter the current global distribution of power and resources if we believe that equal human dignity is a strong candidate to be a fundamental tenet of a global ethic. It has been noted in this study that a major obstacle to global justice is the predominance of Western neoliberalism, in addition to the startling material and economic disparities that are in stark contrast to the concept of all having equal human dignity. The findings of this study revealed that the Western understanding of human dignity and rights that follows from that is based on the autonomy and freedom of an individual. It is imperative to note that human freedom that human rights norms aim to accomplish failed to sufficiently address the 21st century challenges. Human rights based on freedom in contexts like Delft and Chionekano, can become legitimate reasons for children to rebel against parents, guardians, the elders and the community at large. The ideal human being is then presented in a manner in which individuals are being liberated from the responsibility of society and communal life to pursue their own interests. Nevertheless, the emphasis on human rights brings the need to consider an ethics of responsibility. An ethics of responsibility can help individuals or organisations to make decisions and to act according to their duties and obligations. Although this activity highlights a key link between personal life and various aspects of social life, it remains unclear what social and political conditions need to be

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provided to enable people to develop their moral identity appropriately. There is a need to consider how different economic and social systems influence individual moral responsibility. This study has demonstrated that particular institutional structures in society either promote or hinder responsible living. Hence there is a need for dialogue on the appropriate forms of human rights in the African context. This is supported by an assertion by Cisneros & Premawardhana (2011:135) that there is a deep-running suspicion from African and East-Asian societies about the underlying intentions for the aggressive promotion of a global human rights legislation based on a set of allegedly Western values.

To address the shortcomings of efforts to establish a global ethic, it is essential to consider the unique cultural traditions and lifestyles that people seek to protect from the perceived destructive effects of globalisation. Beyond being a key aspect of resistance to the real or perceived political and economic dominance of Western nations, the struggle to preserve cultural identity also impacts the development of a viable global ethic. Such an ethic must not only respect the dignity of human beings but also affirm the inherent value of non-human life forms. Planet Earth and all its life forms possess worth regardless of their utility to humans. Without this recognition, there is a growing risk that those with political and economic power may impose their ethical frameworks and agendas on weaker communities. To address this imbalance, clear standards should be established for evaluating conflicting interpretations, ensuring global concerns are resolved without allowing any single tradition to dominate world politics. (Ehnberg (2015:224). A global ethic, based on the principle of communicability, should facilitate dialogue and understanding between moral subjects and actors who hold fundamentally different worldviews.

A dialogue provides a foundation from which communities can engage in common action towards conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace. Soni & Raymaker (2011:35) note that participating in transformative dialogue with the intention of learning from and being enhanced by the values and beliefs of the other person is a crucial characteristic. Being self-critical of one's own beliefs helps to pass judgment on others based on our own moral standards. As a result, discussions of the political, economic, and other issues that emerge from the settings in which the dialogue partners live are essential components of a transformative dialogue (Ehnberg 2015:224). This study makes a significant contribution by engaging participants at the grassroots level, amplifying their voices to ensure they are heard in meaningful dialogue. The findings reveal that certain values and virtues are shared between the global ethic and two expressions of a local ethic. These include care and compassion, empathy, respect, support for others, solidarity, sharing, participation, justice or equity, peace, reconciliation, and responsibility. A dialogue for a global ethic should incorporate

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and promote these virtues and moral values through grassroots engagement, as well as academic and institutional dialogues. Participation and presentation in such gatherings are essential components of this dialogue. Furthermore, capturing the moral insights of community leaders in this study enables a deeper exploration of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the everyday lives of local people, fostering mutual engagement in the pursuit of a global ethic.

A truly global ethic can only be envisaged if it is inclusive of the religious and cultural experience of humankind (Cisneros & Premawardhana 2011:148). This necessitates an extensive, in-depth, and flexible discussion with participants who are dedicated to the truth and authenticity of the facts. It is obvious that the search for a global ethic will take long, filled with high hopes and low expectations, but it is worth it to continue with the ongoing dialogue expecting research from different case studies to test the significance of a global ethic to the local. It makes perfect sense to use religions, cultural traditions and philosophy because they all contain deep intuitions about who we are as humans. It is interesting to note the context or social position of community members contributes to the formation of moral convictions they maintain. This means that plurality concerning the moral ideas and notions which different persons and communities entertain is generally acknowledged as a noteworthy feature of the global ethic. It was highlighted in this study that local ethic contributes to global ethic. Consequently, as noted by Soni & Raymaker (2011:31) global and contextual ethics are two poles that challenge each other and inseparably belong together.

Lastly, this study discovered that moral conflict arises from the diversity of worldviews, which occurs when various groups share different ideas due to their respective worldviews, such as those on gender roles. Stated differently, moral uncertainty is the product of conflicting worldviews. Recognising the plurality of worldviews and viewing this as a chance for moral development for people or organisations is necessary in the quest for a global ethic.

8.5 Final remarks

The findings indicated that the moral directives offered by community leaders in Delft and Chionekano aligned with many principles of the global ethic but differed in key ethical categories. The study revealed the need for a global and local ethic to address complex global and local challenges. Dialogue between global and local ethics remains vital, particularly regarding communal and individual responsibilities. The findings revealed alignment and tension between a global and local ethic, highlighting the Western emphasis on individualism in contrast to the African focus on communitarian values. The study emphasised the need for dialogue and mutual

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respect between global and local perspectives to address complex ethical challenges, recognising that both approaches had strengths and limitations. The chapter concluded by advocating for a balanced, context-sensitive approach to ethics that respects cultural diversity while fostering shared moral visions for a sustainable and just world.

