

**Abundant Life and Basic Needs:  
African Religions as a Resource for Sustainable Development,  
with special reference to Shona Religion**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	v
Statement of Authorship .....	vi
Curriculum Vitae .....	vii
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	ix
Theses of the Dissertation .....	xiii
Dissertationsthesen .....	xx
Abstract.....	xxviii
Chapter 1: General Introduction .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The Problem .....	4
1.3 Hypothesis .....	6
1.4 Area of Investigation.....	6
1.5 Justification .....	8
1.6 Aim and Objectives .....	10
1.7 Methodology.....	10
1.8 Description of the Field Research Process .....	11
1.9 Scope of Study .....	13
1.10 Survey .....	14
1.11 Conclusion .....	14
Chapter 2: Abundant Life Realized in Shona Religion .....	15
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 A Brief History of the Shona People .....	15
2.3 Shona Religion as an African Religion .....	18
2.4 The Shona Religion.....	19
2.5 Abundant Life in Shona Religion .....	26
2.6 Shona Anthropology .....	29

2.7 Threats to Abundant Life in Shona Religion .....	29
2.8 Mundane World and Nature in Shona Religion.....	32
2.9 The Kinship of the Shona World .....	33
2.10 The Family in Shona Religion .....	34
2.11 Shona Family and Gender Equality.....	36
2.12 Marriage in Shona Religion .....	39
2.13 Community in Shona Religion .....	40
2.14 Shona Religion's Perspectives on Development .....	41
2.15 The Indicators of Development in the Life and Thought of Shona Religion...	44
2.16 Education as an Agent of Development in Shona Religion.....	47
2.17 The Institution of Avoidance Rules in Shona Religion .....	52
2.18 Taking Shona Indigenous Knowledge Systems Seriously in Development.....	57
2.19 Conclusion .....	62
<b>Chapter 3: The Basic Needs Development Strategy.....</b>	<b>65</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	65
3.2 A Definition of Development .....	65
3.3 A Brief History of the Basic Needs Development Strategy .....	67
3.4 The Concept of Sustainable Development.....	84
3.5 Derogatory Presentations of African Religions and Its Absence From Development Practices .....	96
3.6 Institutional Policies and Scientific Reductionism to African Religions.....	98
3.7 Towards a New Relationship Between African Religions and Development....	104
3.8 Conclusion .....	110
<b>Chapter 4: State, Religion and Development in Zimbabwe.....</b>	<b>111</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	111
4.2 A Brief History of Zimbabwe .....	112
4.3 Political Structures 1980–2016 .....	116
4.4 Economic and Social Development Programs in Zimbabwe Since Independence.....	120
4.5 Chiefs, Headmen and Indigenous Religion in Development.....	129
4.6 NGOs and FBOs on Indigenous Religion and Development .....	159

4.7 Religious Experts on Indigenous Religion and Development.....	174
4.8 Conclusion .....	190
<b>Chapter 5: The Cultural Resources of Shona Religion for Development</b>	<b>192</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	192
5.2 Abundant Life in Shona Proverbs .....	193
5.3 Abundant Life in Shona Songs .....	203
5.4 Traces of Abundant Life in Shona Idioms.....	237
5.5 Shona Prayers for Abundant Life.....	243
5.6 Conclusion .....	235
<b>Chapter 6: A Way Forward: Shona Religion and Development.....</b>	<b>238</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	238
6.2 The Importance, Persistence, and Uniqueness of Shona Religion .....	238
6.3 Shona Religious Elements and Their Positive Impact in Development.....	247
6.4 Recommendations .....	249
6.5 Conclusion .....	252
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>255</b>
List of Formal Interviews .....	255
Interview Guide Schedule for All Interviewees .....	256
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>259</b>

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the poor majority in Zimbabwe in particular and in Africa generally.

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## **STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby certify that this doctoral thesis has been composed by myself, and describes my own work, unless otherwise acknowledged in the text.

All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information have been specifically acknowledged. It has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADB	African Development Bank
AEEP	African European Energy Partnership
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AgriBank	Agricultural Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AMDC	African Minerals Development Centre
ANC	African National Congress
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
APSOs	African Peace Support Operations
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BBA	Bread Basket of Africa
BIOPAMA	Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management
BN	Basic Needs
CAADP	African Agricultural Development Program
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CD	Community Development
CNC	Chiefs Native Commissioners
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECF	Electoral Commissions Forum
EEA	European Environment Agency
EOMs	Election Observation Missions
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
ESS	Environmental Software and Services
EU	European Union
EUC	European Union Commission

FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
FIOs	Faith Initiated Organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNP	Gross National Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HIR	Harvard International Review
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HREA	Human Rights Education Associate
ICSTA	International Conference on Science and Technology in Africa
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGOs	International Governmental Organizations
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JAES	Joint Africa European Union Strategy
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MMPZ	Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe
NATPHARM	National Pharmaceutical Company
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEDPP	National Economic Development Priority Program
NERP	National Economic Revival Program
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIEO	New International Economic Order
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
PF ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
PSUP	Participatory Slum Upgrading Program

RBM	Results Based Management
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises Development
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UA	Unity Accord
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference for Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECLAC	United Nations of the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WBCSD	World Business Council on Sustainable Development
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WEC	World Employment Conference
WMIS	Willowvale Motor Industry Scandal
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZCDP	Zimbabwe Country Dialogue Paper
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZHRW	Zimbabwe Human Right Watchdogs
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZTNDP	Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan
ZWP	Zambezi Water Project

ZWVA Zimbabwe War Veterans Association

## THESES OF THE DISSERTATION

### **1. African Nations' indigenous religious beliefs provide the resource base for decision-making on development initiatives.**

Zimbabwe is secularized at the level of state but not at the level of community. Therefore, communities remain replete with indigenous beliefs, practices and knowledge systems, thereby making them sacralized. Indigenous religious beliefs and practices have not declined and indigenous peoples are still in communion with their ancestors and the supreme life force (*Mwari*). That the Zimbabwean communities have marginalized, sidelined and abandoned their indigenous religious beliefs and practices where they were born into is a contested view. Indigenous religion and spirituality remain crucial factors wherever, local people define, initiate, adopt, oppose, or circumvent development processes. It is important to note that development programs and projects in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa have been credited to the development agencies, be they governmental or non-governmental organizations. However, these developmental initiatives cannot be successful without a high degree of cooperation of the indigenous peoples. A constructive analysis of the cooperation of the local peoples in Zimbabwe with these initiatives will demonstrate that this cooperation goes beyond simple participation in development programs. The indigenous peoples go a step further to invoke the Shona religious beliefs, in the form of values, and mystical practices, without whose invocation they believe success cannot be guaranteed. This success is anchored in communities' harmonious relationship with the supreme life force (*Mwari*), the ancestors, the gods and other spirit beings like *Midzimu* (medium spirits). This is because in their worldview these beings can **make** and **unmake**.

### **2. A Community belief system facilitates and provides a favorable environment for sustainable development.**

Shona belief systems bind the community together and through these beliefs, there is solidarity, unity, and peace in the community. Development initiatives are sustainable in a peaceful environment. These beliefs have an impact on how Shona people make sense of the universe and their place in it. They have positive effects on their day-to-day activities and on their relationships, on human dignity as well as on living in peace with their environment. They encourage strength of the family unit and community cohesion, which are intertwined with religious practices and beliefs. The regular practice of indigenous religious values, norms and beliefs helps poor people move out of poverty. Shona religious beliefs generally inoculate indigenous people against a host of social ills that impede development. These beliefs contribute substantially to the formation of *unhu* (personhood), or moral character and sound moral judgment. Moral behavior increases longevity and lessens the likelihood of contracting diseases like HIV and AIDS,

as well as other killer diseases that threaten human development. A community with a shared belief system or worldview can easily come together in development activities.

**3. The development theories implemented in Africa, generally, and in Zimbabwe, specifically after World War Two have not fundamentally reduced high levels of extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequality, as perceived by both the external and internal development strategists.**

The three development theories –modernization, dependency, and world-systems – are interconnected somehow, striving to maintain the status quo of the developing nations as being underdeveloped which is expressed by high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities. Globalization theory's main characteristics are hegemony, implicit epistemologies, non-homogeneity, forced cultural adaptation, profiteering, wealth accumulation, monopoly, political and economic dominance, social and religious dominance. Globalization has faced resistance in some nation-states through anti-globalization movements. It is hailed as a central axis of social change that never happened before. Culturally, it can be explicitly noted as a reciprocal movement from the core nations to the peripheral nations and from the peripheral nations to the core nations. However, implicitly the world trends analysis shows that the weaker nations (peripheral) are at the receiving end instead of being givers. This is compounded by historical factors which have witnessed centuries of hegemony on the peripheral nations by the core nations, and this hegemony was and/or is in all dimensions a vicious cycle of inequalities which will never end. The Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) was “adopted across Africa and the rest of the world in the 1990s in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank prescriptions. ESAP was neoliberal market-driven policy measures which were adopted as prescriptive solutions to the economic crises of the 1980s. They also sought to reverse the expansionary policies of the 1960s and 1970s which had resulted in big governments” (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). Subsequently, the unemployment rate in Africa generally, and Zimbabwe, specifically, was rising. The growing unemployment threatened the survival of many families. For the first time in the history of Zimbabwe, the standard of living for the majority declined and poverty was and/or is still on the increase.

**4. Open denigration of indigenous African religions and worldviews as obstacles to development has caused the unsustainability of development programs and projects in Africa, generally, and Zimbabwe, specifically.**

The derogatory presentations of African religions began already by the early explorers and writers on Africa: in their descriptions of the African peoples they barely appreciated their religion. They made entries in their journals and these entries did not go be-

yond references to places, objects or personages. Indigenous religious materials, especially ritual objects, and symbols forms particularly caught their fancy because they were exotic. They had not witnessed religious temples, churches or mosques and hence, they raised serious doubts as to whether the Africans had any religion at all. African religions, as a result, have been subjected to misrepresentation, underestimation, and basic stigmatization. This has been based on the so-called common sense of the western countries. The representation of Africa as a continent devoid of its own profound spiritual dimension or of a religion worthy of its name goes to complete the picture of an Africa whose inhabitants and communities would be entwined in an inextricable tangle of often cruel and bloody ancestral rites, superstitions, absurd and childish beliefs and atavistic fears which block their personal capabilities, initiative and developmental possibilities (Mezzana 2002: 1f). However, the whole approach towards African religions is marred with methodological and theoretical errors which include evolutionism, which defines African beliefs as being at the most primitive stage of the spiritual evolution of a people, featuring practices termed derogatorily as animist, fetishist, pagan, and idolatrous (*ibid*: 2). The aforesaid examples of derogatory presentations of African religions and African peoples have supported their absence from development practices. Consequently, development tended to be either from a Euro-Western or Christian bias, both, by nature intolerant of African religions. Derogatory presentations of African religions and its absence from development practices are dark clouds currently hovering across the African continent. Is not it startling that, the more developmental projects and agencies there are in Zimbabwe and other African countries, the higher the poverty rates and more unsustainable the development efforts become?

##### **5. The incorporation of indigenous African peoples' religions, spiritualities, knowledge systems and milieus guarantees the success of development in communities.**

The systematic avoidance of religion (especially African religions) despite its significance in development policies, literature, and practices for many centuries led to a deliberate hegemony of Euro-Western epistemology on the African continent. As for Lebakeng, African development is drowning in reductionist and secular ideologies that dismiss the cultural and spiritual realities of African peoples. For that reason, it was asserted that by overtly denigrating indigenous African knowledge and worldviews as obstacles to development, reductionist and positivist developments remain incoherent and meaningless to African peoples. Their epistemology, ontology and axiology rejects the very essence of local African life – a spiritualized relationship to the universe. Yet, with spirituality central to African epistemologies and worldviews, Euro-Western reductionist and positivist development has engendered a widespread African epistemicide: destroying valuable cultural and social resources necessary for the well-being and cultural continuity of the African peoples (Lebakeng 2010: 24-29 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 2).

If development is to truly benefit African peoples, it must incorporate and reflect the cosmology and beliefs of local peoples. This means exploring the ways in which development combined with a spiritualized worldview can contribute to the cultural, social and moral survival and development of the continent (*ibid*).

**6. There has been a long marginalization of the role of religion in development organizations' policies as is shown in the history of development in Zimbabwe. This was created by attributing the role of modernity, secularist and scientific approaches to development.**

For most African peoples in the Southern Hemisphere, religion is integral to their understanding of the world and their place in it. Therefore, it is central to the decisions they make about their own and their communities' development. Given the apparently integral link between religion and issues central to development, it would seem reasonable that religion would occupy a relatively prominent place in development theory and practices. However, the subject is conspicuously under-represented in development literature and in the policies and programs of development organizations. Beek also establishes that development agencies have avoided the issue of spirituality and religion in development – organizations have no policies to deal with religious issues in their programs. He had surveyed several of the largest development organizations to determine their policies toward spirituality and religious issues in development (Beek 2000: 38). The US Agency for International Development (USAID), one of the world's most influential donors, states that it is USAID policy not to finance activities with a significant religious purpose or content. CARE, one of the largest US development NGOs does not have a policy on spirituality and religion. It is stated that 'CARE' is non-sectarian, and discussing spiritual or religious beliefs is not part of their programs. They concentrate on the physical and social well-being of communities. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an NGO directly controlled by the US Catholic Church, states that discussions about the religious beliefs of their staff or of program participants are not part of CRS' programming efforts (*ibid*). This shows how divorced these organizations are from the religion of the indigenous people they are dealing with. This results in a failure to explore the community problems and the potential solutions. Likewise, it was observed that such avoidance weakens the individuals' and communities' capacities to determine their own values and priorities in development. The organisations fail to understand the people whom they wish to help and devalue the very thing that may give them strength and hope to participate in development activities (*ibid*: 39). The economic and social development programs implemented by the Government of Zimbabwe since independence (1980) to the present have not considered or incorporated indigenous religious beliefs into development policies. Considering this situation, it has become increasingly clear that development programs implemented by the government were biased towards scientific and technological approaches, marginalizing spiritual cap-

ital as a factor in facilitating development. However, spiritual capitals have a measurable impact on individuals, communities and societies in the world.

**7. The success of development programs and projects in Zimbabwean communities and Africa generally, need the cooperation of the Government, Development institutions and Traditional leaders.**

The working relations between traditional leaders (chiefs), the government, NGOs, and FBOs are highly polarized. They are characterized by mistrust, suspicion and in some instances outright animosity, with the latter dismissing the former as irrelevant or even an obstacle to development programs. In most cases, chiefs are sidelined because the state is involved in the negotiation of contracts and licensing. Local traditional leaders at times are caught by surprise when the investors are already making their surveys and at times exploiting or working on the land without their knowledge. For development programs and projects to successfully takeoff, there is a need for the concerned stakeholders of that nation to work together harmoniously. This alone will improve their people's living standards in all aspects. The government, NGOs, and FBOs should seriously work hand in glove with traditional leaders who know the needs and aspirations of their communities. Therefore, for sustainable development to prevail and for uplifting living standards of communities, traditional leaders who are gatekeepers to the community should remain apolitical and stop accepting gifts that will see them compromising their work ethics. Furthermore, there is a clear need for co-operation that takes cognizance of religious and knowledge systems in inclusive and pluralistic models.

**8. In the face of mysterious challenges from unsuccessful development programs and projects, development agents such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith based organizations (FBOs) and Investors incorporate indigenous traditional leadership through the Government.**

The task of the chief is to uphold the religion and culture of the indigenous people. Shona religion (African Religions) must be paid attention to. When the development organizations want to implement any program in the community they should first consult the chief so that he can inform the ancestors and then tell them which areas are sacred and into which they can go freely, and what the people in the area believe in. If development organizations do not do this, their machines will break and mysterious things will happen. Currently, there are problems in Zimbabwe because chiefs are not respected and considered in development planning and implementation. It should be highlighted that these mysterious experiences are not superstitions as development practitioners might perceive from a scientific point of view. This is real, and many development projects and programs failed for ignoring and disrespecting indigenous reli-

gious beliefs. Take for instance, the Pungwe Water Project which supplies safe drinking water to the city of Mutare, or Osborne Dam, which supplies irrigation water to the people of Odzi in Mutasa district, in Manicaland province, where initial failures took place because indigenous religious beliefs were ignored. It was only after the Chiefs Tangwena and Mutasa respectively were consulted that the projects succeeded. The 'Chiadzwa Diamonds Project' in Mutare, failed to take off because the development investors in cohort with the leadership of the Ministry of Mines ignored indigenous people's religious belief systems by not involving chiefs. When they saw that they failed to mine diamonds, they called the chiefs to perform rituals to pave the way for the investors to extract diamond minerals.

**9. Indigenous African peoples' cultural resources such as proverbs, songs, idioms and prayers are rife with models of Abundant Life which propels human development.**

Proverbs whereby leaders are presented as serving their community by restoring the wholeness of life, and by practicing indigenous forms of democracy and participation promote the ideal of good leadership and good governance. There are proverbs that promote communal unity – if there is no unity that translates into peace and harmony in the community, there is no sustainable development at all, but where there is peace, there is development. Hence proverbs stimulating communal unity are significant tools or keys in Shona culture because they foster the spirit of humanness, thereby reinforcing the idea of the fullness of life. Considering proverbs promoting good moral behaviors, "Unhu" is the fundamental moral concept pointing to powers that preserve life as well as guarantee the continuous transfer of health from generation to generation. In the midst of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, good moral behaviors are important for abundant life. Likewise, songs giving expression to protest, praise, and sorrow were analyzed, and the fundamental findings show that songs are great tools to raise awareness, to educate, to revive and to bring back life to broken spirits, whereby they contribute to ascertaining the fullness of life. Idioms are important for serving to sustain human life by cautioning about situations where life is threatened or is in danger. They transmit and communicate the ideal of life in its fullness. Finally, Shona prayers and rituals have depicted that Shona culture gives precedence to the fullness of life and preserves it by all means.

**10. Proselytization of Africans generally and Zimbabweans specifically was aimed to completely supplant and uproot the indigenous people's religious belief systems and culture. The importance, persistence and uniqueness of Shona religion and spirituality are undisputed.**

Shona religion was and/or is still marginalized, sidelined, and left at the periphery, whilst the attention is focused only on the so-called ‘proselytizing major world religions’ (such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). Considering the historical developments on the African continent, it is an undisputed truism that Shona religion in Zimbabwe struggled against many negative exponents who were targeting to completely supplant and uproot the indigenous people’s religious belief systems. Surprisingly, Shona religion as we know it contemporarily is far from disappearing from Zimbabwean communities.

**11. Shona religious elements and practices have a positive impact on development. Therefore, Shona religion is a resource for sustainable development, hence should be incorporated into development discourses.**

Like any other religion in the world, Shona religion has a social, economic, and political impact. The indigenous traditional beliefs have an impact in transforming individuals’ hearts and this inner transformation is taken as a necessary condition for changing the society. Therefore, community belief systems, rituals, ethics, and sacredness, among others, are indigenous religion’s elements that have a positive impact on development. This being the case, the overall positive impact of Shona religious beliefs and practices are fundamental in development discourses. The beliefs and practices appear to have an enormous potential for addressing social vices that impede sustainable development. In that respect, it is important to point out that Shona religion is a resource in facilitating development. Such evidence indicates clearly that indigenous religious beliefs and practices contribute significantly to good living standards of the Zimbabweans. Shona religious beliefs contain a balanced development approach that considers the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the development process.

## DISSERTATIONSTHESEN

### 1. Die indigenen Glaubensüberzeugungen afrikanischer Länder liefern die Grundlage für die Entscheidungsfindung bei Entwicklungsinitiativen.

Auf staatlicher Ebene ist Zimbabwe säkularisiert, nicht aber auf der Ebene ihrer Gemeinschaften. Diese sind noch immer erfüllt von indigenen Glaubensüberzeugungen, Praktiken und Wissenssystemen und darum sakralisiert. Indigene Glaubensüberzeugungen und Praktiken haben nicht abgenommen, und die einheimischen Menschen leben noch immer in Gemeinschaft mit ihren Vorfahren und der Allerhöchsten Lebenskraft (*Mwari*). Dass die zimbabwischen Gemeinschaften ihre indigenen Glaubensüberzeugungen, in die sie hineingeboren wurden, marginalisiert, zur Seite geschoben und verlassen haben, ist eine umstrittene Ansicht. Indigene Religion und Spiritualität bleiben überall dort ausschlaggebende Faktoren, wo die lokale Bevölkerung Entwicklungsprozesse bestimmt, einleitet, übernimmt, sich ihnen entgegenstellt oder zu umgehen sucht. Es ist zu beachten, dass die Entwicklungsprogramme und -projekte in Zimbabwe und anderen Regionen Afrikas den Entwicklungsorganisationen – Regierungs- oder Nichtregierungsorganisationen – zugerechnet wurden. Diese Entwicklungsinitiativen können jedoch ohne eine hohe Bereitschaft zur Kooperation seitens der lokalen Bevölkerung nicht erfolgreich sein. Eine konstruktive Analyse der Kooperation der lokalen Bevölkerung in Zimbabwe mit diesen Initiativen wird aufzeigen, dass diese Kooperation die einfache Teilnahme an Entwicklungsprogrammen übersteigt. Die indigenen Völker gehen weiter, indem sie sich auf die religiösen Überzeugungen der Shona beziehen – in Wertvorstellungen und mystischen Praktiken, ohne die ein Gelingen nicht gesichert werden kann, wie sie glauben. Dieses Gelingen wird gewährleistet durch eine harmonische Beziehung der Gemeinschaften zur Allerhöchsten Lebenskraft (*Mwari*), den Vorfahren, den Göttern und anderen Geistwesen wie Midzimu (Geistmedien). Ihrer Weltanschauung zufolge können diese Wesen **schaffen** und **vernichten** [make and unmake].

### 2. Das Glaubenssystem einer Gemeinschaft erleichtert nachhaltige Entwicklung und stellt eine ihr förderliche Umgebung zur Verfügung.

Die Glaubensüberzeugungen der Shona binden die Gemeinschaft zusammen; aufgrund dieser Überzeugungen gibt es Solidarität, Einheit und Frieden in der Gemeinschaft. In einer friedlichen Umgebung sind Entwicklungsinitiativen nachhaltig. Diese Glaubensüberzeugungen wirken sich auf das Verständnis der Shona von der Welt und von ihrem Platz in ihr aus. Sie haben positive Auswirkungen auf ihre alltäglichen Aktivitäten und auf ihre Beziehungen, auf ihre Vorstellung von der Würde des Menschen und auf ein Leben im Einklang mit der Umwelt. Sie fördern den Zusammenhalt von Familie und Gemeinschaft, indem sie mit religiösen Praktiken und Glaubensüberzeugungen verwo-

ben werden. Die regelmäßige Praxis indigener religiöser Werte, Normen und Glaubensüberzeugungen hilft armen Menschen, den Weg aus der Armut zu finden. Die Glaubensüberzeugungen der Shona schützen die einheimischen Leute im Allgemeinen gegen eine Unzahl sozialer Missstände, die Entwicklung verhindern. Diese Überzeugungen tragen erheblich bei zur Bildung von *unhu* (Persönlichkeit) bzw. sittlichem Charakter und vernünftigem Urteilsvermögen. Sittliches Verhalten befördert die Lebenserwartung und vermindert die Wahrscheinlichkeit, sich Krankheiten zuzuziehen, wie etwa HIV und AIDS, oder andere tödlichen Krankheiten, die die menschliche Entwicklung gefährden. Eine Gemeinschaft mit gemeinsamem Glaubenssystem bzw. Weltanschauung kann in Entwicklungsmaßnahmen leichter zusammenfinden.

3. **Die Entwicklungstheorien, die in Afrika im Allgemeinen, und in Zimbabwe seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg im Besonderen, ihre Umsetzung fanden, haben nicht grundsätzlich etwas an den hohen Raten von äußerster Armut und Arbeitslosigkeit verändern können: So die Beobachtung sowohl externer wie auch interner Entwicklungsstrategen.**

Die drei Entwicklungstheorien – Modernisierung, Abhängigkeit, Weltsystem – sind gewissermaßen miteinander verbunden: Sie suchen, den Status quo der Entwicklungsländer als unterentwickelte, wie er sich in hohen Raten von Armut, Arbeitslosigkeit und Ungleichheit ausdrückt, aufrechtzuerhalten. Die wesentlichen Charakteristika der Globalisierungstheorie sind: Hegemonie, implizite Epistemologien, Ungleichmäßigkeit, erzwungene kulturelle Adaption, Profitstreben, Vermögensbildung, Monopolstellung, politische und ökonomische Dominanz, soziale und religiöse Dominanz. Die Globalisierung stieß in manchen Ländern auf den Widerstand von Anti-Globalisierungsbewegungen. Sie wird als ein Angelpunkt von noch nie dagewesener sozialer Veränderung gepriesen. Sie kann in kultureller Hinsicht begriffen werden als reziproke Bewegung von den Kern-Staaten hin zu den peripheren Staaten und vice versa. Die Welt-Trend-Analyse jedoch zeigt, dass die schwächeren, peripheren Staaten Empfänger statt Geber sind. Hinzu kommt der geschichtliche Faktor einer jahrhundertelangen Hegemonie der Kern-Staaten über die peripheren Staaten, und diese Hegemonie war bzw. ist in all ihren Dimensionen ein Teufelskreis der Ungleichheit, der nie enden wird. Das ‚Economic Structural Adjustment Program‘ (ESAP) wurde „überall in Afrika und dem Rest der Welt in den 1990er Jahren angewandt, in Übereinstimmung mit Vorschriften des Internationalen Währungsfonds (IWF) und der Weltbank. ESAP bestand aus neoliberalen, marktorientierten politischen Maßnahmen, die als Lösung für die ökonomischen Krisen der 1980er verordnet wurden. Es wurde damit auch versucht, die expansive Politik der 1960er und 1970er rückgängig zu machen, die zu großen Staatsapparaten geführt hatte“ (Zhou und Zvoushe 2012: 212-222 [im Original Englisch]). In der Folge stieg die Arbeitslosenrate in Afrika, und insbesondere in Zimbabwe, an. Wachsende Arbeitslosigkeit bedrohte das Überleben vieler Familien. Zum ersten

Mal in der Geschichte Zimbabwes nahm der Lebensstandard für die Mehrheit ab, und Armut nahm bzw. nimmt noch immer zu.

**4. Die unverhohlene Herabwürdigung indigener, afrikanischer Religionen und Weltanschauungen als Entwicklungshindernisse hat die Nicht-Nachhaltigkeit von Entwicklungsprogrammen und -projekten in Afrika im Allgemeinen und Zimbabwe im Besonderen verursacht.**

Die herabwürdigenden Darstellungen afrikanischer Religionen nahmen ihren Anfang bereits bei den ersten Erforschern und Schriftstellern über Afrika: In ihrer Darstellung der afrikanischen Völker würdigten sie kaum deren Religion. In ihren Tagebucheinträgen gingen sie nicht über Verweise auf Orte, Objekte und Personen hinaus. Indigene religiöse Gegenstände (insbesondere rituelle Gegenstände) sowie symbolische Formen sprachen sie besonders an, da sie exotisch schienen. Sie fanden keine Tempel, Kirchen oder Moscheen vor und hatten darum große Zweifel, ob die Afrikaner überhaupt eine Religion hätten. Infolge dessen waren Afrikanische Religionen Falschdarstellungen, Unterschätzung und grundsätzlicher Stigmatisierung ausgesetzt. Dies beruhte auf dem sogenannten ‚gesunden Menschenverstand‘ der westlichen Länder. Die Darstellung Afrikas als Kontinent ohne eine eigene, tiefgreifende spirituelle Dimension bzw. Religion, die diesen Namen verdient, vervollständigt das Bild eines Kontinents, dessen Bewohner und Gemeinschaften in ein unentwirrbares Durcheinander von zumeist grausamen und blutigen Ahnenkulten, Aberglauben, bizarren und kindischen Glaubensüberzeugungen und primitiven Ängsten verstrickt seien, welche ihre persönlichen Fähigkeiten, ihre Initiative und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten blockieren (Mezzana 2002: 1f). Die gesamte Annäherung an afrikanische Religionen ist jedoch beeinträchtigt durch methodische und theoretische Fehler, z.B. durch einen Evolutionismus, der afrikanische Glaubensüberzeugungen als auf der untersten Stufe geistlicher Entwicklung befindlich ansieht, da Praktiken beinhaltend, die herabwürdigend als animistisch, fetischistisch, pagan und götzendienerisch beschrieben wurden (ibid: 2). Die genannten Beispiele einer herablassenden Darstellung afrikanischer Religionen und Völker haben ihr Fehlen in Entwicklungsinitiativen bekräftigt. Infolgedessen tendierten diese eher zu einem westlichen bzw. christlichen Ansatz – der jedoch von Natur aus intolerant gegenüber afrikanischen Religionen ist. Herabwürdigende Darstellungen afrikanischer Religionen und ihre Abwesenheit in Entwicklungsinitiativen gleichen dunklen Wolken, die zurzeit über dem afrikanischen Kontinent schweben. Ist es nicht verblüffend, dass umso mehr Entwicklungsprojekte und -agenturen in Zimbabwe und anderen afrikanischen Ländern zu finden sind, desto größer die Armutsrate wird und desto nicht-nachhaltiger die Entwicklungsbemühungen werden?

**5. Die Einbeziehung von Religion, Spiritualität, Wissenssystemen und Millieus der einheimischen afrikanischen Bevölkerung garantiert den Erfolg von Entwicklungshilfe in den Gemeinschaften.**

Die systematische, jahrhundertelange Vermeidung von Religion (insbesondere afrikanischer Religion) trotz ihrer Bedeutung für Entwicklungspolitik, -literatur und -maßnahmen führte zu einer gewollten Hegemonie einer europäisch-westlichen Epistemologie in Afrika. Lebakeng zufolge ertrinkt die Entwicklung Afrikas in reduktionistischen und säkularen Ideologien, welche die kulturellen und spirituellen Wirklichkeiten der afrikanischen Völker verwerfen. Es wurde geltend gemacht, dass durch die unverhohlene Herabwürdigung von indigenen, afrikanischen Wissens und Weltbildern als Hindernissen für Entwicklungshilfe die reduktionistischen und positivistischen Entwicklungsmaßnahmen für die afrikanischen Völker inkohärent und bedeutungslos bleiben. Ihre Epistemologie, Ontologie und Axiologie lehnt das Wesen des afrikanischen Lebens selbst, eine spirituelle Beziehung zum Universum, ab. Da Spiritualität im Zentrum afrikanischer Epistemologien und Weltbilder liegt, hat eine europäisch-westliche, reduktionistische und positivistische Entwicklungshilfe einen umfassenden afrikanischen Epistemizid erzeugt. Wertvolle kulturelle und soziale Ressourcen, die für das Wohlergehen und die kulturelle Kontinuität der afrikanischen Völker notwendig sind, wurden so zerstört (Lebakeng 2010: 24-29; Vgl. McDonnell 2013:2). Wenn Entwicklungshilfe wirklich von Nutzen für die afrikanischen Völker sein soll, muss diese deren Weltanschauung und Glaubensüberzeugungen berücksichtigen und wiederspiegeln – was bedeutet, die Möglichkeiten zu erkunden, in denen Entwicklungshilfe zusammen mit einem spirituellen Weltverständnis beitragen kann zu Überleben und Entwicklung des Kontinents in kultureller, sozialer und sittlicher Hinsicht (ibid).

**6. Schon seit langer Zeit vernachlässigen die Strategien von Entwicklungorganisationen die Rolle von Religion, was aus der Geschichte der Entwicklung Zimbabwes deutlich wird. Entwicklungsprogramme wurden verbunden mit einer modernistischen, säkularistischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Vorgehensweise.**

Für die meisten afrikanischen Völker in der südlichen Hemisphäre ist Religion wesentlich zum Verständnis der Welt und ihres Platzes darin. Daher ist sie auch der maßgebliche Faktor für die Entscheidungen, die sie bezüglich der Entwicklung ihrer selbst und ihrer Gemeinschaften treffen müssen. Sind Religion und Entwicklungsangelegenheiten so sehr miteinander verwoben, wäre es vernünftig, wenn Religion eine herausragende Stellung in Entwicklungstheorie und -praxis einnehme. Sie ist jedoch auffallend unterrepräsentiert in Entwicklungsliteratur und Strategien und Programmen von Entwicklungorganisationen. Beek konstatiert gleichsam, dass Entwicklungorganisationen die Frage nach Spiritualität und Religion vermieden haben: Die Organisationen haben in

ihren Programmen keine Strategien zum Umgang mit religiösen Fragen. Er hatte die Strategien von einigen der größten Entwicklungsorganisationen untersucht, um ihre Haltung zu Spiritualität und religiösen Fragen in Bezug auf Entwicklung festzustellen (Beek 2000: 38). Die ‚US Agency for International Development‘ (USAID), eine der weltweit einflussreichsten Spendenorganisationen, hat zum Grundsatz, dass sie Aktivitäten mit einem bedeutenden religiösen Ziel oder Inhalt nicht finanziert. CARE, eine der größten US-amerikanischen Entwicklungshilfe-Nichtregierungsorganisationen, hat keine Richtlinie in Bezug auf Spiritualität und Religion. So wird erklärt, dass CARE unkonfessionell [non-sectarian] ist; auf spirituelle oder religiöse Überzeugungen einzugehen, sei nicht Teil ihres Programms. Sie konzentriert sich auf das körperliche und soziale Wohlergehen von Gemeinschaften. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), eine NRO, die direkt der US-amerikanischen Katholischen Kirche untersteht, erklärt, dass Auseinandersetzungen über die religiösen Überzeugungen ihrer Mitarbeiter oder Programmteilnehmer kein Teil ihrer Bemühungen sei (ibid). Das zeigt, wie weit entfernt diese Organisationen von der Religion der indigenen Völker, mit denen sie zu tun haben, sind. Dies lässt sie darin scheitern, die Probleme der Gemeinschaft und mögliche Lösungen zu ergründen. Gleichzeitig wurde beobachtet, dass solch eine Vermeidung die Fähigkeit von Individuen und Gemeinschaften mindert, ihre eigenen Werte und Schwerpunkte für Entwicklung zu erkennen. Die Organisationen scheitern darin, die Menschen zu verstehen, denen sie helfen wollen, und entwerten genau den Gegenstand, der ihnen die Stärke und Hoffnung verleihen könnte, um an Entwicklungsprojekten teilzunehmen (ibid: 39). Die wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Entwicklungsprogramme, die von der zimbabwischen Regierung seit der Unabhängigkeit (1980) bis zum heutigen Tag eingeführt wurden, haben indigene religiöse Überzeugungen nicht berücksichtigt oder einbezogen in ihre Maßnahmen. In Anbetracht dieser Situation wird zunehmend deutlich, dass Entwicklungsprogramme, die von der Regierung eingeführt wurden, naturwissenschaftliche und technologische Herangehensweisen bevorzugten, und das spirituelle Kapital als Faktor zur Erleichterung von Entwicklungsprozessen zur Seite drängten. Das spirituelle Kapital hat aber auf der ganzen Welt einen messbaren Einfluss auf Individuen, Gemeinschaften und Gesellschaften.

## **7. Zum Erfolg von Entwicklungsprogrammen und -projekten in zimbabwischen Gemeinschaften und Afrika im Allgemeinen bedarf es der Kooperation zwischen Regierung, Entwicklungsorganisationen, und traditionellen Führern.**

Die Arbeitsbeziehungen zwischen traditionellen Führern (Häuptlingen), der Regierung, Nichtregierungsorganisationen und religiösen Organisationen sind äußerst angespannt. Sie sind geprägt von Misstrauen, Verdächtigungen, und in manchen Fällen von offener Feindseligkeit – so werden die traditionellen Führer als unbedeutend oder gar als Hindernis für Entwicklungsprogramme betrachtet. In den meisten Fällen werden die

Häuptlinge in den Hintergrund gedrängt, da der Staat die Verträge und Zulassungen erteilt. Örtliche traditionelle Führer werden mitunter davon überrascht, wenn die Investoren bereits ihre Umfragen durchführen und manchmal ohne ihr Wissen das Land ausbeuten oder auf ihm arbeiten. Damit Entwicklungsprogramme und -projekte erfolgreich in Gang kommen können, müssen die betreffenden Interessenvertreter harmonisch miteinander arbeiten. Nur so kann die Lebensqualität der Menschen in allen Belangen verbessert werden. Die Regierung, Nichtregierungsorganisationen und religiöse Organisationen sollten Hand in Hand mit den traditionellen Führern, die die Bedürfnisse und Wünsche ihrer Gemeinschaften kennen, arbeiten. Damit nachhaltige Entwicklung sich durchsetzen und die Lebensqualität der Gemeinschaften sich heben kann, sollten die traditionellen Führer als Pförtner zur Gemeinschaft unpolitisch bleiben: damit aufhören, Geschenke anzunehmen und somit ihren Arbeitsethos zu kompromittieren. Darüber hinaus gibt es ein eindeutiges Bedürfnis nach Zusammenarbeit, die den religiösen und Wissenssystemen Beachtung schenkt vermittels inklusiver und pluralistischer Modelle.

**8. Angesichts geheimnisvoller Schwierigkeiten bei erfolglosen Entwicklungsprogrammen und -projekten beziehen Entwicklungsakteure wie etwa Nichtregierungsorganisationen, religiöse Organisationen und Investoren die indigene, traditionelle Führerschaft durch die Regierung mit ein.**

Die Aufgabe des Häuptlings besteht darin, die Religion und Kultur der indigenen Bevölkerung zu bewahren. Der Shona-Religion (afrikanischen Religionen) muss Beachtung geschenkt werden. Wenn die Entwicklungsorganisationen ein Programm in der Gemeinschaft durchführen wollen, sollten sie zuerst den Häuptling hinzuziehen, damit er sich mit den Vorfahren verständigen kann und ihnen sagen kann, welche Gebiete geheiligt sind, welche sie frei betreten können, und woran die Menschen in der Gegend glauben. Wenn Entwicklungsorganisationen dies nicht tun, werden ihre Geräte kaputtgehen und geheimnisvolle Dinge geschehen. Zurzeit gibt es Probleme in Zimbabwe, da die Häuptlinge weder respektiert noch berücksichtigt werden bei der Entwicklungsplanung und -umsetzung. Es sollte unterstrichen werden, dass diese geheimnisvollen Erlebnisse keinen Aberglauben darstellen, wie etwa Entwicklungsfachleute von einem naturwissenschaftlichen Standpunkt aus annehmen. Dies geschieht wirklich, und viele Entwicklungsprojekte und -programme scheiterten, da sie indigene religiöse Überzeugungen ignorierten und missachteten. So beispielsweise das Pungwe-Wasserprojekt, durch das die Stadt Mutare mit Trinkwasser versorgt wird, oder der Osborne-Damm, der das Volk der Odzi im Mutasa-Bezirk der Manicaland-Provinz mit Bewässerungswasser versorgt: Dort gab es anfängliche Misserfolge, weil indigene religiöse Überzeugungen ignoriert wurden. Erst als die Häuptlinge Tangwena bzw. Mutasa hinzugezogen wurden, gelangen die Projekte. Das Chiadzwa-Diamanten-Projekt in Mutare kam nicht in Schwung, da die Entwicklungsinvestoren und die Führung des Ministry of Mines die

Glaubensüberzeugungen der indigenen Bevölkerung missachteten, indem sie die Häuptlinge nicht mit einbezogen. Als ihnen klar wurde, dass es ihnen nicht gelang, Diamanten zu fördern, riefen sie die Häuptlinge: Diese führten Rituale durch und ebneten den Investoren somit den Weg, um Diamanten zu gewinnen.

**9. Die kulturellen Ressourcen der indigenen afrikanischen Völker, wie etwa Sprichwörter, Redewendungen und Gebete, sind voller Beispiele für ein Leben in Fülle [Abundant Life], welches die menschliche Entwicklung voranbringt.**

Sprichwörter, in denen Führer dargestellt werden als ihrer Gemeinschaft dienend, indem sie die Fülle des Lebens wiederherstellen und indigene Formen von Demokratie und Partizipation praktizieren, befördern das Ideal einer guten Führerschaft und einer guten Regierungsführung. Es gibt Sprichwörter, die die Einheit der Gemeinschaft fördern – gibt es keine Einheit, die zu Frieden und Harmonie in der Gemeinschaft führt, kann es keine nachhaltige Entwicklung geben; herrscht Frieden, gibt es Entwicklung. Daher sind Sprichwörter, die die Einheit der Gemeinschaft anregen, bedeutende Werkzeuge bzw. Schlüssel in der Kultur der Shona, fördern sie doch den Geist der Menschlichkeit und damit auch die Vorstellung von der Fülle des Lebens. In Sprichwörtern, die ein gutes sittliches Verhalten befördern, ist ‚*Unhu*‘ ein grundlegendes sittliches Konzept: Es verweist auf Mächte, die Leben bewahren und die kontinuierliche Übergabe von Gesundheit von Generation zu Generation gewährleisten. Inmitten der HIV/Aids-Pandemie ist ein gutes, sittliches Verhalten bedeutsam für ein Leben in Fülle. Gleichermassen wurden Lieder, die Protest, Lobpreis und Klagen zum Ausdruck bringen, analysiert, und es zeigt sich, dass Lieder großartige Mittel sind, um zu sensibilisieren, zu erziehen, neues Leben zu schenken und gebrochenen Seelen Lebenskraft wiederzugeben – darin tragen sie dazu bei, sich der Fülle des Lebens zu vergewissern. Redewendungen sind von Bedeutung, da sie dazu dienen, menschliches Leben zu erhalten, indem sie vor Situationen warnen, in denen Leben bedroht wird oder in Gefahr ist. Sie vermitteln und kommunizieren das Ideal von Leben in seiner Fülle. Zu guter Letzt beschreiben die Gebete und Rituale der Shona, dass die Kultur der Shona der Fülle des Lebens größte Bedeutung zumisst und sie mit allen Mitteln zu bewahren sucht.

**10. Die Missionierung von Afrikanern im Allgemeinen und Zimbabwianern im Besonderen zielte darauf ab, die religiösen Glaubensüberzeugungen und die Kultur der indigenen Bevölkerung vollständig zu ersetzen und auszurotten. Die Bedeutsamkeit, Beständigkeit und Einzigartigkeit der Shona-Religion und Spiritualität ist unumstritten.**

Die Shona-Religion wurde bzw. wird noch immer marginalisiert, in den Hintergrund und an den Rand gedrängt, wohingegen sich die Aufmerksamkeit allein auf die sogenannten ‚großen missionierenden Weltreligionen‘ (wie etwa Christentum, Islam, Buddhismus und Hinduismus) richtet. In Anbetracht der historischen Entwicklungen auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent ist es eine unbestrittene Plattsitze, dass die Shona-Religion in Zimbabwe gegen viele Gegner kämpfen musste, die die religiösen Glaubensüberzeugungen der indigenen Bevölkerung vollständig zu verdrängen und auszurotten suchten. Erstaunlicherweise ist die Shona-Religion, wie wir sie heute kennen, weit davon entfernt, aus den Gemeinschaften in Zimbabwe zu verschwinden.

**11. Religiöse Elemente und Praktiken der Shona haben eine positive Auswirkung auf Entwicklung. Deshalb ist die Religion der Shona eine Ressource für nachhaltige Entwicklung, und sollte darum in Entwicklungsdiskurse einbezogen werden.**

Wie jede andere Religion der Welt, hat die Shona-Religion soziale, ökonomische und politische Auswirkungen. Die traditionellen indigenen Glaubensüberzeugungen verwandeln die Herzen der Individuen, und diese innere Wandlung bildet eine notwendige Voraussetzung, um die Gesellschaft zu verändern. Darum sind gemeinschaftliche Glaubenssysteme, Rituale, Sitten und Heiligkeit (neben anderen) Bausteine der indigenen Religion, die einen positiven Einfluss auf Entwicklung haben. Ist dies der Fall, so ist der allgemein positive Einfluss von Glaubensüberzeugungen und Praktiken der Shona-Religion grundlegend für Entwicklungsdiskurse. Die religiösen Vorstellungen und Praktiken scheinen ein enormes Potential zu haben, um soziale Missstände, die eine nachhaltige Entwicklung behindern, zu bekämpfen. In dieser Hinsicht ist es wichtig, darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Shona-Religion eine Ressource darstellt, um Entwicklung zu erleichtern. Solche Anhaltspunkte zeigen deutlich auf, dass indigene religiöse Glaubensvorstellungen und Praktiken in erheblichem Maße zu einem guten Lebensstandard in Zimbabwe beitragen. Die Glaubensvorstellungen der Shona-Religion enthalten einen ausgeglichenen Entwicklungsansatz, der die sozialen, ökonomischen und ökologischen Dimensionen des Entwicklungsprozesses berücksichtigt.

## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the mystique of religion in developing countries is plain to see. In Africa, religion shows no sign of disappearing or diminishing as development theorists have generally supposed. Africans have certain religious values which are sources of inspiration and strength. If incorporated, they can greatly contribute to development initiatives in their planning, implementation and monitoring stages. “The Euro-Western development practitioners usually excluded consideration of the religious dimension in formulating development policies towards Africa. After decades of exclusion of religion from development discourse and analysis, the last two decades have witnessed religion rehabilitated as an important concept and variable in the understanding and implementation of social change and progress” (Gerrie and Ellis 2006: 351-367 Cf. Nyoni 2014: 3). The debate on the issue is really topical, vibrant, and classic: academics, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners started to reflect on religion as a concept, in relation to development. However, “the incorporation of religions of the indigenous peoples is not given the desired attention” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). Therefore, this study presents African Shona Religion’s voice in this discourse by using the indigenous Shona peoples, who live in Harare Province, in Seke Communal Area of Zimbabwe, as a case study for the sake of accuracy and critical analysis on the topic. “Despite its suffering from stereotyping” (*ibid*) – Shona religion continues to play a critical role in the life of the Zimbabweans.

The phrase “Abundant Life”, as a concept interpreted and developed by African scholars within the academic discourses on African religions, beliefs, and philosophy, has been traced analytically using related models in Shona religion. The phrase “Basic Needs”, a development strategy from development planners, theorists, and strategists, has also been critically traced from its origins. However, “the term development is not easy to define, which is pointed out by the presentation of its divergent theories” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). The Shona peoples’ understanding of development, however, is derived from their religious worldview. The political structures in Zimbabwe in relation to policies, agencies, and actors in the area of development have been critically analyzed. The views of religious experts and other informants in relation to development have been explored. The institution of chieftaincy, gerontocracy, cultural resources of Shona religion, e.g. African idioms, proverbs, songs, and prayers, corresponding to notions of abundant life, have been critically discussed. Analyses of Shona religion as well as its religious elements and their positive impact in development have been treated in profundity.

The Shona people’s attitude towards nature as well as their worldview have been displayed as the main development mechanisms among the Shona. “Despite the unveiled threats these mechanisms are undergoing today, the potential of these indigenous

mechanisms for development is not in doubt, hence constructive recommendations towards a new relationship between African Religions and development have been expounded”(ibid). The study concludes with some constructive considerations on how development policymakers might be able to incorporate Shona religion as a factor, or resource, in their strategic outlook in order to achieve sustainable development in Zimbabwe and other African countries.

# CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

“Religion is no panacea, but it is a crucial factor wherever, people define, initiate, adopt, oppose, or circumvent development processes” (Binsbergen 1991: 3). It is important to note that development programs and projects in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa have been credited to the development agencies, be they governmental or non-governmental organizations. However, these developmental initiatives cannot be successful without a high degree of cooperation of the indigenous peoples. A constructive analysis of the cooperation of the local peoples in Zimbabwe with these initiatives will demonstrate that this cooperation goes beyond simple participation in development programs. “The indigenous peoples go a step further to invoke the Shona religious beliefs, in the form of values, and mystical practices, without whose invocation they believe success cannot be guaranteed” (Nyoni 2014: 3). “Some of the difficulties that have been encountered in the past decades of development directly speak of the need to adopt new concepts and models, which take into consideration the religion and culture of the indigenous peoples” (Beek 2000: 31-43). This is because religion is central to many of the decisions people make about their own communities’ development. Questions concerning the human nature and purpose need to be incorporated into development thinking and implementation.

The role of religion in development has been observed within development discourse and practices, as Deneulin and Bano note. “Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of the importance of religion for designing development programs and projects” (Deneulin and Bano 2009: 24), unlike several decades after the World War II, where most Western/European governments and development agents viewed religion as detrimental to progress (Haynes 2007: 1, 104). “Lamentably, this involvement of religion in development discourse has been highly selective” (Awuah-Nyamakye 2012: 76-90). That is, the attention has been focused on the so-called ‘proselytizing major world religions’, for example Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism (Faith Based Organizations— FBOs) (*ibid*). African Religions (religions into which Africans were born, non-proselytizing and non-propagating religions) were not given the attention that they deserve. It is this marginalization of the so-called “Indigenous/Local African Religions” in the discourses of development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that has compelled this study to present the Shona Religion’s role in this important discourse. This is going to be accomplished by using the Shona peoples, who live in Harare Province, in Seke Communal Area of Zimbabwe, as a case study for the sake of accuracy and critical analysis on the topic.

The rationale for the focus of this study on the relationship between Shona indigenous epistemology systems and development is the overall low success rate of earlier Western/European based development strategies in assisting the poor to escape their dismal conditions (Breidlid 2009: 140-148). The President of the World Bank expressed his concern after the release of the Global Monitoring Report of 2008: "In this Year of Action on the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), one is particularly concerned about the risks of failing to meet the goal of reducing hunger and malnutrition, the 'forgotten MDGs'. As the report shows, reducing malnutrition has a 'multiplier' effect, contributing to success in other MDGs including maternal health, infant mortality, and Education" (World Bank 2008).

Particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa a real developmental takeoff does not seem to have materialized. "Clearly the reasons for this are multiple, but arguably one reason is related to the modernist development paradigm, which both aid agencies and the government of Zimbabwe have uncritically adhered to, which, however, does not take into account the indigenous peoples' religious beliefs. Western/European epistemologies and sciences have played a hegemonic role in the developmental efforts" (Breidlid 2009: 140-148) – in Zimbabwe, whereas Shona indigenous epistemology systems have been characterized as inefficient, old-fashioned and unscientific, and thus have been relegated to the realm of insignificance. As was pointed out, the discrediting of existing indigenous epistemology and techniques (invariably subsistence-oriented and often environmentally well-adjusted and sustainable), and their replacement with scientifically informed and controlled technology, furthers outside hegemony (Sillitoe 2000: 5).

To put the study into perspective, we need to clarify two key phrases and one term in the topic: 'African Religions', 'Sustainable Development' and the term 'Development'. The first issue is: 'African Religion or Religions'? We are aware of the long debate over whether the spirituality of the Africans should be addressed either in the singular or plural form (Booth 1977: 3; Idowu 1973: 103; Mbiti 1969: 1-2; Alolo 2007 etc.). The argument cannot be treated exhaustively in this study. This being the case, we speak of African religions in the plural because there are more than four thousand African tribes, and each has its own religious system. Therefore, in this study the word 'religions' will be used referring to religions in Africa. Hence, the word 'religion' will be used in relation to the Shona ethnic group of Zimbabwe, on which the focus of the study lies. There is no doubt about the fact that there exists a multitude of African religions, although they suffered abuses in terms of their nature and meaning at the hands of scholars in the field, especially the 'armchair' scholars. As a result, traditional African religions have been described with derogatory terms like: fetishism, animism, primitive religion, black magic, heathenism, even at continent level. It is important to know that none of these descriptions of African religions has a grain of truth, for even the etymologies of many of the terms have nothing at all to do with religions (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). It can be said that the root of the above notion may stem

from the fact that anything that does not conform to a certain cultural pattern accepted as the norm by the global north is regarded automatically as primitive (Idowu 1973: 103). If the above terminologies are not appropriate descriptions of African religions, what then are African religions?

African religions involve the belief and worship of the supreme life force known as *Mwari* in Shona, respectively *Unkulukulu* in Ndebele. The worship of *Mwari/Unkulukulu*, the supreme life force, mostly happens indirectly through divine agents like *Vadzimu* (ancestors), gods, or divinities. According to Awolalu, when we say African religions:

We mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the fore-bearers of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practicing it. This is a religion that has no written literature, yet it is “written” everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the peoples’ myths and folktales, in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped; it is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old. (Awolalu1976: 275)

‘Sustainable Development’ is an evolving concept which has scientific as well as moral connotations, and its meaning is indeed very contentious (Breidlid 2000: 140-148). The Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future: from One Earth to One World*, called for emboldened and dramatically new conceptions of development that advanced the material wants of the present generation *without* depriving future generations of the resources required to satisfy their needs. Thus, the Commission defined or conceptualized ‘sustainable development’ rather simply as: paths of human progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (WCED 1987: 43). “There exist more definitions of sustainable development, but they have in common that they all have to do with the caring of the earth and its natural systems and the challenges faced by humanity. Sustainable development can be broken up into environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and sociopolitical sustainability” (Srinubabu 2014: 1f).

Development has been defined as “a state of modernization as well as the sustained increase of the real per capita income which results in social and structural changes in a country over a long period of time. These changes include the qualitative and quantitative improvement or transformation of a country’s methods of production, roads, hospitals, level of income, attitudes, and quality of life” (Aryetey 2002: 201 Cf. Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). Sibanda posit that, development refers to the improvement of a country’s economic and social conditions. When referring to a country, it will be taken to mean reaching an acceptable standard of living for all of its people (Sibanda 2009: 1f). It means that people have got the basic things they need to live. Also, development

is described as “a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage especially a more advanced or matured stage. For many scholars today, when we talk of development, then, we are talking about the means of reaching an acceptable standard of living for all people. It means that people have the basic things they need to live and, at the same time, all the people have the right to make choices about their lives, and have the opportunity to improve their living situations” (World Bank 2008). Thus, it is clear that development is seen in materialistic and economic terms. However, we are aware of the definition debates between “sustainable development” and “development”. Therefore, for this study, we will simply use the term “development” in referring to “sustainable development” as it is the thrust of this study's topic.

In this study Shona peoples should be understood as those Shona peoples “who still hold on to the African indigenous religion which was bequeathed to them by their ancestors as opposed to those who have been influenced deeply by Western/European culture and other faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other foreign religious traditions” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). Although the Shona are being used as a case study, other Zimbabwean societies and even other African societies will also be used in this study as cross references where it is appropriate to do so. All this will be done to show that Shona Religious beliefs are part and parcel of, and can influence development. To understand development within an African context, there is need not to end at development agencies but also to take into consideration the African beliefs. “Religious beliefs are the prime source of guidance and support for millions of people in the world” (*ibid*). By exploring the roots of development and its historical avoidance of African Religions as a resource for development, the study seeks to determine a course of action that encourages the social significance of African Religions to be recognized and handled in a constructive manner.

## 1.2 The Problem

The key issue in this study is the involvement of African religions in development discourse, since it has been highly sidelined, marginalized, or left at the periphery and attention has been mainly on the so-called “proselytizing major world religions”, (that is: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and FBOs), (Nyoni 2014: 1-8) – as if they do not contribute or have influence on development, and yet, due to the ignorance of African religions and cultures, some agencies have faced difficulties in executing development initiatives or the development initiatives have not been sustainable at all. There are many African religious values and practices, which can be built upon in all the phases of development programs, namely, needs assessment, project design models, implementation, and evaluation (*ibid*).

The Shona religion's spirituality is not given the attention that it deserves in development, and more often than not social and economic initiatives have neglected the val-

ues, traditions and perceptions of the indigenous peoples (stakeholders) in the development processes (ibid). The international agenda has for the most part ignored the fact that the majority of the world's peoples do not view themselves simply as material beings responding to material exigencies and circumstances, but rather as moral beings concerned with spiritual aspirations and purposes. The development activities need to be broadened to include those spiritual aspirations of the indigenous peoples. The existing development strategies and programs fall short of taking into account those essential spiritual and social dimensions of life so fundamental to human welfare (Nyoni 2014: 1-8).

The rationale for the focus on Shona religion as a resource for development in this study is the overall low success rate of earlier Euro-Western based development strategies in poverty eradication in Africa. The more developmental projects and agencies there are in Africa, the higher the poverty rate in Zimbabwe (Africa) becomes. Why is that so? "The '*modus operandi*' of development activities in Africa has tended to be Western/European or Christianized so that the vitality of African religions has been obscured" (ibid).

Western/European centered epistemologies and sciences have played a hegemonic role in the development efforts with minimum success in Zimbabwe (ibid). It is time to discover the unseen, concealed ways of Shona indigenous epistemology systems, and the underlying philosophy of development discourses, and it is time for these two concepts to be seriously partnered for a constructive development. In other words, there seems to be a lack of an integral approach between religion and development in Africa. "Despite the centrality of religion in development issues, as it shapes indigenous health, agriculture, environmental beliefs and practices, the topic receives no more than fleeting attention. Therefore, little is known about the role of religion in development, and as a result, little or no guidance is given to development practitioners in how to address spiritual issues, resulting in less effective and even damaging development efforts" (Beek 2000: 38). However, this is not to discredit or condemn the global north or Christian approaches to development, but an effort to show that there is need to go beyond, and take into account the religious life sphere of indigenous peoples (Nyoni 2014: 1-8).

Development planners, scholars, and strategists should see the indigenous peoples (Shona) as the target group and beneficiaries of development epistemologies, policies, and practices. To do this effectively, the indigenous peoples will need to play a leading role in challenging the hegemony of powerful, but often unaccountable institutions that are involved in Africa's development, such as the World Bank (ibid).

### 1.3 Hypothesis

The study attempts to consider the role of Shona religion as a factor in development processes, in terms of its potentially constructive role. Shona religion, and indigenous knowledge systems, should be an integral part of development. “It is increasingly recognized that development initiatives that pay attention to local or indigenous perceptions and ways are more likely to be relevant to people’s needs and to generate sustainable interventions” (Sillitoe 1998: 224). The assumption is that perspectives from different epistemology systems produce a more comprehensive understanding of development interventions.

However, the implication of such an assumption is not that indigenous epistemology systems are completely isolated from Euro-Western epistemologies; people will reinterpret and incorporate aspects of Euro-Western knowledge and practice into their traditions as part of the ongoing process of globalization. Moreover, any inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems does not imply its overall relevance and adequacy in addressing developmental issues, as well as vice versa. While indigenous epistemology systems often have important advice, knowledge and information to offer, there are also examples from Africa where indigenous knowledge systems have been a barrier to development interventions.

### 1.4 Area of Investigation

The Area of inquiry is religion and development. Thematically, there are two concepts at stake here to be discussed, namely the African religions – Abundant life concept, a scholarly interpretation evolving from within academic discourses of African religions, e.g. Magesa, and the Development –Basic Needs concept. ‘Shona religion’ refers to the beliefs of the Zimbabwean people characterized by beliefs in a supreme life force known as ‘*Mwari*’ among the Shona people (in English –‘the supreme life force’, in Ndebele –‘*Unkulukulu*’). Other African cultures also know this supreme life force, for example, Akan people in Ghana call it ‘*Onyame*’, Yoruba people refer to it as ‘*Oludumare*’. There also is a belief in ancestors that are called ‘*Vadzimu*’, resp. ‘the living dead’ (Mbiti 1999: 482). They live under the soil, own and control it. There are *Vadzimu* at different levels, namely family and territorial. The Shona people believe in avenging spirits (*ngozvi*) and alien spirits (*shavi*[sg.], *mashavi* (pl.)). The Shona people also believe in sacred places, be they natural or man-made, and in sacred practitioners, for example, chiefs (*Madzishe*), spirit mediums (*Masvikiro*), and traditional healers (*n’anga*), among many others.

Therefore, for the Shona people and African societies in general, the “abundant life” concept encompasses the society’s harmonious relationship with the supreme life force, with its ancestors, the gods and the other spirit beings. “In their worldview these Beings can make and unmake. This is what is claimed as fullness of life or Abundant life, –

according to African Religions it manifests itself in peace, prosperity, and the general welfare of the communities and implies the existence and interaction of mystical powers in the universe" (Magesa 1997: 159).

One key element of African religions is that it permeates all realms of the African's life. It is impossible to separate the life of an African from his religion: hence, early writers like Mbiti, and Busia, did affirm the overly religious attitude of traditional African societies. An African is intensely, pervasively religious and in traditional African communities it is not possible to distinguish between religious and non-religious areas of life (Busia 1967). As it was pointed out, Africans are profoundly connected to their religions (Mbiti 1999: 482). All life is religious for Africans (Theuri 2001: 188). As a result, anything that is done within an African context has a corresponding rite or ritual, or religious thinking behind it, which the writer shall argue in this study must be respected and acknowledged if the development program initiatives are to be successful and sustainable.

Development agencies offer programs in education, training, food relief, food security, water and sanitation, and in infrastructure development such as the building schools, clinics, and poverty eradication, amongst many others. However, it should be noted that these areas of concern are not in any way new to the local people, save for the methodologies and techniques that are employed by the development agencies. There is a certain way in which these issues used to be addressed –the methods were informed and defined by a life-transcending force. There are spiritual roots of human motivation, which made their approaches self-reliant, thereby avoiding the habits of dependency. Currently, what we see are approaches that promote dependency and therefore the development programs are unsustainable. Can we really say that non-governmental organizations are in the service of imperialism in Africa and the world at large? We will unpack this question in this study. Development approaches that incorporate spiritual imperatives will lead to enduring changes within individuals and within communities. These aspects of a spiritual and transcendent nature the researcher also wishes to expose, in order to show that there is an inseparable connection between the material and the spiritual aspects of life in Africa.

