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Contents / Sommaire

Women's Health, Economic Health: A Cross-National Study of Nine sub-Saharan Countries

Gloria Hage*

Abstract

This article analyzes whether a country's investment in comprehensive women's healthcare translates into increased economic growth and economic output. Very few studies consider the possible direct correlation between the physical health of a country's women and a country's economic productivity. This study fills part of this gap by examining the health status of women in nine sub-Saharan African countries, using World Health Organization data over various time periods dependent on data availability. Health status was then compared to each country's economic growth, derived from measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Income (GNI), and the Human Development Index (HDI). The data show that where women's health status is high, economic growth is high, and where women's health status is low, economic growth is low. In conclusion, we must ensure women's health, not only for the sake of ethics, but also for the sake of building economically strong countries where all people can thrive.

Résumé

Cet article essaie de déterminer si l'investissement d'un pays dans la santé globale des femmes se traduit par une meilleure croissance et de meilleurs résultats économiques. Très peu d'études s'intéressent à la corrélation directe possible entre la santé physique des femmes d'un pays, et la productivité économique de ce dernier. La présente étude règle en partie cette question en procédant à une analyse de l'état de santé des femmes dans neuf pays d'Afrique

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subsaharienne en utilisant les données de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) au cours de périodes différentes selon la disponibilité des données. L'état de santé a ensuite été comparé à la croissance économique de chaque pays, sur la base du Produit intérieur brut (PIB), du Revenu national brut (RNB), et de l'Indice de développement humain (IDH). Les données statistiques montrent que lorsque l'état de santé des femmes est bon, la croissance économique est bonne, et lorsque l'état de santé des femmes n'est pas bon, la croissance économique est faible. En conclusion, nous devons veiller à la santé des femmes, non seulement pour des raisons d'éthique, mais aussi dans le but de bâtir des Etats économiquement forts où tous les habitants peuvent prospérer.

Introduction

Does providing better healthcare to women have tangible economic benefits for a developing country? Good health is required for any person to contribute economically to their family and community. Women are the foundation of the family, and so, a crucial element of a society's structure. Therefore, does strengthening women strengthen the whole of society? On the most basic level, the link between health and economic growth is that healthy workers are more productive than comparable workers with poor health. Simply, healthy workers produce more, with greater consistency for longer periods of time, and that has a direct correlation to greater economic output. Improved longevity increases savings rates, healthier countries receive greater foreign direct investment, healthy children have higher rates of school attendance and better cognitive development, and a longer life span makes investment in education more attractive (Bloom et al. 2004:10).

In this article, I explore the correlation between the status of women's health and a country's economic growth. The status of women's health is analyzed using independent variables which include government expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP, female life expectancy, maternal mortality, number of births attended by skilled health personnel, and drug access for HIV and TB. Economic growth is analyzed using various measures of GDP and GNI, as well as the Human Development Index (HDI).

Women bear and raise children. The next generation can only do well if given the opportunity for long-term stability, and women provide much of this in the developing world. 'Rural women are responsibe for half of the world food production and, in developing countries, they produce 60 to 80 per cent of the food' (International Center for Research on Women 2005). Women in sub-Saharan Africa provide food for the

family, and are crucial to food security overall. A woman's illness or premature death is a threat to the survival of her family, and possibly others in the community that depend on the food she produces.

Unavailable, inaccessible, unaffordable and poor quality healthcare all contribute to the premature deaths of women. The high risk of dying in pregnancy and childbirth in sub-Saharan Africa continues unabated. sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest rate of maternal deaths in the world, and the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births has remained virtually unchanged since 1990. Life expectancy between the richest and poorest countries is now greater than it was 40 years ago (Chan 2008). The average life expectancy of 642 million people in sub-Saharan Africa is 51 years.

The AIDS pandemic has made it clear that equity in health is a matter of life and death. Of the three million people who died of HIV/AIDS in 2001, 73 per cent of them were in sub-Saharan Africa (The World Bank 2004:26). Women are increasingly carrying the HIV burden. According to the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Report, of all the people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, 59 per cent are women. Also, diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria continue to spread. Two billion people lack access to essential medicines, which results in forty thousand deaths daily, with the majority of them being children under five years of age. Equity in health is a challenge globally, but especially for women and children living in sub-Saharan Africa. This region carries the greatest burden of disease with the least resources.

There are many challenges facing access to healthcare and medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. Medicine is unavailable due to three primary factors: research and development do not support the health needs of the poor; health systems are generally inadequate; and existing medicines are unaffordable to most Africans. People lack access to healthcare due to brain drain, inadequate and poorly maintained healthcare facilities, and the lack of access to other healthcare resources due to geographical barriers. In addition, there are numerous other factors that may play a role in the low life expectancy of women, resulting in a very complex situation.

Having a healthy society, and thus a healthy workforce, should be the goal of all countries. 'Disease can destabilize economies and entire political systems. The stability of the global system hinges on an international effort to fight disease and on the health of the poorest, most vulnerable people' (World Health Organization 2009a). Women, who constitute half of the world's population, are often not considered separately in terms of

health and productivity. This study is considering only women's health status because of the unique role they play in society and the undeveloped potential contribution they may make to a country's economic growth. Leaving women out or underutilizing their talent hinders the potential growth of an entire society. It can be equated to using 50 per cent of available resources.

Research Design

In this study, I utilized the Most Dissimilar Systems Design (MDSD) for my analysis. I compared nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, looking at the correlation between women's health status and a country's economic growth. Countries in my analysis comprise Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria and Swaziland. Independent variables include: government expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP, female life expectancy, fertility rate, infant mortality, under-5 mortality, maternal mortality, births attended by skilled personnel, contraceptive prevalence, access to antiretroviral therapy for advanced HIV disease, and tuberculosis (DOTS) treatment access.

Dependent variables include: the Human Development Index (HDI), Gross Domestic Product per capita, Gross National Income per capita, Gross Domestic Product annual growth, Gross National Income per capita annual growth, and Gross National Income per capita Purchasing Power Parity. Using GDP as a sole indicator of economic growth would be deceptive due to the extreme inequality in wealth distribution. In many sub-Saharan countries, a small percentage of the population or the government hold most of the financial resources. I also utilize the Human Development Index (HDI), as it represents a broader view of a country's wellbeing.

My first step in evaluating the health status of women in this study involved collecting data for all the variables, and then utilizing statistical normalization to derive a single score between 1 and 10 for each variable. The independent variable scores were then combined and averaged to create a single composite score for each country. I then collected all the relevant data for the economic variables and used statistical normalization to give each economic variable a score between 1 and 10. The economic variable scores were then combined and averaged to create one single composite score between 1 and 10 that represents all economic variables. I then ranked the countries for both health status and economic growth, from 1 being the best to 10 being the worst. This allowed me to compare where each country lay in the ranking to determine if there is a pattern that supports my hypothesis.

Taking into consideration that sub-Saharan Africa carries the highest HIV disease burden in the world, countries were selected to ensure that this one factor would not significantly impact any outcome. The countries in this study have different levels of HIV burden, with varying life expectancies and health status. There is enough variation so as not to corrupt the outcome. As well, the inclusion of a variety of health variables should negate any potential deviation that could show itself. No honest analysis of this region could exclude HIV, as it is a significant health threat for women.

This research is very important, given the current global economic crisis. It can help ensure that countries in need continue to receive economic investment for health from the international community. It will also help developing countries allocate their resources towards health services and medicines for women. At a time when resources may be scarce and women and children may continue to be left behind, it is crucial that information is available that argues on the most pragmatic level that the contribution a healthy woman makes to society is not a luxury, but a necessity for that society's economic growth and future.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Health Evaluation

Government Expenditure on Health as a Percentage of GDP

Some will argue that the best predictor of the impact government spending has on health depends on whether a country has good or poor governance. The World Bank has extensive empirical data supporting the argument that aid to countries with poor governance has no perceptible impact. In this study, the percentage of GDP spent on health is considered a significant indication of a country's level of commitment to the health of their population. The optimal environment to deliver health is clearly in countries with good governance. However, we cannot afford to wait for good governance to occur, to address the urgent health needs of poor countries, and most specifically for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). SSA is a region that is volatile to governance change, planned or unplanned. As well, it has a history of war, famine and unrest. It has been shown that properly planned and implemented actions have the possibility to impact the situation on the ground positively.

In this study, Botswana had the highest expenditure rate and largest increase in government spending on health as a percentage of GDP, increasing from 5.1 per cent in 1995, to 7.2 per cent in 2006. Ghana had the second highest expenditure at 6.2 per cent, but between 2000 and 2006 decreased in spending by 1.2 per cent. Swaziland had a healthcare

expenditure as a percentage of GDP in 1995 of 5.9 per cent, in 2000 of 6.1 per cent and in 2006 a decline back to the 1995 level of 5.9 per cent. Although her expenditure is relatively high compared to the other countries studied, it has remained unchanged, even given the fact that she has the highest level of HIV burden. Guinea had a slight increase in spending over the data period with 5.1 per cent in 1995, 5.3 per cent in 2000 and 5.7 per cent in 2006.

Nigeria dropped in her spending from 1995 at 5.2 per cent, to 2000 when it was at 4.3 per cent, and again in 2006 at 4.1 per cent. Niger has remained consistent at a 4 per cent expenditure rate, with a slight dip in 2000. Gabon had a spending rate of 2.3 per cent in 1995, 4.3 per cent in 2000, and then a decrease in 2006 to a rate of 3.7 per cent. Burundi had decreases in spending over the period studied with a rate of 3.6 per cent in 1995, 3.1 per cent in 2000, and 3 per cent in 2006. Angola had a spending rate of 4.1 per cent in 1995, and then decreased to 2.4 per cent in 2000, with a slight increase occurring in 2006, to 2.7 per cent. Only four countries – Botswana, Ghana, Swaziland and Guinea – had rates of expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP greater than the regional average of 5.3 per cent.

Figure 1: Government Expenditure on Health as a Percentage of GDP
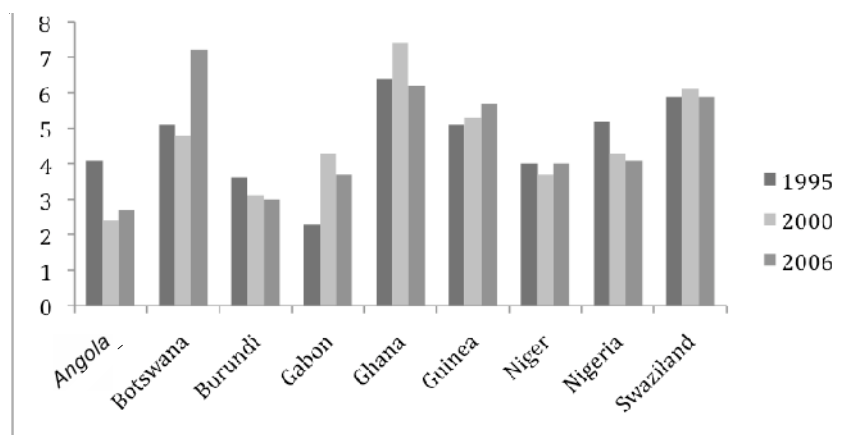
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

Female Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is the ultimate measure of a population's health and longevity, and correlates directly to a country's potential for economic development and growth. In the region of sub-Saharan Africa, life

expectancy at birth has remained unchanged since 1990. Twenty-nine countries in the region have shown improvements in life expectancy. Some countries that were experiencing improvement have recently lost ground due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Even countries with a comparatively low HIV/AIDS burden are challenged when it comes to increasing life expectancy. Many people continue to die prematurely from preventable and treatable diseases.

Of the nine countries I studied, four had a below-average female life expectancy for the SSA region, with the remaining being at par or better. I evaluated data using the years 1990, 2000, and the most recent available data – year 2006. Angola has a below-average female life expectancy for the region, and it has remained stagnant at 44 years, 44 years and 43 years respectively. Angola has gone through many decades of war, with sporadic periods of peace. This may be a contributing factor, but many countries in SSA have similar war-torn backgrounds with different life expectancy trends. In 1990, Botswana had a very high female life expectancy of 68 years, far above the region average of 50. However, it declined greatly by 2000 to 51 years, which correlates to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. In 2006, it increased slightly to 52 years. This may appear on the surface as an insignificant increase, but it may also be the beginning of a positive trend. Botswana has been very proactive in her health programs, especially for women, and she may just be starting to see the outcome of her efforts.

Burundi has been relatively stagnant, with a female life expectancy at 51 years, 49 years, and 50 years respectively. Gabon has seen a continuing decrease from 65 years in 1990, to 63 years in 2000, and 60 years in 2006. Although she still has a female life expectancy 10 years higher than the region average, the consistent decrease over the study period is concerning. Ghana has had a relatively stable female life expectancy of 60 years, 59 years and 58 years respectively. Guinea has seen a considerable increase in female life expectancy from 47 years in 1990, to 53 years in 2000, and 55 years in 2006. Niger, although having a very low female life expectancy of 43 years, has experienced significant improvement since 1990, when the female life expectancy was a mere 35 years. Nigeria has seen some improvement over time, with female life expectancy at 46 years, 48 years and 49 years respectively. Swaziland has experienced a severe drop in female life expectancy from 1990 to 2006. In 1990, her female life expectancy was 62 years; in 2000 it dropped to 53 years, and in 2006 it was 43 years. This is a drop of 19 years in female life expectancy. Swaziland has disease burden challenges, but this decline is the most significant of all the countries in this study.

Figure 2: Female Life Expectancy at Birth
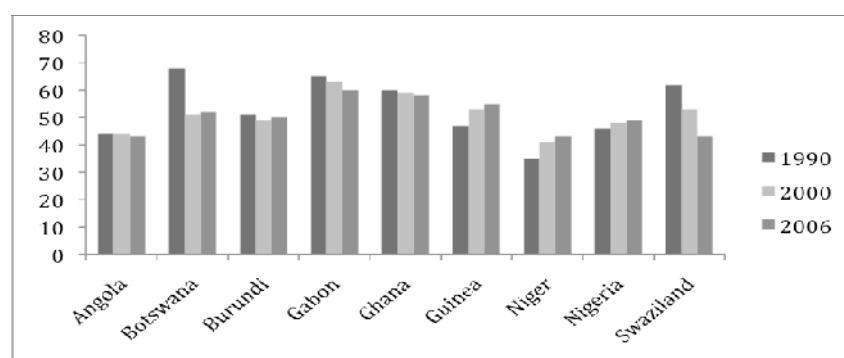
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

Fertility, Infant Mortality and Under-5 Mortality

A high fertility rate is closely related to high child mortality. A low fertility rate usually correlates to a higher state of women's health. Lower fertility rates point to healthier pregnancies, due to better prenatal care, delivery and postnatal care. It also means that babies who are born have the necessary resources available, such as medicine, healthcare, and nutritious food for them to grow into adulthood. When there is high infant mortality, women tend to have more pregnancies, producing more children to make up for the children they may lose. Close spacing of births risks the health and life of women. As well, many pregnancies may limit the years a woman can be economically productive.

Of the nine countries studied, all had declining fertility rates, some more significant than others. The highest fertility rate was in Niger, at 7.3, and the lowest was in Botswana, at 3. The greatest decline in fertility was in Swaziland, with a decrease of 2.1 from 1990 to 2006. In 1990, the fertility rate in Swaziland was 5.7, in 2000 it was 4.2 and in 2006 it reached 3.6. The next biggest fertility decline was in Ghana, at 1.8 from 1990 to 2006. Ghana's fertility rates were 5.8 in 1990, 4.6 in 2000, and 4 in 2006. Botswana and Gabon both had a fertility rate decline of 1.7, and fertility rates over the study period were very similar. Botswana had a fertility rate in 1990 of 4.7, in 2000 it was 3.4, and in 2006 it was 3. Similarly, Gabon's fertility rates were 4.8, 3.6, and 3.1 respectively. Nigeria had a fertility rate decline of 1.3 from 1990 to 2006, with rates of 6.8 in 1990, 6.1 in 2000 and 5.5 in 2006. Guinea experienced a 1.1 decrease in fertility rate in the period studied. The rates were 6.7 in 1990, 6 in 2000 and 5.6 in 2006. Angola and Niger had the smallest decline in fertility rates, at 0.7 and 0.6 respectively.

Figure 3: Total Fertility Rate Per Woman
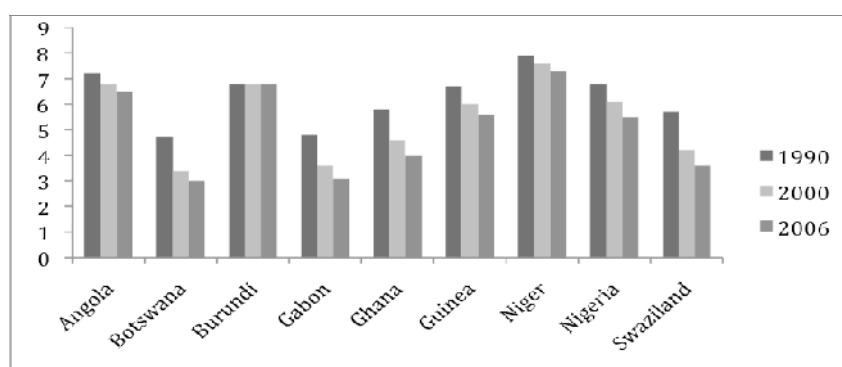
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goal is to reduce the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. Between 1990 and 2006, about 27 countries, majority in SSA, made no progress in reducing childhood deaths. SSA has the highest child mortality rate in the world, double that of the next worse-off region. 'SSA accounts for about half of the deaths of children under five in the developing world' (United Nation Report 2008:21). Overall, infant mortality for the region has decreased somewhat, but not significantly, with a reduction from 1990 to 2006 of 98 per 1,000 live births to 87 per 1,000 live births.

Of the nine countries I studied, four had virtually unchanged infant mortality rates. These were Angola, with a rate of 154 per 1,000 live births; Burundi at 109 per 1,000 live births; Gabon at 60 per 1,000 live births; and Ghana at 76 per 1,000 live births. Compared to the region in 2006, Gabon and Ghana had infant mortality rates well below the average, while Burundi and Angola were quite a bit higher. Two of the countries studied showed an increase in infant mortality. Botswana had consistent increases over the period studied, 1990, 2000 and 2006. Their infant mortality rates per 1,000 live births were 45, 74 and 90 respectively. Even though they are only slightly above the region average of 87 per 1,000, the upward trend is a cause for concern. Swaziland as well experienced a consistent increase in infant mortality over the periods studied. Her infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 78 in 1990, 98 in 2000, and 112 in 2006, well above the regional average.

Only three countries experienced a decrease in the number of deaths per 1,000 live births. The country with the most significant decrease – from 191 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 148 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006 – is Niger. This improvement was consistent over the periods.

Although she had significant improvement in her infant mortality, she remains the second highest among the countries studied. Guinea had the next significant improvement in infant mortality, with a decrease from 139 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 98 per 1,000 in 2006. Nigeria has been showing consistent downward trend in infant mortality; with a rate of 120 per 1,000 live births in 1990, and 99 in 2006. Both rates still remain above the region average. For countries trending downward, keeping and improving the health systems that are delivering these results is key.

Figure 4: Infant Mortality
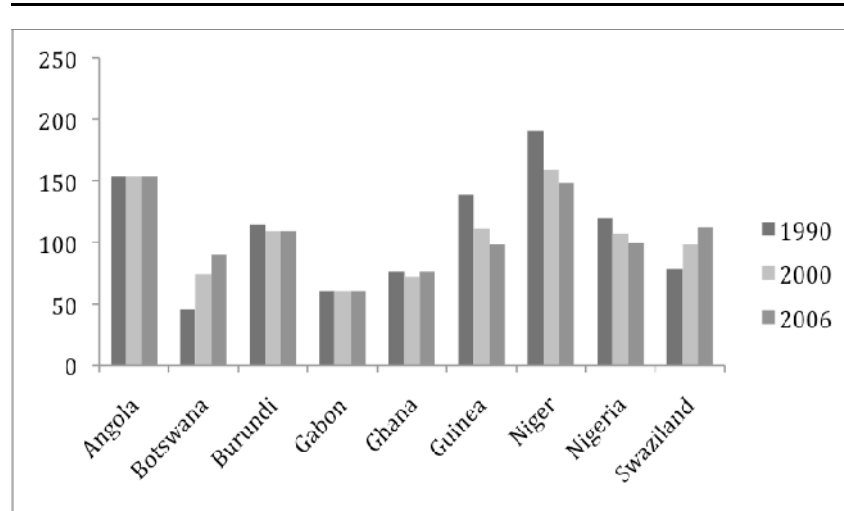
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

Under-5 mortality rates correlate directly to infant mortality rates. Angola, Burundi, Gabon and Ghana all had virtually unchanged under-5 mortality rates per 1,000 live births from 1990 to 2006. Angola remained at 160 deaths per 1,000 live births for all the periods studied, which is about on a par with the regional average of 157 in 2006. Burundi saw a decrease from 190 per 1,000 in 1990, to 181 in 2000, but remained unchanged six years later, at 181 in 2006. Gabon remained unchanged throughout the study period, and is well above the regional average. Ghana decreased in her under-5 mortality, from 120 per 1,000 live births to 113 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2000. However, it increased back to 120 in 2006, showing reverse trending. Ghana is still significantly lower than the regional average, but their recent increase may be a cause for alarm.

Botswana experienced a consistent worsening in under-5 mortality from 1990 to 2006, at a rate in of 58 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990, 101 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000, and 124 deaths per 1,000 live

births in 2006. This is a total increase in the study period of 66 deaths per 1,000 live births, yet this remains below the regional average of 157. Swaziland as well experienced worsening trends in under-5 mortality, with rates for 1990, 2000 and 2006 of 110, 142 and 164 deaths per 1,000 live births; that is, an increase of 54 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2006, above the regional average.