The study contributed to academic discourse on a global ethic and provided a framework for applying ethical theories in local contexts. The study underscored the significance of maintaining cultural identity while engaging in meaningful dialogue with global ethical principles. It offered a theoretical guide for future research and promoted inclusive, context-sensitive ethical solutions to global challenges.

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10 Addenda

Addendum A: Interview guiding questions

How global is the global ethic? Delft and Chionekano as test cases

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GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the main social challenges facing this area?
- What are the main environmental challenges facing this area?
- What do you think are the main root causes of these social and environment challenges?
- What do you think are the appropriate moral directives to citizens, i.e. to address what is within your locus of control?
- On social challenges?
- On environmental challenges?
- How do members of the community typically respond to such directives?

Tell me more?…

Please explain?...

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Addendum B: Consent form

Consent Form Interviews

University of the Western Cape

Research Project:

How global is the global ethic? Delft and Chionekano as test cases

Researcher: Mr J Matenda.

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. I understand that no financial benefits would accrue because of my participation in this research. ☐
3. I agree that the data collected from me to be used in future research. ☐
4. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐
5. I agree to be audio-recorded. ☐
6. I would want to be acknowledged By Name ☐

   By Pseudonym ☐

   By Role/ Responsibility

_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent *(If different from lead researcher)*	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Lead Researcher	Date	Signature

(*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*)

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher:

Mr J. Matenda
Department of Religion and Theology
Faculty of Arts
University of the Western Cape
Bellville 7535
Cell: +27 614368255

Supervisor:

Prof. E. Conradie
Department of Religion and Theology
Faculty of Arts
University of the Western Cape,
Bellville, 7535
Tel: +27 21 959 2206

HOD:

Prof. I. Swart
Department of Religion and Theology
Faculty of Arts
University of the Western Cape,
Bellville, 7535
Tel: +27 21 959 2206

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Addendum C: Letter to the headman

University of the Western Cape

Robert Sobukwe Road

Bellville, 7535

18 March 2021

The Headman

Matenda Primary School

P. Bag 614

Zvishavane

Dear Headman Matenda

Ref: Request for permission to conduct research

I am Job Matenda, a student from University of the Western Cape registered for PhD degree in in the department of Religion and Theology, more specifically specializing in Social Ethics. The purpose of this research is to investigate the question whether or not the moral directives outlined in "The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" produced for the Parliament of World Religions and the "Earth Charter" are compatible with the moral directives offered by community leaders in the Chionekano ward of Zvishavane district in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Thus, the aim of the study is to test the significance of the global for the local. Can such a global ethic do justice to the complexities embedded in these two communities? Inversely, can such an ethic help to address local challenges and common efforts towards social justice, conflict resolution, and ecological well-being? The study will benefit your community in helping to establish whether what local communities can learn from such global initiatives given the danger of local communities becoming isolated in this era of globalization. It gives relevance to modern ethical theories, community leaders' experiences as ethical reflectors as well as actors in addressing problems that arise in human and ecological system. This is an attempt to suggest moral creativity that can open possibilities of meaningful response to those challenges. For any questions regarding this research, don't hesitate to ask me or contact my supervisor on the contact details below.

In this regard, I kindly request for permission to conduct research in your area.

I greatly appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely

Job Matenda

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Addendum D: Letter to the councillor

29 Bandiagara street

Delft

Cape Town

18 March 2021

The Councillor

Sub council 5 Satellite Office

C/O Delft Main Road and Silversands Street

The Hague

Delft

Cape Town

Dear Ward Councillor

Ref: Request for permission to conduct research

I am Job Matenda, a student from University of the Western Cape registered for PhD degree in the department of Religion and Theology, more specifically specializing in Social Ethics. The purpose of this research is to investigate the question whether or not the moral directives outlined in "The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic" produced for the Parliament of World Religions and the "Earth Charter" are compatible with the moral directives offered by community leaders in the township of Delft in Cape Town. Thus, the aim of the study is to test the significance of the global for the local. Can such a global ethic do justice to the complexities embedded in Delft? Inversely, can such an ethic help to address local challenges and common efforts towards social justice, conflict resolution, and ecological well-being? The study will benefit your community in helping to establish whether what local communities can learn from such global initiatives given the danger of local communities becoming isolated in this era of globalization. It gives relevance to modern ethical theories, community leaders' experiences as ethical reflectors as well as actors in addressing problems that arise in human and ecological system. This is an attempt to suggest moral creativity that can open possibilities of meaningful response to those challenges. For any questions regarding this research, don't hesitate to ask me or contact my supervisor on the contact details below.

In this regard, I kindly request for permission to conduct research in your area.

Sincerely

Job Matenda

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Addendum E: Information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

How global is the global ethic? Delft and Chionekano as test cases

What is this study about?

My name is Job Matenda, a student from University of the Western Cape registered for a PhD degree in Religion and Theology. This study is situated in the field of social ethics as influenced by philosophy and religious traditions alike. The purpose of this study is to give you the opportunity as community leaders to ethically reflect on social and environmental challenges facing our communities. This is a bottom top approach that is aimed to build local capacity and facilitate local empowerment through listening to your views and suggestions on what can be done to address social and environmental challenges affecting our communities. The questions that need to be addressed by this study are as follows, what in your views can be done to help address social challenges, injustice, various manifestations of violence and environmental concerns? What ethical theories and categories can best be employed in this regard? There is a danger that local communities are becoming isolated from global initiatives while such initiatives adversely affect them. Thus, the aim of the study is to test the significance of the global for the local by listening to your voices as community leaders.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in individual semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that relate to the study and your experiences in this specific field. The research questions of this study will be asked in English. For the Chionekano ward participants you are free to mix English and Shona since I understand Shona as mother tongue. For Delft participants, questions will be strictly asked in English. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer the following:

- What are the main social and environmental challenges facing this area?
- What do you think are the main root causes of these challenges?
- What do you think are the appropriate moral directives to citizens, i.e. to address what is within your locus of control?
- How do members of the community typically respond to such directives?