The other theoretical concept in this study is the 'Basic needs development strategy'. Development itself is a contested term. It is contested both in its meaning and in its means of achievement. There is no single measure of development, and assessment of development requires a range of indicators (Matthew 2013: 1). This concept proffers a myriad of definitions in line with the observation that development is a many-faceted process (Walter 1972: 9). According to the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development report, development has come to be understood as a multidimensional undertaking, a people-centered and equitable process in which the ultimate goal of economic and social policies must be to better the human condition – responding to the needs, and maximizing the potential, of all members of society (UNCTAD 1996:

21). At the level of an individual, it implies increased capacity and skill, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. The writer argues that the programs aimed at realizing these conditions should be informed and influenced by the knowledge of African religions in order to be successful.

The analysis is going to focus on what has been the interaction, and correlation between the two concepts mentioned above, and what has been the impact of Shona religion in development initiatives. The study shall be citing those examples of initiatives where the above has taken place. The examples will not be exhaustive but will bring out the element under discussion in this study: that Shona religion is a resource for development. Geographically, the area of investigation will be Seke Communal Area, in Harare Province, Zimbabwe, where chiefs, religious experts, and other agencies or actors are interviewed. However, there is admission and acceptance that the study provides only a facet of a broader and more complex scenario of African religions and of development.

## 1.5 Justification

In the area of investigation the study noted the fact that African religions and the life of an African are intertwined. It is a futile exercise to make an attempt to separate the two. It is also generally agreed in scholarship that the African's religious values are the source of inspiration and strength, and to try to study his/her religion divorced from his/her culture and life will not yield substantial results. If an African takes his/her religion wherever he/she goes, politicians to parliament, professors to the lecture hall, bankers to the bank, students to the lecture and examination hall (Mbiti, 1999), it follows that even in developmental programs elements of African religions are prevalent. Walter "confirms the importance of the African superstructure as a factor in development when he says that, each element in the superstructure interacts with other elements in the superstructure as well as with the material base. The religious belief that a certain forest is sacred is the kind of element in the superstructure that affects economic activity, since that forest cannot be cleared for cultivation; it is also to be borne in mind that peculiarities in the superstructure of any given society have a marked impact on the rate of development" (Walter 1972: 16).

- African religions, therefore, are a force in development: if development agencies do not observe these superstructures, they may face difficulties or their development may not be sustainable. They are cornerstone, a touchstone to measure and understand cultural and symbolic aspects of development. "They are also an encompassing category under which even the idea of development, the organizational efforts clustering upon this idea, and the specific activities undertaken in the name of development can be

subsumed" (Binsbergen 1991: 1-9). It is necessary to get to the depths of Shona religious beliefs' influence in development initiatives.

- African religions must not always be seen as a conservative cultural element that works to resist change and as a barrier to development. It can be so if the proper procedures are not followed. However, they are innovative and embedded with ideas which can transform the communities. It has to be observed that in each community there are religious observances that direct the lives of that community and in other areas there are cults that are responsible for different activities. For example, there are religious elements in the African people's cosmology, which have an effect on the way development initiatives take place. These need to be observed for the sake of a wholesome approach to development. Therefore, it is important to carry out a research of this nature.
- "Since religion is an integral part to the understanding of the world and the people's/individual's place in it, it affects fundamental life decisions, for instance: who will treat a sick child, when and how people will plant their fields, and whether or not to participate in any risky but potentially beneficial social action. In support of the above fact, it was noted that just as the social scientists and practitioners have recognized that gender, class, and ethnicity, while potentially conflictual, are integral components of people's identity and must be taken fully into account in development efforts, so is religion, because it is also central to the life of the people" (Beek 2000: 31-32), and in this particular case African religions.
- "Development planners and scholars are finally giving thought to the role of religion as a potential agent of development. However, there is the need for a shift in the development paradigm, whereby a 'bottom-up' negotiation and situation-specific participation has to be an increasingly widespread goal in development in contrast to 'top-down', 'blue-print' modernization approaches of the past" (Pottier and Sillitoe 2003). The previous models were based on experts-led diagnosis of problems such as modernization and transfer-of-technology and Marxist-informed dependence, and what they had in common was a complete neglect of local understandings. Therefore, the failure of numerous developmental projects is a result of development practitioners' lack of concern for indigenous epistemology systems and voices (Sillitoe and Marzano 2009:13-23). Consequently, it is the task of this study, to remind them, so that development processes will not ignore indigenous epistemologies and religious practices, and it is worthwhile to carry out this research.

- A research of this nature is of importance for the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring of projects performed by development practitioners, be they non-governmental organizations or the government, so that they do not engage in activities that antagonize the African belief systems. In support of the fact that African belief systems should not be antagonized, it was posited that “ignoring religious beliefs results in sub-optimal development outcomes” (Matthew 2013: 6).
- The study also challenges the Africans themselves to be proactive in bringing in the rich elements of their religion into development, since they are the practitioners of the religion and the beneficiaries of the development efforts. Brought out in this study are the effects and the power of the numinological beliefs of the Africans which are viewed as non-existent and claimed to be non-empirical.

## 1.6 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to critically explore the resourcefulness of African religions in development. In order to achieve the above aim, the study will be guided by the following objectives:

- To explore, analyze, and assess the discourses of ‘abundant life’ in African religions (with the focus on the beliefs of the Shona peoples) and to question how these discourses can interact and influence development processes.
- To critically explore the origins of the concept of ‘basic needs’ as it is understood by the development planners, theorists and strategists in relation to development in Africa.
- To critically analyze political structures, policies, agencies, and actors in the area of development in Zimbabwe.
- To explore the cultural resources, (for example, African proverbs, prayers, songs and idioms) in Shona religion, philosophy, and tradition in relation to development.
- To critically proffer a way forward and recommendations for consideration in order to foster successful developmental programs in Zimbabwe (Africa).

## 1.7 Methodology

This study employs a number of methods in examining the concepts of ‘abundant life’ and ‘basic needs’ in relation to the resourcefulness of Shona African religion for devel-

opment. Sociological, and historical methods, as well as interviews are important in mapping out the direction and scope of this study. Since this study is interested in looking at the concepts of ‘abundant life’ and ‘basic needs’ in relation to the resourcefulness of Shona religion for development, the sociological method is of utmost significance. “Sociological method is the study of human societies and it is the branch of social science (with which it is often synonymous) that uses various methods of empirical investigation, and critical analysis to develop and refine a body of knowledge about human social structure and activity, often with the goal of applying such knowledge to the pursuit of social welfare. Its subject matter ranges from the micro level of face-to-face interaction to the macro level of societies at large. Its traditional focuses have included social stratification or class, social relations and social interaction” (Collins and Farrugia, 2004). The historical critical method is important in analyzing African religions’ experiences in development.

History is the science that investigates what happens in nature and in the world of man. Therefore, the historical method is a method that investigates the above with the intention to understand the inner connection of facts, and in this particular study it investigates what happened in the world of man religiously and developmentally (Krentz, 1975). This method’s advantage is that it provides evidence of some experiences against which evaluations, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations will be made. The only difficulty is that when the council of elders of the community is dying out, the history of the community tends to get lost and information may be difficult to retrieve in full and accurately. The study will also use the interview technique/method. The researcher is going to interview chiefs, religious experts, and other informants in Seke Communal Area, Harare Province, Zimbabwe, on Shona religion in relation to development. The interview method has the advantage that the researcher can make follow up questions to get clarity on unclear responses. The main disadvantage of this method is that interviewees tell the interviewer what they think they would want to hear rather than bringing out information objectively (Gobo, 2004). All the above methods have their strengths and weaknesses, but if combined together, they are going to complement each other in this study.

## **1.8 Description of the Field Research Process**

The data for this study was collected by the researcher without any assistance from other persons. The fieldwork was conducted between October 2015 and March 2016. By means of extensive interviews with chiefs, headmen, NGO and FBO employees, religious experts, as well as other informants, the study seeks to unravel why development programs and projects are failing to alleviate high levels of extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequality in Zimbabwean communities, as well as in other African communities. Why do development programs and projects fail in Zimbabwe and Africa

in general? The interviewees' responses are quoted in this study in chapter 4, divided into the subtopics: 'Chiefs, Headmen and indigenous religion in development', 'NGOs and FBOs on indigenous religion and development' and 'Religious experts on indigenous religion and development'. The major thrust of the inquiry concerned the incorporation of indigenous religious beliefs and knowledge systems into policy-making, as well as the working relations between traditional leaders, the government, and development organizations in community development.

From 5 – 30 October 2015, the researcher gathered important data from Harare National Archives and University Libraries, whilst pursuing clearance letters to get permission to research in Seke Rural District or Communal Area under Harare Province, Zimbabwe. The researcher is not a member of this community, but a Zimbabwean citizen. The researcher got permission from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, Seke District Offices (Seke District Administrator) and from the Police, where clearance letters were obtained, and was finally able to research in this community. This process had taken a long time because of bureaucracy. After having been given the clearance letters, the researcher started the fieldwork in seven wards – namely: Beatrice, Sonasi, Dema, Zhakata, Marirangwe, Mapare, and Beba. Traditional leaders who are normally the leaders of development programs and projects in communal areas were interviewed. One chief and seven headmen were interviewed in Seke District from 2 – 30 November 2015 to 1 – 31 December 2015. At the same time, nine chiefs and three headmen were interviewed in Harare at the Chiefs' National Offices, which is located at the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. 'Participation observation' was the major instrument of the interviews. Furthermore, the primary interview technique applied was 'open interviews', which means: on-the-spot interviews, with guiding questions to probe for more answers to acquire maximum balanced results on the subject matter. The researcher used a recording system in conducting the interviews and took down notes as well. It was a challenge to gain access to Seke District and took a long time to get permission to research in the wards, also most of the headmen could not get to the venue of interviews on time.

Seke District has a total of six non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – thus, both local and foreign. Altogether, there were twelve NGO employees (including six in Harare), who were being given questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed and collected from 4 – 31 January 2016 to 1-10 February 2016. Out of twelve NGO employees, eight returned their filled questionnaires on time and four did not return them at all. Four of these NGO employees work in NGOs in Harare. For more information on the questions asked, see the appendix. The reason why four NGO employees did not return the questionnaires cannot be ascertained. In the same timeframe, ten questionnaires were distributed to ten FBO employees in Harare. Out of ten, seven returned their filled questionnaires on time. Three of them did not return the question-

naires. The reason for not returning the questionnaires is that all of them had gone for international meetings.

The interviews with and the distribution of questionnaires to religious experts and lecturers in the Universities of Zimbabwe (University of Zimbabwe and Catholic University in Zimbabwe) who are knowledgeable on development were done in *loco*. They were done from 13 February 2016 to 20 March 2016, at the aforesaid academic institutions. Out of twenty-five questionnaires distributed (twenty at the University of Zimbabwe and five at the Catholic University in Zimbabwe), the researcher received ten questionnaires from religious experts from the University of Zimbabwe. Ten questionnaires were not returned. After a follow-up exercise, the researcher discovered that the following reasons were challenges: most of the lecturers forgot to fill the questionnaires and others had no time since they said that they were busy with their daily jobs. Some were busy with conferences, workshops and seminars inside and outside of Zimbabwe. However, this challenge did not disturb the data collection, since questionnaires were distributed in excess. All five questionnaires distributed at the Catholic University in Zimbabwe were filled and returned on time. Overall, besides the aforementioned challenges, the researcher successfully collected the data needed to ascertain whether indigenous religious beliefs, norms, values, tradition, and knowledge systems are incorporated into the development discourse in Zimbabwe. Patience, the distribution of more questionnaires, and interviewing a good number of interviewees left the researcher in a safe and informed position in relation to the incorporation of indigenous religion, spirituality, and knowledge systems into development initiatives in Zimbabwe and Africa. Finally, varieties of exegetical techniques were exploited in the selection and synthesizing of the data used in this study.

## **1.9 Scope of Study**

The scope of this study is geographically limited to Seke Communal Area, in Harare Province, Zimbabwe, although other African societies will also be used in this study as cross references where it is appropriate to do so. Furthermore, it is limited to what the writer calls the “Shona ethnic religion”, thus leaving out other traditional African Religions as well as the Mainline Religions or the so-called “Proselytizing Major World Religions” –Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, (FBOs). This study is limited to Religion and Development; it is advocating for the voice and, incorporation, of Shona Religion’s indigenous epistemology systems, beliefs, and, philosophy: they are a resource for fruitful and sustainable development.

## 1.10 Survey

This study has six chapters of which the first is the general introduction. The second chapter deals with the theoretical concept of 'abundant life', and African Religions' beliefs, philosophy, and traditions, in relation to their interaction with, as well as their role and, influence on development processes. The third chapter deals with the theoretical concept of the 'basic needs development strategy', as it is understood by the development planners, theorists, and strategists, in the context of developing the developing countries in Africa. In the fourth chapter the writer critically deals with the political structures, policies, agencies, and actors on development in Zimbabwe, and analyzes constructive ideas obtained through interviews from chiefs, religious experts, and other informants in relation to development. The fifth chapter marks the exploration of Shona cultural resources, e.g. African proverbs, songs, idioms and prayers on aspects corresponding to notions of 'abundant life' and the 'basic needs development strategy'. In the last chapter, that is chapter six, the researcher evaluates the study and constructively proffers a way forward and recommendations concerning the role, impact, and significance that Shona religion and its indigenous knowledge systems, beliefs, philosophy, and tradition have in development.

## 1.11 Conclusion

This general introduction has focused mainly on giving the general flow of the analysis in this study. It has highlighted the problem of investigation, the research hypothesis, the area of investigation, the justification of the investigation, and the aim and objectives of the study. It also reviewed the literature available in relation to African religions and development as indicated by the citations made: it became evident is that there is very little that tackles the topic bringing these two concepts together. Methods that will be employed in the entire process of the study have also been outlined and critiqued; the description of field research process was explored and the scope of the study was presented. In conclusion, it has presented a survey of the study outlining what each chapter focuses on. The following chapter will focus on the critical theoretical description, as an investigation into the discourses of 'abundant life', thus Shona Religion's beliefs, philosophy, and tradition in relation to its role and influence in development processes.

## CHAPTER 2: ABUNDANT LIFE REALIZED IN SHONA RELIGION

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter's focus is to explore, analyze and assess the discourses on abundant life in Shona Religion and show how these discourses can interact and influence development processes. "Shona Religion was molded by other cultural factors as well, such as those occupying West and East Africa, and posits that their views (Shona) likely changed after the VaRozvi invasion around 1677" (Asante and Nwadiora 2007: 11-12). Therefore, other books on African religions by different scholars will be used in this chapter as cross-references where it is appropriate to do so. Special attention will be dedicated to the history of the Shona people in brief, Shona religion as an African religion and examples on abundant life in Shona religion as follows: related models on abundant life in Shona religion, the kinship of the Shona world, the Shona religion's perspectives on development, the indices of development in the life and thought of Shona religion, the institution of avoidance rules in Shona religion, and taking Shona indigenous knowledge systems seriously in implementing development programs. These examples are important to give a wayforward and recommendations for consideration in relation to foster successful developmental programs in Zimbabwe.

### 2.2 A Brief History of the Shona People

"The Shona of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Southern Zambia belonged to the Bantu. They formed eighty percent of the population of Zimbabwe and were under British colonialism for almost a century. The Shona are one of three major cultural groupings of mixed farming that predominated in the Southern Africa, the two others are the Sotho - Tswana and Nguni" (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 CF. Bourdillon 1996: 1). Before 1500, a Shona clan, the *Rozvi*, established a great Kingdom known to Europeans as *Monomutapa* which stretched from the Kalahari to the Indian Ocean and from the Limpopo to the Zambezi, and by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century *Monomutapa* broke up into several *Rozvi* dominated successor states that survived into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Shona society was founded in the Zimbabwe plateau region of South Central Africa (ibid). The original inhabitants of Zimbabwe were a Shona group called *Hungwe* which was conquered by another group; the Mbire (Needham, Mashingayidze and Bhebhe 1984: 5-14). Other Shona ethnic groups included the *Barwe*, the *Manyika*, the *Ndau*, the *Korekore*, the *Shangwe*, and the *Guruuswa*. Shona society organized many of its descent principles through men rather than women (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4). The emergence of the Shona language is most likely a development of the later Iron Age. Like the Sotho-Tswana and the *Nguni*, the Shona language belongs to the Southern Bantu Language group (Ibid). The Shona Language (*Chishona*) is widely spoken in Zimbabwe and parts of, Mozambique, Zambia,

and Botswana. Shona is one of the principal languages of Zimbabwe. It has several dialects including *Hwesa*, *Karanga* or *Chikaranga*, spoken in Southern Zimbabwe with the sub-dialects *Duma*, *Jena*, *Mhari*, *Ngova*, *Venda*, *Nyubi*, and *Govera*. The *Zezuru* dialects include *Chizezuru*, *Bazezuru*, *Mazizuru*, *Vazezuru* and *Wazezuru* that are spoken in *Mashonaland*, the Harare Central Province, and in the *Seke* communal area, which is used in this dissertation as a case study. The *Korekore* dialect is widely spoken in Northern Zimbabwe (ibid).

“The balanced and varied resources of the Zimbabwe plateau provided wide environmental and economic factors to underpin the spectacular growth of the Shona states. They occupied much of modern Zimbabwe and the area between the *Sabi* and *Pungwe* rivers and extended to the Indian Ocean in modern-day Mozambique” (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 Cf. Bourdillon 1996: 1). It is probable that the Shona originated from the Congo Basin area and migrated southwards into Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) at the end of the first millennium. The first stone building in Zimbabwe was the work of the Shona people. Most of the stone works in the Great Zimbabwe were constructed by them (ibid). Moreover, the Shona began to build in the southeastern hills of Zimbabwe during the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century. They established the Great Zimbabwe civilization with stone wall enclosures. The Great Zimbabwe was indeed a thriving center for professional masons. The word ‘Zimbabwe’ is a Shona term for houses of stones. Therefore, this civilization developed in an area with excellent pasture for grazing, hunting, farming, mining, and long distance trading which made the Great Zimbabwe a prosperous state in the region (ibid). “Possessing cattle was a symbol of power and wealth that was concentrated in the hands of those in positions of authority” (ibid). Furthermore, the Shona society enjoyed reasonable political organization in the decades that preceded European partition. “It was divided into lineages and a male member belonged to the father’s lineage; a married woman joined her husband’s lineage” (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 Cf. Bourdillon 1996: 2). Each lineage was symbolized by an animal with spiritual significance. The Shona people identify themselves with clans rather than the group. Communities, in turn, have a mixture of clans (ibid).

“Economically, the Shona practiced agriculture, mining, and pastoralism” (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4). The most specialized sector of the economy was gold mining. This being the case, gold was an important source of wealth in Great Zimbabwe, but cattle continued to be the backbone of the economy (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 Cf. Beach 1980: 1-51). “The Shona formed part of the gold trade network that extended to China. The Portuguese had contacts with the Shona and established themselves in what became known as *Mashonaland* before they were driven out at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the *Rozvi Changamire* Dynasty” (ibid). In Central Africa, the Shona groups were the first to accept European settlement, but under *Mwene Mutapa*, the Portuguese were never able to control the Shona absolutely. In the 1690s, *Changamire* rulers who were successors of the *Mutapa* dominated a large territory and remained free from the Portuguese invasions (Olaniyi

2013: 1-4). They controlled the gold production and the gold trade more than all other rulers in the Zambesi-Limpopo region. The Shona constructed stone buildings and accumulated vast amounts of gold ornaments at their capitals, *Dhlo3hlo* and *Khami* (ibid). “They collected tribute from their subjects and vassal states. The *Changamire* state continued to expand before it was overthrown by conquerors from *Kwazulu* in the 1830s. In response to capitalism in southern Africa after 1870, agriculture and migrant labor further developed. The Shona peasant farmers supplied white farmers in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) with a variety of crops such as *poko* corn, millet, groundnuts, tobacco and so on” (ibid).

However, “in the 1890s the British South Africa Company invaded the Shona territory, because the Shona had a weak central Kingdom. The Shona, like the Ndebele, lost their economic resources including land and cattle. They were subjected to forced labor. The British conquest also led to the collapse of the old political structures. The Shona were mobilized through the religious authority of a spirit called *Mwari/UMlimu* (Supreme life force of the Shona and Ndebele people). The Shona and Ndebele rose in rebellion against the British forces between 1896 and 1897 using guerrilla tactics” (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 Cf. Mungazi 1991: 1f). After two to three years of British South African Company rule, both the Shona and the Ndebele had grievances including confiscation of cattle, exploitation of land, compulsory labor, harsh taxation, insubordination of Africans by white officials. These were the immediate factors which led to the African revolt, coupled by Jameson’s raid. Jameson was the administrator of *Mashonaland* who conquered the Ndebele in 1893 (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4 Cf. Needham, Mashingayidze and Bhebhe 1984: 14). The combined forces of the Shona and the Ndebele attacked the company. The European settlers lost about 10% of their population. Unlike the Ndebele, the Shona were a fragmented people. The Shona were only united by religious institutions, especially *Mwari* (the supreme life force) whose shrines were located in caves with elaborate priests and messengers. “*Mkwati* (Shona leader) and his followers mobilized the people that *Mwari* was prepared to kill all the White settlers. The revolt started with localized resistance to the Europeans and Company rule from 1891-1896” (ibid: 1-4; 15). The resistance of *Nyandoro* (another Shona leader) in the East of the Salisbury (Harare) district in April 1896 marked the beginning of the Shona uprising. In the same year, the Shona and the Ndebele forged an alliance and revolted against the Europeans. The religious organizations were a reinforcing factor in the rebellion. People were mobilized through the *Mwari* religious cult. Shona resistance to colonial rule in the 1890s took the form of desertion from underpaid labor, abandonment of settlements due to tax and labor demands, theft and cattle maiming between 1894 and 1896 (ibid).

“Globally, the Shona people are known for their artworks: stone sculpture and *mbira* music. Despite the tremendous influence of Western scientific worldview and Christianity, the Shona remained attached to their traditional metaphysics. The Shona did not passively assimilate to European modernity; they have fused Western science with tradi-

tion to shape their African modernity. In the uprising wars, European settlers were defeated in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Mozambique in the 1960s and 1970s" (Olaniyi 2013: 1-4). Culturally, Shonas are community-oriented; there is no belief in personal wealth or gain, only in what is best for the community. What we witness in the current Zimbabwe situation is a clear deviation from an accepted Shona religious norm.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, "the Shona have migrated to work in the mines of South Africa, after the colonial settlement of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) employment became available within the country, on farms and mines, and particularly in the growing industrial cities. Some groups were moved off their land to make way for the settlers who wanted to farm it. Widespread education was introduced by various groups of missionaries who also established hospitals, and diverse forms of technical training including training in improved agriculture" (Bourdillon 1996: 1). These services were subsequently taken over by the government. Plow agriculture is now prevalent. After independence, the Shona settled around the Harare Province, although there are many Shona in other parts of the country. Therefore, the *Seke* communal area in the Harare Province of Zimbabwe provides a good geographical area for a case study in the sense that it is an area which is settled by the original kinship of the *Rozwi* and *Changamire Shona* peoples (ibid). They have been clustered away from the best farmland near Harare City where there is a temperate climate, and an annual rainfall of 70 to 100 centimeters, to a hotter and drier area that is 40 – 50 kilometers away.

### **2.3 Shona Religion as an African Religion**

"African religions in general are the indigenous faith and practice of African peoples, which is the product of their perception of and encounter with the world, their reflection upon and experiences of the universe in which they live. Generally, the Shona world exists in two spheres – the mundane or visible, tangible, and concrete world of man, animals, vegetation and other natural elements, and the invisible world of the spirits, ancestors, divinities and the Supreme life force. Yet, it is one world, indivisible, with one touching on the other" (Lausanne Committee 1980: 1-5). Its specific elements are basically the belief in the existence of *Mwari* (the supreme life force) and gods, the belief in spirits, both good and bad, the belief in cultic prohibitions (avoidance rules) and moral violations. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, *Mwari* (the supreme life force) has many names and meanings. Although the origin of the word *Mwari* is debatable, there is no question that he/she is considered above and different to earthly powers. However, the word *Mwari* (the supreme life force) may have come from "Muari or Mual". "The argument is that Shona grammar forbids joining syllables with two vowels following each other in certain cases. The rule for morphophonemic (sound) change results in a case where we drop "u" from the prefix "mu-", and substitute it with "w" so that the prefix "mu-" is identified as "mw-" and therefore "mu + ari" gives us *Mwari*"

(Merwe 1957: 42 Cf. Taringa 2004: 175). When you refer to the one who claims to be or the one who claims that “I am”, i.e., “ari”, the rule requires that the person is called *Mwari* (ibid). *Mwari* (Shona Supreme life force) is regarded as being intimately related to spiritual beings and represents fertility. Some equate this nature with female and life-giving force. *Mwari* is the Supreme life force above all men and nature, Creator of good and evil, the source of life that represents fertility. Shona people communicate with him through the intervention of other deities, spirits, such as ancestors or *Mbondoro* (territory spirits). In the changing world, *Mwari* is still regarded as the Supreme life force. However, eclipsed by the predominant presence of spirits and spiritual forces, ritualistic worship of *Mwari* has declined in recent times due to the colonial theology of Christianity in its different versions. However, the Shona give profound reverence to *Mwari* and call upon him/her in times of national, familial, and individual crisis throughout the year.

Other names for *Mwari* in Shona religion are: *Musikavanhu* - the Creator of human beings, *Nyadenga* – the Great one of the sky, *Wokumusoro* – the one above, *Chipindikure* – the supreme life force (who can turn things upside-down), *Chirozva – maya* – the one who has power to destroy good and bad people (ibid). The names are too numerous to be exhausted under this subtopic. “The Shona people believe in sacrifices performed for various purposes, such as warding off evil spirits, securing ancestors’ support, appeasing ancestors and supernatural beings and expressing their gratitude, the continuing existence of the dead in the invisible world, position them where they could be of help or assistance to the living, and they believe in judgment from *Mwari* (the supreme life force) or from the dead” (Parrinder 1980: 58-59). It should be noted that African religions give meaning and direction to their adherents. They express themselves in the way the Africans have always regulated their relationship with nature and with fellow men. As a result of this, in some cases some animals may be regarded as sacred to devotees of any particular divinity, some natural phenomena such as trees, hills or rivers may be deified (Parrinder 1980: 58-59). Shona religion is regarded as *ChiVanhu/ChiShona*. *ChiVanhu* refers to a “worldview of the black Africans of Zimbabwe. It can also be considered as the philosophy of the life of the black Africans in Zimbabwe” (Makuvaza 2014: 20-54).

## 2.4 The Shona Religion

*Mwari* (the supreme life force) and *Midzimu* (ancestors) are the most venerated beings. Narrowing down the religious focus to the Shona people of Zimbabwe, they believe in the supreme life force (*Mwari*). The focus is now on the community beliefs because these beliefs are the foundations of the actions that the Shona take towards or against anything. They silently give the rites and rituals, positive responses and negative responses to any initiative. If they are not exposed, it will be very difficult to understand

why a Shona reacts the way he/she does in the face of anything. They are the spring-board of the philosophy of the religion of the Africans. Shona believe in life after death during which a person continues to bear influence on the living. The spirit of a deceased, who was a leader should be honored regularly and if not it can ask to be honored and the common way is to cause mild sickness, which it removes as soon as the request is addressed. “Therefore, within the Shona culture, the dead have influence on the living, as all men and women are expected to provide for and protect their families as best as they can, even if they die they leave their bodies in the graves and they do not cease to care for their descendants” (Lan 1985: 34).

For the Shona people women and men who died, living an acceptable life in the community and having families, are transformed into ancestors (*Midzimu*) who know the future before it happens. The ancestors have a form of the spiritual body, have no material form, cannot be bound by space and time and so can be in many places at the same time, thus, being omnipresent. It is vital to understand this because sometimes, as shall be illustrated, development efforts cannot take place because of the influence of these ancestors and their nature. The welfare of their descendants is their concern. Hence, anything purported to be for the good of the people such as development efforts needs to be sanctioned by them. They can cause illness as a way to show that they want to speak through that person to their descendants, warning them of impending danger or to complain that they have been forgotten. Although the *Midzimu* (ancestors) are unceasingly generous and concerned with the welfare of the living, their protection must be won by performing rituals directed towards them. “The spirit ancestors are usually only two or three generations back from the living generation and are the people who passed on the custom of honoring their ancestors and the traditions of the community. They are honored in ceremonies to celebrate a good harvest and in appeals to deal with misfortunes. When a spirit becomes angry, it communicates through a medium, or a diviner diagnoses the anger and cause, and appeasement follows. Families seeking to avenge a death or enforce debt payment may consult diviners-healers (*n’anga*); for more information see below. Witches are thought to have the power to raise angry spirits, and the anger of a spirit may or may not be justified in view of the affected family” (Ember and Ember eds. 1996: 1-26).

#### 2.4.1 Mhondoro (*Territorial Spirits*)

In the same way, the ordinary people protect their descendants and are concerned about their welfare, the chief should do the same. To understand the role and significance of the spirit of a chief, it is important to understand the role of the chief itself because it is what the chief does as a living person that continues, though now in a spiritual form. However, “Chiefdom is a tract of land under the jurisdiction of a traditional ruler and the legendary power of the early members of the royal families is further ex-

pressed in the belief that their spirits remain powerful guidance of the Chiefdom” (Bourdillon 1976: 121). Any chiefdom is likely to contain a spectrum of clan names, thus, even those who are in no way related to the royal family speak of the spirit guardians of the chiefdom as their ancestors who have a duty to protect them. In some areas when a headman holds a festival in honor of the spirit guardians, a member of the chiefly clan must be there to establish contact with the spirit guardians of the land. “The Chiefly clan is especially associated with the Chiefdom and has a special status in obtaining the help of the guardian spirit of the land” (ibid). This serves to show that each territory has its spirits who should be acknowledged. They are the owners of the land upon which the development initiatives take place.

A young man had gone to stay with his mother’s father and was almost refused the stay. After being shown the fields to do his farming he met a ‘*mhondoro*’ (territorial spirit) who when his spirit came out did not want to see this young man. This is based on the Shona belief that a son cannot go and live with the mother’s father. He is expected to stay with his father or near his father. So the ‘*mhondoro*’ had all the reasons to refuse him the stay. The young man was, however, “saved by the grandfather who told the *mhondoro* that the young man was their grandchild. It was only then that he was accepted and the acceptance was done ritually. The young man was going to be given a chicken by the *mhondoro*” (Lan 1985: 34). This was not a real chicken. It could be a buck or any wild animal, which the young man would easily catch in the forest on a hunting expedition and that was seen as a sign that he was now welcome to be in that community. The *mhondoro* would facilitate the young man’s success. This applies to any stranger who gets into any area. The person has to be introduced through the religious standards of that particular place and the guardians of the land have to know that there is a stranger on their land through the relevant structures. This accounts for the reason why development practitioners have to report to chiefs on arrival in an area. The chief is the guardian of the fundamental values of life (*upenyu*), and strength or power comes from the chief’s status and his accession rituals.

The chief (Shona chiefs tend to be almost exclusively male) is responsible for the prosperity of his people, and particularly for the land and its fertility. The traditional chiefdom has an association with the religious and extraordinary powers. According to a Shona religious belief, a chief is chosen by the gods and is, hence, endowed with extraordinary powers. Therefore, “the founding ancestors of the Chiefly dynasties are usually the spirits believed to control the productivity of the land: the living Chiefs are successors to these founding ancestors and must have their approval and protection” (Bourdillon 1976: 136). The chief’s political power arises out of the religious power of his ancestors; because of this the chief becomes the link between the living and the dead. When the chief dies he does not relinquish his religiopolitical and magical powers. He continues to have an effect upon the living and their land. Honoring the living chief is to honor those who have gone before him. It is important to have an under-

standing of the importance of the guardians of the land because there is no development that can take place within an area without their sanction. What is outlined above is the basis of their effect on any initiative. They are the owners of the land upon which the drama of development unfolds. Therefore, they can ‘make’ and ‘un-make’ the success of development projects.

#### *2.4.2 Ngozi (Avenging Spirits) and Mashavi (Stranger Spirits)*

There are also other spirits known as avenging spirits (*Ngozi*) and alien spirits (*Mashavi*), “an angry spirit is a spirit of an aggrieved person which wishes for retaliation on an individual or family by which it was angered when the person was still alive” (Gelfand 1973: 60). Alien spirits are wandering spirits of men and women who have died in a foreign land and have not been accorded proper rites and rituals at death. They are spirits of strangers who died away from home. They could also be spirits of animals such as baboons and monkeys. Their characteristics are that they confer quality gifts or talents like “hunting, healing or dancing amongst many others when they possess someone. These spirits are said to dwell anywhere especially in the bushes or under trees” (ibid). In some way, the people are afraid of them and children are advised not to visit a thick forest or just sit under trees, especially when herding cattle or when gathering firewood, lest these spirits catch up with them. In the same manner, Shona people will not agree to do a development initiative in an area they believe is infested by these spirits because it will be sacred to them by virtue of that belief. Rituals should be performed first before a development initiative starts in such an area.

#### *2.4.3 The Communion of the Shona World*

According to the Shona people, Shona religion is connected with everything in the visible world. One aspect of this is that certain categories of animals are given a sacred significance and certain rocks or caves or rivers are seen as holy (*Chinhoyi* caves). “The *Chinhoyi* caves are a group of caves in Zimbabwe, located in the *Makonde* district in the *Mashonaland* Province, in central northern Zimbabwe. They lie nine kilometers away from *Chinhoyi* town. There is a sense of being part of nature as a whole and belonging to a living vibrant cosmos, which has mysterious laws of its own which development planners can perhaps glimpse and sometimes use to their advantage but probably not understand them fully” (Rushinga and Maposa 2010: 204). In addition to the beliefs in the dead who lie under the soil and can, therefore, control it, the Shona also believe in sacred places, which could be natural sights such as certain forests, and mountains (e.g. the Buchwa Mountain in Zvishavane, and the Matopo Hills in Bulawayo). These places are believed to be sacred and people cannot climb these mountains without cause or just fell down trees. These include the graves of the dead and shrines built for religious

purposes. These sacred places can have an effect upon development. For instance, a forest or some piece of land may be scientifically suitable for a development project or for the construction of some infrastructure, but religiously it may not be proper because it is sacred. If the development project is unavoidable, then special rituals have to be done to access these sacred places. This is just an example of how sacred places can have an influence on development projects.

#### *2.4.4 Traditional Healers (N'Anga) and Health*

The other main feature in the Shona religious beliefs is *n'anga* (traditional healer) and his/her secret, the spiritual art of healing. “The healer possesses the power to heal mental and bodily sickness and to enable people to understand something of the mysteries of life and the workings of the minds of the dead ancestors. In the belief of the Shona, the *n'anga* is a medical doctor, psychiatrist, psychoanalysts, and horoscopist” (Gelfand 1973: 39). To the Shona, the white doctor is a grotesque figure of devilry and crookedness and it is preferable not to have anything to do with him. They associated the doctor’s science of medical operation with human anatomy with the dark arts of witchcraft and sorcery (Vambe 1972: 186). The Shona community is, therefore, ready to eat from the hollowed hand of the *n'anga*. The *n'anga* was given the best of everything, especially food, free of charge, no matter how long he would stay with those who would have invited him for his services and the hosts would cling to every word he said and tried to satisfy all his unpredictable whims. The strong belief in *n'anga* is based on the belief that every form of sickness and suffering in the world is caused by bad or evil spirits and man’s failure to live strictly in accordance with *Mwari*’s (Supreme life forces’) will. They also believe that *Mwari*, when he chose to, allowed the ancestors to get angry with their living relations, who in turn would be exposed to the evil of witchcraft, which brought about physical and mental suffering. Due to this, the *n'anga* would not proceed with his cures without first exploring the tribal and the spiritual background of his patient to find out the basic cure of the illness. The description below shows how a *n'anga* (traditional Healer) operates:

The healer could use the ‘Hakata’ (pieces of wood marked with characters) from whose juxtaposition as they rested on the ground when banged together after chanting certain poetic phrases, he could read meanings and messages. Following this would be a grueling session of questions where the *n'anga* would behave like a hostile prosecuting counsel, who bullies and twists the emotions of the accused to cause confusion. The healer spared no effort in badgering and goading the senior member of the family into bringing out all its secrets. For the healing of the sick person, the healer would want to know the history of the relationship of the sick person with the neighbors, what the father and mother could have done and more importantly their relationship with the ancestors. He would threaten and plead as he tried to probe into the darkest regions of the entire family... (Vambe 1972: 189)

The healers move around like mobile clinics with their stock of herbs and mixtures. They took quite some time to mix and sort out. Where necessary the healer would make short trips into the bush to dig up certain roots that he did not have and the medical discoveries were supposed to come to him/her in dreams or when in a trance. It should be noted that these men and women were of great learning within the context of their environment. They possessed a stock of medical knowledge and skill and cured certain cases, which baffled white doctors especially those of disorder in nature. Unfortunately, due to a strong sense of secrecy, individualism, and even jealousy, the healers would not disclose their expertise; hence, many died with their knowledge to the disadvantage of their descendants (*ibid*).

The above description illustrates Shona religion and how Shona people go about their life and how their prayers are answered. These are their beliefs and how these beliefs address their needs. “This also goes to substantiate that needs are solved religiously. Be it water, health, or agriculture, all had a religious corresponding response which is performed. For their food, water, peace, and stability the Shona trust in supreme powers that have to be invoked to help them through. These beliefs are within them and have made indelible marks to such a degree that trying to convince them otherwise will only lead to confusion or pretense. To tell the people that the rain has fallen as a natural phenomenon, after performing a rainmaking ritual would offend them and they would laugh in derision or mockery because they have evidence to the contrary. To them the rain is a result of the rainmaking ritual that has been performed, phenomenologically speaking, and analyzing the whole scenario and the subsequent evidence, the conclusion is that what the people are saying is true because they have lived with this belief which has become true on numerous occasions. On a similar note, though general, the spirits are the forces of nature, the force of the storm, rain, rivers, seas, hills, pools, rocks and other phenomena of nature” (Parrinder 1962: 59). Unfortunately, the rain ceremonies were judged illogical as the formation of clouds and rain could be explained and proved scientifically, while the Christian perspective would say only God provides rain and all ceremonies purported to provide rain by the Africans are diabolic. This has to be considered by development initiatives related to agriculture and harvesting water from hills, mountains, and rivers. When the Shona want water, they have to perform rainmaking rituals as mentioned above. There is a need to seriously consider and take into account these beliefs. African religions should not be treated as a fossil but rather as one of the most important building blocks of modern life and development.

#### *2.4.5 Ceremonies in Shona Religion*

“The main elements of a Shona religious ceremony are the union with the spiritual world through the medium (*svikiro*) who, when possessed, affords immediate contact

with a spirit of the Shona celestial hierarchy" (Gelfand 1962: 43). This spirit is honored with prayer and is propitiated by gifts or animal sacrifice. "Through the medium, the spirit advises and warns its worshippers. However, the most important ceremonies involve offerings of millet beer to the spirits concerned. Shona beer is brewed and poured on a specified space of the ancestor(s) while the remainder is consumed by the gathering, whilst singing and dancing. Sacrifices may occasionally be offered to ancestors and territorial spirits, but are regularly offered to *Mwari* (the supreme life force). Spirits may also be honored with gifts of cloth or money handed over to the medium" (ibid). The ceremony of 'rain-making' (*doro remvura*) is also very important in the Shona religion because the Shona economic system is anchored on agriculture. Ideally, each male member of the village should own his own piece of land (*munda*). Hence, the piece of land will then be divided into several portions (*makandiva*) where different crops are grown. With adequate rains the Shona are self-sufficient. With adequate rains, their spirits are high because they are assured of a good harvest (Vambe 1972: 186). When a drought is threatening, the Shona people perform rainmaking rituals.

When a drought is about to happen in Shona communal areas, the chief and the council of elders of the communal areas make secret trips to consult *Nehanda* (a female spirit medium) at her headquarters on issues of political importance and rain for their development through farming or when there is the threat of a serious drought. What follows is an account of a consultation of *Mbuya Nehanda*: "the Shona Chief would choose certain old females to brew large quantities of beer, while the Chief killed a number of cattle according to prescribed tribal rites. They were to be consumed at a subsequent ceremony of propitiation, consisting of tribal prayers, songs, and dances. Following this ceremony, clouds formed and darkened and the rain came down in torrents even before the dancing and the feasting were over" (Vambe 1972: 189). The term 'rain-making' simply refers to the ceremony performed when Shona people are in drought seasons. Up to this day, the ceremony of rain-making (*doro remvura*) is still performed in Shona religion.

In other seasons when there is so heavy and persistent rain that the Shona people think that they are faced with the prospect of ruined crops and, therefore, starvation, the chief and council of elders would again consult *Nehanda* (a female spirit medium). Therefore, when they come back, beer, meat, dancing, singing and feasting appropriate to this particular problem are a prominent feature at this ensuring ceremony. The result is that in due course the rains subside and everyone is greatly relieved. The rain-making and other Shona tribal ceremonies of a similar nature came under the general title of *Kutamba Mashari* (to perform spirit dances). There are mainly two kinds: those for thanksgiving, such as after a good harvest and those intended to placate the souls of the departed in moments of national crises, such as shortage or abundance of rain. During the ceremonies, people would drink and get drunk with beer and various men and women would go into trances. Purporting to be possessed by *Mashare* (medium

spirits) and *Mhondoro* (territorial spirits) they would “display muscular paroxysms, their twitching and writhing were like acrobatic feats, and while possessed they would speak in strange tongues. They imitate the sounds and the language of animals. However, skeptical one could be, he or she would feel how the whole adult world around would have entered into a common realm with their dead wherein they had direct communication with the ancestors. These trances and sounds, twitching and writhing seemed no longer controlled by the material or natural forces, but instead by unseen intangible presence” (ibid). This entire entertainment is enough to excite the onlookers and connect the living and the dead.

It emerges that the Shona people have been and are a very religious people despite the derogatory and pejorative terms their religion was given, such as paganism, primitive, fetishism, juju, animism, etc. The key in their beliefs is the effect of the living dead, the belief in sacred rocks and places, the belief in traditional healers and the belief in the ‘rain-making’ ceremonies, and rituals. These beliefs constitute their religion and define their existence, socially, economically and politically, and cut across all dimensions of their life. The role of Shona religion in development will be based on these beliefs. With the above religious beliefs, the next part deals with models of abundant life in Shona religion.

## 2.5 Abundant Life in Shona Religion

As it has been noted under this chapter in the unit ‘The Shona Religion’, the Shona worldview does not separate the mundane world and the supra-mundane or invisible world. Therefore, the inseparableness between the mundane and invisible worlds is categorically interpreted by the researcher as a model of abundant life. However, the Shona people generally see abundant life as society’s harmonious relationship with the supreme life force (*Mwari*), the ancestors, the gods and other spirit beings like *Midzimu* (medium spirits). “This is because in their worldview these beings can make and unmake” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). “Fullness of life, abundant life, according to African Religions manifests itself in peace, prosperity, and the general welfare of the communities and implies the existence and interaction of the mystical powers in the universe” (Magesa 1997: 159). Shona spirituality is a driving force to abundant life. Spirituality in African religions is described as values by which an individual or community relates to the spiritual realm (Mbiti 1975: 104). It is born out of a relationship between human beings and other spiritual beings which include *Mwari* (the supreme life force), spirits of the departed (ancestors), divinities and gods, spirits associated with natural objects and phenomena, and nature itself. The Shona peoples are extremely aware of the unbroken communication with the spiritual world as a community in which they participate and to which they belong. Therefore, their understanding of

abundant life is governed by the sensitivity to this reality of relationship and communication.

The relationship between the mundane world and the supra-mundane world is maintained through religious activities and practices like sacrifices, festivals, and prayers. Of these, prayers are the most intensive expression of Shona spirituality. They are spiritual messages for the attention of the spirit world. “The Shona people’s prayers reveal elements of spirituality such as: holiness, purity, cleanliness of heart” (Bourdillon 1993:81). Prayers portray humility, faith, trust and confidence that humans have in their relationship with the spirit world. However, any threat to or breakdown of prayers threatens the abundant life. Prominent among the themes of prayers in Shona communities are peace, love, tenderness, care, and gentleness in the relationships of the human community. For the Shona acknowledge that if there is no peace, love, care, etc., abundant life is threatened and the spirit world with its divinities becomes angry and suspends its protection of the mundane world. “Praise, thanksgiving, joys at blessings received is also present in the prayers directed to the spiritual world” (ibid: 90). From the above fact, we can gather what Shona require of religion. The ultimate concern of the fullness or abundance and blessedness of life is the central theme of prayers and that for which Shona people struggle. Shona religion wrestles with the reality of evil, suffering, and pain.

“Prayers may or may not be accompanied by offerings; sacrifices (as noted earlier) are another avenue of communication with the spirit world in the search for abundant life and the defeat of death” (Mwakabana 2002: 16-17). They may be accompanied by vows that involve ascetic life or other modifications of lifestyle. Spirituality in Shona religion means the quest for freedom from negative influence, protection from evil forces or liberation from life-denying circumstances. In affirming above mentioned facts Gelfand noted that “Shona spirituality often takes the form of rituals of reconciliation as well as of those of separation and all these affirm that living as a Shona person is living in and with the spirit world” (Gelfand 1959: 129). Shona spirituality motivates and undergirds people to build community, to respect the individual and to develop sustainable relations with nature – hence, development initiatives should take note of these Shona spiritualities, for if not considered, they completely destroy the relationship of religious communication, and abundant life diminishes. In Shona religion, spirituality undergirds abundant life, and Shona lives with the knowledge that *Mwari* (the supreme life force) and the world of spirits participate in the human dimension. Unity of life is hereby affirmed in full. The Shona cosmology is deeply religious, presupposing that Shona live by faith. Believing in the existence and reality of the spirit world and spiritual beings, Shona religion holds that what happens in the spirit world affects the mundane world and vice versa. Faith in Shona religion is both personal and communal; it is the basis of a community’s hope. The expectation of the “good from the spirit world encourages offerings, sacrifices, and other religious rituals; it also encourages a communal spirit and

a striving towards the common good" (Daneel 1959: 291f). It is faith in the inherent goodness of humanity which makes Shona expect that when the right-hand washes the left, the left hand will also wash the right. However, the concept of abundant life within Shona religion is anchored in a profound relationship between the mundane world and the supra-mundane or spiritual world. "Therefore, it is important that the relationship between the visible world and spiritual world must not be disturbed" (ibid).

In Shona religion evidence of an abundant life (*upenyu wakazara*) or good life or good living (*ugaro rwakanana/kugara kwakanaka*) is marked by what Magesa noted as the power to procreate, have good eyesight, good hearing, good health, wealth, and prosperity to ensure personal value and dignity. The abundant life is lived in the context of harmonious relations in the community, and with nature and the world of spirits. Hope is related to the realization of this abundant life, especially in the form of longevity. Longevity is crowned by peaceful death, followed by proper burial rites to ensure that one is reunited with one's ancestors in the spirit world and that one does not become a bad ghost haunting people and nature. The abundant life is marked by ethical propriety (Magesa 1997: 159). Shona maintain that traditional morality sanctioned by Shona religion ensures the integrity of the community, of the individual, and of nature. If such a philosophy is co-opted within the community development, development programs can lead to sustainable development. To ensure abundant life, Shona emphasize that one has to remain integrated into one's community, for it is expected that the community provides security, caring and healing. To be separated from one's community is to be counted as dead. This is another indication of Shona religion's position that life is a unity and that abundant life requires wholeness.

Shona love and celebrate life in all its many aspects, including personal, communal, economic and environmental health. All stages of human life are celebrated, but most especially those that signify the abundance or fullness of life. "Birth, the attainment of sexual maturity, and the return to the spirit world (death) are all cause for celebration. Celebrative events and festivals honor individuals, build community and revive the contact with the natural world and the world of the departed, very often celebrations bring all together, in a communal meal as the culmination" (Magesa 1997: 159). This communication with the spirit world is of cardinal significance in Shona religion.

Since life does not always run smoothly and obstacles have to be overcome, celebrating life often means ultimately celebrating salvation. "For, to celebrate deliverance songs, prayers, dances – rituals of cleansing from evil, pollution, and shame are often performed" (Sindima 1990: 144). Celebrating is a way of recognizing the dependence of the human on the spirit dimension and specifically on *Mwari* (the supreme life force). It also signifies the element of communion. Sharing a meal in Shona religion is a demonstration of kinship and common purpose. Oneness may be celebrated in other forms, such as blood pacts or the exchange of objects. This being the case, a key tenet of Shona religion is that division diminishes life. Hence, wherever a larger community is

created, this calls for a celebration. This regular experience is provided by the elaborate celebrations of marriages and the reconciliation of estranged persons and communities, and ceremonies of welcoming back those who have been on a journey. To celebrate is to affirm the priority of life over death and to tame the power of death by confining it to the process by which one moves from life in this dimension to life in the other dimension, where the spiritual beings live. Just as one's arrival in this mundane world was celebrated, one expects to be welcomed and celebrated in the supramundane dimension for a life well lived here.

## 2.6 Shona Anthropology

There is a philosophy of abundant life in Shona communities. Shona religion holds that life is the greatest gift which *Mwari* (the supreme life force) has bestowed on humans. Hence, Shona are brought up, taught, and trained to seek and attain a life which must be enjoyed to its fullest, peacefully and undisturbed. At the same time, it teaches that human life and the pursuits of life are not attainable in isolation and apart from one's community because, by definition, life is social. However, "a communal life is nurtured and sustained by a network of interdependencies of individuals and community, individuals and spiritual world, as well as the natural environment" (Sindima 1990: 144). Therefore, in all of the life's pursuits, Shona religion reminds individuals always to strive for the maintenance of a relationship with their extended families and clans, with their ancestors, with nature and *Mwari* (the supreme life force) or *Musikavanhu* (the creator of human beings). Existing in this network of relationships, individuals cannot avoid experiencing and being influenced by the customs of their community, customs which shape and influence their own lives as much as they shape and influence the lives of their neighbors. Beyond the communal life, however, Shona religion teaches that spiritual powers are there which can shape and influence individual lives, for better or worse. Furthermore, Sindima says, "it is important to seek ways and means to manipulate or control those external powers and agencies which are more powerful than humans, through practicing rituals and extraordinary recipes and charms prescribed by religious authorities to those who feel threatened" (ibid).

## 2.7 Threats to Abundant Life in Shona Religion

Given the fact that life is one of communal interrelationship, Shona religion acknowledges that problematic areas (*zvitadzo* – a Shona word for many sins) exist which arise when individual acts undermine the stability of people's social life. "The concept of sin(s), *chiri* or *chitadzo* (Shona words for singular sin), in Shona religion refers to any and all anti-social activities that are aimed at hurting individuals and communities" (Maimela 1987: 63-67). Although sin includes evil thoughts, "Shona do not view sin and evil in

abstract metaphysical or transcendental terms. Sin has to do with real life situations, and for the Shona people, there is no idea of a fall or of an original sin. Children are born without sin, and only get disturbed or unstable or maladjusted as they grow. Sin is committed in the present life, so it is in this life that sin must be dealt with. There is no place for punishment in the afterlife. Anxiety about judgment in the hereafter is not part of the Shona's experience. There are no punishments to be avoided or rewards to look forward to in heaven or paradise" (ibid). This being the case, "in Shona religion sin is dealt with in terms of appeasement, by compensating the person or community that has been wronged here and now. To many Africans, sinful acts are those which destabilize or destroy the community and threaten the well-being of one's neighbors. The word used for sin in several African languages means particularly to spoil or harm human relationships. The witch is sinner par excellence, not primarily because of his or her deeds, but because of the evil consequences of these deeds: illness, barrenness, catastrophe, and misfortune, disruption of relationships in the community, poverty, and so on" (Bosch 1987: 50). Therefore, salvation for an individual in Shona religion means being integrated into the community of the ancestors (*midzimu*) and becoming one. "Hell in the afterlife means having no children to commemorate you when you have died" (ibid). These problematic areas might be of an existential, spiritual or emotional nature. The existential problems to abundant or fullness of life also manifest in "drought and devastating floods, hazards of life such as being bitten by poisonous snakes, struck by lightning, killed by a falling tree, or such as infertility, and repeated infant deaths, general bad luck, economic insecurity, failure in business ventures, the emotional or spiritual problematic areas manifest themselves through bad spirits and malicious persons, witches and sorcerers, and hatred or ill towards people" (Magesa 1997: 62). These problems may arise when individuals undermine the social rank of the elders of the family or fail to support their parents – both of which could provoke the anger and curse of the departed and founders of extended families and clans. Therefore, young people are discouraged from acting against their elders or failing to take their elders' interests into account.

In relation to threats to abundant life in Shona religion, the ethical emphasis or concern of African religions is the promotion of human life (ibid). However, the above-mentioned idea bears a special significance because it shows the centrality of African religions' philosophy on the sanctity of human life. Many current problems, for example, poverty, ethnic conflicts, hunger and the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism, which are still present in Africa, lead to the dehumanization of the African human person and threaten abundant life. Similarly, it shows how African religions regard the universe, with all that it contains, as being lent by God to humanity, for the promotion of life, good relationships, and peace. Magesa went on to say, "poverty is a menace to abundant life and for him poverty in Africa has been caused by those who

regard themselves as powerful and as having more right to enjoy the fruits of God's good creation" (Magesa 1997: 62).

Therefore, external forces in Africa, for instance, European or Western powers have threatened abundant life in Africa to a certain extent, by plundering its human and natural resources during colonialism and even today. The situation remains unchanged when there is an unjust world economic system in which Africa is not an equal partner, so that the fruits of God's creation, which would have enhanced the abundant life of Africans, are continuously and systematically transferred to the northern hemisphere (ibid). "However, this is happening because of greed and individualism and lack of recognition of the humanity of the other, an unwillingness to share" (ibid). The emphasis of Shona religion's beliefs systems negates this kind of attitude: it is the unwillingness to honor *Mwari* (the supreme life force) and the ancestors (*Midzimu*) and to share the gift and power of life with other members of the family, lineage or clan in this case the world family, the world clan—with one ultimate aim: to enhance life in all its dimensions.

In the light of this, Magesa seems to presuppose that it is also greed, misgovernment, and corruption among African leaders which have prevented the majority of African people from living and experiencing life in its fullness. "Some of the civil wars in African countries and the resulting refugee problems are a result of greed among those who are supposed to be servants of the people. A leader should do whatever is in his or her power to protect and prolong the life of the family and the community, this being the case, he is following the order of the universe, established by the ancestors and transmitted by tradition" (Gelfand 1959: 130). Although African religions may not employ the social analysis of liberation theologians (which unveils the political, socio-economic and ideological factors leading to oppression) the philosophy of Shona religion does possess instincts, values, and characteristics which are against dehumanization.

Taken individually or collectively, these threats to abundant life discussed above are what constitute 'sin' (*Chitadzo*). Thus 'sin' in Shona religion is any activity by which individuals attempt to destroy, to diminish, and to threaten the lives of the members of the community. Sin and evil are measured in terms of the life of individuals. However, "thus, manifestations of sin and evil are the refusal to love, to care for and enter into a creative and life-giving relationship with other people. They are understood more in terms of a breach of loving fellowship between individuals than in terms of the human transgression of some abstract divine law" (Bosch 1987: 50). Sin is an activity which threatens the abundant life of individuals and the stability of their communal life. Shona religion helps its adherents to seek salvation and relief from sin and evil as defined above.

## 2.8 Mundane World and Nature in Shona Religion

“Shona religion holds that the mundane world and nature are good gifts that God entrusted to human beings: they provide the nourishment of life, security and a home for our bodies” (Mwakabana 2002: 11-26). Since the well-being of human beings is intimately connected with the well-being of the natural environment, Shona religion shows respect and reverence for the natural environment. “This reverence and respect for nature with its wonders and mystery enabled Shona religion to maintain certain avoidance rules and beliefs which prevented or discouraged people from abusing nature, for example, forests, and rivers” (ibid). Because forests are sources of necessities of life such as food, drinks, houses, wood, clothes and medicines, the cutting down of certain trees or the use of certain leaves is prohibited. However, because of conversions to other religions, the lure of modernism, and the quest for so-called civilization and development, Shona appear to be gradually losing the respect for the mystery and dignity of nature. In consequence, they have subjected nature to gross abuses through unlimited industrial expansion, as well as uncontrolled and unsustainable development. The abuse of nature in Zimbabwe, in Africa generally and the world at large has caused untold ecological crises of serious dimensions. For instance, damages to health due to the pollution of the air and water through chemicals, industrial waste and overpopulation, depletion of natural resources and mass-killings of certain animal species, climate change and desertification, to name only a few examples of the abuse of nature.

In the social sphere, Shona are increasingly losing the human-centered and communal orientation which was central to the religious ethos and beliefs. As a consequence, Zimbabwe is experiencing serious social crises, marked by injustice and oppression, exploitation, violation of human rights, and ethnic divisions. Magesa quoting Sindima (1990) on reverence of nature, points out that “it requires commitment in upholding the sanctity of creation in everyday life, because, all life – that of people, plants, and animals, and the earth – originates and therefore shares an intimate relationship of bondedness with divine life; all life is divine. This emphasizes that nature and persons are one, woven by creation into one texture or fabric of life, a fabric or web characterized by interdependence between all creatures. This living fabric of nature – including people and other creatures – is sacred” (Magesa 1997: 62). Therefore, Magesa continues to observe that, its sanctity does not mean that nature should be worshipped, but that it ought to be treated with respect (ibid: 67). As observed by Sindima and Magesa, in Shona religion, the sanctity of creation has been maintained by the human community. Magesa, again quoting Mulago (1981), posits that, human beings draw their existence from one and the same source of power, as does the rest of nature. Humanity turns towards (this) power, is seized by it and seizes it (ibid). The universe is a religious universe. He continues to say that “nature is filled with religious significance - the physical and spiritual are but two dimensions of one and the same universe. These dimensions dovetail into each other to the extent that at times and in places one is apparently more

real than, but not exclusive of the other" (ibid). In the final analysis, however, *Mwari* (the supreme life force), acting through the ancestors (*Midzimu*) but never completely absent from the scene, is the ultimate point of departure and arrival in human ethical life. However, Shona religion emphasizes harmony in its spiritual hierarchy, as illustrated by the continuous proliferation of rituals rendered to *Mwari* (the supreme life force) through the ancestors (*midzimu*). There should be a continuous communication between the mundane world and the supra-mundane or invisible world – any breakdown causes chaos to the mundane world.

In regard to the spiritual hierarchy in relation to harmony and continuous communication between the mundane world and the invisible or spiritual world, Magesa explains, that without harmony, greed, selfishness, and exploitation – in other words, chaos – set in and triumph over the universal moral order. Chaos does not imply simple disorder; it risks putting relationships between the two spheres of the universe on a collision course, inviting great suffering for the human community (ibid). Therefore, connectedness between humanity and creation and the invisible world is very fundamental in Shona religion. However, the most basic understanding of the concept of abundant life in Shona religion and other African societies is anchored in ancestral communion. "Hence, one can only become truly human in a community, in the context of other human beings in the mundane world, and in some sort of relationship to the dead (spiritual world) (ibid: 67). Kinship (*Ukama*) largely constitutes life itself and its mystique. Therefore, kinship is most intensely and most meaningfully realized and expressed in and by the ancestor relationship. Keeping the ancestor (*mudzimu*) in good humor is an essential task of the living in Shona religion.

## 2.9 The Kinship of the Shona World

Kinship is the most universal and basic of all human relationships and, therefore, kinship is based on ties of blood, marriage, or adoption. "There are two basic kinds of kinship ties; those based on blood ties that trace descent and those based on marriage, adoption, or other connections" (Mbiti 1969: 102-103). In Shona religion, *Ukama* (kinship) is identified in patrilineal groups, and is the basic unit of economic cooperation and, usually, of residence; extended families traditionally share a homestead or live in adjacent homesteads. "Except from chiefly families, such a group is rarely more than three or four generations in depth, and it is easy for an individual to attach instead to matrilateral relatives" (ibid). In light of that, the concept of kinship will be expounded in line with Shona religion and in relation to other African societies' perceptions on kinship and its importance in regard to responsibilities in the community and respect for individuals. The kinship ties (*Ukama*) will be interpreted as along winding string which ties so many individuals together, beginning with the immediate family, then spreading out to the extended family and to elderly or senior members of the commu-

nity. Mbiti rightly observes that kinship “has been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. Kinship is a network of relationships through birth and marriage which extends to cover virtually everyone in lineage or extended family. It is a bonding system and it dictates the proper behavior of its members” (ibid). Kinship (*Ukama*) structures were created by and large in Shona religion as a way to fostering order, peace, and security in their communities after they realized that once there is some sort of relationship between two or more individuals, there is mutual respect among them. The concept of the extended family can be a profound tool, a force which can be used in sustainable development simply because it taps from the very essence of survival. The respect for each other varies from one individual to another, depending on the definition of the connecting relationship. In Shona religion, this respect is still a force to reckon with because in a village Shona people live near to each other according to kinship. The reasons for that are social, economic, political and religious. When social, economic, political and religious challenges come they can easily help each other harmoniously. “The fact that Shona people have respect and high regard for these kinship structures makes it easy for them to pass it on from generation to generation in their various communities and is a solid base on which to find community peace, stability and sustainable development starting from the grassroots” (Ember&Ember 1996: 1-26).

In addition, the idea that Shona religion has an innate and unquestionable respect for an individual once they understand that that individual is related to them one way or the other means that, the same concept can be used on a higher level, in order to influence the start of sustainable development as a bottom-up approach. Both kinship and respect for its structures are what development strategists and, planners, can tap from Shona knowledge systems for sustainable development initiatives and such an approach may have far-reaching results in Zimbabwe. Such structures, as outlined above, are evidence of the Shona peoples’ philosophy of creativity as well as of their ability to organize themselves for the sake of progress and sustainable development.