As with infant mortality, the three countries showing an improvement in under-5 mortality are Guinea, Niger and Nigeria. Between 1990 and 2006, Guinea reduced its under-5 mortality per 1,000 live births by 74, Niger by 67 and Nigeria by 39. Although these are significant decreases, all of these countries, at 161, 253 and 191 in 2006, remain above the regional average. Niger with a rate in 2006 of 253 per 1,000 live births, and Angola with a rate of 260 per 1,000 live births are considerably above the regional average.

Figure 5: Under-5 Mortality, Both Sexes
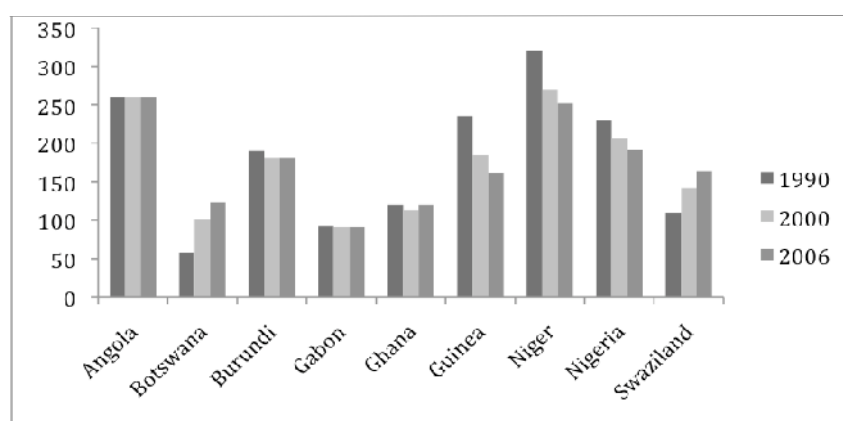
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

Maternal Mortality

In SSA, the risk of a woman dying due to a treatable or preventable complication of pregnancy and childbirth is 1 in 22, compared to 1 in 7,300 in developed regions (World Bank 2008:25). Maternal mortality in SSA per 100,000 live births has seen little change from 1990 to 2005. In 1990, the regional rate was 920 deaths per 100,000 live births, and in 2005 that number was 900, decreasing only by 20. Over a fifteen-year period, there has been negligible improvement in maternal mortality in this region. As well, the lack of good and adequate maternal care is causing a large number of infant deaths and disabilities.

Women die from a wide range of complications in pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. The four major killers are: severe bleeding, infections, eclampsia (which is a hypertensive disorder during pregnancy) and obstructed labor. Complications after unsafe abortions cause 13 per cent of maternal deaths. Indirect causes of maternal death include diseases that complicate pregnancy, such as malaria, anemia and HIV. Women also die from lack of adequate care during the entire pregnancy and birthing period.

Figure 6: Maternal Mortality Ratio for 2005
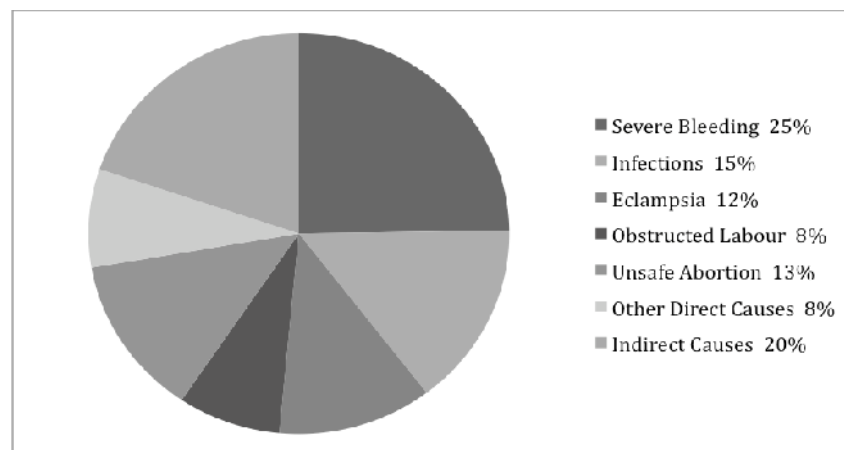
Source: The World Health Report 2005. Make every mother and child count, WHO 2005.

'Pregnancy-related complications are among the leading causes of death and disability among women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years)' (Oluwole 2004:22). The loss of women in the prime of their lives is not just a personal tragedy but also a societal one, as it erodes the social and economic gains that she had made in her life. These deaths ultimately tear apart the fabric that weaves family, community and the greater societal structure together. The need for improved maternal health has been expressed over the past twenty-five years with various commitments made along the way. Sadly, the numbers speak for themselves and the lack of improvement in this area is by far the most detrimental for women and the society as a whole. This is the foundation of women's health, and all other health issues ride on the success or failure of this area.

For the nine countries studied, the only available data year was 2005. The regional data used are from the MDG 2008 Report, it only reports data on the regional level for 1990 and 2005. It is important to take into account the fact that we are unable to access maternal mortality trending for these countries, therefore not knowing if these countries are progressing or worsening in this area. The whole number data for 2005 point to serious problems for many of the countries studied. It is however, important to keep in mind that, worldwide, there has been very little improvement in maternal mortality, with a less than 1 per cent decrease per year from 1990 to 2005. This is far below the 5.5 per cent decrease per year needed to meet the MDG target.

Figure 7: Maternal Mortality Ratio per 100,000 live birds for 2009
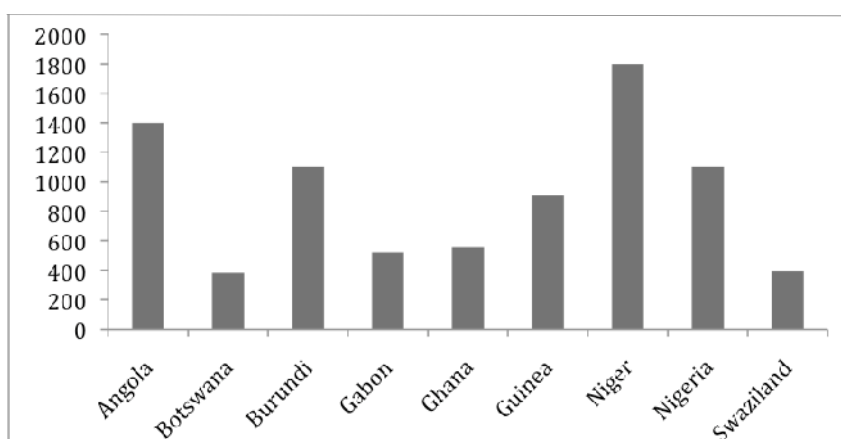
Source: World Health Organization and World Bank 2009.

Of the countries studied, four had maternal mortality rates lower than the region, four had maternal mortality rates higher than the region, and one was on a par with the region. The four countries with significantly higher maternal mortality than the region average of 900 per 100,000 live births are Niger at 1,800 per 100,000 live births; Angola with 1,400; and both Nigeria and Burundi with 1,100. The four countries with rates below the region average are Botswana with 380 per 100,000 live births; Swaziland with 390; Gabon with 520, and Ghana with 560. Guinea has a rate at par with the region, of 910 per 100,000 live births.

Ghana and Burundi have both started pilot programs to improve their maternal mortality. In 2003, Ghana started a program called 'Safe

Motherhood/Infant Life Education' (SMILE) support groups (Fleischer-Djoleto 2004:26). The pilot program started in the Wassa West district of Ghana where it is very rural with difficult terrain, and has a poor transport infrastructure and family incomes of less than US$0.5/day. These groups were formed to educate community members on maternal and newborn health issues, and they work in collaboration with the community health centers.

Delays in seeking appropriate care occur at the individual, family and community levels. SMILE has worked to educate on what the danger signs of pregnancy are, and when to seek help. It has also set up a referral system, provided appropriate transport and improved communication between communities, referral centres and ambulances. It has already seen improvement in process indicators such as an increase in the number of SMILE support groups, an increase in effective referrals from the community, and an increase in the number of patients reporting skilled attendants at delivery.

In 2004, Burundi started a referral and feedback system in the Karusi Province to improve maternal and newborn mortality. 'This system, a first experience in the country, enables health centers of the province to send a radio message to the maternity service of the Buhiga Hospital in the event of a complication of pregnancy and childbirth, requiring transfer of the patient for emergency operation. Pending the arrival of an ambulance that is itself equipped with radio, the staff of the health centres can through radio communication receive medical advise from Buhiga Hospital doctors' (Masimbu 2004:29). These programs are bold steps taken to improve the lives of women and infants. They will require continued commitment and involvement from all members of the society.

Births Attended by Skilled Personnel

Having skilled health personnel at delivery is the most effective way of preventing maternal death. This percentage has remained virtually unchanged in SSA over the past fifteen years. SSA has the lowest percentage of births attended by skilled personnel in the world, at only 44 per cent, while developed regions are at 100 per cent. Other regions in the developing world have made significant progress in this area over the past fifteen years. The fact that this has remained virtually unchanged in SSA is a cause for great concern when considering the danger this places on the lives of women and children.

Botswana, in 2000, had the highest coverage rate, with 99 per cent of births attended by skilled personnel. Gabon in the same year had a rate of

86 per cent. Swaziland, in 2002, reported an attendance of skilled personnel at birth rate of 74 per cent. Ghana had a rate of 50 per cent in 2006, up slightly from 44 per cent in 1998. Angola reported an attendance rate of 45 per cent in 2001, a substantial increase from 1996 when it was 23 per cent. Guinea had a rate of 38 per cent in 2005, up from 35 per cent in 1999. Niger has remained at an 18 per cent rate of births attended by skilled personnel from 1998 until 2006. Burundi in 2005 had a birth attendance rate of 34 per cent. Nigeria showed a decrease in births attended by skilled personnel from 1999 at 42 per cent, to 2003, when it was at 35 per cent.

Figure 8: Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel (%)
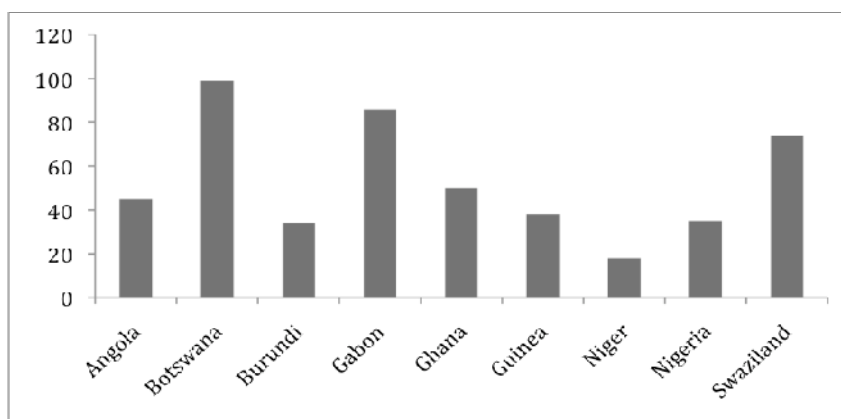
Source: Latest Available Data 2000-2006 (WHO).

With the exception of Botswana and Gabon, the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel for countries in this study was very low. A skilled health worker at delivery, in the form of a doctor, nurse or midwife, is critical in reducing maternal mortality. To see a drop in maternal deaths, every birth needs assistance from appropriately trained personnel, with proper equipment and referral options in case of complications. In this study, Botswana has shown the greatest strides with a rate approaching 100 per cent.

Contraceptive Prevalence

All of the countries studied had relatively low percentages of contraceptive prevalence. Swaziland, in 2002, posted the highest contraceptive prevalence rate of 46 per cent. In 2000, Botswana and Gabon reported contraceptive prevalence rates of 44.4 per cent and 32.7 per cent respectively. In 2003, Ghana reported a rate of 25.2 per cent, and Nigeria

of 12.6 per cent. In 2002, Burundi reported a contraception prevalence rate of 19.7 per cent. In 2006, Niger reported a contraception prevalence rate of 11.2 per cent. In 2005, Guinea reported a rate of 9.1 per cent, and in 2001 Angola reported a rate of 6.32 per cent. This means that the percentage of women in these countries that are not using contraception ranges from 54 per cent to 93 per cent. Not only can contraception help women control and space the number of children they have, if used in the form of a condom, it also protects them from HIV.

Figure 9: Contraceptive Prevalence Data, Years 2000 - 2006
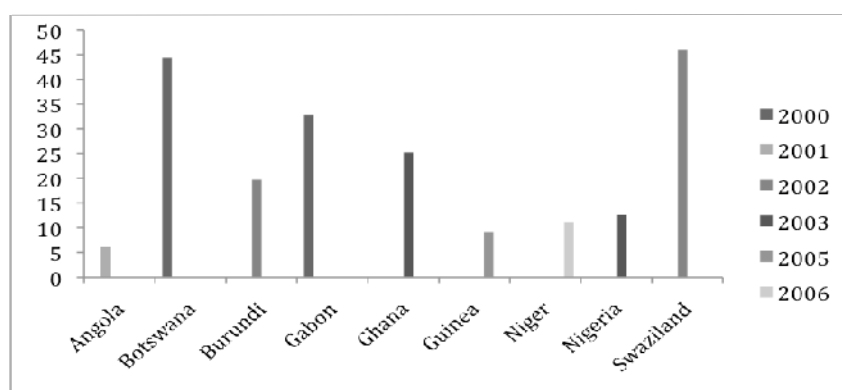
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

HIV/AIDS Antiretroviral (ARV) Therapy Coverage

Despite a few small victories, HIV/AIDS continues to take an enormous toll in SSA. Due to prevention programs, overall new infections of HIV declined from 3 million in 2001 to 2.7 million in 2007 (World Bank Report 2008:28) As well, due to the expansion of access to antiretroviral medicines, less people are dying from AIDS. Because of the increase in survival, the number of people now living with HIV was estimated at 33 million in 2007, compared to 29.5 million in 2001. The majority of these people are living in SSA. Women represent a growing share worldwide of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The percentage of women who are HIV positive and pregnant who receive antiretroviral therapy is a very important health indicator, as it reveals the need for the protection of the women's life while preventing

mother-to-child transmission of this disease. Pregnancy antiretroviral medicine programs, especially when used to prevent mother-to-child transmission of this disease, are an enormous societal benefit that strengthens women and families. The number of pregnant women between 15 and 49 years of age who are HIV positive when visiting antenatal care clinics reveals the challenges faced by many countries in SSA. In 2006, Botswana reported that 29.3 per cent of women visiting antenatal care clinics were HIV positive, Swaziland reported 19 per cent, Angola 2.4 per cent, Burundi 5.1 per cent, Nigeria 3.9 per cent, and Ghana 3.3 per cent (WHO, Regional Office for Africa 2008). Interception of HIV at pregnancy is key to prevent mother-to-child transmission and to ensure that women are treated to extend their lives. Due to missing data for one country, this very important health variable was excluded from this analysis.

Access to medicine to treat HIV is crucial for SSA to grow economically. The AIDS epidemic is estimated to knock 0.3-1.5 percentage points off Africa's GDP annual growth rate (Bell et al. 2003:2). HIV disproportionately affects women and ultimately can either allow for a child to be born with HIV or a mother to die of HIV, leaving children orphaned. Access to treatment for everyone, along with effective prevention programs, is the only way to begin to deal with this pandemic.

Botswana, with an HIV/AIDS prevalence of 26.3 per cent (the second highest of the countries studied), had the highest antiretroviral therapy coverage rate for people with advanced infection, at 76 per cent. All other countries had coverage rates that were much lower. Swaziland, with the highest prevalence of HIV of all countries studied at 34.4 per cent, had an ARV coverage rate of just 35 per cent. Gabon, with an HIV prevalence rate of 6.7 per cent, had an ARV coverage rate of 39 per cent. Guinea, with an HIV prevalence of only 1.5 per cent, had an ARV coverage rate of 26 per cent. Burundi, with an HIV prevalence rate of 3.1 per cent, provided for only 17 per cent of those in need of life-saving medicine. Angola, with an HIV rate of 3.1 per cent, provided ARV coverage for only 16 per cent of those in need. Nigeria is similar, with HIV prevalence of 3.5 per cent and an ARV coverage rate of 13 per cent. Ghana and Niger have prevalence rates of 2.2 per cent and less than 1 per cent respectively, with treatment rates at 12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively.

Figure 10: Antiretroviral Therapy Coverage in Advanced HIV Disease
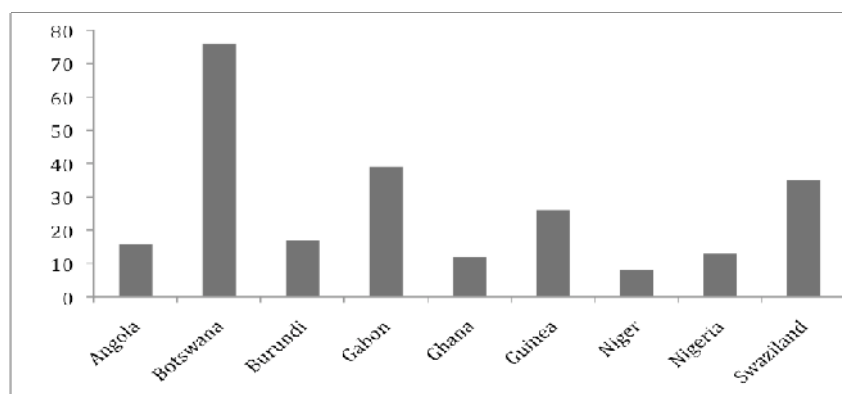
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

Tuberculosis, DOTS Coverage

When considering health status in SSA, it is essential to consider the prevalence and treatment of tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is a contagious disease. If not treated, each person with active TB will infect, on average, 10 to 15 people every year (World Health Organization 2009b). People with HIV infection are much more likely to develop TB than the HIV-negative population. The estimated incidence rate, meaning newly diagnosed cases, of TB in SSA is 350 cases per 100,000 of the population (WHO 2007). The detection rate in Africa is 46 per cent, making it the region furthest from the target of 70 per cent detection (World Bank 2008 Report). The highest number of deaths and highest mortality per capita associated with TB is in the African region. The TB epidemic grew rapidly in the 1990s, but this growth has been slowing down and incident rates are stabilizing or beginning to fall.

DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short-Course) programs involve diagnosis and registration of each tuberculosis patient, followed by standard multi-day treatment. DOTS programs are helping to curb the impact of this disease. Worldwide, the success rate in 2005 for DOTS was 84.7 per cent, just below the target of 85 per cent. However, if current trends continue in SSA, they will fall short of both targets, making it difficult to reach the global goal. DOTS has not yet impacted the worldwide transmission and incidence rates that are needed to reach the 'Stop TB Partnerships' goal of halving the 1990 prevalence and death rates by 2015.

Figure 11: Tuberculosis Treatment Success under DOTS (%)
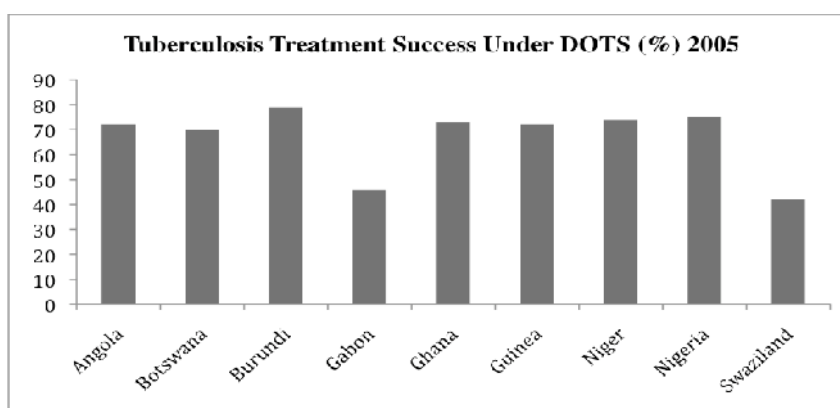
Source: World Health Organization 2009.

HIV and TB form a dangerous combination, each accelerating the other's progress. TB is the leading cause of death amongst people who are HIV positive. In Africa, HIV is the most important contributing factor to the increase in TB incidences. Treatment for TB is complicated due to the various drug resistant forms that are being diagnosed. Drug resistant TB can be treated, but it takes extensive treatment, lasting up to two years. Managing the combination of HIV/TB in SSA is a vast task, but a necessary one for getting these countries' health status on track.

Health Status Composite Score

A health composite score of 10 represents the best health and a score of 0, the worst health. The following variables are included in the health status score: government health expenditure as a percentage of GDP, female life expectancy, maternal mortality, fertility rate, infant mortality, under-5 mortality, births attended by skilled health personnel, contraceptive prevalence, ARV treatment in advanced HIV disease, and DOTS treatment success rate. The final health status score will allow ranking of these countries from the best health status to the worst health status, which in turn will allow for comparison with the final economic composite score.

Botswana had the highest score for health of all the countries studied, with a score of 9.20. Botswana had the highest scores on government expenditure on health (10.0), maternal mortality (10.0), infant mortality (10.0), births attended by skilled health providers (10.0), and treatment for advanced HIV disease (10.0). Gabon has the second highest health score at

8.06 and the highest scores on life expectancy (10.0), infant mortality (10.0), and under-5 mortality (10.0). Ghana came third, with a score of 7.25, and had high scores in government expenditure on health (8.61), life expectancy (9.66), and DOTS treatment success (9.24). In addition, Ghana's scores were relatively high for maternal mortality (8.73), infant mortality (8.29) and under-5 mortality (8.28).