Written informed consent will be required and the experiences shared by you will be tape-recorded with your permission.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

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You will be asked how you would prefer to be referred to in this study. Space for this will be indicated in the consent form. I presume that some of you would want to be mentioned by name in order to receive due credit for your knowledge contribution that you have shared. To those who may prefer a description in terms of role responsibilities (e.g. "a school principal from Delft Technical High School"), and those who may prefer a pseudonym (e.g. Interviewee A from Madamwa village). I will adhere to such choices as you indicated in the consent forms.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no foreseeable serious risks in the information being gathered from the nature of this study.

What are the benefits of this research?

The benefits to society include efforts to address the social and environmental challenges that communities face in their daily lives for social justice and ecological well-being. The findings of this study can add value in common efforts that impact on policy implementation.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You are not going to be penalized for refusal or withdrawal from this study.

What if I have questions?

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact: Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 7530 Tel: 021959411 Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za	Should you have any further questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact: Research Supervisor: Professor Ernst Conradie, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535 Telephone: (021) 959 2206 Email: econradie@uwc.ac.za

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Addendum F: Ethics clearance

UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

60 YEARS *of hope, action & knowledge*

21 May 2021

Mr J Matenda
Religion and Theology
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

HSSREC Reference Number:	HS21/3/21
Project Title:	How global is the global ethic? Delft and Chionekano as test cases.
Approval Period:	20 May 2021 – 20 May 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.

The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

Director: Research Development
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X 17
Bellville 7535
Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 21 959 4111
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

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Addendum G: Earth Charter

Addendum F: Declaration Toward a Global Ethic

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The Earth Charter

What is the Earth Charter?

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history.

The document's inclusive ethical vision recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. It provides a new framework for thinking about and addressing these issues. The result is also a very broad conception of what constitutes sustainable development.

The Earth Charter is the product of a decade long, worldwide, cross-cultural conversation about common goals and shared values.

www.earthcharter.org

Earth Council
P.O. Box 319-6100
San José,
Costa Rica.
E-mail:
info@earthcharter.org

https://uwcscholar.ac.za

Preamble

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

EARTH, OUR HOME

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

THE GLOBAL SITUATION

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous—but not inevitable.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

Principles

I. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.
b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.

2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.
a. Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.
b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.

3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.
a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.
b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.

4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.
a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.
b. Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.

II. ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

In order to fulfill these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

5.Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
a. Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives.
b. Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity, and preserve our natural heritage.
c. Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems.
d. Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment,and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms.
e. Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.
f. Manage the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage.

6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
a. Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive.
b. Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm.
c. Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities.
d. Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances.
e. Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.

7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.
a. Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems.
b. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.
c. Promote the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies.
d. Internalize the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards.
e. Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.
f. Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world.

8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.
a. Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations.
b. Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being.
c. Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain.

We stand at a critical mome

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III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.
a. Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.
b. Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves.
c. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.

10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.
a. Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations.
b. Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt.
c. Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labor standards.
d. Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.

11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.
a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.
b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.
c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.

12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.
a. Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin.
b. Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods.
c. Honor and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.
d. Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.

IV. DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE, AND PEACE

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice.
a. Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest.
b. Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.
c. Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent.
d. Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm.
e. Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions.
f. Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.

14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
a. Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development.
b. Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education.
c. Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges.
d. Recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living.

15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
a. Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering.
b. Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged, or avoidable suffering.
c. Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species.

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.
a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.
b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.
c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.
d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.
f. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

The way forward

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

ment in Earth's history...

Background

In 1987 The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development issued a call for creation of a new charter that would set forth fundamental principles for sustainable development.

Representatives from governments and nongovernmental organizations worked to secure adoption of an Earth Charter during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The Charter was intended to serve as the ethical framework for Agenda 21, but the time was not right.

The Earth Charter movement was then taken up by the Earth Council and Green Cross International along with the Dutch Government in 1994.

In 1997, an Earth Charter Commission was formed to oversee the project and the drafting of the Charter. The same year, at the conclusion of the Rio+5 Forum in Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Charter Commission issued the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft.

The Earth Charter Initiative has involved the most open and participatory consultation process ever conducted in connection with the drafting of an international document.

Thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations from all regions of the world, different cultures, and diverse sectors of society have participated. The Charter has been shaped by both experts and representatives of grassroots communities. Guided by these contributions to the consultation process, the text was extensively revised.

A final version of the document was released by the Earth Charter Commission in March 2000.

The Earth Charter Initiative has entered a new phase that focuses on the implementation of its principles into action.

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Earth Charter Commission

AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST
Amadou Toumani Touré, Mali*
Princess Basma Bint Talal, Jordan
Wangari Maathai, Kenya
Mohamed Sahnoun, Algeria
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Kamla Chowdhry, India*
A.T. Ariyaratne, Sri Lanka
Wakako Hironaka, Japan
Pauline Tangiora, New Zealand/Aoteroa
Erna Witoelar, Indonesia
EUROPE
Mikhail Gorbachev, Russia*
Pierre Calame, France
Ruud Lubbers, The Netherlands
Federico Mayor, Spain
Henriette Rasmussen, Greenland
Awraham Soetendorp, The Netherlands
NORTH AMERICA
Maurice F. Strong, Canada*
John Hoyt, United States of America
Elizabeth May, Canada
Steven Rockefeller, United States of America
Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Canada
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Mercedes Sosa, Argentina*
Leonardo Boff, Brazil
Yolanda Kakabadse, Ecuador
Shridath Ramphal, Guyana
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*Chair, Finance Committee

For more information please contact:
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The Need for an Earth Charter

We stand at a critical moment in history, one that holds great promise as well as great peril. With the dangers of war, social and economic injustice and threats to the environment emerging, the human family must determine how to secure a sustainable future.