## 2.10 The Family in Shona Religion

Shona people understand the concept of family differently from the way European or Western people understand it. In European or Western cultures, two men with the same surname or family name (*mutupo*) are not necessarily related, whereas, in Shona custom, the sharing of the same family name (*mutupo*) implies clan relationship which is deemed to be as close as a blood relationship. Sharing the *chidawo* or *mutupo* (surname or family name) implies blood relationship, although in ethnic eyes both are ‘*ropa rimwechete*’ (one blood only). “The Shona family consists of two definite components – the dead (non-living) ancestors (*Midzimu* – ancestral spirits) and living people” (Bourdillon, 1987). Those not yet born are a vital expectation. To a certain extent, European cus-

toms are totally different from Shona and other African societies' approaches regarding the family concept; for instance, the Shona can have numerous 'fathers', 'mothers', and 'brothers'. The relations in brief are:

- Ancestor – *madzitateguru*. *Tateguru*
- Aunt, maternal – *amai z*, *mai k.m.* *madzimai*
- Aunt (older than my mother) – *amaiguru*, *maiguru*
- Aunt (if younger than my mother) – *mainini*
- Father – *baba*, *madzibaba*
- Father (if older than my father) – *babamukuru*

The list is too big to exhaust under this space. "The kinship system is as follows: a man calls all the brothers of his biological father 'father', all his aunts female 'mother' and classifies them as 'big' or 'little', according to whether they are older or younger than his own parents. All children of that generation of 'fathers' he calls 'big' or 'little brother' or 'sister', and all of his children and those of their generation are called my children" (ibid). The son of the chief or headman or kraal head's sister (the *Muzukuru*) is very important and the *muzukuru* (nephew or niece) is often the most knowledgeable and unbiased person in the kraal. The chief headman's or kraal head's mother is also a very powerful figure. The most important person on different occasions is a man's sister (*Vatete*), and sometimes his mother-in-law. Generally, it is the oldest living male or the oldest living female, respectively.

"Members of the family who have died are regarded rather as being in a different sphere than in a completely separate world and are part of the family. They are shown respect, and beer and meat are offered to them; they are prayed to as intermediaries, with the prayers always being made by the eldest male in the family to his deceased father who represents the collectivity of prior spirits, if a paternal matter. However, if it is a maternal matter, he cannot do so, as that is a matter for the wife's family. The social structure of the family and this encompasses the tribal lineage too, should be geared to respect for seniority, since Shona religion and other African societies say, wisdom comes with age" (Bourdillon, 1987). This adage or proverb also explains the respect that one earns by virtue of one's age in most African societies. In that case, "the communities expect old people to be responsible enough to solve most of their problems without any form of partiality, fear or favor" (Mbiti 1975: 179f). There is an unwritten law which permits those aged members of the society to be consulted on major issues that affect the community regardless of whether the issues are peculiar to a specific family. An elderly person may be consulted or called upon to intervene in a quarrel that involves family members because it is believed that his age will give him the necessary neutrality that is required in solving such matters. Furthermore, "the use of an intermediary, through whom formal talk is rooted, is the social dimension of general practice and direction that permeates the speech of several cultures in Africa" (Yankah and Gunner 1995: 211-224).

## 2.11 Shona Family and Gender Equality

The family is a fundamental element of society, and a person's gateway of integration into the ethnic group and wider community. Although most of the times developed nations are worried about overpopulation, the fact remains that families lead to communities and communities lead to nations. Shona communities are led by men – hence, Shona religion believes in patriarchal dominance. In that respect “the Shona kinship (*Ukama*) system is basically patrilineal, which means that kinship (*Ukama*) through males is stressed over kinship through matrilineal and when a Shona man or woman wants to show respect to another person, he/she uses traditional clan names inherited from that person's father (rather similar to English names), these names clearly distinguish groups of patrilineal kin who are related through the male line and consequently, have the same clan name” (Bourdillon 1996: 2). Accordingly, in Shona religion men are not only the dominant group in society; their ancestors are the key to our understanding of Shona religion insofar as it is concerned with the ancestors (*Vadzimu*). The *Mwari* cult of the Shona religion in Zimbabwe has commonly been interpreted as describing the supreme life force (*Mwari*) of the patriarchal family and ancestry. “Therefore, decisions are usually made by the men of the family. The wife never discusses her husband's affairs outside their hut, although this varies, and women certainly try to influence their husband's decisions” (ibid). Intercession through the ancestors is the responsibility of the eldest male of the family unit. “He is also the provider, though to a limited extent. It is the women who have to provide food and manage the stocks. If the family unit runs short of food, it is the fault of the wife, that is, she is the planner, the calculator and sole guardian of the grain hut (*Dura* in the Shona language), and so it is necessary to ask her permission to look inside it. In the event of her husband's death, a woman still does not make her own decisions. She is a widow and is inherited by any such male relative (on her husband's side) she may choose, and she may refuse all” (Bourdillon 1996: 2f). She need not necessarily sleep with him, should she wish not to do so. The bloodline is considered to go down through the male only. Thus, a man is permitted in theory to marry his niece by his relatives, but should he marry his brother's child, this would be incestuous (he is guilty of incest) (ibid).

“The man should have (as a Shona cultural general rule) the final say in any family decisions. In the event of divorce, the woman's interests are looked after by the nearest male relative in her direct family. A woman's duty is usually geared entirely to the comfort of her husband and to the rearing of her children. Within the village, there is a communal duty of respect to the village headman and the elders. Usually, most persons within a village are related, if not by direct blood lineage then it is through the clan relationship, which is considered strong. Similarly, the village headman and elders owe duty and pay respect to the clan chief of their area” (ibid). However, there are *Vatorwa* (that is one who is not related) – and they are, however, almost always *Vatorwa* in any area. These are also treated with respect.

It is posited that the “family is an important societal sphere in people’s lives in almost all societies; for many, it is the most important, and equal opportunity of employment for men and women is the most central part of Euro-Western’s family and gender policy” (Gerhards 2011: 176-177). In Africa, there also is gender policy in all nations, but practical implementations seem to be very difficult. Gerhards pointed out that “an impact on the support for gender equality rest mostly on the cultural religious orientation of the community or society – hence societies are influenced by different cultural lines of tradition that shape concepts of family and gender. Cultural traditions are substantially influenced by religion and by the ideas embodied in the belief systems of different religions” (ibid: 181). Through their analysis (which the writer contends with) they went on to assert that:

Most of the religions have at some point in time legitimized the dominance of men over women to varying degrees and continue to do so to some extent. In the Christian denominations, the book of Genesis is taken to legitimize a male-dominated world. According to this interpretation, the originally equal relation between man and woman disappeared after the fall of mankind and was transferred into a relationship in which the woman is subject to the man. Likewise, according to most interpretations, the Koran states that men have superiority over women, and it also provides the right to polygamy... (Gerhards 2011: 181)

Furthermore, EI-Saadawi (1991), cited in Gerhards, writes about gender roles:

It is highly controversial whether and to what degree different interpretations of gender roles can be traced back to particular religious texts like the Bible or the Koran. Rather, through empirical evidence, Islam advocates strongly a traditional gender hierarchy, in which the wife is responsible for the children and the household, while the husband is responsible for earning money and maintaining a position of power in the family. Being a wife and mother is the most important societal function for women; education and employment are subordinate. The public sphere is reserved for men, and women who participate in the public sphere are forced to conceal this fact. Traditional Islamic law, Christianity with a bit of liberalism, and African religions’ beliefs are structured in a patriarchal manner and secure the dominance of men in many spheres... (Gerhards 2011: 181-182)

From an African perspective, (as well as in Shona culture) decisions are usually made by the man of the family, although nowadays like in Euro-Western continents there is a development in Africa that in a family the man and wife in the small family can make decisions in consultation with each other. If there are clans issues, decisions are made by the clan male elders, a sign that patriarchy is still prominent on the African continent. In most parts of Africa, the woman is the one who sees if food is in the house, and must administer the stocks of food. The man is the provider of everything in the family, whilst the woman keeps children, though nowadays women who are educated can be employed in formal jobs. Likewise, a boy child in Africa is taught the duties

which are related to a man, for instance, looking after domestic animals, doing hard jobs, fishing, and hunting. He brings home what he has acquired from the bush and mountains as well from the rivers, though nowadays it's from formal jobs after being educated and other self-reliant jobs. A girl child is also oriented along the chores of a woman: she stays at home cleaning utensils, and clothes, for the family, fetching water for cooking, she does the cleaning of the homestead, cooking, keeping her younger brothers and sisters as well as waiting to be married. Some are sent to school, and some unfortunately are not. Nevertheless, nowadays through gender equality, a girl child is supposed to be educated to the last level of education if money permits, and she can choose to be married or not, in short, what is done to a boy child should be done to the girl child.

Furthermore, African society or community has never (maybe nowadays because of modernization and globalization) emphasized the free individual. "It has comprehended individuals only in the light and context of the community protecting them within a cocoon of finely spun relationships, relating them to the ancestors of the ethnic group and to its posterity" (Bourdillon 1996: 3). How different is this from the Euro-Western concept of the individual? The Euro-Western man/woman is free to develop his/her capabilities as he/she wishes, to insulate himself/herself against the demands from his/her less successful neighbors or relatives. "But he/she is also free to fail and to find little but the impersonal support of state charity if she/he does. Given the uncertainties of a subsistence economy, it is not surprising that Africans choose to invest in the security of personal relationships – for present and future security in case anything goes wrong. Finally, this should not be taken to mean that all Africans think in the same way. The influences of change are widespread and deep. There are Africans who, because of their education and experiences, have adopted a variety of views as have the Euro-Westerners. It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of how many Africans have moved away from their indigenous traditional worldview" (ibid).

Having said this, it is generally clear that family and gender equality is a challenge throughout the world, although other countries are trying to catch up on family and gender equality which is also a policy in most governments; keeping up on practical implementation seems to be a big challenge. In addition, on the political level incorporating women in government positions is still a big challenge. From the aforesaid scholarly analysis, it is clear that religious traditions are a hindrance to gender equality, as they are influenced by their culture of exegesis on gender roles from their texts books like the Bible and the Koran – African religions follow suit because they are predominantly patriarchal oriented in nature – in contrast to Euro-Western governments and societies. (This is debatable, as even the Western societies are still patriarchal, though they are working towards gender justice. Whereas Zimbabwean women can expect equal pay for equal work with men, women in the USA cannot have the same rights). African governments and societies should catch up in developing family and gender equality, a fun-

damental cultural value in the modern and free world. This is in recognition that women and girls, like men and boys, have great abilities to contribute to development; hence through their hard work development programs and projects in communities can be sustainable.

## 2.12 Marriage in Shona Religion

In Shona, religion marriage is very fundamental, as this is the root of kinship (*Ukama*). Therefore, in relation to the above “the survival of kinship in the social structure of Africa depends on marriage. What establishes clan relationship, to begin with, is consanguinity, which is considered to be the primary and most important relationship in the social structure. It is recognized, however, that consanguineal (blood relation or descended from the same ancestor) relationships (affected through birth) are not possible without affinal relationships, that is, relationships affected through marriage” (Magesa 1997: 116). However, “in the long run, marriage always establishes very strong bonds between the individuals belonging to different families and clans particularly when children are born (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 23-31). According to Magesa, in Africa, whether descent structures are patrilineal or matrilineal, unilateral or bilateral, and whatever kinship-relationship terminologies are used, marriage bonds remain basic to effective relations that, to various degrees, include relatives of both sides of the marriage partnership (Magesa 1997: 116). In Shona religion, the father generally names his children after his own ancestors; it is an important religious belief. Furthermore, by the very fact of his paternity, he is recognized to bequeath (pass on) his personality or spirit to his children, without which they cannot thrive or succeed in life. He takes pride in bringing up his children and in supervising their moral and civic training. The mother in Shona religion has no legal rights whatsoever in regard to her children. Instead, this is the prerogative of the father and the father’s male relatives, for instance, the father’s older brothers (*Vana babamukuru*), and the father’s younger brothers (*Vana babamunini*), respectively.

“Marriage and reproduction are very important in Shona religion, and every person has a moral obligation to marry and to contribute to the social reproduction of his kinship group. This most basic value, to beget or bear children, is instilled in all members of the society from childhood onwards. Nobody is allowed to shirk (avoid or neglect) this duty” (Weinrich 1982: 39). However, in Shona religion, it is the responsibility of the whole clan to honor this obligation and to help all family and clan members to fulfill it. Thus, solidarity within each family and the families or clans involved in marriages is a basic element of all relationships. Solidarity is the foundation of the Shona community. Because of its importance in preserving and transmitting the life force, the proper order is to be maintained from the first step to the marriage preparations and the marriage itself. This is even more significant in the relationships between the living and the

ancestors. All pertinent rituals and avoidance rules must be observed according to Shona religion. The ancestors, as guardians of the vital power of their descendants, have a special stake in this step of a person's life, and so they are involved in a very special way. Whatever is done at a marriage ceremony is in "their sight (ancestors) and is, in a sense, dedicated to them. To be abundant, life depends on the ancestors who guard it on behalf of *Mwari* (the supreme life force), wherein lies its origin, and for whom the ancestors are intermediaries. Shona marriage is ultimately anchored in *Mwari* (the supreme life force), the main creator, sustainer of life and the principal preserver and transmitter of the vital force" (ibid). For this reason, much of what takes place in marriage in Shona religion has overtly religious characteristics and significance.

## 2.13 Community in Shona Religion

Shona religion like other African communities, "shares the basic instinct of gregariousness with the rest of humankind. Families and members of kin-groups from minimal to maximal lineages generally live together and form communities. However, Shona peoples like other Africans share life intensely as a community. There are communal farmlands, economic trees, dams, streams, rivers, and markets. There are also communal shrines, ritual objects and festivals for social, economic, and religious purposes" (Ejizu 2014: 1-28). There is closeness to nature and they do not want to experience a hard life in a terribly hazardous environment. Therefore, there is a crucial need for security and the responsibility to protect it. Furthermore, "in Shona religion, the community is much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origin and / or deep common interests and values. It is both a society as well as a unity of the visible and invisible worlds; the world of the living on the one hand, and the world of the ancestors, divinities and souls of children yet to be born to individual kin-groups. The network of the relationship among Shona people is remarkably extended and deep. The invisible members, especially ancestors and spiritual beings, are powerful and by far superior to human beings. Their reality and presence in the community are duly acknowledged and honored among the Shona peoples" (Ejizu 2014: 1-28). Neglect could spell disaster for Shona communities and diminishes communication, hence, cut off the abundant life providences from the ancestors and *Mwari* (the supreme life force).

The fundamental difference between European and African societies is that the life of the Shona person is communal in his/her traditional setting. Whilst Europeans, recognize family obligations, the individual is still free to make his/her own decisions in a highly competitive world. In the Shona community, it is the responsibility of the chief to ensure the welfare of the members of his society. "Therefore, he has a social and, particularly, a religious responsibility to ensure just that. For instance, as pointed out by Rashid "poverty is one of the major hindrances to development in Africa" (Awuah-

Nyamekye 2012: 75-90 Cf. Rashid 1996: 1-2). Aware of this, Shona religion and culture inculcate a sense of sharing and hospitality among kith and kin and even among members of the larger communities outside the chief's area of jurisdiction. Therefore, the training of the young to become responsible adults rests not only on the parents but also on the other members of the community (ibid). However, Awuah-Nyamekye notes that "these measures, in which the ancestors have a role to play, will keep poverty at a lower level and thus ensure that no one becomes a social and economic liability so as to pose a threat to sustainable development" (Awuah-Nyamekye 2009: 25-39).

However, from the above discussion, it is evident that Shona religion has a communal approach to sensitive life-giving issues. Such a communal unity of purpose can be utilized by development planners in approaching development projects in Zimbabwe by co-opting indigenous knowledge systems from the community grassroots, although the prevailing social and political order in most parts of contemporary Zimbabwe is not conducive to implementing the above-mentioned approach. It is true that the Shona religion still has considerable influence in the life and culture of many Shona people, though it no longer enjoys exclusive dominance and control over the life of a certain population in Zimbabwe.

## 2.14 Shona Religion's Perspectives on Development

There is generally not enough literature that directly examines the Shona religion's perspectives on development. This being the case, Shona religion's perspectives on development are revealed indirectly, through ideas drawn from religious beliefs, practices, rituals, and traditions. "Therefore, Shona religion has a worldview which puts much emphasis on the role religion plays in their developmental matrix. The Shona people's (like the Akan people in Ghana) understanding of development is derived from their religious worldview because they do not divorce their religious life from the other aspects of their lives, be they social, economic, or political" (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90 Cf. Nyoni 2014: 1-8). As Opoku quoted in Awuah-Nyamekye explains, "a close observation of Africa and its societies will reveal that religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that in Africa, religion is life, and life religion. Africans are engaged in religion in whatever they do – whether it be farming, fishing, mining, or hunting, or simply eating, drinking or traveling. Religion gives meaning and significance to their lives; both in this world and the next – it is, hence, not an abstraction but a part of reality and everyday life" (Opoku 1978: 1 Cf. Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). The implication for this is that for Shona people development is related to the community's harmonious relationship with *Mwari* (the supreme life force), the ancestors (*Vadzimu*), the gods and the other spirit beings (Nyoni 2014: 1-8 Cf. Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). This is because in the Shona worldview these beings can make and unmake. Therefore, development in

the view of the Shona is the judicious utilization of resources (both natural and human) with the view to achieving growth and meaningful life for the present generation and the subsequent ones. “In other words, like the Akan, development in the life and thought of the Shonas is a means of ensuring a holistic or all-inclusive well-being of humans utilizing judiciously the total environment of the people from the religious or sacral point of view (human and economic development)” (ibid).

The Shona people’s perspective on development in the communities is connected to the traditional leadership of the chiefs. Awedoba points out that “the primary objective of traditional leadership has been to effect development, as it is understood in the communities. This could be through the exploitation of the religious, economic, political and other strategies and resources available, including warfare if need be. Regarding the question of effective leadership, a chief is expected to lead the community properly so that he can attract developers and win the community’s share of the national cake. He should be loyal to his people, to his religion and to the nation” (Awedoba 2006: 523). This being the case, the Shona people believe that, traditionally, the role of the chiefs as spiritual leaders of their respective communities imposes on them the responsibility of seeking spiritual favors from the spiritual beings (ancestors), in and around their communities, for their people. These spiritual favors include peace and unity, good health, the warding off of evil and disasters, high fertility in humans and animals as well as bumper crops. Additionally, their special relationship with and sensitivity to the environment as spiritual entities enables them to seek ways of living that promote sustainability, a key concept in modern development discourse since the 1980s. Seini notes that “chiefs as custodians of the land have greater control over the use of land as an important resource in contemporary sustainable development” (Seini 2006: 54). Similarly, Osmann asserts that, in their relationship with the land as a spiritual entity, chiefs can be important allies in the fight against environment degradation in the communities (Osmann 2006: 527), and can be the best allies of development planners for successful development programs.

“The Shona people see sustainable development, when chiefs guard the communities’ assets jealously, including any natural resources such as land (as noted above) and everything that the land holds like minerals, forests, animals, and water. They are also expected to be guarantors of the rule of law, to be fair and to execute the administrative responsibilities of the state at the local level. If they (Chiefs) fail to observe these, they are liable to face the ire or anger of the territorial spirit (*Mhondoro*), which may lead to poor rains and bad harvests thereby leading their communities into poverty” (Mtapuri and Mazengwa 2013: 4f). The subjects or people, in turn, should also obey the chiefs’ orders and are expected to participate democratically and equally in matters of the state. The authors went on to point out that, if they fail, they also upset the *Mhondoro* (territorial spirit) who would then bring unbearable misfortune such as death, loss of income, wealth and other calamities (ibid). Therefore, development practitioners stand

to develop communities if they take into consideration such Shona religious worldviews, before implementing development programs. Thus, sustainable development can be realized.

In regard to the chiefs, President Robert Mugabe also highlighted the importance of chiefs in Zimbabwean politics when he said, “If we do not consult chiefs on governance, who do we consult? Chiefs have the right to participate in determining the right policies and criticizing the government. We would never agree to that nonsense that Chiefs should be neutral players in the governance of the country” (Sunday Mail 2009: B104.2). The chiefs are the final authority on matters pertaining to the use and possession of land. They empower their subjects by giving them land fairly and in some cases giving cattle to those without means to plow their fields. The distribution of land by the chiefs is part of sustainable development, abundant life realized, and empowering his people through the distribution of grain to the hungry subjects as in the case of *Zunde RaMambo* (chief’s Granary). As Mararike explains, “*Zunde* may refer to plenty of grain stored for future use in a particular community. *Zunde* normally means an informal, inbuilt social, economic and political mechanism” (Mararike 2010: 15 Cf. Machingura 2012: 182). The *Zunde RaMambo* is still practiced in some parts of Zimbabwe but not with the same vigor it used to have in ancient Shona times. It is crucial to note that, such wealth or grain gathered (during *Zunde RaMambo*) did not belong to the chiefs as individual persons. The chiefs merely held the grain on behalf of the ancestral spirits and in trust for communities. “Any member of the village, travelers, strangers, etc. in dire need could call upon the Chiefs and subsist on their largesse” (Ayittey 1991: 154). Failure to feed their subjects as chiefs implied failure of leadership and rejection by the ancestral spirits.

The above discussion shows that the chiefs are a means of development among Shona people in Zimbabwe and also across the African continent. This is one model of abundant life within Shona religion – but the coming of colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had some impact on status, office, duties and dignity of chiefs. Chiefs became the target of the colonial settlers as a result of their religious and political power. It is important to note that the powers of the chiefs were compromised when they were removed with the coming of the early colonial administrators, who introduced the Roman-Dutch law which limited the powers of chiefs, especially in regard to trying cases in the communities and other areas where they used to have powers. The colonial administrators prohibited traditional leaders’ authority and in some cases, they just incorporated them into their colonial political structure for easy control of the people. Mbiti believes that the sanctity associated with the office of the chief and traditional monarch was lost as a result of the changing concept of time more than those of politics (Mbiti 1975: 187). Some chiefs started associating themselves with the white administration and became unpopular within their communities.

What made chiefs unpopular within their communities in Zimbabwe is the fact that the installation of the chiefs, instead of being led by spirit mediums, was now led by the government (Bourdillon 1976: 111). However, chiefs started depending on the government salary or allowance, though small, as it was in excess of the average earnings of black workers in the country. Some ended up receiving large perks depending on their cooperation with the colonial government (Pallery 1966: 478). The political, religious and economic power of the chiefs was eroded as the colonial regime took custody of it (Nyambara 2001: 19), and chiefs no longer fed their people through food and land. Land defined their identity, the sustainability of abundant life as well as a spiritual relation with ancestral spirits and *Mwari* (the supreme life force). The chiefs' loyalty now belonged to the salaries they got, and not to the people and the ancestral spirits. Maxwell points out that, "after colonialism, traditional chiefs seeking to return their popular legitimacy were often compromised due to their unavoidable association with the colonial state. They were obliged to oversee the collection of the hated hut tax, and impose unpopular agricultural practices at the behest of the colonial regime" (Maxwell 1999: 5). In the eyes of the people, chiefs were no longer representatives of the ancestral spirits but had become government employees. Chiefs became afraid of losing their income or being vetoed out of office and replaced by loyal chiefs. Yet at the same time, failure to own a piece of land exposed rural Shona people to hunger and disease. The chiefs' claim to be the means of abundant life through feeding their people in times of need and their claim to ancestral supernatural authority were made redundant as they were no longer custodians of the land and Shona people's lives. Interestingly, the ZANU-PF government after the independence of Zimbabwe further displaced the power of chiefs through patronage. A replay of the colonial style exposed Zimbabweans to severe poverty, hence, there is a need to give chiefs their former powers back, as mentioned above, in order to realize sustainable development in Zimbabwe.

## **2.15 The Indicators of Development in the Life and Thought of Shona Religion**

Generally, "divergent theories and conceptions of the term 'development' demonstrate that there is no single definition of the concept of development. That is to say, what the people of a specific community living at a particular time may consider being development may not be the case at a different time or for the people of a different community" (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). However, since time immemorial development has been defined based on social and economic progression. "Thus, it is clear that development is seen in materialistic and economic terms. Scholars like Joseph Osei have a problem when development is defined in this way because for him, 'development' does not mean mere economic growth or westernization, but rather the total sum of a country's well-being virtues minus the total sum of the country's well-being vices.

While well-being qualities include modernization, democratization, qualitative education, and critical consciousness, the well-being vices include dependency, bribery and corruption, unwarranted military interventions, dictatorships, and the abuse of human rights, etc.” (Osei 1995: 39 Cf. Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). This moral and holistic conception of development is shared by the eminent African scholar Kwame Gyekye, who has argued that to take development seriously means to take it in terms of adequate responses to all existential conditions in which human beings function, conditions which encompass the economic, political, moral, cultural and other spheres, and not just economic or materialistic spheres (*ibid*). As demonstrated in the above arguments, like the Akan people the indices of development among the Shona people “are seen in the absence of all life-negating phenomena. Specifically, this includes diseases, poverty, crop failure, ignorance, premature deaths, barrenness, sterility, droughts, violence, environmental degradation, and other misfortunes in general. It includes the presence of all life-affirming phenomena, such as many marriages, more procreation, security, and bumper crops, which translates into long life, older people, more animal reproduction, more rains, flowing rivers, and the protection of the environment” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90) – as well as constant communication with the ancestors (*Vadzimu*) and *Mwari* (the supreme life force). The absence of misfortunes to children, the young and older people in communities is seen as a development in Shona religion. The Shona people have a firm belief that development should be worked for, that is, every community and every individual must take collective and sensible steps to bring about development.

The above discussion substantiates that for Shona religion, development is not restricted to the physical environment. Instead, “it is defined to include human development and social harmony, for it is human beings who are the beneficiaries of development and, thus, development will be meaningless if it leads to social conflict” (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90) – and the siphoning of natural resources by a minority of people, whilst the general populace is drowned with rivers of poverty. For the Shona, like the Akan, “the presence of impressive growth figures, an impressive per capita income of the few, good roads, housing, and health care facilities amidst insecurities such as unemployment, and only privileged people benefiting from the ‘national cake’, is a far cry from the true meaning of development” (*ibid*). The Shona’s “understanding of development also explains why in their society, a carefully thought-out code of conduct has been designed to ensure harmonious relationships, for instance, peace and the dignity of the human person, nature and the spiritual world” (*ibid*). Harmony and the sense of community-living are the most protected values among the Shona and in other societies in Zimbabwe like the Ndebele, as well as in other African societies in general. In relation to this, it is pointed out that “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am” (Mbiti 1990: 106). Therefore, in Shona and many other traditional African societies, the first person plurals “we” and “our” feature actively in their everyday

speech. That is the reason why in Shona religion people greet each other as follows: ‘‘Mangwanani’’ (good morning), the reply is ‘‘mangwanani’’ (good morning). The midday greeting is: ‘‘Masikati’’ (good day), the reply is ‘‘masikati’’ (good day). Therefore, if we analyze the above Shona way of greeting, we can observe the use of the plural form ‘‘Masikati’’ (good day) and ‘‘Maswerasei?’’ (Have you spent the day well), used to refer to the entire family or household, if two different family members greet each other. If it is a greeting directed to the chief, headman, etc., the greeting refers to the entire community or society he represents. In the Shona culture, when one greets the chief or headman, whilst there is a funeral in the community, he shows no joy in the greeting and will answer as follows: ‘‘Maswera here Mambo?’’ (Have you spent the day well chief?), he will reply ‘‘Hatina kuswera zvakanaka’’ (We did not spend the day well). However, the point is the use of ‘‘we’’ and ‘‘ours’’. This corresponds to Mbiti’s affirmation that in African societies there is a sense of unity and community-living: ‘‘I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am’’. ‘‘Therefore, it is only when the above objectives are achieved that development becomes meaningful’’ (Awuah-Nyamekye 2012: 75-90). It is fundamental to state here that there is a sustainable dimension to development among the Shona because the community includes those yet to be born. This clarifies why the well-being of future generations is considered in the day-to-day activities of the Shona people. There is a Shona proverb which says, ‘‘Musapedza dura nezviva rimwe’’ (‘‘do not eat everything you have in a day’’/‘‘It is not wise to eat everything you have in a day’’). This adage clearly sums up the Shona people’s perception of the concept of sustainable development. The clear analysis shows us that the foregoing discussion depicts that among the Shona people the concept of development is as old as the humankind. Therefore, development is a common phenomenon within Shona people.

In Shona religion conflict prevention and peace-building are traditionally considered indices of development, as they encourage unity, community-living and the connection to the spiritual world. Gerrie Ter Haar and Stephen Ellis ‘‘assert in relation to African religions in different societies that for many Africans, religion is perceived primarily in terms of interaction with a spirit world. This aspect of religion is hardly considered by international organizations engaged in peace-building. Yet ideas concerning a spirit world play a major role in both legitimizing and discouraging violence. In many African wars, fighters seek traditional medicines or other objects or substances that are believed to be channels of spiritual power. These are presumed to make the people who possess them effective in battle or to protect them from injury. The persons who dispense such medicines exercise influence over fighters and, in some cases, this can take on a clear institutional form’’ (Gerrie Ter Haar and Stephen Ellis 2006: 136). In relation to conflict prevention and peace-building, Gluckman argues that ideas of conflict resolution are also interwoven with African traditional religion and its associated system of ethics and morality (Gluckman 1965: 304-353). Magesa also acknowledges the role of the legal system but claims that in regard to resolving conflicts such institutions are insepara-

ble from moral values, as both institutions are founded on kinship, lineage, joking and clan relationships. The purpose of both is essentially the same: to protect and enhance life in the universe. Similarly, the resolutions of conflicts are connected to the religious system and are inseparable from it. To speak of law and reconciliation is to speak of morality and ritual at the same time (Magesa 1997: 118).

On the same issue of conflict prevention and peace-building, the Shona religion emphasizes the principle of *Unhu*, which means personality. Gelfand rightly observed that “*Unhu* (personality) in Shona religion is a noun denoting the character or personality of an individual. *Unhu* is bound up with the ancestors (*Midzimu*). If a child lacks *unhu*, his/her parents are blamed. *Unhu* is the correct way of living according to the teachings of the Shona elders. A person with *Unhu* behaves in a good way, respects his/her parents and elders, and sets a good example for others. Therefore, as the child grows, so does his/her *Unhu* increase, but full *Unhu* only come at the age of maturity” (Gelfand 1970: 13). Personality (*Unhu*) is derived from one's history and rootedness in an on-going community (Menkiti 1976: 171-181 Cf. Matavire 2012: 218-223). “It is the family and the community which define an individual as a person, and the communities define traditional values and ethics that are to be upheld by the members of the customary community” (Matavire 2012: 218-223). Any violation of these ethical or moral values is an offense to the whole community and is punishable. The Shona people believe that a person has a certain conception of morality which is intrinsic to him/her and his/her nature. “Morality, according to the Shona, is determined by society's beliefs, and traditional chiefs are custodians of these beliefs and values” (ibid). The Shona traditional chieftaincy reconciles disputants using the principle of *Unhu* (personality) as the guiding principle. The key objective of traditional jurisprudence or the legal system is to bring equilibrium to dis-equilibrated relationships or ethnic disputes. “In this case, the Shona penalties are not meant to permanently hurt individuals, but to restore his equilibrium” (ibid). It is significant, however, to point out that some of the Shona development indices aforementioned may be seen as against development, in relation to the continuous modern definition of the word ‘development’.

## **2.16 Education as an Agent of Development in Shona Religion**

Education is an essential component of every people throughout the world: it is the ‘*sine qua non*’ and it was there in pre-colonial in Africa as well as in Euro-Western continents. Before modernization, education throughout the world was used as a benefit to individuals, economy, and society (whether formal or informal). Before detailing the concept of education which is fundamental in development of a country, it has to be clarified what exactly education means. The importance to define the term ‘education’ is reflected in the myriad of definitions from different scholars in the world. Therefore, education is defined as follows:

Education is the light that derives away the darkness of ignorance and enables mankind to find its ways through the tortures and labyrinth of development and civilization. Education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviors. It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. Education refers to what can be used by man to solve his problems to improve his life and make it comfortable. It is one of the several ways that man employs to bring change in to his all-round development. Education demands efforts and discipline. It is also a formidable tool for man's survival... (Ikechukwu, UNESCO, Ayu, Peter, cited in Boyi Abubakar Aminu 2013: 147 – 152)

Snelson, cited in Mkandawire, defines education as a condition of human survival. "It is the means whereby one generation transmits the wisdom, knowledge, and experience which prepares the next generation for life's duties and pleasure" (Mkandawire 2011: 1). Although the aforesaid definitions may not cater to or address all the issues raised in education they help in having a wide knowledge about all aspects of education. Moreover, education existed as early as man's history. In view of its historical and cultural context, education could be referred to as 'indigenous African education' or 'indigenous Euro-Western education' (ibid)

Furthermore:

Education at all levels and in all its forms constitutes a vital tool for addressing virtually all global problems. Education is not only an end in itself. It is a key instrument for bringing about changes in knowledge, values and lifestyles required to achieve sustainability and stability within and among countries. Education has been seen as the greatest force that can be used to bring about changes. It is observed that the greatest investment a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources is that of education. Education provides us with people possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to win a nation's state and to even export brains. Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument for change: any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution. (Bajaj and Chiv, Aminu cited in Boyi Abubakar Aminu 2013: 147 – 152)

In addition, "the African indigenous and missionary types of education had an aim of equipping leaders (politically and economically) on how to perform social functions and respecting their adults. For instance, in the village or denomination to which they belonged, children were taught different survival skills" (Mkandawire 2011: 1). Furthermore, "both types of education prepared individuals for employment in their own environment because they believed that people must have good living standards. For this reason, they taught people how to find food through farming (agriculture). Areas which had fertile soils were identified as farms and various crops such as maize, beans, and

groundnuts were grown. Furthermore, they both believed that shelter was very important for people to live in, hence, construction of houses was encouraged and some of them developed the skill of building such shelters" (ibid) – today they are known as architects. "Both types of education believed in good morality: how to live well and knowing the good and bad. Education tended to focus on instruction as the individuals were taught how to live in order to be accepted in the society. Accepted values and norms such as honesty, generosity, diligence, and hospitality were part of civic education" (ibid). Even after colonialism, it is an undisputed truism that education continues in both continents, now in a modern way that is formal and informal (both written and oral). The grander aim of education is centered on human development for the well-being of individuals, communities, nations, and the continents, to foster human life in its fullness for sustainable development. Most African political leaders were educated in mission schools, hence the continuation of formal education can be attributed to Euro-Western patterns. To this effect, Mutua asserts that:

Many African leaders were forged in mission and colonial schools, a process that almost certainly entailed the ideological renunciation of African religions, traditions, and beliefs, on the one hand, and the embrace of Christianity and the traditions of the Europeans, on the other. Even as the new converts straddled the fence, as many inevitably did, and mixed the "old" with the "new", there was little doubt that the new was expected, as a matter of course, to overcome the old. (Mutua 1999: 175)

Therefore, education is an essential agent and a key instrument in development. However, it was and is still criticized by many scholars, especially African scholars, who felt and still feel that colonial education in Africa is opposed to indigenous African education in the pre-colonial period. In the same vein, Fasuyi (1973) and Nduka (1965), quoted in Mutua, pointed out that:

The Euro-Western educational system was introduced, replacing the informal traditional system; it was geared to the needs of the colonial administration. This objective was started in a 1921 speech by the first (British) Governor of Nigeria: the chief function of government, primary and secondary schools is to train the most promising boys from the village schools as teachers for those schools, as clerks for the native courts, and as interpreters. (ibid)

Overall, without over-emphasizing the aforementioned facts, it remains true that a nation's sustained prosperity depends on the level and standard of its education system. Education can empower and disempower individuals in society. Likewise, education can maximize a nation's intellectual resources in order to achieve socio-economic and political progress from which everyone in the society and the nation at large benefit. In addition, education is a right to everyone and the access to it is human development that can lead to sustainable development and may alleviate high levels of poverty,

unemployment, and inequality which are a common phenomenon in Africa. However, in terms of differences, between African and Euro-Western education, it is asserted that:

Although both were agents of transmitting culture to the young generation, indigenous African education taught children their own African culture based within their own society while missionaries brought in their culture from another society specifically European to which African children were not familiar with and indigenous African education was for everyone in Africa as well as existed for the purpose of strengthening the African community while missionaries aimed at promoting the growth of their culture and church. (Mkandawire 2005: 1-5)

On the one hand, Kelly says that “the aims and objectives of indigenous African education were to teach or instill the accepted standards and beliefs governing good behavior, creating unity and general agreement by people. Therefore, competition on a practical and intellectual basis was encouraged while the education of the missionaries mainly focused on spreading Christianity” (Kelly 1999: 37f). On the other hand, Farrant posits that “in terms of organization structure, the education brought by the missionaries was a hierachal structure from lowest to the highest level while African education had no schools or buildings or formal organization of either nation or local educational systems” (Farrant 1980: 30). As for Mkandawire, “indigenous African education could take place under a tree, or in the bush as they were hunting or collecting firewood or fruits. In some societies where education was largely informal parents were predominantly responsible for teaching using their households as the school, thus, the education covered practical skills and continued as long as the child lived with his/her parents. This type of education was informal and there was no sort of organization at local or national levels” (Mkandawire 2005: 1-5). Furthermore, it is argued by Shropshire (1938), quoted in Mutua, that:

Education in missionary schools was perhaps the most decisive weapon in the reconstruction of African identity. The mission usually preyed on the youth, capturing them and tearing them from their cultural moorings, hence the colonial state financially supported the mission schools thus enhancing the capacity to transform social reality. (Mutua 1999: 173-174)

As for Isichei (1970), cited in Mutua, “the missionaries succeeded in maintaining their virtual monopoly of education, and obtained adherents, not through dialogue with adults, but by cutting children off from their traditional culture and placing them in the artificially unanimous environment of the school” (*ibid*). In view of agriculture, Sherington (1987) quoted in Mkandawire pointed out that:

A person learned how to grow crops in the indigenous African education such as finger millet, rice, wheat, sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins. This was an economic system of education. Apart from this, indigenous African education

also included technology in which young people learned how to manufacture metal tools such as axes, hoes, spears, merchants, knives, arrows, and bows. There was also a political stability of life among the indigenous African people which led to the political system. Society was based first of all on family relations; the smallest social unit was the homestead in which a child learned how to behave with the mother and the father. The chief was recognized as a leader of all civil, military, judiciary and religious matters affecting the people in his area. This type of education had religious teachings centered on the supreme life force with strong beliefs in the ancestral spirits... (Mkandawire 2005: 1-5)

The physical environment influenced the content of the curriculum of indigenous African education. "This shows that what was taught meant to assist the child to adjust and adapt to the environment so that the child could exploit and derive benefits from it. The child learned about landscape, weather and about plants and animals so as to come to terms with the environment. In addition, the physical situation influenced what practical skills the child acquired in order to be prepared for future responsibilities. For instance, boys and girls who lived in fishing areas learned such skills" (Mkandawire 2005: 1-5). The main aim of the indigenous African education was to prepare an individual for self-reliance. To this effect, learners were imparted with knowledge on survival skills such as carpentry, pottery and basketry. "Unlike indigenous African education, missionaries' type of education had a sole objective to spread the knowledge about religions among forefathers and other nations" (ibid). To a large extent, the missionaries' education sidelined and marginalized the African way of life. They rejected much of this traditional way of life because their desire was to convert as many people as possible to Christianity. Thus, education provided was biased towards religion (ibid). This was done to pacify Africans for continuous hegemony socially, economically, religiously and politically. Furthermore:

In the indigenous African education, children or youth were strictly taught about land ownership and how people were to treat it. The whole land would be administered by the kings or Chiefs who used to get into the throne through a matrilineal system of kinship in which someone gets into power through hereditary. They also believed in working in groups and generally the content of indigenous African education had much stress on the communal and social aspect rather than on an individual. This was done mainly to prepare boys and girls for adult life in households, village, and tribes. (ibid)

Mwanakatwe argues that "the indigenous type of education was not flexible, it was static, hence, this means it was unchanging from generation to generation, in other words, it was rather conservative and not innovative. It stressed also, among other things, togetherness or unity as well as understanding the rights and obligation of each individual in a particular society. The concept of togetherness would teach the indigenous people on how to live and work with others within the societies or chiefdoms. The rights and

obligations will put in place the extent and limitations of individual rights – hence this was responsible for making sure that boys and girls understand what is required of them in a particular society” (Mwanakatwe 1974:4f, Cf. Mkandawire 2005: 1-5). Therefore, there was a complete discontinuity on the part of African indigenous education when the new education was introduced. In the context of the discussion above it is clear that the indigenous African type of education was more practical whilst the Euro-Western type of education was more theoretical. In a way, the practical type of education within Shona culture and religion can be a force to reckon with in sustainable development if they are tapped fully. The indigenous education in Zimbabwe and Africa was more focused on the culture, tradition, norms and belief systems of the communities – cosmovisions or worldviews.

The aforesaid factors foster the fact that although education was and is still fundamental in African communities and Euro-Western communities in pre-colonial and post-colonial times, it is evident that there was and/or is educational hegemony in favor of Euro-Western education, although there are efforts to resuscitate pure indigenous African education which recognizes the African worldviews in a formal pattern of education. Therefore, education remains an essential agent in creating sustainable development in African communities. Unfortunately, African education that is practical in its approach is sidelined, marginalized as archaic and barbarian, in favor of Euro-Western education which sometimes do not fit and solve African communities’ challenges. For this reason, indigenous African knowledge systems have been rendered useless since time immemorial. Finally, education is an integral component in development that has a holistic transformation of humanity as its goal. It is fundamental to use both African indigenous and Euro-Western approaches of education systems to resolve the myriads of problems bedeviling the world, as well as to alleviate the sufferings of the people, especially in Africa and other developing countries in the world. This is human development which leads to sustainable development.

## **2.17 The Institution of Avoidance Rules in Shona Religion**

In “every community and in every culture, there are ways of socializing its own community members so that they may grow, live responsibly and be socially compliant citizens. These are the ways in which the norms and values of the community are inculcated into all community members. However, this is part of a life-long process of inculcation to ensure that an individual is socialized since it is through this process of inculcation that one learns the principal values and symbols of the social system in which he/she participates” (Chigidi 2009: 174-188). “Every culture, contains a large number of guidelines that direct conduct in particular situations” (Haralambos and Holborn 2000: 4 Cf. Chigidi 2009: 174-188). For this reason, “it is through socialization that our behavior becomes regulated since we now possess values, goals, and ambitions and live

in an ordered environment" (Odetola and Ademola 1985: 57 Cf. Chigidi 2009: 174-188)).

Therefore, Shona religion chose to put in place avoidance rules, and these 'avoidance rules' are set in order to control, guide, and regulate the behavior of its members (Gelfand 1979: 138 Cf. Chigidi 2009: 174-188). "Therefore, Gelfand studied a large number of avoidance rules (*Zviera in Shona*) he had collected across Zimbabwe from various schools and observed that they were meant to inculcate correct behavior into citizens. He notes that the principle that emerges from these avoidance rules is that, a child must conform and behave like others in order to avoid an unusual occurrence" (ibid). Gelfand, however, classified these avoidance rules or taboos into six categories according to themes; those that talk about living in the correct way, successful pregnancy, avoidance of danger, good behavior, healthy living, and those conveying religious teachings. Bozongwana (1983) approaches the study of Ndebele avoidance rules from a religious perspective. He sees avoidance rules as part of the Ndebele religion. "His classification of these avoidance rules is slightly different from that adopted earlier by Gelfand (1979) and later by Tatira (2000). Bozongwana groups them according to the people who are affected by them. Therefore, he groups the avoidance rules according to those that affect children, those that affect women, those that affect men, and those categorized simply as general avoidance rules" (Bozongwana 1983: 36 Cf. Chigidi 2009: 174-188). Tatira (2000) looks at Shona avoidance rules and argues that they are a useful way of keeping children in check. He notes that children spend a lot of time on their own looking after domesticated animals and so on and it was easy for them to do the wrong things away from the watchful eye of the elders. Thus, avoidance rules come in handy and ensure that children do not behave in a wayward manner (ibid).

Magesa explains "avoidance rules may be described as systems of prohibitions with regard to certain persons, things, acts, or situations. The objects considered as taboos are perceived to contain within them certain assumed danger that always has repercussions against anyone who confronts them. The danger need not be explained and in many cases, it is not; neither is it perceptible to the senses, but it is there, and sooner or later the consequences of transgressions invariably boomerang or return upon the transgressor" (Magesa 1997: 75). This being the case, avoidance rules have great moral authority. Magesa, quoting Webster (1973), goes on to say that "Webster considers their authority unmatched by that of any other prohibition" (ibid: 75-76). Webster points out that this authority is constituted by the fact that an avoidance rule amounts simply to an imperative 'thou-shall-not' in the presence of the apprehended danger. That any breach of the prohibition was unintentional or well-intentioned does not matter; no allowance is made for either the ignorance or the praiseworthy purpose of the avoidance rule-breaker (Webster 1973: 13). Magesa, quoting Northcote Thomas, confirms the aforesaid idea that "avoidance rules apply to three categories of situations: a – the sacred (or unclean) character of persons or things, b – the kind of prohibition which results from

this character, and c – the sanctity (or uncleanness) which results from a violation of the prohibition" (Magesa 1997: 76). However, according to Magesa, "avoidance rules in African ethics consist in their convergence to constitute a moral ambiance or to erect moral codes that are intended to serve harmony and the order of the existence of the universe. They are experienced in day-to-day life and are passed from one generation to another to be safeguarded by society, to direct its behavior and that of its individual members. Their purpose is to preserve harmony and to keep chaos at bay" (ibid). Therefore, what is important from the foregoing discussion is that the general consequence of diminishment of life results from harming or transgressing avoidance rules. "Breaking avoidance rules, according to Magesa, causes otherwise inexplicable calamity, calamity happens if they are (whether knowingly or unknowingly) transgressed and avoidance rules exist to make sure that the moral structure of the universe remains undisturbed for the good of humanity" (ibid).

Therefore, Shona avoidance rules (*Zviera*) are also quite rich because of their thrust on knowledge and moral dimensions. "They are one among a number of sanctions that are employed in order to ensure proper behavior in Shona communities. *Zviera* (avoidance rules) are strong sanctions that discourage certain forms of human behavior" (Tatira 2000: 146-151 Cf. Maska and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148). It is through the use of such sanctions that Shona people come to know of the good traits to inculcate and bad traits to avoid, and a good character is a solid weapon against various anti-social behaviors (Masaka and Chemhuru 2011: 133). They went on to say "the outcome of a good character is a good reputation whereby a person becomes the envy of many because of his/her commendable dispositions. Though the inculcation of commendable character traits in individuals is a life-long process, it is believed, among the Shona, that such moral education makes an indelible or ineradicable impression in one's formative years. In this light, children are taught the difference between good and bad behavior and they also learn to avoid a number of avoidance rules. Strong and severe warnings for those who violate the Shona code are quite visible in the avoidance rules. It is important to note that the individual within the Shona society, just as in other African societies, does not live on a moral island" (ibid). Menkiti argues that "a human being can only be fully comprehended as an inseparable part of the whole" (Menkiti 2006: 324-331 Cf. Masaka and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148). "This communitarian view of the individual emanates from the realization that the moral life of a human being is shaped by not only the community of physical beings but also spiritual forces (ancestors in the spiritual world). In relation to the above-mentioned fact, Gelfand makes an important analysis that, though the origin of avoidance rules is unknown, they illustrate the fact that other forces exist besides the physical ones in the moral education of members of the Shona society. Since enforcement of the Shona moral code has a spiritual dimension, the apprentices of Shona morality come to know of 'the existence of spiritual powers, so important in the Shona religion'" (Gelfand 1979: 138 Cf. Masaka and Chemhuru 2011:

132-148). However, spiritual powers such as *Midzimu* (ancestral spirits) and *Mwari* (the supreme life force) provide for a living with others, direction and appropriate moral guidance (Asante 2000: 18 Cf. Chemhuru and Masaka 2011: 132-148). “The Shona believe that spiritual forces are custodians of their moral code. Ancestral Spirits play a crucial role in making sure that one picks up desirable character traits and avoids vices” (ibid). Furthermore, it is noted by Tatira (2000) and Gelfand (1979) quoted in Chemhuru and Masaka that:

The Shona believe that ancestral spirits help in ensuring that one’s character is good, provided a person does not offend them through acts such as failure to perform periodic rituals in their honor and engaging in other social misdemeanors such as incest (*Makunakuna*). Therefore, the violation of avoidance rules can be seen as a direct provocation of ancestral spirits who are the custodian of the moral code. An act that breaches an avoidance rule triggers a reaction supposedly at the supernatural level. Avoidance rules are effective moral tools because their violation invokes the ire of ancestral spirits who are one of the key pillars of Shona religion... Thus avoidance rules are forms of moral education that one is introduced to in the formative years of one’s character and have lifetime relevance. (Chemhuru and Masaka 2011: 136)

Regarding the topic of health, “Shona people are well known for their penchant for a hygienic living, cleanliness, and environmental consciousness. *Zviera* (avoidance rules) are vital in transmitting values on issues pertaining to hygiene, cruelty, and precaution and good behavior on the members of society” (ibid). Their houses are generally neatly built, thatched and kept clean. This strong liking for cleanliness transcends the upkeep of the individual to cover one’s character as exhibited through his interactions with other beings and his relation to the world external to him/her in general. It is a Shona reality that one’s *Unhu* (personality) is also exhibited by the manner in which one deals with not only human beings but other living creatures and the environment in general (ibid). “In relation to the religious African metaphysical outlook, human beings tend to be cosmically humble and therefore, not only more respectful of other people but also more cautious in their attitudes to plants, animals, and inanimate things, and the various visible forces of the world” (Tangwa 2006: 387-395 Cf. Masaka and Chemhuru 2011: 136). Thus, one is attracted to the Shona people’s harmony with nature and sustainable use of natural resources through, among others, their pole and dagga houses that are thatched with grass, and neatly arranged in a linear order along mountains and rivers (ibid). However, despite the Shona’s environmental consciousness and the quest for sound hygienic standards, there are members of their society who may be tempted to engage in activities that go against these virtues. Due to the Shona’s obsession with maintaining good health through hygienic living and prevention of anti-social activities, a number of *Zviera* (avoidance rules) are put in place (ibid). The following are some of these *Zviera* (avoidance rules):

“*Ukaitira tsvinamunzira, unoyitamamotakumagaro*” (if you excrete on the road, you develop boils on the buttocks).

“*Ukagara papfihwa, unourayamukadzi*” (if you sit on a hearthstone, you will kill your wife).

“*Ukadongorera munbuachigeza, unoyitashowera*” (if you peep on a person who is bathing, you will develop pimples on your eyelids).

“*Ukateedzera chirema, unoyitachiremawo*” (if you imitate a lame person, you will become lame too).

“*Ukauraya datyamatenga, anotadzakunaisamvura*” (if you kill a frog, heavens will fail to bring down rain).

“*Ukatasva imbwa, unozoitamuroyi*” (if you ride a dog you will become a witch) (Tatira 2000: 146-151; Cf. Maska and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148)

All the aforesaid *Zviera* (avoidance rules) “contain the threats of punishments and make potential offenders reconsider their decision because of the hardness of the punishment that goes with violating certain avoidance rules. In this regard punishment for violating the cultural environmental laws in Zimbabwe before colonialism were extremely severe, as the sovereign and overall custodian of the environment, the chief, executed his divine right to safeguard the environment with a strong hand” (Kasere 1996: 33-39 Cf. Chemhuru and Masaka 2011: 132-148). As the environment is viewed in its totality as a heritage that is indispensable for the survival of humanity, no one has unrestricted freedom to exploit the environment with impunity to the disadvantage of all (ibid). Since nature’s resources are community-owned (by the visible world and the invisible world, the ancestral spirits and *Mwari* (the supreme life force), everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the environment. Kasere points out that, to make matters worse, everyone knows that the invisible *Mhondoro* (lion - territorial spirit) watches over their behavior, and deviants risk a series of misfortunes or provoking a natural disaster that would affect the entire community if they lack observance (ibid). “In this regard, the spiritual flavor that is associated with Shona avoidance rules assists in fostering a sustainable use of the environment. *Mhondoro* (lion - territorial spirit) is revered in Shona religion; he is believed to have dominion over a larger area and the anger that is brought about by this spirit is analogous to that of a lion that roars with death-inducing thunder. The fear of reprisal from *Mhondoro* (territorial spirits), the consequence of violations of certain taboos, provides decisive checks and balances to those who may be tempted to act in a manner that negates the sustainable use of the environment” (Bourdillon 1987: 6-7 Cf. Maska and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148). Through the use of avoidance rules, the Shona and other African societies have succeeded in influencing the behavior of their members in a desirable way (ibid).

This being the case, “the most fundamental aspect of these *Zviera* (avoidance rules) is to inculcate commendable character traits in their apprentices that will make them worthy members of the society that would not only behave in a desirable way towards fellow human beings, but also relate to the environment in a manner that embodies respect for biodiversity, as well as the sustainable use of nature’s resources. Although they do not disapprove of a sustainable use of nature’s resources, including other living creatures such as draught animals and food, they are against the wanton destruction of fauna and flora without justification. They also take great exception to cruelty to animals because, for them, all animals are sentient and, therefore, deserve to be given moral consideration. For them, the person who exhibits violent surges through cutting down trees without any need for them and cruelty to other living creatures lacks *Unhu*” (Masaka and Chemhuru 2010: 121-133 Cf. 2011: 132-148) – personality. However, the Shona evolved the (*Zviera*) avoidance rules as a means of socializing its members into good citizens and this social practice is a useful indigenous knowledge system that can be used for sustainable development by development practitioners.

## **2.18 Taking Shona Indigenous Knowledge Systems Seriously in Development**

The foregoing subtopics have shown how knowledgeable Shona people are. Indigenous knowledge systems have been neglected for a long time to the extent that there is less success in sustainable development in Zimbabwe and other African countries. However, “development has too often failed to deliver on its promises to poor nations” (Sollitoe, Bicker and Pottier eds. 2002: IV). “The policies imposed from above by international agencies and state bodies have frequently not met the needs and aspirations of ordinary people in Zimbabwe and other African countries. Development agencies have been searching for some time for alternative approaches, however, it has to do with the shift in emphasis that is occurring in the development world from a ‘top-down’ intervention to a ‘grassroots’ participatory perspective or bottom-up approach” (Sillitoe 1998: 223-252). “Development agencies have been moving around for several years with mounting evidence of resources wasted in ill-conceived, frequently centrally imposed schemes that have not only failed to improve matters in less developed countries but which have also on occasion made them worse, arrogantly sending in intellectuals to sort out local problems” (Hobart 1993: 1-30). The aforesaid arguments clearly show that it is time for development practitioners to seriously work with the indigenous people’s skills and insights to further understanding of agricultural, health, community issues, and so contribute, as this study argues, to a positive change in the long term, promoting culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable interventions acceptable to all beneficiaries (Sollitoe, Bicker and Pottier eds. IV).

However, what then is indigenous knowledge? And when is knowledge indigenous? This is a contentious ‘phrase’ yet to be defined among scholars which is shown by the range of alternative terms used for indigenous knowledge systems by different writers, vying for prominence and claiming to be more representative, as they argue over the content of, and approaches to this field. They include local knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge, people’s science and folk knowledge. It is, however, difficult to draw lines between these; even the words ‘indigenous’ and ‘local’ are fraught or filled with obscurity (*ibid*: 8). “But they all share a certain common semantic load and address the same broad issues. Some writers contrast this knowledge with scientific knowledge, prompting others to query the status of ‘non-scientific’ Western knowledge beliefs and the implications of contemporary accelerating globalizing trends. These differences take us into difficult eggshell terrain with a contentious political edge which has connotations of superiority and inferiority” (*ibid*).

A working definition was, provided by Ellen and Harris who explain that “indigenous knowledge system in development contexts may relate to any knowledge held more or less collectively by a population, informing understanding of the world. It may pertain to any domain, particularly natural resource management in development. It is community-based, embedded in and conditioned by local tradition. It is culturally informed understanding inculcated into individuals from birth onwards, structuring how they interact with their environments. It is also informed continually by outside intelligence. Its distribution is fragmentary. Although more widely shared locally on the whole than specialized scientific knowledge, no one person, authority or social group knows it all. There may be a certain asymmetry here, some clustering of certain knowledge within populations (for example by gender, age etc. or according to specialist status, perhaps reflecting political or ritual power). It exists nowhere as a totality, there is no grand repository, and hence, no coherent overall theoretical model, although it may achieve some coherence in cosmologies, rituals and symbolic discourse (which are notoriously difficult to access convincingly)” (Ellen and Harris 2000: 2-6). “It is an indigenous knowledge system transmitted orally and through experience, and repetitive practice characterizes its learning between generations. It is the heritage of practical everyday life, with its functional demands, and is fluid and constantly changing, being dynamic and subject to ongoing local, regional and global negotiation between people and their environment” (Clammer 2002: 42f). However, this being the case, indigenous knowledge systems equally consist of a skill and experienced knowledge.

The researcher posits that development practitioners can lead a genuine effort to implement sustainable development projects if they co-opt indigenous Shona people’s knowledge systems in Zimbabwe. “This will be a profound move in considering indigenous knowledge and experiences seriously and works to end the arrangement of epistemologies into hierarchies of the worthy and the unworthy. Therefore, scholars and development practitioners should examine their conceptions, attitudes, values, and

opinions and how these affect their work in Zimbabwe and other African countries. However, self-reflection will help to reveal what is influenced by values, prejudices, culture, class and gender. Development policies should be examined not just in terms of whether they would succeed or not (as defined by experts, development agencies, and governments), but also in terms of the extent to which they reflect the wishes and aspirations of the specific communities” (Okolie 2003: 235-260) – within Zimbabwe, that are supposed to benefit from them, and to the extent to which they empower the people to take control of their lives. This means that such terms as ‘commercial farmers’ or ‘small-scale farmers’, must be disaggregated or separated in order to examine how their constitutive elements may be differently affected. This will help to ensure that equity is maintained (*ibid*).

Furthermore, it is argued that:

The goal should be sustainable development practices for an improvement that can be sustained over time and across generations. Therefore, development cannot be sustainable unless it moves from participant observation to a participatory approach which includes the grassroots. Participatory development is not the same as asking indigenous or local people what they think about what experts recommend for them or, worse, trying to convince them or include them in the effort to convince them to choose what the experts recommend. It should involve asking indigenous people what they think good social transformation should be, what changes they think they need, how they think they can get them, and what assistance they might need in doing so. It should be about focusing on local conditions and working with the indigenous people to meet their needs while protecting the ecosystem. (Okolie 2003: 235-260)

To be truly participatory, research geared towards improving food and mining production, in Zimbabwe and other African countries, should involve dialogue between indigenous farmers and scientists, rather than exclusive reliance on development experts and the accompanying dismissive attitude towards indigenous knowledge. “Indigenous knowledge is the body of knowledge accumulated by a group of people (not necessarily indigenous) who by centuries of unbroken residence develop an in-depth understanding of their particular place in their particular world. It is about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with the environment” (Roberts in Dei 2000: 71 Cf. Okolie 2003: 235-260). It includes distinct beliefs that they hold, explicitly expressed, for instance, in lore (Shona traditions and knowledge), or in advice passed from one generation to the next. “It may be implicit, embodied in specific Shona religious practices (for example determining when and where to plant specific crops and with what tools and techniques, and how each crop interacts with the soil and other crops)” (*ibid*). For indigenous peoples, local ways of acting, feeling, knowing, and making sense of their social and natural worlds have significant implications for development; indigenous peoples experience and interpret the contemporary world in ways that

are continuous and consistent with their indigenous worldviews (ibid). Indigenous or traditional does not imply that the indigenous epistemologies are static or fixed. They refer to the changing ways in which people have lived, known and tried to know their social and natural world (ibid).

Therefore, for Shona peoples and other Africans to simply abandon their indigenous epistemologies, ignore their experiences and rely on western experts' advice is no longer a good approach. However, Europe and the West never really abandoned all its indigenous epistemologies (Manzo 1991: 3-26). Furthermore, scientific culture cannot take root in a society which ignores the accumulated intellectual experience of indigenous people (Gueye 1995: 7-12). Zimbabwean food policies, for instance, should take into account Zimbabwean Shona religious ideas about production and relations to nature. For example, Shona see land as more than a factor of production; it is sacred (as noted in foregoing discussed subtopics), delicate and needs to be revered and cared for sustainability – and the land belongs to the ancestors (*Midzimu*) and *Mwari* (the supreme life force). Likewise, Shona like other African people “do not see labor as just another factor of production; laborers are human beings and are people’s relatives. However, there is a body of anthropological work on the worldview of Africans and their relationship to nature and the environment which clearly shows that Africans do not see nature as something simply to be exploited and dominated but as something that needs renewal as well” (Mbiti 1982: 193-111).

The experiences of the writer assert that steady dialogue between development experts and Shona indigenous people should enable them to learn from each other. Indigenous people would tell development practitioners what obstacles they face in their development initiatives. “Development experts would demonstrate new ideas and technologies to indigenous people and explain what they perceive to be the advantages of their adoption” (Okolie 2003: 235-260). The Shona people like other African people would tell development experts how the new ideas and technologies may or may not be suitable in their culture, their traditions, and their lived experiences, and whether they can afford them. The Shona people’s fears about their ecosystem, social relations, cultures and traditions should be part of the discussion. Thus, they may discuss and evaluate how a new variety of crops fits into their farming system and social relations, or how a traditional soil fertilization practice can be modernized and shared with other farmers in similar circumstances. Zimbabwean farmers are likely to embrace ideas and technologies that they can afford and which would take from, but not destroy, nature or the earth (on which they depend) and their social relations. The dialogue between Zimbabwean farmers and development experts can include some strategies for sustainable development in agriculture, mining, environmental conservation, etc. which Zimbabweans have employed for generations. These include shifting cultivation, mixed cropping, self-help or mutual cooperation, and common space or common properties among other things.