Swaziland came fourth with a health status score of 7.13, and had high scores in government expenditure on health (8.19), maternal mortality (9.92), and contraceptive prevalence (10.0). Guinea came fifth with a health status score of 5.74, and had high scores in government expenditure on health (7.91), maternal mortality (9.92), and DOTS treatment success (9.11). Nigeria ranked in the sixth position with a score of 5.74, with good scores in life expectancy (8.16), and DOTS treatment success (9.49). Burundi took the seventh position with a score of 4.80, with a good score in life expectancy (8.33), and the highest score in DOTS treatment success (10.0). Angola placed eighth, with a score of 4.65, with the worst scores in infant mortality and under-5 mortality (0.0). Niger ranked last with a health status composite score of 2.84. The country scored lowest in maternal mortality (0.0), fertility (0.0), infant mortality (0.63), under-5 mortality (0.41), births attended by skilled health personnel (1.81), and HIV treatment of advanced disease (1.05).

Figure 12: Health Status Score
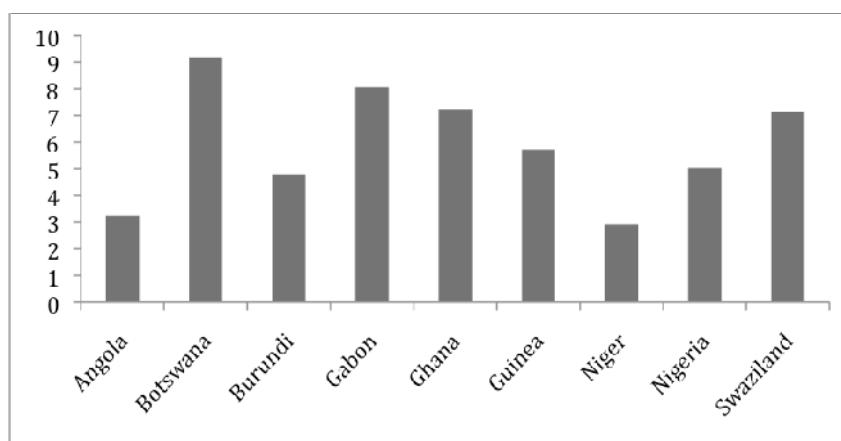
Source: Combination of World Health Organization Data 2009.

Economic Evaluation

Human Development Index

Each year since 1990, the Human Development Report has published the human development index (HDI). This measure looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of wellbeing. The HDI is a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life, being educated, and having a decent standard of living. These are measured by life expectancy, adult literacy and enrollment in school, and purchasing power parity. This index primarily provides a wider view of human progress and the relationship between income and wellbeing.

The human development index includes rankings of 179 countries. Angola, Gabon and Guinea only had a score available for 2005. Gabon is ranked 119/179 with a score of 0.677, the highest HDI score of all countries studied. Botswana is next with a rank of 124/179 with a score of 0.654, and Ghana ranked 135/179 with a score of 0.553. Swaziland ranked 141/179 with a score of 0.547. These four countries are considered to be in the group of countries labeled 'medium human development'. Nigeria is ranked at 158/179 with a score of 0.47 while Guinea is ranked 160/179 with a score of 0.456. Angola is ranked 162/179 with a score of 0.446. Burundi is ranked 167/179 with a score of 0.413. Close to the bottom of the list is Niger, ranked at 174/179 with a score of 0.374. These are ranked as 'low human development' countries. The health data, however, shows that certain countries, even those considered as low human development, have health programs and services that will positively impact the lives of women and children.

Table 1: Human Development Report 2007/2008

HDI Rank and Trends				
Medium Human Development		1990	1995	2005
119	Gabon	-	-	0.677
124	Botswana	0.674	0.631	0.654
135	Ghana	0.517	0.568	0.553
141	Swaziland	0.633	0.592	0.547
Low Human Development				
158	Nigeria	0.411	0.445	0.47
160	Guinea	-	-	0.456
162	Angola	-	-	0.446
167	Burundi	0.366	0.368	0.413
174	Niger	0.279	0.321	0.374

Source: United Nations Development Program.

Gross Domestic Product Per Capita

Gross Domestic Product per capita is obtained by taking the total country GDP and dividing it by the population. It shows what the GDP actually translates into an individual level. GDP as a whole can be misleading due to inequity in income distribution, utilization of a country's resources and who actually benefits financially from these resources. The same can be said of per capita GDP, but it is considered to be a more accurate reflection of the current economic status of the people within a country.

The highest GDP per capita in 2007 belonged to Gabon at $8,085.27, with Botswana close behind with $7,932.88. Angola came third with $3,756.18, and Swaziland fourth with $2,837.53. Nigeria came fifth with a GDP per capita of $1,160.79. Ghana, Guinea, Niger and Burundi all have per capita GDPs at levels below one thousand dollars. They are, in order of highest to lowest, Ghana at $690.01, Guinea at $417.48, Niger at $312.66, and Burundi at $124.93. Angola, Botswana, Gabon, Nigeria and Swaziland all showed significant upward trend in GDP per capita from 2000 to 2007.

Figure 13: Gross Domestic Product Per Capita, Current Prices in US$
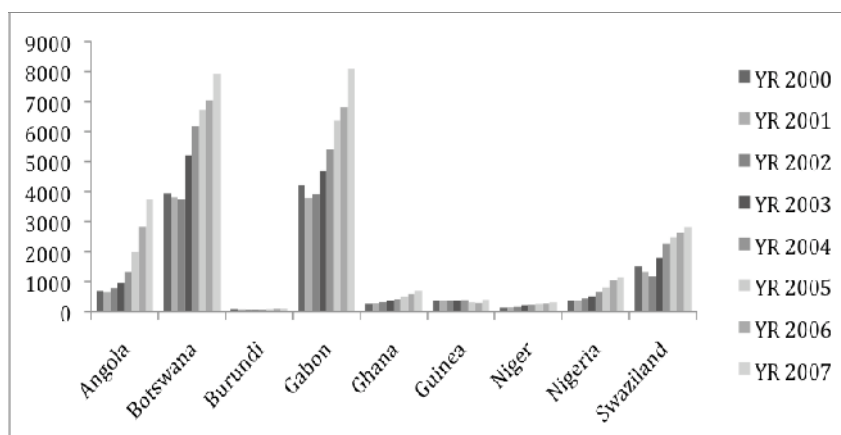
Source: World Bank 2009.

Gross National Income Per Capita

Gross National Income per capita is the dollar value of a country's final income, divided by its population. It is meant to reflect the average income of a country's citizens. GNI per capita is an indication of a country's economic strengths and needs, as well as the general standard of living

enjoyed by the average citizen. A country's GNI per capita is closely linked with other indicators that measure the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of a country and its people. In general, people living in countries with higher GNI per capita tend to have longer life expectancies, higher literacy rates, better access to safe water, and lower infant mortality rates.

The average GNI per capita worldwide in 2007 was $7,958, more than 8 times sub-Saharan Africa's average of $952. In the World Bank database of world development indicators, 209 countries are listed, from highest to lowest, in GNI. The rank of the countries in this study are: Gabon 80/209, Botswana 86/209, Swaziland 124/209, Angola 125/209, Nigeria 161/209, Ghana 175/209, Guinea 187/209, Niger 200/209, and Burundi 209/209 (World Bank 2008). The GNI per capita ranked similarly to the GDP per capita with one exception, Angola and Swaziland ranked third and fourth respectively in GDP per capita and fourth and third respectively in GNI per capita. All the other countries had the same ranking. The GNI per capita in 2007 for Gabon was $6,670, Botswana $5,840, Swaziland $2,580, Angola $2,560, Nigeria $930, Ghana $590, Guinea $400, Niger $280, and Burundi $110. Only four countries studied had GNI per capita greater than the SSA average. Figure 14 shows consistent increases in GNI for Gabon, Botswana, Angola, Swaziland, and somewhat less for Nigeria.

Figure 14: Gross National Income Per Capita, Atlas Method, in US$
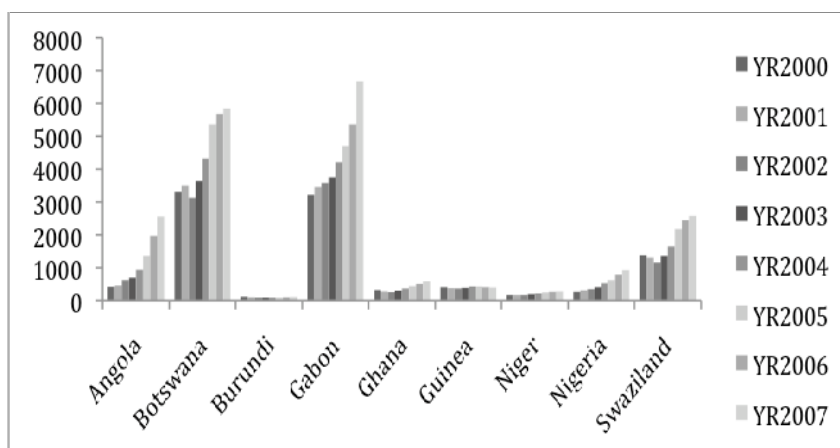
Source: World Bank 2009.

Gross Domestic Product Annual Growth

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a general figure often used to assess the productivity of a nation. However, the number can be misleading. Due to the accounting practices that are used and numerous other factors that can affect a country's GDP, it is a figure that must be taken into account with other economic indicators, and never alone as a sole indicator of a country's economic growth.

Angola had the highest annual GDP growth from 2000 to 2007, with an average growth of 11.75 per cent. Nigeria came second with 6 per cent. Botswana and Ghana both came third with an average annual GDP growth of 5.12 per cent. Niger and Swaziland came fourth with 3.62 per cent. Niger consistently ranked low for most health and economic variables. Guinea came fifth with an average annual GDP growth of 2.75 per cent while Burundi came sixth with 2.50 per cent. Burundi consistently ranked at the bottom for health and economy. Gabon came last with an average annual GDP growth of 1.62 per cent. This is opposite to Gabon's GNI per capita average annual growth of 16.9 per cent, which ranks it as number one for that variable.

Figure 15: Gross Domestic Product Annual Growth Percentage
2000-2007
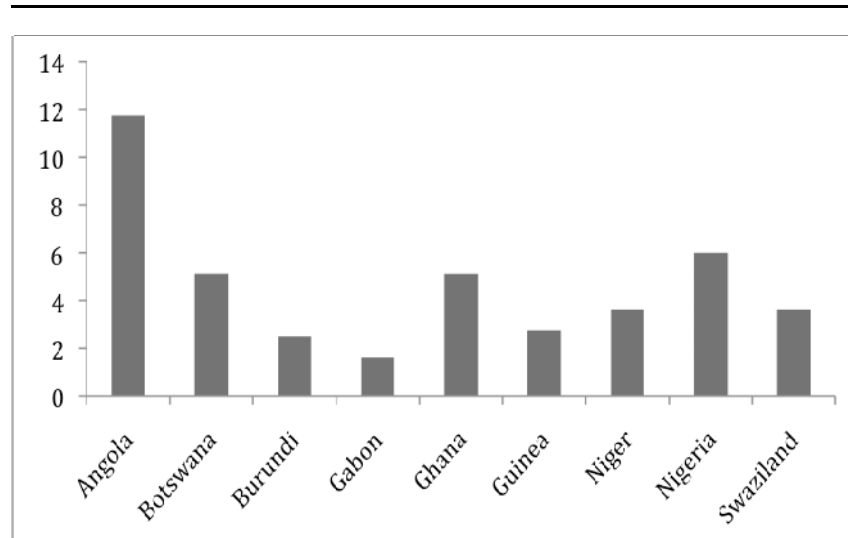
Source: World Bank 2009.

Gross National Income Per Capita Annual Growth

Gabon had the highest Gross National Income per capita average annual growth rate, at 16.9 per cent. This compares to a GDP growth rate of 2.129 per cent, where it was ranked eighth. The GNI growth rate is more consistent with Gabon's performance for all other indicators. Angola is second with a GNIpc average annual growth rate of 13.1 per cent, consistent with Angola's GDP numbers. Ghana ranked third with an average GNIpc annual growth rate of 7.2 per cent while Botswana came fourth with 4.8 per cent. Swaziland ranked fifth with an average GNIpc annual growth rate of 4.2 per cent. Nigeria ranked in the sixth place with an average GNIpc annual average growth of 3.5 per cent. Burundi, with 3.1 per cent, ranked seventh instead of last as in GDP growth. Niger had a zero growth rate, while Guinea had a negative GNI per capita annual average growth rate of -1.8 percent. There were interesting differences between GDP and GNIpc average annual growth for Gabon and Guinea. Gabon had a GNIpc growth of 16.9 per cent, ranking number one and a GDP growth of just 2.129 per cent, ranking it eighth, a large differential. Guinea ranked fifth in GDP at a reasonable growth of 3.611 per cent, while in GNIpc it ranked last with an average annual loss of -1.8 per cent.

Figure 16: Gross National Income Per Capita Annual Growth
2000-2007
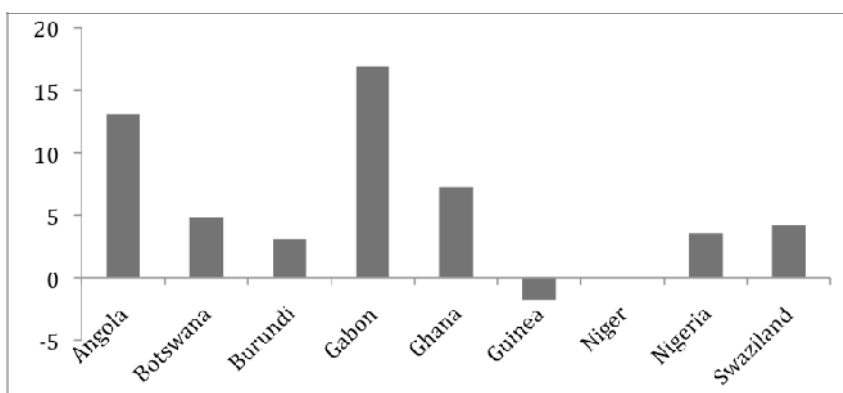
Source: World Bank 2009.

Gross National Income Per Capita Purchasing Power Parity

Gross National Income per capita, purchasing power parity, is a key indicator when examining a country's economic wellbeing. It measures the relative purchasing power of different countries' currencies over the

same types of goods and services, despite differential rates of inflation. This allows for a more accurate comparison in standard of living across countries (Nations Online, World Bank 2010). Gabon and Botswana rank first and second with a score of 10 and 9.3 respectively. Swaziland ranked third with a score of 3.8. Angola ranked fourth with a score of 2.58. Nigeria and Ghana came fifth and sixth with scores of 1.3 and 1.0 respectively. Guinea ranked seventh with a score of 0.9. Niger ranked eighth at 1.3, and Burundi last at 0.3. By far, the best standard of living is represented in the top two rankings, as they are far greater than the others.

Economic Composite Score

For the economic composite score, 10 indicates the best economic growth, and the score of 0, the worst. Botswana ranked first with an economic composite score of 7.32. Botswana was strong on all economic variables. Gabon came close in the second position with an economic composite score of 7.26. Gabon as well was strong in all economic variables. Angola came third with an economic composite score of 5.62, and was very strong in GDP growth, yet weak in HDI. Swaziland came in fourth with an economic composite score of 3.74. Swaziland had good numbers for GDP per capita and GNI per capita, as well as HDI. However, the GDP and GNI per capita growths were weak.

Figure 17: GNI Per Capita Purchasing Power Parity, in International Dollars
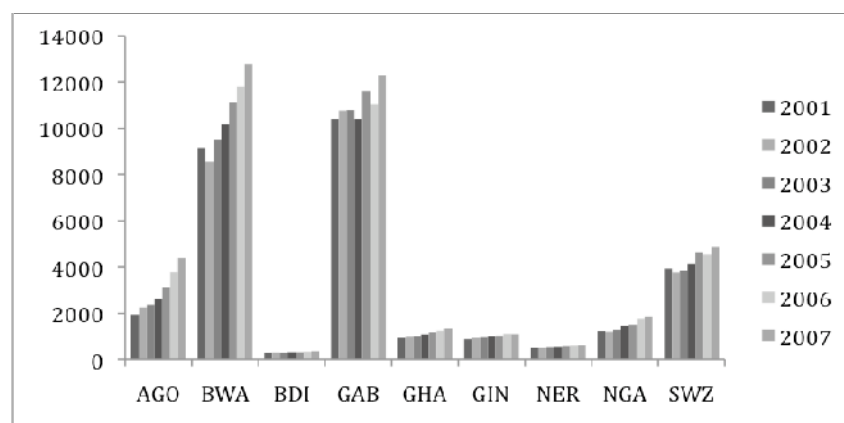
Source: World Bank 2010.

Figure 18: Economic Composite Score
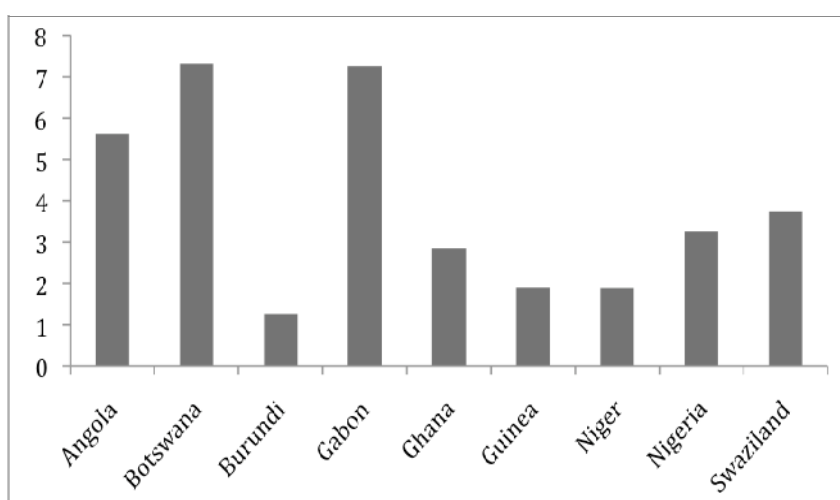
Source: Combination of World Bank, International Monetary Fund and
        Human Development Report Data 2009.

Nigeria came fifth with an economic composite score of 3.26. Her GDP
growth was fairly good but the GNIpc, GDP, and GNIpc growth were
quite low. Ghana came sixth with an economic composite score of 2.85.
Ghana had consistently good GDP growth and a good HDI, but was weak
in all other economic variables. Guinea ranked seventh with an eco-
nomic composite score of 1.90. Her negative GNIpc growth decreased the
composite score greatly. Niger came eighth with an economic composite
score of 1.89. She had very low scores for GNIpc and GDPpc. As well,
Niger had a zero GNIpc growth score. Burundi came last with an eco-
nomic composite score of 1.26. The country had very low scores for all
economic variables.

The Final Analysis

In the final analysis, I ranked each country's health composite score and
economic composite score, from the best health and economy to the worst.
This allows an evaluation of each country's ranking, and ultimately
reveals whether or not there is a correlation between women's health
status and a country's economic growth. Do healthy women positively
influence their country's economy? Can we make any assertions from
the data presented at all? Are there other more influential factors that
must be considered?

For this study's purpose, I considered a country's health status and economic status to correlate if they had equal ranking or were separated by no more than two rankings. For example, if a country has a health status composite score ranking of 1 and an economic composite score ranking of 3, I believe that they are close enough to confirm my hypothesis. In other words, any country with scores that rank more than two apart would not support my hypothesis. If a country did not support my hypothesis, I offer an explanation, should one exist, which would help us better understand the difference in the rankings. As Figure 18 shows, seven out of the nine countries studied showed a direct correlation between health status and economic growth, one is slightly off, and one is a significant outlier.

Table 2: Health and Economic Composite Score Ranking

Country	Health Composite Score	Economic Composite Score
Botswana	9.20	7.32
Gabon	8.06	7.26
Ghana	7.25	2.85
Swaziland	7.13	3.74
Guinea	5.74	1.90
Nigeria	5.03	3.26
Burundi	4.80	1.26
Angola	3.26	5.62
Niger	2.84	1.89

Botswana was consistent throughout all the data sets. It came in with the highest composite health score at 9.20 and the highest economic score of 7.32. Throughout all of my research, Botswana had high performance scores, whether health or economic. Botswana is a clear example of the correlation between women's health status and economic growth, and thus supports my hypothesis. Gabon ranked second for both scores with a health composite score of 8.06, and an economic composite score of 7.26. Gabon performed consistently high amongst all the variables with the exception of GDP average annual growth. Gabon had an average GNIpc annual growth rate of 16.9 per cent, and the highest scores for GNIpc PPP and HDI. Gabon supports my hypothesis.

Ghana came third for health with a composite score of 7.25, and sixth with an economic composite score of 2.85. Ghana scored consistently amongst most variables. Ghana's GNI per capita score of 0.88 and GDP per capita score of 0.85 drove down her overall economic score. The reason

why I believe Ghana still supports my hypothesis is because her economic score, although relatively low, still represents consistent economic performance over the time period studied, including a 6 per cent GDP growth over the past four years. As well, the health composite score correlates directly to her HDI score, which ranked her third at 8.16. HDI takes a broader look at a country's wellbeing, and there could be a lag in certain economic variables.

Swaziland ranked fourth for both the health composite score at 7.13, and the economic composite score at 3.74. Swaziland had strong health scores in life expectancy, maternal mortality, fertility, births attended by skilled personnel, and contraceptive use. Swaziland also had a strong HDI score of 8.07. The only health variable she was somewhat weak in, compared to the other countries studied, was infant mortality. Overall, the scores and ranking of Swaziland support my hypothesis. Guinea is ranked fifth in health with a composite score of 5.741, and seventh with an economic composite score of 1.90. Guinea was weak in some key individual health variables, which may be diminishing her economic growth. The country had low scores in fertility, skilled health personnel at births, contraceptive use, and ranked low to average on most other health scores. As well, she had a low HDI ranking, and very low GNI per capita average annual growth score of -1.06. The correlation between her health status and economic growth supports my hypothesis.