Advances in global communications and increased globalization of economies and culture demonstrate the need for an integrated vision and approach to addressing the interconnected problems we face. They also call for a new sense of global responsibility and action, which will demand basic changes in the values, behaviors and attitudes of government, the private sector and civil society.

The Earth Charter is a vehicle for addressing these issues and stimulating change.

The Earth Charter challenges us to examine our values and to choose a better way. It calls on us to search for common ground in the midst of our diversity and to embrace a new ethical vision that is shared by growing numbers of people in many nations and cultures throughout the world.

The Earth Charter initiative

I. MISSION

The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.

II. OBJECTIVES

1.To disseminate the Earth Charter to individuals and organizations in all sectors of society throughout the world.
2.To promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, faith communities, and a variety of other settings, and to develop and distribute the necessary supporting materials.
3.To encourage and support the use, implementation, and endorsement of the Earth Charter by civil society, business, and government at all levels.
4.To seek endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

III. USES OF THE EARTH CHARTER

There is a variety of interrelated ways to utilize the Earth Charter and to implement its values. You can use the Earth Charter as:

An educational tool for developing understanding of critical choices facing humanity and the urgent need for commitment to a sustainable way of life.
An invitation to individuals, institutions, and communities for internal reflection on fundamental attitudes and ethical values governing behavior.
A catalyst for multi-sectoral, cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue on global ethics and the direction of globalization.
A call to action and guide to a sustainable way of life that can inspire commitment, cooperation, and change.
A values framework for creating sustainable development policies and plans at all levels.
An instrument for designing professional codes of conduct that promote accountability and for assessing progress towards sustainability in businesses, communities, and nations.
A soft law instrument that provides an ethical foundation for the ongoing development of environmental and sustainable development law.

Get involved!

- **Express your support** for the Earth Charter by endorsing it online at *www.ecouncil.ac.cr/template/endorse/*
- **Commit to the aims and spirit** of the Earth Charter and use it in your daily life. (It is meant to be a part of our daily lives.)
- **Incorporate the Earth Charter into your workplace and local community.** Make it a part of all business, organization, association or government bodies through the mission statement, programs, activities, and literature.
- **Disseminate and have dialogue about the Earth Charter.** In this way we consciously create our future.
- **Use the Earth Charter** as an educational instrument. Plant the seed of tomorrow.
- **Form a group to reflect on the Earth Charter,** making it a living document, a force in people's lives and relationships.
- **Use the Earth Charter as a theme** for workshops, conferences, forums, and meetings.
- **Contribute** finacially to the movement, if you wish.

Contributions in support of the Earth Charter Initiative can be sent to:
The Earth Charter Fund/TPC, attention: Claire Wilson, Post Office Box 648, Middlebury VT 05753, USA.

Endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals or organizations signifies a commitment to the spirit and aims of the document. It indicates that they intend to use the Earth Charter in ways that are appropriate given their situation and will cooperate with others in working for the implementation of its principles. Endorsement builds support for the Earth Charter Initiative and social change. See the website for further information on endorsement.

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PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

TOWARDS A GLOBAL ETHIC:

An Initial Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions

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Towards a Global Ethic:
(An Initial Declaration)

1. THE DECLARATION OF A GLOBAL ETHIC

The world is in agony. The agony is so pervasive and urgent that we are compelled to name its manifestations so that the depth of this pain may be made clear.

Peace eludes us…the planet is being destroyed…neighbors live in fear…women and men are estranged from each other…children die!

This is abhorrent!

We condemn the abuses of Earth's ecosystems.

We condemn the poverty that stifles life's potential; the hunger that weakens the human body; the economic disparities that threaten so many families with ruin.

We condemn the social disarray of the nations; the disregard for justice which pushes citizens to the margin; the anarchy overtaking our communities; and the insane death of children from violence. In particular we condemn aggression and hatred in the name of religion.

But this agony need not be.

It need not be because the basis for an ethic already exists. This ethic offers the possibility of a better individual and global order, and leads individuals away from despair and societies away from chaos.

We are women and men who have embraced the precepts and practices of the world's religions:

We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic.

We affirm that this truth is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action.

We affirm that there is an irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families

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and communities, for races, nations, and religions. There already exist ancient guidelines for human behavior which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a sustainable world order.

WE DECLARE:

We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals, and plants, and for the preservation of Earth, the air, water, and soil.

We take individual responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions, and failures to act have consequences.

We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of our world community, practicing a culture of solidarity and relatedness.

We consider humankind our family. We must strive to be kind and generous. We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen, or be exploited in any way whatsoever. There should be equal partnership between men and women. We must not commit any kind of sexual immorality. We must put behind us all forms of domination or abuse.

We must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal. We must move beyond the dominance of greed for power, prestige, money, and consumption to make a just and peaceful world.

Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed first. We pledge to increase our awareness by disciplining our minds, by meditation, by prayer, or by positive thinking. Without risk and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation. Therefore we commit ourselves to this global ethic, to understanding one another, and to socially beneficial, peace-fostering, and nature-friendly ways of life.

We invite all people,
whether religious or not,
to do the same.

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2. THE PRINCIPLES OF A GLOBAL ETHIC

Our world is experiencing a fundamental crisis: A crisis in global economy, global ecology, and global politics. The lack of a grand vision, the tangle of unresolved problems, political paralysis, mediocre political leadership with little insight or foresight, and in general too little sense for the commonweal are seen everywhere. Too many old answers to new challenges.