However, in relation to types of farming noted above, it is observed that shifting cultivation, fallowing, and mixed cropping was practiced among Shona and Ndebele as well as other Africans farmers who have traditionally planted different crops on the same lands at different times, planted a mixture of crops on the same land at the same time, and also let the land lie fallow for a number of years, before planting on it again. By alternating crops and letting the land lie fallow, the land is organically renewed. Centuries of experience have taught Zimbabwean farmers that different crops relate to the soil differently in terms of a number of nutrients they take from it and the nutrients they put back in. But Zimbabwean farmers are often unaware of the exact chemical and biological processes that go on (ESS 2010: 1ff). This being the case, “western scientists can help in identifying what these are and, working with the indigenous farmers, identify alternative cost-effective, sustainable and secure ways of renewing the soil if pressure on the land, for instance, would no longer allow for fallowing or if there are strong reasons to discourage shifting cultivation or mixed cropping. Sustainability here includes ensuring that such changes involve what the indigenous farmers in Zimbabwe can afford over the long term and would not involve dependence on forces beyond their control, such as unreliable markets for chemical fertilizers” (Okolie 2003: 235-260). The government can explore paying to have some farmers’ portions of land lie fallow in order to renew the soil (an ecologically sound policy), which also ensures that resources are kept within Zimbabwe rather than lost to fertilizer imports. Modern sciences can help develop quick and high yielding varieties of crops that can be cultivated as supplements to, rather than replacements for, existing crops.

Co-operation (the concept of *Nhimbe* in Shona) is a traditional framework for ‘knowing that and knowing how’ among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. The overall framework is working together, and it is very task orientated. “It recognizes that households have different resources and livestock, in terms of human labor, skills, wealth, etc. The traditional Shona culture is not egocentric; there is greater interconnection and interdependence” (Cathrine 2009-2010: 8-9). Traditionally, Zimbabwean farmers have pooled resources, including capital and labor, for mutual assistance and benefit. Pooling of labor includes rotation labor (*Mushandira pamwe* in Shona). “A group of friends and /or relations contribute labor to a member in a rotating system until every member has benefited before the cycle begins again. Experts can concur with Zimbabwean and other African farmers on how to revitalize those forms of cooperation in order to assist individuals and groups. The pooling of land by small land owners, where possible, will allow for the use of modern equipment and for economies of scale. The dialogue here may also reveal the need to assist the indigenous farmers with modern accounting methods to help them manage collective properties (property owned jointly) better and to minimize mistrust and fraud, especially as traditional formal and informal methods of rule enforcement become less effective” (Okolie 2003: 235-260).

Sacred land or Sacred Mountains/*Matondo/Makomo Anoyerwa*, it is a land and/or objects owned collectively in a community, can be sacred forests, mountains, dams, springs, etc. (Munyaradzi 2013: 9). Shona people also practice sustainability by designating and preserving certain spaces and properties as common or shared spaces and properties vital to peoples' health, sustenance and biodiversity, which nobody could own, as they belong to the ancestral spirits (*Midzimu*) and *Mwari* (the supreme life force). These lands are not cultivated. Traditional Shona healers could go into them to find leaves, barks and roots for their medical concoctions in a dignified manner. The sources of drinking water are preserved through avoidance rules (*Zviera*), banning fishing or bathing in them. Often, they are hedged with spiritual beliefs (avoidance rules), a useful means of social control in Shona communities that rely mainly on informal means of social control. Therefore, "environmental management, bodies of water management and conservation are not new (to the Shona people), but they have always been part of their tradition" (Duri and Mapara 2007: 98-111 Cf. Chemhuru and Masaka 2010: 121-133). This being the case, "they dispute colonial environmentalists' contention that pre-colonial Shonas were not conscious of the need to sustainably use the resources of nature. Thus, the Shona environmental management and conservation avoidance rules validate the claim that Shona people had, and still have, an environmental consciousness that seeks to protect water sources like rivers, pools, dams, wetlands, wells, and springs. In traditional Shona communities, there is a heavy dependence on open wells, rivers and springs for drinking, cooking, bathing, washing, and agricultural and industrial uses" (ibid).

These Shona knowledge systems and practices that characterize Shona agriculture and other areas, as presented above, are Shona religious resources which resulted from centuries of change and do not represent the ultimate destination. The strategy is to tap from them so that development experts understand the Shona religious worldview for implementing successful sustainable development projects. Development practitioners can play a critical role in updating these sustainable practices critical to Shona societies and demonstrating that indigenous peoples, who depend on the local ecosystem for their sustenance, are more likely to enthusiastically welcome practices that proffer in sustainable development in the communities.

## 2.19 Conclusion

This chapter has established models of abundant life in Shona religion and the Shona worldview, the greatest pillars in Shona beliefs and practices. Therefore, development practitioners should be conscious of the resourcefulness of Shona religion and try to complement Shona knowledge systems in development initiatives. This can create equal power relations between development practitioners and Shona indigenous people. The Shona indigenous people cannot freely participate as equals if there are constant re-

minders of the power of the development experts, including the dangling of the loans before their eyes. With these, development practitioners will become more relevant to the current model, “not bookish, elitist, urban-based, middleclass” (Kingsley 1993: 98ff), which is not focused and largely irrelevant to the vast majority of Shona and other ethnic (Ndebele) communities in Zimbabwe. Shona are not averse to change, but, like every other community in Africa, they have to be reasonably sure that the change will be beneficial and guarantee them sustainable development, with food, environmental, natural resources, security for the needs of the current generations and for the needs of future generations. They do welcome change from outside of their worlds. Therefore, development practitioners in Zimbabwean communities need to be seen as part of the communities that they are trying to understand and help. It should encourage learning from the religious worldview of the Shona, by tapping into how these Shona indigenous people actually live, their interests, beliefs, values, desires, practices, achievements, and challenges. The goal should not be to replace one exclusionary form of knowledge system with another but to promote strategies that incorporate the most applicable forms of knowledge systems that would contribute to the stated goals of improving the lives of target communities and peoples in Zimbabwe.

Lastly, the foregoing discussions have displayed profoundly the resourcefulness of Shona religion and have tried to show a shift in the development paradigm – this is the case because, in recent decades, it has become evident that the way development practitioners thought on development, has changed. Therefore, “bottom-up negotiated and situation-specific participation has become an increasingly widespread goal in development in contrast to the top-down, blue-print modernization approaches of the past” (Pottier and Sillitoe 2003: 13-23). On the other hand, the previous models were based on an experts-led diagnosis of problems such as modernization and transfer-of-technology and Marxist-informed dependence, and what they had in common was a complete neglect of indigenous peoples’ understandings (Sillitoe and Marzano 2009 13-23). These past development models failed to address growing poverty and vulnerability in Zimbabwe and developing countries at large. After witnessing the failure of numerous projects resulting from their lack of concern with indigenous voices, “the development paradigm has increasingly shifted to a more bottom-up approach. It is, however, clear that development practitioners can no longer ignore indigenous or local knowledge systems and practices, for a lack of respect for others’ ways leads to offensive interference in their lives” (Sillitoe 1998: 223-252). If all development organizations, NGOs, FBOs and the government in Zimbabwe seriously co-opt Shona indigenous knowledge systems and other Africans’ indigenous knowledge systems in Africa as valuable resources, which can contribute to, and in fact determine, the sustainability of projects, development could be pragmatic and poverty eradication can be realized in Zimbabwe and other developing countries in Africa. However, despite the potential to play a positive role (indigenous knowledge systems) in the development processes in

Zimbabwe and Africa, global north theories on development have highly marginalized African religions, as shall be shown in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: THE BASIC NEEDS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 3.1 Introduction

“Just as the Great Depression the 1930s induced major changes in the prevailing winds of economic thought in the developed countries, in the form of the Keynesian revolution, so the economic upheavals of the depression and two Worlds Wars gave impulse to the first major body of development thought produced in the developing countries” (Oman and Gamesham 1994: 137). Keynes advocated the use of “fiscal policy – government spending – to deal with recession, because he believed that high unemployment rates could persist indefinitely” (Rapley 2007: 17). This chapter explores the origins and the development of the concept of basic needs as it has been advocated and elaborated by development planners, scholars and strategists in relation to development in Africa, with special reference to Zimbabwe, as well as transformations of this concept in the last decades. The aforesaid focus will be achieved by concentrating on the following aspects: a definition of development, a brief history of the origins of the basic needs development strategy, the denigration of African religions and its absence from development practices, institutional policies, scientific reductionism in its relation to African religions, as well as an introduction of a new relationship between African religions and development. These subtopics are important as they further the understanding of the reasons for the absence of African religions in the history of development in Africa.

### 3.2 A Definition of Development

Good living standards are desired by any human being, whether the person lives in the global north or global south. Hence, developing the lives of a people (especially one which is living under poor standards) is a worthy pursuit that is difficult to argue against. Moreover, in the developing countries, no one has witnessed communities which are anti-development, although the concept of development is conceptualized differently by different communities at different times. It was observed that “development itself is a contested term; it is contested in both its meaning and its means of achievement. There is no single measure of development and assessment of development requires a range of indicators” (Clarke 2013: 1). “All in all, development has been a vague yet predictive term struggling to acquire a precise meaning” (Haynes 2009: 5). However, “development has been viewed as a state of modernization as well as the sustained increase in the real per capita income which results in social and structural changes in a country over a long period of time. These changes include the qualitative and quantitative improvement or transformation of a country’s methods of production, roads, hospitals, levels of income, attitudes and quality of life” (Sibanda 2009: 1f).

On the one hand, “development refers to the improvement of a country’s economic and social conditions. The World Bank posited that when referring to a country it will be taken to mean reaching an acceptable standard of living for all people. It means that people have the basic things they need to live” (ibid). On the other hand, Ricardo understands development as a process of self-sustained accumulation of capital and growth which could be arrested only by the limitations of available land (Larraín 1994: 21).

Furthermore, development is defined as the expansion of entitlements and its capability to give life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom (Thirlwall 2003: 21). Development is said to have occurred when there has been an improvement in the basic needs, when economic progress has contributed to a greater sense of self-esteem for the country and individuals within it and when material advancement has expanded people’s entitlements, capabilities, and freedoms (ibid). The fact that these ingredients are not measurable does not detract from their importance; Thirlwall continues to posit that “the condition of being developed is as much a state of mind as a physical condition measurable by economic indices alone” (ibid). For Rapley, development studies had arguably remained one of the last bastions of modernism in the social sciences. Although theorists differed over the means of attaining the goal of development, there was little dispute over its content and desirability. However, development was understood to mean rising living standards, which would manifest themselves in rising incomes (growth), which in turn would translate into improved health, nutrition, education, and personal autonomy (development) (Rapley 2007: 185-186). These are some ways of understanding development as foregoing discussions have shown.

In addition, Mosher noted that “another approach to understanding development is to start not from production but from human needs” (Mosher 1976: 1f). The two conditions to be used in aiming at development are the capacity to obtain physical necessities (particularly food, and a job – not necessarily a paid employment but including studying, working on a family farm or keeping the house), and equality, which should be considered an objective in its own right. In this approach, development means combatting or ameliorating poverty in order to enhance or restore human capabilities and freedoms (ibid). The approach that shall be used will be a holistic approach which is defined as the “development where the level of satisfaction of various dimensions of human needs is considered to have improved. Although for decades development has been largely conceived in social and economic terms, more recently the concept of human development has come into vogue or fashion emphasizing aspects that go beyond the economic dimension. The holistic development approach encompasses the human development approach, including the spiritual dimension of life. The human development dimensions include low levels of material poverty, low levels of unemployment, relative equality, democratization of political life, true national independence, good literacy and educational levels, good health, relatively equal status for women and

participation by women and sustainable ability to meet future needs" (Hunt 1989: 260). Therefore, fundamental to this study is the concept of basic needs to a sustainable development concept, a current strategy in development. It came into prominence because of the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environmental Development); the Commission report on *'Our Common Future: From One Earth to One World'* called for emboldened and dramatically new conceptions of development that "advanced the material wants of the present generations *'without'* depriving future generations of the resources required to satisfy their needs. Thus, the Commission defined or conceptualized 'sustainable development' rather simply as paths of human progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (WCED 1987: 43). However, proper approaches to development should aim at this. On the contrary, Streeten sees the aforesaid definition of sustainable development as sufficiently vague to cover many contingencies. For him, sustainable development has come to mean a holistic development approach that includes social, economic and environmental, thus maintaining intact the physical and human capital that produces an income stream (or increasing it in line with population growth, technological developments, inter-temporal preferences, etc.) (Streeten 1997: 128-129). "Maintenance, replacement, and growth of capital assets, both physical and human, is certainly one aspect of sustainability. Physical wear and tear, technical obsolescence, and the depreciation of human capital have to be taken into account" (ibid). This being the case, however, it is important to examine the concept of development itself in order to establish how it came to be in Zimbabwe and in African countries generally.

### **3.3 A Brief History of the Basic Needs Development Strategy**

#### *3.3.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Development*

The main objective of this part is to present a brief history of the basic needs development strategy. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to first discuss, the evolution of theoretical perspectives of development which are: the modernization theory; the dependency theory; the world-systems theory; and the globalization theory. These major theories are the principal theoretical explanations to interpret development efforts carried out after World War II, especially in the developing countries. Furthermore, "these theoretical perspectives allow us not only to clarify concepts, but to set them in economic and social perspectives" (Reyes 2013: 1-10), and also to identify recommendations as a wayforward in terms of social policies in relation to sustainable development in developing countries in Africa.

### *3.3.2 Modernization Theory*

According to Kyong-Dong Kim, the origin of the term ‘modern’ in western intellectual history should be traced. For him, the very notion of ‘modern’ or ‘modernity’ was an intellectual construct first adopted in Europe from an earlier Latin usage by seventeenth and eighteenth-century historians to periodize their history. In this effort, they designated the modern era to be apart from ‘medieval’ and ‘ancient’ periods, roughly beginning around 1500 A.D., or the fall of Constantinople and the discovery of America. Countries outside the confines of Europe of this period had used their own system of historical era designation in terms of the chronology or genealogy of dynasties, kingdoms, or ethnic groups (Kim 1985: 61-62). “It was only after they were exposed to the western intellectual culture that they also came to adopt the new system of historical periodization separating the modern era from the old regimes” (ibid). Furthermore, Kim says that it was a time of human awakening in the humanistic sense of realizing the central place of humans in the unfolding historical stage and the possibility of conquering the time. What has ensured, or perhaps encouraged it, has been the rise of modern capitalism, which was to become the prime force to push the worldwide acculturation process to be called modernization (ibid: 81).

For Jones, “the emergence of modernization theory in the late 1950s and early 1960s stemmed from America’s new position of international hegemony and the concern to solve the problems of the poor countries. Hence, the focus of the theory is on the third-world, especially on how to promote development in the third-world while implicitly holding the first-world as a model” (Jones 1981: 249-283, Cf. Yeh 1989: 2). According to the modernization school, “there is something wrong within the third-world nations that made them economically backward, for example, sociologists have stressed the persistence of traditional values and institutions; psychologists highlighted the low achievement motivation; demographers are appalled by the population explosion; political scientists emphasized the inefficient and corrupt bureaucracies; and the economists pointed to the lack of productive investment” (ibid). On the one hand, Larrain notes that modernization theory starts with an implicit reference to a dichotomy between two ideal types: the traditional society (which in other versions can also be called ‘rural’, ‘backward’ or ‘underdeveloped’) and the modern society (or urban, developed, industrial). However, this distinction describes two ideal types of social structure which are somehow historically connected by means of a continuous evolutionary process which follows certain general laws. The idea is that all societies follow a similar historical course which gains in differentiation and complexity as it departs from one polar type and moves towards the other (Larrain 1994: 87). Additionally, Rapley points out that “modernization theory sought to identify the conditions that had given rise to development in the first world and specify where and why these were lacking in the third world” (Rapley 2007: 24-25). He noted that modernization theorists, depending on their focus, reached varying conclusions, thus: to some, the problem of the third world

was a mere shortage of capital hence development required a rise in the savings rate, and to others, it was a question of value systems, thus, third world peoples lacked the cultural values, such as the profit motive, that would make them entrepreneurial. Thereby, in this case, “development required westernizing elites or some kind of education in capitalist values. Yet, whether from a sociological, political or economic standpoint, modernization theorists generally concurred on one important point – underdevelopment was an initial state. The west had progressed beyond it, but other countries lagged behind. Therefore, the west could help speed up the process of development in the developing world, for example by sharing its capital and know-how, to bring these countries into the modern age of capitalism and liberal democracy” (ibid).

Smelser posits that in modernization theory, “modern societies are more productive, children are better educated, and the needy receive more welfare as well as modern societies have the particular feature of social structural differentiation, that is to say a clear definition of functions and political roles from national institutions furthermore, structural differentiation has increased the functional capacity of modern organization, and of coordinating the activities of the various new institutions” (Smelser 1964: 268-274, Cf. Reyes 2013: 1). In addition, Reyes noted that “modernization is a homogenizing process, in that it produces tendencies towards convergence among societies, and as time goes on, they will increasingly resemble one another because the patterns of modernization are such that the more highly modernized societies become, the more they resemble one another” (ibid: 2). Rostow, cited in McClelland, argues that modernization theory is based on five stages: “traditional society, precondition for takeoff, the takeoff process, the drive to maturity, and high mass consumption society, and in turn this exposition has a possible solution for the promotion of developing world modernization, hence if the developing world’s problem resides in their lack of productive investments, then the solution lies in the provision of aid to these countries in the form of capital, technology, and expertise” (McClelland 1964: 167-170, Cf. Reyes 2013: 2).

Having noted the main thrust of the modernization theory from different scholars, it is also important to point out that Yeh believes that “the impact of the modernization theory was felt and has been very substantial in national development planning in the developing world countries as well as on the developmental assistance work of international agencies, including various bodies of the United Nations” (Yeh 1989: 6). However, as time progressed, modernization theory faced criticism because of its thrust on implicitly and explicitly forcing its modern values socially, economically and politically within the internal structures of developing world countries, what other scholars, for instance, Kyong-Dong Kim, called the initial international acculturation and the incipient indigenization of change (Kim 1985: 63). This caused a lot of challenges on the theory since there were resistances in different countries. To this effect, “Yeh also enumerates a number of critiques of the modernization approach which have been raised – one particular issue has to do with the possibility that 20<sup>th</sup> century patterns of devel-

opment might take forms that are distinctively different from earlier ones, thus raising important questions on both the meaning of development and the possibility of multiple paths to societal development. This criticism objects to the tendency to use an idealized version of the contemporary western society as a developmental goal, especially when the western societies are changing themselves. Furthermore, the promotion of the capitalism – democracy model fashioned after the western or U.S experience creates the impression of excessive ethnocentrism since variations from the western model are seen as deviations to be corrected. This raises the question of how to handle the distinctive cultures of the developing world countries which seem to stand in the way of the modernization process" (Yeh 1989: 6-7).

Modernization theory was pushed worldwide by the capitalist and imperialist governments when most of the developing world nations were fostering their political independence: Hence the western world countries wanted to maintain their social, economic, and political hegemony, thereby dominating in foreign investments for profits. Therefore, the theory concentrated on the internal challenges of the developing world countries. In the same vein, Yeh says that "modernization theory has provided an internal explanation of the problems of the developing countries' development" (Yeh 1989: 3). Finally, because of the aforementioned shortfalls, Rapley asserted that as time went on, a more radical second generation of structuralism emerged, reacting angrily against modernization theory. This was dependency theory – and in academics of development studies, radical theorists (dependency theorists) carried on the torch (Rapley 2007: 25).

### *3.3.3 Dependency Theory*

For Rapley, dependency theory has its roots in Indian nationalist thought from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the theory first came to light in the book entitled "The Political Economy of Growth" written by Paul Baran in the 1950s. "The dependency theory literature proliferated within a decade and whereas modernization theorists saw the first world as guiding developing world countries' development through aid, investment, and example, Baran postulates that the first world actually hindered the emergence from poverty of the developing world countries" (Rapley 2007: 26). The first world elites in whom modernization theorists placed their faith would not lead their countries (third world) out of backwardness, rather, argued Baran, these elites were fifth columnists who conspired to keep their homeland poor. Though it appeared illogical, this strategy was shrewd – it impoverished most of the population, but enriched the few who applied it (*ibid*). According to Yeh, "the dependency theorists set on an essentially polar theoretical structure: the core vs. the periphery. The developed western nations are the core, while the developing world nations are the periphery. The argument here is that the core exploits the periphery for its own interests. The historical experience of colonialism and the removal of surplus from the periphery have led to the peripheral un-

derdevelopment – a process that has been known as the development of underdevelopment. However, with the core domination, there is little chance for the periphery to have an autonomous development. Thereby, the dependency theorists are generally pessimistic about the future of the developing world nations; they will always fall behind the core, leading to the widening of world inequalities” (Yeh 1989: 7-8). For Bodenheimer, the dependency theory emerged in the 1950s from the research of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC). One of the principal authors is Raul Prebisch, hence he cited him as the one who set ECLAC’s proposal on dependency theory. Therefore, according to Prebisch’s model, in order to create conditions of development with a country, it is fundamental to:

Control the monetary exchange rate, placing more governmental emphasis on fiscal rather than monetary policy; promote a more effective governmental role in terms of national development; create a platform of investments, giving a preferential role in terms of national capitals; allow the entrance of external capital following priorities already established in national plans for development; promote a more effective internal demand in terms of domestic markets as a base to reinforce the industrialization process in Latin America; generate a larger internal demand by increasing the wages and salaries of workers, which will in turn positively affect aggregate demand in internal markets... (Bodenheimer 1970: 49-53, Cf. Reyes 2013: 3)

Reyes says that “scholars such as Falleto and Dos Santos argued that the ECLAC’s development proposal aforesaid failed, which only then lead to the establishment of the dependency model” (Reyes 2013: 3). In addition, Baran, quoted in Rapley, explains that the dependency model made developing nations bourgeoisies to rule in alliance with traditional landed elites, spreading their profits on ostentation or showing off rather than on the investment that would accelerate growth. “Imperialism had not exported capitalism to the developing nations; rather, it had drained the colonies of the resources that could have been used for investment and had killed off local capitalism through competition. Thereby, siphoning surplus away from the developing nations, the developed nations had enriched itself – by keeping the developing nations underdeveloped, the ruling bourgeoisies of the developed nations ensured a ready market for their finished goods and a cheap supply of raw materials for their factories” (Rapley 2007: 26). Furthermore, Yeh says that in the theoretical paradigm of the dependency theorists, international political economy assumes a central role. Struggles among local classes and other interest groups are conditioned by the developing nations’ relation to the advanced industrial nations of the core. Therefore, “foreign actors are inextricably involved in class struggles and alliances within countries on the periphery. Instead of assuming that contact between the core and periphery would lead to more rapid development, the dependency theorists feels that external linkage produces retrogression in

the developing nations. In other words, ties with the developed nations create big or enormous problems, not solutions. He went on to note that for this and other reasons, the path followed by the developed nations could not be followed by the developing nations" (Yeh 1989: 8). Having climbed the ladder of development and having developed strong state apparatuses, the first world is now in the position to exploit and prevent the developing nations from rising in a similar way. However, it is argued that the fundamental obstacle to change at the local level is not irrational attachment to traditional values, but the very rational attempts by local elites and their foreign allies to defend their own interests (ibid).

From a critical point of view Petras posits that dependency theorists challenged the theoretical paradigm of the modernization theory – instead of providing an internal explanation, the dependency theory offers an external explanation of developing countries' development. "The essence of the argument is that developing countries remain economically backward, with high levels of poverty, not because they have traditional values and institutions, but because they are being exploited by advanced capitalistic countries. The peripheral position of the developing nations did not occur through a natural process of evolution; instead, it was a historical product of several centuries of colonial domination. Therefore, the present developing nations are not undeveloped but have actually been underdeveloped by the core nations" (Petras 1978: 98f, Cf. Yeh 1989: 3-4). On the one hand, Friedrichs argues that despite the fact that modernization theory and dependency theory conflict in many areas, they also have certain similarities: "a research focus on third world development circumstances; a methodology which has a high-level of abstraction and is focused on the development process, using nation-state as a unit of analysis; the use of polar theoretical structural visions; in one case the structure is tradition versus modernity – modernization, in the other it is core versus periphery – dependency" (Friedrichs 1970: 34-36, Cf. Reyes 2013: 4).

Lastly, the aforementioned scholarly discussions depict that the critical analysis of the dependency school from the external paradigm or dimension on development in developing nations relies on the historical perspective from colonial periods. Therefore, presenting an appetite of the core nations to want to continue siphoning more profits (riches), hegemony, fame, and class upon the peripheral nations. In other words, the two theories (modernization and dependency) lead to neo-colonialism but now by means of an economic model strategy, an implicit way of core nations' dominance on the peripheral nations. It creates a vicious cycle which will never end. The failure of these two theories is evident in the context of perpetual highlevels of poverty, unemployment, inequalities and economic meltdown in peripheral nations especially in Africa, although they are attributed to poor governance and corruption among other challenges on the continent. This is why dependency theory's thrust, according to Rapley, is "as long as third world economies were linked to the first world, they could never break free of their dependence and poverty. What they needed were autonomous national

development strategies" (Rapley 2007: 28). Furthermore, Yeh points out that "theoretically the dependency theorists built their thesis around historical case studies that included an integrated examination of local and international actors. At both local and international levels, the emphasis is on interests (wealth, power, prestige), rather than values and norms, on economic and political institutions rather than cultural patterns" (Yeh 1989: 8). As a result, the dependency school highlighted the value of comparable historical studies, which as a reorientation of scholarship helped, to lay the groundwork for the world-system perspective (ibid).

### *3.3.4 World-System Theory*

For Wallerstein, the world-systems perspective is distinct from the modernization and dependency schools. "Instead of the tradition-modern or core-periphery structure, the world-system perspective works with three layers, thus: the core (western industrial nations), the periphery (non-industrial third world nations), and the semi-periphery, those nations in between the core and the periphery which exhibit characteristics of both. Furthermore, the semi-periphery can only be defined relationally. To the core, it may be just a periphery; but to the periphery, the semi-periphery acts like a core and exercises domination over it. The formulation of the semi-periphery concept is a theoretical breakthrough because it enables researchers to examine the complexity and changing nature of the capitalist world-systems" (Wallerstein 1979: 43f, Cf. Yeh 1989: 8-9). He went on to posit that "this three-tier model allows us to entertain the possibilities of upward mobility as well as downward mobility. Additionally, the world-system perspective is capable of studying the changing locations of the state in relation to the contradictions and crises that are built into the working of the capitalist world-systems. Therefore, the three-tier model is able to avoid the deterministic statement of the dependency school: a periphery is bound to have underdevelopment and that countries in the core cannot fall from grace short of an armed struggle. The world-system perspective no longer needs to define away the path of genuine development in third world peripheries. Instead, it can help asking interesting questions, such as why a few East Asian nations are able to transcend their peripheral status and successfully industrialize in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, while in Africa such trends of development mobility are not realized" (ibid). As for Kyong-Dong Kim, the world-system theory has some crucial connection with the process of industrialization in the latecomer societies. Additionally, it has played the role of motivating them (periphery nations) to take that path, it has influenced the mode of industrialization and it affects the consequences of industrialization. However, since the inception of modernization in the west, the world has become incorporated into one vast socioeconomic system. No single nation-state is able to stand outside this system of asymmetry without a serious blow to its own develop-

ment. Thus, it is imperative that we understand the nature of this world-system (Kim 1985: 104-105).

Kim went on to explain that this assumes an asymmetric structure of the world society in terms of economic, technological, military, and political relationships among nations. It divides nation-states along a continuum between core, metropolitan, center nations and peripheral, dependent nations. In between these two polar categories, of course, there are semi-core and semi-periphery (*ibid*). On the one hand, Paul Baran, cited in Larrain, postulates that capitalism as a world-system is no longer considered to be homogeneous but it constitutes a hierarchical international system where more developed countries exploit the less developed countries. “Therefore, the exploitation of the less developed countries consists in the transfer of a part of their economic surplus, to the developed world and the squandering of another part of it in luxury consumption by backward local oligarchies (a small group of people having control over a country and its wealth)” (Larrain 1994: 115). Furthermore, because of the loss and misuse of their economic surplus, backward countries become underdeveloped. On the other hand, imperialism is opposed to the industrial development of backward countries and therefore seeks to prop up and make alliances with the local comprador bourgeoisies. Moreover, capitalism in its new monopolistic phase is no longer an expanding and dynamic force but leads to stagnation, particularly in less developed countries. Consequently, the only chance for these countries is to abandon capitalism and adopt a socialist road to development (*ibid*).

This being the case, Wallerstein argues that the world-system theory is different from both the modernization and dependency theories in that it pays little attention to the internal or external distinction in the causation of underdevelopment. The theory instead insists that the whole world should be taken as a unit in social science analysis, and therefore has a much broader focus. Furthermore, this perspective studies not only the peripheries – backward developing countries, but also the advanced or developed capitalistic core or countries, the new socialist states, as well as the rise, development and future of the entire capitalistic world economy (Wallerstein 1979: 43f, Cf. Yeh 1989: 4). Moreover, Alvin Yiu-cheong and Reyes, points out that:

The principal differences between the world-system approach and the dependency studies are: the unit of analysis in the dependency theory is the nation-state level, whilst for the world-system it is the world itself; concerning methodology, the dependency school posits that the structural-historical model is that of the boom and bust of nation states, whereas the world-system approach maintains the historical dynamics of world-system in its cyclical rhythms and secular trends the theoretical structure for the dependency theory is bimodal, consisting of the core and the periphery by contrast the world-system theory the structure is tri-modal and is comprised of the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery; in terms of the direction of development, the dependency school believes that the process is

generally harmful; however, in a world-systems scenario, there is the possibility for upward and downward mobility in the world economy; and the research focus of dependency theorists concentrates on the core and the periphery... (Alvin Yiu-cheong 1991: 110-116, Cf. Reyes 2013: 6)

However, Larrain points out that “capitalism expanded from Europe and managed to incorporate the whole world into a single international system. Hence, this world-system is divided into a whole chain of metropolises and satellites, which runs from the world metropolis down to the hacienda or rural merchant who are satellites of the local commercial metropolitan center but who in their turn have peasants as their satellites” (Larrain 1994: 116). Therefore, “the whole system has a monopolistic structure which entails the misuse and squandering of resources all over the system. A particular form of misuse is the exploration and appropriation of a large part, or even all of or more than the economic surplus or surplus value of the satellite by its local, regional, national, or international metropolis – therefore, ultimately, it is the main imperialist power that appropriates the resources extracted all along the metropolis, in satellite chain” (ibid).

However, as for Yeh, the world-systems perspective, offers no fixed generalized solution to third world development. Thus, there are no prescribed doses because participation in the capitalist world system or economy has both beneficial and harmful consequences to third world nations. “Each nation has a chance to climb upwards to the core status, and each has a possibility to move downward to the peripheral status. Since there is no fixed pattern, the world-system perspective calls for a concrete study of the history of each specific case and comparative analysis before making any high-level generalization” (Yeh 1989: 10-11). In this light, the world-systems perspective is only a *perspective*, a way of asking new research questions and looking into new research agenda, rather than a theory in which there are well-formulated hypotheses and tested generalizations (ibid). Furthermore, “there is the criticism that the world-systems approach exaggerates the power of the capitalist world system to such an extent that the world-systems dynamics can determine the pattern of local development regardless of domestic class relations. Consequently, we may develop a picture of a world so determined by capitalism, particularly by those who control the core capitalist states, that it leads to fatalism, since it is difficult to see how any part of such a tightly-knit system can possibly break away” (ibid: 13). Having said this, it becomes evident that the capitalist world system theory is more interested in international or worldwide expansion, thereby incorporating semi-peripheral and peripheral nations for materialistic quantitative gains. Non-materialistic qualitative gains are: for example, raw materials, semi-finished products, cheap labour; economic power, political power, class, fame, cultural dominance, epistemology hegemony etc. Therefore, in such a vicious cycle of hegemony, poverty alleviation and underdevelopment in developing nations will continue to be elusive, hence unsustainable development and high-level percentages of poverty will

remain. Explicitly and implicitly, the motif behind the world-system theory is also monopolistic in nature.

### *3.3.5 Globalization Theory*

Robertson Roland and White E. Kathleen in the book entitled 'The Blackwell Companion to Globalization' explain that "globalization was discussed by that explicit name in sociology and anthropology, as well as in religious studies, only from the late 1970s and early 1980s, although it became apparent in recent years that globalization in effect began many centuries ago. Furthermore, we have to recognize clearly that the idea of globalization did not fully enter academic, not to speak of wider political and intellectual, discourse until the late 1980s or 1990s. Hence, the widespread use of this term across the world began only after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent, if only partial collapse of communism" (Roland and White 2007: 55). This being the case, what then is meant by the term 'globalization'? For Robertson (1992), cited in Milton, globalization is a concept that refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Milton 1996: 164). Furthermore, Milton analyzed the phrase 'the compression of the world' and to him it means the bringing together of distant locations through their participation in a single economic or political system or network of communications, in such a way that events taking place in them influence one another (*ibid*). On the one hand, White and Robertson argue that "as much as they attempt to produce a definitely systematic way of analyzing globalization, it should be strongly emphasized that in a major respect globalization is, in the frequently used phrase, an essentially contested concept. Likewise, many books and articles purporting to be talking about globalization indicate at the outset that there is no accepted definition of globalization but that the author or authors are about to produce one" (White and Roland 2007: 54). On the other hand, Milton sees that Robertson's concept of globalization is crucially different from those described in the other models. Hence, what makes the difference is culture. Globalization is not just a process taking place in the world, and in which culture plays a role. It is, in part, a cultural process; something that happens within the culture as well as in the world outside the peoples' understanding (Milton 1996: 165).

Additionally, Milton says that globalization also refers to the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. This describes a change in what people think, feel and know about the world; it describes the development of what he calls 'a sense of the global'. However, a sense of the global can take many different forms; people come to understand the world as a single place in many diverse ways. "Ecologists and environmentalists, for instance, have come to see it as a single ecosystem, in which processes taking place in one location can affect the whole. Entrepreneurs have come to see it as a single marketplace, tourists as a single playground, and so on" (*ibid*). Kaplan

explains that “the theory of globalization emerges from the global mechanisms of greater integration with particular emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions. Therefore, in this sense, this perspective is similar to the world-systems approach. However, the most important characteristics of the globalization position are its focus and emphasis on cultural aspects and their communication worldwide. Rather than the economic, financial, and political ties, globalization scholars argue that the main elements for development interpretation are the cultural links among nations. Furthermore, in this cultural communication, one of the most important factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world” (Kaplan 1993: 3f, Cf. Reyes 2013: 6). Moreover, Moore argues that the main aspects of globalization theory can be delineated as follows:

To recognize that global communications systems are gaining an increasing importance every day, and through this process all nations are interacting much more frequently and easily, not only at the governmental level but also within the citizenry; even though the main communications systems are operating among the more developed nations, these mechanisms are also spreading in their use to less developed nations. This fact will increase the possibility that marginal groups in poor nations can communicate and interact within a global context using the new technology; the modern communication systems imply structural and important modifications in the social, economic and cultural patterns of nations. In terms of the economic activities, the new technological advances in communications are becoming more accessible to local and small businesses... (Moore 1993: 4f, Cf. Reyes 2013: 6-7)

Furthermore, Reyes says that the main assumptions which can be extracted from globalization theory can be summarized in three principal points. “First, cultural factors are the determinant aspect in every society. Second, it is not important under current world conditions to use the nation-state as the unit of analysis, since global communications and international ties are making this category less useful. Third, with more standardization in technological advances, more and more social sectors will be able to connect themselves with other groups around the world. This situation will involve the dominant and non-dominant groups from each nation” (Reyes 2013: 7). In the same vein, Robertson and White noted as the single most important defining feature of globalization – whether considered as a very long-term process or a rather short one – that of increasing connectivity which is sometimes called interconnectedness (Roland and White 2007: 56).

According to Thomas M. George, there are different players in globalization theory. Hence, he points out that it is important to understand the players involved in globalization and to understand that each is both actor and acted upon. They are: nation-states, firms, international governmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), a host of other associations and individuals

(Thomas 2007: 84). Additionally, he notes that capitalist firms – corporate bureaucracies pursuing profit within competitive markets – are the bourgeois revolutionaries that range throughout the world, as so vividly depicted by Karl Marx. Corporations historically have had great influence over their states. In a classic overstatement, Marx depicted the state as the manager of capitalists' interests. In scholarly, policy, and activist circles, they are the strong actors pursuing clear economic interests, influencing states and pushing globalization for good or bad. These transnational corporations are both competitive and collusive. Corporations that are able to gain competitive advantage, often through the policies and geo-military support of their states, become the most powerful players and they are able to bully and outdo competing corporations and have the greatest influence on states often at the expense of other corporations. At the same time, corporate capitalist interests confront state, society and local cultures as a united force of capitalists or big business (ibid: 85).

The nation-state is the other obviously strong actor in the world for Thomas. The titanic struggles of states and blocs of states are the stuff of history. The modern nation-state has many dimensions to it, and one or another has been used to define it as rational-legal authority, effective administrative control or monopoly of legitimate violence over a territory; the incorporation of a population through citizenship; the pursuit of national interest. The study of the world has been the study of international relations – that is, the relations among nation-states – rooted firmly in the real interests and interactions of nation-states. States act in national interests vis-a-vis other states, firms and domestic actors (ibid: 86). Finally, for Thomas, international non-governmental organizations are non-profit organizations not established or run by states. Hence, the growth and operation of INGOs are closely associated with the world society at large. “Whatever their reputation, INGOs wield a substantial amount of influence. They lack, of course, rational and legal authority and for the most part, have little economic power, although large INGOs in the development sector mediate the administration of increasingly high amounts of development monies (e.g. Oxfam, CARE, Action AID, and Catholic Relief Service)” (ibid: 95). Their influence has its source in rational-moral authority deriving from their voluntarism. INGOs claim to represent and express universal human interests, are individualistic and democratic in their goals and organization, and are committed to global rationalism or progress. These principles are woven together and embodied in the authorizing of individuals as world citizens to act globally (ibid).

Globalization theory's challenges are evident to see, as noted by Boli and Petrova: “globalization of the nation-states, firms, international governmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), other entities, individuals, corporations involves a wide variety of dynamics; tensions-filled processes. At issue is the reconstruction of the social world, all over the world, in line with globalized models, principles, role expectations, and identities” (Boli and Petrova 2007: 119). In

this view, obviously, there are collisions between global and local models, that generate high social heat; dislocation is widespread, forced adoption can be brutal and many of the complaints about cultural or capitalist imperialism are well grounded (*ibid*). Today, globalization is a set of forces and actors generating greater homogeneity as well as increasing diversity, more cooperative relationships and new kinds of conflicts, greater wealth and opportunity along with rising inequalities. “Globalization has become, to many minds, a grand source of progress and salvation; and to many others, it is a merciless juggernaut that levels all in its path. On both sides of this grand debate, one thing stands out: globalization has become a central axis of social change like never before” (*ibid*: 120).

Now it becomes clear that the first three development theories discussed earlier (modernization, dependency, and world-systems) are interconnected somehow, striving to maintain the status quo of the developing nations as being underdeveloped which is expressed by high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities. Globalization theory’s main characteristics are hegemony, implicit epistemologies, non-homogeneity, forced cultural adaptation, profiteering, wealth accumulation, monopoly, political and economic dominance, social and religious dominance. Globalization has faced resistance in some nation-states through anti-globalization movements. For instance, White and Roland posit that “during the 1990s there arose what was popularly called the anti-globalization movement, situated mainly but certainly not exclusively in western societies. As this movement grew, through often massive, sometimes violent, demonstrations at meetings of such organizations as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the G7/8 assemblies, largely through the increasingly instrumental use of the Internet in the facilitation of such global movements, so too did the development of a global consciousness about what were perceived to be the great inequalities produced by globalization, in its mainly economic sense” (White and Roland 2007: 55). Although on the one hand, the theory is hailed as a central axis of social change that never happened before, culturally, it can be explicitly noted as a reciprocal mobility from the core nations to the peripheral nations and from the peripheral nations to the core nations – implicitly the world trends analysis shows that the weaker nations (peripheral) are at the receiving end instead of being givers – this is compounded by historical factors which have witnessed centuries of hegemony on the peripheral nations by the core nations and this hegemony was and/or is in all dimensions a vicious cycle of the inequalities which will never end. This being the case in development theories, we can now turn to the basic needs development strategy.

### 3.3.6 The Basic Needs Development Strategy

In 1976, the International Labour Organization (ILO) attempted to increase the national and international emphasis given to poverty alleviation. Therefore, the basic needs approach was introduced by the ILO in the report of the Director-General at the World Employment Conference (WEC) of 1976, mainly in relation to prevalent modernization, structuralism and dependency inspired development approaches, which were not achieving satisfactory results in poverty eradication, unemployment, and combating inequalities in developing countries. “It tried to define an absolute minimum of resources necessary for long-term physical well-being such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, certain household equipment and furniture, drinking water, sanitation, public transport as well as health and educational facilities. The approach has been applied in the sphere of development assistance, to determine what a society needs for subsistence, and for poor population groups to rise above the poverty line. Basic needs theory does not focus on *investing* in economically productive activities. Basic needs can be used as an absolute measure of poverty” (ILO 1976: 31-44 Cf. Jolly 1976: 31-44). Furthermore, the ILO conference of 1976 proposed through their Director-General that all countries should give priority to the meeting of the basic needs of all members of their populations by the year 2000 (ibid). In addition, the World Employment Conference (WEC) through the ILO defined basic needs to include the minimal consumption requirements needed for a physically healthy population, certain minimal standards of access to public services and amenities, access by the poor to employment opportunities which would enable them to achieve a target minimum income, and the right to participate in decisions that affect the lives and livelihood of the people. This was to be met by the year 2000 and all governments were requested to ensure that these needs be universally given (ibid).

However, it is generally agreed in development progression scholarship that “growing economic inequality within developing nations contributing to western interest in the Chinese experience resulted also in the articulation in the late 1970s and early 1980s of basic needs oriented approaches to the formulation of development targets and policy. These emerged from a growing concern, manifest in the literature from the mid-1970s, that policies of redistribution with growth might not be sufficient to guarantee an increase in welfare for the poorest of the 800 million or so people estimated to be living in absolute poverty, mostly in developing countries” (Hunt 1989: 75-76). During the mid-1970s, a growing body of evidence on the extent of mass poverty in many of the developing nations became available. The impact of such evidence in the west (especially the United States’ House of Representatives decided in 1976 that development assistance should be directed toward meeting the basic needs of the poor) was probably increased by the reports of widespread human and livestock deaths from famine during the 1973-4 Sahel drought (ibid). “The Sahel is located in Africa between the Sahara Desert to the north and the Sudanian Savannah to the south (Sahel countries

are: Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan)" (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998: 1636).

According to Ruttan, the focus of development assistance shifted from Community Development (CD) programs in the 1950s and early 1960s to Integrated Rural Development (IRD) and Basic Needs (BN) programs in the early 1970s (Ruttan 1975: 9-16, Cf. Machethe 1995: 22). The shift in focus resulted from the awareness that the benefits of economic growth were not trickling down to the masses and thereby reducing poverty and unemployment." In the 1950s and 1960s, development objectives were expressed in terms of the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita without paying much attention to the alleviation of poverty. The use of the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita as the major performance criterion was questioned when it became evident that the benefits of growth did not trickle down as was envisaged. Therefore, for Mosher the concept of development is redefined because the Gross National Product (GNP) or average per capita income was an inadequate measuring rod" (Mosher 1976: 1f).

The basic needs (BN) strategy requires a departure from the top-down approach which characterized central planning to participation by the people in the decision-making process. Such participation is essential especially in the determination of basic needs (ibid). However, it is noted that reconciling the objectives of "a -mass participation in local decision-making and building local institutions with b -achieving measurable improvements within a short period of time have been a major problem (Ruttan 1984: 393-401, Cf. Machethe 1995: 23). A basic needs strategy incorporates both a rapid rate of economic growth and improvements in the quality of employment or conditions of work (ILO 1976: 31-44)). Not only should the output rise over time but the structure of production must change. Furthermore, it is argued that the structure of ownership power and government policies prevented the poor from benefiting from growth (Streeten 1978: 411-421). An increase in production may be achieved by making use of existing underemployed and unemployed labor resources combined with the better allocation of capital, and partly through the redistribution of productive resources such as land. Therefore, it was pointed out that a basic needs strategy should aim at increasing and redistributing production in such a way that deprivation arising from lack of basic goods and services is eradicated (ibid).

The International Labour Organization outlines two alternative approaches to meeting basic needs. The first approach stresses rapid economic growth. This approach requires high levels of investments and it is unlikely that most developing countries will be able to achieve and sustain such high levels of investment. The second approach involves increasing the income of the poor faster than the average. This may be achieved through growth and redistribution of income. Although lower rates of investment would be required, there might be political and other difficulties in implementing policies for redistribution. A high per capita level of income is not essential for achieving

basic needs. Countries such as China, Cuba and Sri Lanka are often mentioned as successful examples of cases in which the achievement of basic needs was possible at low per capita income levels (ILO 1976: 31-44, Cf. Machethe 1995: 24). Interestingly, it is explained that “it is also not always true that growth is opposed to egalitarian income distribution which results in the achievement of basic needs, in Taiwan and South Korea, growth was combined with increasing equality of incomes” (Chenery, Ahluwalia, and Bell 1974: 154f).

Therefore, an analysis by Boutros-Ghali and Taylor indicates that a basic needs development strategy would be less capital and import-intensive than policies which were followed in Egypt. And it is further pointed out that achieving basic needs in communal areas would be less capital and import-intensive than in urban areas (Boutros-Ghali and Taylor 1980: 409-436, Cf. Machethe 1995: 24-25). The evidence from modeling the implications of basic needs development strategies in the Philippines and Korea show that better results may be achieved in efforts to redistribute income and consumption in favor of the poor by improving the domestic terms of trade for agriculture than by more direct consumption interventions (Adelman, Robinson and Wery 1979: 37-82). However, the Integrated Rural Development and Basic Needs approaches came under question in the early 1980s (Ruttan 1984: 393-401). Unfortunately, the failure of the Integrated Rural Development and Basic Needs programs to solve one of the most fundamental communal development problems – achieving a reliable food surplus – is the major reason for the decline of integrated rural development and basic needs in the early 1980s (Eicher and Baker 1982: 170f).

To summarize the discussion above, in the review of literature on approaches to communal development in the developing countries in Africa, Machethe, confirms that communal development is a complex process whose objectives are not easily achieved. These approaches, namely, community development, integrated rural development, and basic needs were all aimed at improving the welfare of communal people. Despite their good intentions, very little progress has been achieved from the 1950s to the 1980s. There were a few exceptions, but generally, programs, and projects that were inspired by these approaches have not been successful in reducing poverty and in improving food security. Many people in Asia, Latin America, and Africa still experience acute food shortages and absolute poverty (Machethe 1995: 25). One of the most important lessons emerging from the experiences of developing countries with community development is that the top-down approach is not appropriate for improving the welfare of the poor people in communities (*ibid*). Thus, this study is advocating for a bottom-up approach, which is related to an endogenous development approach that starts from the grassroots or from the hearts of communities. However, since World War II, the development strategies were all top-down approaches and their failure provides sufficient evidence that centralization does not work, and Binswanger regards integrated rural development as the last bastion of central planning swept away by reality like all

other central planning schemes (Binswanger 1994: 14, Cf. Machethe 1995: 26). “Communal people should be empowered to decide for themselves what is good or bad. Community development projects that are imposed on rural people will be resisted in many ways; the most visible one being the refusal to participate in such projects. Lack of participation has been cited above as one of the reasons for the failure of some of the development projects” (ibid). It would be incorrect to conclude from the above that decentralization is a panacea. Therefore, it is pointed out that decentralization has had its failures in countries such as India, Brazil, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast (ibid).

Furthermore, Machethe points out that another lesson emerging from the communal development experiences of developing countries is that complex development projects, often with ambitious targets, should be avoided. Co-ordination and replication of such development projects are difficult. Development projects focusing on specific elements such as primary health, education, agricultural extension, mining, etc, are likely to be more successful. It has been indicated above that these are the projects that the World Bank is financing instead of the integrated rural development projects of the 1970s. The high failure rate of communal development projects in Africa is largely attributable to limited planning, implementation capacity, and recurrent costs. Building the capacity to plan and implement communal development projects in developing countries should be an important priority of Governments and donors committed to the improvement and welfare of the poor people in communities. Developing countries need to devote more resources to human resource development, so that they can be less dependent on expatriates for the planning and implementation of communal development projects. The achievement of a reliable food surplus should be an important goal of any communal development program. The failure of integrated rural development and basic needs concepts to achieve this goal is largely responsible for their decline (Machethe 1995: 26-27).

It should be pointed out that the high failure rate of communal development programs in Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa is also attributed to marginalizing and, sidelining indigenous epistemology systems, corruption, misused money, ethnic political conflicts, natural disasters, overpopulation, dependency syndrome, and poor farm policy, among others. Furthermore, implementing successful development programs in developing nations should incorporate non-governmental organizations’ epistemologies to reinforce the local knowledge systems, and should be spearheaded by community grassroots leaders who draw their leadership from the people, thus being people-oriented. Thereby, sustainable development can be fostered, which is endogenous to nature – an approach which sprung from the communities of indigenous people. Evidently, the basic needs approach from the aforesaid scholarly discussions failed to bring on the table the desired results which are: very lowlevels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities. Instead, the opposite happened: very little trickledown to the poor to alle-

viate absolute poverty – which leads us to the discussion of the concept of sustainable development in its evolution.

### 3.4 The Concept of Sustainable Development

It is observed that “the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable’ have equivalent terms in French (*durabilité et durable*), German (*Nachhaltigkeit*, literally meaning ‘lastingness’, and *nachhaltig*) and Dutch (*duurzaamheid* and *duurzaam*) and have been used for centuries” (Pisani 2006: 83-96). “The demand for raw materials and its impact on the environment have been a constant issue throughout human history. Already in the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman civilizations environmental problems such as deforestation and the salinization and loss of fertility of soil occurred, which we would today refer to as sustainability problems” (ibid). Plato in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Strabo and Columella in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and Pliny the Elder in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD discussed different types of environmental degradation resulting from human activities such as farming, logging, and mining. “These authors were not only aware of environmental degradation, but also recommended what we would call sustainable practices to maintain the ‘everlasting youth’ of earth, and Varro in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD stated that we can, by care, lessen the evil effects” (ibid).

“Wood was both as fuel and construction material an indispensable raw material up to at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it was used in almost all production processes” (ibid). The German mining engineer Georg Agricola (1950: 8) described the negative impacts of woodcutting and mining on wildlife as well as the massive consumption of wood for ship-building, mining and many other purposes. “A shortage of wood became a very real danger in Europe. Fears that such a shortage would threaten the basis of people’s existence stimulated a new way of thinking in favour of the responsible use of natural resources and in the interest of the present and future generations, which is very similar to the thinking behind sustainable development today” (ibid). In the book entitled ‘*Sylvicultura Oeconomica 1713*’, ‘*nachhaltende Nutzung*’ (sustainable use) of forest resources is suggested, which implied maintaining a balance between harvesting old trees and ensuring that there were enough young trees to replace them (Hans 1973: 70f). Other experts on forestry, such as Marchand and Wilhelm Goltfried Moser, “likewise condemned excessive wood consumption as a practice that would bring negative consequences to future generations. They advocated sustainable forestry and recommended measures for the conservation of forests. The term ‘*ewiger Wald*’ (eternal forest) was coined to refer to afforestation and the generation of timber” (Pisani 2006: 83-96).

The roots of the concept of sustainable development can be traced to the era of European Enlightenment, when German Kameralists, inspired by the English author John Evelyn (1620 – 1706) and the French Statesman Jean Baptist Colbert, began to plan their dynasties’ woodlands ‘*nachhaltig*’ (‘sustainably’), in order to hand them along undi-

minished to future generations. The word itself was then coined in 1713 by Hanns Carl von Carlowitz, head of the royal mining office in the Kingdom of Saxony, in order to meet the challenge of a predicted shortage of timber, the key resource of the time" (Ulrich 2007: 3). "As a matter of fact, sustainable development entered the global stage during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The United Nations presented it as their strategic concept for shaping – and indeed saving – the future of the blue planet. It promised to become the keyword for describing a new balance between the use and the preservation of nature's potentials and resources. The Brundtland Commission, which paved the way to the Rio Summit, had defined it in 1987 as a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987: 43).

Furthermore, "in the 18<sup>th</sup> century concern about population growth and its consequences for the consumption of resources started surfacing. Already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century writers such as Matthew Halle and William Petty had drawn attention to this issue. However, the most famous work in this regard was written by Thomas Robert Malthus, entitled 'The Principle of the Population' as it affects the future improvement of society, and published in 1798. He stated that because the increase in population threatened to outstrip food production, it had to be restricted" (ibid). "In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the focus shifted to coal as the most important source of energy, and alarms were raised that coal deposits may be exhausted. The most influential publication in this regard was written by Jevons (1866), in which he concluded that English coal reserves would be depleted in a hundred years. Should the wasteful consumption of coal continue unchanged, England would lose her dominant industrial position. Therefore, it was necessary to adopt 'every means of sparing the fuel which makes our welfare'" (Jevons 1866: 5). "In Germany, Rudolf Clausius and others argued that natural resources such as coal ought not to be wasted, because they were non-renewable" (Pisani 2006: 83-96). More than a century before the term 'sustainable development' came into general use, a number of publications appeared which dealt with what we call today sustainable development. Mill (1883) in his book 'Principles of Political Economy', published in 1848, points out that a stationary condition of capital and population, but not of human improvement only, he sincerely hoped for the sake of posterity, that the world's population will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it (ibid). George Perkins Marsh's book 'Man and Nature', published in 1865, has been described as the fountain head of the conservation movement. He states that man has long forgotten that the earth was given to him for usufruct alone, not for consumption, still less for profligate waste (Marsh 1865: 36). "He described how different aspects of the natural environment had been disturbed by human intervention and argued that the earth might become unfit for human habitation, which might even result in the extinction of humankind. But he also discussed possible remedies for environmental problems. Marsh did not want to protect nature for its own sake, but for the sake of hu-

mankind, which is similar to the approach of the contemporary proponents of sustainable development" (ibid).

Alfred Russell Wallace, in his book entitled 'Our wonderful century', published 1898, included a chapter on the plunder of the earth as a retrospective assessment of the successes and failures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "He discussed the damage done by the reckless destruction of the stored-up products of nature and regarded the unlimited extraction of coal, oil, gas, minerals, and the exploitation of the rainforests as an injury done to posterity. Van Zon concludes that all the themes covered in the Brundtland Report of 1987 were already present in Wallace's text" (Pisani 2006: 83-96). When oil became the primary source of energy there was a drastic increase in oil consumption and the issue was raised that oil supplies might be exhausted soon. "In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century scientists such as Gifford Pinchot, G.A. Brender a Brandis and F.M. Jaeger discussed the limitations of the supply of raw materials and energy sources and warned against wasteful consumption. Thorstein Veblen (1917) and A.C. Pigou (1929) called for what can be called today sustainable development" (ibid). Lastly, it is affirmed that "around the middle of the century Egbert de Vries (*De aardebetaalt*, 1948), William Vogt (Road to survival, 1948) and Henry Fairfield Osborn (Our Plundered Planet, 1948 and The Limit of the Earth, 1953) dealt with the consequences of the overexploitation of natural resources and called upon people to use these resources in a responsible manner in order to ensure the continued existence of civilized society and in 1950 K. W. Kapp published an analysis of most of the environmental issues which now form part of the sustainable development discourse" (ibid).

The formation of this concept can be traced back further to the 1980s, when the "International Union for the Conservation of Nature", an association of nation states, environmental agencies, and NGOs together with the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), a Non-Governmental Organization, published their world conservation strategy. Under the patronage of the United Nations Secretary-General, this declaration was simultaneously presented in 34 capital cities around the world. Its title is 'living resource conservation for sustainable development'" (Grober 2003: 167-175). "A few years before, the term 'sustainable' had become a central issue in a document of another international organization. At a world conference in Bucharest on 'science and technology for human development', the ecumenical 'World Council of Churches' (WCC) discussed a new socio-ethical guideline. Partisans of a theology of liberation, 'swords-to-ploughshares', pacifists, and ecologically-minded advocates of a spirituality of creation combined their force and replaced the old WCC – formula 'responsible society' with the new term 'just and sustainable society'. Using the biblical term 'husbanding', the conference stated that the future will require a husbanding of resources and a reduction of expectations of global economic growth. It demanded the transition to a global welfare society, based on 'sustainability' within the next generations" (Robra 1994: 104). Ulrich points out that "the merit to

have introduced the term ‘sustainable’ into political language, however, belongs to the ‘Club of Rome.’ In March 1972, this globally operating think-tank published the epoch-making account on the ‘Limits to Growth’, written by a group of scientists and economists, led by Dennis and Donella Meadows of the ‘Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Describing the desirable ‘state of global equilibrium’, the authors used the word ‘sustainable’ in searching for a model output that represents a world system that is: 1-sustainable without sudden and uncontrolled collapse; and 2-capable of satisfying the basic material requirements of its entire people” (Ulrich 2007: 3).

The review of the literature on the foregoing discussion clearly shows that the concept of sustainable development, according to Pisani, “can be traced back to ancient times, but that population growth, increase in consumption after the industrial revolution, and the danger that crucial non-renewable resources such as wood, coal, and oil could be depleted, boosted the awareness of the need to use resources in a sustainable way. Fears that present and future generations might not be able to maintain their living standards stimulated a mode of thinking that would inform discourses which prepared the way for the emergence and global adoption of sustainable development” (Pisani 2006: 87). However, the implementation is still a challenge. Furthermore, implementation challenges are compounded by the fact that intra-and-inter governments are reluctant to effectuate what was agreed upon at the Rio Summit of 2012 and to commit to the implementation of the Agenda 21 clauses. Therefore, from a political perspective, governments are preoccupied in upholding power in order to achieve economic progress, a bias that leads to sidelining environmental preservation. However, this bias causes ecological threats and disasters on planet earth. Sustainable development is important in a world which emphasizes progress without recognizing the need for environmental preservation. To this end, the world has been led into a new situation of ecological crisis that has brought about climate change. The sustainable development paradigm has made the world realize that human beings are there to keep and co-exist with the environment. The ecological crisis the world is facing today is a result of human material progress. In addition, sustainable development, if implemented properly by all world governments, seems to be the heir to the concepts of progress, which is a three-tier system (social, economic and environment development). In the same vein, the Brundtland Report of 1987, cited in Pisani, expressed the belief that “social equity, economic growth, and environmental maintenance are simultaneously possible, thus highlighting the three fundamental components of sustainable development: the environment, the economy, and society, which later became known as the triple bottom line. The report discussed the need to apply integrated, sustainable solutions to a broad range of problems related to population, agriculture, food security, biodiversity, energy choices, industry, and more. Additionally, the report also acknowledged the tension between economic growth and environmental protection. It concluded that economic growth was essen-

tial, particularly in the developing world, but that there should be a switch to ‘sustainable development’, which would be environmentally sound” (Pisani 2006: 92-93).

### *3.4.1 The Historical Context at the Birth of Sustainable Development*

“The theoretical framework for sustainable development evolved between 1972 and 1992 through a series of international conferences and initiatives. The United Nations conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm (Sweden) in 1972, was the first major international gathering to discuss sustainability at the global scale. The conference created considerable momentum, and a series of recommendations led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as the creation of numerous national environmental protection agencies at the national level. The recommendations from Stockholm in Sweden were further elaborated in the 1980 World Conservation Strategy and collaboration between the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and UNEP – which aimed to advance sustainable development by identifying priority conservation issues and key policy options” (Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 7). “In 1983, the United Nations convened the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), chaired by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Comprised of representatives from both developed and developing countries, the commission was created to address the growing concern over the ‘accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development.’ Four years later, the group produced the landmark publication *‘Our Common Future’* (or the ‘Brundtland Report’) that provided a stark diagnosis of the state of the environment. The report popularized the most commonly used definition of sustainable development: “development that meets the needs of the current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987: 43, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 7). At the close of the commission’s work, Mrs Brundtland had the following to say about the mandate:

When the terms of reference of our commission were originally being discussed in 1982, there were those who wanted its considerations to be limited to environmental issues only. This would have been a grave mistake. The environment does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns have given the very word ‘environment’ a connotation of naivety in some political circles. The word ‘development’ has also been narrowed by some into a very limited focus, along the lines of ‘what poor nations should do to become richer’, and thus again is automatically dismissed by many in the international arena as being a concern of specialists of those involved in questions of development assistance. (Gro Harlem Brundtland, in the foreword to *‘Our Common Future*, WCED 1987: 45)

It is evident that “the Brundtland report provided the momentum for the landmark 1992 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Summit that laid the foundations for the global institutionalization of sustainable development. Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockholm conference in Sweden, the Earth Summit adopted the Rio declaration on environment and development and the Agenda 21. The Agenda 21 addresses front-line global problems, which are grouped together under 39 themes including social and economic development, environmental protection, resource management, participation of civil society in the decision-making process and the means to implement sustainable development. Adopted by 179 countries, its objectives are: the elimination of poverty, the alteration of consumption patterns, dropping non-viable production, the protection and management of natural resources – the program is a world class reference document” (Rio 1992: 7f, Cf. Murphy 2010: 8). “The Rio declaration contained 27 principles of sustainable development, including principle 7 on common but differentiated responsibilities, which stated that in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities” (ibid). The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command (ibid). “Agenda 21 included 40 separate chapters, setting out actions in regard to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, conservation and management of natural resources, the role of major groups, and the means of implementation. In Agenda 21, developed countries reaffirmed their previous commitments to reach the accepted United Nations target of contributing 0.7 percent of their annual gross national product (GNP) to official development assistance, and to provide favorable access to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to developing countries” (ibid).