Nigeria ranked sixth for health with a score of 5.03 and fifth with an economic score of 3.26. Nigeria had low scores for six of the ten health variables measured. She was low in maternal mortality, fertility, under-5 mortality, births attended by skilled personnel, contraceptive use, and HIV antiretroviral coverage for people with advanced disease. This correlates to her low economic score. Her rankings support my hypothesis. Burundi ranked seventh with a health score of 4.80 and last with an economic score of 1.25. Burundi had relatively low individual health variable scores across the board except in ranking number one for DOTS treatment success. DOTS scores were high for seven of the nine countries studied. The potential significance for Burundi is that with the DOTS success, she shows that she has the ability to implement a health program and get results. The country would need to translate that success into other areas of need. All individual economic scores were extremely low. Burundi supports my hypothesis.

In this study, there was one major outlier, Angola. The country ranked eighth in health with a composite score of 3.26, and ranked third for economic growth with a composite score of 5.62. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, if there is a reasonable explanation for why Angola has poor

women's health, and high economic growth. Angola is unique in its circumstances and challenges. 'Despite a fast-growing economy due to a major oil boom, she ranks in the bottom 10 per cent of most socioeconomic indicators. Angola is still recovering from 27 years of nearly continuous warfare, and it remains beset by corruption and economic mismanagement' (US Dept of State 2009).

In 2008, crude oil accounted for 83 per cent of Angola's GDP, 95 per cent of exports, and 83 per cent of government revenue. However, the oil industry is offshore and has little, if any, connection with other sectors of the economy (US State Department 2009). This is despite the fact that the Angolan government has pressured oil companies to use local businesses and to increase the number of Angolan staff. Oil production revenues are not impacting the Angolan economy on a micro level, and in essence should not be considered in an aggregate of economic data. Clearly, much of the income generated by the oil industry does not reach the people of Angola. Therefore, their high GDP growth has no real impact on the individual lives of Angolans. It seems as if there are two separate economies, the real economy of the people, and the economy of the government.

One could argue that the Angolan government has found a way to grow economically, while not tending to the health needs of women, thus negating my hypothesis. I would argue that economic growth based purely on a non-renewable resource, such as oil, is not sustainable in the long term. The only really sustainable resource a government has is its people. In addition, what good is economic growth that does not help advance and strengthen all aspects of a country? Therefore, although it appears at first glance that Angola negates my hypothesis, I believe that further investigation into her GDP growth would negate that variable's impact. The HDI index could be considered the best overall indicator for Angola's economic wellbeing. If this is the case, Angola ranked seventh on HDI, very close to her eighth ranking for health, thus supporting my hypothesis.

Niger is ranked last with a composite health score of 2.84, and eighth with a composite economic score of 1.89. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world according to the United Nations Development Fund Index. It has experienced drought cycles, desertification, and strong population growth. In 2000, Niger qualified for debt relief under the International Monetary Fund program for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). 'Debt relief provided under the enhanced HIPC initiative significantly reduces Niger's annual debt service obligation, freeing funds for expenditures on basic health care, primary education, HIV/AIDS prevention, rural infrastructure, and other programs geared at poverty reduction' (CIA 2009).

Niger's scores across most health variables are very low with the exception of the DOTS treatment program. The country scored very low on most economic variables, with zero GNI per capita growth, and minimal GDP growth. She has many challenges but many opportunities as well. The country has natural resources that can be exploited for growth, and if she spends the debt relief money as stated above, she would have a healthy workforce to assist her in building the country and economy. A strong first step would be to improve her extremely high rates of maternal and infant mortality. Niger supports my hypothesis.

Concluding Thoughts

The narrative of women's health as it relates to economic growth will continue to unfold. As women grow in stature around the world and their contributions to society are better understood, developing countries will begin to appreciate this under-utilized resource for economic growth. Although I cannot unequivocally prove my hypothesis, I believe that the data clearly supports that there is a strong correlation between women's health status and a country's economic growth, showing that where women's health status is high, economic growth is high; and where women's health status is low, economic growth is low. This study should convince developing countries to invest in women's health, not only because it is the right thing to do but also because it is economically advantageous.

These data should be food for thought for those who seek to improve women's health, and for those whose primary interest lies in helping developing countries grow their economies. Women give birth, care for the young and old, and are the foundation of the family and community. In strengthening them, I believe we do strengthen the whole of society. We can no longer allow women to die in pregnancy and childbirth, or from treatable or preventable diseases. We must ensure women's health, not only for the sake of ethics but also for the sake of building economically strong countries where all the people can thrive.

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The Role of Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article examines the role of chiefs in fostering democracy, human rights and peace in Zimbabwe. It argues that in the pre-colonial era, chiefs had knowledge of grassroots democracy as they made consultations with their council machinery before taking any decision. It also argues that the pre-colonial chiefs were custodians of peace and human rights. Human life was viewed as sacred and annoyance of innocent people would evoke punishment from the ancestors. With the introduction of salaries and new administrative policies, the office of chieftaincy was compromised in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. Chiefs lost most of their powers and, therefore, lost control of their people. This article argues that chiefs can however use their position, influence and power to transform Zimbabwe into a democratic, lawful and peaceful nation. It invites the current chiefs to borrow a leaf from their counterparts in the pre-colonial era who were guided by democratic principles in their deliberations, who respected the laws of their chiefdoms and ensured that subjects under their jurisdiction were given fair treatment.

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Résumé

Cet article étudie le rôle des chefs dans la promotion de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme et de la paix au Zimbabwe. Il indique qu'à l'époque précoloniale, les chefs avaient connaissance de la démocratie populaire puisqu'ils consultaient leur conseil avant toute décision. Il estime également que les chefs précoloniaux étaient les gardiens de la paix et des droits de l'homme. La vie humaine était considérée comme sacrée et le mécontentement des personnes innocentes entrainait la punition des ancêtres. Avec l'avènement du système de salaires et des nouvelles politiques administratives, la fonction de chef a été compromise aussi bien dans la période coloniale que dans la période postcoloniale. Les chefs ont perdu la plupart de leurs pouvoirs et, par conséquent, le contrôle de leur peuple. Cet article, estime toutefois, que les chefs peuvent utiliser leur position, influence et pouvoir pour transformer le Zimbabwe en une nation démocratique, respectueuse du droit et pacifique. Il invite les chefs actuels à suivre l'exemple de leurs homologues de l'époque précoloniale qui étaient guidés par des principes démocratiques dans leurs délibérations, qui respectaient les lois de leurs chefferies et veillaient à ce que les sujets placés sous leur autorité soient soumis à un traitement équitable.

Introduction

This article examines the institution of chieftaincy in Zimbabwe and its role in fostering peace, democracy and human rights. It studies this institution from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era in order to determine the extent to which traditional leaders have been instrumental to promoting these values in their areas of jurisdiction. It also examines how the colonial and post-colonial governments have used the institution to achieve their own administrative goals. The final part of the article explains how the chiefs can use their positions and influence to restore justice, democracy and peace in the country.

Chieftaincy in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe

The institution of traditional chieftaincy represents the pre-colonial prevailing indigenous form of local governance throughout southern Africa. This institution originally provided societal, political, economic and religious functions for local communities (Dusing 2001). The term 'chief', *ishe* or *vashe* in Shona and *induna* in Ndebele, refers to an individual who, by virtue of ancestry, occupies a clearly defined leadership position in an area. Traditionally, chiefs were installed by the most senior headmen in the area in consultation with the spirit-mediums of the chiefdom. The medium acted as the voice of the ancestors in the whole process of the

installation. This procedure was meant to curb any possible dispute that might arise from the people. The involvement of the ancestors in the choice and appointment of the chief made him an important religious functionary. Traditional chiefs could stay in office until death as long as they obeyed the precepts of the ancestors. The Shona proverb, '*Hakuna zuva rinobuda rimwe risati radoka*' (There is no sun that rises before the other one has set), implies that the chief could not be deposed as long as he had the backing of the ancestors. However, chiefs who despised the ancestors and did not rule according to the democratic guidelines given by the ancestors through the spirit mediums risked losing their positions.

The chiefs were supposed to be the link between the ancestors and their subjects. As the link between the supernatural and the temporal existence of the present, they had extensive religious powers that generated fear, respect and obeisance from their subjects (Vaughan 2003). They were responsible for all religious ceremonies conducted in their areas. In times of drought, famine or any natural disaster, people looked up to their chief. In fact, natural disasters were sometimes blamed on the chief who might have disobeyed the ancestors (Bourdillon 1993; Dusing 2001). Traditional leaders were also responsible for protecting and distributing land among their subjects. Land in pre-colonial Shona was viewed as a sacred commodity, a burial ground and the abode of the living dead. Since they mainly depended on agriculture, the Shona also viewed land as a source of their livelihood. They believed that the land belonged to the ancestors and that the chiefs were its custodians (Gluckman 1977; Bourdillon 1998). Chiefs were also mandated to distribute the land among their people equitably. This implies that they were not supposed to horde the land that belonged to the community for their personal gain.

Traditionally, chiefs were expected to administer justice and democracy in their areas of jurisdiction. They were not tyrannical leaders who wielded the power of life and death over their subjects nor did they use excessive force to maintain law and order. The ancestral spirits through their human agents, the spirit mediums and the subjects always removed tyrannical rulers from power with the assistance of the neighbouring chiefs. This is the situation in which Chirisamhuru of the Rozvi Empire found himself when he ignored the advice of the ancestral spirits during his rule. His army, with the help of a neighbouring female chief, Nyamazana, rebelled against him. Traditional chiefs would not deliberate alone on the issues affecting their people, particularly those with important political, economic, religious and social dimensions.

Instead, they consulted their administrative machinery which was comprised of councillors, spirit mediums and headmen. As Ayittey, cited by Dusing (2001:77) notes, 'Without the approval of the elder council, a traditional leader was powerless as he neither could pass any legislation nor make political decisions.' The most important injunction was that the chief should never act without the advice and full concurrence of his councillors, the representatives of the people. The advisors were supposed to, *inter alia*, submit important information about opinions and developments in their community; warn early about potential oppositional forces within the chiefdom and to keep a check on the leader's own behaviour, and when he did wrong to warn him and, if necessary, reprimand him. Ignoring the advice of his council was a legitimate cause of his deportation. Therefore, traditional leaders were bound by law to rule with the consent of their people. Many chiefs indeed complied with this requirement. With reference to the Ndebele chieftaincy, Ranger (2001:xiv) says, 'I am yet to meet a Matebele chief who says he makes a decision without consulting the people'. Furthermore, village headman Bhilisa Dude, cited in *Lighting Our Way*, a community publication by the African Community Publishing and Development Trust (2008), commended the late Chief Masuku from Matabeleland, saying:

> The late chief Masuku used to effectively reprimand the wrongdoers. He surprised all by keeping aloof and yet he was close to the people he led. He had no friends but loved everybody. He always worked with respected kraal heads and headmen who formed his chieftaincy committee yet this was the very committee that always stood against his excesses and always ensured that he acted within the bounds of sanity.

The role of the chief in this process of community-based decision making was to 'reflect and discuss the opinions expressed in the village assembly and ultimately to suggest and publicly approve a decision of consensus, considering different opinions and interests of involved persons' (Dusing 2001:99). He was quite free to dismiss the council's ruling if it exhibited negative implications and could act as he thought best. However, this was only in theory, as acting against the advice given by the council could lead to his downfall. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that, in general, traditional chieftaincy represented a democratic society whose communal aspirations and values were collectively expressed. Chiefs had a sense of what can be termed as 'grassroots democracy'.

Traditional chiefs also performed religious functions on behalf of their people. The fertility of the land, people and even animals was attributed to the benevolence of the ancestors. As such, the Shona felt obliged to show their gratitude to them through offering and thanksgiving religious

ceremonies where beer was brewed and offered to the ancestors. The chief was responsible for such events. When the community was hit by drought or other natural disasters, the chief was expected to ask for clemency on behalf of the people. The chief would not carry out these duties alone. He would democratically consult with the community elders, his subordinates and spirit mediums. In addition to the religious functions, the chief also settled disputes among his people. He tried all kinds of crimes and disputes, including theft, murder and witchcraft which threatened the peace of his chiefdom (Vaughan 2003).

Chieftaincy in the Colonial Era

The democratic structure and function of the institution of the chieftaincy that existed in the pre-colonial period came to an end with the coming of colonial authorities in the country in 1890. The colonial masters introduced administrative structures and legislative laws that reduced the function of a chief to that of a government officer. The chief was no longer answerable to the ancestors in matters pertaining to the day-to-day happenings in his chiefdom but to colonial administrators. His judicial powers were clipped. He was only allowed to try petty cases like disputes among his subjects, while serious cases like murder, fights, thefts and witchcraft were all to be referred to the colonial authorities.

According to Palley (1966), the Rhodesian High Commissioner's proclamation in November 1898 introduced the Southern Rhodesia Native Regulations, which laid down the structures of a Native Department to administer Africans. The Secretary of the Native Affairs who was answerable to the Administrator (who later became the Governor) governed this Department. The country was then divided into Mashonaland and Matabeleland Provinces. Chiefs of the provinces were under a Chief Native Commissioner (CNC). Below him was a Native Commissioner (NC) stationed in each district. He was assisted in his administrative duties by African functionaries including chiefs, kraal heads and messengers. The Native Commissioner took upon himself all the administrative duties for the district, thereby robbing the traditional rulers of all the powers they wielded before the colonial era (Holleman 1969). As a result, the power of the chiefs to allocate land was usurped. In 1910, the Native Commissioner of Inyanga (Inyanga District Annual Report 1910) remarked that he did not advocate the placing of too many powers in the hands of the chiefs. For him, the power must be concentrated in the hands of the Native Commissioner who can be assisted by the chief. The Commissioner of Umtali, now Mutare (Umtali District Annual Report), also echoed the Commissioners' sentiments in

1949. He viewed the Commissioner as the mother and father of the native people in his district while the African policemen and messengers who assisted him were seen as the Commissioner's mouths and ears in the district. These functionaries reported directly to him. Notably, the policemen and the messengers were salaried, so they performed their duties with much zeal. They also disrespected the chiefs whom the colonial had disempowered.

The Native Commissioner also facilitated the installation of new chiefs. He screened the candidates for chieftainship and headmanship to ensure that the right candidates for the posts were appointed. Kruger (1992:64) correctly stated that 'from the time of European conquest, chieftainship and other positions depended not only on inheritance laws but also on the government approval'. It was therefore an offence for a chief or a headman to be installed without the approval of the Native Commissioner. In 1917, Chief Makoni of Rusape was reprimanded for appointing and installing a headman without the approval of the Commissioner (Superintendent of Commissioners 1917). Chief Chimuriwo also clashed with the Native Commissioner of Salisbury for appointing and installing Dzingirai as successor of headman Mandeya who had died.

The roles of the spirit mediums in electing and installing traditional leaders were also eroded. The NC introduced the ballot system in electing even new headmen or chiefs. Just after the death of Chief Chimuriwo of Mutasa, the NC for Umtali called for elections to replace him. Village heads had to line up behind their preferred candidates vetted by the NC. In this particular election, Mukukudzi polled thirty votes against Masawara's six, implying that the former became the successor. The same process was used after the death of Mukukudzi in 1958. Gomwe became the next chief after he garnered fifty votes against Masawara's six votes (Umtali to Manicaland, 1961). The colonial electoral process watered down the religious significance previously attached to the institution of chieftainship in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. The traditional leaders therefore became victims of the colonial injustice and dictatorial rule. They became powerless before their people.

Notably, female traditional authorities who used to have a lot of influence in the Shona Society began to sink into oblivion. The colonial authorities had no respect for female chiefs. Schmidt (1966:99) observes:

> African women were 'invisible' to the colonial authorities. Having accepted the idea that women were perpetual minors in society and presumably played no part in public life, administration officials assumed that they had no political function.

As such, the colonial authorities saw no reason why a female traditional chief had to be replaced by another female candidate. In 1934, headwoman Mupotedzi of Honde Valley died and was not replaced by the administrators. The same happened after the deaths of headwomen Shezukuru and Kanganya of Manica Reserve. The democracy and the rights that the female functionaries enjoyed became a thing of the past. It should therefore be noted that while their male counterparts were losing most of their executive powers to the colonial administrators, women leaders were being phased out altogether (Duri 2002).

According to Bratton (1978), the Southern Rhodesia Order-in-Council of 1898 officially robbed the chiefs of their power to allocate land to their subjects as expected of them prior to the coming of the colonisers. This document together with the Land Apportionment Act of the 1930s approved the forceful removal of Africans from fertile arable lands, paving the way for the establishment of white farmlands. Chiefs Chirumanzu, Mutekedza, Zimuto and Chinhoyi all lost their land as a result. The loss of fertile land forced their subjects to flock into towns to look for employment.

Chiefs were also made to collect taxes for the government from the impoverished communities. In 1913, the government introduced the hut tax, poll tax and dog tax. All had to be levied by the chief on his people on behalf of the colonial government. To make them work hard, chiefs were salaried according to the amount of tax they would have collected from their people. Chiefs were also supposed to provide cheap labour form their communities for the construction of railway lines from Umtali to Salisbury and for road construction as well. Failure to comply with the government instruction implied prosecution (Inyanga District Report 1912).

The colonial government therefore disempowered the traditional chiefs and used them as agents to bolster their control of African territories. They ceased to be champions of democracy as they used to be in pre-colonial times. It is however wrong to blame the colonial administrators totally for the acts of injustice committed by the chiefs against their people. The settler government did not force anyone to become a chief. The people could still not participate in the chieftainship of that time 'if they so wished. Accepting the office of chieftainship also meant that Africans were willing to serve the new government. They became willing participants in the colonial exploitative schemes. It could therefore be argued that the introduction of incentives in the form of money attracted many Africans to the extent of wanting to work for the colonial government at all cost.

Chieftaincy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

The ZANU PF government that replaced the colonial regime in 1980 discredited the institution of chieftainship. It further clipped the powers of chiefs, which were already adversely reduced by the colonial government. At independence, the government adopted socialist policies that excluded the roles of the traditional leaders (Bhebe and Ranger 2001). The roles of the chiefs, including that of allocating land, were transferred to District Councils, Ward Committees (WADCOs) and Village Development Committees (VIDCOs). Gwatida[1] (2009) of Chief Charumbira's area said that his father confirmed that, as a chief in the 1980s, he had to consult a district councillor in connection with the distribution of a piece of land. The councillors, village district committees and the village development committees believed themselves to possess exclusive authority over communal land. The sidelining of the chiefs was willed and systematically done by the government. Lazarus Nzarayebani, then MP for Mutare South cited by Ranger (2001:47), said:

> At Independence in 1980, we did revolutionarily so well. Ours was change; change in administration of our public affairs and public lives… Some institutions where necessary must simply be allowed to wither away. One of these institutions might be chieftainship.

The statement of the legislator clearly indicates how indifferent the government of Zimbabwe was toward the institution of chieftainship. It should, however, be noted that the freedom fighters enjoyed great support from this constituency during the liberation struggle. Many chiefs during the war got themselves into trouble for supporting them. In the 1970s, village head Amandios Njerema of Shezukuru Ward was imprisoned and tortured for providing food and shelter to the liberation fighters. Chief Makiwa Nyashanu was also deposed for refusing to have his subjects in restricted areas commonly known as 'keeps' that would make it virtually impossible for the guerrillas to access food from the people. However, not all chiefs supported the liberation struggle. Such leaders were abducted and even murdered by the liberation fighters. For example, headmen Kurewa of Mutasa and Chikomba of Chivhu were murdered on suspicion that they sympathised with the colonial government (Duri 2000). Therefore, it could be that the government of Zimbabwe ignored the chiefs because some of them collaborated with the colonial masters.

After eighteen years of independence, the ZANU PF government made a sudden shift regarding the way they related to the institution of chieftaincy. The then minister of Local Government, John Landa Nkomo, announced in 1999 plans to create new ward and village assemblies that

would be led by chiefs and headmen. Following this announcement, allowances for the chiefs were increased from Z$2,083 to Z$10,000 a month. The headmen allowances moved from Z$680 to Z$5,000 per month. These hefty increments were followed by President Mugabe's public apology for neglecting the chief since Independence (Ranger 2001). Thereafter, the powers of the chiefs were returned. Chiefs were to be given powers to spearhead development programmes in their areas, including distributing land to their subjects. They were also tasked with the role of promoting cultural values and norms in their communities. The question is: Why this sudden twist?

A top ZANU PF official reported that the promotion of chiefs at that time was necessitated by the birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its impact on the people. Realising that MDC had its strong hold in urban areas, the ruling party decided to stop it from making inroads in the rural areas. For this purpose, they could not afford to ignore the influence of the traditional leaders. Having noted the influence that the chiefs had in mobilising support for the guerrillas during the war, the ZANU PF government decided to co-opt them in their struggle against the opposition. They declared all places in the countryside no-go areas for the opposition. In a bid to win the favours of the chiefs, the ZANU PF government raised their social status by giving them incentives that surpassed those of the most senior civil servants. The chiefs were given brand new trucks and free fuel for personal use. Those who could not drive were chauffeur-driven. The salaries of the traditional leaders were also reviewed from time to time. The chiefs benefited from the beautiful houses constructed for them by the government. The government saw to it that the homes of the chiefs had electricity and that water pipes were put in place. The chiefs were also given the mandate to distribute government food handouts in times of drought. In addition, they benefited from the Land Reform Programme and the Farm Mechanisation Programme. Some of them now own vast tracks of land which they cannot even use effectively. Through the latter programme, they received tractors, seeds, ploughs, carts and fertilizers.