Hundreds of millions of human beings on our planet increasingly suffer from unemployment, poverty, hunger, and the destruction of their families. Hope for a lasting peace among nations slips away from us. There are tensions between the sexes and generations. Children die, kill, and are killed. More and more countries are shaken by corruption in politics and business. It is increasingly difficult to live together peacefully in our cities because of social, racial, and ethnic conflicts, the abuse of drugs, organized crime, and even anarchy. Even neighbors often live in fear of one another. Our planet continues to be ruthlessly plundered. A collapse of the ecosystem threatens us.

Time and again we see leaders and members of religions incite aggression, fanaticism, hate, and xenophobia—even inspire and legitimize violent and bloody conflicts. Religion often is misused for purely power-political goals, including war. We are filled with disgust.

We condemn these blights and declare that they need not be. An ethic already exists within the religious teachings of the world which can counter the global distress. Of course this ethic provides no direct solution for all the immense problems of the world, but it does supply the moral foundation for a better individual and global order: A vision which can lead women and men away from despair, and society away from chaos.

We are persons who have committed ourselves to the precepts and practices of the world's religions. We confirm that there is already a consensus among the religions which can be the basis for a global ethic—a minimal *fundamental consensus* concerning binding *values*, irrevocable *standards*, and *fundamental moral attitudes*.

Principle I: No New Global Order Without a New Global Ethic!

We women and men of various religions and regions of Earth therefore address all people, religious and non-religious. We wish to express the following convictions which we hold in common:

- We all have a responsibility for a better global order.
- Our involvement for the sake of human rights, freedom, justice, peace, and the preservation of Earth is absolutely necessary.
- Our different religious and cultural traditions must not prevent our common involvement in opposing all forms of inhumanity and working for greater humaneness.
- The principles expressed in this Global Ethic can be affirmed by all persons with ethical convictions, whether religiously grounded or not.

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- As religious and spiritual persons we base our lives on an Ultimate Reality, and draw spiritual power and hope therefrom, in trust, in prayer or meditation, in word or silence. We have a special responsibility for the welfare of all humanity and care for the planet Earth. We do not consider ourselves better than other women and men, but we trust that the ancient wisdom of our religions can point the way for the future.

After two world wars and the end of the cold war, the collapse of fascism and nazism, the shaking to the foundations of communism and colonialism, humanity has entered a new phase of its history.

Today we possess sufficient economic, cultural, and spiritual resources to introduce a better global order. But old and new ethnic, national, social, economic, and religious tensions threaten the peaceful building of a better world. We have experienced greater technological progress than ever before, yet we see that world-wide poverty, hunger, death of children, unemployment, misery, and the destruction of nature have not diminished but rather have increased. Many peoples are threatened with economic ruin, social disarray, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe, and national collapse.

In such a dramatic global situation humanity needs a vision of peoples living peacefully together, of ethnic and ethical groupings and of religions sharing responsibility for the care of Earth. A vision rests on hopes, goals, ideals, standards. But all over the world these have slipped from our hands. Yet we are convinced that, despite their frequent abuses and failures, it is the communities of faith who bear a responsibility to demonstrate that such hopes, ideals, and standards can be guarded, grounded, and lived. This is especially true in the modern state. Guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion are necessary but they do not substitute for binding values, convictions, and norms which are valid for all humans regardless of their social origin, sex, skin color, language, or religion.

We are convinced of the fundamental unity of the human family on Earth. We recall the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. What it formally proclaimed on the level of rights we wish to confirm and deepen here from the perspective of an ethic: The full realization of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, the inalienable freedom and equality in principle of all humans, and the necessary solidarity and interdependence of all humans with each other.

On the basis of personal experiences and the burdensome history of our planet we have learned:

- that a better global order cannot be created or enforced by laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone;
- that the realization of peace, justice, and the protection of Earth depends on the insight and readiness of men and women to act justly;
- that action in favor of rights and freedoms presumes a consciousness of responsibility and duty, and that therefore both the minds and hearts of women and men must be addressed;

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- that rights without morality cannot long endure, and that *there will be no better global order without a global ethic.*

By a global ethic we do not mean a global ideology or a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, and certainly not the domination of one religion over all others. By a global ethic we mean a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes. Without such a fundamental consensus on an ethic, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and individuals will despair.

Principle II: We Express a Fundamental Demand: Every Human Being Must Be Treated Humanely.

We are all fallible, imperfect men and women with limitations and defects. We know the reality of evil. Precisely because of this, we feel compelled for the sake of global welfare to express what the fundamental elements of a global ethic should be – for individuals as well as for communities and organizations, for states as well for the religions themselves. We trust that our often millenniaold religious and ethical traditions provide an ethic which is convincing and practicable for all women and men of good will, religious and non-religious.

At the same time we know that our various religious and ethical traditions often offer very different bases for what is helpful and what is unhelpful for men and women, what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. We do not wish to gloss over or ignore the serious differences among the individual religions. However, they should not hinder us from proclaiming publicly those things which we already hold in common and which we jointly affirm, each on the basis of our own religious or ethical grounds.

We know that religions cannot solve the environmental, economic, political, and social problems of Earth. However they can provide what obviously cannot be attained by economic plans, political programs, or legal regulations alone: A change in the inner orientation, the whole mentality, the "hearts" of people, and a conversion from a false path to a new orientation for life. Humankind urgently needs social and ecological reforms, but it needs spiritual renewal just as urgently. As religious or spiritual persons we commit ourselves to this task. The spiritual powers of the religions can offer a fundamental sense of trust, a ground of meaning, ultimate standards, and a spiritual home. Of course religions are credible only when they eliminate those conflicts which spring from the religions themselves, dismantling mutual arrogance, mistrust, prejudice, and even hostile images, and thus demonstrate respect for the traditions, holy places, feasts, and rituals of people who believe differently.