“Three influential instruments of environmental governance were established at the Rio Summit: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the non-legally binding statement of forest principles” (ibid). Following a recommendation in Agenda 21, the United Nations General Assembly officially created the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) later that year. “The Rio Summit 1992 was very successful from a political stand point, hence, it had the world’s attention and active engagement and attendance by virtually every national leader. Its challenges lay in two areas: first, too much of an emphasis on the environment pillar in the negotiations and secondly, the implementation of goals established under Agenda 21, particularly those related to development aid and cooperation” (ibid). “Since that time a number of important international conferences on sustainable development have been held – including the 1997 Earth Summit in New York and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. These meetings were primarily reviews of progress; and they

reported that a number of positive results had been achieved, but implementation efforts largely had been unsuccessful at the national and international level. The United Nations General Assembly noted in 1997 (paragraphs 4 and 17) that the overall trends with respect to sustainable development are worse today than they were in 1992 and much remains to be done to activate the means of implementation set out in Agenda 21, in particular in the areas of finance and technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity-building" (UNESC 2002: 8f, Cf. Murphy 2010: 8). In his 2002 report on implementing Agenda 21, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirmed that progress towards reaching the goals set at Rio Summit has been slower than anticipated, and that there is undoubtedly a gap in implementation (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2002). "Regrettably, initiatives following the seminal Rio Summit have not attracted the attention, commitment, and resources required for effective implementation of sustainable development. This is a problem with multilateral agreements, in that commitments at the international level do not reflect the processes and realities in countries, where multiple stakeholders – including government, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – need to be engaged in action" (ibid).

The negotiations at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 demonstrated a major shift in the perception of sustainable development – away from environmental issues, toward social and economic development (ibid). "This shift, which was driven by the needs of the developing countries and strongly influenced by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is but one example of how sustainable development has been pulled in various directions over its twenty-plus year history. The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000 and committed countries to reach eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (UN 2010: 6f Cf. Murphy 2010: 9). The eight goals are: halving extreme poverty; halving the spread of HIV and AIDS; providing universal primary education; eliminating gender disparity in education; reducing the under-five mortality rate; reducing the maternal mortality rate and achieving universal access to reproductive health; developing a global partnership (in order to address the needs of the poorest countries, to further an open non-discriminatory trade system, and to deal with developing countries debt); and ensuring environmental sustainability (by integrating sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reducing biodiversity loss; improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation; and improving the lives of slum dwellers) (ibid).

Therefore, "defining and implementing sustainable development has had to deal with the tensions between the three pillars, and the prevailing influences at different points in time. Ironically, "it could be said that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) succeeded where the Rio Summit failed, but failed where Rio Summit succeeded. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) did make a constructive change by focusing considerably more attention on development issues, particularly in

integrating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with sustainable development principles and practices. However, the political timing was simply not there: the political leadership was not engaged because the world, led by the United States, was more focused on security issues around terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and Iraq" (UN 2010: 6f, Cf. Murphy 2010: 9). Unfortunately, the seeds planted in Johannesburg Summit 2002 fell upon an arid land. "At and since the Rio Summit 1992, sustainable development has found its most prominent hook (at least in terms of media and political attention) around the issue of climate change. Responses to address climate change, both mitigation and adaptation, are linked to sustainable development" (ibid). The fourth Assessment Report of the International Panel on climate change (IPCC, 2007: chapter 12: 1.1) pointed out that there is an iterative or frequentative relationship between Climate Change and Sustainable Development, and that the two can be mutually reinforcing. In many respects, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has become an international proxy for discussions around sustainable development and a potential means to channel required funding and technology from developed to developing countries (ibid). "While climate change is certainly one manifestation of the broader challenge of sustainable development, the scale and complexity of the broader sustainability challenge means that it cannot be adequately addressed in the confines of the climate change negotiations" (ibid).

### *3.4.2 Problems Encountered in Implementing Sustainable Development So Far*

It has been profoundly observed that the concept and idea of sustainable development are widely accepted, and good progress has been made on sustainable development metrics. "Yet the implementation of sustainable development has been largely unsuccessful. The world has made little progress in implementing programs and policies to improve the lives of the poor and the integration of the three pillars which are economic, social and environmental improvements remains a challenge" (Moyo 2009: 76f, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 12). "Sustainable Development is not easy and will take considerable time and effort. Many of the consensus-driven United Nations Summits have resulted in broad documents, policies, and goals; and the action plans tend to be sprawling documents that offer something for everyone" (Victor 2006: 1-3, Murphy 2010: 13). However, high-level international meetings – such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – avoid concrete discussion about how to shift to a more sustainable, low-carbon economy, and international talks increasingly become disconnected from the real-world policy (Hodas 2010: 3f, Cf. Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 13).

Therefore, "efforts to implement sustainable development have taken place in an environment of mainstream economic planning and market-based investment, in a manner

that will not disrupt overall growth. As such, implementation has not moved beyond slow incremental steps towards transformative action. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) argued that there is a lack of leadership and each sector waits on the others, limiting real progress toward sustainable development. They note that politicians tend to run for office on promises of making the price of goods reflect their real (higher) costs for the sake of sustainable development; consumers tend not to demand to pay such higher costs; business tends not to lobby lawmakers for higher prices" (Holliday, Schmidheiny and Watts 2002: 25f, Cf. Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 13). "The Economic Commission for Africa asserts that some developing countries argue that a lack of financial and technological resources and unfair terms of trade have plagued their implementation of sustainable development. Many poor people and poor countries do not have adequate access to technology, lacking the resources, infrastructure, quality of governance, and business environment necessary to stimulate sustainable development" (ECA 2002: 2f, Cf. Drexhage 2010: 13). "While national governments have developed sustainable development strategies and plans, and local governments have been involved in initiatives, these actions have not led to fundamental changes. Chasek explains that few countries have lived up to their Rio Summit 1992 commitments, stating that the National Agenda 21 efforts led to increased academic debate, heightened public awareness and minor adjustments in the system of national accounts and taxation rules, but they have not fundamentally altered the way we manage and measure our national economy" (Chasek, Downie and Brown 2010: 53-115, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 13). "Part of the reason for the lack of implementation is that actions have tended to emphasize the symptoms of environmental degradation and not the underlying source of the problem, and countries are still struggling with an issue raised in the Brundtland report: the institutions and policies put in place to address sustainable development issues were not only weak but they had been directed one way or another to tackle the symptoms of environmental degradation and to ignore its sources" (Macneill 2007: 1-18, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 13). "The sources, of course, are to be found in government (and corporate) fiscal, tax, budget, trade, energy, agriculture as well as other policies and in the values underlying them. Governments have not taken down the silos between departments to find the complex, integrated answers" (ibid).

However, "while sustainable development was supposed to have an institutional home in the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), it has not been harnessed effectively by national governments as a vehicle for implementation" (Sathaye, Najam and Cocklin 2007: 699-717 Cf. Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 13). "The CSD has focused on the environment and has not promoted effective integration of the three pillars (economic, social and environment) of sustainable development. In addition, other institutions and processes – the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs), a proliferation of environmental treaties, strong global economic institutions – have cornered different

parts of the sustainable development paradigm. As a result, climate change has emerged as the *de facto* proxy for addressing sustainable development issues. The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that in many respects, climate change has determined what a sustainable development approach to implementation would look like. It is no longer a question of whether climate change policy should be understood in the context of sustainable development goals; it is a question of how" (ibid). "Sustainable development and climate change share strong complementary tendencies: they are multi-sectoral, they both require international cooperation to solve the problem, and the problem is that they are inter-woven through economic and technological development in increasingly complex networks" (ibid). As Reid notes, "the most obvious obstacles to sustainable development – such as lack of awareness of the issues, the political unacceptability of obvious steps forward, the opposition of entrenched interests, and the inadequacy of institutional mechanisms for integrating environment and development – reflect the direction and priorities of the development path followed by western societies for many generations" (Reid 1995: 129). Such obstacles are the product of ideas that have shaped western society and dominated the culture, first in Europe and then more widely, ever since the age of geographical exploration and trade expansionism at the end of the Middle Ages. Among the most important of these ideas is a belief in progress, a view of the natural world as a resource to be exploited, and a belief in the special importance of scientific knowledge. Around them a complex of assumptions about goals, strategies, and procedures has developed, which is frequently referred to as a paradigm, a set of norms, beliefs, values and habits that form the world view most commonly held by a culture, and is transmitted from generation to generation by social institutions (ibid). The culture of material progress and economic growth has witnessed the incorporation of obstacles to sustainable development such as Western or European techno-centricism, modernism, and sciences which introduced more exploitative attitudes to the natural world, thereby endangering the environment, hence, countering sustainable development efforts.

"Since the Rio Summit 1992, economic growth has been fed by unprecedented resource and material consumption and related environmental impacts. Large portions of the natural world have been converted to human use, prompting concerns about the ability of the world's natural resource base to sustain such growth. While the world has made some progress on decoupling natural resource extraction from economic growth, the absolute consumption of resources is projected to increase long into the future" (OECD 2008: 36-57 Cf Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 15). The organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that "countries under this organization group figure substantially in both global resource use and raw material supply, and many non-OECD countries, especially the large developing economies of Africa and Asia are catching up (ibid). "The vast consumption gap between the rich and the poor is expressed through a widely-known measure: roughly 80% of the natural resources

used each year are consumed by about 20% of the world's population" (Matthew and Hammill 2010: 1117- 1128). The International Monetary Fund points out that "incomes and wealth also reveal a large and growing gap between the rich and poor" (IMF 2007: 138-143). The International Labour Organization also notes that "rising income inequality has been observed in most countries over the past two decades, especially so in middle and high-income countries, where the incomes of richer households have increased relative to those of the middle class and poor households" (ILO 2008: 8-31, Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 15). "Global inequality has been declining, and the world is a less unequal place than it was 25 years ago, but this is largely a result of successful development in China and India" (Frieden 2007: 48-49). "Overall, the world remains extremely unequal, with the richest 1% of the world's population owning 40% of the world's wealth; while the poorest 50% have barely 1% of the world wealth" (Davies, Sandstrom and Shorrocks 2005: 15f).

Therefore, "the Worldwide Fund for Nature points out that increasing consumption, combined with population growth, mean that humanity's demands on the planet have more than doubled over the past 45 years. These impacts are revealed in a number of disturbing trends. Global biodiversity continues to decline, and species in all groups with known trends are, on average, being driven closer to collapse, with around 80% of the world marine fish stocks for which data is available being fully exploited or overexploited" (WWF 2008: 4-30). Furthermore, "the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment reveals that the provision of many critical ecosystem services – such as water, biodiversity, fiber, and food – is being compromised due to the impact of human development" (Hassan, Scholes and Ash eds. 2005: 2-20). "The Worldwide Fund for Nature explains that the scarcity of and competition over freshwater is a growing concern for many regions in the world, with around 50 countries currently facing moderate to severe water stress" (WWF 2008: 4-30). "Climate change will exacerbate water stress and other problems. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's assessment report, the carrying capacity of large parts of the world will be compromised by climate change, and significant political divisions threaten international progress on climate change, yet the window for action to avert the most dangerous effects of global warming is shrinking by the day" (IPCC 2007: 7-22, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 15).

### *3.4.3 Some Progression on Sustainable Development*

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Affairs, the global implementation of sustainable development remains a challenge, but there is evidence of progress. Advances have been made on poverty alleviation, with the world on track to meet one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): "halving the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 per day – but this is due to economic success in Asia;

little progress was made in Sub-Saharan Africa. Access to energy is improving, and progress has been made on electrification in all developing regions; although rates in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa remain one-half to one-quarter below those in the rest of the world" (UNESA 2005: 11-41, Cf. Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 14). The Pew Research Centre observed that "the environment is a topic of greater priority for governments and business than it was 20 years ago, and there are some efforts to integrate environmental considerations more effectively into economic decision-making. For instance, there are legislative efforts in various developed countries to place a price on carbon, in order to achieve a growing sustainable development. The environment – and climate change in particular – continues to be rated a top concern for citizens in many countries, as was shown by the recent Copenhagen Climate Change Conference" (PRC 2010: 69-72, Cf. Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 14). "Concerns over environmental degradation and increasing pollution have led to increased investment in green technologies. The United Nations Environment Programme's Global Trends in Sustainable Energy Investment 2010 reports that in 2009, for the second year in a row, both the United States and Europe added more power capacity from renewable sources such as the wind and solar than conventional sources like coal, gas, and nuclear" (UNED 2010: 4f, Cf. Murphy and Drexhage 2010: 14). "Eco-city development is occurring in North America, Europe, China, and the United Arab Emirates – and includes such features as water conservation, energy efficient building, smart grids with renewable energy, led street lights, and walkability" (Biello 2008: 6f). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development asserted that over recent decades both developed countries and emerging economies have made progress in reducing the rate of resource extraction per unit of gross domestic product (OECD 2008: 36-57).

Lastly, according to Drexhage and Murphy:

While some people would argue that sustainable development has failed, 20 years after its implementation, surely this is a relatively short time frame to implement the needed changes on such a complex and challenging issue. The needed systemic changes will require a revolution in the way the world does business, and this will impact lifestyles and consumption patterns – especially so in developed countries, but also for the growing middle class in developing countries. Such changes are difficult and have been resisted in a world that has put economic and social growth over environmental issues. A new model could chart a development path that truly is concerned with equity, poverty alleviation, reducing resource use and integrating economic, social and environmental issues in decision making. The opportunity is ripe to move beyond gradualism to real systemic change. Moving to this new path of real systemic change will require: taking sustainable development out of the environment *box*, thus considering wider social, economic, and geopolitical agendas; moving to actual implementation, with real accountability –going beyond the present view of sustainable development as a framework or concept, towards concrete action that includes *bottom-up* measurable activities, which includes a shift

from reaching agreement to *implementation*; encouraging transparency and accountability in actions... (Drexhage and Murphy 2010: 19-20)

As for the Human Rights Education Associates (HREA), “it is impossible to separate the well-being of the human person from the well-being of the earth. Therefore, truly sustainable development places just as much importance on the protection of the earth and the earth’s resources. International documents that include the environmental aspect of development affirm and reaffirm that human beings are at the center of concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. As the goal of sustainable development is to permanently improve the living conditions of human beings, social and economic developments must be carried out in a way that is environmentally and ecologically sound: ensuring the continual rejuvenation and availability of natural resources for future generations” (HREA 2003: 1). However, in order to achieve the aforesaid factors, the components of indigenous peoples’ religious beliefs, culture, traditions, philosophy, and worldviews must be taken fully into account in sustainable development efforts, since all these components are fundamental to the life of peoples in developing countries in Africa and other developing countries in the world, where development is implemented. Instead, of incorporating the indigenous African peoples’ worldviews or spiritualities, there is still no involvement of African religions with development discourses, hence they have been highly marginalized, left at the periphery, tinted with derogatory presentations – thereby the attention has been focused on the proselytizing major world religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). This leads to the discussion of derogatory presentations of African religions and its absence from development practices.

### **3.5 Derogatory Presentations of African Religions and Its Absence From Development Practices**

According to the Harvard International Review (HIR), “development planners and theorists are finally giving thought to the role of religion as a potential agent of development” (HIR 2014: 3), that is within development discourses and practices – lamentably, this involvement of religion in development discourses has been highly selective. That is, attention has been focused on ‘redemptive religions’ or ‘proselytizing major world religions’ (Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism), whereas African religions were sidelined, marginalized, and left on the periphery since time immemorial. However, it is crystal clear that the marginalization of African religions and its absence from development practices is due to derogatory presentations of African religions by earlier Euro-Western writers or scholars. Evidently, there is a long tradition of denouncing African religions as “animism, primitive, magic, fetishism, paganism, heathenism, native religion and Africans as savage people” (Mbiti 1997: 7-9). This being the

case, the aforesaid position is affirmed by the reductionist theories of African religions as shall be portrayed below.

Concerning derogatory presentations of African religions, it is pointed out that when the early explorers and writers on Africa, focused their attention on the religions of the African peoples, they made entries in their journals and these entries did not go beyond references to places, objects or personages. Indigenous religious materials, especially ritual objects, and symbols forms particularly caught their fancy because they were exotic. They had not witnessed religious temples, churches or mosques and hence, they raised serious doubts as to whether the Africans had any religion at all. African religions, as a result, have been subjected to misrepresentation, underestimation, and basic stigmatization. This has been based on the so-called common sense of the western countries. “The representation of Africa as a continent devoid of its own profound spiritual dimension or of a religion worthy of its name goes to complete the picture of an Africa whose inhabitants and communities would be entwined in an inextricable tangle of often cruel and bloody ancestral rites, superstitions, absurd and childish beliefs and atavistic fears which block their personal capabilities, initiative and developmental possibilities” (Mezzana 2002: 1f). On another level, it is noted that the whole approach towards African religions is marred with methodological and theoretical errors which include evolutionism, which defines African beliefs as being at the most primitive stage of the spiritual evolution of a people, featuring practices termed derogatorily as animist, fetishist, pagan, and idolatrous (*ibid*: 2).

“Moreover, as a result of the people’s beliefs noted above, the priorities arising from them—their religious celebrations, their sacred sites, and their way of organizing their communities and taking decisions, are seen as peripheral to development issues” (*ibid*). The effort, in fact, would be to make sure that they are done away with and would be replaced by sound scientific thinking from the global north. “This mechanism profoundly affects the African continent’s position in the world scene and produces important consequences in terms of its economy, society, political scenario and international relations. This mechanism also prevents perceiving the spiritual, cultural and human energies which would be precious to the search of an African modernity and for the continent’s development. During the long and dark decades of imperialism and colonialism from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the British, Belgian, Italian, French and German governments told African societies that they were backward” (*ibid*). They told them that their religious systems were sinful, their agricultural practices inefficient, their tribal systems of governing irrelevant and their cultural norms barbaric, irreligious and savage (Maathai 2005: 9). In the same vein, modernity has been associated with development, with new ideas and also with Christianity. By contrast, African religions were supposed to belong to an archaic type of human religions. Christianity was considered an exception in these theories, because it is taken as a civilized religion. With its working ethics and ideologies, which were metaphors of a

privatized economy, it was looked upon as a dynamic factor promoting modern development, and for too many people in the developing world conversion to Christianity was literally the first step to civilization (Platvoet 1982: 217). This being the case, according to McDonnell, “it is a clear fact that there is domination by Euro-Western epistemology; African development is drowning in reductionist and secular ideologies that dismiss the cultural and spiritual realities of African peoples. This attitude of denigrating indigenous African epistemology and worldviews as obstacles to development and biases to Christianity is a profound derogatory on African religions” (McDonnell 2013: 3).

The aforesaid examples of derogatory presentations of African religions and African peoples have confirmed its absence from development practices. Consequently, development tended to be either from a Euro-Western or Christian bias, both, by nature intolerant of African religions. Derogatory presentations of African religions and its absence from development practices are dark clouds currently hovering across the African continent. However, the grander key issue in this study is the involvement of African religions in development discourses, since it suffered marginalization and sidelining. They were left at the periphery, whereas at the same time the attention was given to ‘redemptive religions’ or ‘proselytizing major world religions (FBOs). Whenever, there is an international conference on religion and development, it is about the inclusion of Faith-Based Organizations, not African religions. “The focus on African religions as a resource for sustainable development in this study follows from the overall low success rate of earlier, and current Euro-Western and ‘redemptive religions’ (FBOs) based development strategies in poverty eradication in Zimbabwe and other African countries” (Nyoni 2014: 1-8). Is not it startling that, the more developmental projects and agencies there are in Zimbabwe and other African countries, the higher the poverty rates and more unsustainable the development efforts become? According to the BBC News of 18 January 2016, the Oxfam has noted with great concern that the gap between the poor and the rich is widening at an alarming rate, hence, as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century progresses, 1% of the world’s population is getting richer and richer whilst 99% of the world’s population get drowned within extreme/absolute poverty. It is instructive, therefore, to focus on ‘institutional policies and scientific reductionism to African religions’.

### **3.6 Institutional Policies and Scientific Reductionism to African Religions**

For most African peoples, “in the Southern Hemisphere religion is integral to their understanding of the world and their place in it. Therefore, it is central to the decisions they make about their own and their communities’ development” (Beek 2000: 31-43). Given the apparently integral link between religion and issues central to development, it would seem reasonable that religion would occupy a relatively prominent place in de-

velopment theory and practices. However, Beek went on to say that “the subject is conspicuously under-represented in development literature and in the policies and programs of development organizations. He also establishes that development agencies have avoided the issue of spirituality and religion in development – organizations have no policies to deal with religious issues in their programs. He had surveyed several of the largest development organizations to determine their policies toward spirituality and religious issues in development” (Beek 2000: 38). “The US Agency for International Development (USAID), one of the world’s most influential donors, states that it is USAID policy not to finance activities with a significant religious purpose or content. CARE, one of the largest US development NGOs does not have a policy on spirituality and religion. It is stated that ‘CARE’ is non-sectarian, and discussing spiritual or religious beliefs is not part of their programs. They concentrate on the physical and social well-being of communities. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an NGO directly controlled by the US Catholic Church, states that discussions about the religious beliefs of their staff or of program participants are not part of CRS’ programming efforts” (*ibid*). This shows how divorced these organizations are from the religion of the indigenous people they are dealing with. This results in a failure to explore the community problems and the potential solutions. Likewise, it was observed that such avoidance weakens the individuals’ and communities’ capacities to determine their own values and priorities. “They fail to understand the people whom they wish to help and devalue the very thing that may give them strength and hope to participate in development activities” (*ibid*: 39).

This being the case, “Beek analyzed the spirituality and development of the Lenca indigenous Indians who live in west Honduras and explains that the Lenca are one of the poorest and most isolated groups in Honduras. For six months, together with his family he lived within the Lenca community, trying to understand how such a poor and isolated community was able to mobilize nearly four thousand people in order to demand improvements in government services” (*ibid*: 32). He asserts that for most of them spirituality and religion are a significant mobilizing factor. He points out that while almost the whole Lenca community considers themselves to be Catholic, their spirituality is a synthesis between Catholicism and their traditional indigenous religion. “Each community has several traditional religious leaders who perform traditional rituals and diagnose and treat illnesses and other problems” (*ibid*). These indigenous rituals have helped the Lenca community in agriculture, health, and social action etc. for many centuries of religious and economic pressures. However, the Catholic Church in Lenca condemns these traditional rituals of the Lenca indigenous peoples, and considers them to be drunken and satanic (*ibid*: 33).

The aforesaid example of the Lenca community demonstrates that the power of indigenous or local peoples’ cosmovision or spiritualized worldview is a sophisticated weapon to influence their development. Therefore, the researcher concurs with Beek, when

he states that “this is not limited to the Lenca community” (ibid: 36). This can happen anywhere in the world and can yield profound results for the development of indigenous or local peoples, especially in Zimbabwe and other African countries. This is so, because indigenous peoples’ religious beliefs, philosophy, culture, and worldviews often powerfully shape development-related decisions and actions both for and against change. Hence, the failure to incorporate them into development policies results in bad development planning systems and leads to less effective interventions for sustainable development. Indigenous or local religious beliefs and worldviews are often ignored by development practitioners working for social action or changes in agricultural and other development interventions. Beek stresses that “development interventions which ignore spirituality, intentionally or unintentionally, affect not only people’s spirituality but also areas such as environment, gender relations, and community interdependence and the failure to reflect with people on the role of spirituality in their lives robs them of the opportunity to determine their own values and priorities, and is, therefore, anti-developmental” (ibid). However, when development practitioners or workers arrive in Zimbabwean communities or are doing their needs assessment, they rarely ask about the religious beliefs of the people. They move in with their own epistemological understanding. If any question about the religious beliefs of the people is asked, it will be asked at the end, which means that it is of less importance. But when religious issues emerge, the development practitioners or workers find them difficult to handle such issues.

For Dorr, people in the West, including Church leaders and theologians, are inclined to assume that the global north epistemologies, worldviews, and cultures are superior to other cultures. They are inclined to look down upon the African indigenous people who practice African religions. It is widely assumed that the role of economists, planners and development workers in non-Western or European countries is to ensure that the African indigenous adopts the Western or European model of development. He further admits that those who want to come to work in Africa should be given orientation courses to open their minds to the richness of African worldviews and cultures (Dorr 2004: 9). Therefore, the systematic avoidance of religion (especially African religions) despite its significance in development policies, literature, and practices for many centuries led to a deliberate hegemony of Euro-Western epistemology on the African continent. As for Lebakeng, “African development is drowning in reductionist and secular ideologies that dismiss the cultural and spiritual realities of African peoples. For that reason, it was asserted that by overtly denigrating indigenous African knowledge and worldviews as obstacles to development, reductionist and positivist developments remain incoherent and meaningless to African peoples. Their epistemology, ontology and axiology rejects the very essence of local African life – a spiritualized relationship to the universe. Yet, with spirituality central to African epistemologies and worldviews, Euro-Western reductionist and positivist development has engendered a widespread

African epistemicide: destroying valuable cultural and social resources necessary for the well-being and cultural continuity of the African peoples" (Lebakeng 2010: 24-29, Cf. McDonnell 2013: 2). "If development is to truly benefit African peoples, it must reflect the cosmology and beliefs of local peoples. This means exploring the ways in which development through a spiritualized worldview can contribute to the cultural, social and moral survival and development of the continent" (ibid).

For Leys, "epistemological hegemony occurs when a set of knowledges endorsed as superior to others, thus leading to the marginalization and, at times, destruction of knowledge and experiences that do not fit within the constraints of the dominant epistemological order. He went on to point out that as our epistemology is intertwined with our worldview, epistemological dominance can be expanded to define the dominance of one worldview over another; thereby the marginalization of knowledge extends to a marginalization of worldviews and cultures. Moreover, epistemological dominance attempts to reconstruct the knowledge, values, and morals of marginalized societies to reflect those of the dominant" (Leys 1996: 3-44 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 8). Hence, Nyamnjoh in the same vein explains that it inculcates cultural estrangements and a profound sense of inferiority to those whose knowledge is on the margins (Nyamnjoh 2001: 28-49). Global north development ideologies stem from Enlightenment and Evolutionary theories – wherein a scientific or materialistic perspective is drawn. "Social sciences literature historically tended to refer to religious epistemologies as belief systems based on myths, whose overall negative effect on society would be replaced eventually by sound scientific thinking. Likewise, Marx, in 1844 argued that religion was the opium of the people. Freud in 1949 believed religion to be nothing more than an infantile response and the adult's reaction to his own sense of helplessness" (Beek 2000: 39). Furthermore, "the European or Western universal acclaim of modern knowledge and progress can be traced back to the evolutionary narrative of the Enlightenment era, whereby logic and rationalization were conceptualized as precursors to human development" (Sadar 1999: 44-61 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 10). This was founded on positivist and reductionist science: valid or real knowledge was that which could be measured and proven by empirical evidence. "Thus, with the concentration on empirical evidence, valid knowledge was framed as that which fell to the physical and sensory world; anything non-material, unseen and thus immeasurable in this epistemological framework was considered invalid and unreal and dismissed as invalid knowledge" (ibid)

Therefore, for Haverkort and Reijntjes, "African worldviews of the supernatural or spirit, unable to be measured, were discarded from the realm of valid knowledge and disproven by positivist and reductionist science. However, as such knowledge was not reflective of modern scientific ontology, spiritual understandings of the universe were equated to primitiveness and ignorance and are thought to be surpassed by modern and enlightened ways of knowing" (Haverkort and Reijntjes 2007: 431f Cf. McDonnell 2013: 10). "An example of evolutionary theory that frames the current development

ideology can be found in Auguste Comte's three laws of advancement, in which it is argued that the first most primitive stage of development was the theological stage, whereby society was dominated by religion and family. The second stage was supposed to be the metaphysical stage, and was considered to be slightly more advanced or developed, as in this stage philosophical reasoning and consciousness of one's relationship to the world developed. Yet, it was only in the third and final stage, the scientific or positive stage, that ultimate progress or development would be achieved as it was equated with the control of oneself and of nature" (Fagerlind 1989: 3-50 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 11). As Comte's theoretical framework demonstrates, scientific positivism and reductionist notions of development were thus equated with a linear belief that human and social progress could be achieved by the liberation of human beings from the primitiveness and ignorance of spiritual epistemologies and by the adoption of an enlightened state of rational and scientific epistemology (ibid). Moving from a state of scientific ignorance to scientific enlightenment, development was conceived to be universal, natural, directional, imminent, continuous, and necessary, proceeding uniformly (ibid).

Furthermore, as Comte's theoretical framework suggests, human progress and development were equated with control. Control of oneself, control of nature, control of society, and control of knowledge all became checkpoints of human progress. Emotional, intuitive and spiritual knowledges and worldviews were discredited as invalid ways of knowing or interacting with the world and were believed to be the anti-thesis of self-control. Instead, the ideal human was one who had control over his/her emotions and instincts and was to maintain a constant state of rationality and logic (Fagerlind and Saha 1989: 3-50 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 11). They went on to postulate that "it was believed, as Rousseau claimed, that one could only be recognizable as a human being once she/he had entered civil society. Through civil society (European society), thus civilization, one would learn to control his or her primitive urges to become master of oneself" (ibid). Similarly, Condorcet saw human beings as moving toward a state of perfection, which could only be accomplished once one had overcome their emotional and intuitive instincts (ibid). "Thus, according to Dei, progression and development meant extinguishing and suppressing emotional, intuitive, spiritual and metaphysical knowledge, as they were associated with uncontrollable urges and primitiveness, and replacing them with positivism and reductionism of science. They went on to say that dividing knowledge into emotional and rational knowledge initiated a dualistic worldview framed by notions of mind over matter; subject versus object; human versus nature; and emotion versus logic" (Dei 2002: 335-360 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 11). Consequently, Turker argues that the dualistic nature of positivist and reductionist science initiated an anthropocentric relationship to nature. Elevating reductionist and positivist science to an absolute lead to a deconstructed and demystified understanding of nature and reduced her to her functions and processes. With the growing belief that

humans could grasp and deconstruct the laws of nature, the relationship to nature was de-spiritualized. As the natural world was no longer conceptualized as a force to respect, the intimacy and spiritualization of that natural world (as perceived by African cosmovision) was disproven. Relationships with nature that fell outside scientific positivism and reductionism were recognized as obstacles to progress and development as they challenged the scientific hegemony and manipulation of nature (Tucker 1999: 1-28, Cf. McDonnell 2013: 12). Because of the hegemony of scientific positivism and reductionism, the natural world became a resource for human consumption and development as opposed to a spiritual force to be protected and respected (Haerkort, Van't Hooft and Hiemstra 2002: 7-10 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 12).

In African contexts, “the epistemological hegemony of the evolutionary development discourse has framed Africa as imprisoned by evolution and incapable of achievement” (Nsamenang 2005: 275-285 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 13). On the one hand, Dei asserts that African knowledge, offering an understanding of reality that does not subscribe to a Euro-Western worldview, is set in the epistemological framework of evolutionary theory and continues to be marked as primitive knowledge impeding development. En-trenched in evolutionary concepts of real and unreal knowledge, African indigenous knowledge is marked as an unreal and invalid way of knowing, thus it is ignored and devalued as a resource for development. As a result, the diversity and innovation of African spiritual knowledge have been rejected as unnecessary tools for African development (Dei and Kempf 2006: 1f, 129f, Cf. McDonnell 2013: 13). On the other hand, Goulet posits that African development is driven by physical and material development. It has been reduced to science without wisdom, whereby instrumental and scientific approaches have succeeded human and spiritual approaches (Goulet 1980: 481-489 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 14). In relation to the above notions, Nsamenang, assert that “as opposed to truly improving the quality of life, spiritually, socially, economically, cultural and environmentally, development as an attempted uni-cultural process destroys and devalues anything that falls outside the tight-knit box of Western/European epistemology as impeding to modernization and progress” (Nsamenang 2005: 275-285 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 14).

Yet, with the dismissal of African worldviews as unnecessary for development, development in African contexts is anti-people, anti-environment and anti-community (Dei 1993: 17-19 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 14). Furthermore, it is pointed out that if spirituality is as essential to African life as food and rationality, the dismissal of spirituality in African development means rejecting the very essence and purpose of African life. Spiritual knowledge cannot be disassociated from development as it remains at the foundation of Africans people’s worldview; informing social, political, economic, environmental relationships (Goulet 1980: 481 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 14). Thus, the emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals and communities must be the basis of any development process (Dei 2000: 70-85 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 11). Like the Lenca community in Hon-

duras, “social transformation is only possible when it is founded on the spiritual values of the community. Spiritual knowledge thus becomes indispensable to social change; otherwise, development for non-Western or European peoples often means being consigned to meaninglessness, the annihilation of indigenous cosmologies in the face of a desacralizing instrumental rationality can produce a modernity that has no coherent meaning or conceptual validity for indigenous peoples” (Tedla 1995: 11-4 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 14). He continues to point out that without recognizing and acknowledging the spiritualized worldviews of African communities, the epistemological hegemony of development will lack any validity and meaning for African peoples and continue to silence and marginalizes indigenous or local voices in their own development processes (*ibid*). Therefore, it is bound to fail. However, this being the case, McDonnell points out that “exploring an African worldview as an epistemological framework for development is not with the purpose to reverse the hierachal framework of knowledge production by suggesting that one epistemological framework is superior to another” (McDonnell 2013: 15). This would, in fact, be counter-productive to the call for the admission of a plurality of discourses, worldviews, and knowledges in development discourse. Instead, in theorizing an African development thought, an African worldview first has to recognize African spiritual knowledge as an asset for development, and to see the ways in which indigenous or local and exogenous or external knowledge may converge and diverge to best suit the needs of the African peoples (*ibid*). We must first understand and validate the beliefs, values, and knowledge of African peoples before we attempt to introduce exogenous knowledge in African communities (Prah 2001: 90-102 (McDonnell 2013: 15).

Finally, the preceding scholarly discussion showed that there are certain religious values which are sources of inspiration and strength to African peoples and, which can greatly contribute to development initiatives, although Euro-Western knowledge hegemony will continue to suppress African epistemologies, thereby marginalizing worldviews which are integral to development in African communities. Institutional policies should not incorporate redemptive religions’ religious beliefs only, but should seriously start to appreciate African religions as a resource for sustainable development. In Africa, indigenous peoples have live a religious existence, they have a religious self-definition, and their well-being is again religiously anchored, hence developmental planning and implementing processes should take that into account. Therefore, it is instructive to move on ‘towards a new relationship between African religions and development.’

### **3.7 Towards a New Relationship Between African Religions and Development**

The missing link in development planning for Africa, which is integral toward forming a new relationship, is described under this subtopic. It is fundamental for development

practitioners to recognize African spiritual epistemologies as an asset for development and to see the ways in which local or indigenous and exogenous epistemologies may converge and diverge to best suit the needs of African peoples. This being the case, therefore, there are no superior epistemologies. The understanding of the Africans' spiritualized worldviews (cosmovision) is another integral phenomenon that should be put into practice for sustainable development in Africa by development practitioners or workers. A brief depiction of Africans' spiritualized worldviews from different scholars (for example, Harvekort and Kempf 2002; Dei 2000, 2002, 2011; Nyamnjoh 2004; Turak 2006; Gonese et al. 2002; Mbiti 1969; Wangoola 2000 and Mazama 2002) is shown below. It is important to note that, "a spiritualized worldview, an African cosmology is shaped by daily objects and events; and it's the basis of African life and informs the epistemology (our knowledge), ontology (our existence), and axiology (our shared beliefs, values and norms) of African peoples" (Haverkort and Kempf 2002: 7-10, Cf. McDonnell 2013: 16). Furthermore, Dei pointed out that African spirituality, stresses mind, body, and soul interactions. Such spirituality is about values, beliefs, ideas of integrity, and dignity that shape the individual consciousness into a collective and unified existence. The individual develops spirituality through the engagement in society, culture and through his/her relation to nature (Dei 2002: 335-360). He explains that African spirituality is an axiological imperative that is shaped by a diverse and interconnected system of knowledge (Dei 2011: 233f Cf. McDonnell 2013: 16). As the spiritual and physical worlds are not dualistic or contrasting forms of knowledge, the invisible, the spiritual, and the emotional knowledge are not surpassed by the physical or material knowledge. Instead, both forms of knowledge are mutually valuable and necessary for balanced and harmonious interactions with the world (Nyamnjoh 2004: 162-184 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 16-17). He continues to say that everyday interactions are spiritualized occurrences and challenges—changes in government, the nepotism of a leader, the death or abuses of children, the weather – they all can be understood as the result of spiritual forces (*ibid*). "Therefore, to African spiritualized worldviews, the nature of existence and the understanding of reality are not only determined by physical and material relationships, but by a spiritualized relationship which confirms our purpose and place in the greater cosmos" (*ibid*).

Strikingly, Turaki explains that relationships between nature and humans as well as between, spirit and nature are not dichotomized or compartmentalized but are integrated into an interdependent system that is tied together through spiritual interactions. As the epistemology of the African cosmovision sees the physical and spiritual worlds as integrated, this initiates a profound respect and reverence without exploitation of nature (Turaki 2006: 50f Cf. McDonnell 2013: 17). The above belief was affirmed as a commitment to conserve and enrich nature (Dei 2002: 335-360). "Living in harmony with the natural world translates into living in harmony with the spiritual world, as they are interconnected and co-dependent" (Gonese, Tuvafulurem and Mudzingwa 2002: 169-180

Cf. McDonnell 2013: 17). Therefore, an African believes that natural phenomena, such as plants, rocks and bodies of water are respected and revered, acting as vehicles to the spiritual world, and having both visible and invisible powers. Likewise, “as animals are understood as being a part of a larger spiritual system, they are respected and not killed unless in self-defence or to provide immediate sustenance or sacrifice. Moreover, non-living elements, such as rain, are also deemed as sacred and as powerful spirits, as they are needed to sustain life and rainmakers in their ability to solicit the spirit world and call up or cease rainfall are seen as vitally important to the health and well-being of the community” (Mbiti 1969: 193f Cf. McDonnell 2013: 17). Thus, at the foundation of the African worldviews lies a deep reverence and respect for the natural world. Human beings are seen as being spiritually connected to all that happens within the greater frameworks of nature. As a community encompasses the natural world, the living, the undead, the unborn and the ancestors, they can be conceptualized as an axiological imperative to guide everyday life (Wangoola 2000: 265 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 18). Furthermore, because life and death are not seen as dichotomous but as a continuum or continuous sequence of states of being, our actions throughout our life determine our place in the spiritual realm (Dei 2011: 233f Cf. McDonnell 2013: 18). However, Mazama points out that as the spiritual realm coexists with the natural world, our actions toward the natural world impact our spiritual well-being. Moreover, as ancestors are omnipresent, co-existing in the natural and spiritual world, they are seen as being closer to the Supreme life force and as communicating with God on behalf of the people (Mazama 2002: 218-234 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 18). Furthermore, ancestors are chosen based on their own exemplary lives and act as moral and spiritual imperatives for the community and individuals. With deep faith in the ancestors’ ability to guide positive moral actions and ensure community safety and resilience, ancestors play a primary role in the axiology of African communities, as they are the guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities (*ibid*).

Dei explains that “as communal relationships are founded on a spiritual understanding of the world, the individual’s axiological role within the community is manifested in their relationships and their integration within the larger natural, ancestral and spiritual community” (Dei 2000: 70-85 Cf. McDonnell 2013: 18). He went on to note that as one grows and ages, the individual moves from a ‘me’ towards a ‘we’ centred approach. The individual him-/herself is not recognized as a moral being, but becomes so because of his/her relationships and co-dependency with the community (*ibid*). Therefore, African epistemology, grounded in spiritual conceptions of the world, does not dismiss the individual entirely, yet sees the individual within the larger social systems. It focuses on collective interests while harnessing individuality. It is for this reason that individual liberty is often interpreted as a threat to African communities. As communities often pool resources and efforts together for survival, an individual reformer may be seen as questioning or corrupting systems of mutual aid and interdependence (*ibid*).

Furthermore, he asserts that the individual as a reformer or introducer of knowledge or epistemology is understood as egocentric, whereas community-formed education and responsibility are highly valued, again functioning on the premise of self-help, mutual aid and morality. Thus, community and communal relations are vital to forming the ethos of African peoples (ibid). Thus, an individual's relationships to nature, to oneself, and to the community are all morally grounded, not only affecting the mundane or visible or material world but also having profound implications or bearings in the supramundane or invisible or spiritual world (ibid). Therefore, the foregoing scholarly discussions offered a general understanding of African religions across Africa, their spirituality and spiritualized worldviews.

Linked to the above, policymakers (governments – though not the same), diplomats, development practitioners, religious actors (FBOs) and NGOs are in need for a broader understanding of the nature of African religions (as depicted above) and how they impact the lives of African peoples in their different communities. They need to get into a conversation about what African peoples believe, to better understand how these beliefs contribute to their worldviews, hence how African peoples live their lives, religiously, socially, culturally, traditionally, and politically to mention just a few. 'Too often in recent years, discussions about religion, foreign policy, and development have been concerned primarily with engaging Faith-Based Organizations or Faith Initiated Organizations (FBOs or FIOs)' (Wilton Park 2014: 1-9). There is a need to broaden this engagement or dialogue or discussion so that it considers dialogue with a wider range of African communities (that is African religions). This may prove as valuable across multiple and diverse policy domains. "There is a risk of ghettoizing engagement with African religions, hence treating it as a function separate from broader policymaking processes" (ibid). However, the integration of African religions into the everyday practice of foreign policy and development should be a policy goal. Having said this, there is a need for literacy in African religions – training development practitioners may help in overcoming the marginalization of African religions as a resource for sustainable development. The religious illiteracy is hampering sustainable development in Zimbabwe and other African countries. If there is an *honest engagement* between policymakers and African religions, there should be an understanding of African religions' community's beliefs, traditions, politics etc. The leaders of these communities can be effective mediators between the grass roots and policymakers in a wide range of development and transitional contexts (bottom-up approach). There is also a need to creating a central governmental center to champion African religions and FBOs on religious engagement in development practices. "This might include the development of specialized offices concerned with exploring the traditional African religions (including FBOs) and foreign affairs as well as the codification of strategies on engaging with their diversified leadership" (Wilton Park 2014: 1-9). Also of benefit would be intra- and inter-governmental networks that span different agencies and departments to en-

gage African religious communities. The global north should accept that religious pluralism is part of the fabric of African communities and that it enriches common life, communal relationships, and global south solidarity. Hence, the multi-religious situation is a reality of our time (21<sup>st</sup> Century). As Samartha points out, “to reject exclusivism and to accept plurality, to be committed to one’s faith and to be open to the faith communities of our neighbours, to choose to live in a global community of communities, sharing the ambiguities of history and the mystery of life – these are the imperatives of our age” (Samartha 1998:193).

The other most striking feature of sustainable development dominant within African religions’ epistemologies with the potential to breed a relationship between the global north and the global south, is the emphasis on development which is local or indigenously driven (from within African communities or societies), thus endogenous development. This concept, according to Vazquez-Barquero, “is rooted in the global south’s experiences and it arose as an antithesis to the dependence syndrome. Endogenous development proponents consider self-reliance as an important political strategy against hegemony and exploitation by the global north” (Vazquez-Barquero 2002: 73). Therefore, endogenous development is defined as based on local or indigenous peoples’ criteria of development and takes into account peoples’ material, social and spiritual well-being (ibid). Therefore, the importance of *honest grassroots participatory approaches* and of integrating local or indigenous knowledge systems into development interventions has become broadly recognized (bottom-up approach). However, many of these approaches run into difficulties in attempts to overcome an implicitly global north bias. Endogenous development seeks to overcome this bias by using local or indigenous peoples’ worldviews and livelihood strategies as the starting point of development (ibid). “Many of these worldviews (for example Shona in Zimbabwe as discussed in chapter two and other African worldviews as discussed under this subtopic above) and livelihood strategies reflect sustainable development as a balance between material, social and spiritual well-being. The main difference between endogenous development and other participatory approaches is its insistence on the inclusion of local or indigenous religious (spiritual) aspects of the development process in addition to the ecological, social and economic aspects” (ibid). The endogenous development concept is mainly based on local or indigenous strategies, values, institutions and resources.

Therefore, the researcher is also aware that, “priorities, needs and criteria for development may differ in each community and may not always be the same as those of the development worker from the global north. Key concepts within endogenous development include local or indigenous control of the development process, taking cultural values seriously, appreciating worldviews and finding a balance between local or indigenous and external or exogenous resources” (ibid). The aim of the endogenous development is to empower local or indigenous communities to take control of their own development processes. Therefore, Vazquez-Barquero explains that:

Endogenous development is a means of achieving the social, cultural and economic transformation of society based on the revitalization of traditions, respect for the environment and equitable relation of production. This makes room for turning natural resources into products which may be used, distributed and exported to the whole world. Endogenous development aims at incorporating people and communities, previously excluded from the educational, economic and social system, by building productive networks with easy access to technology and knowledge. It is through endogenous development that organized communities are given the power to develop the potential of every region in the areas of social, economic, cultural, and spiritual well-being. (Vazquez-Barquero 2002: 73)

Vazquez-Barquero continues to posit that endogenous development aims at improving the quality of life and the creation of a new economic and social model of development in which the neglected aspects of development by other development models are considered. The collaboration of solidarity with local or indigenous communities is encouraged. “The endogenous development policy is based on the process of change and it promotes the active participation of the entire population in the destiny of the nation, the democratization of resources, the creation of a fair society and the improvement of living standards for neglected communities. Peoples’ participation in the formation, execution and control of public negotiation is the necessary means to achieve sustainable development” (ibid).

In addition, Burkey noted that endogenous development entails a type of development that originates from the heart of each society without any outside interference and imitation. In other words, the society, community or individual defines its values and its vision of the future in sovereignty (Burkey 1996: 73). The same idea is expressed by Carmen when he states that “development is not something done to people in the usual interventionist mode by outside agencies and self-proclaimed experts, but is and can only be the product of an ever-present inventive, creative, autonomous human agency” (Carmen 1996: 2). Linked to the above, Bragg says that development ought to become a project of peoples’ own autonomous agency. “Peoples, as subjects, need to be free for the process of change, inventing their own future as authors of a culturally embedded, gender-permeated, economic and political process of transforming and humanizing the landscape they inhabit” (Bragg 1987: 20-51). He went on to point out that the concept of endogenous development within a nation involves the decentralization of power, which would allow the concerned at every level of society to exercise all the power they are capable of. It also allows for the participation of all members of society, equal opportunities and the right to control one’s own destiny (ibid). Lastly, he posits that the philosophy of endogenous approach is crucial to a people-centred development as it forms the non-negotiable foundation for the whole method and process of development in the global south. His argument is based on the premise that meaningful development is endogenous by nature because it is born out of local or indigenous initia-

tives, and people themselves become the drivers of their own development agenda in their own cultural, religious context and situations (*ibid*). As for Reid, endogenous development stresses the need for culture and development to move together but, too often, modern theorists have ignored customs and social patterns in an attempt to bring material benefits to the fore (Reid 1995: 71).

However, for Harvekort, Millar and Gonese it is becoming increasingly clear that for most African communities, adoption means, therefore, doing both things side by side. For the African it is a question of survival in a diverse and risk-prone environment. “Strategies for modernization, by means of stimulating introduction of new innovations from outside, could be replaced by strategies of endogenous development, development from within. Outsiders can build up relationships with traditional leaders and discuss the possibilities of experimenting with forms of agriculture, health, or management of natural resources, according to the interest of the population in a given community. Rural appraisal exercises can include co-operation of spiritual leaders, and take notice of the worldview and religious concepts of the people involved. On-farm experiments and tree planting activities can be successfully planned together with the traditional leaders, and rituals can be held to initiate these activities and to discuss the traditional criteria to be used in evaluating the outcomes. For this, the global north field workers need to establish a relationship with the community based on respect. And, in this process, awareness is required to resist two temptations: the temptation to condemn and reject local or indigenous knowledge and practices, and the temptation to justify and idealize those” (Haverkort, Millar and Gonese 2003: 152). Finally, therefore, if global north or development practitioners are to effectively work with African peoples and within localized African spiritualized worldviews and improve their relationship, they, (according to Beek) must be willing to assess and analyze their subjective positions – thus recognize their biases, their belief systems, their presuppositions and their cultural knowledge base and how they impact their relationship to the communities with whom they work (McDonnell 2013: 1-26). “And also, recognize the importance of spirituality in local peoples’ lives, seek to better understand it, address it openly, and give local peoples the opportunity and power to decide how both their development and their spirituality will and should shape each other” (Beek 2000: 41-42).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has critically explored the origins of the basic needs concept from the global north and has unveiled that, instead, of benefiting the intended communities in Zimbabwe and other African communities, the development concept benefited the rich, whereas the socio-economic status of the poor in the global south remained unchanged. The strategy did not yield the desired results – hence, it was a failure. This being the case, the sustainable development concept was brought to the global table

around the 1970s to address the failed issues by the basic needs strategy, which has shown its bias toward economic and social development. However, the issue of poverty in Africa was not addressed adequately. Therefore, the sustainable development concept was discussed at length above to ascertain its pros and cons. The strategy is popularized at different global forums in order to be implemented in both developed and developing countries throughout the world. The reason to implement the strategy is because it is holistic in approaching development. It encompasses three pillars of development: economic, social and environmental. The main challenge unveiled in this chapter is the implementation of the strategy. However, throughout the world, many countries are finding it difficult to balance their developmental programs within the three pillars mentioned above. Thereby, they (governments) seem to be biased towards economic and social developments, neglecting the environmental development. Hence, by neglecting environmental development or maintenance, a world challenge surfaced through Global Climate Change. However, this challenge is widely acknowledged as an emerging negative force in world affairs. There is the green light of good life for the current generation and for posterity, if sustainable development can be honestly practiced by all governments in the world.

The chapter profoundly showed how the global north has marginalized, and left at the periphery African religions. Therefore, they are absent in development practices, whereas since time immemorial FBOs and NGOs have been incorporated in them, with undesirable results in alleviating highlevels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the global south. For that reason, the researcher believes that African religions have a positive potential role to play in development processes in Africa. Lastly, a depiction was given on how the global north can build a new relationship with the global south, whereby the global north policymakers should consider African religions as a resource for sustainable development. Therefore, theories of development born out of the modernization paradigm as discussed in this chapter have been a letdown insofar as they promote a kind of development that is not indigenous or people driven: it does not take into account their epistemological systems, religious beliefs, cultures, traditions, and philosophy. In Africa, religions are central to peoples' worldviews. In the interest to enriching the elites and few individuals, development policies in Zimbabwe have been very selective and highly manipulated, as shall be shown in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4: STATE, RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The Republic of Zimbabwe is located in the Southern part of Africa. It shares its borders with Mozambique to the east, Zambia to the north, Botswana to the south-

west, and the Republic of South Africa to the south. “It is a landlocked country with a land area of 390, 757 square kilometers of which 85% is agricultural land and the remaining comprises national parks, state forests and urban land” (Government of Zimbabwe 2004: 1). In Zimbabwe, Christianity is generally regarded as a religion that has many followers, to the extent that some Christian religious groups advocated for the nation to be regarded as a Christian state – however, constitutionally it is a secular state. “Christianity, as it was brought by western missionaries, separated state and religion: the state, concentrates on political authority, whereas religion belongs to the private realm. For the enlightened elites in non-western countries, being modern called for the reform of indigenous practices and the institutionalization of religion as a category within the state’s constitution and administration” (Ashiwa and Wank 2009: 2 Cf. Carino 2013: 133). However, this understanding of religion misses the point, because, before its contact with the outside world, the context in Africa and, in particular, Zimbabwe, was a very religious one. The only difference is that religion is regarded as something that is not to be objectively thought about but, rather, as something that needed to be lived out. To this effect Busia pointed out that “the African is born religious and it is not possible to distinguish between religious and non-religious areas of life” (Busia 1967: 1). Where an African individual is, there also is his/her religion, for he/she is a religious being. “It is this that makes Africans so religious: religion is in their whole system of being. If an African takes his/her religion wherever he/she goes, politicians to the parliament, professors to the lecture hall, bankers to the bank, students to the lecture hall, and to the examination hall” (Mbiti 1989: 3) (this has been discussed in detail in chapter 2), it follows that a separation of religion from other realms is an exotic phenomenon in Africa and, in particular, in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this chapter looks at Zimbabwe’s political structures, policies, agencies and actors (such as chiefs, headmen, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious experts on indigenous religion and development) concerning the area of development from 1980 – 2016. The objective is to unveil if development programs implemented by the government have yielded meaningful results in poverty alleviation on Zimbabweans. If not, why, and what are the reasons and possible remedies to that? It also seeks to unravel if the government is incorporating indigenous religion and spirituality into development as a resource for sustainable development.

## 4.2 A Brief History of Zimbabwe

Britain colonized Zimbabwe in 1890 and Zimbabwe attained its independence on 18 April 1980. The history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe dates back to the colonization of the country by the British in 1890. The first resistance to colonial forces dates back to the year 1893. This resistance reached its highest point with the First Chimurenga war from 1896 to 1897. “Chimurenga is a Shona word for ‘revolutionary

struggle' and the term has been specifically used for the Zimbabwean struggle against the British colonial rule. In 1966 – 1979 the Second Chimurenga, a guerrilla war, was fought against the white minority regime. By 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe attained independence. The word Chimurenga is believed to have come from the name 'Murenga' who was one of the fighting African spirits against settlers hence, the word Chimurenga" (Machingura 2012: 13). In its modern version, "the liberation struggle dates to 1957 when the African National Congress (ANC) was formed. This party was banned in 1959. In 1960 the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed to succeed the ANC. The National Democratic Party was banned in 1961. However, in the same year, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was formed to replace the banned NDP" (Tekere 2007: 83f). In 1966, when most of the detainees were released, sharp differences emerged within the ZAPU and, as a result, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was formed (*ibid*). There were two liberation movements, namely the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe with its armed wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), and the Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African National People's Union (PF ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo (June 19, 1917 – July 1, 1999), with its armed wing, known as the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). They were fighting together against the Rhodesian government led by Ian Douglas Smith (April 8, 1919 – November 20, 2007). The Rhodesian forces killed thousands of civilians in refugee camps at Chimoio in Mozambique and in another camp in Zambia (Mzumara 2012: 142-154). "PF ZAPU was based in Zambia while ZANU-PF was based in Mozambique. Scores of people killed by the Rhodesian forces were black Zimbabwean refugees. The war also killed many other people and displaced many people in and outside the country" (*ibid*).

The years between 1890 and 1980 were characterized by nearly a century of oppression, wars, uprisings, and domination of Zimbabweans by the British. The Shona and Ndebele became a source of cheap labor and were regarded as inferior by the British colonizers. With white administration at the center of Shona culture, there was also forced labor, forced taxation, cultural change and religious change, among other things. Highways and cities were given British names, political oppression was the order of the day, and the best land was freely given to the British settlers. Missions, schools, and hospitals were introduced and functioned for the most part as preparatory centers for training African minds in colonial and missionary agendas. Colonialists were eager to offer a form of education to blacks that would transform them to serve their colonial masters (Ranger 1967: 145-148).

It became clear to both the Shona and Ndebele people that the British government had come to colonize, and transform the Shona and Ndebele worldviews. There was a promotion of many injustices and little care for the people whose land they colonized and whose culture they disregarded as heathenism. This made the Shona people very

bitter and incited them to resist white rule in Zimbabwe (ibid). Determined to fight for their land, religious leaders from both the Shona and Ndebele responded by conducting uprisings against the British occupation of Zimbabwe, targeting whites. While whites had the advantage of superior weapons, the Shona people had bows and arrows, *Mwari*, and the ancestors on their side. The religion and spirituality of the indigenous people were known by the British missionaries who arrived in the 1890s. In Shona society, “*Mwari* was known by many names or appellations and was approached through intermediaries whom the Shona venerated as ancestors. Among the Ndebele people, *Mwari/Unkulukulu* was worshipped at the Matopo Hills near Bulawayo in the western part of Zimbabwe. Among the Shona people in the eastern Zimbabwe, *Mwari* was worshipped in every Chiefdom and village”(Ranger 1967: 145-148).

The ancestors are regarded as founders of a nation and are highly esteemed in the worldview of the Shona people, and they play a central role in their day-to-day life. They are not worshipped in Shona culture, but “rather are considered as founders and spiritual agents whose role is to communicate the message of *Mwari* to the people. Often, they are a means to reconciliation between tribes and conflicting parties” (ibid). Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana (ca. 1840-1898), a spirit medium, was considered to possess supernatural powers. She was imbued with a direct connection to the deity analogous to that attributed to the ancestors of Greeks and Romans (Wisemann 2004: 1-36). However, “Nehanda of Zimbabwe was not just a mythical figure but a real female ancestress heroine whose story helps to identify and signify the identity, ethos, mores or norms, and values of the Shona people. Her role and place in Shona religion and culture resonated with core Shona beliefs in such a way that she captured the worldview of her people by persuading them that *Mwari* was against the British colonization of Zimbabwe. She encouraged the Shona Chiefs and political leaders to expel the British from Zimbabwe” (Ranger 1967: 209-210). Through her spiritual powers, she convinced nationalist leaders that whites were responsible for all the suffering and natural disasters that engulfed Zimbabwe. National disasters (like droughts and diseases etc.) in Zimbabwe mean only one thing to the Shona people – an expression of *Mwari*’s anger. Thus, religious leaders in both eastern and western Zimbabwe joined in the war of resistance. Religious and ancestral leaders such as Nehanda gave religious sanction to the risings and used their religious places as command centers for intelligence purposes (ibid). “She finally became a target of the British government and was captured and sentenced to death by hanging in 1898, till the end steadfastly refusing and denouncing the British occupation of Zimbabwe. In her last words, she told the British that my bones will rise again” (ibid). These few words were a source of inspiration to the liberation fighters, and were finally fulfilled in the war that culminated in the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, and her remains are yet to be given a heroine’s burial at Zimbabwe’s Heroes’ Acre, a memorial place for all who fought for the independence of the Shona and Ndebele people (ibid) – her skull is in Britain.

Her role as a spirit medium, communicating with the ancestral spirits for *Mwari* in order to deliver the independence of Zimbabwe, shows a profound, vital role of Shona religion in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. This being the case, it is contended that Shona religion is a resource for the prosperity of Zimbabwe. Shona and Ndebele people in Zimbabwe believe that Zimbabwean leadership is chosen and ordained by the ancestral spirits and *Mwari*. In 1976, ZANU-PF and PF ZAPU worked together, especially in order to adopt and pursue a common political strategy in constitutional talks with the British government. “They went together to the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference in 1979, which led to the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement, which paved the way for Zimbabwe’s independence” (The Herald: Tuesday 18 April 1983: B13). Zimbabwe got its independence on 18 April 1980, bringing to end ninety years of colonial rule. The independence of Zimbabwe marked the end of a struggle against discrimination, racism, injustice, and oppression. On taking over, Prime Minister Robert Gabriel Mugabe urged Zimbabweans to be constructive, progressive and forever forward looking. He said:

Our new nation requires of every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and a new spirit, if yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, right and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. The wrong of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten. If ever we look to the past, let us do so for the lesson the past has taught us, namely that oppression and racism are inequalities that must never again find scope in our political and social system. It could never be a correct justification that because whites oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the blacks must oppress them today because they have power... (The Herald: Tuesday 18 April 1983: B13)

After the end of colonization, people in Zimbabwe were expecting to witness an improvement in the living standards of ordinary people. This was because the post-independence atmosphere was not demanding any particular social arena commitment. Zimbabweans were living in a climate of excited enthusiasm caused by the outcome of the liberating victory, which had led to independence. It was a most elating experience, full of expectations. Even when sacrifices were demanded, they were happily accepted in a true spirit of sacrifice, with great simplicity and heroic generosity. No one would have dared to doubt or criticize the independent government of the people. Furthermore, one could see things moving, great changes taking place, for instance, the government started building new schools, new hospitals, and free education for those in primary schools was given. All this was inspiring and spreaded an optimistic attitude towards the future. “Those people, who were still living in situations of poverty or of great duress strongly believed that they could see the light at the end of the tunnel” (CCJPZ 1987: 1f). Unfortunately, immediately after independence, a group of EX-

ZIPRA began to operate as dissidents in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces where they began to terrorize people and security forces responded with a heavy hand. About 3,750 civilians were killed or missing, 680 homesteads were destroyed, 10, 000 detained and 20, 000 were tortured to death (The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (ibid). Peace only returned after the two parties ZANU-PF and PF ZAPU and their leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo signed a Unity accord on December 22, 1987, and subsequently merged their political parties into one single party that became known as ZANU-PF on December 22, 1989 (Moyo 1991: 83-102).

After the Unity Accord of December 22, 1987, the country slowly, began to have economic problems. The government had spent millions of dollars to fight the dissidents' menace and to monitor the movements of dangerous politicians, a term used loosely to refer to PF ZAPU officials hunted by the government. As a result, "scarce economic resources were diverted from developmental projects for a wasteful military exercise" (Moto Magazine 1997: 8). Such events caused several hardships: economic, political and social. For instance, families were left destitute, without breadwinners and without shelter. "Many people, possibly thousands, suffered permanent damage to their health as a result of physical torture, inhibiting their ability to seek work, or to maintain their lands and perform daily chores such as carrying water" (Maposa 1995: 6).