In return for these benefits, the chiefs were supposed to be loyal to the government. Most chiefs rendered their support to the ruling party unconditionally for fear of losing their privileges. In an interview, Chief Gama[2] of Buhera remarked, "They [ZANU PF chiefs] are eating and we [chiefs] are eating. So let them rule forever". These sentiments were also echoed by chief Chitsa[3] of Gutu who likened President Mugabe to God when he remarked, "*Uyu mwana waMwari chaiye*" (He is God Himself). All this is a

reflection of the mentality of most of the chiefs in Zimbabwe who owe their livelihood to ZANU PF. They remained mute when their subjects were suffering inhuman treatment by politicians loyal to the government during election times.

The ZANU PF government instructed them to expel from their chiefdoms members of the opposition party that were branded as 'British puppets'. Some chiefs in Buhera and Muzarabani, for fear of losing their benefits, actually complied with this instruction. In Muzarabani, a chief is reported to have barred the burial of an MDC activist in his area. He openly told the relatives of the deceased to go to Britain and bury their dead. The activist was finally buried in the same area after the relatives paid a bull and vowed that they would not have anything to do with the MDC again. Some chiefs also denied opposition members food handouts. To get the handouts, villagers were supposed to be holders of ZANU PF party cards. The ruling party ensured that no opposition member would benefit from the drought relief food. Some chiefs who, in most cases, supervised the distribution of this food announced that the drought relief was meant for those who support the government, and ZANU PF was the government. One of the researchers who hails from Muzerengwa village in Buhera, a stronghold for the MDC, witnessed the predicament that the villagers in this area went through. Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the MDC had to send truckloads of food to relieve his supporters. However, at times, this food would be confiscated by ZANU PF youth militia in the area. Some chiefs also campaigned for the ruling party in general elections. They allowed the operations of the armed youth militia and the establishment of military bases in their areas. They also sanctioned the beating up and even killing of opposition activists in their area. One MDC activist Itai Masarakuenda was hacked to death by ZANU PF supporters at the instruction of traditional leaders, Chorosi Bika and Chimbare of Buhera. Rabson Tichasima of Muzarabani was also murdered and chief Dambakurima did not take any action to stop his death (The Zimbabwean, 2008). The *Legal Monitor* of 29 June 2009 also reported that chiefs in Bikita and Nyanga Districts encouraged ZANU PF supporters to loot chickens, goats, beasts and other valuables belonging to MDC supporters during the run-up to the June 2008 elections. The animals were slaughtered at the military bases where opposition members were tortured, abused and forced to repent.

To ensure that the right candidates for chieftaincy posts were chosen, the government assumed the role of appointing and anointing chiefs. It tasked the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

with this duty. To qualify for the post of a chief, one had to satisfy two requirements, namely, allegiance to the party and a clean criminal record. People opposed to the rural party did not qualify for the post. Nevertheless, the definition of crime for the ZANU PF government sometimes excluded crimes perpetrated in favour of the ruling party. Thus murder, torture and harassment committed for the good of the party were not considered criminal. At times, the government installed well-known criminals and murderers as long as they ardently supported ZANU PF. Notably, during the liberation struggle, ZANU PF opposed the appointment of chiefs by the colonial regime, citing the abuse associated with the practice. They argued that the involvement of the government in appointing chiefs was a way of silencing chiefs on the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the settler regime. Ironically, the ZANU PF government adopted the same way of silencing chiefs on issues of democracy and justice it uses. Chiefs are used to oppress their own people, and so, most of them are hated by their subjects.

Nonetheless, although many chiefs supported ZANU PF, a few stood their ground and refused to partake in the repression of the people. Some defended their subjects by simply ruling that they would not tolerate political violence in their chiefdoms. To restore justice and democracy in the country, others supported the struggle initiated by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). By so doing, they risked losing their status as chiefs and even their lives. Chief Makuvise of Buhera was stripped of his traditional regalia, humiliated before his subjects and murdered in broad daylight for supporting the MDC. One of his sons reported that the chieftaincy has since been given to a member of the next family who supported the ruling party. Chief Mutambara is another chief who opposed ZANU PF and supported the opposition party. Before the harmonised elections in March 2008, a man claiming to be an uncle and spokesperson of Chief Mutambara told the MDC supporters at a rally that the chief had disowned Auther Mutambara, the president of an MDC faction for supporting ZANU PF. The spokesperson of the chief presented a huge sheep to Morgan Tsvangirai as a gift from the chief. However, some chiefs did not come out in the open due to fear of victimisation. They remained silent and watched in grief as their subjects were hacked and abused for political reasons. There is no doubt that the chiefs in Matabeleland encouraged their people to support the opposition parties. The results of the elections since 2000 clearly indicate that most places in this area are no-go areas for the ruling party. Most of these chiefs witnessed the massacre of their subjects during the Gukurahundi

era of the early 1980s. According to CCJP and LRP, more than 20,000 people perished during this period. As a result, they never supported ZANU PF and its leadership.

The Power and Influence of the Chiefs in the Fight for Justice and Democracy in Zimbabwe

Traditional leaders still remain influential political actors in contemporary Zimbabwe, especially in rural local government, despite their manipulation by politicians during the colonial and the post-colonial periods. Although some chiefs have lost much of their legitimacy as they formed part of the colonial and post-colonial government machinery, others did maintain the traditional system of accountability and consultation in their areas of jurisdiction. They still command respect and dignity from their people. Most of these are elderly people who, by virtue of their social and moral standing, deserve reverence and obedience from the people. In rural areas where people are still influenced by African traditional religions, the chief is viewed as the link between the spiritual world and the people. The people look up to him in times of difficulty, including drought and other natural disasters, just as in the pre-colonial period. For these reasons, chiefs are very influential in their communities. The question is: If the chiefs are so influential, can they not participate in restoring justice, democracy and peace in the country? We have noted that some chiefs successfully mobilised their supporters to vote for the government of ZANU PF. Can these chiefs not use their influence and power to champion human rights? This article challenges the chiefs in Zimbabwe to borrow a leaf from their counterparts in the pre-colonial period. As we have noted before, traditional chiefs respected the laws of their communities and did not take decisions that affected their people all alone. They made necessary consultations. The chiefs could be the voice of their people and should defend them against any form of injustice from the government in power. They have the means and the much needed power to influence the democratisation process in Zimbabwe.

It is encouraging to note that some started the process of restoration and healing way following the violent elections of 2008 before the inauguration of the Government of National Unity. It is reported that Chiefs Chimombe and Chiwara, both from Gutu in Masvingo Province and Nyashanu of Buhera District in Manicaland, ordered their people to return the property that they looted during the run-up to the June elections of 2008, without instructions from the politicians. Thus, they have taken a lead in the process of national healing which the Unity Government is failing to accomplish despite the commitment they made

(Global Political Agreement 2008). Other chiefs could be encouraged to follow this good example. In spite of the benefits that they are receiving from the government, chiefs should be non-partisan and administer their duties impartially. They could also emulate some of their counterparts who observed the laws of their communities. Traditional leaders were not above the law. As Chirenje (1982:21) rightly points out, 'The law of the community was obeyed by the common village resident as well as by the chief himself...'

The chiefs could get some guidelines for democracy, justice and peace–building from the traditional wisdom, especially the Shona proverbs. The proverbs proffer discourses on leadership, sovereignty, freedom of expression and accountability, which all amount to good governance. This article draws examples from the Shona proverbs which could guide chiefs in the execution of their duties. The proverbs *ishe itsime* (a chief is like a well) and *ishe ihumbarota* (a chief is like a rubbish pit) point to the idea of justice which characterizes the institution of chieftainship. Traditionally, anyone was free to draw water from a well whenever he or she was thirsty. Also, one could freely throw waste in a rubbish pit even if that did not belong to him. So also, the chief was expected to attend to all cases brought before him fairly and without partiality. The need to be non-partisan is reinforced by Article xiv of the Global Political Agreement which both the ZANU PF and the MDC formations agreed to: (a) commit themselves to ensuring the political neutrality of traditional leaders and (b) call upon traditional leaders not to engage in partisan political activities at national level as well as in their communities (Global Political Agreement 2008:9). The proverb *mhosva haitongwi nepfumo* (A case is not settled by a spear) reminds the traditional leaders that they should not use violence in dealing with cases. Chiefs should inspire confidence in their subjects. This is only possible if the chiefs are just. There are proverbs that remind traditional leaders to respect the people under their jurisdiction, such as *ushe varanda* (chieftaincy depends on the subjects) and *ushe vanhu* (a king depends on the people). These wise sayings stress the view that chiefs owe their status to the will of the people. His mandate to rule rests in and is dependent on his subjects. The people therefore are the ultimate source of the king's authority. Ramose (1999:144) accurately notes that 'to be a king is to accede to that position because of the consent of the people and to remain so for as long as the people have not withdrawn their consent.' Lastly, traditional leaders can be exemplary to the politicians by accepting that they must step down when their term of office expires. The proverb *ushe madzoro hunoravamwa* (chieftainship

is like a cattle-herding roster, you take it in turns) helps them to distance themselves from the despotic political leaders who want to cling to power, regardless of the will of their people.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the roles of chiefs in the pre-colonial period, colonial period and post-colonial period. We have demonstrated how the colonial regime abused the office of chieftaincy to achieve its political goals. After independence, the ZANU PF government, instead of uplifting the social status of the chiefs, ignored them and introduced its socialist ideals that excluded the chiefs. It was only after the rise of the MDC party that the ruling party decided to co-opt the traditional leaders. Had it not been for the rise of the strong opposition party, the chiefs would have sunk into oblivion. The chiefs were instrumental in helping the ZANU PF party to remain in power. Nevertheless, some chiefs resisted being used by the party. It was argued that the chiefs as traditional leaders could take an active role in restoring democracy and justice in Zimbabwe. This is possible because of the power and influence they wield in their communities.

Notes

1. Interview with Gwatida Solomon, Bondolfi, 12 March 2009.
2. Interview with Chief J. Gama, Buhera, 25 August 2008.
3. Interview with Chief M. Chitsa, Gutu, 5 August 2008.

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Cultural Change, the Hybrid Administrative System and Public Sector Reforms in Africa: The Case of Anti-corruption Measures in Malawi

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Abstract

A decade ago, this author noted that the hybrid administrative system had created a huge dilemma for management training in Africa, in that there was a discrepancy between what was taught and what was happening because of wholesale importation of western theories into an alien culture. This article is an extension of this perception, to explain the dismal outcomes of public sector reforms in Africa. The absence of an indigenous entrepreneurial class, and human and material resources have 'forced' the state at independence to become a major actor in socio-economic development. However, new brands of reforms that call for new public management techniques have questioned the size and role of the state in Africa. Consequently, public sector reforms aimed at modernizing public sector bureaucracy to improve the quality of life of the citizens have become fashionable. Despite tremendous efforts and resources, many countries have not come close to their goals of developing and transforming their societies to the same standard as developed countries. How do we explain the failure of public sector management reforms in achieving their intended objectives in most of Africa? Focusing on Malawi's reform efforts to crackdown on corruption, this article explores the view that it is the hybrid administrative system that is an additional explanation for the challenges confronting some reforms. While we have been successful in importing management structures, rules and procedures through reforms, we are yet to succeed in transforming the cultural aspects which make these reforms work. The article recommends a shift in individual and organizational values,

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attitudes, beliefs and practices at the bureaucratic and political levels. The central argument of the article is that positive outcomes in public sector reforms in Africa will be achieved through public sector culture transformation.

Résumé

Il y'a une décennie, cet auteur a noté que le système administratif hybride avait créé un énorme dilemme pour la formation en gestion en Afrique en ce sens qu'il y avait un écart entre ce qui était enseigné et ce qui se passait du fait de l'importation à outrance de théories occidentales dans une culture étrangère. Cet article élargit cette perception pour expliquer les conséquences désastreuses de réformes du secteur public en Afrique. L'absence d'une classe d'entrepreneurs locaux, et de ressources humaines et matérielles a " forcé " l'Etat depuis les indépendances à devenir un acteur majeur dans le développement socio-économique. Cependant, de nouveaux types de réformes qui font appel à de nouvelles techniques de gestion publique ont remis en question la taille et le rôle de l'Etat en Afrique. Par conséquent, les réformes du secteur public visant à moderniser la bureaucratie du secteur public pour améliorer la qualité de vie des citoyens sont à la mode. Malgré des efforts et des ressources considérables, de nombreux pays sont loin d'atteindre leurs objectifs de développement et de transformation de leurs sociétés afin de les hisser au même niveau que les pays développés. Comment pouvons-nous expliquer le fait que les réformes de gestion du secteur public n'ont pas atteint les objectifs qui leur sont assignés dans la plupart des pays africains? En mettant l'accent sur les efforts de réforme du Malawi pour lutter contre la corruption, cet article passe en revue le point de vue selon lequel c'est le système administratif hybride qui est l'autre explication des difficultés que rencontrent certaines réformes. Même si nous avons pu importer avec succès des structures de gestion, des règles et des procédures à travers des réformes, nous n'avons pas encore réussi à transformer les aspects culturels qui font fonctionner ces réformes. Cet article recommande un changement des valeurs, attitudes, croyances et pratiques individuelles et organisationnelles aux niveaux politique et bureaucratique. L'argument central de cet article est que la réussite des réformes du secteur public en Afrique passe nécessairement par la transformation de la culture du secteur public.

Introduction

Public sector reforms in most of Africa have not achieved their goals of developing and transforming their societies (Ayeni 2002). This article tries to shed light on the role of the hybrid administrative system in explaining the dismal outcomes of some of the public sector reforms in Africa. By failing to transform the values and beliefs that make such reforms successful, a great discrepancy emerges between promise and performance. The first part lays down the historical and conceptual basis for public sector reforms in Africa. The second part examines the case study of Malawi to illustrate the dismal failure of reforms aimed at cracking down on corruption. This is not to suggest that all reforms are failing, but rather to demonstrate how failure to transform culture is a huge blow to value-laden reforms. The third part clarifies the hybrid administrative system and its effect on reform measures. The last part provides a way forward.

Conceptual and Historical Context for Public Sector Reforms in Africa

The public services (ministries, parastatals and extra ministerial departments) have always been the tool available to African governments for the implementation of developmental goals and a pivot for the growth of African economies. Public sector reforms need to be understood as a modernization of what was formerly called administrative reform. The latter is defined by the UN(1983) as 'specially designed efforts to induce fundamental changes in public administration systems through system-wide reforms or at least through measures for the improvement of one or more of its key elements such as administrative structures, personnel and processes'. The content of the reform can be ideological, socio-psychological, technical and institutional (Hanekom et al. 2001). According to Turner and Hulme (1997), administrative reform strategies include restructuring, participation, human resource issues, accountability and the public-private mix. Public sector reforms have been undertaken in different countries worldwide for improving service delivery, enhancing productivity, accommodating political demands, meeting the requirements of economic development, bringing the government closer to the people's needs and aspirations, and strengthening overall good governance.

Beginning in the 1980s, both developed and developing countries embarked on public sector management reforms to rationalise the role and institutional character of the state. The public sector has been under pressure to adopt private sector orientations in order to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency – value for money, better quality services,

increased productivity and faster delivery (Turner and Hulme 1997). The earlier reforms aimed at shaping a public administration that could lead to national development as opposed to colonial public bureaucracy which was based on law and order. The World Bank and other donors in Africa have been concerned with finding alternative ways of organizing and managing the public services and redefining the role of the state to give more prominence to markets and competitions and to the private and voluntary sectors.

Public administration in contemporary Africa operates in a turbulent economic and political environment and has to continue to strengthen its capacity in various directions. Formulation and implementation of public policies and development plans require enhanced capacity (Sharma and Mahlauli 1993). Increasing pressures for democratization, decentralization and public participation in governance creates new demands. The growing private sector and privatized public service delivery need effective monitoring mechanisms on the part of public administration machinery. As the standards of ethics and integrity continue to decline and corruption continues to increase, these have to be arrested by undertaking measures on different fronts (Frimpong and Jacques 1999; Hope and Chukulo 2000, Sharma 2006). For strengthening the mechanisms of public accountability and raising the standards of integrity, the oversight institutions such as parliament, the opposition political parties, judiciary, Auditor General, Ombudsman, anti-corruption agencies, communication media and organs of civil society need to be stronger (Sharma 1998, 2006).

According to Hughes (2003), in good governance prescriptions, one finds public management reforms as a key component pointing towards market and private sector approaches to public sector management popularly called New Public Management (NPM).

New Public Management is a label used to describe a management culture that emphasizes the centrality of the citizen or customer, as well as accountability for results. It captures most of the structural, organizational and managerial changes taking place in the public services of most OECD countries, and a bundle of management approaches and techniques borrowed from the private sector. NPM shifts the emphasis from the traditional public administration to public management, pushing the state towards 'managerialism': the traditional model of organization and delivery of public services, based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning and centralization, direct control and

self-sufficiency apparently being replaced by a market-based public service management or enterprise culture. According to Hood (1991), the major NPM doctrines of what must be done are that:

- Direct public sector costs should be cut and labour discipline raised so as to improve resource use;
- Private sector-style management practices be applied to increase flexibility in decision making;
- Competition in the public sector (through term contracts and tendering) be increased, as rivalry is the key to lower costs and better standards;
- The public sector be disaggregated and decentralized to make units more manageable and to increase competition among them;
- Controls be shifted from inputs to outputs, the stress on results rather than procedure;
- Explicit standards and performance measures be established, because accountability requires clearly stated aims while efficiency requires attention to goals;
- Managers be given powers to conduct hands-on professional management, because accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility, not diffusion of power.

New public administration initiatives are founded on the realization that the public service is under pressure as it is faced with new tasks, yet staffed by people geared to achieve old tasks. Again, public services face ever-growing pressures from tax payers, politicians and donors demanding cuts in government budgets. Citizens have become more active and vocal consumers and are able to insist on lower costs accompanied by higher quality (ECA 2004).

Improved efficiency is now the overriding aim of public sector reforms in most African countries. Reductions and refocusing of the state's activities are needed to improve macroeconomic stability, as well as the implementation of stronger incentives for performance. Furthermore, increased competition in service provision, both with the private sector and in the public sector itself, is required in order to raise efficiency (ECA 2004).

As a result, governments are required to concentrate their efforts less on direct intervention and more on enabling others to be productive (World Bank 1989:5) by providing core functions such as safeguarding law and order, protecting property rights, managing the macro economy to promote basic social services and infrastructure and protecting the vulnerable and destitute.

Despite the move to reduce the role of the public sector, there is broad agreement about the need to increase the capacity of the state through 're-engineering' (Hope 2002) or invigorating (Klitgaard 1997) public institutions. A variety of NPM-inspired measures are used, like the refocusing of public-sector functions through staff reductions and changes in budgetary allocations; restructuring of public organizations through the recognizing of ministries; decentralizing; de-linking or hiving off central government functions to local governments or the private sector; emphasis on private-sector styles of management practice; marketization and introduction of competition in service provision; performance measurement; greater transparency; pay reform; and emphasis on outputs (Therkilden 2001).

Improved accountability in the conduct of public affairs is another reform objective. Accountability involves both the political justification of decisions, actions and managerial answerability for implementation of tasks according to the agreed performance criteria (Day and Klein, 1987). Political accountability is about those with authority being answerable for their actions to the citizens, whether directly or indirectly and managerial accountability is about those with delegated authority being answerable to carrying out agreed tasks according to agreed performance criteria.

Evidence shows that even in consolidated democratic states in Africa, there are major deficits in accountability (Olowu 1999). The various reforms of the 1990s addressed some of the accountability to: strengthen the rule of law and the judiciary, promote democratization and the role of the media, depoliticize the public sectors in countries that used to have one-party rule, strengthen anti-corruption measures and increase internal and external auditing capacity.

In 1995, the Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsed the Commonwealth Initiative for Public Service Reform to provide a focus of collaboration between member governments as they face the challenges to improve public service performance. It was an attempt to demonstrate their commitment to good governance as enunciated in the 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration.

Diversity of Reforms

Ayeni (2002) documents public sector reform initiatives in 40 Commonwealth countries, 17 of whom are in Africa. Key reforms include decentralization, commercialization, privatization, bench-marking, organization and methods, fighting against corruption, good governance, accountability, public financial management reform programme, public sector income policy and administration, functional reviews, job

evaluation and salary review, training, information technology, one-stopshops, code of ethics for public officers, strengthening management capacity, service delivery improvement, ICT, computerization of human resources information, performance management systems, and restructuring ministries and provinces.

In Botswana, for instance, the government has undertaken various public service reforms to enhance productivity. As outlined by the National Development Plan No. 9, the public service reform programmes include: the Performance Management System (PMS); Work Improvement Teams (WITS); the Computerized Personnel Management System (CPMS); Organization and Methods (O&M); Privatization; Performance-Based Reward System (PBRS); Parallel Progression; Scarce Skills; Job Evaluation; Localization; Decentralization (Republic of Botswana 2003) and, currently, the Balanced Score Card have been implemented.

Malawi and Public Sector Reforms

The Malawian society has undergone a lot of political, social and economic transitions from the pre-colonial to the current multiparty democracy (Dzimbiri et al. 2000). Independent from Britain in 1964, Malawi was a one-party state under Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda from 1966 to 1994 when she became a multiparty democracy under Bakili Muluzi (Phiri and Ross 1998). Like most countries in Africa, Malawi has not been an exception in political and administrative reforms right from independence. Not only did Malawi move away from the multiparty and Westminster-style of parliamentary democracy to the one-party presidential system two years after independence, but also that profound changes in economic, administrative and political spheres took place since then. The country had to transform economically to raise the living standards of its people through agricultural reforms, public sector performance and private enterprise encouragement. However, lack of an indigenous entrepreneurial class, finance and human resources forced the state to be in the forefront of spearheading socio-economic development (Dzimbiri 2004). Consequently, the expansion of the public sector was noticed within a few years and, like in other countries, was seen as a burden to development. The oil crisis of the 1970s threw most of the gains the country made out of balance and, consequently, Malawi became a candidate for the World Bank-supported structural adjustment programmes (GoM 1987).