Now as before, women and men are treated inhumanely all over the world. They are robbed of their opportunities and their freedom; their human rights are trampled underfoot; their dignity is disregarded. But might does not make right! In the face of all inhumanity our religious and ethical convictions demand that *every human being must be treated humanely!*

This means that every human being without distinction of age, sex, race, skin color, physical

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or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin possesses an inalienable and untouchable dignity. And everyone, the individual as well as the state, is therefore obliged to honor this dignity and protect it. Humans must always be the subject of rights, must be ends, never mere means, never objects of commercialization and industrialization in economics, politics and media, in research institutes, and industrial corporations. No one stands "above good and evil" – no human being, no social class, no influential interest group, no cartel, no police apparatus, no army, and no state. On the contrary: Possessed of reason and conscience, every human is obliged to behave in a genuinely human fashion, to do good and avoid evil!

It is the intention of this Global Ethic to clarify what this means. In it we wish to recall irrevocable, unconditional ethical norms. These should not be bonds and chains, but helps and supports for people to find and realize once again their lives' direction, values, orientations, and meaning.

There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: *What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.* Or in positive terms: *What you wish done to yourself, do to others!* This should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions.

Every form of egoism should be rejected: all selfishness, whether individual or collective, whether in the form of class thinking, racism, nationalism, or sexism. We condemn these because they prevent humans from being authentically human. Self-determination and self-realization are thoroughly legitimate so long as they are not separated from human self-responsibility and global responsibility, that is, from responsibility for fellow humans and for the planet Earth.

This principle implies very concrete standards to which we humans should hold firm. From it arise five broad, ancient guidelines for human behavior which are found in most of the religions of the world.

Principle III: We Commit to a Set of Irrevocable Directives.

1. Commitment to a Culture of Non-violence and Respect for Life.

Numberless women and men of all regions and religions strive to lead lives not determined by egoism but by commitment to their fellow humans and to the world around them. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless hatred, envy, jealousy, and violence, not only between individuals but also between social and ethnic groups, between classes, races, nations, and religions. The use of violence, drug trafficking and organized crime, often equipped with new technical possibilities, has reached global proportions. Many places still are ruled by terror "from above;" dictators oppress their own people, and institutional violence is widespread. Even in some countries where laws exist to protect individual freedoms, prisoners are tortured, men and women are mutilated, hostages are killed.

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a. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: *You shall not kill!* Or in positive terms: *Have respect for life!* Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: All people have a right to life, safety, and the free development of personality insofar as they do not injure the rights of others. No one has the right physically or psychically to torture, injure, much less kill, any other human being. And no people, no state, no race, no religion has the right to hate, to discriminate against, to "cleanse," to exile, much less to liquidate a "foreign" minority which is different in behavior or holds different beliefs.

b. Of course, wherever there are humans there will be conflicts. Such conflicts, however, should be resolved without violence within a framework of justice. This is true for states as well as for individuals. Persons who hold political power must work within the framework of a just order and commit themselves to the most non-violent, peaceful solutions possible. And they should work for this within an international order of peace which itself has need of protection and defense against perpetrators of violence. Armament is a mistaken path; disarmament is the commandment of the times. Let no one be deceived: There is no survival for humanity without global peace!

c. Young people must learn at home and in school that violence may not be a means of settling differences with others. Only thus can a culture of non-violence be created.

d. A human person is infinitely precious and must be unconditionally protected. But likewise the lives of animals and plants which inhabit this planet with us deserve protection, preservation, and care. Limitless exploitation of the natural foundations of life, ruthless destruction of the biosphere, and militarization of the cosmos are all outrages. As human beings we have a special responsibility – especially with a view to future generations – for Earth and the cosmos, for the air, water, and soil. We are all intertwined together in this cosmos and we are all dependent on each other. Each one of us depends on the welfare of all. Therefore the dominance of humanity over nature and the cosmos must not be encouraged. Instead we must cultivate living in harmony with nature and the cosmos.

e. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means that in public as well as in private life we must be concerned for others and ready to help. We must never be ruthless and brutal. Every people, every race, every religion must show tolerance and respect – indeed high appreciation – for every other. Minorities need protection and support, whether they be racial, ethnic, or religious.

2. Commitment to a Culture of Solidarity and a Just Economic Order.

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to live their lives in solidarity with one another and to work for authentic fulfillment of their vocations. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless hunger, deficiency, and need. Not only individuals, but especially unjust institutions and structures are responsible for these tragedies. Millions of people are without work; millions are exploited by poor wages, forced to the edges of society, with their possibilities for the future destroyed. In many lands the gap between the poor and the rich, between the powerful and the powerless

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is immense. We live in a world in which totalitarian state socialism as well as unbridled capitalism have hollowed out and destroyed many ethical and spiritual values. A materialistic mentality breeds greed for unlimited profit and a grasping for endless plunder. These demands claim more and more of the community's resources without obliging the individual to contribute more. The cancerous social evil of corruption thrives in the developing countries and in the developed countries alike.

a. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: *You shall not steal!* Or in positive terms: *Deal honestly and fairly!* Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No one has the right to rob or dispossess in any way whatsoever any other person or the commonweal. Further, no one has the right to use her or his possessions without concern for the needs of society and Earth.

b. Where extreme poverty reigns, helplessness and despair spread, and theft occurs again and again for the sake of survival. Where power and wealth are accumulated ruthlessly, feelings of envy, resentment, and deadly hatred and rebellion inevitably well up in the disadvantaged and marginalized. This leads to a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence. Let no one be deceived: There is no global peace without global justice!

c. Young people must learn at home and in school that property, limited though it may be, carries with it an obligation, and that its uses should at the same time serve the common good. Only thus can a just economic order be built up.

d. If the plight of the poorest billions of humans on this planet, particularly women and children, is to be improved, the world economy must be structured more justly. Individual good deeds, and assistance projects, indispensable though they be, are insufficient. The participation of all states and the authority of international organizations are needed to build just economic institutions.