### **4.3 Political Structures 1980–2016**

We should bear in mind that, ZANU-PF's victory in the country's first majority rule election in 1980, prompted it to desire the One-Party State regime. For instance, any public opinion against ZANU-PF's stance was viewed as a threat to the state, even on matters that were not party issues. People could not express divergent political views without becoming state enemies. "Things had changed, the party had become more important than the nation itself, more important than the people it was supposed to serve, and more important than Shona religion which is believed to have brought the independence of Zimbabwe through the ancestral spirits and *Mwari*" (Moto Magazine 1997: 9). As a result, the occasions of abuse and corruption multiplied by the day. More and more frequently, unbearable situations of injustice surfaced within the country. Disregard of human rights started creeping in along the halls of power. "Many people country-wide suffered harassment, torture and imprisonment, something Zimbabwean people had experienced before under colonial rule and especially during the time of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) under Ian Douglas Smith (1965-1979). In 1987, the two major political parties, ZANU-PF, and PF ZAPU, signed the Unity Accord to bring about peace in the country" (ibid) – as mentioned above. Even though there was peace in the country, the balance of the general economy was left in the hands of the white minority and not opened to the general populace (ibid). There were many issues, which were needed to be addressed after the Unity Accord of 1987: first

and foremost, the issues of economic transformation and of compensation for the killings done during the dissident era.

Some politicians took advantage of the instability by engaging in acts of corruption. One, for example, is the Willow-vale Motor Industry Scandal (WMIS), which was uncovered by the Chronicle (a Zimbabwean newspaper) and later substantiated by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Many people were found to have engaged actively in corruption by the Sandura Commission. However, the government exonerated those who were involved in corrupt activities. They protected those of high-profile and in some cases proven to be corrupt. President Robert Mugabe even went on to elevate them to higher positions and declared them to be heroes (Moto Magazine 1996: 10). Therefore, if the Anti-Corruption Commission was allowed to continue with its series of investigations, the country would not be in this crisis today. There was a need at this stage of corruption to educate the average Zimbabwean about the effects of corruption on the economy of the country. The fact that a lot of names were mentioned and the involved people went unprosecuted, was seen as a way of condoning corruption. The people in the private sector, who are always at the forefront of condemning corruption, were deeply involved in it, too. They would pay medical bills for politicians in return for preferential treatment. As a result of corruption, many companies had to close down, leaving people unemployed and poor.

From 1980 to 1999, the political situation in Zimbabwe was not very bad, although there were some ethnic group differences between the Shona and Ndebele, because of the dissident era, described in the foregoing section. Things began to change with the appearance of an opposition party, the 'Movement for Democratic Change' (MDC) in 1999. The ruling party ZANU-PF realized that there was now a formidable party that was a threat to their existence. "They drafted a constitution in the same year (2000) and a referendum was held on 12 and 13 February 2000. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by the trade Unionist Morgan Tsvangirai, well informed on ZANU-PF'S shortcomings and inconsistency, spearheaded a campaign against a new constitution because of its fundamental flaws" (Mzumara 2012: 142-154). The government lost by a 'no' vote of 54% while it managed to get a 'yes' vote of only 46% in support of a drafted new constitution. After losing in the referendum, the ZANU-PF began to mobilize itself to prevent an outcome of similar nature in the next general elections. From then on, the land reform became a leading factor for ZANU-PF's new campaigning strategy (*ibid*). In the June 24-25 2000 general elections, Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF won 63 seats, and MDC, a new party, 57 seats – and it is noted by the Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF) that the elections were marred by pre and post election violence and intimidation which made ZANU-PF to win the elections (ECF 2008: 7). "When the war veterans began with the forcible occupations of white commercial farms, during pre-and post-general elections, the ZANU-PF government embraced this move to turn around its political fortunes. This marked an era of gross violations of

human rights. ZANU-PF began the state terror directed against the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the white commercial farmers. The farm invaders did not hesitate to vandalize property as well as beating up workers, rape, kidnap, torture, loot and even murder both the workers and farm owners. School teachers and nurses in the rural areas also became victims of the invaders. Although agriculture is the mainstay of the country's economy, the ZANU-PF government sacrificed this vital economic sector for political expediency" (Mzumara 2012: 142-154). This being the case, the western governments condemned this and imposed a travel ban on top officials from the government and ZANU PF to demonstrate their displeasure (ibid). These travel bans were part of sanctions, hence they negatively affected the economy and the living standards of ordinary people – although they were removed by the European Union in 2014, Robert Mugabe and his wife Grace remained under travel ban to the Euro-western countries to date.

In 2002, the government introduced anti-media laws in order to clampdown on the independent press. "Laws like the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), passed in the Parliament of Zimbabwe on 31 January 2002, deprived people of their freedom of expression" (Moto Magazine 2001: 1). The bombing of the Daily News, (January 29, 2001) was a sign that the government did not have room for freedom of expression in Zimbabwe (ibid). The arrest, torture, and degrading humiliation of the Independent Press Journalists in Zimbabwe portrayed a very bad image of the country. The present regime (ZANU-PF) passed many laws for the protection, not of the state, but of one particular party. On March 9-11 2002, there were presidential elections: Robert Mugabe won the elections by 52.2% of the vote, while Morgan Tsvangirai got 42.0% of the vote. It is posited that it was the closest presidential election to date. "Although the organization of African Unity (AU) described the elections as "transparent, credible, free and fair", the conduct of the election was strongly condemned by the Commonwealth, by Norwegian observers, Zimbabwean opposition figures, and western governments and Media" (BBC. News, 3 November 2003).

"The draconian laws (AIPPA and POSA) were amended later, after the Government of National Unity (GNU) had been formed and signed on 15 September 2009; nothing is working well to date (2016). AIPPA has been used to suppress the voice of any person or organization which disagrees with ZANU-PF. In the same way, POSA is used to prevent meetings and activities of any organization, which is critical of ZANU-PF, especially opposition parties in Zimbabwe" (ZCBC Pastoral Letter 2002: 8). It is important to note that these Laws/Acts have been used selectively. As a result, the media has been streamlined in such a way that to criticize the government is anathema. The news has become nothing but that which passes government censorship. Furthermore, a journalist is one who has not only studied journalism but one who is essentially registered with the state. It is unfortunate that the Law/Acts have been used to reduce the

freedom of speech in Zimbabwe, and enabled the ZANU-PF to control both the print media and broadcasting. As a result, some print and electronic media were used to divide the people with reports which were biased and unbalanced. However, a Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Commission (ZCBC) Pastoral Letter stated that "the media, both print and electronic, should facilitate national dialogue, tolerance, peace and unity" (ZCBC Pastoral Letter 2002: 8). The media must serve the society as a whole, not the narrow interests of a particular party, of ZANU PF or of the business sector (*ibid*). The ZCBC Pastoral Letter also condemned the use of inflammatory and intimidatory statements as well as shouting slogans against fellow Zimbabweans for the reason that they are in opposition parties.

During the 2005 elections, Zimbabwe Human Rights Watchdogs (ZHRW) reported 1,221 acts of political violence including 1 murder, after ZANU PF had won again under disputed results. "In the course of the 2008 general elections, there were 6,469 incidents of political violence, including scores of murders, unlawful detention, arrests, harassments, abductions, assault, torture, and property destruction" (MMPZ 2009: 156-161). "However, the 2008 elections did not produce a conclusive winner at the presidential level. The three political parties, namely ZANU-PF, MDC (Tsvangirai) and MDC (Mutambara), then signed a Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008 to form a Government of National Unity (GNU)" (Government of Zimbabwe 2008: 1-14). It resulted in the amendment of the constitution "(No. 19) Act, creating the positions of the Prime Minister and the two Deputy Prime Ministers, and spelled out their functions, shared power, and the operations of the government" (Mzumara 2012: 142-154). Mugabe became the President of Zimbabwe under GNU representing ZANU PF. Morgan Tsvangirai became Prime Minister representing MDC (Tsvangirai), Mutambara became Deputy Prime Minister representing MDC (Mutambara), and Khupe Thokozani became another Deputy Prime Minister, representing MDC (Tsvangirai). There were two Vice Presidents, both from ZANU PF – Joyce Mujuru and John Landa Nkomo (now late) (*ibid*).

"The 2013 elections on 31 July 2013, were the first elections held under the new constitution which was approved in a referendum in March 2013 and signed into Law by President Mugabe on 22 May 2013" (BBC. News, 3 August 2013). Robert Mugabe won 61% of the vote and therefore claimed a seventh term as president. Morgan Tsvangirai finished second with 34% of the vote. Reports by Zimbabwe Election Support Network monitoring group (ZESN) said that one million people, mostly in urban areas (MDC Areas), were unable to cast votes. "Other reports suggested that people had been forced to vote for Mugabe" (*ibid*). The African Union (AU) also had monitors in Zimbabwe and they remarked that elections were free, credible and fair. Western representatives were not allowed to send monitors. For Morgan Tsvangirai, the elections were a 'huge farce'. He noted that the country was mourning about the results. Furthermore, he claimed that "over a million voters were turned away from the polling

stations. Because of that, MDC would no longer work with Mugabe nor participate in government institutions" (ibid). Therefore, ZANU PF was given the mandate to rule for the next five years; MDC will fight it again in the 2018 Zimbabwe general elections.

## **4.4 Economic and Social Development Programs in Zimbabwe Since Independence**

Various economic policies and development programs were implemented since Zimbabwean independence (1980): the government was continually trying to redress the white minority regime in both social and economic sectors, which were characterized by a relatively well-developed urban sector and a largely poor rural sector that employed cheap labour force (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006: 27). The newly independent government sought to address some of these inequalities through the below-discussed policies and development programs.

### *4.4.1 Growth With Equity Policy of 1981*

"With its independence (1980), Zimbabwe inherited a dual economy characterized by a relatively well-developed urban sector and a largely poor rural sector that provided livelihood to about eighty percent of the country's population" (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). Against this background, priority was given to poverty reduction, and the government spending was to increase social sector expenditures, expansion in rural infrastructure and redressing social and economic inequality, including land reform (Government of Zimbabwe 2004: 1). On behalf of the urban population and its living standards, the government developmental policies pursued to cover the areas of minimum wages, black life standards, and indigenization. The equity developmental policy in general, "highlighted the government's desire to develop the country guided by socialist and democratic principles in the allocation and distribution of resources and social benefits" (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). However, the positive returns of Growth-with-Equity development policies were most apparent in the education and health sectors, where access to public services, resources allocation, and distribution were deracialized. The state transformed into a distributive and welfare state (ibid). The government viewed itself as a creator of a just society, with a historical mandate to decide on behalf of its people on what is good for them in the long-term pursuit of the aspirations of the liberation struggle. The new government was led by ZANU-PF, a party that fought in the armed struggle and brought independence of Zimbabwe from the British rule.

Overall, Zhou and Zvoushe argue that "developmental policy making during post-independence was centralized and top-down in its approach, whereby social welfare and

nation building considerations were uppermost in most policy decisions. Furthermore, policies of reconciliation (Unity Accord of December 22, 1987) and growth with equity provided a macro policy framework that was consistent with the imperatives of the new socio-politico-economic dispensation" (ibid). The challenges to implement these policies were evident after independence, though the policy making motive was generally pro-poor or had a social bias. The actions of the government were for the good of the public, and the policy choices by the political leadership were linked to the civil populace. The policy was also broad and biased to meet the goal of public goods and services. Therefore, "these fundamentals anchored the growth with equity macro policy which guided and influenced fiscal policy planning, agricultural policy, education policy, and health policy among others" (ibid). Therefore, development policies made in Zimbabwe just after independence were pro-poor blacks and were influenced by a nationalism agenda that emphasized nation-building and economic growth. To a greater extent, the policy was successful, but not everything was met by the policy provisions as expected by the leadership.

#### *4.4.2 Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan (ZTNDP) 1982–1985*

Since the first policy discussed above could not meet the expectations of the political leadership, the major objective of the Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan (ZTNDP) was to "continue improving the performance of the economy to enable the financing of the expanding social services sector. The plan targeted a 3% per annum growth in formal employment where 108 200 jobs would be created and an economic growth rate of 8% per annum" (Zimbizi 2001:13). After the 1981 development plan, land reform and resettlement cornerstones of this program fell by far short of resettling 162 000 families as had been envisaged. "Only one-fifth of the target had been achieved" (ibid: 14). It is posited that the Growth Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 4% per annum and unemployment remained unacceptably high, although there were, however, major improvements in social infrastructure development (ibid). At this juncture, the economy of Zimbabwe was characterized by a heavy reliance on the export of raw materials and a high degree of technological dependency on the outside world. It is pointed out that agriculture and mining accounted for over two-thirds of the total exports and the debt service ratio was 28% of total exports of goods and services. Inflation, which was pegged at 15% at the beginning of the transitional plan, rose to 17% by 1985 (ibid: 14). The two development policies discussed above were an attempt of the new government of a restructuration in line with the new socio-politico-economic period that had set in. The inherited national policy-making systems and processes needed to be transformed from minority-focused to majority-focused institutions. "The inherited economy was also fraught with embedded inequalities in income and wealth distribution, with the agricultural, education, industrial and banking sectors

among the most visibly affected" (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). Against such a backdrop, the new government started a new liberation war, this time, an economic liberation war, which is not yet won since independence. In light of the above, it is vital to say that the economic and social policies did not address the country's expectations as had been envisaged by the leadership.

#### *4.4.3 Zimbabwe First Five-Year National Development Plan (ZFNPD) 1986–1990*

It is important to emphasize that "this national development plan's major objectives were to transform and control the economy, to carry out a land reform and to ensure efficient utilization of that land. The challenge was that the government could not implement the land reform because there was no money to cater for that program. It has been observed that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was targeted to grow at an annual rate of 5.1%, the agricultural output should be by 5.0% per year, above the projected population growth rate of 2.76% per annum" (Zimbizi 2001: 14). The plan also projected that employment would increase at an annual rate of 2.2%. Therefore, from 1986-1990, there was generally a low growth rate, compounded by low levels of investments and shortages of foreign exchange. "Between 1980-1990, 209 000 new jobs were created in the non-agricultural sector and 46% of these jobs were in the public sector (public administration, health, and education). The public debt was 70% of the GDP at the end of 1990" (ibid). This development plan, again could not meet the envisaged expectations of substantially improving the living conditions of the poor. Therefore, there was a need for an economic reform program that would be pro-poor to correct inequalities that had been causing untold suffering of the majority and creating social stratification (the gap between the poor and the rich was widening at an alarming rate).

#### *4.4.4 Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) 1991–1995*

In 1991, ten years after independence, the government introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in order to redress the social and economic imbalances of the previous colonial regime (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). ESAP was adopted across Africa and the rest of the world in the 1990s in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank prescriptions. "ESAP was neoliberal market-driven policy measures which were adopted as prescriptive solutions to the economic crises of the 1980s. They also sought to reverse the expansionary policies of the 1960s and 1970s which had resulted in big governments" (ibid). "The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank initiated early retirement and retrenchment schemes for workers in both the public and the private sectors" (Moto Magazine 1996: 10). More than fifty thousand workers were lured into the schemes. According to the IMF,

the measure was an attempt to reduce the government's expenditures and to replace manpower with technology in the private sector (ibid). The government was expecting a new generation of indigenous entrepreneurs to be created through the financial assistance from the World Bank. The economy growth rate was too poor to create enough jobs and to sustain development programs. This was caused by the inherited monopolistic and centralized economy, years of drought, and inadequate planning (Gibbon 1995: 7-37). The dream of thousands of retrenched employees whose money had run out came to an end. The unemployment rate rose to more than forty percent. The growing unemployment threatened the survival of many families. "For the first time in the history of Zimbabwe, the standard of living for the majority declined and poverty was on the increase" (ibid).

The gap between the rich and the poor began to widen. The cost of living had risen more for the poor than for the rich. When the government implemented ESAP, people were not consulted. There is no doubt that the rural people became more marginalized than they were before the implementation of ESAP. Coincidentally, a year after the government embarked on ESAP, a series of droughts followed. The situation had become bitter for the majority of the citizens, especially for those people who lived on subsistence economy such as small farmers. It is noted that:

Many young people left their rural homes to look for employment in the cities. It did not take the time to notice people filling the streets selling goods, washing cars and degrading themselves in prostitution, more and more people tried to survive on the informal sector of the economy which often did not provide enough for a decent living (Moyo 1992: 5). It did not take two years after the implementation of ESAP until nearly three-quarters of Zimbabwe's population was reported to be living below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL). The slow rate of economic growth meant that fewer people were able to secure employment annually. There was a further unfavourable dimension to this state of affairs, as more and more workers lost jobs as a result of the demands of ESAP, the country's dependent population became astronomical in relation to the economically active population, as the latter becomes the de facto breadwinners of the former. (Moto Magazine 1996: 5)

Furthermore, it is argued that ESAP specified measures to achieve: "trade and exchange liberalization; domestic market deregulation; financial sector reform; and other institutional reforms. However, the Zimbabwean experience with ESAP policy prescriptions points to processes that were generally haunted by structural and situational constraints and their impact on the economy was low note as an annual growth rate of less than 1% was recorded" (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). Therefore, Zimbabweans experienced untold suffering during the implementation of the ESAP development program.

#### *4.4.5 Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST)*

*Launched in April 1998*

The ZIMPREST program was supposed to be launched in 1996 and to end in 2000 but was delayed by two years. Drawing lessons from the weaknesses and shortcomings of ESAP, it sought to restore macroeconomic stability, poverty alleviation, as well as facilitating public and private savings and investments (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012: 212-222). Therefore, in its strategy to eradicate poverty, ZIMPREST prioritized job creation. It aimed at creating an enabling platform for entrepreneurship, developing human capital and involving various stakeholders in the process (ibid). This plan was a home-grown reform package. “However, the lack of resources to implement this reform package undermined its effective implementation, because it was launched at a time when resources had already been allocated through the three-year rolling budget system. There was also a mismatch between the supply and demand for foreign currency. Two years into the ZIMPREST saw the budget deficit of about 10% of GDP, inflation above 50% and unemployment around 60%” (ibid). It is noted that the export sector performed poorly in terms of US dollar; exports collapsed from 12% in 1996 to about 20% in 1999 (ibid). Generally, ZIMPREST suffered from the lack of international financial support for its implementation, and it was pointed out that the government was too ambitious because it encompassed too many goals to be achieved; with no foreign support on poverty reduction, land reform, employment creation, institutional reforms, decentralization, and others, and without clearly spelling out the budgetary implications of each one of these policy objectives (ibid). There were no social or economic gains within this reform plan, and the policy lacked local grassroots support and the needed international financial support, hence it was not successful.

However, “at the time when the whole country was horrified by starvation, joblessness, closure of companies, shortage of foreign currency and droughts, the war veterans demanded fifty-thousand dollars for their gratuities” (Moto Magazine 2002: 16). They formed a Zimbabwe War-Veterans Association (ZWVA), which demanded both money and power. Having squeezed the government into giving them unbudgeted money for their gratuities and other benefits, they became so powerful that even President Mugabe got dancing to their demands (ibid). The government printed more money in order to give gratuities to the war veterans. This printing of currency affected negatively the stabilization in monetary and budgetary measures. After the disbursement of the gratuities, there were some increases in the interest rates, devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar, and freefalling inflation with prices rising every day, causing the Zimbabwean economy to shrink or contract. After the gratuities, the fuel price doubled, raising transport costs and all basic commodities, leaving many working-class families barely able to afford a single meal a day. In reaction to the situation, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) called for work stoppage known as ‘stay-away’. The stay-away triggered the escalating of food prices and costed eight people’s lives. “It also left a trail

of destruction of property estimated at tens of millions of dollars" (Kurebwa 2002: 16).

#### *4.4.6 Millennium Economic Recovery Program (MERP) Launched in August 2001*

This development program was launched as a short-term 18-month economic recovery program. "Its objective was to restore economic vibrancy and address the underlying macroeconomic fundamentals" (Government of Zimbabwe 2004: 12). These macroeconomic fundamentals included: to consolidate fiscal adjustment policies, resolve the foreign currency crisis, accelerate and complete public enterprises reforms, lower interest rates, build investor confidence, and protect vulnerable groups. The program sought to contain budget deficit within 3.8% of the GDP and to reduce domestic debt from 31% of the GDP in 2000 to 7% over 18-months (Zimbizi 2001: 15). From 2000 on, "the budget deficit was estimated at 23% of the GDP, the economy declined by about 4.2%, agriculture declined by 3%, tourism by 4.5%, manufacturing by 10.5% and mining by 14%. The land resettlement program which was haphazardly done or fast-tracked for political mileage without transparency as well as the political situation dampened direct investor confidence, which has destabilized the macroeconomic environment" (ibid). The vulnerable groups which are in commercial farming, mining, and peri-urban areas have been seriously affected. "The shortage of foreign currency has precipitated the fuel crisis, drugs stock-outs, food insecurity and limited access to basic needs, water and sanitation, as well as to health and education services" (ibid). It is further asserted that women and children under the vulnerable groups mentioned above are particularly vulnerable because of their limited resources and coping mechanisms. A United Nations Inter-Agency Vulnerability Report from 2000, cited in Zimbizi, identified the following population group as the most vulnerable:

Commercial farm workers, causes of vulnerability – land reform program, abandonment of farm or retrenchment, political violence – and the effects are: displacement, inability to meet basic needs like food, health, and education due to loss of income. Retrenchees are underemployed (e.g. closure of mines and factories). There were poor households in peri-urban and communal areas, poor incomes due to unemployment and poor agricultural activity due to a rise in input costs. There was also increase in communicable diseases because of poor access to health facilities and inadequate nutrition caused an increase in nutrition deficiency diseases hence, communicable diseases. (Zimbizi 2001: 16-17)

Again, under this development policy plan, there was no positive macroeconomic recovery for transformation on Zimbabweans.

#### *4.4.7 National Economic Revival Program (NERP): Measures to Address the Current Challenges – February 2003*

In February 2003, the Zimbabwe government launched yet another 12-months stabilization program, called NERP, while considering options for long-term economic recovery against the backdrop of facing severe socio-economic challenges. It is argued that these have been compounded by a hostile external and domestic environment, arising from the country's detractors' opposition to land and agrarian reform programs. "Sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe have seen important sources of foreign exchange – donor funding for development projects, bank's lines of credit, and foreign direct and portfolio investment – dry up. The country experienced low export performance and high inflation and failed to adequately provide fuel, electricity, food, drugs, as well as spares, capital, and equipment, among others" (Government of Zimbabwe 2003: 1). The government was warned that if it does not seriously address foreign exchange unavailability, it will lead to national instability and pose a threat to national security.

This being the case, the policy depicted above set the tone for a sectoral driven economic revival growth strategy, which needed to be complemented by measures that enhanced the country's capacity to generate foreign exchange. These measures were also central to the success of agrarian reforms – a cornerstone for the government's socio-economic transformation. It is asserted that the objectives of the aforesaid plan were difficult to achieve if the country's economic challenges were not addressed as fast as possible. These challenges manifested themselves through low economic activity, unemployment and worsening poverty levels, high money supply growth and related hyperinflation, and acute foreign exchange shortages (*ibid*: 2). The economy continued to deteriorate, a declining cumulative of 19.3% over the past three years. The rapid expansion in money supply to around 150%, a result of increased bank lending to the public sector, was a major cause of concern. Unsustainable high inflation, which accelerated to 208.1% in 2003, remained Zimbabwe's prime macroeconomic challenge. "Domestic prices had continued to escalate, against the background of shortages of basic commodities" (*ibid*). High inflation, therefore, coupled with deteriorating terms of trade, has led to further worsening export performance, and cumulatively, the country's exports declined by 35% over the last four years (Government of Zimbabwe 2003: 2). Apart from a crippling industrial production, the resultant foreign exchange shortage had seen the country's external payments rising to about 1.4 billion US dollars (*ibid*: 3). In light of this situation it has become clear that:

The build-up of external payments arrears has further worsened the country's international credit worthiness. Furthermore, the acute shortage of foreign exchange has also adversely affected the economy's capacity to supply adequate basic goods and services. As a consequence, most companies were operating well below capacity and others closed down, leading to higher unemployment percentages which are a threat to the nation's stability. Though NERP was received with more optimism

by donors, the private sector, and other stakeholders, more than half-way through its implementation, the program did not manage to generate the foreign currency required to support economic recovery, although home-grown reforms plan efforts were government's new emphasis. (The Government of Zimbabwe 2003: 4)

#### *4.4.8 National Economic Development Priority Program (NEDPP) April 2006*

The government of Zimbabwe continued to experience macroeconomic challenges due to poor governance, political tensions in the country, poor rule of law, poor land redistribution (which was fast-tracked), high levels of corruption, poor public service delivery, and poor relations with the donor community (e.g. European Union, Western countries, IMF and World Bank). From 2000 – 2006, the government has introduced several development programs aimed at reviving the economy. These included the National Economic Recovery Program (NERP) discussed above in 2003, the macroeconomic stabilization measures implemented by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) in 2004, and the 2005 – 2006 macroeconomic frameworks (NERP II), but none of these has been successful in turning around the economy. Therefore, the NEDPP program was launched by the government in April 2006, as a short-term action, results-based program to bring about economic stability. According to the Zimbabwe Country Dialogue Paper (ZCDP) of April 2007, NEDPP focused on the following objectives: “reducing inflation, stabilizing the currency, ensuring food security, increasing output and productivity, generation of foreign exchange, enhancement of expenditure and revenue management, removal of price distortions and effective policy coordination and implementation” (ZCDP 2007: 6). Furthermore, under NEDPP, the government sought to mobilize 2.5 billion US dollars to boost efforts to stabilize the economy, reduce inflation and increase agricultural productivity. The program was expected to enhance savings and trigger investment inflows into the country (ibid: 7). At the same time, the government of Zimbabwe needed to intensify internal political dialogue and normalize relations with western donors as well as work with its creditors to come up with a comprehensive strategy for arrears clearance (e.g. IMF, World Bank, and African Development Bank). Therefore, NEDPP could not transform the socio-politico-economic hemorrhage of the country as was envisaged. In such a chaotic socio-politico-economic deterioration another development reform plan was drawn.

#### *4.4.9 Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) October 2013 –December 2018*

Zimbabwe continues to experience a deteriorating economic and social environment since 2000 – though it is alleged that these challenges are caused by illegal economic sanctions imposed by the western countries, and it is clear that development policies

made in Zimbabwe since independence were not favorable to the country and were not accepted by the investors. It seems that these policies are made to meet the interests and needs of the ruling class. This is compounded by the fact that there is no progress in political reformation, hence, without political reformation, development assistance and foreign direct investments are unlikely to materialize in sufficient amounts. For this reason, the governmental development activities can be propelled if there is: political tolerance, the rule of law, fighting corruption; good public service delivery, good planning systems, and good public administration. Therefore, without these, the country experiences deep socio-economic and political crises characterized by a hyper-inflationary environment and low industrial capacity utilization. In the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013, general elections, ZANU-PF won the elections; they were given the mandate to develop the country up to 2018, when other general elections are going to be held. The government has crafted a new economic development policy known as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (Government of Zimbabwe 2013: 6-8). “The vision of the development plan is ‘towards an empowered society and a growing economy’ and the execution of this plan will be guided by the mission, “to provide an enabling environment for sustainable economic empowerment and social transformation to the people of Zimbabwe” (ibid: 9).

Having discussed the aforesaid development policy programs from 1980-2018, it is generally clear that the multiplicity of development programs, particularly those from the second decade of Zimbabwe’s independence to date (2016), are indicative of the failure to tackle the challenges of socio-economic and political reforms. The failure to transform the socio-politico-economic systems at the onset of independence is compounded by poor governance. In addition to the failure of development programs discussed above to usher in the socio-economic and political transformation for the majority of Zimbabweans, it is disturbing to note that, ZANU-PF leadership, their families, relatives, and friends are filthy rich as each day passes, whilst the general populace is wallowing in poverty. The grand question is: ‘Are all these development plans meant for the majority or for the few who are in leadership and is it that these development programs are manipulated or what?’ In such a scenario Zimbabwe is currently experiencing high levels of corruption, poor rule of law, poor public service delivery, zero political tolerance, zero accountability, and a poor tax collection system, despite the fact that all these are indispensable ingredients for economic recovery. Additionally, the country is still fighting high levels of unemployment and underemployment which is above eighty percent, poor levels of incomes, high levels of industrial and company closures. This is compounded by poor relations with the outside western countries, uncleared national debt which is pegged at over ten billion, high levels of poverty with the rural people and women suffering the brunt of such poverty. Furthermore, the country is experiencing high levels of braindrain as people emigrate in search for jobs. The use of US dollar as a nation’s official currency without a Zimbabwean official currency and

poor foreign direct investments have caused a liquidity crunch or crisis – an acute shortage of money in the country. On top of the above fundamental socio-economic challenges, the country is currently facing food insecurity, resulting from fast track land distribution (which was not judiciously planned) and poor funding of important development programs due to the non-availability of foreign currency.

All international donors (e.g. the US Agency for International development (USAID), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) among others) whom Zimbabwe is enjoying are directed towards humanitarian welfare, as well as socio-economic transformation. Therefore, there is no trust in the ZANU PF leadership which has been in power since independence (1980). Lastly, for ZIMASSET to be fully implemented, transforming the socio-economic crises in Zimbabwe, there is a need for political transformation and then building bridges with the international community. In light of this situation it has become increasingly clear that development programs implemented by the government were biased towards scientific and technological approaches, marginalizing spiritual capital as a factor in facilitating development. However, spiritual capitals have a measurable impact on individuals, communities and societies in the world. The following interview data (responses) from the Chiefs and headmen, NGOs, FBOs, and religious experts will determine how the role of religion in development is perceived in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.5 Chiefs, Headmen and Indigenous Religion in Development**

The role of traditional institutions in community development activities is significant. They deal with socio-economic, political, religious-cultural as well as governing systems in indigenous communities. In Zimbabwe's pre-colonial era 'chiefs' were the highest form of leadership in the nation; currently they are having limited and controlled authority. It is fundamental, therefore, to trace the developments of Chiefs' leadership fluctuations in relation to their involvement in development in Zimbabwe from pre-colonization, colonization, to post-colonization eras respectively. During the pre-colonial period, Zimbabwean Chiefs had full authority. They had full access to and control of the nation's resources such as land. To this effect, it is pointed out that:

It was one of the responsibilities of the Chief to uphold the community's rights to the land to members of the village, settle land disputes and protect the interests of his/her people against any form of intrusion. He/she also had authority to adjudicate in any conflict arising within the nation. As such, Chiefs had full jurisdiction over all matters considered serious enough to affect the whole nation. Apart from these functions, the Chief had important ritual functions to perform to ensure the success of his/her people's social and economic activities. He/she was a representative of his/her nation (*Nyika*) and the functional link with the generation of

ancestors who established prior claims to the nation for the benefit of their progeny. He covered all aspects of the propitiation of the ancestral spirits. Generally, Chiefs looked after the welfare of their people, both spiritual and material, but they took the advice and guidance from spirit mediums (*Masvikiro*). Spirit mediums had power and authority to advice or even to admonish Chiefs if they were wrong. (Mararike 2011: 10-11)

As for Bourdillon, during the pre-colonial era, the role of the Chief was clear within the Shona culture. Therefore, he explains, “the Chief is traditionally the guardian of the fundamental values of *Rupenyu* (life) and *Simba* (strength, vitality, well-being)” (Bourdillon 1976: 131). Life comes from the land of which the Chief is the owner, and strength or power comes from the Chief’s status and his accession rituals. Both life and strength are necessary for the prosperity of the people. The Chief is responsible for the prosperity of his people and particularly for the land and its production. Thus, drought may be blamed on the general incompetence of the Chief or on the fact that the wrong person was appointed (*ibid*).

The aforesaid quotations prove that during the pre-colonial era chiefs in Zimbabwe had full authority and control over the land, and could allocate it to their subjects for developmental purposes. This being the case, we can say that chiefs were considered to be the oasis of grace since they were believed to represent gods, ancestors, and *Mwari*. They were considered to be full of wisdom, charisma, honor, majesty, wealth, power, and all that is required to make him/her an outstanding leader of the people in the nation. He/she is an extraordinary human being and is above his/her subjects. The chief is viewed as the entrance point to sustainable development in communities. To that effect, we can simply say again that the chief and his subjects in the communities had indigenous knowledge systems that made these communities prosper, survive all dangerous pestilences and have development mechanisms for their upkeep. For example, they practiced agriculture that never eroded soil fertility through land and crop rotation systems of cultivation, despite droughts and natural disasters. They were good farmers, good miners, good hunters, and had long distance trading. All these skills show the Shona culture’s indigenous knowledge systems, which can be used as a resource for sustainable development. Concerning the colonial period, it is posited that:

It is true that some of the powers of the Chiefs were removed by the early white administration, particularly the power to try what Roman-Dutch law defines as criminal cases and to mete out traditional punishments to witches and other malefactors. It is also true that Chiefs now come under government jurisdiction in such things as the use of land. Their clear subjection to the white government deprives the Chiefs of some of their traditional status. Now the Chiefs cannot enforce or expect substantial tribute from their subjects and depend instead on their government salaries for their livelihood, as a result, many Shona presume that the loyalty

of their Chiefs has been directed away from their people towards their source of income. (Bourdillon 1976: 135)

When we critically analyse the colonial period 1890-1979, we can note that chiefs in Zimbabwe and even in most African countries faced many challenges, because they were playing a dual role by representing both their subjects or communities and the colonial government, an anathema in relation to governance systems in African traditions. This being the case, Bourdillon points out that, on the one hand, chiefs are traditional 'fathers' of their people and represent them and speak for them both to the spiritual powers believed to control the land and to other powers their people may have to deal with, particularly the power of the national government. Chiefs are the senior descendants of the founders of the chiefdom, the link with the traditional past, and they are supposed to represent their people, faithfully. The traditional status of the chiefs depends on their ability to attract and to inspire confidence in their followers. On the other hand, chiefs are government employees (Bourdillon 1976: 139). However, because of these developments chiefs were no longer considered true representatives of their subjects. In such scenarios, the colonial government could impose chiefs who can adhere to their demands, not to the demands and mind of their followers. It is clear that the government interfered in the traditional election of chiefs, and the temptation was to install chiefs who were not eligible and not recognized by their communities. Such chiefs could not represent their communities well because they were trying to please the colonial government who was their employer, hence, the indigenous people's religion and spirituality were abandoned. Chiefs were given their salaries by the colonial government, therefore they were expected to be faithful to their employer. Ultimately, chiefs compromised their true Shona cultural responsibilities. Furthermore, Bourdillon argues that:

Many Chiefs see their status as depending on government support, especially when they see the weakening position of traditional rulers elsewhere in the world. Apart from personal gain, many Chiefs see that their ability to acquire for their people supports for development projects depends on their cooperation with the government. As one Chief commented on his return from the conference organized by the government to discuss the proposed 1969 Constitution, 'it is a very bad Constitution, but what can we do? If we say 'no' we cannot get money for roads and schools. So we said 'yes'. Although the Chiefs are supposed to be the leaders and representatives of their people, they often appear to their people simply as government employees under the control of white administration. (ibid: 139-140)

The explanation above shows that the colonial government penetrated into Shona traditional culture through imposing chiefs. The, Shona culture was threatened and destroyed, because the colonial government could teach the indigenous people their culture and education, thereby neglecting the indigenous knowledge system as outdated.

To them, Africa was a dark continent which was in dire need of civilization. This move divided many communities where some local people could resist these developments whilst other communities embraced these developments. However, colonial education was taken onboard whilst indigenous education and religion were demonized and relegated as an ancient, archaic, and uncivilized system. To this effect, Shona society changed, and their views changed, too. Considering this painful development, Stopforth (1972), cited in Bourdillon, says that:

A further complication arose when the educated of the chiefs' subjects regard the chiefship as an outmoded institution, or an institution with limited value in the modern world. In the changing Shona society, traditional leaders are usually accepted for traditional roles (most agree, for example, that Chiefs should continue to control the allocation of rural land), but new situations require a new type of leadership. In a recent survey of an African township near Salisbury (now Harare), informants were asked if the Chiefs should be represented in parliament; many agreed that they must be represented, but with younger educated Chiefs. So even without the problem of colonial government control, the position of a Chief as the political (rather than religious or symbolic) head of his people is questioned. (Bourdillon 1976: 135)

It is apparent that, modern education eroded the indigenous people's respect and upholding as well as their high regard of their local knowledge systems, traditional culture, belief systems, philosophy, and worldviews. Therefore, the colonial era compromised the chiefs' traditional responsibilities. Let us critically analyze in brief the post-colonial period 1980-2016, in relation to how Chiefs were treated as actors for sustainable development in their communities.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, most people expected the challenges experienced by the institution of Chieftainship during the colonial period to be history. Many Acts were changed and passed in parliament. These Acts were trying to give guidelines on the role, duties, and functions of Chiefs in contemporary Zimbabwe. To these changing fortunes of Chiefs Mararike gives a good and critical analysis. He postulates that:

After the attainment of political independence in 1980, the Senate remained with Chiefs still represented. In 1982, the Chiefs and headmen Act (No. 29) removed the administrative and traditional powers of the Chiefs and headmen that they had under the African Affairs Act, Chapter 228. Although the two-house system of parliament was later abolished, the Chiefs continued to be represented in the new parliament. In 1989, the ruling ZANU-PF Party recognized the need to restore some administrative powers of Chiefs at its first National People's Congress. The Congress directed the government to strengthen the institution of Chieftainship with the hope that it might play a direct role in the preservation of the family of

Zimbabwe. It was also envisaged that Chiefs might play a role in the maintenance of the people's value systems... (Mararike 2011: 19-20). Has anything changed yet?

A critical evaluation of the analysis above compels us to say that there is no full recognition of the institution of chieftainship even after Zimbabwe attained political independence from 1980 to date (2016). As long as Chiefs have no independent authority and control of the land, we cannot say that they are in total control administratively and traditionally in their respective communities in Zimbabwe. They cannot incorporate indigenous knowledge systems when development programs are being planned and implemented in their areas of jurisdictions. This being the case, religious belief systems of the local people cannot be considered when development professionals are in contact with the government only, a top-down approach altogether. There can be an imposition of development programs from the government since chiefs' roles and responsibilities are no longer seriously considered by the contemporary Zimbabwean government, which has caused the rise of corruption. It is clear that nothing changed since the colonial era. To this end, Mararike, explains again that, we may assume that the restoration of the powers of the Chiefs may not be meaningful and complete if it does not go hand in hand with the restoration of their authority to have access to and control over resources such as land. Power and access to and control over resources should not be separated. This is why the traditional Leaders Act, Chapter 17, 1998, may be considered to be defective. It does not legally recognize the chiefs' power to control and allocate land to their subjects. Chiefs and elected authorities have an interest in the control of resources such as land. If their functions in this regard are not harmonized, conflicts and the overlapping of their activities with that of local authorities can be harmful in developing their communities (ibid: 28).

By 2 May 2012, the New Zimbabwe COPAC Draft Constitution was availed to the Zimbabweans, and on 22 May 2013, the new Zimbabwe Constitution was signed into law. (Before President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF Party won the 31 July 2013, general elections). This means that the new Zimbabwe constitution was signed into law by the Government of National Unity (GNU) (which came into power on 13 February 2009, after the 29 March first round and 27 June second round 2008 general elections could not produce an outright winner. The Government of National Unity comprised the ZANU-PF Party and the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). Of interest in this new constitution is Chapter 15, where Traditional Leaders' (chiefs') responsibilities are spelled out. The new Zimbabwe constitution of 22 May 2013, explains thus:

The institution, status and role of traditional leadership according to Customary Law are recognized. A traditional leader is responsible for performing the cultural, customary and traditional functions of a Chief or headperson, as the case may be, for his or her community. The obligations and functions of traditional leaders are; traditional leaders must – act in accordance with this Constitution and the laws of

Zimbabwe; observe the rules pertaining to traditional leadership and exercise their functions for the purposes for which the institution of traditional leadership is recognised by this Constitution; and treat all persons within their areas equally and fairly. Therefore, traditional leaders are to promote and uphold cultural values of their communities and, in particular, to promote sound family values; take measures to preserve the culture, traditions, history and heritage of their communities, including sacred shrines within their areas; facilitate development in their areas; in accordance with an Act of parliament... (Zimbabwe's Constitution of 2013: 132-136)

In analyzing the traditional leaders' obligations and duties, it is generally clear that their authority is no longer as independent as it was during the pre-colonial era. They will definitely not do anything without the blessings of the Act of parliament, where their obligations and duties are determined and passed into laws. In this case, we can see that the post-colonial period in Zimbabwe has not improved the restoration of chiefs' powers.

After a general overview of the chiefs' historical trajectory, it is important to layout a detailed description of the research which resulted in this study. Since 2004, the researcher has been a researcher on development. This was prompted by a long observation that all government policies on socio-economic development have yielded negative results as reflected above. To this end, in his first-degree the research was on: "Christianity and Development: The Case of Women's Training and Development department of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches". In his Master's degree, the research topic was "An analysis of Gustavo Gutierrez's Liberation religious tenets of the poor in view of the socio-economic situation among the people of Epworth Suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe". Over these six to seven years, the writer was curious to research on why development policies approved and passed by the Zimbabwean parliament do not yield positive results. Whilst researching on development in his Master's degree, he encountered the document entitled "Colonial Report, Northern Rhodesia, in the Mystery Casebook on the history of the building of Lake Kariba dam in the 1950s". Ever since then, the writer got a different perspective on the influence of indigenous people's religious beliefs on development. This discovery was accompanied by reading other scholars' works, for instance, Ver Alan Kurt Beek's "Spirituality: A Development Taboo (2000)". It was a paradigm shift to realize that, indigenous religion can be a resource for sustainable development in developing nations. The Colonial Report, Northern Rhodesia – now Zambia, north of Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), says that:

In 1957, a year into the building of the Kariba Dam, the river rose to flood level, destroying some equipment and the access roads. The following year the odds happened, this time destroying the access bridge, the coffer dam and parts of the main wall. Nyaminyami/Zambezi River water-god/spirit of the local people had made good his threat. Over 50 thousand local people living near and around Kari-

ba dam, mostly BaTonga tribe; they were vehemently moved. It takes months of reasoning and coaxing to convince the local people that the bridge would provide power. Eventually, however, ritual ceremonies were held to honor their Nyaminyami water-god and the journey to new lands began and in 1960, the Kariba dam was opened. There was the development of roads rehabilitation, clean water, electricity, construction of schools, improving agricultural production, and health services etc. (Mystery Casebook 2012: 1f)

In light of the above, mysterious events have also been witnessed when development initiatives were undertaken without the blessing of the owners of the land. This is just but one example, (for others, see below) on how Shona religion can be a factor in facilitating development. It was the work of the BaTonga elders/Chiefs and their medium spirits to persuade the Nyaminyami water-god to allow the Zambezi to be tamed. It was when the Nyaminyami water-god was consulted through the chiefs that the Kariba dam wall was finished. Some ground scientifically known to be rockless would turn to be rocky so that nothing could be done on it unless the traditional leadership would consult the owners who had gone before them (the ancestors). Therefore, it is important for us to critically analyze the data collected from the field research through interviews.

In interrogating, analyzing, and articulating the collected data, this section adopts the qualitative methodology. To be precise, it adopts the qualitative analysis of content which has two components: “a descriptive account of the data and a more interpretive analysis that is concerned with the response as well as what may have been inferred or implied” (Keith 2005: 193-231). The data for this section on chiefs’ involvement in development and the incorporation of indigenous religion into development programs as well as in development discourses (policy making) was collected from October 2015 to March 2016 from Zimbabwe. Through extensive interviews with various actors and agencies in development, such as Chiefs, headmen, personnel in the development institutions (NGOs and FBOs), and religious experts who are academics (professors and doctors), the study intends to show that indigenous people’s religion and spirituality are a force to reckon with for sustainable development. The interviews sought to find out if indigenous religion is incorporated into policy making and if it is integrated into development programs in Zimbabwe. All of the interviewees’ views and responses are directly quoted in the body of this report, (see appendix for more details on the interviewees). Sociological variables, such as positions, educational backgrounds, religious faith, age, gender, and ethnicity of the respondents are to be used when critically analyzing the content or views exposed by the interviewees. Traditional leaders’ understanding of indigenous people’s religious beliefs, spirituality and knowledge systems, should be tapped and considered as a resource for sustainable development in Zimbabwe. Ten chiefs and ten headmen were interviewed. Their views on all sixteen questions are analyzed in themes as reflected below.

#### *4.5.1. The Relationship Between Religion and Development*

All ten interviewees (chiefs) agreed that there is a connection between religion and development. They were clear that religious beliefs often determine individual or community positions on what is considered 'development' – hence determining directions people and groups take in developing themselves or others or cooperating in national development. To this end, **Mr. A.A.**, one of the chiefs, said:

The state or the government is a development actor and the church shares the same moral responsibility to improve the living standards of the population they serve. Furthermore, religion drives community development in education, health, and general development. It deals with issues such as human rights, family growth as well as national development. Therefore, their connection is indisputable.

**Mr. B.B.**, a chief, described in some detail the way he sees the connection:

Religion is connected to development. When I am saying 'religion', I mean all religions in the world, those of the minority and those of the majority, such as African indigenous religions, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. They connect vulnerable populations in remote and very remote places to development. As for our own indigenous religion in Zimbabwe, it's a religion in which Zimbabweans were born into; hence there is a great connection to development. Remember, religion is for the betterment of human beings and that betterment is development. Therefore, religion is a strong motivation for people to act in the way they do in development. Moreover, healings that take place through religion contribute to the manpower development within the societies.

**Mr. C.C.**, a senior chief, remarked that:

Yes, religion and development are connected. In religion, people tend to value the culture, norms, and the tradition, hence, in this respect alone, human development is intertwined with religion. In addition, in religion, we learn about the dignity of a person endowed with responsibilities and these responsibilities have a positive impact on development.

The same question was asked to ten headmen and eight of them agreed that there is a connection between religion and development, as they both address issues of human well-being, whether physical, mental, or spiritual. They noted that both religion and development are human centered. Therefore, religion shapes the well-being of the nation through cultural dimensions. Development works hand in hand with the concepts of cultural religion. For this reason, a headman, **Mr. K.K.**, said:

There is a strong connection between religion and development in the sense that as much as religion looks at humanity's salvation, it also looks at humanity's psychological needs, thus, development. They both have value to humanity, that determine what kind of development can be done or implemented in a community.

**Mr. L.L.**, another headman said:

It is true, yes, religion and development are connected. Development has to do with human transformation and religion defines preferred development efforts. Development involves the soul which is the center of religion. Furthermore, religion informs the worldview of a people, thus by extension informs how one reacts to the social environment or milieu. In this regard, religion affects thought processes and actions of a community. For this reason, some people do not send children to school or health institutions on religious grounds. Issues of marriage consent and how the family is organized is usually tied to religious beliefs. Therefore, they are really connected.

One of the two headmen, **Mr. M.M.**, had a different perspective than the other eight. He pointed out that:

Some African traditional religions do not permit girls to learn beyond grade seven. This limits their development potential. Also, some do not allow their children to get immunized or to seek treatment. This leads to a lot of morbidity and deaths from preventable diseases. Some religions can deter development. Therefore, the connection is not clear to me.

Several observations need to be made about the chiefs' and headmen's responses on the aforesaid question. Chiefs are still embedded in indigenous religion and since they are custodians, they feel that indigenous religion is connected to development. Their worldview is religious; hence modern scientific education has little impact on their perspectives. On these grounds, most of them have a low level of education; they analyze issues differently. On the contrary, headmen are comprised of young and educated people who have reached ordinary levels. They are exposed to modern education and its topical issues such as human rights, democracy, globalization, etc. Therefore, they are able to articulate issues as well as preserve indigenous religious belief systems and remain critical of their own local religious beliefs' dark and unprogressive areas. They are gender sensitive, hence for them, development of a girl child is a development of the nation.

#### *4.5.2 Indigenous Religion – A Hindrance or a Factor in Facilitating Development?*

Seven respondents (chiefs) believe that indigenous religion is not a hindrance to development, in fact it's a factor that facilitates development. They believe that a people's history is an important benchmark to measure progress, thus indigenous traditional religion embodies historical development aspirations which have a bearing on the future. Furthermore, they noted that indigenous religions advocate for policy change in order to create a good environment for development. They are also the catalyst of development in creating a skilled and healthy human resource base through schools,

universities, and affiliated development faith-based organizations. To this effect, **Mr. D.D.**, a chief, said:

Indigenous traditional religions are a factor that necessitates and facilitates development. Traditional approaches in medication, for example, *mishonga* (herbs), can be scientifically developed to the benefit of the society.

**Mr. E.E.**, another chief, highlighted that:

Indigenous religions are not a hindrance in development. If people are consulted well on their developmental needs, they can shape their destiny. There are progressive indigenous and, endogenous religious and knowledge systems that are embodied in the traditions that could be centers of development, such as '*nhimbe or humwe*' (community people working together for a common goal to develop their families), conservation practices, food and nutrition, health, and medicine. Due to indigenous religion people have social responsibilities for others in any life circumstances and always learn from each other – thereby creating sustainability.

Three of them (chiefs) felt that indigenous religion is a hindrance to a certain extent. **Mr. F.F.**, one of them, intimately remarked that:

Indigenous religion becomes a hindrance in so far as it can be oppressive. However, if viewed purely from the perspective of cultural preservation, there are development elements. In addition, it is a hindrance because half of the time it encourages enmity between health institutions and the local people, a sign of hindrance for development that causes people's deaths, since they will be discouraged to visit clinics and hospitals, respectively.

Five headmen felt that indigenous religion is both a hindrance and a factor in facilitating development. For them, it is a hindrance because it lags behind in terms of changing culture dynamics. It must not remain an old-time religion but must be trendy and keep up with changes in the society. **Mr. N.N.**, a headman, noted that:

In some respect, indigenous traditional religion is a hindrance in development when traditional beliefs reject aspects of development such as human rights of disadvantaged groups like women and girls. Moreover, myths and taboos and traditional belief systems can slow or hinder uptake of development. Other traditional practices lead to abuse and retard development, for example, sending a boy child to school and leaving a girl child without education, as well as early marriages of a girl child.

**Mr. O.O.**, a headman, said:

If not respected, indigenous religion is a stumbling block in development. If respected, it will render a great cooperation that sustains development, though there are still areas it cannot negotiate on, that hinder development, such as condoning domestic violence to women and girl child abuses.

The other five headmen had a different perspective on the same question. For them, indigenous religion is not a hindrance at all but a factor in facilitating development. As an indigenous religion, it bases its developmental aspects on indigenous and endogenous knowledge systems (IKS). Therefore, a headman, **Mr. P.P.**, was convinced when he posited that:

Indigenous religion is not a hindrance for development because these indigenous traditional beliefs and practices had been in existence for centuries and from these the local people benefited up to date. Therefore, it is actually a vehicle for sustainable development through facilitation and preservation of indigenous knowledge that is essential for development.

And **Mr. Q.Q.**, a headman, was quick to say:

Yes, it is a factor in facilitating development because through education and campaigns religious beliefs that are negative to development can be dispelled and it allows for a change in beliefs, thereby seeking ways to adopt on positive beliefs, but without renouncing indigenous beliefs, but fusing and synchronizing, thus enhancing the proposed changes. Belief in an extended family advances the commitment to care for children. For this reason, African traditional religions and cultures are known for fostering a ‘communal practice’, a unique feature in a modern world system full of individualism.

We can see that most chiefs and headmen believe that indigenous religion is not a hindrance but an essential factor in facilitating development. This is because indigenous people relied and are still relying heavily on their religion. Few chiefs and headmen believe otherwise: the researcher thinks that this is compounded by the reason that the landscape is changing and contemporary chiefs and headmen have different levels of education. Some Africans have been impacted by long times of denigration of African religions and spirituality. Another factor is the proliferation of technologies and scientific advancements. Furthermore, the lack of documents of the indigenous people’s worldview and culture may obfuscate its relevance. Although they acknowledged some gray areas in indigenous religious belief systems, the general feeling of the majority is that indigenous religion is fundamental to its believers.

#### *4.5.3 The Incorporation of Indigenous Religion Into the Planning and Execution of Development Projects*

Ten interviewees (chiefs) are of the opinion that the incorporation of indigenous religion into the planning and execution of development projects is a must, because religious beliefs determine indigenous people’s identity and understanding of developmental principles. For the interviewees, they are useful as a baseline for different developmental trajectories, and indigenous knowledge systems are often intertwined with tradition-

tional religions. To substantiate the perspective shown above, two chiefs captured their colleagues' views as follows, thus **Mr. G.G.**, noted that:

Indigenous religion should be incorporated into the planning and execution of development projects, in order to adopt certain norms, values and practices from it that are transformative and essential to stir up development. In addition, they are sustainable and can assist in ensuring that projects go a long way. For instance, issues of climate change have been there since time immemorial, but somehow using indigenous knowledge systems local people have survived droughts in the past. Moreover, beliefs, myths of a particular society should be considered in development projects management, if not, the projects are doomed to fail and unsustainable.

**Mr. H.H.** also said:

Incorporation of indigenous religion assures development participation of the local people. It is a gateway to reach to remote places for sustainable development in the communities, thereby reaching out to many people. A people's culture and religion are important in shaping beliefs and interaction with nature, thus, they should be accommodated in designing and executing development projects. By doing this, projects are sustainable because they will be owned by and of benefit to the local people.

All the headmen (ten) agreed that indigenous religion should be incorporated into the designing and execution of development projects. According to them, development practitioners operate in these communities: therefore, a synchronized approach is necessary for development projects in order to yield positive results on the ground. Two respondents (headmen) described how indigenous religion can be incorporated. **Mr. R.R.:**

We need to be realistic here, indigenous religion should be incorporated into the planning and execution of development projects in as much as it has a significant number of adherents in a given social setting and it touches local people's aspects that have to do with their well-being. This is a sustainable way; they have the indigenous knowledge and can come up with practical plans that can be implemented with minimal challenges. Therefore, integrating indigenous religion into development discourses is essential, since most aspects of local people's belief systems are positive for human and environmental development. If this is done, there is a sense of ownership and sustainability. Care should be taken, however, in ensuring that the aspects of religion taken are not retrogressive.

**Mr. S.S.:**

Yes, very much so, it should be part of the baseline survey data collected, otherwise development projects will not be successful. These acceptable traditions within indigenous peoples can go a long way in promoting development projects –

thus involving the local leadership. Furthermore, for the development practitioners to get cooperation from the local people and to be able to understand indigenous religion, it should be incorporated into every stage of development. This will equip them with the knowledge of how to address religious issues and will inform them about the drawbacks indigenous religion can bring to development. Moreover, indigenous knowledge systems have been contributing in a big way in development and, development practitioners need to know the traditional aspects of the people whom they are helping. This is because any development's success depends on the understanding of the community and should be context-specific.

The indigenous traditional leaders to a larger extent agree that the incorporation of indigenous religion into the planning and execution of development projects is an integration process that determines the success of any development project. Therefore, local religion must be incorporated into development discourses – indigenous people will get a sense of ownership of these projects and sustainable development will not be a challenge. In such cases, development projects will address pertinent issues the local people are facing and will genuinely lower high levels of extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequality in Africa.

#### *4.5.4 The Government of Zimbabwe and Indigenous Religious Beliefs in the Planning and Implementation Stages of Development Programs*

All interviewees (ten chiefs) pointed out that the government should seriously and genuinely incorporate indigenous religion when planning and implementing development programs. Currently, the government only acknowledge the existence of traditional leaders and indigenous religion through the constitution, but it does not consider it in development. For that reason, interviewees think that the government only formally respect indigenous people's traditions, but avoids it practically in development discourses. This being the case, a chief, **Mr. I.I.**, elaborated as follows:

True that, our government should incorporate our indigenous religion because this can foster participation in these programs and will bring sustainable development to our nation. The move, if implemented, will enhance the attainment of development goals without causing conflict in development systems. This will accommodate traditional leadership and their practices, hence will influence development programs – therefore, there is a need to genuinely incorporate indigenous religion. Development should begin by identifying local resources that are available for self-development.

And **Mr. J.J.**, another chief, had this to say:

This is the way to go about it: building social cohesion and harmony which are the basic tenets of sustainable development and will definitely develop communities. Incorporation of indigenous religion will engender buy-ins from all indigenous

stakeholders and render the sense of ownership. Zimbabwe is facing serious socio-economic challenges through the successive failure of development programs. As traditional leaders, we think it is attributed to the government's neglecting of our indigenous beliefs, norms, values, and practices which help a lot and create a good milieu for genuine development programs and projects that will alleviate absolute poverty in our country.

In the same vein, six respondents (headmen) believe that the government as an institution cannot ignore matters of culture and tradition, as well as religion and spirituality: they must be included for development programs to be people specific and accepted in communities. To this end, the government should work hand in hand with traditional leadership since they represent the grassroots. They are custodians and vanguards of the culture and religion of the local peoples. Therefore, **Mr. T.T.**, a headman, put it this way:

Without a doubt, our government should incorporate indigenous religion into planning and should implement it in development programs, because those beliefs are essential in advancing development and if unrecognized, they can be a hindrance to development initiatives. This is because most people in Zimbabwe, although they profess to be Christians, are still deeply connected and involved with the indigenous religion they were born into. Therefore, indigenous religion is a repository of indigenous knowledge systems which can either have a positive or negative influence on any development project. When the government refuses to consider their own people's religion, it's as good as refusing their identity – therefore, ancestors and *Mwari* will be angry and forsake us, hence the country faces many challenges as she is experiencing right now.

In contrary of the perspective outlined above, four respondents (headmen) had a different view altogether. They think that the government should not incorporate indigenous religion because investors and other development agents could be pushed away. Hence, **Mr. K.K.**, a headman, had this to say:

The government and local authorities should simply recognize indigenous religion and should not incorporate it into the planning and implementation of development programs. The reason is that belief systems are difficult to implement in development since they are not scientific. Besides, these beliefs cannot be understood by most young Zimbabweans who work for the government, by investors as well as development practitioners. Therefore, relegating them can quicken progress since considering them will be time-consuming and some development programs have short live spans. Donors can pull out their money if delays are experienced. Our government is not considering it because of such challenges.

Several observations to the respondents' responses are to be made. Those who believe that the government should incorporate indigenous religion know the significance of a people's religion and how powerful religion is. They are proud and they identify with

their culture. The reason why the government is continuously sidelining indigenous religion is the fact that traditional leaders are paid; hence they cannot influence change. Another factor that inhibits the incorporation of indigenous religion is that most government officials profess to be Christians and have adopted a scientific approach in development discourses. Therefore, indigenous religion and spirituality are considered to be pagan. For this reason, considering it will be like reliving the past.

#### *4.5.5 Are NGOs and FBOs Considering Indigenous Religion When Implementing Development Programs?*

Out of ten interviewees (chiefs), seven have categorically echoed that NGOs and FBOs do not consider indigenous religion since most of these development agencies' principles and convictions are grounded in the Bible – thereby, they are international Christian institutions or organizations. Even secular NGOs do not consider indigenous religion when implementing development programs. However, if they face resistance from the local traditional leadership and their people, they implement them elsewhere, where there are no such challenges. They were very explicit in regard to this policy, and one of them, **Mr. A.A.**, highlighted the following views:

Most donors do not believe in indigenous people's belief systems; therefore, they do not consider local people's beliefs when implementing development programs. Even those development agents who are in favour of humanitarian welfare, when being in communities, they start with a Christian prayer and a Bible verse is read and they close the program with a Christian prayer. These development agents lack an understanding of indigenous religion and its importance to the local people. There is an absence of detailed research and documentation of the connection between religion and development. These agents tend to respect traditional leaders only because of their power, not because of what they believe in.

Three other respondents (chiefs) have a different perspective on whether NGOs and FBOs consider indigenous religions when they implement development programs in the communities in Zimbabwe. They expressed that some NGOs and FBOs who consider local religions are those which were formed in Zimbabwe, such as the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Christian Care, etc. These organizations work with traditional leaders, on conflict transformation and conservation programs, to mention just but a few. One of them, **Mr. B.B.**, said:

To a greater extent, traditional leaders play a big role in facilitating developmental activities and they make sure that indigenous religion is incorporated as well when these development programs are implemented. Furthermore, there is no way any development project or program can be implemented without considering local people's belief systems.

Six headmen were clear in their responses that NGOs do not consider indigenous religion. They noted that, most of the FBOs tend to emphasize proselytization on behalf of their parent Christian churches when engaged in humanitarian welfare – thereby excluding local religion and even denouncing it. One of the respondents, **Mr. L.L.**, was quick to say:

Indigenous religion is of far too little importance to these development agents. Most NGOs and FBOs are from the global north (western societies); they are generally Christian in their orientation. They do not take cognisance of indigenous religions.

Four of them (headmen) were also clear that NGOs and FBOs consider indigenous religion when they implement development programs. They noted that these organizations are cognizant of the fact that in order to be successful, they should explore local traditional beliefs through tools such as participatory rural appraisals (PRA). “The approach aims to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in the planning and management of development programs and projects” (SIPA 2013-14: 1-7). **Mr. M.M.** had this to say:

For development agents, this is very much part of the baseline survey, to analyze data and take it into consideration in designing operations grounded on the philosophy: ‘do no harm’. Furthermore, the local people and their religion are always put in the driving seat for purposes of sustainability and ownership. It is their development; hence, their active involvement is important. In fact, they are incorporated especially at the start of the project and program so that there is no conflict and the project and program can be adopted easily.