The most significant reforms are those of the 1990s, when internal and external pressures led to the transformation of Malawi from a dictatorial one-party state to a democratic multiparty state during the period 1992-94. This meant a total rewriting of the national constitution,

repeal of harsh laws and the re-enactment of new laws to guarantee human rights, good governance and other basic rights. New institutions like the Office of the Ombudsman, Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation, Law Commissioner and, more importantly for this article, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, were created. Reforms undertaken in the public sector include privatization of public enterprises, contracting out, out-sourcing, job evaluation, rationalization of ministries, democratic consolidation, and budgeting systems, police reforms, judicial reforms and labour policy reforms.

The rhetoric of fighting against all forms of corruption has characterized the entire period of the multiparty democracy in Malawi. I wish to dwell on the fight against corruption as an example of public sector reform measures the country has embarked in order to try to explain why failure to transform the cultural aspect of the reform effort has the potential to prevent the realization of the benefits of certain public sector reforms which require a shift in the existing values, attitudes and beliefs for them to succeed.

The Fight Against Corruption in Malawi: A Case of Unsuccessful Reform Initiative

Corruption can be defined as the part of a public official's behaviour that deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of pecuniary or status gains (McCormack 1997 in ECA 2004). According to Hope (2002, in ECA 2004), the two major contributions to bureaucratic corruption in Africa are the erosion and the compression of the salary scales of public servants. Transparency International (1997, in ECA 2004) has documented a number of corrupt practices to testify to this dimension. In many African countries, a variety of measures have been taken to curb ethical violations. Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe have experimented with the institution of the ombudsmen, anti-corruption bills and a variety of institutional mechanisms to enforce ethical behaviour (ECA 2004). The need to improve transparency and accountability and, more importantly, to curb corruption led to the creation of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in Malawi in 1995. The ACB is a government organ mandated to prevent and control corrupt practices through public education, investigation and prosecutions. The ACB's role includes:

- Examining the practices and procedures of public and private bodies in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices and secure the revision of methods of work or procedures conducive to corrupt practices;

- Advising public and private bodies on ways and means of preventing corrupt practices, and on changes in methods of work or procedures of such public and private bodies compatible with the effective performance of their duties;
- Disseminating information on the evils and dangerous effects of corrupt practices on society;
- Enlisting and fostering public support against corrupt practices;
- Receiving and investigating complaints of alleged or purported corrupt practices and prosecuting the offender;
- Investigating any conduct of any public officer which, in the opinion of the Bureau, may be connected with or conducive to corrupt practices, and to report this to the Minister responsible.

At the official launching of the ACB in 1996, former President Muluzi said:

> The establishment of the Anti-Corruption Bureau serves as proof that the Government considers corruption to be an evil which must be fought. Let it be known, therefore, that the fight against corruption is now a top Government priority. I also wish to make it clear that although the Anti-Corruption Bureau is linked to the Government, it will fight corruption from top to bottom without fear or favour. I repeat, without fear or favour. The Government is determined to respect the independence of the Bureau and will not interfere in its work (Chunga 2005).

In 2004, the second multiparty president, Binguwa Mutharika, went into government with a promise to cut down government expenditure, reduce government debt and fight corruption and other vices that had been perpetuating poverty in the country. In his inaugural speech in May 2004, Mutharika declared a zero-tolerance policy on corruption and promised to take action against anybody found to be corrupt, regardless of his/her status in society (*Nation* May 25 2004). Speaking when he presided over activities marking the 2005 National Anti-Corruption Day, Mutharika reiterated: "I will not relent until the roots of corruption have been pulled out from our nation. I will not relent until those who plundered our economy with impunity have been brought to book" (*Nation* 8 February 2005). President Mutharika has repeatedly promised to put his weight behind ACB, saying he would not protect any corrupt person.

Outcomes of the Anti-Corruption Reforms

The extent to which such reform initiative is yielding fruits can only be inferred from several corruption experiences and allegations over the past years. According to the ACB Annual Report 2000/2001, there were several cases involving top political elites and senior government officials

and large sums of money (ACB 2001). The first is the Apex Case which involved a former Minister of Justice and Attorney General and a former Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security. The two were implicated in the US$7,615,803 case for the purchase of Land Rovers for the Malawi Police Service from Apex Motors. The ACB sought prosecution of the former ministers for abuse of office and the owners of Apex Motors for cheating and obtaining money under false pretences. The vehicles, which were sold to the Government, were supposed to have been brand new, but were second hand and reconditioned (*Nation* 10 January 2005).

The second case is the K187 million Ministry of Education scam which implicated the then Minister of Finance and Education (*Weekend Nation* 8-9 January 2004). He was accused of authorizing payments to contractors, mainly ruling party supporters, who had been dubiously awarded contracts. He was discharged in 2001 after the Director of Public Prosecution had refused consent to allow the ACB to continue with the case whose proceedings had already started. The Minister was also implicated in the awarding of the pre-shipment inspection contract to a British firm, Intertek Testing Services (ITS), instead of the Swiss firm, Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS), which was recommended by a seven-member evaluation committee.

The third case is the K2.9 billion maize scam in which a former Minister of Finance and other ruling UDF top party officials were accused of selling maize from the Strategic Grain Reserves in 2002, a situation that caused hunger which threatened the lives of 3.2 million people (*Daily Times* 8 September 2004). The ACB recommended the prosecution of the former minister and other senior public officials for criminal negligence and recklessness. The fourth case involved a former Deputy Commerce Minister who was implicated in a K559, 216 case concerning the issuance of licenses for the import of chicken by the Ministry of Commerce. The ACB recommended prosecution of the accused for penal code offences. The fifth case was the City Motors case in which a former Minister of Works and Transport was implicated in a K14 million abuse of office case in which he was accused of wrongfully authorizing payment to City Motors. Another case implicated a former Minister of Education who was convicted for using government money to fund his wedding ceremony.

Again, the former president is being investigated for pocketing donor money amounting to K1.4 billion into his personal account. The ACB arrested the former chief executive of the state-owned bus company, Shire Bus Lines, in August 2004 on allegations of corruption (*The Nation*

14 September 2004). In November 2004, the ACB also arrested a former Minister of Finance on allegations revolving around the construction of a multi-million Kwacha hotel and abuse of office when he was the General Manager of the state-owned Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation. Lastly, a former petroleum chief executive was convicted in 2004 and sentenced to 6 years in jail for receiving US$25,000 as gratification from Humble Energy of the United Kingdom (*The Nation* 2 September 2004).

A study conducted for the Commonwealth Foundation on features of a good society – and which tends to corroborate the above – concluded that the existence of corruption in the country was one of the factors that prevented the existence of a good society in Malawi (Dzimbiri 1998). Newspaper headlines reported incidences of corrupt tendencies. For example, contracts were awarded to own construction companies, and projects fizzled out whilst in progress because funds had been embezzled (Dzimbiri 1998). Headlines in popular dailies included 'Mother of All Corrupt Practices', 'Probe Surveys Department', 'Corruption and Nepotism', 'Fraud at Ntcheu Government Offices', 'Duty Evasion: Are VIPs Privileged?','UDF Ministers have Banished their Poverty', 'Where is UNESCO's Money?','The Catholic Bishops Criticize Corruption in the UDF Party', and 'Corruption has Increased Tremendously in This Country'. Zedi Mbewe argues that, before coming into power, UDF ministers were poor; but four years later, they own minibuses, Mercedes Benzes, mansions, cars for spouses or children and he alleges that corruption was the major strategy used to enrich themselves (*Malawi News* 28 February 1998).

Aubrey Kayange lamented the increasing levels of corruption and nepotism in recruitment and promotions. He queries what the Anti-Corruption Bureau was doing: 'Let us uproot these evils' (*Nation* 1 April, 1998). A Ntcheu district citizen reports an officer who bought a car battery using official petrol coupons and demanded a cash sale which he used to claim K2,574.58 (*Nation* 1 April 1998). Headlines in popular newspapers include: 'Malawi High on Corruption Index' (*Nation* 23 December 2003); 'Civil Service Corrupt' (*Nation* 10 September 2004);'Fighting Corruption: 2004-2009' (*Nation* 16 April 2004); 'Members of Parliament Faces Corruption Charges'(*Nation* 16 April 2004); 'Muslim Association in a K10 Million Scam' (*Nation* 16 April 2004); 'Muluzi Faces Arrest' (*Nation* 10 January 2005); 'K187M Education Scam Rears Ugly Head' (*Weekend Nation*, 8-9 January 2005).

Why the Discrepancy?

The law on corruption and the consequences of corrupt practices are known to many Malawians, and top-level political commitments through public pronouncements are also clear. What can explain the continued incidence of corruption scandals over the years? According to ECA (2004), anti-corruption initiatives have not been successful for many reasons: in the first instance, many have been introduced in an overall political and policy environment that has not been sufficiently conducive to the success of the measures. The nature of the state and governance and commitment at the highest political level are crucial prerequisites for any successful drive to curb and punish ethical violations. For Malawi, at the formal level, this commitment has been noted. Secondly, some of the anti-corruption measures that have been introduced have been partial in nature, focusing mainly on sanctions, and not the source. Of course, there is a tendency by the Anti-Corruption Bureau to be involved in educating the public and investigating allegations and prosecuting the culprit. But questions about causes of corruption are not being handled. Third, many of the institutions that were established to promote ethics and accountability often lack the resources, public visibility, impartiality and public support that are critical to their success. True, in the case of Malawi, the bureau has at times complained of so many cases being shelved due to lack of money for investigation. Shortage of staff to handle investigations is also another explanation for delays in investigations and, therefore, bringing the culprit to book.

Why Do Public Sector Reforms Fail?

Practitioners and researchers have advanced several reasons to explain why the achievements of public sector reforms have in most cases fallen short of expectation. I intend to discuss these in terms of the general overview and what I consider to be the influence of the hybrid administrative system on public sector reforms.

A General Overview

There are several factors to explain why reforms fail. Some of them include institutional capability. Programmes and strategies for Africa's economic recovery and development have not been implemented in full because public sector institutions have been afflicted by problems of corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, poor coordination, poor management and institutional capacity, non-existent salary policies and political interference (ECA 2004). These weaknesses have stifled the process of socio-economic development across the continent. Multiple

accountabilities – such as managerial, political and financial – and public accountabilities are also viewed as another explanation. Declining public service ethics, social values and morale are other reasons advanced for the failure of public sector reforms in general (ECA 2004). According to Corkery (1995), one key reason for the failure of public sector reforms is that models derived from developed countries, mostly under the sponsorship of IMF and World Bank, are largely irrelevant because within the more sophisticated institutional practices and procedures, any changes that have been introduced are supported by institutional safety nets which are not available in Africa. He further argues that private sector management practices imported in some countries have not always been transplanted successfully because the parallel reform of monitoring and review procedures called by the introduction of these practices is not taking place simultaneously. For Fofana (1995), lack of political will for reform translated into concrete actions explains why reforms fail. These arguments are indeed crucial for understanding the problems of administrative reforms in Africa. However, this article makes one contribution to these problems by highlighting the significance of the hybrid administrative system in explaining the failure of some public sector reforms in Africa, particularly those which involve acquiring new values, norms, beliefs, orientations and practices, like fighting against corruption. In other words, some reforms involve not just institutional or structural change, but also changes in values, attitudes and beliefs.

The Hybrid Administrative System and Corporate Culture

The current administrative system in Africa needs to be understood as a mixture of the traditional indigenous and western structures and values which continue to co-exist side by side. At independence, African governments inherited administrative structures which were geared towards the requirements of the ex-colonial powers. For Balogun (1986), most African countries had experienced a dilemma in terms of which administrative culture to adopt. To go back to the good old days of despotism and kingdoms or to come to terms with the Western administrative system which co-existed with indigenous structures and values for close to a century?

Political and administrative reforms were undertaken in many African countries due to changes in political objectives and greater volume of governmental role, especially in development (Hyden 1975). For Leys (1974), it was a move from law and order orientation of government to one of development. A hybrid administrative system is one in which the superstructure (institutional arrangement) mirrors the Western model

while the value system remains unchanged. According to Khandwalla (1977), the wider culture influences the functioning of modern organisations.

Thus, the wider culture has a significant impact on the extent to which citizens obey and follow national constitutions, laws, rules and procedures created for the effective functioning of nations and institutions. For example, Dzimbiri (1996) noted that while organisational structures and process in Africa mirror exactly those in the West, and that Western management theory and literature is used by trainers in training experienced managers, the latter are too aware of the gap between what the theories propose and the actual practice in organisations. For example, while the literature talks of merit, competence, official verifiable qualifications for deciding recruitment or promotion of officers in organisations or public service in general, managers as well as trainers are aware that such objectivity or meritocracy is overtaken by extended family considerations, nepotism, bribery and favouritism which are in line with some African cultures. The dilemma of the trainer at this point is whether he/she should be talking of nepotism and corruption which are hard realities in the organisations where these managers come from, or should continue to talk of merit or objectivity as propounded by western literature when this is not what is happening on the ground.

In the case of the fight against corruption; like in other countries of Africa, Malawi has been working hard to fight against corruption, as evidenced by the creation of the anti-corruption bureau and top level pronouncements against corruption at the presidential level. In spite of all this effort, many top profile cases have emerged and the epidemic is not in any way diminishing. Malawi is one of the countries ranked high on the Corruption Index. How does the hybrid administrative system help understand the increasing level of corruption against these national efforts?

Thus, while anti-corruption reform measures are imported from the West, as long as the mindset or value infrastructure pattern of beliefs, values, traditions, practices remain supportive of corruption, these initiatives aimed at arresting corruption may even exacerbate it. After all, why should ministers, presidents who are policy giants be in the forefront of corruption scandals when they are in practice behind the very policy-making process for the eradication of corruption? Why should there be a wide discrepancy between policy formulation and policy implementation? In other words, why should there be such an unprecedented

window dressing in the introduction and implementation of reforms aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the public service?

Over five decades ago, Riggs (1961) talked of a prismatic society in trying to clarify the impact of ecology on administration. Although that was years ago, his argument is very relevant to the current dismal failure of some administrative reforms in Africa. They are new 'innovations' in 'foreign' contexts. We are transferring institutions, procedures and systems to contexts which cannot handle the value systems which come or work well with the new systems. The result is a total misfit between the reform strategy and the cultural orientation of the key actors who are instrumental in implementing the reform. As a result, there is a lot of expenditure in terms of money, personnel, time and effort to make things work. We create laws, new constitutions, financial or procurement procedures and fail to follow them up in practice. Why? This raises a serious question on the role of the law in changing people's behaviour. Will a change of national laws, constitutions, rules and regulations automatically lead to compliance in terms of citizens' behaviour? Why, for example, would states that have adopted the United Declaration of Human Rights and enshrined laws in their national constitutions become violators of human rights themselves? Again, why would states that have adopted international labour conventions on collective bargaining, freedom of association and the right to strike, for example, become major violators of labour rights? (Dzimbiri 2005). Thus, unless the cultural infrastructures of public services in most African societies are able to transform, to create a good fit with the new structures, some of the reforms will amount to a 'leopard dressed in a goat's skin'. The discrepancy between rhetoric and practice, law provision and implementation will continue to be greater. Evidence abounds in Africa to demonstrate how donor-driven democratic reforms are propping up theoretically-evolved democracies (*Financial Times* 5 March 2000).

Transforming Corporate Culture: A Suggested Way Forward

From the above discussion, it is evident that a discrepancy between the intentions of some reform measures and the outputs as well as outcomes on the ground exists. The fight against corruption, for example, has become tough on the reform agenda of many states in Africa. Most of them, like Malawi, continue to experience high incidences and allegations of corruption cases in spite of the reform measures carried out on existing institutions and legal provisions to arrest the epidemic. While many reasons are advanced for the continued incidence of corruption, it is the

lack of fit between the value system that comes with the reform measures (through aid) and the reality on the ground.

The need to transform individual and organisational or corporate culture becomes imperative for the success of certain reforms. There is a need to inculcate moral and ethical values that are associated with accountability, openness, integrity, selflessness, public spiritedness, love, sympathy, human goodness, truth, morality, dignity, ethics, spirituality, fairness and humility, besides institutional or procedural reforms in public sector reform initiatives. Unless people become 'born again' or change their attitudes and values, they will be guided by greed, selfishness, lust, self-aggrandizement, and narrow and parochial values which might be counter-productive to reform intentions. Resistance to change 'the way we do things around here' is one of the factors that create a discrepancy between law and practice or promise and action. This requires new breeds of leadership which can transform others for the good of humanity. Such leadership that can lead above, and not below the line will lead according to the fundamental principles of humanity (Ferguson 2003).

In our view, therefore, cultural change is key to success in many reform strategies. At the organizational level, corporate culture is the pattern of basis assumption, values, norms and artefacts shared by the organizations' members (Cummings and Worley 2005). These shared meanings help members to make sense out of the organization. Basic assumptions are unconscious, taken-for-granted assumptions about how organizational problems should be solved. These basic assumptions tell members how to perceive, think and feel about things. They represent non-comfortable and non-debatable assumptions about relating to the environment as well as about nature and human nature, human activity, and human relationships. Values tell members about what is important in the organization and what they need to pay attention to. Norms guide how members should behave in a particular situation. They represent unwritten rules of behaviour. Artefacts are visible manifestations of the other levels of cultural elements. These include observable behaviours of members, as well as structures, system procedures, rules and physical aspects of the organization (Cummings and Worley 2005). A favourable corporate culture can improve an organization's ability to implement new business strategies, as well as achieve high levels of excellence. A lack of fit between the culture and the necessary organizational changes can result in the failure to get them implemented effectively.

Culture Change Interventions

Culture change interventions start by diagnosing the organization's existing culture to assess its fit with the current or proposed business strategy. Diagnosing a corporate culture requires uncovering and understanding people's basic assumptions, values, norms and artefacts about organizational life through an interviewing process, standard surveys to identify a culture gap, and describing culture in terms of managerial behaviour (Cummings and Worley 2005). Guidelines for changing culture include: development of a clear vision and the desired shared values and behaviour; top management commitment, symbolic leadership which communicates the new culture through its actions, supporting organizational changes, selection and socialization of newcomers and termination of deviants (Cummings and Worley 2005).

The role of learning institutions in providing value supportive of public sector reforms is instrumental. There is need to inculcate the above values and ethical standards in the youth through innovations in the curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. If the present children start getting lessons on the negative aspects of corruption, the need for moral integrity, transparency, accountability, objectivity, meritocracy, among others, at the earliest stage of their moral and physical development, the future generation will acquire values that are not only supportive of public sector reforms but are also geared towards increased organisational health, effectiveness and efficiency. This is not to suggest that all public sector reforms fail because of culture, but to argue that many of them require changing the mindset of the major actors and implementers of the reform initiatives, if their success is to be guaranteed.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to explain the place of cultural change in public sector reforms in Africa. A lot of reforms that have been implemented in most of Africa have not borne the fruits that were expected. Various explanations have been advanced. These include shortage of finance, incompatible models of reforms, corruption, multiple accountabilities and lack of top-level political and administrative commitment. However, the article makes one additional contribution to the list of factors – cultural change. Reforms are not simply structural changes but involve a great deal of human/behavioural change in the way people do things, their values and beliefs. Structural change alone will not do. This article concludes by arguing that unless specific structural reforms are accompanied by parallel change/reforms in values, attitudes and beliefs of the major actors in the reform agenda, a great deal of discrepancy will continue to exist between reform intentions and practice or outcomes on the ground.

Note

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A Concise Historical Survey of the Bamum Dynasty and the Influence of Islam in Foumban, Cameroon, 1390 – Present

Forka Leypey Mathew Fomine

Abstract

The Bamum (locally pronounced Pamom) are found in the Western
Province of the Republic of Cameroon and occupy principally the
Noun Division. The present Bamum population is composed of
people from two different backgrounds. The dominant ones are the
people of Sudanic origin who broke away from the Tikar, at Rifum
and then moved southwards to Njimom, and finally to their present
site of settlement. There are also those of Bamileke origin who were
found living in the present-day Bamum country and who were
conquered and partially assimilated by the Bamum invaders.
Foumban,[1] the capital of the Bamum Kingdom, is without doubt the
cultural showpiece of traditional civilisation in the Republic of
Cameroon. Since its foundation, the Bamum Kingdom has gone
through an excitingly creative evolution. Bamum is one of the rare
African kingdoms to have invented an indigenous writing system
of its own, as well as a printing press and a machine for grinding
grain. With the advent of colonialism, Bamum was one of the
kingdoms in Cameroon that collaborated closely with the German
colonisers. In this way, the Bamum were permitted so much
autonomy that the incidence of colonialism only slightly upset the
traditional structure of the society until 1916 when the French
replaced the Germans.
The prime objective of this article is to investigate how Islam
changed the lifestyle of the Bamum. It also takes a close look at the
activities of early Bamum kings, especially the outstanding

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achievements of Sultan Njoya and a detailed investigation into the influence of Islam in the Bamum Kingdom. The article argues strongly that Islam has influenced the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of the Bamum.

Résumé

Les Bamum (mot localement prononcé Pamom) se trouvent dans la province occidentale de la République du Cameroun et occupent principalement le département du Noun. La population actuelle des Bamum se compose de peuples d'origines différentes. Les peuples dominants sont ceux d'origine soudanaise qui se sont séparés des Tikar à Rifum pour migrer vers le Sud à Njimom avant de s'établir finalement sur leur site d'implantation actuel. Il ya aussi les peuples d'origine Bamiléké qui vivaient dans l'actuel pays Bamum et qui ont été conquis et partiellement assimilés par les envahisseurs Bamum. Foumban , la capitale du Royaume du Bamum, est sans aucun doute la vitrine culturelle de la civilisation traditionnelle de la République du Cameroun. Depuis sa fondation, le Royaume du Bamum a connu une évolution d'une créativité passionnante. Par exemple, le Bamum est l'un des rares royaumes africains à avoir inventé un système d'écriture indigène qui lui est propre, ainsi qu'une imprimerie et un moulin à grains. Avec l'avènement du colonialisme, le Bamum fut l'un des royaumes camerounais qui ont collaboré étroitement avec les colonisateurs allemands. Ainsi, le Bamum s'est vu accorder tant d'autonomie que l'impact du colonialisme n'eut que très peu bouleversé la structure traditionnelle de la société jusqu'en 1916, lorsque les Français remplacèrent les Allemands.