   A solution which can be supported by all sides must be sought for the debt crisis and the poverty of the dissolving second world, and even more the third world. Of course conflicts of interest are unavoidable. In the developed countries, a distinction must be made between necessary and limitless consumption, between socially beneficial and non-beneficial uses of property, between justified and unjustified uses of natural resources, and between a profit-only and a socially beneficial and ecologically oriented market economy. Even the developing nations must search their national consciences.

   Wherever those ruling threaten to repress those ruled, wherever institutions threaten persons, and wherever might oppresses right, we are obligated to resist –whenever possible nonviolently.

e. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

   - We must utilize economic and political power for service to humanity instead

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of misusing it in ruthless battles for domination. We must develop a spirit of compassion with those who suffer, with special care for the children, the aged, the poor, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely.

- We must cultivate mutual respect and consideration, so as to reach a reasonable balance of interests, instead of thinking only of unlimited power and unavoidable competitive struggles.
- We must value a sense of moderation and modesty instead of an unquenchable greed for money, prestige, and consumption. In greed humans lose their "souls," their freedom, their composure, their inner peace, and thus that which makes them human.

3. Commitment to a Culture of Tolerance and a Life of Truthfulness.

Numberless women and men of all regions and religions strive to lead lives of honesty and truthfulness. Nevertheless, all over the world we find endless lies and deceit, swindling and hypocrisy, ideology and demagoguery:

- Politicians and business people who use lies as a means to success;
- Mass media which spread ideological propaganda instead of accurate reporting, misinformation instead of information, cynical commercial interest instead of loyalty to the truth;
- Scientists and researchers who give themselves over to morally questionable ideological or political programs or to economic interest groups, or who justify research which violates fundamental ethical values;
- Representatives of religions who dismiss other religions as of little value and who preach fanaticism and intolerance instead of respect and understanding.

a. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: *You shall not lie!* Or in positive terms: *Speak and act truthfully!* Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No woman or man, no institution, no state or church or religious community has the right to speak lies to other humans.

b. This is especially true

- For those who work in the mass media, to whom we entrust the freedom to report for the sake of truth and to whom we thus grant the office of guardian. They do not stand above morality but have the obligation to respect human dignity, human rights, and fundamental values. They are duty-bound to objectivity, fairness, and the preservation of human dignity. They have no right to intrude into individuals' private spheres, to manipulate public opinion, or to distort reality;
- For artists, writers, and scientists, to whom we entrust artistic and academic freedom. They are not exempt from general ethical standards and must serve the truth;

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- For the leaders of countries, politicians, and political parties, to whom we entrust our own freedoms. When they lie in the faces of their people, when they manipulate the truth, or when they are guilty of venality or ruthlessness in domestic or foreign affairs, they forsake their credibility and deserve to lose their offices and their voters. Conversely, public opinion should support those politicians who dare to speak the truth to the people at all times;
- Finally, for representatives of religion. When they stir up prejudice, hatred, and enmity towards those of different belief, or even incite or legitimize religious wars, they deserve the condemnation of humankind and the loss of their adherents.

Let no one be deceived: There is no global justice without truthfulness and humaneness!

c. Young people must learn at home and in school to think, speak, and act truthfully. They have a right to information and education to be able to make the decisions that will form their lives. Without an ethical formation they will hardly be able to distinguish the important from the unimportant. In the daily flood of information, ethical standards will help them discern when opinions are portrayed as facts, interests veiled, tendencies exaggerated, and facts twisted.

d. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

- We must not confuse freedom with arbitrariness or pluralism with indifference to truth.
- We must cultivate truthfulness in all our relationships instead of dishonesty, dissembling, and opportunism.
- We must constantly seek truth and incorruptible sincerity instead of spreading ideological or partisan half-truths.
- We must courageously serve the truth and we must remain constant and trustworthy, instead of yielding to opportunistic accommodation to life.

4. Commitment to a Culture of Equal Rights and Partnership Between Men and Women.

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to live their lives in a spirit of partnership and responsible action in the areas of love, sexuality, and family. Nevertheless, all over the world there are condemnable forms of patriarchy, domination of one sex over the other, exploitation of women, sexual misuse of children, and forced prostitution. Too frequently, social inequities force women and even children into prostitution as a means of survival – particularly in less developed countries.

a. In the great ancient religious and ethical traditions of humankind we find the directive: *You shall not commit sexual immorality!* Or in positive terms: *Respect and love*

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one another! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this ancient directive: No one has the right to degrade others to mere sex objects, to lead them into or hold them in sexual dependency.

b. We condemn sexual exploitation and sexual discrimination as one of the worst forms of human degradation. We have the duty to resist wherever the domination of one sex over the other is preached – even in the name of religious conviction; wherever sexual exploitation is tolerated, wherever prostitution is fostered or children are misused. Let no one be deceived: There is no authentic humaneness without a living together in partnership!

c. Young people must learn at home and in school that sexuality is not a negative, destructive, or exploitative force, but creative and affirmative. Sexuality as a life-affirming shaper of community can only be effective when partners accept the responsibilities of caring for one another's happiness.

d. The relationship between women and men should be characterized not by patronizing behavior or exploitation, but by love, partnership, and trustworthiness. Human fulfillment is not identical with sexual pleasure. Sexuality should express and reinforce a loving relationship lived by equal partners.