We can note that out of twenty respondents (chiefs and headmen), thirteen said that NGOs and FBOs do not consider indigenous religion when they implement development projects and programs. Seven of them (three chiefs and four headmen) said that indigenous religion is being considered in development. In light of that, it can be taken as a sign of division among Africans. The probable reason can be that indigenous religion had been demonized for centuries when the global north or western Christian missionaries came to Africa. Down to the present day (2016), Africans were and are still being decapitated culturally and religiously, hence many contemporary Africans despise the religions they were born into, clinging to proselytizing religions. Development agents take advantage of this division among Africans. However, the general trend here is that if development agents leave behind indigenous religion in development programs, thus leaving out traditional leaders, development programs will not succeed. Chiefs and headmen can influence their community members to ignore and repudiate development initiatives.

#### *4.5.6 How Can Development Agencies and Their Personnel Become Conscientized to Seriously Consider Indigenous Religion?*

All chiefs believe that the government and the traditional leadership should be seriously involved in conscientizing development agencies and their personnel to consider indigenous religion when implementing development programs. They expressed that they can do that through stakeholder meetings and workshops as well as through conferences. They should be included in the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that is signed between the government and the development agencies. One of the chiefs, **Mr. C.C.**, contributed more information, thus:

Traditional structures must be incorporated into local governance structures at district forums. Documents on traditional practices and religious beliefs should be produced for development agencies and their personnel to use. In addition, development agencies should know that nothing in terms of development can be for the benefit of the indigenous people without consideration of their culture and religious belief systems. The government of Zimbabwe should make it a norm and a given rule that at any inception of a project, local traditional authorities, and the government officials should be informed, so that they participate at the implementation stage of each development program so that they can respectively play their roles. Moreover, they should encourage participation and consultation within the grassroots level to consider their input in development programs.

All the interviewees (ten headmen) are of the opinion that there is a need for stakeholders like the government and traditional leadership to seriously conscientize development agencies to consider indigenous religion. Like their counterparts (chiefs), they noted that training of all development personnel on the importance of indigenous religious beliefs should be a priority. **Mr. N.N.** said:

This can be done through staff development programs as well as through service training workshops which traditional leadership facilitates. Tools for exploring and documenting traditional religious beliefs should be developed. This will help development personnel appreciate indigenous religious beliefs in their area of operation. Furthermore, through the local traditional leadership, they should be guided and consider local people's faith at village level.

The responses from both chiefs and headmen given above show that development agencies and their personnel could not accept and consider the belief systems of the local communities where they operate. Ignoring traditional leadership has caused a majority in the communities to suffer whilst the few are benefiting, and it has also caused the siphoning of natural resources without benefiting the local people where development activities are conducted. Traditional leaders are more trusted by their people than political leaders. For this reason, the government of Zimbabwe should genu-

inately work with the traditional leadership so that the majority who is experiencing the scorch of extreme poverty can benefit and change their living standards.

#### *4.5.7 Integration of Indigenous Religious Beliefs, Norms, and Values Into Policy-Making*

Ten chiefs testified that the government of Zimbabwe should integrate indigenous religious beliefs, norms, and values into policy-making in order to achieve an effective incorporation of local beliefs into development. They think that the integrity of a government can be measured by the degree of consideration it shows for its people's culture and belief systems. They also think that policy-making should allow the participation of traditional leaders in all processes. To this effect, **Mr. D.D.**, a chief, elaborated as to how policy-makers can do this effectively, thus:

Our government should seriously conduct specific consultation with the traditional leaders to integrate the various positions that are held in various provinces of the country before the policy is drafted. After that, they should also make use of the chiefs' council and empower them to have more advisory roles and oversight during the process. In other words, I am saying that they should involve them at all stages of developing a policy. Therefore, there is a need to assess their benefit in social development and to remove unprogressive elements of belief systems, especially those that are not gender friendly on women and girls. In addition, laws have to be created that support the use of indigenous religious belief systems, there is a need to document them and show how these belief systems support development. Besides, these beliefs can be shared with NGOs and FBOs in document form. With this approach, all stakeholders will be involved and benefits will be enjoyed by the majority when we lead as traditional leaders.

Seven headmen's responses show that it is possible to integrate indigenous religious belief systems, norms, and values into policy-making. They noted that there is a need to include lobby bodies and groups like the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA), leaders' representatives and historians in the formulation of policies. **Mr. O.O.**, one of the headmen, noted that:

The involvement of all stakeholders should strengthen non-harmful beliefs, so that they can be adopted into legislation and policies. For instance, make it a policy that every father in Zimbabwe is obliged to ensure basic and full education for their children, especially girls. This will make unprogressive elements within our belief systems to be not in tandem with human rights tenets. Such a move is open and inclusive and such policies always attract bigger participation and interest on the part of the intended beneficiaries. To a larger extent this does not invalidate our belief systems, no, it strengthens them. Our culture is our identity, therefore, development projects and programs should fit within our culture and milieu for

them to be effective – thus, if they are policies, development practitioners will seriously consider them and there will be genuine change within our communities.

Three interviewees (headmen) had a different perspective, and for them, integration of indigenous belief systems is impossible and difficult to achieve. Policy-makers are not vested in culture and belief systems. Therefore, the integration process can take ages since most of them are young adults who are Christians. **Mr. P.P.**, a headman, had this to say:

I don't think it is practical to integrate indigenous belief systems into policy-making, considering the modern world system we are in – avalanche with technology and cultural dynamics. Most of the policies are technologically oriented and are biased towards Christian values and norms. For that reason, it's not possible.

It is important to emphasize that the group of headmen is comprised of young adults who have gone through the global north education and to a larger extent are not in touch with their roots – although many of them profess to be rooted in indigenous belief systems. Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe's personnel and a group of young adults are caught between modern world systems and African indigenous knowledge systems. They are compromising and sacrificing their culture, religion, and spirituality; a difficult decision that will affect negatively the foreseeable generation and the posterity. This is another reason why African indigenous religions are not integrated into policies and in development programs and projects.

#### *4.5.8 Chiefs' Duties in Making Sure That Indigenous Religion Is Respected When Projects Are Implemented*

All interviewees (ten headmen) agreed that traditional leaders, such as they themselves and chiefs, are custodians and champions as well as vanguards for the preservation of indigenous religion and culture in their respective communities. Therefore, the government should afford them those duties so that they can work without partisanship. To this end, they think that chiefs, including themselves, should be given back the power they originally inherited so that they can perform their roles genuinely. Unfortunately, they have been adulterated by the ruling party ZANU-PF. **Mr. Q.Q.**, a headman, put it this way:

I think that chiefs and us have the obligation to oversee and promote our traditional religion in our respective domains. We have the duty to ensure that other role players in traditional religion are participating too. We have to keep track of what development events are being done in our areas and make sure that our belief systems are considered and respected fully. This alone gives joy to our ancestors and *Mwari* who are the owners of the land where these development programs and projects are initiated. Our participation as traditional leaders in the

development and mobilizing of our people to actively participate in development events will ensure indigenous religion to be incorporated and be respected fully. Chiefs and us, as traditional leaders with the powers vested in us, should guide and orient development practitioners to respect and incorporate local belief systems for these development programs to take-off successfully. We should defend indigenous religion without fear and favor, for we shall be held accountable by the ancestors and *Mwari*.

Ten chiefs also agreed that it is true that they are champions, custodians, and vanguards of indigenous religion day and night. Therefore, they are community leaders and command respect from their people. Through interaction with the development personnel of NGOs and FBOs, they can accomplish the inclusion of traditional religion in programs and projects that are being implemented in their communities. With this perspective, a chief, **Mr. E.E.**, said:

We as chiefs are the vanguards of our precious tradition in this country and we need to be empowered as enforcers of indigenous religion in development programs for the owners of this land, our ancestors and *Mwari*, know that their land is going to be dug etc. Therefore, we are supposed to be involved in all development planning so that we can be given space to input at our level. If that is not done, as chiefs we have the power to influence our people not to participate in those development programs that despise our way of life and our belief systems. In addition, if we are empowered fully, we can encourage our local people to have focus groups where information can be gathered for consideration in development projects. For this reason, development projects should also be shared with us, so that there is coherence with traditional beliefs in the areas in which projects are done. Furthermore, we are the compliance authority, although sometimes the government officials ignore us for political reasons. We manage the monitoring and evaluation of the project initiators. We motivate and supervise the project implementation with tangible efficiency. These are some of our grassroots duties.

Chiefs and headmen are important leaders on the groundwork and in mobilizing their people to participate in development projects and programs, and they can easily incorporate their indigenous religious belief systems for they know that without doing so, ancestors and *Mwari* will not bless these programs and projects to take-off. This being the case, chiefs should be empowered to perform their duties fully.

#### *4.5.9 Are There Relevant Areas Where Indigenous Religious Belief Systems Can Be Involved in Development?*

All interviewees (chiefs) showed their enthusiasm that indigenous religion is relevant in all areas. Therefore, traditional leaders and their people can own the projects being implemented and can continue to monitor the projects and programs. However, **Mr.**

**G.G.**, one of the chiefs, was specific in relation to the areas where indigenous religion fits well, thus:

Yes, and it is true that our indigenous religious belief systems seriously help in conservation and land reclamation, conflict resolutions, food relief programs, and child protection programs. Also, all marriages should be registered with the chiefs or headmen, to ensure that child marriages disappear. In addition, our beliefs are relevant in health, environmental conservation, food security and agriculture for more and better yields, in mining as well. Sometimes mining is done on sacred places, hence, there is a need for rituals that will appeal to the ancestors and *Mwari* for their permission – since the program will benefit their living children, our community. Furthermore, they are relevant in community self-sustenance, resilience, creating a culture of sharing, forging and tolerance. They also extend to the capacity of building, thus responding to emergencies and disasters through the building of schools and mission hospitals. Moreover, they are also relevant in water and sanitation – borehole drilling. I have witnessed that when *chivanhu* (performing of ritual), was being done before the borehole drilling took place – incidentally water was struck. Therefore, methodologies and processes are heavily guided by the beliefs and values of the beneficiaries. Oh sorry, I forgot lawmaking should be done within our belief systems as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation, social development, infrastructural development and economic development, the list is endless. Our beliefs systems fit in all areas.

Likewise, all ten respondents (headmen) could not disagree with their counterparts on this one. They noted that indigenous religious belief systems have relevance in all areas that elevate human beings' living standards. One of them, **Mr. R.R.**, detailed their perspectives stating the following:

Well, I think that indigenous belief systems are relevant in areas where development programs and projects have to do with the conservation of biodiversity. These programs and projects may include development that changes the landscape of the region. And the good part of these positive indigenous beliefs is that it can unite communities and promote development programs, for example, *Nhimbe* – communities supporting each other in the fields, or the concept of *'Zunde'* – distributing grain by the chiefs to support the less fortunate families through or because of droughts. Furthermore, they are relevant in sacred places, so that these are not disturbed in any manner.

It is apparent that indigenous religious belief systems are relevant to the indigenous people, since they have used them repeatedly for many centuries. However, this does not mean that indigenous belief systems will remain stagnant. Instead, they will gradually change, since they are in constant contact to other world cultures. To this effect, unprogressive elements will be eliminated and positive elements of indigenous religion will be reinforced.

#### *4.5.10 Working Relation Between Traditional Leaders, Government, NGOs and FBOs in Development Programs*

All ten respondents (chiefs) were in agreement that there should be interaction in all spheres of development. This triggers the successfulness of development programs to the advantage of the beneficiaries in different communities of the country. One of them, **Mr. H.H.**, said:

This is a difficult question because, traditional leaders fall under the Ministry of Local Government, but as employees. Things have changed recently, though there were good working relations. The good working relations are in the context of master and servant, between the government and traditional leaders, the latter behaving as servants since they are receiving salaries. The working relation between traditional leaders, NGOs and FBOs is sometimes good and sometimes bad. To a larger extent, for me, it's disjointed, I think that this has been caused by the centralisation of power within our country. This being the case, the government is the one responsible for chiefs, thereby consulting them or giving them instructions on what to do is a common phenomenon. Furthermore, when the NGOs and FBOs finalize any development project and program with the government in such an organigram, the traditional leaders are sometimes afraid to contradict the government when they see that projects and programs do not resonate with the community, with people's aspirations and expectations. In such scenarios, NGOs, FBOs and even investors simply tell or inform the chiefs on what they would want to do in the community and they should comply. So we are dealing with a top-down approach here. Therefore, the working relations are not consultative, but are instructive, and lack specific parameters for engagement – so politics is at play here.

All ten headmen felt that the working relations are shrouded with political motives. Therefore, for them, the role of traditional leaders (chiefs and headmen) has become political in nature. For this reason, one of them, **Mr. T.T.**, pointed out:

Since traditional leaders operate directly under the Ministry of Local Government, but not as employees, usually there is a tension between chiefs, headmen, NGOs, FBOs and even investors in terms of loyalty and allegiance. Cooperation should be the best route, with clearly defined roles. In addition, for the success of the working relations and the development programs, these parties should time and again meet on conference tables, assisting and educating each other in all the ten provinces of the country. This will help these provinces to benefit equally from these development programs. If we don't work together, development will not happen. The top-down approach has proven to be problematic. Therefore, as traditional leaders who work with our people from the grassroots, we feel that a bottom-up approach will make our working relations to be practical and genuine, hence, cordial, since the government will take action through the NGOs and FBOs that comes from the people and if possible change policies where there is a need to do that.

The responses from the interviewees, given above show some developments in relation to the authority of traditional leaders if they are exercising their powers at all. To a greater extent, they feel that traditional leaders are not empowered enough to execute their duties independently. However, work relations had been politicized to the effect that it is difficult to implement a bottom-up approach – thus, traditional leaders will not genuinely represent their communities in a bid to fulfill their employer's (government) aspirations. This is a tricky position, hence there is dishonesty in such work relationships. Traditional leaders are forced to compromise their roles, hence ignoring indigenous religion to the demise of development programs in the country.

#### *4.5.11 Development Programs in Mining and Agriculture Operating on Sacred Land – What Can Traditional Leaders Do?*

Ten chiefs felt that in such circumstances, it is a result of bad working relationships between the traditional leadership and the government. This is caused or can be experienced when the government enters into an agreement with the investors and development agents, and allows them to go straight to work without consulting the chiefs who know their constituencies better than government officials. Chiefs know all sacred places or areas in their communities. They noted that development can be done successfully if beliefs, norms, and values of the areas are respected, as well as the ethical considerations are taken seriously. Traditional leaders should quickly intervene when the mining or agricultural program is underway – otherwise, there are no meaningful results from the program or project. This being the case, one of them, **Mr. E.E.**, a senior chief, laid down what should be done in such situations:

My task as the Chief is to uphold the religion and culture of the indigenous people. Shona religion (African Religions) has to be attended to. When the development organizations want to implement any program in my area they should first consult me so that I can inform the ancestors and then tell them which areas are sacred and into which they can go freely, and what the people in my area believe in. If you do not do this, your machine will break and mysterious things will happen. Currently, we are having problems in the country because Chiefs are not respected and considered in development planning and implementation. Thus, the traditional leaders engage with the government and investors so that they protect the sacred land. In addition, well-planned development programs which have no political motives would normally have included the traditional leaders in the first place. If Acts of parliament supersede the local traditional values, negotiations are entered into. However, if that happens, as traditional leaders we perform ritual ceremonies in cooperation with the mine owners or investors. They do not have power over the land as it is allocated by the government on behalf of our ancestors and Mwari. The investors are made to pay a levied fine before conducting cleansing ceremonies. Furthermore, traditional leaders should be empowered to

prevent and stop such travesties and they should continue to enforce the respect and incorporation of indigenous beliefs to safeguard our culture in our country. There should be a linkage between our local norms, values, and development programs.

He also gave the example of the 'Chiadzwa Diamonds Project' in Mutare, which failed to take off, after the development investors in cohort with the leadership of the Ministry of Mines ignored indigenous people's religious belief systems by not involving Chiefs. When they saw that they failed to mine diamonds, they called the Chiefs to perform rituals to pave the way for the investors to extract diamond minerals. To the aforesaid exclusion of traditional leaders, The Standard Newspaper of 22 June 2014 says that:

In Mutare, President of the Chiefs' Council, Chief Fortune Charumbira has said diamond mining operations in Chiadzwa are facing numerous problems because the spirits are angry at government and mining companies for snubbing traditional leaders and local cultures. The Zimbabwe government and mining companies are disrespecting cultural values of communities they were operating in. 'You know, some of these things are spiritual. It is unfortunate that the government did not consult traditional leaders on how to extract the diamonds'. The diamonds are on our traditional land. There are supposed to be rituals done first in order to appease the spirits. The land belongs to us and the diamonds are ours. We are the ancestors of this land where diamonds lie on, but, the government decided to go for it alone. Look, now there are so many problems in Chiadzwa. Traditional leaders were of the view that mining companies were violating cultural rites in their operations. They come into communities, displace the villagers and pollute their environment. Villagers are suffering. There are violations of cultural rites. Our ancestors are not happy because of the disrespect of their rights since they stay in a rich land, but are not benefiting from their ancestral land resources. (The Standard Newspaper, 22 June 2014: 1f)

On the same question, all ten headmen had the same perspective, as noted by a senior chief above. They believe that mother-earth feeds her own children – therefore, miners and agriculturists should seek and be granted permission from both the government and traditional leaders, in order to operate. Natural resources should benefit the general populace of that country – thus feeding the local children. One of them, **Mr. S.S.**, said:

In such circumstances, traditional leaders should be consulted for baseline studies. However, when work already had begun, cleansing ceremonies could always be conducted to avoid the failure of the program. In normal situations, traditional leadership has a role in advising the government and development partners about such sacred lands before implementations kick off. What I mean here, I mean the government should not sideline or marginalize traditional leaders because they know all sacred land in their respective areas, unlike government officials and politicians, who come and go. Traditional leaders remain in their positions until they

die, therefore consulting them will be for the good of development programs and the preservation of our culture and religious belief systems.

Disrespecting ancestors and *Mwari* through the traditional leaders is to risk shame and mortal danger for individuals and the entire community. Although the Mutare incident lacks specificity and details as to what really took place and what investors experienced, the overall report from 'The Standard Newspaper' and from Chief Fortune Charumbira can be accepted from the religious perspective. Unfortunately, from a scientific perspective, the whole report lacks evidence and can be dismissed as well as taken as a political motive. *Mwari* stands behind the ancestors and the ancestors stand behind the chiefs, as the ultimate guardian for the sole purpose of benefiting humanity, and humanity has an obligation to sustain the work of *Mwari*. This makes it impossible and impractical to do away with indigenous religion in any spectrum of life, including development. The ultimate purpose of development is the betterment of humanity, which is the concern of the ancestors and *Mwari* in indigenous religion. To by-pass and denigrate this principal belief system will not get development organizations anywhere. The belief that they have consulted the ancestors and that they have been blessed is important. Therefore, the ancestors and *Mwari* are believed to *make* or *unmake* development if they are not consulted. Furthermore, a developmental initiative in agriculture will not kick off if ritual ceremony is forbidden. The whole activity of agriculture is ritualistic, and to engage in such an activity without doing the rituals will be like building a house without a foundation. This may also compromise participation from the indigenous people, which is a crucial element in development, and the program becomes divisive and less effective, hence not sustainable. But once these ceremonies are done, the indigenous people are happy and forthcoming to participate in development programs because, in addition to the feeling and belief that the activity is sanctioned, they also feel that their identity is not treated contemptuously. The community feels the social ties of cooperation and therefore it is strengthened. By their nature ceremonies unite people and bring them together for the development of their community. With the marginalization of such ceremonies and rituals through Euro-Western scientific and Christian oriented development approaches, the people lost their point of unity – no sustainability of development will be realized.

#### *4.5.12 Experiences on Development Initiatives That Failed Because Indigenous Beliefs Were Ignored or Disrespected*

All twenty interviewees (chiefs and headmen) noted that some development agencies are experiencing difficulties in implementing development programs because they disrespected traditional beliefs. One of them, a chief, **Mr. I.I.**, said this:

Yes, there are many experiences in relation to development initiatives that failed because indigenous traditional religious beliefs were not respected or ignored. An

irrigation scheme constructed by the European Union (EU) in Mwenezi, a rural area in Masvingo province, failed twice with rivers changing course due to the disregard of traditional leaders' advice. This was successful after project leaders listened to the traditional leaders of the area. In addition, we have dam constructions in a number of pegged places around the country that have failed until the indigenous traditional people were consulted. I am also informed that the Manyuchi dam project called for local traditional people well in advance of any successful commensuration of the dam project and there was no problem. Furthermore, from a water and sanitation (WASH) organization's perspective, in a place called Bome, in Mashonaland central province, boreholes failed to yield water when some traditional rites were not performed before the drilling of boreholes commenced. This is practical and it happened – therefore, indigenous belief systems should be followed without exception.

**Mr. I.I.**'s response is a testimony that indigenous belief systems, if they are not followed properly and respected as well as incorporated, can impede development initiatives that help the whole country and improve the lives of the poor majority. This being the case, indigenous people's traditional beliefs and culture should be followed, if development programs and projects are meant to benefit the majority who are experiencing extreme poverty in African communities. Therefore, African indigenous religions are a resource for sustainable development.

#### *4.5.13 The Pros and Cons of Incorporating Indigenous People's Belief Systems Into Development Programs and Projects*

All the respondents agreed that there are pros and cons in their views, but one idea vividly came out. The idea is that all development programs and projects that incorporate indigenous people's belief systems into their planning and implementation are more sustainable and communities identify themselves with them. They involve communities through their culture, religion, and spirituality – thereby encourage buy-ins. By admitting that there are pros and cons, one of them, a chief, **Mr. J.J.**, took it upon himself to elaborate more on that and pointed out:

True that, as traditional leaders we know that there are advantages and disadvantages in incorporating indigenous beliefs. However, let me assure you that the pros outweigh the cons on this respect. Well, the pros are: there is a 'we' feeling within local people if their religious beliefs are incorporated, hence, it helps to improve indigenous people's livelihoods for they will participate a hundred percent, there is rapid growth of the development program, there are practical solutions to sustainable development, there is no community strife if its culture and religion are considered, it maintains the discipline of the society even without written laws, and lastly there are morals within the religious beliefs, that are good to the program and project, for instance, anti-corruption – as you know, our culture and be-

iefs condemn corruption and encourage *ubuntu* (a leadership concept that emphasizes kindness to humanity). The cons are: sometimes the incorporation of belief systems can slow down the process, for it tends to be bureaucratic in nature, hence some project initiatives have no patience and may opt to go where there are no such bureaucracies – when timelines are not met, it can lead to extreme poverty as communities resign in their fate and wait for the ancestors and *Mwari*'s hand to solve their problems, instead of working. This may create religious fanaticism, hence, can cause community strife. There might be conflicts between leaders of traditional practices and other religions, for example, Christianity. Development programs will be given to other communities. This can be taken as discrimination from development agents, since they will not accept cultural practices of families, women, and girls where they are working – this alone will retard development programs. If development programs are not in line with indigenous peoples, they can be prejudiced.

It is evident from the response that the pros outweigh the cons. The cons' effects would bring untold suffering into the communities and developments could not succeed in such circumstances. However, it is a truth that there are no human practices that are perfect. Therefore, humanity is fallible. Of great importance for development agents is to understand a people's way of life and take advantage of positive practices that will save lives of the poor majority.

#### *4.5.14 The World Bank's and the IMF's Vision Is "A World Free of Poverty" – To What Extent Can Indigenous Belief Systems Contribute to Achieving This Vision?*

Sixteen interviewees (chiefs and headmen) – nine chiefs and seven headmen – felt that international development institutions' vision can be met only if these institutions believe that indigenous people's religious beliefs are a fundamental resource for sustainable development in their respective communities. This being the case, involving these beliefs and values will help define poverty in different contexts and how they will approach each context in implementing development programs which are relevant. For them the inclusion of local people's religious beliefs, spirituality and knowledge systems can promote trust between the development organizations and communities, so that mutual respect ensues. A headman, **Mr. K.K.**, said:

Yes, the vision is attainable if these development agencies can allow full participation of the local people and allow the programs and projects to fit within our culture and religion, not for the local people to fit within the programs and projects. Remember, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is fundamental because it's kind of a bottom-up approach and it is different from the top-down approach that is commonly enforced by these development institutions but doesn't work at all. In addition, local stakeholders know what problems they have, but they may not have the necessary resources to reach a solution at the back of their minds. Therefore,

the inclusion of local beliefs will help the indigenous people to solve their problems in their own way. Indigenous people's involvement will shape their destiny and sustainability is guaranteed. Furthermore, they have a say in the development, this alone encourages identification of real needs which will address root causes of absolute poverty in a community. This brings a platform for engagement with people if this is genuinely utilized. It provides durable or sustainable solutions to eradicate poverty. The use of traditional agricultural practices in farming that preserve moisture and zero tillage as well as reliance on organic manure in place of fertilizers and pesticides will help in food security. Another challenge is that local people are not benefiting from their natural resources extracted by investors – if they are given a share of their natural resources there is a possibility to achieve this vision.

Four of the interviewees (one chief and three headmen) felt that the international development institutions' vision cannot be achievable considering the rampant mistrust between these development institutions and local peoples. For this reason, they noted that there is a lack of genuine inclusion and participation of indigenous peoples and their beliefs – therefore, it is not a meaningful participation that does not include a local person and the whole community. A headman, **Mr. L.L.**, described it in some detail:

I do not agree with the Bretton Woods Twin's vision (World Bank and IMF – which was created at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944) and how they go about it in development programs and projects even when they incorporate indigenous people and their beliefs. African people are still drowning in rivers of absolute poverty, unemployment, and inequalities, despite the availability of these development programs – why? I know that Africa has her own internal challenges, but some development programs are blind to indigenous people's beliefs, aspirations, and knowledge. Let me hasten to say that there is nothing like 'a world free of poverty', this is utopia which cannot be attained, considering the division of the Modern World Systems and its capitalism, where there are poor nations and rich nations. This being the case, developing countries in Africa suffer more than global north countries. This is also compounded by unfair and greedy trade deals on the international market, as well as unending conflicts in Africa. Let me end by saying that fewer conflicts promote development and development that fits well within the culture, religion, spirituality and knowledge of a people will promote a world free of poverty.

The interviewees' responses show that there is a great need for development institutions to genuinely consider indigenous people's religion and knowledge systems for the vision to be attainable. The inclusion processes create sustainable development. It is a well-known fact that some development agencies have Christian principles and values but a pluralism of religions can be a panacea in ushering in development programs for the intended beneficiaries, who might not be of the same faith with the development institutions.

#### *4.5.15 Can Ubuntu, Indigenous Religious Good Governance and Leadership Have a Positive Impact on Zimbabwe's Future Development?*

All twenty respondents (chiefs and headmen) pointed out that if *ubuntu* (being generous and compassion to other people) indigenous religious good governance, and leadership are taken seriously in Africa, the concept of *ubuntu* could go a long way to ensuring a better distribution of wealth – which is one of the major challenges to reducing extreme poverty. However, capitalist models of development militate against the principles of *ubuntu* and politics tend to influence development to an extent that these principles become white elephants. One of the respondents, a chief, **Mr. A.A.**, elaborated as follows:

Definitely, these principles can have a positive impact on our country's future development. Why, because most of our indigenous religion teaches good leadership, governance and *ubuntu*. In fact, these principles are embedded in our culture. This is done in order for our communities to benefit, not for individuals. If these principles are honestly practiced they will root out corruption and promote a culture of transparency and accountability, which are our traditional practices. These bring about values such as integrity, dignity, and cooperation as benchmarks in leadership. In addition, development programs rooted in *ubuntu*, good governance and leadership tend to uplift the general living standards of the majority of the poor. Lastly, our country's future development trajectory is bright if all these principles are practiced.

It is true that *ubuntu*, religious good governance, and leadership never left Zimbabwean leaders, but Zimbabwean leaders left their cultural way of life and adopted a foreign culture. For this reason, if development programs are availed in the community, leaders, especially politicians, tend to think for themselves and their families, neglecting the majority. This is a sign of zero *ubuntu*, good governance, and leadership. Despite the fact that Zimbabwe is rich with natural resources, her leaders are getting richer each day whilst the poor are suffering.

#### *4.5.16 Areas of Synergies Between FBOs and Indigenous Religion in the Struggle for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe*

All twenty interviewees (ten chiefs and ten headmen) had a common perspective because they noted that they (as leaders) and FBOs are there to change the living standards of their people. Therefore, they felt that as much as indigenous belief systems and culture should be respected and incorporated, leaders should not concentrate on each religion's negative elements. Instead, they should work together as human beings. Co-operation is essential in sustainable development, fixation on dogma is divisive. **Mr. M.M.**, a headman, stated areas of synergy:

First and foremost, there is a need for the sharing of knowledge systems from both parties, then co-visioning areas of common interest. We can be engaged in activities such as provision of basic services – food relief, shelter, clothing, health services, advocacy and community organizing and community development as well as a family support system. We can work on building social cohesion and communities' local capacities to deal with shocks, violence, droughts, and disease outbreaks. Furthermore, FBOs can use our traditional religion positively – thinking outside the box and embracing chiefs and headmen in their work and giving them their rightful places. Again, synergies are possible on issues of gender justice, promoting human rights, and dignity for all. We can work together in child protection and child rights for all, and in accessibility of resources for all without discrimination. Furthermore, in the areas of environmental conservation, conflict resolution, marriage institutions, respect for each other's values. We can synergise in the provision of the needed manpower and volunteers in the process of development programs, in the combat against HIV and AIDS, in peace building, elections, and constitutions. For sustainable development to be realized, development programs should be implemented together with the indigenous people, not for the people – it should begin with the local people.

A few observations can be noted here. Development programs are for the people as they are – together with their knowledge, religion, and spirituality. In other words, as a development practitioner, you have to be able to work within a people's milieu. This understanding will propel the sustainability of programs. It is clear that people of different faiths can cooperate. Different faiths are not barriers that retard development practitioners from the global north and south to collaborate in development discourses. Ultimately, we can postulate that chiefs in contemporary Zimbabwe are pro-development in the communities they lead; however, what is needed is to give them the power to control development activities together with development organizations. The worldview of the Shona people tells them that their socio-economic and political activities cannot be separated from their cultural and religious understanding. Some developmental initiatives are aimed at economic amelioration. An understanding of Shona people shows that development cannot be materialistic and technocratic, only people-based. In Shona, to be people-based means nothing more than taking into cognizance indigenous religion as it is evidenced by the chiefs and headmen in Harare and Seke District, though they have been disempowered by the modern constitution. As a result, we go beyond the dualistic approach (common in the Euro-Western thought system), which separates spirit from form, religion from economics, development, politics and so on. Furthermore, it is evident that since the colonial period, up to the present day (2016), indigenous people's religious beliefs, values, norms and worldview were not considered. They are considered when development investors and the government face challenges like in the cases of the 'Kariba dam' and the 'Chiadzwa Diamonds Project', as well as in other aforementioned examples. This being the case, we can say that to-

gether with the proliferation of technological progress and scientific approaches from the global north, there emerges a need for cooperation since Shona religion has proved to be a reliable resource for sustainable development in Zimbabwean communities. Not incorporating indigenous beliefs into development discourses as a resource compromises sustainable development in Zimbabwe where high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequalities are still experienced.

## 4.6 NGOs and FBOs on Indigenous Religion and Development

There is no doubt that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) operate in different communities in the world, (that is in developed as well as in developing nations). They have a long history of responding to the people's needs, especially in relation to poverty, natural disasters, war-torn nations, as well as in any emergencies. They are significant as socio-economic and political actors operating in rural and urban sites in Africa, Asia, Latin America and are linked to their principle donors in Euro-Western and Asian developed nations. Therefore, they have earned the nickname 'important players' in the international communities where they play a great role in development programs and humanitarian assistance. Africa deserves special mentioning here, because the aforesaid challenges are common in most of its countries. They have a history, too, in responding to emergencies, as well as engaging in development programs in developing nations. Following the thrust of this thesis, in considering African religions as a resource for sustainable development, this section on 'agencies of development – NGOs and FBOs' discusses and critically examines if these development organizations incorporate indigenous religious beliefs when operating in Zimbabwe. The different roles played by these organizations are explored, through the extensive data gathered from field research. Fifteen interviewees, eight NGO and seven FBO employees were interviewed (see appendix for more details on interviewees). Their perspectives on sixteen questions are critically analysed in themes as reflected below.

### 4.6.1 *The Connection Between Religion and Development*

Eight interviewees (NGO personnel) who responded to the question above agreed that there is a connection between religion and development. The common response was that most development programs and projects are motivated by and are based on religious ideologies and/or convictions. Therefore, religion is inseparable from development. One of them, **Mrs. A.**, gave an account on how she sees the connection:

I have worked fifteen years in this NGO and my experience has made me to agree with others that there is a connection. Why, because there are many indigenous traditional practices and beliefs that serve development. These include social mo-

bilisation which requires participation, leadership and guidance as well as support. In addition, religion can have a positive impact on change in mindset, thus engendering positive values, work ethics etc., delivery of services to the communities. Let me also hasten to say again, religion deals with human life and development deals with human life, too. Furthermore, although some people might say that the notion of development is not easy to understand, but if every religion sustains its practitioners then every religion is associated with development. Once more let me end by saying that religion has values which people uphold just like in development. Both religion and development rally people towards a common cause and have got a uniting effect which compels people to act in the common purpose of bettering their living standards.

Responding to the same question, seven FBOs employees who were interviewed also agreed that there is a connection between religion and development. They felt that religion has an effect on personal, community, and national levels. It promotes and sustains peace, builds families and the nation. Even in the formation of the personality of its adherent religion contributes to development. Therefore, one's religion affects decision making, relationships, rest days, food choices, health issues and every aspect of an individual's life. Religion and development are part of a man's life from the womb to the tomb. One woman, an FBO employee, **Mrs. I.**, who is in her late 30s, was quick to say:

True that, there is a connection. Religion is the way that a people live, it informs their beliefs and social system. There is a relationship between these social systems and development. This is because in most instances what you believe in has a direct influence on your progress in life. Moreover, religion promotes social cohesion and interaction which promotes peace and where there is peace there is development and the vice versa is true. Furthermore, religion shapes behavior and beliefs of a people and this affects their views on certain aspects that influence development such as education, technology, and science. This is the way I see the connection between religion and development.

We can see how these NGO and FBO employees view the connection between religion and development. Although they work in development organizations that value the Christian dogma, to a larger extent they are convinced that indigenous religion plays an important role in development. They showed that all indigenous religious beliefs encourage development. Therefore, religion and development are not enemies at all; working together will create a change in the communities.

#### *4.6.2 Indigenous Religion – A Hindrance or a Factor in Facilitating Development?*

Out of fifteen interviewees (eight NGO employees and seven FBO employees), ten of them, five NGO and five FBO employees, agreed that indigenous religion facilitates development. They were clear that indigenous religion views good life as a result of

proper worship by its believers. By supporting good life, indigenous religion facilitates development to ensure that people are prosperous. They felt that the Zimbabwe indigenous religion promotes progression of development; therefore it remains a critical factor in facilitating development. For this reason, sustainability is assured. One of them, an FBO employee, **Mr. J.**, had this to say:

It should be known that indigenous religion has sustained Zimbabweans for millions of years, hence it has developed them. It is the only religion that can develop us, no other religion can do that. After saying this, let me move on to say that indigenous religion is not a hindrance, in fact, it also encompasses positive modern technology. It is concerned about the conservation of the environment, thus, to protect wetlands, it's against poaching and the destruction of forests which they have conserved for generations. Furthermore, when development programs come into our communities, they should take cognizance of the people's social systems. Finally, if a religion is understood, respected and tolerated, one will be confused, but people will work together for the success of the development programs and projects to change the lives of the beneficiaries.

Five of the interviewees (three FBO and two NGO employees) had a different perspective on the aforementioned question. They felt that indigenous religion can be a factor in facilitating development and can be a hindrance to development. Indigenous religion can be a hindrance if certain taboos are insisted upon just on religious grounds. For instance, in Zimbabwe a development agent cannot succeed putting up a school or a clinic if indigenous people deny the program or project on religious convictions. An NGO employee, **Mr. B.**, said:

Let me remind you that, where indigenous religion is adhered to in its original form, it will be a hindrance to development. Therefore, indigenous religious beliefs need to embrace change and the current state of economy, science, and technology. They will not hinder development if they respond to the development dynamics but if they don't, yes, they will hinder development.

Some observations can be made from the responses given above: Interviewees who said that indigenous religion facilitates development have a good history of the religion and how it has sustained its followers. For that reason, it can work together with any modern development approach. Indigenous religion works very well in areas of conservation of the environment and agricultural practices; therefore, these elements can be roped in, considering the negative effects of applying pesticides and chemicals in the soil. This does not dismiss the fact that any religion has some negative elements, as noted by the interviewees who believe that indigenous religion has elements that hinder development.

#### *4.6.3 The Incorporation of Indigenous Religion Into the Planning and Execution of Development Projects*

All the respondents from both NGOs and FBOs felt that it is fundamental to incorporate indigenous religion into the planning and execution of development projects because it captures the thinking pattern of the local people who will provide the human capital in development projects. A woman, who is an NGO employee, **Mrs. C.**, summarized as follows:

Yes, it should be incorporated into all stages because its exclusion will hinder development and the local people won't cooperate in any way. Just like in the Chiyadzwa Diamond project, which was made possible by chiefs who performed rituals to pave the way for the investors to extract diamonds. Incorporation is the only way indigenous people in a community can participate. Their participation is a sign that their way of living as a people is acceptable and it's a sign that they have accepted the project, and this will sustain the project. By doing this, the project will not remain 'foreign' to the community. Development practitioners will also get the perspectives of the local people. Leaving out indigenous religion from development will be like separating a fish from the water. The sustainability of any program and project comes when values, norms, and beliefs of the local people are incorporated. Religion should be considered in the sense that it helps to have an inclusive and participatory process in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects. When you deal with a person, remember you are dealing with a religious person. Development personnel should know the religion of a community if good development is to be achieved. Above all, this improves the atmosphere of the operation.

The response from **Mrs. C.** shows the importance of indigenous religion in development. As a senior NGO worker, she has seen, heard, and experienced it all. Therefore, such an approach expands the base of operation for the development practitioners. Local people will participate without reservations. If their religion and spirituality are genuinely considered in development programs, they can sustain these programs.

#### *4.6.4 The Government of Zimbabwe and Indigenous Religious Beliefs in the Planning and Implementation of Development Projects*

All fifteen interviewees were convinced that the government should incorporate indigenous religious beliefs into the planning and implementation of development projects. They noted that policies governing the development projects need the buy-in of the indigenous people, and these people almost always think religiously. Besides, a development that comes out of the people's convictions is more likely to be sustained. To this end, an FBO employee, **Mrs. K.**, elaborated as follows:

Our government should seriously incorporate our religious beliefs into development, I believe, thus involving the traditional leaders during the planning stage and creating an awareness of the projects as they are the recipients of the development plan. They will accept and educate their communities for easy dissemination of information to the grassroots – from villages, wards, districts and provinces. However, the government should be mindful that beliefs differ from one location to another – hence there is no room for imposition from the government on the minority tribes as well. This is because in any government there are different people with different beliefs and they represent people similar to them, so they have to include various beliefs – it would be best if the chiefs' council could be a part of this process. Our government should be motivated by our indigenous religion and the policies should be drafted within the beliefs of the local people. Ultimately, if our own government ignores our religious belief systems, then, it neglects our culture, hence such a country has no identity at all. Our government is not incorporating indigenous religion because it was demonized by the colonial countries during the colonial era when the missionaries came to Africa; hence they hesitate to embrace their own religious beliefs seriously in development. If incorporated and given prominence, they should demonstrate their relevance, and value. The historical trajectory of indigenous religious beliefs has been jeopardized, hence our government's skepticism to incorporate it.

It can be seen that all interviewees are of the opinion that their government should incorporate indigenous religion into the planning and implementation of development projects. This will bring about the sustainability of the projects. At the same time, they were critical of the fact that their government is skeptical to incorporate indigenous religious beliefs. The reason is that most government officials are Christians. Therefore, there is a clash of faiths in that respect. Generally, the most important feeling of the interviewees is that religion and spirituality of a people play a big role in development discourses in developing nations.

#### *4.6.5 Are NGOs and FBOs Considering Indigenous Religion When Implementing Development Programs?*

All fifteen respondents highlighted that NGOs' and FBOs' development agencies do not incorporate indigenous beliefs when implementing development programs – they merely respect the structures of traditional leadership in a given community. These development agencies, especially NGOs, employ local people with qualifications in psychology or sociology and not people with qualifications in religious studies, while FBOs are largely Christian-based and more often than not look down upon indigenous religion as pagan. These organizations have their own agendas in Africa, hence they don't consider indigenous religion at all. One NGO employee, **Mr. D.**, noted that:

NGOs and FBOs are mostly in competition with indigenous religion, hence, they do not necessarily promote values, beliefs, and norms of other religions. They normally consider politics, not religious beliefs of the indigenous people. If they consider religious beliefs, they only consider Christian beliefs as they normally start and end with prayers in any development executing. Instead, traditional beliefs are demonized and are rather bypassed if not taken as non-existent. In most cases, development practitioners simply ask the community if it wants the project, then they can go ahead. Otherwise, they leave that community. Therefore, these development agencies should use community engagement to design and implement development interventions and include the views of the majority of the people. Development agencies view local beliefs as stumbling blocks which need to be modernized. In such instances, these development agencies have received criticism and sometimes rejection of communities. Sometimes, with the prevalence of extreme poverty and unemployment experienced in these communities, rituals are performed secretly without the knowledge of the development agencies' personnel. Then the project will carry on, hence people will benefit from it.

It is evident from the response given above that, these development agencies do a noble job in the communities. The problem comes when they do not consider and incorporate indigenous people's beliefs. For this reason, it is difficult to address extreme poverty in Africa, since these belief systems can be a factor in facilitating development.

#### *4.6.6 How Can Development Agencies and Their Personnel Become Conscientized to Seriously Consider Indigenous Religion?*

All interviewees agreed that there is a need to conscientize development agencies. Zimbabweans who work in these development agencies noted that the challenging issue is that most urban and rural people do not publicly practice indigenous religion at family levels. Instead, in public, the majority of families practices religions such as Christianity and Islam. In schools, colleges, and universities it is the same. This poses a challenge for development agencies to seriously consider indigenous religion. One of the FBO employees, **Miss L.**, had this to say:

Yes, there is a challenge, but I think that holding workshops, seminars, and conferences where the role of indigenous religious beliefs in development is discussed with the leaders of development agencies, as well as with the traditional leaders, will be a good starting point. For me, it's an engagement with gate-keepers of indigenous religion. Inception meetings with these traditional leaders should be a must since there is consideration of different ideas between stakeholders. The government should seriously help in conscientizing development agencies on this issue since it is the one who authorize operations. Through the memorandum of understanding (MoU), both parties will have agreed on the issue of incorporating indigenous religious beliefs.

It is apparent that these employees wish for their religion to be considered in development; unfortunately, it is not the case on the ground. Indigenous religion has been relegated to the private sphere because the government is not coming out clearly in support of it. The shunning of indigenous religion by the government is taken by these interviewees as a derogatory stance that can compromise their culture and religion. This being the case, they feel that indigenous people should be proud of their way of living and publicly profess their spirituality.

#### *4.6.7 Integration of Indigenous Beliefs, Norms, and Values Into Policy-Making*

All respondents felt that policy-makers should seriously integrate indigenous beliefs, norms, and values into development: achieving this will be a great improvement. However, they highlighted that the current challenge within policy-makers is division. On top of that, they noted that most policy-makers are reluctant to integrate indigenous beliefs into development policies. Therefore, they said that against such a backdrop integration of indigenous beliefs into policy-making will take a long time. Besides that, most of the policy-makers are not well vested in indigenous religion. It is a commonly shared view that traditional leaders should be co-opted into the parliament so that they can help in this regard. NGO employee **Ms. E.** pointed out that:

For every success, consultation is essential; therefore policy-makers should consult with the custodians of the indigenous religious beliefs as well as with academics, encouraging research in this area. They should also encourage dialogue between Christianity and indigenous religion. Members of parliament should be trained, mentored and provided with the necessary tools and instruments so that they can successfully integrate indigenous religious beliefs into policy. Another fundamental point is that most policy-makers did not go through our religion in schools, colleges, and even at the university level. Therefore, our indigenous religion should be seriously taught in schools, colleges, and universities like Christianity. Furthermore, there is a need to document our belief systems rather than for them to remain in oral form. A nation that respects and reveres its religion and culture prospers.

The century-long sidelining, marginalizing and derogating of indigenous religious beliefs has damaged Shona religion. Today these beliefs are deemed as barbarian beliefs and taken as folklore and superstition. Therefore, the young generation was born and oriented in Christianity; they despise indigenous religion and knowledge systems. Christianity was presented as an advanced religion; hence it is taken as such. Besides, this challenge, indigenous religion has its adherences, its incorporation into development discourses can be a panacea for African nations.

#### *4.6.8 Chiefs' Duties in Making Sure That Indigenous Religion Is Respected When Projects Are Implemented*

Eight NGOs and seven FBOs employees interviewed said that nowadays, chiefs have compromised indigenous religion because they are no longer performing like the old traditional leaders. Today most of the chiefs are involved in politics and this has created divisions, hence they are not in a position to be full custodians of indigenous religion. Some of them consider indigenous religion as a resource for sustainable development and some who converted into Christianity doubt whether indigenous religion can propel any development. Having said that, one of the employees articulated himself very well regarding the chiefs' duties of, making sure that indigenous religion is considered when development projects are implemented. **Mr. M.**, an FBO employee, said:

Chiefs' duties are clear; unfortunately, they are sometimes overtaken by partisanship. They are supposed to ensure that the practices, beliefs, norms, and values of the local people are revered and kept at all cost in our communities. They should identify and inform any project agent of a violation of our belief systems, for example, there are preserved areas that should not be disturbed. If a development project is to be done there at all, rituals must be performed first before any activity is undertaken. Remember, they are custodians of our customary laws and beliefs, hence they are the first ports-of-call in any community and they see to it that ancestors and *Mwari* are always happy. This will make our land to prosper and our people will experience the good life. Chiefs should not give in to politicians who come and go. They should make sure that unprogressive beliefs are discarded, especially practices that violate human rights, lead to gender oppression and those that are counter-development. Ultimately, chiefs' offices are fundamental because they are the vanguards of a people's identity to all generations.

It is evident from the response that in Africa chiefs are important and their duties and responsibilities are fundamental. However, for them to remain effective, they should not be involved in politics. In contrary, chiefs should love and work for everyone in their respective communities despite their political affiliations. Through their duties and their diligent leadership on the grassroots they can easily guard the indigenous beliefs against their demonization.

#### *4.6.9 Are There Relevant Areas Where Indigenous Religious Belief Systems Can Be Involved in Development?*

All interviewees are convinced that indigenous belief systems are relevant in all areas. The common remark was that indigenous religion can be involved in the area of children's rights, concerning the acquisition of birth certificates. This being the case, an NGO employee, **Mrs. F.**, had this to say:

Without being sarcastic, indigenous religious belief systems are fundamental in areas such as unveiling medical knowledge and plants for further experimentation in a modern system. They are also important in the area of ethics, thus reducing and eliminating corruption. Similarly, in construction/infrastructure development projects – as most of them require rituals or some cleansing of some sort, for instance, in agriculture, building bridges, roads, dams, schools, clinics etc. These may fail to take-off and the common explanation has been that the owners of the land (ancestors and Mwari) were not happy. They are relevant in work ethics, strong family set-up, and respect for culture. Therefore, indigenous religious beliefs are relevant in all areas that promote human development.

In light of the response given above, it is evident that indigenous religious beliefs can be a remedy for sustainable development. It is necessary to tape positive elements, for instance, in medical knowledge, to develop medicines, as well as in work ethics to eliminate corruption. The beliefs can be applied to many areas. In social justice, they can be applied as well as in wealth distribution in relation to the concept of *ubuntu*. These positive elements are part of indigenous and endogenous knowledge systems that can be of great use for sustainable development.

#### *4.6.10 The Working Relations Between Traditional Leaders, Government, NGOs and FBOs in Development Programs*

All NGO and FBO employees were clear that the working relations between these stakeholders are shrouded with dishonesty. They pointed out that sometimes, or in most cases, chiefs, NGOs, and FBOs ‘appear’ to have good working relations because the government takes chiefs as their employees under the ministry of local government and imposes conditions for the chiefs to work with any development agent. However, chiefs are in principle respected as traditional leaders who work with the grassroots and yet they are not consulted in decision-making or in the planning and implementation of the development programs. With this in mind, most chiefs are ignored. For this reason, an FBO employee, **Mrs. N.**, clearly said:

At the moment, traditional leaders are only used to map the way for development or implementation of the programs without being given a chance to contribute. They are just used as vessels and later being ignored when their communities have been used. Their voices are not part of what is going on. The main problem is that chiefs and the government now are in a relationship of employee and employer, as often chiefs feel indebted to the Minister of Local Government who pays their salaries. This is unfortunate, as chiefs are often used to achieve political ends, and this politicizes development programs and projects. People become very selective in their participation. Because of this, working relations become erratic and dishonest, since the government can change goals depending on the political temperature. The government uses a one model fits all approach, which sometimes im-

pacts negatively on the smaller or minority chieftainships that have different beliefs and cultures. Therefore, in this respect, chiefs to a greater extent are not taken as partners in development. The government views NGOs and FBOs with a lot of suspicion as it thinks they have some hidden agenda. For the benefit of the communities, chiefs as traditional leaders who work cordially with their people should be consulted during the planning and implementation of programs. Therefore, in a normal setting the government, NGOs, and FBOs should seriously work hand in glove with chiefs who know the needs and aspirations of their communities. Finally, for sustainable development to prevail and uplifting living standards of communities, gate-keepers who are chiefs should remain apolitical and stop accepting gifts that will see them compromising their work ethics.

This report of the working relations between chiefs, government, NGOs, and FBOs shows that there is dishonesty and there are no clear roles followed by the institutions. Of interest is how chiefs are treated by the government, NGOs, and FBOs, as well as how the government is suspicious of development agencies from a political perspective. This scenario retards development programs that can genuinely lift the living standards of the communities. Chiefs are in a dilemma because they are paid by the government; hence every political party which will be in power can take advantage of them and make them abandon their true work of being true representatives of their communities. Due to politics, they are now corrupt to the extent that they cannot execute their duties impartially. They have abandoned indigenous religious beliefs that abhor corruption and accumulation of wealth by the few whilst the majority is suffering. *Ubuntu* is no longer practiced by chiefs and their conduct is not in accordance with indigenous people's culture. Finally, with good working relations between these parties, development programs and projects can do wonders in alleviating high levels of absolute poverty, unemployment, and inequality in Africa.

#### *4.6.11 Development Programs in Mining and Agriculture Operating on Sacred Land – What Can Traditional Leaders Do?*

The respondents felt that chiefs should be consulted first. For instance, they pointed out that in cases that are related to mining, the Mines and Minerals Act precedes other Acts which renders chiefs helpless. They also noted that if chiefs are given a chance to air their views on how to maintain and preserve the sacredness of these areas while the project is running, then it should be done that way. However, the present situation is that once permission is granted to development agencies by the government, all is destroyed and the chiefs are taken out of it since there is the claim that the land belongs to the state – but chiefs believe that the land belongs to the ancestors and *Mwari*, human beings are only its care-takers. Therefore, one of the NGO employees, **Mrs. G.**, summarized as follows:

We should be honest here; mining and agriculture are essential to the nation's economy and cannot be discontinued. Traditional leaders should be given the leeway to consult the spiritual world and seek permission for such activities to take place with the blessings of both the underworld and the spiritual world. Otherwise, nothing will take-off. We know that usually not the whole vast track of land or area where the mine or agriculture project is situated is sacred. It is usually a part of the area – maybe a shrine, tree or river that is being regarded as sacred. The fact that mining and agriculture projects are near such sacred portions of land makes the whole area to be sacred too; hence ritual ceremonies are the way to go about it. This is in view of the fact that the ancestors and *Mwari*, if unasked, can unmake any progress of the development in the nearby area. The chiefs should encourage the parties involved to appreciate the sacredness and preserve the sacred place or object. Engagement is important and useful in resolving any challenges of this nature. Besides, chiefs need to raise awareness to the government so that through a comprehensive consultative process, sacred land can still be protected while development programs are undertaken. I am not talking fiction here that indigenous traditional religious belief systems are fundamental; this is from a religious perspective and not from a scientific perspective, therefore, it is happening. Lastly, to a larger extent, chiefs' voices have no power, if there are no difficulties on the part of the development activities, but if they face difficulties they (development institutions and the government) turn to the chiefs whom they are asking for traditional solutions.

The general observation on the above response is that the government and development institutions use political and scientific powers whilst dismissing realities of religious and spiritual beliefs that are embedded in the communities. In such a context, chiefs as traditional leaders and in accordance with their work ethics should remain steadfast on behalf of their culture and people. However, another observation is that engagement, consultation, cooperation, etc., are important principles in the development of a nation. Therefore, stakeholders should always work together for the benefit of their people.

#### *4.6.12 Experiences on Development Initiatives That Failed Because Indigenous Beliefs Were Ignored or Disrespected*

Out of fifteen interviewees, ten of them shared their experiences whilst five of them had no experiences to share. One senior NGO employee, **Mr. H.**, captured what his colleagues referred to as follows:

Ooh yes, most projects fail because wetlands dry up mysteriously once a violation of traditional beliefs is done. We have one dam we constructed as a development agent and the traditional leaders instructed that on completion beer must be brewed and drunk on the site. However, this was not done; instead, beer was

brewed and drunk at the kraal head's homestead. On that day heavy rains came and the dam breached. In Binga, in Matabeleland north, local people refused to use blair-toilets because their belief system says that in-laws should not share the same toilet. In Manicaland, in Zimunya, Gombakomba area, a water project failed until an indigenous religious practitioner, Tenzi Mavhima, was consulted. After having performed a ritual, the project continued. In my home village in Karoi, Mashonaland west, a dip-tank was planned to be constructed close to a sacred pool. None of the villagers came to assist in the construction of the dip-tank until it was moved to another place. The Shangani population, in Insiza, Matabeleland south, dismissed sexual and reproduction health programs for adolescents because development partners have not acknowledged the value of Shangani people's practice of initiation. Agricultural projects have failed because of droughts, partly because traditional leaders' early warning systems have not been harnessed or taken heed of. Finally, in Manicaland in Birchenough-Bridge, in Gunura area, when an irrigation scheme was about to be done workers mysteriously died until a ritual was conducted. Dams such as Tokwe-Mukosi failed to take-off for many years until ritual ceremonies were performed. Therefore, indigenous people's religious beliefs should be incorporated for meaningful and sustainable development to be realized.

Two observations can be drawn from this long and packed response from **Mr. H.**: First, religious and spiritual issues cannot be proven scientifically. Second, most indigenous people in African communities believe these narratives and they would want to keep them for the benefit of the current generation and the posterity. Therefore, getting along with indigenous and endogenous knowledge systems will afford development programs and projects to be more sustainable. It is a positive sign that African religions can play a good role in development discourses, therefore sidelining and marginalizing them will be denying indigenous people a genuine development.

#### *4.6.13 Pros and Cons of Incorporating Indigenous People's Belief Systems Into Development Programs and Projects*

All interviewees agreed that there are pros and cons in incorporating indigenous people's religious belief systems in development. One of the employees, **Mrs. O.**, an FBO employee, detailed the pros and cons as follows:

The pros are clear because incorporation helps perpetuation and acceptance of these programs and projects. An accepted project or program succeeds and vandalism of property won't be experienced. Local people will support what they believe in. Accepted programs and projects in some way change the negative aspect of a local belief through behavior change programs. They identify themselves with the program or project. Progressive practices can always be utilized to the advantage of the project. Culture and development approaches result in projects that cooperate with traditional authorities, hence there is a potential buy-in by the peo-

ple, and the neediest people will be accommodated. Local people have healthy minds when their religion is respected. The cons are: the failure to incorporate indigenous beliefs will result in the rejection of the project or program. It won't benefit the local people in such a situation. There are some beliefs which are retrogressive or counter-development like refusal to vaccinate both people and livestock which results in the spread of fatal diseases. This will be a challenge to the whole community. Therefore, negative aspects of these beliefs might derail the project. They may hinder development as people may always seek a religious explanation, even when a scientific explanation suffices. Besides, indigenous religious practitioners may abuse their power or authority and hinder development. Hence, when there are disagreements and rejection of an idea or concept, traditional authorities can influence resistance. Therefore, in any religion certain practices are no longer relevant; thereby development projects may not be done well. This might incite violence and lack of efficiency.

It is evident that indigenous religion has some negative aspects that can impede development. Therefore, people should use positive practices of their indigenous religious belief systems that encourage the notions of uplifting their people's living standards and those that make development programs and projects to be sustainable for the current generation and for posterity. The grand aim of these development programs and projects is to alleviate extreme poverty of the poor majority in African communities.

#### *4.6.14 The World Bank's and the IMF's Vision of 'A World Free From Poverty' – To What Extent Can the Incorporation of Indigenous Belief Systems Contribute to Its Realization?*

All respondents agreed that 'a world free of poverty' can be attained, but they were quick to note that the World Bank and IMF should know that they are dealing with religious people. The governments and traditional leaders of these developing nations in Africa are concerned that their religious beliefs are not respected. Imposition of development programs by these institutions without respecting indigenous religions is not a wise move. They further noted that the main challenge is that these institutions are not concerned with 'vision', instead, they create poverty in these developing nations – therefore, indigenous people should fashion their own ways of survival, which first and foremost means incorporating their culture, religion, and spirituality which have carried them for millions of years. This being the case, one of these employees, an FBO employee, **Mrs. I.**, said:

The vision is achievable I think, especially if our indigenous beliefs are incorporated. I have worked in this organization for fifteen years now and have noted that local people's religion and spirituality determine the sustainability of the development projects and programs. This is true, because if incorporated, it would be a major factor in the sense that local people own the program and they value that,

but the reality on the ground is not like that. Since they are the recipients of these programs, it should reflect their belief systems. Another factor is how poverty is defined by these institutions; only the lack of material, basic needs is considered to constitute poverty. Yet, for the local people it's holistic, thus spiritual and materialistic. This promotes the participation and fulfillment of their aspirations. The vision is attainable if there is the promotion of beliefs of the local people that are biased towards the conservation of the natural environment and that speak against corruption. This enhances the sustainability of development programs and projects, thereby ushering in the chances to defeat poverty. Furthermore, indigenous beliefs provide early warning systems that can be incorporated into mechanisms that reduce the impact of droughts on agriculture. Indigenous seeds and crops can be improved – this curbs against food insecurity, thus warding off poverty within the local people. These are some of the indigenous strategies to reduce poverty, rather than imposing foreign strategies that sometimes do not work at all. Through these strategies, the right target groups will receive the required services to pull them out of poverty. In this respect, incorporation of indigenous religious beliefs will help in achieving a world free of poverty.

It is also clear from the interviewee's response that international development institutions should change their approaches from a 'one size fits all' model and start to be realistic, since most of the development programs implemented in Africa after World War Two, did not yield favorable results. Currently, Africa is lagging behind, despite the presence of these development programs and projects. Different approaches that seriously consider the culture, religion, and spirituality of the indigenous people will be of great importance in addressing the challenge of poverty and in helping to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030.

#### *4.6.15 Could Ubuntu, Indigenous Religious Good Governance, and Leadership Have a Positive Impact on Zimbabwe's Future Development?*

All interviewees believe that *ubuntu*, good governance, and leadership are the most wanted principles in the modern world systems. Every developing African nation is faced with rampant poor governance, corruption, thieving, and poor public management. They noted that these principles do have an impact if people know who they are and practice work ethics. This can improve future development in Zimbabwe. For example, if there is *ubuntu*, good governance, and leadership in a country, corruption and other social vices are rooted out. Therefore, there is a room to create a just and equitable society. An NGO employee, **Mrs. A.**, professionally laid out how it should happen:

Definitely, the concept of *ubuntu* encourages working together, sharing of whatever is available for the benefit of everyone. Individualism is divisive; hence this is what has led poverty to spread like veld-fire in this country because projects and funds meant for the needy and poor are diverted to individual use and consump-

tion. Therefore, Zimbabwe right now (2016) is polarized – leadership has created an environment where corruption, bribery, and stealing are applaudable virtues. We need a new culture and beliefs in leadership which will see all those as bad, thus seriously enforcing *ubuntu* and good governance. We are the people who can shape the Zimbabwe we want, however, reality says something which is totally different, because so many laws, policies or terms of getting aid are set by some other bodies and voices and we traded our '*ubuntu*', and religious beliefs for aid or assistance. These ills such as corruption, bribery, stealing, poor governance and poor public management have led most development initiatives to fail. *Ubuntu* creates and promotes unity, as well as the culture of hard-working. It reaches out to the people who need to be helped, improved and they will benefit. This is in recognition of the fact that most of our economic ills are a result of our social-ethical ills. These principles are positive inputs that can be realized when traditional practices such as these are fused with modern development approaches, because without *ubuntu*, good governance and leadership, a nation is driven into counter-development. Therefore, Zimbabwe's future development is bright if we develop a culture that encompasses all these positive ingredients.

The response shows that modern development approaches need to encompass indigenous people's traditional practices that have been pushed to the periphery for so long. The sustainability of development programs and projects is embedded within the aspirations and beliefs of indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is essential to consider the role of indigenous religions in development discourses. This approach may help in poverty stricken communities in Africa to create a nation free of poverty. Tribalism, individualism, racism, nepotism, corruption, and greed *inter alia*, have weakened the national interest of unity – therefore, they propelled the failure of development programs and projects. Zimbabwe is endowed with natural resources: she is rich and is capable of feeding her population if *ubuntu* is genuinely practiced.