L'objectif premier de cet article est d'étudier comment l'Islam a changé le mode de vie des Bamum. En outre, Il s'intéresse de près aux activités des premiers rois Bamum, aux réalisations exceptionnelles du sultan Njoya et procède à une étude approfondie sur l'influence de l'Islam dans le Royaume du Bamum. Cet article soutient fermement que l'Islam a influencé la vie politique, économique, sociale, religieuse et culturelle du Bamum.

Geographical Location and Historical Background of the Bamum

The Bamum Kingdom lies within its shrunken limits, enclosed by the rivers Mbam and Mape to the east and Noun to the west. It is situated between longitude 10° 30′ to 11, east of the Greenwich Meridian and latitude 5° to 6 north of the equator (Njeuma 1973:249-265.3; Martin 1951:1-36). It is located in the Western Province of Cameroon. The kingdom occupies a total surface area of approximately 7,300 km (Njeuma 1973:249-265, Martin 1951:1-36,

Gumne et al. 1972:5). It is bounded on the north-west by Donga-Mantung and Bui Divisions, on the west by Mifi Division (Bafoussam), on the south by Bafia and Bangante and on the east by Banyo, in the Adamawa Province (Gumne et al 1972:5). In relation to topography, the kingdom comprises the Foumban highlands (plateaux) and the Malantouan and Magba lowlands, which have altitudes of 1,500 meters and 750 metres respectively (ibid). The climate comprises two seasons of uneven duration, namely, the long rainy season and short dry season. The Bamum Kingdom is a transitional zone that comprises both savannah and forest vegetation (Daouda 1992:13) due to the fact that it lies between the southern forest zone and the tropical savannah grassland of northern Cameroon. The kingdom has varied soil types that influence crop cultivation in the area, for instance, the Foumbot region that has rich volcanic soil is the greatest food crop-producing community in the entire kingdom. The soil in Foumban is predominantly dark and sandy.

Perhaps the most famed and probably the largest of the Grassland kingdoms in Cameroon is Bamum (Yongetah and Brain 1974:41; Ngoh 1996:20). The Bamum Kingdom was founded in 1390 by Nchare, a prince from Rifum (present-day Bankim) (Greary and Njoya 1985:19; Dugast 1949:126; Fanso 1989:41) in the Tikar plain. The Bamum are therefore of Tikar[2] origin (before migrating to Kimi, the Tikar are believed by some scholars to have come from Bornu, a Sudanese kingdom around the Lake Chad Basin). Granted the fact that their founder, Nchare, was the son of a Tikar chief. The Bamum share the same ancestry with other ethnic groups such as the Nso', Bafut, Kom, Bum Fungom Ndop and Ntem (Niba 1986:16).[3]

Generally, the genesis of the Bamum Kingdom is attributed to the migration of three members of the Tikar royal house, namely Nchare, Nguonso and Morunta, who broke off from the main group at Rifim (Kimi) (Mohammadou 303) after the death of their chief. The desire to start new settlements away from the parent group provoked this move, but there is also the possible connection with the gradual southward migration of Tikar groups, such as the Chamba and Mbum, under pressure from the Jukun empire centred around Wukari on the river Benue. When Nchare, Nguonso and Morunta arrived in Mbam, they continued in different directions: Nguonso, the eldest who was a female, went westward and settled with her band of followers at Kovifem (Chilver and Kabbery 1970:249-257), Tavisa and finally at Kumbo headquarters of Nso in the present North-West Province of Cameroon. There, she founded the Nso Kingdom or State.[4] Morunta continued north-east of the Mbam, settling at Nditam in the direction of Bafia. Nchare crossed the

Mbam and settled first at Njimom (Bah 1985:149)[5] where he defeated the Bamileke who were there before, imposing his supremacy. At Njimom, he was recognised as king, taking over the attributes of the Tikar 'sacred' kingship (Njeuma 1973:253). Today, the Bamum settlement is no longer limited to Njimom, but covers the entire Noun Division. Population censuses carried out in the area show that the Bamum population has increased rapidly. For instance, the population of Bamum that was 70,000 (Binet 1952:399-415) inhabitants in 1952 had increased to 100,000 in 1974 (Eyongetah and Brain 1974:41). By 1982, the population had increased to 215, 000 inhabitants (Neba 1999:70). In 1987, the population was 293,725 inhabitants (National Demographic Census 1987). The figures from the last national census carried out three years ago have not yet been published.

Nchare and his followers, with a long tradition of warfare, changed the way of life of the population immediately to the east of the River Mbam, from peaceful subsistence agriculture to war-oriented communities. The advantage the intruders had was the possession of iron weapons, for example, iron-tipped arrows, spears and lances. By a series of concerted military campaigns, Nchare overran the neighbouring villages until he came face to face with Mfomben, the most important chief in the region. He conquered Mfomben's capital, present-day Foumban, and consolidated his authority over the conquered villages (Njeuma 1973:253).

After settlement, the pivot of the Bamum traditional government was the king. Political activities centred around the palace and on the person of the king. The palace (which served as both the king's residence and office) was always crowded with titled officers and those who came to greet the king or simply to be current with the news. The exercise of political functions depended exclusively on services rendered to the king. Individual ability, wealth and birth were not criteria for office though they provided an initial advantage to many people (ibid:254).

On the death of Nchare, a new kingdom was founded consisting of several villages recognising the king at Foumban as overlord, to whom tribute was obligatory. The essential feature of the society, which changed only very slowly with the years, was that it was dominated by subsistence agriculture with farms situated near the dwellings. The early farms were worked according to a co-operative plan through organised teamwork. This system kept the entire population busy. Sometimes slaves, exclusively war captives, were used to supplement the labour force in the farms of notables or traditional titleholders. In the past (and even today) the Bamum's chief economic activity was farming, supplemented

with artisan work (Daouda 1992:15); for instance the weaving of cloth, baskets, mats, bags, caps and the carving of marks and pipes. The making of drums, gongs and pottery was often mixed with agricultural work since work on the farms was seasonal. In the past, the aim of producing these items was not solely commercial. Rather, they were produced for domestic consumption, for presents to the king, for the payment of bride-wealth, as well as for hospitality and other traditional obligations at communal festivals (Njeuma 1973:254). Concerning crop cultivation, the Bamum cultivated both cash and food crops. The dominant cash crops cultivated were cocoa and arabica coffee (Dubie 1940:9). The Bamum produced 395,898 tons of cocoa in 1939 (Region du Noun 1941), while in 1940, so much coffee was produced to the extent that approximately 1,800 tons were exported (Picco 1940:9).

Daily subsistence among the Bamum was based primarily on maize (*Zea mays*) (Geffrier 1941:5), introduced from the United States of America (USA) in the early 19th century (Tardits 1977:779) and cultivated as a subsidiary staple; but during the reigns of Nsangu (1863-1889) and Njoya (1889-1933) as the kings[6] of Bamum, it diffused extensively until in the 1950s and early 1960s, it progressively replaced sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) which had been the predominant staple. Nowadays, maize is the major staple of the Bamum (Nemkam 1981:11). The two main varieties cultivated were dent maize (*Var.indentata*) and flour maize (*Var. amylacea*). The flour type was introduced in the 1920s by Bamum traders from northern Cameroon much later than the dent type (Tardits 1983:1-28).

Some Early Bamum Kings

Although tradition recounts nineteen kings since the Bamum kingdom was founded, generally speaking, Bamum history rests on the achievements of four reigns: Nchare, the founder of the kingdom and the ruling dynasty; Mbwombwo, the tenth king; Nguwo, a slave who served as Mbwombwo's chief councillor for war, the fourteenth king; and finally, the indomitable Sultan Njoya. These four reigns are key to the history of Bamum. They best illustrate the civilising influence of African rulers in politics and commerce, diplomacy and in the organisation and consolidation of empire.

Physically, Nchare was a short man with a protuberant stomach. He was dark in complexion, had short limbs, but was very courageous. He loved dancing and drinking palm wine. He is said to have been very charitable (Njoya 1977:11). He was succeeded by one of his daughters, since he had no surviving son. The lady and others who succeeded him ruled for several years, and fought wars with other groups until they

captured Mfomben. The general feeling was that by the conquest of Mfomben, too much had already been achieved and further wars were unnecessary. This feeling lingered on until the tenth king, Mbwombwo. Recent tradition explains the extraordinary personality of Mbwombwo (Njeuma 1973:254).

Mbwombwo was a very determined man with giant body features (Bah no date:10). He believed in action. He is said to have been very tall, and had red eyes, broad nostrils and large ears. He also had a long neck, a broad chest and back, and long arms. He was as courageous as a lion, cruel, but very generous (Mveng 1976:139). Until today, no Bamum king has physically resembled him. Mbwombwo kept his people perpetually under military preparedness. Even agriculture became subordinated to military pursuits.

During the reigns of Mbombwo's immediate predecessors, Kuoto and possibly Ngulume, Bamum was subjected to two types of raid: raiders with firearms who came from the west, and Fulani slave raiders on horseback from the north. Long-distance raiding or conquest was not only possible, but rewarding to the stronger party. More so, the type of arms a people used finally decided their victory. As a consequence Mbwombwo concentrated almost all the kingdom's efforts on the production of efficient weapons. Every able-bodied man in the kingdom had to be armed as a defensive measure against raiding bands, and later as a means of enlarging the kingdom. According to Mbwombwo, empire building was the universal preoccupation of strong rulers who became distinguished by the nature and quality of arms at their disposal (Njeuma 1973:255).

Practically every village had at least one forge for manufacturing various kinds of iron weapons for fighting. Ownership of forges became the hallmark of wealth and true nobility. Mbwombwo's expeditions to the north across the Mape to the foothills of the Mambilla mountains, and west to Banso and Oku, were motivated by the desire to dominate the source of iron (ibid). With the increase production of iron weapons, Bamum expanded her frontiers rapidly under Mbwombwo. Another reason that accounts for the military success of the Bamum was surprise attack (Bah 1985:11). The majority of the conquered people who had specialized skills were displaced and resettled along the Foumban-Foumbot axis. War captives were generally not always enslaved but given land to settle and live like freemen.

Further still, during the reign of Mbwombwo, the king stood as the unrivalled head of the society. The wars fought during his reign were considered to be the king's wars and those who engaged in the fighting

considered themselves as being in the personal service of the king. The contrast in Mbwombwo's reign was the simultaneous pursuit of long-distance wars on the one hand and commerce on the other. The military expeditions exposed the Bamum to commercial opportunities. Commerce went hand in hand with war. By 1804, the revolt of Uthman Dan Fodio against the Hausa rulers had created a large political as well as an economic centre to the north of the Bamum Kingdom. The empire had been inspired by Fulani religious renaissance, but those who exploited the commercial possibilities were the Hausa. In those early days, the Bamum traded principally with the Nso', Kom, Bum, Meta and Takum (Bah 1985:566, Njeuma 1973:256).

The Hausas came to the south-east in large numbers with the establishment of Muslim regimes in Muri and Adamamwa, north of the Bamum Kingdom. They traded in the nineteenth century to satisfy two separate and distinct markets: the European-oriented markets of the coastal city-states, in such articles as ivory and slaves; and also the subsistence economies of the savannah kingdoms, for example, Bornu and the Hausa states, in slaves, tobacco, palm oil and kolanuts. Kolanuts were particularly in high demand as a stimulant in the Hausa states before and after the Fulani upheavals. The Hausa exchanged Bamum products for iron ore, cloth and salt. With the successes in Mbwombwo's wars, and the resultant sudden upsurge in the Foumban population, many of the aristocracy, including the king, started indulging in financing long-distance trade, primarily to obtain iron ore.

The impact of Mbwombwo's dynamic leadership was also felt in the internal development of the state. This was predominantly in two spheres: in the extension of court etiquette and in the granting of privileges to the king's close collaborators and members of the royal family. The distance between the king and the people became wider than ever. The king designated his successor from among his children. The functions of the '*Kom*' who, strictly speaking, were the king-makers degenerated to simply implementing the wishes of the king. New titles of nobility (for example, *Nji*), were introduced for those rewarded by the king for rendering special services or for those responsible for one or other of the multifarious duties which suddenly came into existence. Mbwombwo's reign was that of prosperity for the Bamum (Njeuma 1973:257).

Mbwombwo was succeeded by his son, Gbethnkom, who could not provide order and cohesion in the kingdom as his father had, probably due to the vastness of the kingdom. The monarchy passed through a phase of instability, marked by palace revolutions and assassinations of kings. Nguwo, one-time Mbwombwo's minister of war, seized power

and ruled as an uncrowned king. He relaxed on the war front and concentrated more on domestic affairs. He was the first Bamum king to order his people to turn their interest solely towards agriculture. Except for border problems with Nso, he did not attempt to extend the frontiers of the kingdom beyond what he had inherited.[7]

Nguwo reigned for over forty years. At the end of his reign, more dynastic instability broke out. Ngoungoure, the last surviving son of Mbwombwo, had the opportunity to rule for just thirty minutes due to his assassination. One of Mbwombwo's grandsons also ruled for a while, but did nothing worth noting. When Nsangou took over the throne, he achieved unity by reconciling and integrating his rivals into important positions in his administration. He deliberately exterminated those that he could not integrate. He died on an expedition against the Nso around 1888. However, the Bamum king whose rule most influenced the life of the Bamum people was Sultan Njoya.

Sultan Njoya and his Outstanding Achievements

After the death of Nsangou in 1888, Njoya became king at a tender age. His mother assumed regency (Ngoh 1996:21) under the general supervision of Bentkom. Njoya's mother, Nsabndunke, died on 2 July 1913, after which Bentkom attempted to dethrone Njoya, but did not succeed as Njoya sought the assistance of the Lamido of Banyo. During Njoya's reign, several Muslim scholars from Banyo settled in Foumban where they constructed a mosque and opened an Islamic school where many Bamum were taught how to read and write Arabic (Martin 1951:6). During the reign of Njoya, the Europeans who visited the Kingdom of Bamum appreciated the high level of culture and civilisation that reigned. European missionaries and officials frequented and settled in Foumban. They admired Njoya as a great king and Njoya in turn admired the ability of the Europeans and Muslim scholars to read and write. This contributed to his invention of a particular writing, the Bamum script – *Sho-Mum*.

With the help of palace stewards and councillors, Njoya invented the *Sho-Mum* (Binet 1852:399). This writing was composed of signs and symbols from actions and ideas. The script was later on reduced to 510 letters and 83 signs, ten of which were numbers. The invention of the script led to the creation of schools in the palace. Courtiers were taught in these schools, how to read and write the Bamum language. Following the invention of the script, the Bamum were able to codify their laws and customs in a single book, titled, *History, Laws and Customs of the Bamum*. Learned scholars of the script documented the history of the Bamum (ibid:22).

Njoya is also noted for the construction of the magnificent palace of Foumban (Mveng 1976:138). Today, the palace serves not only as a monument to the ingenuity of the Bamum but also as a tourist attraction. Njoya personally supervised local crafts. He encouraged bronze work, woodcarving and weaving. This was intended to promote the people's image and to encourage cultural development within the kingdom. King Njoya was the first among the Bamum kings to become Islamised and he took the Muslim title of Sultan. Under his supervision, a museum was opened in the Foumban palace where works of art were preserved. Some of the works are still there until this day. Sultan Njoya also invented a hulling mill[8] for the grinding of cereals. His reign came to an abrupt end because he was against the French colonial policy of assimilation. The French dethroned and exiled him to Yaounde where he died in 1933 (Ngoh 1996:22). EI Hadji Seidou Njimoluh Njoya, who ruled from 1933 to 1992 succeeded him. Today, the Sultan or King of Bamum is Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya who has been ruling since 1992. Islam is the dominant religion in Foumban, and thus has greatly influenced the life of the Bamum.

Islam in Foumban and its Influence

Islam was introduced in Foumban during the reign of King Njoya in c.1910 (Dugast 1949:127). King Njoya accepted Islam because it advocated the acquisition of more than one wife, a practice that Catholicism and Protestantism which were initially introduced in the area protested against strongly. The Catholic and Protestant clergymen had advised the king and his traditional title holders to divorce their numerous wives and remain with a single wife per man. Another reason that prompted King Njoya to accept Islam was the desire to extend the frontiers of his kingdom. In the year that Islam was introduced in Foumban, the Lamido of Banyo, the nearest lamidat to Foumban left the following Marabous in Foumban and charged them with the responsibility of converting the Bamum – Malam Jidah, Malam Aboubakar, Malam El-Hadj, Malam Babam, Malam Adamu and Malam Jijniwauam (Aboubakar 1981:61). The Islamic faith that these Islamic scholars spread in the Bamum Kingdom played a preponderant role in transforming the society politically, economically, socially, religiously and culturally.

In the economic domain, Islam played an important role, especially in the communication system. Prior to the introduction of Islam in Foumban, the entire communication system in the area was the same as in the entire Western Grassfields – purely rudimentary in nature – before the beginning of missionaries' activities in the region (Funteh 2003:39). The indigenous pattern of communicating with one another included the use

of the traditional gong, an instrument used to summon people by the chief or king and the local dialect. The olive plant known in the area as *Nkeng* was mostly used as a medium of communication between and among chiefs, both in times of trouble and peace, or to invite any important personality the chief wanted to talk with. Strongmen and women did the transportation of goods for commercial purposes on foot because footpaths were the most reliable form of roads (ibid:40). Before the introduction of Islam, everybody in Foumban walked on foot, no matter the purpose and distance, except the king who was carried on a traditional stretcher by four strong men. When King Njoya became Islamised and visited his counterpart, the Lamido of Banyo, he saw the donkeys that existed there and brought some to Foumban, which were reared and used for the transportation of luggage. The donkey also replaced the men who used to carry the king because King Njoya felt that carrying him was a form of slavery and because the Holy Koran forbids slavery, he was obliged to abolish that inhumane practice. However, some critics in the area are of the opinion that King Njoya stopped people from carrying him not because he intended to abolish slavery, but because he had acquired the donkeys from Banyo. These critics strongly believe that if the donkey was not available in the Bamum Kingdom, then the Bamum would have continued to carry their king as the custom had been. Islam did not only contribute to the introduction of the donkey in Foumban, but also greatly influenced the entire Bamum trade network.

Before 1910, trade in the Bamum Kingdom was perceived and transacted from a purely small-scale perspective and mostly by barter. At times, cowry shells, glass beads, brass coils and some shaped pieces of flat iron (called shovels) used strictly in marriage and trade transactions, represented the measure of value in the existing exchange system (ibid). The most prominent items of exchange were locally manufactured salt, maize, palm oil and palm wine. Slaves were also indispensable items of this small-scale trade. The stages of slavery have significantly changed in the area. First, before 1910, all the Bamum who were not from the royal lineage were slaves to the members of the royal lineage. A member of the royal lineage could kill a non-royal lineage member, seize his property and the matter would not be tried in any court. Second, all the traditional titleholders from the palace who were involved in the first external slavery did it with Europeans via barter. Humans were exchanged for shoes, salt, mirror, clothes, whisky and European-manufactured guns.[9] Third, after 1910, the early Islamised Bamum sold the Christians and the other non-Muslims into slavery.[10] Furthermore,

prior to the introduction of Islam in the region, the Bamum exchanged the palm oil that they produced *en masse* for the palm wine that their neighbouring Bamileke produced in huge quantities. However, after the introduction of Islam in Foumban, the Bamum stopped the trade in palm wine because the Holy Koran forbids Muslims from consuming alcoholic drinks.

The pilgrimage to Oumrha, Saudi Arabia also played a great role in trade transactions in the Bamum country. During the pilgrimage, Bamum Muslim merchants purchased such goods as Islamic rosary, perfumes, female wrappers, and male gowns and caps, and in turn sold them in Foumban. Before the introduction of Islam in the region, such trade transactions did not occur. Moreso, Bamum scholars who were awarded scholarships in Islamic studies to pursue their studies in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other Middle East countries sent the money they earned in these countries back to the Bamum Kingdom where it helped to boost the Bamum local economy.[11] Before the introduction of Islam among the Bamum, no Bamum had such an award. The local manufacturing of different works of art for domestic usage and also as items of trade was a practice of antiquity among the Bamum.

Just as the case was with most of the Western Grassfield chiefdoms, the Bamum sought every means of remaining self-reliant in what concerned locally manufactured artisan items. They gave ample opportunity for the development of local industries such as weaving, pottery and blacksmithing. As concerns the art of carving, there existed many centres and experts. The carving experts involved themselves in the production of secret objects such as statutes. They also produced musical instruments such as the short flutes and xylophones in different forms. The pottery industry too greatly flourished in the area. Experts in this domain manufactured high quality artistic pottery that was later used for trading with other chiefdoms. Most pottery was made out of clay. The clay was churned and pounded so that it became sticky and so used for the production of shaped containers such as vases, pipes and pots (used in cooking food, tapping of palm wine and as storage utensils) (Funteh 2003:38). Almost all the adult males and females in the society carried out weaving. The men mostly weaved mats and bags from raffia palm fibres. They also produced caps from cotton and feathers. The women, on their part, concentrated on the weaving of baskets. To realise good products, the weavers used knives and cutlasses that were locally produced by the Bamum smiths.