   Some religious traditions know the ideal of a voluntary renunciation of the full use of sexuality. Voluntary renunciation also can be an expression of identity and meaningful fulfillment.

e. The social institution of marriage, despite all its cultural and religious variety, is characterized by love, loyalty, and permanence. It aims at and should guarantee security and mutual support to husband, wife, and child. It should secure the rights of all family members.

   All lands and cultures should develop economic and social relationships which will enable marriage and family life worthy of human beings, especially for older people. Children have a right of access to education. Parents should not exploit children, nor children parents. Their relationships should reflect mutual respect, appreciation, and concern.

f. To be authentically human in the spirit of our great religious and ethical traditions means the following:

   - We need mutual respect, partnership, and understanding, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation, which are expressions of violence and engender counter-violence
   - We need mutual concern, tolerance, readiness for reconciliation, and love, instead of any form of possessive lust or sexual misuse.

   Only what has already been experienced in personal and familial relationships can be practiced on the level of nations and religions.

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5. Commitment to a Culture of Sustainability and Care for the Earth.

Numberless men and women of all regions and religions strive to lead lives in a spirit of mutual harmony, interdependence, and respect for the Earth, its living beings and ecosystems. Nevertheless, in most parts of the world, pollution contaminates the soil, air and water; deforestation and over-reliance on fossil fuels contribute to climate change; habitats are destroyed and species are fished or hunted to extinction. Over-exploitation and unjust use of natural resources increases conflict and poverty among people and harms other forms of life. Too often, the poorest populations, though they have the smallest impact, bear the brunt of the damage done to the planet's atmosphere, land and oceans.

a. In the religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions of humankind we find the directive: You shall not be greedy! Or in positive terms: Remember the good of all! Let us reflect anew on the consequences of this directive: We should help provide – to the best of our ability – for the needs and well-being of others, including of today's and tomorrow's children. The Earth, with its finite resources, is shared by our one human family. It sustains us and many forms of life, and calls for our respect and care. Many religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions place us within the interdependent web of life; at the same time, they accord us a distinctive role and affirm that our gifts of knowledge and of craft place upon us the obligation to use these gifts wisely to foster the common good.

b. All of us have the responsibility to minimize, as much as we can, our impact on the Earth, to refrain from treating living beings and the environment as mere things for personal use and enjoyment, and to consider the effects of our actions on future generations. Caring and prudent use of resources is based on fairness in consumption and takes into account limits on what ecosystems can bear. Wherever heedless domination by human beings over the Earth and other living beings is taught, wherever abuse of the environment is tolerated, and wherever development surpasses sustainable limits, we have the duty to speak up, to change our practices, and to moderate our lifestyles.

c. Young people should be encouraged to appreciate that a good life is not a life of outsized consumption or amassing material possessions. A good life strikes a balance between one's needs, the needs of others, and the health of the planet. Education about the environment and sustainable living should become part of the school curricula in every country of the world.

d. To be authentically human in the spirit of our religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions, means the following: Our relationship with each other and with the larger living world should be based on respect, care and gratitude. All traditions teach that the Earth is a source of wonder and wisdom. Its vitality, diversity, and beauty are held in trust for everyone including those who will come after us. The global

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environmental crisis is urgent and is deepening. The planet and its countless forms of life are in danger. Time is running out. We must act with love and compassion, and for justice and fairness – for the flourishing of the whole Earth community.

Principle IV: We Work Towards a Transformation of Consciousness.

Historical experience demonstrates the following: Earth cannot be changed for the better unless we achieve a transformation in the consciousness of individuals and in public life. The possibilities for transformation have already been glimpsed in areas such as war and peace, economy, and ecology, where in recent decades fundamental changes have taken place. This transformation must also be achieved in the area of ethics and values!

Every individual has intrinsic dignity and inalienable rights, and each also has an inescapable responsibility for what she or he does and does not do. All our decisions and deeds, even our omissions and failures, have consequences.

Keeping this sense of responsibility alive, deepening it and passing it on to future generations, is the special task of religions.

We are realistic about what we have achieved in this consensus, and so we urge that the following be observed:

1. A universal consensus on many disputed ethical questions (from bio – and sexual ethics through mass media and scientific ethics to economic and political ethics) will be difficult to attain. Nevertheless, even for many controversial questions, suitable solutions should be attainable in the spirit of the fundamental principles we have jointly developed here.
2. In many areas of life a new consciousness of ethical responsibility has already arisen. Therefore we would be pleased if as many professions as possible, such as those of physicians, scientists, business people, journalists, and politicians, would develop up-to-date codes of ethics which would provide specific guidelines for the vexing questions of these particular professions.
3. Above all, we urge the various communities of faith to formulate their very specific ethics: What does each faith tradition have to say, for example, about the meaning of life and death, the enduring of suffering and the forgiveness of guilt, about selfless sacrifice and the necessity of renunciation, about compassion and joy. These will deepen, and make more specific, the already discernible global ethic.

In conclusion, we appeal to all the inhabitants of this planet. Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is changed. We pledge to work for such transformation in individual and collective consciousness, for the awakening of our spiritual powers through reflection, meditation, prayer, or positive thinking, for a conversion of the heart. Together we can move mountains! Without a willingness to take risks and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation! Therefore we

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commit ourselves to a common global ethic, to better mutual understanding, as well as to socially beneficial, peace-fostering, and Earth-friendly ways of life.

We invite all men and women,
whether religious or not,
to do the same.

NOTE: On the 25th Anniversary of "Towards a Global Ethic (An Initial Declaration)" the fifth directive was added after a broad, months-long consultative process and the approval of the Parliament of the World's Religions' Board of Trustees in July, 2018.

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