Blacksmithing constituted an important activity among the Bamum. Bamum blacksmiths were famous in the production of broad-leaved jingle spears (that until this day are held by the Bamum chiefs and members of secret societies), shovels, cutlasses, knives, axes and hoes (ibid). The Bamum themselves also invented a grinding mill. Islam has attempted to influence the Bamum manufacturing industry, but has achieved very little. For instance, the first Imams in the area advised the Bamum to halt the carving of statues and turn entirely to agriculture, but the Bamum refused and argued that carving was a lucrative occupation. Until this day, a large proportion of the Bamum Muslim population continues to carve and sell statues as middlemen. Although the Bamum were manufacturers of short flutes, the technique of the manufacture of these flutes did not diffuse in the area before the introduction of Islam. The technique was introduced in the Bamum Kingdom by the Fulani Muslims from Northern Cameroon. These flutes were blown solely when the Sultan was on tour and the sound they produced meant, honour to the king.[12]

However, it is not only the economic life of the Bamum that was affected by Islam. Their social life too was affected tremendously. Marriage was an important social institution in the Bamum pre-Islamic period. Two kinds of marriage contracts, monogamy and polygyny, popularly referred to as polygamy in Cameroon, existed in the area. As is the case in many African traditional societies, polygyny – the legal marriage of one man to two or more women concurrently (Funteh 2003:63) – remained popular, especially among influential individuals such as chiefs, traditional titleholders and wealthy men of the age. During the pre-Islamic period, a grown-up boy's father chose his son's wife while the family head of the girl's family behaved alike. The age of marriage for the female was not an important factor. All the beautiful women in the society belonged to the king. They were caught compulsorily and taken to the palace. Those fortunate fellows whose daughters got married to the king were highly protected in the society. There was also no limit to the number of wives that an individual could get married to at a given time. Wife inheritance was also a common practice in the area, especially in the king's palace and with village chiefs.

During the pre-Islamic period, the bride wealth requirements that the son-in-law gave his father-in-law included fathoms of cloth, kitchen utensils (pots, spoons and knives), shovels, food of different varieties, goats, kolanuts, palm wine and some cowries. All these requirements amounted to about 200,000 F CFA. Before marriage was contracted in

those early days, the girls were expected to be virgins. The royal family alone was privileged to bring up its wives from the age of six to maturity.[13] Islam greatly influenced Bamum marriage customs. For instance, Islam advocates the liberty of the woman. Due to Islamic doctrine, Bamum women now choose their husbands. This is a sharp contrast to the pre-Islamic situation whereby husbands were imposed on women by the women's parents. Although Islam permits polygyny, the number of wives is limited to four and all the wives should be loved equally by their husbands. Islam has also influenced the Bamum bride wealth requirements. After its introduction, about two cutlasses, two hoes, a few dresses and approximate 12,000 F CFA has sufficed for bride wealth. The father of the young woman in some cases even builds a house for his son-in-law. All that the father of the woman wants is the happiness of his daughter in her matrimonial home. A devoted Muslim father-in-law would ask his son-in-law if he is a Muslim. If he is a Muslim, the father-in-law gives him the Holy Koran, a mat for praying and a rosary. This is a recent development in the Bamum Kingdom. In fact, the marriage institution has always been the place where a sound educational foundation is laid in the Bamum Kingdom.

Education was principally informal in nature before the introduction of Islam in Foumban. There existed a popular belief, which according to Firth, was that: For any society to be able to withstand the passing of time and its challenges, the elders have to teach the young the know-how of their socio-cultural, economic and political activities (Firth 1953:49). The type of education or teaching, which was given to the children in their early childhood in the Bamum Kingdom as well as in other traditional societies of Cameroon, was by their mothers, baby-sitters (brothers and sisters) and their fathers (Funteh 2003:68). This is how pre-colonial traditional education in Cameroon as a whole operated. Nevertheless, most skills were acquired by watching elders and beginning to act in like manner. The mothers went along with girl children when engaged in their socio-economic responsibilities. This was the forum for teaching them how to perfectly undertake female-related duties, especially the task of future leadership both in the family and in the community (ibid).

Part of the informal education was also in the hands of experts in basic skills. In most, if not all the Western Grassfield chiefdoms, vocational training like blacksmithing, traditional healing, priesthood, thatching, carving, pottery, and weaving was in the hands of experts. Parents entrusted their children to the professionals (in the case where the parents

themselves did not do these activities) who trained them in groups and individually. The introduction of Islam in Foumban greatly modified this informal education also.

The type of education introduced via Islam was formal in nature. This was through the introduction of a Koranic school in the region that laid emphasis on reading and writing. The first Koranic school was opened in Foumban during the reign of Sultan Njoya (Aboubakar 1981:246). The language of instruction used in the school was Arab. The three prominent Islamic scholars (marabous) who taught in the school were El Hadji Ibraham Njifekuop, El Hadji Aboubakar Sina and El Hadj Admau Ntiche (ibid:247). The duration of course remained largely indeterminate. The didactic materials used were very simple, the main ones being the wooden arm board and a feather (*Al-Calami*). In addition to the teaching of Arab, the language used by Muslims to pray to God (Allah), the girls who attended the school were also taught to be future obedient housewives, and in effect, the Koranic school produced obedient and submissive housewives (ibid:246). A tuition fee was either paid in cash or kind to the marabous, depending upon their wish. The pupils offered their instructors gifts that consisted of a cock, a tin of maize or any other food item available, while their parents paid small sums of money (peanuts). This was a stark contrast of the pre-Islamic situation in which the experts who taught children weaving and other crafts were not paid in any form and did not receive gifts.

As Islam influenced Bamum pre-colonial education so too it influenced its judiciary. The implementation of law, order and justice was the sole responsibility of the traditional council, headed by the king. The secret society known as *Ha-toumiah* executed the decision arrived at by the traditional council. Offences were classed into minor and major. Minor offences included disobedience to the chief, refusal to perform communal labour in the quarter or palace, fighting and refusal to settle a debt. Major cases included murder, rape, adultery, witchcraft and aggravated theft. The traditional council handled all these offences. The aim of the council was to foster solidarity and harmony amongst the Bamum. During the pre-Islamic period, the punishment for committing adultery with the king's wife or that of a village chief was murder while adultery with the wife of a non-title holder was subjected to a huge fine of several goats. Nowadays, although Islam does not permit adultery, according to Bamum Muslims, it also does not permit the murder of the adulterer. In this regard, the Bamum Muslims are in total contrast with the Islamic *sharia* law, which stipulates that any woman who is guilty of adultery

should be stoned to death. The Holy Koran strongly forbids murder and the judgement of man by a fellow man. The Muslims, therefore, introduced a new code of justice in the land. The Bamum Muslims were, and even today, advised to take the Holy Koran as their only source of reference in providing a long-lasting divine solution to all problems. Judgement and punishment of the defaulters to them was God's duty and not that of man.[14] Before the introduction of Islam, all the Bamum believed in the existence of several gods.

Although the Bamum practised polytheism, they however believed that one of the gods was supreme. They believed that the particular supreme God was invisible, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He was believed to be the creator of the sky, earth, water and everything found therein (Funteh 2003:70). He was also believed to operate through the other gods of the land such as the god of the mountain, sun, stone and hills. Ancestral worship was a common feature in their traditional belief system. All the Bamum poured libation with palm wine and palm oil. Palm oil libation signified fight or blood while palm wine libation was directed to the spirits. The Bamum believed that the world would come to an abrupt end one day through the submersion of the earth.

Following the introduction of Islam in the Bamum Kingdom, the Bamum traditional belief system changed slightly, although some Bamum Muslims still believe in the existence of several smaller gods.[15] I s l a m strongly forbids the pouring of libations. Bamum Muslims also have a different view towards the end of the world. There is, however, a remarkable difference between the views of Muslim literates and Muslim illiterates. The Muslim literates believe that the world comes to an end to a particular individual when he or she dies and not that there will ever be outright world destruction. On the contrary, elderly Bamum Muslim illiterates believe that the entire world is gradually coming to an end due to the social ills that currently prevail in Foumban such as oral sex, homosexualism, prostitution, nude pictures, women attending school, women holding posts of responsibility in the government, wife beating and women commanding their husbands.[16]

Turning to the cultural sphere, the Bamum traditional birth and death ceremonies and the activities surrounding them were also affected by the Islamic faith. The reaction of the people of the Western Grassfields (the Bamum inclusive) to the birth of a child into the society was an event of great importance.[17] It was an occasion for great jubilation and feasting.[18] Whenever a Bamum woman was pregnant, the entire family was happy, and on the day she started labour, a traditional birth

attendant or a traditional midwife attended to her. Happiness filled the hearts of the family concerned when the child emitted its first cry. The mother was immediately washed with warm water and ate a heavy scrumptious meal. After any successful birth, the father of the child organised a small feast that was attended by all the members of the child's maternal and paternal family.[19] The custom in Foumban and in many parts of the Western Grassfields provided that during the feast any person who learnt of the birth and happened to be returning from tapping palm wine, immediately surrendered the wine (no matter the quantity and purpose) to the family in question, for it was believed that palm wine was good for a breastfeeding mother as it increased the flow of her breast milk.

In fact, after childbirth, the woman was prohibited from doing any hard work for a period of about three months. If it was her first child, she was respected, pampered and kept in absolute confinement for a period of about five months. The naming of the child accompanied the joy of birth. The Bamum were very conscious of the implication of names. They named children in relation to certain local philosophies in the region. It was the responsibility of the maternal and paternal grandparents of the child to give its name but priority was given to the paternal grandfather. Some indigenous Bamum names include Chandinli, which means think of the last day, Mpahtouahnkaine, which means you will suffer and Mounchili, which means a child without a name.

However, since Islam was introduced in the area, no taper surrenders his palm wine to the family of a new born baby because the kingdom today is dominated by Muslims (it is estimated that 80% of the Bamum are Muslims, 8% protestants, 4% Catholics and 7% animists)[20] who no longer drink palm wine. Women no longer give birth at home as the case was during the pre-Islamic period. Some hospitals have been built in the region through Islamic aid. There was even an orphanage that trained young orphans on various petty trades. This orphanage was financed by Kuwait. But after the attack on the American Pentagon on 11 September 2001, Kuwait ceased financing the orphanage because the Cameroon Government insisted that aid from Muslim-dominated countries must pass through it before reaching wherever it was directed to. Islam also led to the introduction of new names among the Bamum such as Ibrahim, Soule, Adamu, Aboubakar, Seidou, Muhammad and others.

During the pre-Islamic period, when death occurred, the corpse was washed by old women[21] and buried with some herbs in the mouth and some tied in the palms. However, the burial of a king was different. After

digging his grave, his corpse was placed on the feet of at least four able-living men.[22] Nowadays, Islam forbids the burying of corpses with herbs in the mouth and palms. Through the Islamic influence, Sultan Njoya forbade the burying of a king with living people because he considered the practice to be a form of slavery. There is a small degree of burial segregation in the area. Although the Muslims bury Christians and animists, the Bamum Muslims who have along beard, referred to as a *Wahab*[23] do not bury the non-Muslims.[24] Islam introduced this burial segregation because before its introduction, all the Bamum buried their fellow countrymen.

Furthermore, before the introduction of Islam in Foumban, all the Bamum were pork eaters. But today Bamum Muslims no longer eat pork because the Holy Koran strongly forbids Muslims from consuming it. Bamum Muslims respect the taboo because they believe that the pig is a dirty animal, hence unfit to be eaten by a Muslim who is a clean person.[25] Muslims also believe that pork consumption defiles them.

Perhaps the most visible impact of Islam in Foumban is on the dressing pattern of the people. Before the introduction of Islam, dressing was not a complex issue in the region. Women and men wore a loincloth, wrapped round the buttocks and chest, while the children below the ages of 10 put on virtually nothing. The unprivileged men and women wore small cotton strips of cloth, which covered only their genitals. The rich men appeared at the dancing ground with special loincloths made of many strips of cotton woven locally. This was the prevailing situation in the Bamum kingdom and in many parts of the Western Grassfields.[26] Prestigious men put on an iron necklace, blue and white porcelain beads and brass rings on their fingers. Prestigious women on their part put cowry shells in their hair, and on their wrists and ankles.[27] However, when Islam was introduced, the early Muslim Hausa merchants from Northern Nigeria who contributed enormously to spreading Islam in the Bamum country introduced and imposed modern wrappers for the women, and caps and long gowns that fell to the ankles or knees for the men. These Nigerian Hausa merchants, who were themselves the sellers of these Muslim-fashioned dresses, imposed the idea in the area that if the Bamum Muslims did not wear these foreign dresses, then Allah (God) would not take their prayer seriously.[28]

Before the introduction of Islam, shrines were the sole places of worship in the Bamum Kingdom. This was the sacred place where different gods were worshipped. Following the acceptance of Islam by the Bamum, the Muslims introduced the traditional Muslim Mosque in the region. Today, the mosque is the most conspicuous place of worship in the entire region.

Islamic influence has also been felt in the political domain. Before the introduction of Islam, at the head of the political organisation was found the king. He was the owner of the land and the commander of the entire Bamum populace. The Muslims introduced the title of Sultan that the king bears today.[29] Because the title Sultan is limited to the commander of the Muslim faithful, some Bamum prefer to refer to the Sultan as King-Sultan of the Bamum. This is a recent appellation in the area that has emanated from the introduction of Islam in the region.

Summary

Each human being is surely governed by certain beliefs or laws. Some of the beliefs or laws, if not all, are obtained from religious standpoints, for instance, from Judaism, Buddhism, Jehovah Witness, African traditional belief systems, Christianity or Islam. Islam – the religion we have discussed – has played a major role in transforming behavioural patterns in the world. Similarly, it has transformed behavioural patterns in Foumban. However, it is not only the behaviour of the Bamum that has changed. The religion has influenced the area politically, economically and socio-culturally. In the economic sphere, Islam helped in the introduction of the donkey in the region. Before the introduction of the donkey via the Islamic inspiration of Sultan Njoya, the Bamum themselves carried their kings from the Bamum country to wherever he intended to go. The introduction of the donkey did not only aid in the transportation of the king to wherever he went, but also helped in the transportation of economic commodities. This greatly reduced the burden of the Bamum. Still in the economic sphere, the Muslims introduced new manufacturing techniques in the region. The introduction of these new manufacturing techniques provided more employment opportunities for the Bamum.

Prior to the penetration of Islam in the Bamum Kingdom, the Bamum social life was woven in with many social institutions, namely, education, religion and marriage. The marriage institution, in particular, was infested with a lot of tenets. Monogamy and polygyny were practised, but the later remained very popular among the influential individuals due to the socio-economic benefits they derived from it. The pre-Islamic education was informal in nature, but Islam introduced the formal type. The early Muslims introduced formal education in the area through Koranic schools where the first Bamum were taught how to read and write. This was a positive consequence, as it paved the way for the pursuit of Western education in the area. The introduction of formal education in the kingdom was in fact, a gradual step to the eradication of illiteracy that plagued the region. The Bamum religion was characterised by

polytheistic features. With the introduction of Islam, many innovations were made regarding the social life of the people. In relation to marriage, although Islam advocated polygyny, it limited the number of wives that a Muslim could marry to four. Muslims introduced modern long gowns that fall to the knee and round caps of different colours. The wearing of such long gowns enabled the Bamum Muslims to appear in uniformity with the other Muslims of Northern Cameroon. If the Bamum are living a modern life today and integrating with ease in modern Cameroon society, it is thanks to the Islamic faith.

Notes

1. Otherwise stated in this paper, Foumban will not only stand for the capital of the Bamum Kingdom, it will designate the total area that is inhabited by the Bamum. The same area is also henceforth referred to as the Bamum Kingdom.

2. The term Tikar was popularised by the British Administration and applied to those populations of the east and central Bamenda Grassfields whose dynasties claimed an origin from the region o f the Upper Mbam River and its tributaries. Some of these populations describe their place of origin as 'Tikari', some as 'Ndobo' and some as 'Kimi' or Rifum - Kimi being the modern Tikar chief of Bankim or Kimi and Rifum its lakeside coronation site. The term Ndobo, at least at the early part of the 20th century, referred to the area lying North of Bamum and South of Banyo. The name in the form of Mundop was applied by the immigrant Kimi dynasty from Mbum to the people among whom it settled, the Ndop Administrative Area in the Bamenda Grassfields acquired its name after the first British Assessment in 1925 because of some dynastic claims to Ndobo origin. Among the later should also be included the Bafut, Kom and Bambili dysnasties. It may be significant that the dynasties which specifically claim Ndobo origin and do not mention Kimi or Rifum are in Central and South Bamenda; the papiakum dynasty (and those of some Bamileke chiefdoms such as Bagam and Bangante) claim Rifum origins, as do those of Nso, Ntem and the Tikar hamlets on the Banyo border. For more elaboration of the term Tikar and more groups that claim origin to it, and some puzzling things about these claims, see E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kabbery, Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields (Buea: Government Printer, 1967), p.23.

3. Mathias Livinus Niba, "Nationalism in the Southern Cameroons, 1939-1959 (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1986), p. 16. These peoples share a common political system of centralised monarchies backed up by ubiquitous secret societies.

4. What used to be the Nso state, of which the Fondom of Nso was the core, is today represented by the Bui Division of the North West Province of Cameroon. It is 2,300 square kilometres in area. In 1953, it had a population of over 50, 000 inhabitants, according to the colonial census of that year. In 1971, the population of the same area was estimated at 105, 000. The 1976 national census of Cameroon put the population of Bui Division at about 142,000. Today's estimates put it at 200,000. The state of Nso was a composite polity. It comprised the Nso Fondom (Kingdom), the core and founder of the state. The capital of the Division Kimbo (Kumbo), also the capital of the Nso Fondom is located at the centre of both. It has the Nto' (palace), the headquarters of some of the important associations, the main market, and a large residential population. Beyond the capital in all directions, there are very many villages of Nso proper. These villages are made up of patriclans and patrilineages. Except for the Won nto' or royal clan. The Nso clan is not an exogamous unit, and members are dispersed throughout a number of villages. The exogamous localised unit is the patrilieange, a number of whose male members occupy a single compound controlled by a lineage head having the title Shuufaay, Faay or Sheey (lordling). For a further description of Nso state, see Bongfen Chem-Langhee, The Shuufaayship of Professor Bernard Nsokika Fonlon (Yaounde: CEPER, 1989), pp.-6-30.

5. Thierno Mouctar Bah, "Guerre Pouvoir et Société dans L'Afrique Pre-Coloniale (Entre Le Lac Tchad et La Cote du Cameroun)" (Ph. D. thesis, University of Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne, 1985), p.149. Njimon is the place where the Bamum as a people under Nchare leadership assumed a separate political identity. As an ancient capital, Njimom has until today remained a spiritual centre of the Bamum.

6. In order of succession, the kings who have ruled the Bamum Kingdom are Nchare Yen 1394-1418, Ngouopou 1418-1461, Monjou 1461-1498, Mengap 1498-1519, Ngouh1 1519-1544, Fifen 1544-1568, Ngouh11 1568-1590, Ngapna 1590-1629, Ngouloure 1629-1672, Nouotou 1672-1757, Mbwombwo 1757-1814, Gbethnkom 1814-1817, Mbiekouo 1817-1818, Ngouhouo 1818-1863, Ngoungoure 30 minutes, Nsangou 1863-1889, Njoya Ibrahim 1889-1933, El Hadj Seidou 1933-1992 and Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya 1992-present.

7. Interview with Adama Mande, housewife, aged 60 years, Koutaba, 22 October 2007.

8. Personal observation of the hulling mill at the palace of the Sultan of Foumban. During mouth swabs samples collection in Foumban, Loveline Lum, Veeremah Krishna and I had the opportunity to visit the Foumban palace where we were shown the old hulling mill that sultan Njoya invented and the bones of the war victims who were killed during the Mbwombwo's wars, the wars that extended the frontiers of the Bamum Kingdom.

9. Interview with Mounchili Ibraham, researcher, aged 33 years, Foumban, 7 October 2007.
10. According to the Bamum Muslims, selling the non-Muslims into slavery was but normal as they considered the non-Muslims to be infidels and Pagans. Selling them into slavery was therefore not a sin.
11. Interview with Ibrahim.
12. Interview with Ibrahim.
13. Interview with Mohammad Ayiatou, farmer, aged 60 years, Malantouan, 17 October 2007.
14. Interview with Zacharie Sangou, aged 55 years, farmer, Koutaba, 11 September 2007.
15. Interview with Alidou, trader, aged 64 years, Foumban, 13 October 2007.
16. Interview with Ibrahim.
17. It was and still is considered an event of great importance because the baby is believed to bring luck into the family where it is born.
18. Robin Horton, "Ritual Man in Africa," Africa 34 (April 1964): 85-96.
19. Funteh, "Pre-colonial Society," p. 101.
20. Aboubakar, "L'Islam en pays Bamum," p.233.
21. The Bamum believe that the water that is used to wash a corpse is very poisonous and as such, young women who often have quick temper are prevented from washing corpses because of fear that they can use the water to poison people.
22. The Bamum believed that the living men were to continue serving the king as servants in the world where his soul went.
23. Wahab was a devoted Muslim from Saudi Arabia who propounded the Islamic doctrine (Sunnite), that Islam should be practiced just the same way as Muhammad the founder did. The wives of the Muslims who practice this doctrine dress always on black and cover all parts of their bodies except the eyes.
24. Interview with Benjamin Lebuoh, farmer, aged 66 years, Foumban, 23 October 2007.
25. All the Bamum Muslim informants shared this opinion.
26. Funteh, "Pre-colonial Society," p.110.
27. Interview with Adamam Mande, housewife, aged 60 years, Koutaba, 22 October 2007.
28. ibid.
29. Interview with Emmanuel Mboumbouo, herbalist, aged 50 years, Yaounde, 17 October 2007.

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