#### *4.6.16 Areas of Synergies Between FBOs and Indigenous Religion in the Struggle for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe*

All respondents' views on this question show that there are more areas of synergies between FBOs and indigenous religion than areas that cannot be synergised. The areas are listed below. An FBO employee, **Mr. J.**, said:

True that, these two parties must work together for the benefit of the targeted communities, and the areas are: reduction of violence against girls and women as well as domestic violence, interventions that bring to end the decision for girls to get into marriages at their tender ages. This is achievable when traditional authorities can add value to development if they are given space to work with FBOs. Being custodians of their culture, traditional leaders can influence the preservation of indigenous knowledge, religion, and spirituality by working hand-in-glove with

FBOs personnel. Synergies should start in planning, and continue in implementation, monitoring and evaluation – this will see the success of programs. This again creates a peaceful co-existence and respect as well as tolerance between FBOs and indigenous religion in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, there can be synergies in areas such as social-economic services, sustainable agriculture, empowerment and private entrepreneurship. Furthermore, in sustainability of indigenous natural resources, technological advancement in processing indigenous resources, in the upholding of virtues such as good stewardship of resource and entrenching a culture of trustworthiness. Finally, this collaboration instills good moral values in local people to curb corruption. If one has values, upholding them with integrity, we would not be talking of extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequalities in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the working together of these parties is fundamental and has profound positive results, which will create a just and equitable society.

**Mr. J.**'s response shows that where there are professional people, ways of engagement, respect, and tolerance, it is possible for them to work together despite their religious differences. Their spiritualities encourage the preservation of human life in full – therefore, they must be concerned with the well-being of the people in the society. For that reason, they must be seen rubbing shoulders in a bid to save human lives. Therefore, if FBOs and traditional leaders collaborate, the untold sufferings of the poor majority can be alleviated. Working together in synergised areas is a colossal evidence that humanity has come of age – hence it recognizes, accepts, and tolerates religious pluralism.

#### **4.7 Religious Experts on Indigenous Religion and Development**

Contemplating the growing awareness on the part of governments of the need to strengthen policy making by engaging religions, (especially in the global north), this section brought together religious academic experts' views on how policymakers in the government, development practitioners, NGOs, and FBOs, can collaborate, integrate and incorporate indigenous people's religion into development – in order to make better policies and make a vital difference in developing nations, so that they may experience development programs that are sustainable. Consequently, this will have positive effects in reducing high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequalities. Religious experts have prolonged and intensive experiences through research, practice, and education in this particular field. Their inputs and contributions in relation to Shona religion as a resource for sustainable development can furnish us with intelligent recommendations and far-reaching conclusions on the subject matter. The fundamental aim of this discussion is to critically analyze what it is that religious experts know, suggest, and how they view the operations of development organizations in Zimbabwe. How do they view the essence and effects of indigenous people's religion in Zimbabwe communities? To this end, data was gathered through interviews with these religious experts who are academic professors, and doctors from the University of Zimbabwe

(UZ) and the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (see appendix for more details on the interviewees). Therefore, profound and intelligent insights and answers, as well as rational suggestions, were proffered as per the following critical responses from fifteen interviewees.

#### *4.7.1 The Connection Between Religion and Development*

Fifteen religious experts agreed that religion and development are connected. For them, religion is about people and development is also about people. All work is for human development. Religion has ceased to be an insignificant factor but has become an essential part of the development process. Religion cannot be separated from the socio-economic, cultural and political world in which it is lived. Every development is based on a particular religious ideology. Hence, one of the religious experts, **Professor L.L.**, summarized as follows:

Religion is part of our culture, culture is the people's way of life, development means expanding the range and depth of life activities. The so-called development that is not in sync with people's culture (religion) is often rejected. Therefore, religion is the anchor of development because it informs adherents (people involved in development) on human beliefs, taboos, fears and the psychology of the community. The two are inseparable. For me, religion can complement as well as motivate development. Through religion, people and institutions may be agents of advocacy, funding, innovation, empowerment, social movements and service delivery. This is the truth because most of the people in the world are governed by religious beliefs, hence any kind of development that conflicts with religious beliefs is usually not accepted. Furthermore, religion can help in giving a vision of human dignity (bodily and spiritual) conducive to development. Also, religious practitioners often are involved in intellectual issues and historically contributed to literacy, preserving the classics and allowing the heritage of a people's civilization not to be forgotten. Finally, yes, religion and development are intimately connected.

Two issues can be drawn from this response. First, religion is part of the culture of a people, therefore it is fundamental in decision making and whenever indigenous people think, circumvent, and act on developmental issues in their communities. Second, both religion and development deal with people's well-being, for that reason they support humanity to experience good life.

#### *4.7.2 Indigenous Religion – A Hindrance or a Factor in Facilitating Development?*

Out of fifteen interviewees, nine felt that indigenous religion is not a hindrance to development, it is rather a factor that facilitates development. In Zimbabwe, right now (2016) it is not considered as a partner in development because the economic system is

capitalism, which is based on the individualistic religious ideology of Christianity. This being the case, **Doctor Q.**, explained:

Oh no, indigenous religion is not a hindrance at all, because all development ideas find takers only if they resonate with the people's religion and culture. If development means getting Africans to behave, talk, and act like global north people, then people will resist preferring to stick with the familiar – indigenous traditional practices. Nevertheless, indigenous religion is more concerned with spirituality, life in its fullness and family values; in that respect, it's useful in development. Indigenous traditional religion is the real world of the beholder (Africans) and one is born traditionally religious and it is this religion which is in the bone marrow of the individual – therefore, is it a factor in facilitating development. However, there are foreign factors that can hinder development in Africa. Therefore, indigenous religion is an aid to development because local people are able to identify the projects grounded in their culture. Moreover, indigenous traditional institutions of chieftaincy, gerontocracy, and institutions of taboo, kinship ties and the traditional attitude towards nature can be mechanisms that have great potential to facilitate development. Lastly, there is no culture and religion is against its people's development.

Six of the religious experts felt that indigenous religion is a hindrance to development. According to them, there are areas in which it retards development because there are many taboos to be observed before development takes place. To this end, one of them, **Reverend Dr. X.**, had this to say:

It is indeed a hindrance because indigenous religion's convictions are that some places such as graveyards or caves which are regarded as sacred must not be disturbed, this even applies for areas near these sacred places or land. This has deprived these areas from having irrigation systems installed and having boreholes drilled. Sometimes hospitals as well as schools are not built because they are pegged near sacred places. Therefore, it is in such situations that if indigenous religion is ignored there is bound to be resistance to the development of projects and programs. So, it is a hindrance in that regard. Furthermore, it is a hindrance because of the inferior status which it accords to women. Effective and sustainable development in Zimbabwe requires greater recognition of girls, children and women. Women should be co-opted as key players in development processes. It encourages non-scientific belief in witchcraft and the use of scientifically unjustifiable herbal remedies. This can be a retardation to development. If there is a careful and holistic approach to valuing indigenous religion – then such unprogressive aspects can be avoided and there can be a smooth partnership between religion and development.

Drawing from the above narrative, it is apparent that some elements of indigenous religious beliefs are hindrance to development. Furthermore, other religions in the world have elements that hinder development (although this can be contested), for that reason

indigenous religion cannot be an exception. Therefore, what is important is that different faiths must cooperate for communities to realize good life.

#### *4.7.3 The Incorporation of Indigenous Religion Into the Planning and Execution of Development Projects*

All fifteen respondents were of the opinion that the incorporation of indigenous religion into the planning and execution of development projects is fundamental. They critically noted that indigenous traditional religion is linked to a particular economic context, which is, subsistence agricultural economy, and is not inclined to advanced technological set-ups. It may offer some useful values but should not be a substitute for science and technology. With this at the back of our minds, indigenous religion should be incorporated because some of the areas where development programs and projects are executed require ritual ceremonies for them to kick-off. **Professor M.** had this to say:

Indeed, indigenous religion should be incorporated into the planning and execution of development projects, because it's a public force that has to be reckoned with in developing countries as it is in developed countries. Development in Zimbabwe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be shaped largely by religion. This is because any other approach is fraught with danger. All development projects that ignore local religion failed to take root – therefore, it should be incorporated whilst in the planning stage as well as at the executing stage. If not, people don't buy it – I mean would not support such a project. In this respect, development projects should be grounded in a people's culture and spirituality. Foreign-initiated projects usually fail because local people simply fail to own it, because they don't identify with them. Moreover, indigenous religion drives culture, culture drives social forms, social forms drive development. So you cannot do development without affecting or being affected by religion. An indigenous religious practice uplifts codes and ethics in development, such as the concept of *ubuntu*, good management, or policies and is against violence as well as corruption and all forms of intolerance. Furthermore, most indigenous people are notoriously religious – hence if religion and spirituality are bypassed, then there are bound to be conflicts and unnecessary contradictions and resistance to development. Therefore, when the planning of community development activities is done within a religious community, no wonder why Zimbabweans ask this question whenever they start development projects '*chabvumirwa here neVadzimu?*' (Have the ancestors accepted the project to go ahead or not?). This is because indigenous people believe that if ancestors and *Mwari* accept any development project it is bound to succeed and can change people's lives in the community.

Culture shapes how people react and view the world. Therefore, it is a great motivation if a people's religion is accepted, respected, and tolerated. This alone is an assurance

that they are not being segregated. If their culture and religion are not tolerated, there will be resistance and development initiatives will be difficult to execute.

#### *4.7.4 The Government of Zimbabwe and Indigenous Religious Beliefs in the Planning and Implementation Stages of Development Projects*

All interviewees agreed that the government of Zimbabwe should incorporate indigenous religious beliefs into the planning and implementation of development projects. All highlighted that the role of indigenous religious beliefs in development is ambivalent, that is, it has both positive and negative effects in development processes. For them all beliefs that threaten development should be challenged whereas those that promote it should be upheld. In addition, they noted that most development programs and projects need scientific approaches. In that respect, indigenous religion should not interfere with this. However, they unequivocally emphasized that even a purely secular project or enterprise may benefit from the presence of moral and spiritual values of the people and their workforce, even if these are not on paper. **Doctor R.**, said:

The government should involve traditional leaders, practitioners, and community representatives before undertaking developmental endeavors – therefore, an adequate case study should be done by qualified personnel. Foreign material is not readily digestible, hence if you want to work with the local people you do things they prefer, that they can relate to, that they can appreciate and that they can understand too, for these projects to kickoff. It is because most Africans are superstitious and they consciously or subconsciously ascribe to superstitious ideas. Any development programs that excludes them will operate in a vacuum. Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe should encourage and incorporate indigenous religion into the planning and execution of development projects for people to genuinely benefit from them. This is why Zimbabwe currently is facing untold sufferings, she has forgotten that we are Africans and our worldview is a factor in facilitating development endeavors. Therefore, any country or government that ignores its own people's religion ignores its own people's development.

A few observations can be noted from **Doctor R.**'s response. First, for Africans, their indigenous religion is precious and should not be sidelined. Indigenous religion is the *sine qua non* for the local people because their decisions are grounded on it. Second, religion for Africans is collective, it is not an individual enterprise, and if one individualizes religion one excommunicates oneself from the community or society. Religion in an African context is for everyone thus, for the living, dead, and the unborn; therefore, if the government does not incorporate indigenous religion, it despises the spiritual world and the underworld – thus defeating the cosmological understanding.

#### *4.7.5 Are NGOs and FBOs Considering Indigenous Religion When Implementing Development Programs?*

All the respondents' perspectives attested that NGOs and FBOs are not considering indigenous religion when they implement development programs. Therefore, they pointed out that the marginalization of indigenous religion contributes toward the death and disappearing of indigenous beliefs. Above all, NGOs and FBOs are ambassadors of the global north and will never uplift African beliefs, values, and norms. For this reason, they both confine indigenous religious beliefs to the private sphere. They overlook the role of indigenous religion in development or they assume that it would be continuously relegated to a matter of private belief. Hence, they see indigenous religion as an obstacle to development. One of the religious experts, **Professor N.**, expressed his knowledge and experience about this issue:

Whether we like it or not, it is crystal clear that NGOs and FBOs are usually not sensitive to local beliefs and are to a larger extent imposing foreign ways of development, hence, most projects fail to sustain. Therefore, our government and traditional leaders should help us by making sure these development agencies consider the local people's religious beliefs especially at program designing, and at the implementation too. It is easy but they are reluctant to do that, and it should not be an afterthought action. We know that they are sponsored and administered by foreign institutions which do not value African religions and cultures, but they should respect our way of life, otherwise it will be a wasted endeavor. Some development agencies pay lip-service in promising to incorporate our belief systems but on the ground, it's zero. In a way, for the most part, they try to force their western ideas or models down our throats, a model which has proved to be a failure for decades of years. They forgot that spiritual resources of a people must be incorporated if there is going to be real and sustainable development. Again, I think they don't respect and consider local people's religious beliefs because of their prior religious affiliations. There should be genuine, honest and true partnership in fostering development. They simply want to go straight to the grassroots in our communities and work with them without recognition of their religion and culture. African governments sometimes think that the development agencies have a political agenda, thus focusing on our resources, assets and that they want to use various tactics to siphon our natural resources. Having said this, I think it's high time for NGOs and FBOs to seriously consider African people's various cultures and religions in development discourses.

**Professor N.** has depicted how difficult it is for NGOs and FBOs to incorporate indigenous people's religious belief systems, although in Zimbabwe they are operating day and night. To a greater extent, it is caused by the organizations' beliefs that are different from the local people's beliefs. Despite the fact that these development agencies are doing a colossal job in trying to develop these communities, local people's religious

beliefs and culture should be tolerated holistically for development projects and programs to be relevant and sustainable.

#### *4.7.6 How Can Development Agencies and Their Personnel Become Conscientized to Seriously Consider Indigenous Religion?*

All interviewees expressed their concern on development agencies and their personnel who ignore local people's culture and religion. Therefore, they noted that any project needs to be context specific if it is to succeed – hence development personnel needs to consider that. Being context specific is to seriously consider and take into account a people's milieu when embarking on development initiatives in their communities. One of them, **Reverend Doctor Y.**, intimately said:

This is difficult to do considering the prevailing politics in Zimbabwe, but indigenous traditional leaders (chiefs and headmen) should be fully co-opted in developmental programs. Both the public and private, print and electronic media should make deliberate and concerted efforts to depict indigenous religion positively. By doing this, these indigenous beliefs are portrayed as being embodied within local people, hence it will be easy for this development personnel to follow them. There is a need to train development personnel on how to integrate issues concerning indigenous beliefs in development programs and this is fundamental. In our schools, colleges, and universities indigenous religion should be a corecourse in order to teach the young generation about our culture, religion, and spirituality. From these young people come the future government officials and policy-makers, hence, it will be easy to incorporate these beliefs. Traditional institutions of chiefs' council must be roped in to conduct presentations and courses for development personnel to be better acquainted with these belief systems and to be sensitive to African practices. Furthermore, our politicians should seriously work hand in hand with traditional leaders in this area because our way of life can disappear gradually. By emphasizing this, the government should remain committed to respecting their own people's conscience and religious freedom.

It is apparent from the interviewee's views that the government is not seriously involved in seeing that its own people's beliefs are respected, considered, and tolerated by development agencies. It should empower traditional leaders fully. Chiefs should conscientize development agencies to seriously consider indigenous religion. The more indigenous people and their government respect and elevate their own religion, the more development agents will do the same – the vice versa is true.

#### *4.7.7 Integration of Indigenous Beliefs, Norms, and Values in Policy-Making*

Policy-making is an essential process in any country because developments in any country of the world are determined by their policies – therefore, the process can elevate people's living standards. All interviewees felt that policy-makers should integrate indigenous religious beliefs, norms, and values in policies for the betterment of development programs. They emphasized the fact that most policy-makers' educational backgrounds have turned their worldview from an African perspective that is religious to that of the global north that is scientific. For this reason, indigenous religion is given less attention compared to development initiatives that have a scientific approach. In doing this, policy-makers are denying African beliefs, thereby creating indigenous social death. In a profound way one of the religious experts, **Doctor S.**, pointed out how integration can be done professionally:

The current challenge we are facing as a nation is that those on top do not want to be servants of the people who chose them. Instead, they want to be bosses and the element of consultation is not in them. The service these policy-makers can do is to consult the people. They should deliberately consult the traditionalists and take into account their recommendations. What I mean by consultation, I mean chiefs should be fully and genuinely co-opted in policy-making processes. There should be wide and comprehensive consultations with the indigenous elders who are the custodians of our culture, religion, and spirituality. Policy-makers should first appreciate their own beliefs they have been decapitated from, then a continuous interaction between them and traditional leaders and practitioners should follow. Policy-makers' immense orientation in Christianity's capitalistic economic ideological system should be neutralized by adopting a communalism that is more African in its ideology. This is what I see as a better remedy to our polarized nation.

It is evident that Zimbabwe's policy-makers have created and passed policies that did not resonate with the nation's practical issues. This is supported by the fact that development policies passed since independence in 1980, have failed to bring positive results. The country is divided as to which policies to pass that can genuinely change high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequalities. Foreign policies that have been implemented, like the economic structural adjustment program (ESAP), failed to address socio-economic challenges. However, the integration of people's beliefs ameliorates these challenges, and development programs that do the same are likely to be sustainable. Therefore, it is recommended to integrate indigenous people's knowledge, religion, spirituality, and culture in development discourses.

#### *4.7.8 Chiefs' Duties in Making Sure That Indigenous Religion Is Respected When Projects Are Implemented*

All respondents clearly noted that chiefs are gate-keepers and vanguards of indigenous religion and culture. Their duties and responsibilities are heavy and require them not to be involved in politics. They should be leaders for everyone in the community. They should unequivocally uphold Zimbabwe national values, norms, and heritages. For their duties to be professionally executed, the government should fully support them. A religious expert who majored in African religions, **Professor O.**, said:

Our nation's culture, religion, and spirituality are guarded by our chiefs. Our nation's identity depends on them, thus the living, dead, and unborn. Therefore, they are there to defend our norms, and values. They must educate our communities on the efficacy of our culture. They must push for laws which enforce the importance of our religious beliefs and the representatives of the chiefs' council in the senate and parliament. They should not be seen compromising our culture by being political and partisan. They should make recommendations to parliament so that our cultural heritages will not be eroded by foreign education. As much as we encourage cultural exchanges, this should not compromise our social way of life. They should promote our religious beliefs by making sure that it is integrated into projects and programs, thus preserving it from extinction. They should encourage public participation in development projects, ensuring that traditional practices are respected. Above all, they should engage with development practitioners so that they seriously prioritize our beliefs in their areas. Finally, they should always input in all possible forums they attend, and should use their virtues of unquestionable authority within their communities.

It is clear that traditional leaders in Zimbabwe are respected on paper but not practically. If chiefs have such enormous duties, why and what went wrong? Is it the modern way of life that has eroded chiefs' duties and their importance? It is evident from **Professor O.**'s response that if chiefs and the government cooperate, indigenous religious beliefs can be respected and incorporated in implementing development projects. The success of incorporating indigenous beliefs in development depends on what the government is doing to achieve this goal.

#### *4.7.9 Are There Relevant Areas Where Indigenous Religious Belief Systems Can Be Involved in Development?*

All interviewees think indigenous religious belief systems can be synergized in all areas. They agreed that like any other world religion, indigenous religion is relevant to the ethics of business dealings – thus shunning corruption, helping the weak and vulnerable. It emphasizes honesty and respect to other people and their beliefs. **Doctor T.** clearly stated that:

Indigenous belief systems can be utilized in development programs in such areas like the provision of human basic needs, such as health, food, and shelter, in mediation with the ancestral world, in conflict resolution between investors and the communities. In the area of rainmaking ceremonies to ward off droughts, traditional leaders and religion are consulted, before going to war, in national events, and many Zimbabweans consult traditional practitioners during the time of social challenges, for instance, death, sickness, and for prospering. In the area of national healing, nation building, agriculture, as well as in building infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals etc., in mining, they (traditional leaders) perform rituals before these programs start to guarantee their success. Furthermore, in tourism and in development projects like co-operations – they appeal to ancestors and *Mwari* who are the owners of the land for their blessings. If all this is done, indigenous people are filled with a sense of security and obvious support from the spiritual realm against evil forces – since evil forces are believed to disrupt individual and communal development.

**Doctor T.**'s response shows how important indigenous religion is and the areas that can use this religion. This being the case, the government and development agents should not ignore indigenous religion since it is a force to reckon with in development discourses. Therefore, the time is ripe for African religions to be seriously considered as a resource for sustainable development. This has positive bearings on development projects and programs in communities.

#### *4.7.10 The Working Relations Between Traditional Leaders, Government, NGOs and FBOs in Development Programs*

For a development program and project to successfully takeoff, there is a need for the concerned stakeholders of that nation to work together harmoniously. This alone will improve their people's living standards in all aspects. The interviewees' responses show that there are no good working relations between these parties. Furthermore, they noted that it is a war; it is not amicable because of diametrically different and opposing ideologies between the development agents from the global north (NGOs and FBOs) and the global south (traditional leaders and government). One of them, **Professor P.**, summarized it as follows:

It's really deplorable, to say the least. The working relations between chiefs, government, NGOs, and FBOs are highly polarized. It is characterized by mistrust, suspicion and in some instances outright animosity with the latter dismissing the former as irrelevant or even an obstacle to development programs. In most cases, chiefs are sidelined because the state is involved in the negotiation of contracts and licensing. Local traditional leaders at times are caught by surprise when the investors are already making their surveys and at times exploiting or working on the land without their knowledge. In another way, development programs and projects

are imposed on the government: since the government is in need of direct foreign investments (DFI), it accepts. Chiefs and the people are told to take it or leave it. In practice, the government, NGOs, and FBOs are bosom buddies – hence the people are forced to comply or at least, since all Africans are consistent with ‘*Un-hu*’ (good character), they show politeness and gratitude by accepting these development programs. Generally, the government’s operatives look down on traditional leaders and they are very impolite. A government without any mysterious challenges does not take on the chiefs’ ideas. For this reason, sustainability of programs is undermined by this imposed development approach. This top-down approach has costed many development initiatives. However, the government should work hand in hand with chiefs, NGOs, and FBOs in development issues. This will create a good atmosphere for sustainable development.

This is a difficult situation. That being the case, it is clear that the working environment between these parties is not good. However, the government should not show its antagonism with the chiefs by siding too much with development agents. Instead, the government should support traditional leaders because they represent the grassroots and this is where the scorching of extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequalities are severely felt. Besides, they both work for the same people. The three parties should strive to work harmoniously with traditional leaders for the benefit of the poor majority. If these parties can work together honestly and put their ideas on the table, corruption and bribery which are a common phenomenon in developing nations can be prevented.

#### *4.7.11 Development Programs in Mining and Agriculture Operating on Sacred Land – What Can Traditional Leaders Do?*

Any sacred land in any nation should be preserved, however, if a development program cannot be relocated, ritual ceremonies should be conducted according to that nation’s religious beliefs. This will encourage the success of development programs. All respondents noted that a nation should preserve its sacred land in relation to religious beliefs. All interviewees said that because of political challenges in Zimbabwe, chiefs find it very difficult to contribute their views. Against this backdrop, chiefs should be steadfast in advocating for these sacred lands to be respected and preserved. The government and investors should consult with the chiefs who know these sacred places better, before any program is undertaken. **Doctor U.** had this to say:

It is a known factor that Africans consult the spirit mediums through ‘*n’angas*’ (traditional practitioners or doctors) to learn what ancestral spirits want. Many white farmers who complied with rain-making rites engaged good agricultural seasons abound with great yields. Many miners have closed their mines, when the white owners refused to recognise the real owners – the ancestors of the land where these development programs and projects were operating. However, in a normal

situation and where there is good governance, first of all before these projects kickoff, the government or companies involved should liaise with the local traditional authorities and seek guidance and clearance. Otherwise, they will operate without considering that there is a sacred land nearby or that they even are on the sacred land. In most cases, if there are consultations such incidents never happen. This is because all chiefs want development in their communities, hence they will cooperate, tolerate, and accept change, rather than being adamantly conservative and uncooperative. Finally, they can perform necessary rituals and development processes occur. Therefore, collaboration between chiefs, government, and investors is a positive gesture that develops communities.

It is, however, apparent that indigenous knowledge, religion, and spirituality have not found their convergence zone with modern approaches to development. Sometimes ignorance of indigenous people's religions creates these challenges. It is of great importance for the investors to understand indigenous people's religions so that they can appreciate, accept, and tolerate these beliefs. It's not a wise approach for investors to set their conditions for indigenous people to suit them. Therefore, diversity in cultures, religious beliefs and spiritualities should not impede human beings to work together for the benefit of the poor majority. Indigenous people resist any move that tries to extinct their way of life.

#### *4.7.12 Experiences on Development Initiatives That Failed Because Indigenous Beliefs Were Ignored or Disrespected*

All fifteen interviewees narrated their experiences and knowledge on development programs and projects that failed because indigenous religious beliefs were disrespected. To a greater extent, these experiences show the significance of indigenous religion and spirituality in development discourse, as well as how it is a resource for sustainable development in developing countries' communities. **Doctor V.** described in some detail how and where these experiences occurred:

I should right away say this, these experiences are not superstitions as our outsider colleagues might perceive from a scientific point of view, this is real and live and many development projects and programs failed for ignoring and disrespecting our religious beliefs. Well, we have the Pungwe Water Project which supplies safe drinking water to the city of Mutare, and Osborne Dam which supplies irrigation water to the people of Odzi in Mutasa district, in Manicaland province, where initial failures took place because indigenous religious beliefs were ignored. It was only after the Chiefs Tangwena and Mutasa respectively were consulted that the projects succeeded. In Mashonaland Central, the Eureka gold mine in Guruve, failed to takeoff because the white investors refused to request permission to start mining activities from African ancestral owners, it was a success after they asked for permission through traditional leaders. In the Midlands province, in Mberengwa

district, Buchwa mine was closed when their white manager refused to perform the annual traditional rites and many infrastructure projects only took off after complying with indigenous traditional ritual ceremonies. During the building of a dam in Chivi, Masvingo province, graveyards were supposed to be removed, but chiefs resisted and influenced their people not to accept the project. Many cooperatives – irrigation schemes with sophisticated drip irrigation, and other piggery failed in my rural home area, in Zaka, in Masvingo province, because they disrespected our belief systems. Furthermore, a network booster failed to be erected in Beatrice, in Seke district, Mashonaland East, because the chief wanted rituals to be done and the company refused. Let me remind you once again: there are no development projects that ignore and disrespect our religious beliefs that have succeeded. Besides, if these development agents' agenda is genuine to develop these communities – why not tolerate, accept, and incorporate other people's way of life? Sustainability of these developments programs and projects is easy if all human beings' indigenous belief systems are respected in their diversity.

**Doctor V.**'s response is so clear in pointing out the importance of indigenous people's religious beliefs. From a scientific point of view, the above account cannot be accepted, but from a religious perspective it is acceptable and it makes sense. Shona and Ndebele peoples believe in mystical powers which are embedded in ancestors and *Mwari* – who can **make** and **unmake** events in their lives. Therefore, indigenous people's culture, religion, and spirituality are fundamental and play a big role in development.

#### *4.7.13 The Pros and Cons of Incorporating Indigenous People's Belief Systems Into Development Programs and Projects*

Out of fifteen interviewees eleven dwelt on pros rather than on cons, and for them, all development projects and programs that incorporate indigenous beliefs will give local people a sense of ownership and control. **Doctor W.** laid down the pros as follows:

Africans are notoriously religious, (I know this perspective can be disputed), that is, religion is intertwined with the socio-economic, political and cultural lives of the people. Religion infuses all aspects of people's lives; hence it cannot be separated from development or the 'secular'. Yet, every culture has its own merits and demerits and African culture is not an exception. Thus, it should not be incorporated wholesomely. Therefore, pros are: sustainability of development projects is guaranteed, all programs that go against local beliefs are bound to fail. Africans have traditional ways of placating the spirits where things have been done wrongly, the problem is then rectified. In addition, incorporating indigenous beliefs leads to acceptability and success of the programs, because this may increase expected outcomes in terms of yield. In this respect, you engage the whole person, a person who is confident of whom he/she is. It leads to total development and satisfaction of the entire citizenry. Indigenous ideologies ensure that all human beings are of

value and guarantee all to have the means of production. There is community ownership, the involvement of everyone and no clashes and conflicts and resistance; it's easy to build peace in communities.

Four of the respondents who emphasized the cons felt that the incorporation of indigenous beliefs impedes development programs and projects. **Reverend Doctor X.** had this to say:

The process may delay progress and can be time-consuming. There can be bribes involved in some instances where there are corrupt leaders. In addition, engagement takes a long time, moreover, indigenous beliefs are primitive and indigenous authorities make a lot of demands, hence delaying development programs and projects, and since most of these programs and projects have a short life-span in relation to donors, there are risks to lose them. Lastly, people who are religiously respected can resist developmental projects, thereby influencing the whole community. The scientific basis of projects may be compromised and inaccurate beliefs will influence human behavior. However, let me point out, without incorporating belief systems we can still respect the consciences of people who follow them.

One can safely say that the two responses given above show that every religion has pros and cons, in development. Since the target are human beings, their cultural practices should be considered too. Above all, it is essential to involve people and their philosophy in development.

#### *4.7.14 The World Bank's and the IMF's Vision Is "A World Free of Poverty". To What Extent Can the Incorporation of Belief Systems Contribute to Implementing This Vision?*

All fifteen interviewees agreed that incorporating indigenous beliefs can contribute immensely to the achievement of the vision. They said that developments that will be sustainable are implemented within an indigenous people's milieu and cultural heritage, in contrast to developments that are imported and imposed from outside the communities. According to them, the World Bank and IMF are anti-development towards any once colonized state in Africa. These development institutions represent only the religious ideology of the western countries, which is Christianity – this is a hegemonic religious belief in relation to indigenous religion. These institutions prefer Christianity to indigenous religion; thereby believe that indigenous beliefs cannot be a factor in facilitating development. Incorporating them doesn't per se alleviate poverty. Therefore, these institutions do not, in fact, advise any NGO and FBO to incorporate indigenous beliefs. **Professor Q.** said:

The vision can be achieved, but there is a need for interfaith dialogue between indigenous religion and other religions for the successful implementation of this goal. Religious actors of the major religions represented in Zimbabwe, that is, African traditional religion, Christianity, and Islam should be fully co-opted to participate in the implementation of this vision. Again, the poverty is of the people, to remove it, one has to work with the local people and their religious beliefs. It's not a matter of choice, either you are with the local people and it works, or you ignore them, a dismal failure of the development projects and programs follows. Poverty ends when local people are doing the projects and programs they accept and like. Imposed policies and projects may be good but they may face resistance and poverty can continue. There are great chances to achieve the vision because development will not just happen in a vacuum, it will take place in communities and their milieu should be seriously considered. Remember, each community is unique. If they are involved, they contribute brilliant ideas as to how the vision can be achieved rather than being theoretic. To this end, you get a buy-in from people; this will make projects to be successful and sustainable. Ignoring their beliefs and culture creates a tense environment that will retard development. Incorporating their beliefs makes projects and programs people oriented – thus, contextualizing development enables local people to participate in alleviating poverty.

Some observations can be drawn from **Professor Q.**'s response. First, it is clear that international development institutions often dictate their terms of conditions on developing countries they help with funding development programs and projects. This can encourage the imposition of development programs. Second, this is a top-down approach that will be unfavorable for sustainable development. Even if a bottom-up approach is implemented without incorporation of the indigenous people's religion, spirituality, and culture, development programs and projects will not take-off.

#### *4.7.15 Could *Ubuntu*, Indigenous Religious Good Governance, and Good Leadership Have a Positive Impact on Zimbabwe's Future Development?*

All respondents believed that the concept of *ubuntu*, principles of indigenous religious good governance and leadership will positively impact Zimbabwe's future development. They noted that although *ubuntu* has been hijacked by the west and lost its true meaning in the development of Africans, it has an impact if it is taken from its original African perspective. *Ubuntu* for them will be useful if it is viewed as 'common humanness' and therefore, it should not be an excuse for ignoring western good values – hence good governance by the leadership of different faiths, will have good effects in the society. **Professor M.** had this to say:

Yes, these principles will help indeed, but developed countries are in a crisis today in spite of their advanced scientific and technological development because the bases on which western civilization rests are purely materialistic and far removed

from the spirituality of religion and its intrinsic effects such as good morals and values. These we find in *ubuntu* and it is also the core concern of the traditional leaders to jealously guard our African heritage and pass it on from the present generation to the future generations. Therefore, it's time we continuously teach the concept of *ubuntu*. If we do that, Zimbabwe will forge ahead. However, even if you bring western science, you need to synchronize it with local people's traditions – then it will work, otherwise, an imposition against the people's norms and values guarantees failure – no wonder why Africa has still not progressed despite 'massive' but misplaced development aids, programs, and projects. *Ubuntu* reduces issues like corruption, bribery, and flouting of religious beliefs either through ignorance or by will. Communities will also benefit from the projects that will take place in their community. This is because *ubuntu* strives for the respect of others. There will be a reduction of dishonesty, and nepotism. Resources in the country will benefit everyone and will be channelled to the right places and the country will boom, hence their living standards will improve. With *ubuntu*, there will a spirit of working together to create a just and equitable society.

It is apparent that *ubuntu*, good governance, and leadership are the wishes of many people in African nations, because if such principles are upheld, the poor majority will live a better life. This is enhanced if indigenous people's religion, spirituality, and culture are respected and lived. All development initiatives are anchored in a people's religious convictions. It is also apparent that a people's culture is a repository of development ideologies and if such a culture is incorporated, development practitioners may tap resources that are pertinent to sustainable development. Therefore, a people's culture and religion should not be sidelined and pushed to the periphery as barbarian folklore and superstition.

#### *4.7.16 Areas of Synergies Between FBOs and Indigenous Religion in the Struggle for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe*

All interviewees noted that there are development areas where FBOs and indigenous religion can work together. The incompatible areas are a result of differences in ideological and dogmatic perspectives. For this reason, they pointed out that indigenous religion should be involved in all areas, which have to do with indigenous people's development. Therefore, **Reverend Doctor Z.** described in some detail areas of synergies:

It is true that sustainable development can only succeed in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. FBOs and indigenous religion should first deal with the animosity between them through interfaith dialogues in order to create a good environment for peace and social order which is a prerequisite for genuine development in Zimbabwe. The areas are management of wildlife, small and medium-sized enterprises, crime, combating droughts, and HIV and AIDS. This is a holistic

approach that ensures genuine sustainable development in communities. Furthermore, these two parties can change communities' living standards if they can work together without animosity. Synergised areas will afford to preserve indigenous people's religious beliefs whilst respecting FBOs' religious convictions too. Therefore, the success of these development programs will be unlimited in a spirit of togetherness.

It is evident that it is possible for FBOs and indigenous religion to work together in different areas of development. People with different faiths and dogma cannot avoid cooperating as long as their focus is to develop the same communities. It is also clear that Africa will not develop as long as the foreign agenda is driven. Therefore, development programs and projects should be in the hands of the indigenous people who are the beneficiaries. International development institutions, donors, and investors should bring enablers, tools, catalysts, and enhancers only, rather than imposing what they think suits indigenous people. If this can be achieved, then, it is possible to bring about sustainable development in African communities.

## 4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has critically explored the brief history of Zimbabwe. The expectations of the Zimbabweans in the post-colonial era were high. They expected good life, coupled with a low rate of poverty, a high percentage of employment, and high levels of equality. This was measured against the promises of the liberation struggle. They were thrilled with hopes of good living standards in a free and well-governed country. Political structures were analyzed – where corruption was and is still embedded within the leadership. The gap between the few rich and the majority of Zimbabweans, who are poor, is bigger than in any other country in Africa. All repressive laws which were promulgated to disenfranchise the populace from their democratic rights worsened the living standards. After independence (1980), socio-economic policies and development programs were implemented, without incorporating indigenous people's religious beliefs. The marginalization of indigenous religion, compounded by global north influences, is believed to have brought socio-economic and political misfortunes to the country. However, the government introduced an economic policy called 'the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation' (ZIMASSET) from October 2013 to 2018, where Zimbabwe general elections are to be conducted. To date (2016), the policy has yielded nothing positive in developing socio-economic and religiopolitical standards in the country. The majority of Zimbabweans is getting drowned with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequalities – coupled with poor governance, rapid shutting down of companies which are exacerbating unemployment percentages to over 85%. There are rising levels of diseases (caused by drinking untreated water), HIV and AIDS and other endemic diseases (for example, Tuberculosis).

culosis), political intolerance, droughts, food shortages, as well as environmental degradation. Informal employment is rampant in a capable country that was once a breadbasket of Southern Africa. Furthermore, rampant public corruption has destroyed society's moral fiber and it is a big menace in all government and private institutions. In the mining sector, diamonds are extracted by development investors and local mining companies, which is, however, not benefiting Zimbabwean communities. Although the presence of development organizations is visible throughout the country, especially in rural areas where over 60% Zimbabweans live, unfortunately, poverty is unabated.

The development organizations' historical trajectory in Zimbabwe was analyzed. However, it was discovered that government policies on development, NGOs as well as FBOs are not seriously considering and respecting chiefs who are custodians of Shona religion, spirituality, and culture, when planning and implementing development programs as well as projects. Furthermore, knowing that all development organizations are indispensable in the current socio-economic and political dispensation in most African nations, it should be categorically noted that, it has been proven to be impossible for development organizations to ignore indigenous people's religion and spirituality when planning and implementing development programs. Incorporation of indigenous people's religion and spirituality is a panacea for these communities in developing nations to realize and experience sustainable development. Therefore, Shona religion and spirituality is a force to reckon with in development discourses. As noted by the interviewees, it is apparent that indigenous religion is a factor in facilitating development programs and projects. Ignoring indigenous people's religion and spirituality is an anti-developmental stance. The following chapter critically discusses the cultural resources of Shona religion in relation to development.

## CHAPTER 5: THE CULTURAL RESOURCES OF SHONA RELIGION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters 1, 2, and 4 showed that Shona religion is important and worthy to be incorporated into development discourses. They further described the concept of abundant life in Shona religion and its importance as a resource for the development of communities. The fieldwork data showed how chiefs, headmen, NGOs and FBOs employees, and religious experts depicted the relevance of Shona religion, spirituality and knowledge systems for sustainable development. The Shona people, who are the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe, consist of a number of linguistic groups, such as Zezuru, Karanga, Korekore, Ndau, and Manyika. Despite these different linguistic groups within this vast ethnic group, one can identify common elements in cultural resources and traditional cosmovisions or worldviews of its people. Therefore, the cultural resources to be discussed in this chapter are part and parcel of life in Seke people who are among the aforesaid Shona ethnic group. To this end, this chapter explores the cultural resources of Shona religion as a model of abundant life, as well as an integral part of development in Zimbabwe, because any development initiatives that do not take a people's cultural life seriously face challenges. This chapter intents to show that African cultural resources are part of indigenous peoples' knowledge, that can influence development for a better life. Therefore, the chapter makes the case that both young and old people in local communities are to be taught this cultural indigenous knowledge, so that they exhibit behaviours that are not threats to the communities' unity and harmony, because the Shona believe that where there is peace there is development. This cultural indigenous knowledge is a "local philosophy that is inculcated to the young as well as adults as acceptable societal norms, values, and beliefs which stress harmony, fairness, equity, morality, self-sufficiency, hardwork, the preservation of human life, appreciation of oneself and others, co-existence, responsibility and justice within families and communities" (Dei 2014: 48-66). Furthermore, these cultural indigenous knowledge systems are embedded in proverbs, songs, idioms, and prayers – which give Shona people a conscious appreciation of human development as being central. Within these cultural resources, implications for sustainability, environmental and moral ethics can be found through avoidance rules, and religious practices such as prayers and rituals which have a positive impact on development. Therefore, this chapter, just like the other chapters aforementioned, augments the main thrust of the entire study: to advocate for African religions as a resource for sustainable development.

## 5.2 Abundant Life in Shona Proverbs

Proverbs are an integral part of learning both the language and culture of a people. However, it is the contention of this chapter that proverbs are excellent tools for the comprehension of the Shona worldview as well as the worldview of people in different communities in the world. Furthermore, comprehension of Shona proverbs is a way of knowing profoundly embedded histories, local cosmologies, and philosophies of the community. Shona proverbs emphasize relationships between individuals, their communities, the complex nexus of the mundane world and the supra-mundane world, nature, as well as both development and demise of man. Like all knowledge systems, proverbs contain words of empowerment and words to disempower communities, though their inherent philosophy is to instil strong personalities into all members of the community. According to Malinowski, quoted in Niemeyer, every human culture teaches its members a definite vision of the world (Niemeyer 1982: 6).

The term proverb is defined as “a message coded by tradition and transmitted in order to evaluate and/or affect human behaviour” (Parker 1974: 80, Cf. Niemeyer 1982: 33). Proverbs make sense to the people acquainted with them and because they do, they are effective in the evaluations and influence of human behaviour (*ibid*). Similarly, Abrahams says:

Proverbs are descriptions that propose an attitude or a mode of action in relation to a recurrent social situation. They attempt to persuade by clarifying the situation, by giving it a name, thus indicating that the problem has arisen before and that past practice has come up with a workable solution. (Abrahams 1972: 121)

Mbiti claims that proverbs are common ways of expressing religious ideas and feelings. “It is in proverbs that we find the remains of the oldest forms of African religious and philosophical wisdom” (Mbiti 1970: 86). On the other hand, Goredema points out that a proverb is a short pithy or terse and vigorous sentence expressing some general truth or sentiment. Proverbs are important sayings that express a philosophy of life, distinctive not only to the same community or tribe or culture but to other cultures as well (Goredema 2013: 1). Here, we find two interpretations of proverbs – Mbiti’s interpretation is more religious, whilst Goredema’s interpretation is a philosophical one. In this study, both interpretations are accepted because African philosophical wisdom simplifies religion by describing indigenous faith, therefore both interpretations are embedded in African culture.

“The worldview of a people is their way of looking at reality. It consists of basic assumptions and images which provide a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world” (Kearney 1981: 51, Cf. Niemeyer 1982: 10). According to Charles Kraft, “the worldview is the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of a culture assent (largely unconsciously) and

from which their value system stems. The worldview lies at the very heart of a culture, touching, interacting with, and strongly influencing every other aspect of the culture” (Kraft 1979: 53-54). A people’s worldview is their basic model of reality (*ibid*). This being the case, an overall definition in relation to the aforesaid definition from Kearney and Kraft, as cited in Niemeyer, is as follows:

Worldview is the assumptions and presuppositions with which people look out upon their world, systematized and integrated so as to bring coherence to their thinking about the world. Worldview is basic to every subject, whether individual or people, effecting the being affected by patterns, performance and panorama that make up that subject’s culture. (Niemeyer 1982: 11)

Therefore, we can say that proverbs unlock gateways to a people’s world or lead to their perspectives on the world (*ibid*). However, we can safely conclude that proverbs are tools for understanding the worldview of a people and they are effective keys for unlocking the doors to implicit knowledge as well as explicit knowledge. Hence, every community teaches its members their worldview.

Shona proverbs are messages with distinct characteristics that are transmitted for specific purposes and in particular contexts. Their distinct characteristics have authority on the subject through oral literature in Africa, which include ‘shortness, sense, and salt’. However, it should be noted that there are also ‘short’ phrases and comparisons which are proverbial in nature, but are not proverbs. “Their distinct characteristic of sense characterizes proverbs because there is a popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in them” (Finnegan 1970: 393, Cf. Niemeyer 1982: 32). However, on the characteristic of ‘saltiness’ Bergsma points out how proverbs sometimes have repetitious utterances in them that are reminiscent of tongue twisters. Often, these utterances not only create the meaning implied but amuse the listeners – add salt to their daily diet of activities (Bergsma 1970: 153). Furthermore, besides being messages with distinct or unmistakable characteristics, proverbs are transmitted for specific reasons. Finnegan says that proverbs serve to advise, rebuke and shame. This is an evaluative purpose that is fulfilled so as to avoid conflict, and this may be a universal feature of proverbs (*ibid*: 407-418). Parker makes the general observation that proverbs serve to release social tension, giving psychological release to the individual involved (Parker 1974: 119-122). From an African perspective and on a more official level, proverbs are widely used throughout Africa in traditional and contemporary judicial procedures to settle disagreements, close disputes, and win arguments. Arewa and Dundas report that proverbs are often cited as precedents in judicial cases much like western lawyers cite cases from the past (Arewa and Dundas 1964: 70-85). Thus, the advice, rebuke, and shame to which Finnegan refers are served in a better way. In addition to this evaluative purpose, proverbs can be used to transmit principles and educational purposes. However, the objectives of proverbs are for aesthetic and educational purposes.

Context is another distinguishing feature of Shona proverbs. Ruth Finnegan asserts that “a proverb should not be regarded as an isolated saying but rather as just one aspect of artistic expression within a whole social and literary context” (Finnegan 1970: 393). Therefore, the social context of a proverb is very important. Here, the reader becomes aware of who says what, to whom, when he/she says it, where it occurs, how it takes place, the intent of the speaker, and the effect of the proverb upon the situation (Parker 1974: 42). The age of a person who is declaring the proverb is very important; children should not use proverbs. The social context also includes beliefs, values, social behaviour, structure, categories and plans – all of which are a part of both pattern and performance. The literary context of the proverb is also important. It must be seen in the context of other oral literature or folklore, as the various genres are unitedly called (*ibid*). Parker goes on to say that these other genres include sign language, gestures, jokes, beliefs, ideas, phrases, charms, blessings, curses, riddles, tales, legends, and songs. It should be acknowledged that the meaning of a proverb can only be understood when its context is known. When knowledge of the context is combined with knowledge of the distinctive characteristic and the specific purposes, then the proverb can be understood in depth. Furthermore, the proverbs of a people contain a wealth of information about the worldviews of those people. They provide this information in a context that is tri-level: literal, micro and macro (*ibid*: 54-55). Furthermore, a culture as a whole is partially reflected in the corpus of proverbs which it has created, borrowed, and maintained. The culture provides a unique macro-level context in which only this corpus of proverbs could occur; therefore, the macro-context of a corpus of proverbs as the cultural context itself includes beliefs, values, social behaviour, structure, categories and plans (Parker 1974: 16).

According to Gelfand, “the Shona use the literal form of proverbs very sparingly and usually to communicate instruction and give warning – thereby building personalities (*hunhu*) for the young and adults so that they can realize abundant life within their communities” (Gelfand 1970: 13-14). The Shona begin by considering a person’s personality or makeup, which they call *hunhu*. A man or woman who has *hunhu* (personality) behaves in a decent, good, rational, responsible way. A worthy man or woman, boy or girl has *hunhu*. One who fights with others or steals can be said to be without *hunhu* (*haana hunhu*) (he/she has no personality) and such individuals are threats to the harmony within a community. He/she is not human. A person possessing *hunhu* can control him/herself, and his/her passions and instincts, but should his/her desires overcome him/her, he/she has no *hunhu* (personality). An individual with *hunhu* has good morals. Morality is equivalent to maturity. Therefore, for the Shona, the difference between a human being and an animal is his/her possession of *hunhu* (*ibid*).

According to Hamutyinei and Plangger, a simile is distinctive from the metaphor in that the former contains an explicit comparison. The Metaphor is the most common style used in the proverbs of Shona people. In fact, ninety percent of the Shona proverbs

seem to be of this kind. There is parallelism in Shona proverbs, for example, “*Kurava mbudzi nedzisipo/Kurava nedzava matoo*” – counting absent goats means counting dead ones. Parallelism occurs more frequently in Shona proverbs than in proverbs of other tribes. Parallelism is a very common feature applied to express simple analogies but also paradoxes. This is possible because proverbs usually have a balanced structure and fall naturally into halves (Hamutyinei and Plangger 1974: 15, Cf. Niemeyer 1982: 94).

“Proverbial lore, as oral literature, forms an undeniable part of a people’s cultural heritage and presents the totality of the experiences of a people” (Matereke and Mapara 2009: 208). The oral and written language makes it possible for people to share experiences and have a sense of belonging, and the preservation of proverbs in oral discourse allows them to be flexibly applied to a number of varying contexts; thus, the proverbs remain relevant to a variety of contexts and situations (ibid). They are pithy expressions of beliefs, values, and knowledge of the community that were created or borrowed from other communities. “They are normally introduced by the expressive formula: ‘*Vakuru vedu vaiti...* or *Vakuru vedu vanoti...*’ (Our elders used to say... or our elders say...). This formula expresses that the experiences of the elders, both the living and the departed, are the authority behind these words of indigenous philosophies or wisdom, and as such their word is to be taken seriously” (ibid). What gives the words their strength and authority is the African notion that age is an important factor in determining wisdom. “An old man or an old woman may not be educated in terms of western education, but since they are the depositaries and custodians of the cultural philosophies of the ancestors, their word is the voice of reason. They have gone through more experiences and deserve to be listened to” (ibid). If the young and the adult people refuse to listen to the voice of wisdom or reason from the elders, there is a belief that the ancestors can punish the culprit(s) in a shameful way. For example, the person may not find a job, or he/she may live a cursed life whilst his/her peers are enjoying life to the fullest. Such members’ *hunhu* (personalities) will be unwelcome in any community; hence, they will never taste good life here and now and even in the spiritual world. They cannot be ancestors in the supra-mundane world.

“The proverbs address human experiences with yet another set of experiences drawn from the past; there is an assumed continuity between the past and the present in the proverbs” (ibid). Chimhundu (1980), cited in Matereke and Mapara argues that the proverbs have the purpose of:

Summing up the accumulated ethical and philosophical experience of generations for the benefit of posterity and thus, the collective experiences of the past continue to inspire and give guidance to the present, and as the sender of the proverb is appealing to tradition, there is a sense in which the sender reminds the receiver that tradition continues to be relevant in the present as something that has stood the test of time, hence the special force and weight of the proverb. (Matereke and Mapara 2009: 209)

“A closer analysis of Shona proverbs would clearly show that they are heavily loaded with people’s experiences and interactions with both fellow humans and the rest of nature” (Masaka and Mapara 2013: 136). For Gelfand, the Shona have continued to stick to their cultural faith even after a long time of coercive Christianization. In his survey of Shona people living in a western environment in then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) he observed that the Shona are still closely wedded to their cultural beliefs, preferring their own moral and spiritual culture to that of the west. They have all adopted a good deal of western material culture but still retain their own spiritual life (Gelfand 1981: 49, Cf. Masaka 2013: 137). “Even if the Shona may appear lost in the midst of an onslaught from the western cultures, they are always reminded of the dangers of alienation through proverbial lore, reminded that they have to live a life that conforms to the spiritual realities of an ideal African” (Masaka and Mapara 2013: 136-137). Therefore, there is a sense in which Shona religion is kept quite at the core of Shona life because the proverbial lore, which is continuously imparted to the young, ensures that Shona belief systems and its epistemologies are appreciated (ibid).

Shona proverbs are profoundly hinged on their recognition of full human life as being central. Therefore, every human activity ought to be for the purpose of fostering full life. As such, Shona proverbs are concerned with restoration, maintenance, and transmission or communication of life. This is the standard by which to judge good and bad leaders in the Shona culture, good and bad systems and structures, be they political, economic, social, or religious – preservation of life is a major aim. The fullness of life or abundant life in the Shona culture manifests itself in health and good morality among the young and the adult people in the communities, bringing peace, prosperity and general development. Morally, Shona proverbs have one aim: that is to increase the life of the entire community for its good – anything which is negative decreases or threatens that good life. For Shona people, humanity’s moral duty is to enhance life by preserving it. Such moral duties are cultural values and norms of indigenous people’s knowledge systems embedded in proverbs. The Shona proverbs which are to be discussed below strengthen human development for abundant life in relation to social, economic and environment development perspectives.

### *5.2.1 Proverbs That Promote Good Moral Behaviour as Models of Abundant Life*

“*Zingizi gonyera pamwe maruva enyika haaperi*” (Insect, suck nectar from one flower, the flowers of the world cannot be exhausted). In Shona culture, people are taught this proverb to forbid unscrupulous behaviour that threatens abundant life. Young and middle-aged adults are generally adventurous, full of energy and they experiment all the time, especially by having multiple partners. The proverb literally explains that “the behaviour of an insect tirelessly moves from one flower to the next in search of nectar. The insect is being commanded to stick to a particular flower” (Gwavaranda 2011: 129-

130). Likewise, in the midst of HIV and AIDS, the young women and young men have more than one sex partner. The proverb, therefore, becomes essential because it promotes good moral behaviour in young women and young men and even in older members of society. The proverb imparts the virtue of personality (*hunhu*), and, by encouraging *hunhu* in individuals, a community realizes harmony or peace, and, in turn, development. The proverb inculcates the virtue of respect for oneself as well as another person's spouse, thereby preventing the spread of the diseases that threaten abundant life. The analogy of the insect, when applied to human behaviour, fosters good moral behaviour.

*“Chaona Ziso Ndecharaona”* (What the eye has seen is what it has seen). This proverb takes into consideration that every move or action an individual does, happens after seeing. Similarly, there is a general saying supporting the above proverb which says '*vanhu rume kudabonde kwavo kuri mumaziso*' (Men get into sexualintercourse through seeing or men are aroused into sexualintercourse through seeing or men's sexualintercourse is in the eyes). Therefore, the proverb teaches people to uphold good moral behaviour, which discourages one from rushing to take action on the basis of sight (ibid: 130). The proverb guards against any threat to good life. It warns against many sex partners. In Shona culture, personal integrity and self-control are fundamental for abundant life and the development of communities. A healthy community with healthy individuals can build a healthy nation. The proverb encourages men and women in the Shona culture to get married and have children and thus becoming respected members of the community as *munhu ane hunhu* (a good person with good personality). It builds good behaviour, character, and responsible individuals in the society and this is a favourable ground for development.

*“Ramba kundzwa akaonekwa nembonje pahuma”* (One who rejects advice was seen with a wound on the forehead). The Shona people advice the young and the adults to always check on their moral behaviours, because without jealously guarding on moral behaviours it jeopardises *hunhu* (personality) and demises the preservation of life. If a person cannot take advice seriously, he/she surely kills the social fibre and threatens the present generation and the posterity in communities. For example, “if one refuses to take advice about HIV and AIDS seriously, the likelihood of infection is very high and in addition, if you are a married person, there is a danger of infecting your spouse who may be innocent with the virus” (Gwaravanda 2011: 131). This entails that the advice promotes good moral behaviour for the purpose of fostering life and the proverb communicates possible threats to this. Furthermore, a wise person should take heed of the wisdom of the proverb and take informative advice in a responsible manner, although nowadays exposure to foreign moral practices may result in beneficial and unbeneficial and undesirable moral behavioural system. However, the importance of proverbs lies in their warnings which emphasize the sanctity of life of the human per-

son, thereby imparting the sense of family, community, solidarity and participation in securing the life in its fullness.

### *5.2.2 Proverbs That Promote Communal Unity*

The Shona culture celebrates cooperation and discourages individualism. Shona people “share the basic instinct of gregariousness with the rest of humankind. Families and members of kin-groups from minimal to maximal lineages generally live together and form communities” (Ejizu 2013: 2). The social relations extend from human beings to their natural environment and to the spiritual forces in the supra-mundane world. Relations at all of these levels are sustained and maintained through a strict observation of cultural values such as reciprocity, participation, harmony, and hospitality. All of this is done in recognition of human life as being central. Therefore, every human activity ought to be for the purpose of enhancing life in its abundance. Thus, the Shona people’s philosophies and epistemologies are communal, and they inculcate the following proverbs:

“*Varume ndevamwe kutsra kwendebvu vano dzimurana*” (Men are all the same, when their beards burn, they help each other to extinguish the fire).

“*Imbwa mbiri hadzitorerwi nyama*” (Meat cannot be taken away from two dogs).

“*Gumwe rimwe hari tswanyi inda*” (A single thump does not kill a louse).

“*Rume rimwe hari kombi churu*” (A single male person no matter how big does not surround an ant-hill alone). (Mandova and Chingombe 2013: 101-102)

The aforementioned proverbs deeply reflect Shona philosophical knowledge. An individual views his/her position in relation to the aspirations of the community. A community is incomplete without all of its members, and an individual who is not part of the community is not complete either. That is why Mbiti says that “whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual” (Mbiti 1969: 109). Furthermore, Shona culture celebrates connectedness and cohesion – hence, man is not created to be alone. He/she is created to be a being in relation. The whole existence from cradle to death is embodied in a series of associations, and life appears to have its full value only in those close ties. Michael Kearney says:

These close ties will include extended family members, the clan, and village, the various societies and organizations in the community together with the close ties to the ancestors and gods who are interested in the day-to-day life of man. (Kearney 1981: 109-110)

This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the Shona view of man. It is a profoundly religious transmission. “Only in terms of other people does the individual be-

come conscious of his/her own being, his/her own duties, his/her privileges and responsibilities towards him/herself and towards other people" (Mbiti 1969: 106). We can conclude that the proverbs selected above support communal solidarity and that Shona people believe that all community members should confront all challenges that threaten human life, abundant life, and their existence as a unit. As Mandova and Chingombe point out, the Shona people believe that fragmentation of society is detrimental to the realization of societal goals. It produces individuals who act in ways that are not worthy of the celebrated ethos of the society. The essence is to view one's interests within the framework of societal aspirations (Mandova and Chingombe 2013: 102). An individual is not analyzed outside his/her problems because his/her challenges are also the challenges of his/her society (*ibid*). Furthermore, this is why Ramose, cited in Mandova and Chingombe, says:

The African view of man denies that persons can be defined by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristics of the lone individual. Rather man is defined by reference to the environing community as far as Africans are concerned, the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories, whatever these may be. And this primacy is meant to apply not only ontologically, but also in regard to epistemic accessibility. (*ibid*)

It should be clear that communalism does not negate individualism, but individualism has to be followed within the cultural ethos of the community, which elevates the recognition of human life as being integral. Individualism should be pursued within the aspirations of the community – hence everyone has a role to play for communal unity. Development of individuals in Shona communities is development for the whole community. Therefore, development practitioners can use this communalism within Zimbabwean communities in order to advance sustainable developmental projects.

### *5.2.3 Proverbs That Promote Good Leadership and Governance*

Shona culture promotes good leadership and good governance in their leaders. As such, leaders should protect human life at all cost, which is through restoration, maintenance, and transmission or communication of life. This is the Shona matrix by which to judge good and bad leaders, as well as good and bad systems and structures whether political, economic, religious, or social. Abundant life or life in its fullness is an important aspect of leadership, the preservation of life and the attainment of the good life (*ngaro rwakanaka/upenyu hwakazara*). Good leadership in Shona manifests itself in peace (*runyararo*), prosperity of the populace (*hupfumi kuwanhu*), and the general welfare of the communities. Good leadership in Shona culture emphasises a moral obligation that increases the life of the entire communities for their good, and the undesirable leadership trait is that which decreases or threatens life. It is a moral prerequisite in Shona culture that the order of the universe, known through tradition, is respected and main-

tained. When life is threatened or weakened, leaders are a means of restoring wholeness and balance in life by communicating with the spiritual world, which belongs to the ancestors and *Mwari* (the supreme life force), the owners of the land and people. However, Shona leadership hinges on the ancestors and *Mwari*, which means that a leader who is in constant communication with the spiritual world increases the entire life of the community and nation for the better, but a leader who negates constant communication with the spiritual world decreases or threatens that life.

Good governance responds effectively to the populace's aspirations and collective wishes. Therefore, leaders should be servants of the people. This is emphasized by Kenneth Kaunda, the former president of Zambia:

For us in Africa, to talk about ourselves as the servants of the people are more than a political platitude. It is a precious part of our culture and tradition. The essence of servant-hood is surely availability, openness to the demands of all those who have a claim upon one's services. This seems to be in marked contrast to the western traditions of leadership. The symbol of rank in western society appears to be unavailability. The more important you are, the more difficult it is for anyone to get access to you unless they are important too. In our tradition to be known by name to others is to belong to them in a very real sense, and therefore the more widely you are known the greater the number of people of all kinds who have the right of access to you. (Kaunda 1966: 33, Cf. Niemeyer 1982: 185)

Regarding good leadership, which is people-oriented and servile in nature, Bourdillon notes that "the chief is traditionally the guardian of the fundamental values of *rupenyu* (life) and *samba* (strength, vitality, and well-being). Life comes from the land, which is owned by the chief, and strength or power comes from the chief's status and his accession rituals for the spiritual world (the ancestors and *Mwari*). Both life and prosperity are necessary for the prosperity of his people and particularly for the land and its produce. Thus, a drought may be blamed on the general incompetence of the chief or on the fact that the wrong person was appointed" (Bourdillon 1976: 131). This being the case, Shona people proffered proverbs that inculcate good leadership and good governance, which are people-oriented and not individualistic in nature:

*"Ishe makurukota"* (A king or chief is his council).

*"Munhu kubata ushe makurukota"* (Kingship or Chieftainship depends on councilors).

*"Ushe usiyiranwa"* (Chieftainship is legacy).

*"Ishe itsime"* (A chief is like a well).

*"Ishe ndewe vanhu rose"* (A chief belongs to every person or everyone).

*"Ishe ibumba rota"* (A chief is like a rubbish pit).

*"Ushe madzoro"* (Chieftainship is like a cattle-herding roster you take it in turns).

*“Mbosva haitongwi nepfumo”* (A case is not settled by a spear).(Mandova and Chingombe 105-106)

The first and second proverbs embody Shona governmental principles, which emphasize the active participation by the community. The proverbs remind the leaders that decision-making is not done by one person only. The emphasis of these proverbs is the notion that consultation in leadership is a sophisticated weapon against authoritarianism (ibid). This is why Ramose (1999), cited in Mandova et al., asserts that the concept of a king with absolute power is odd to traditional African constitutional thought because the king's orders to the nation derive their validity from the fact that they had previously been discussed and agreed to by his counsellors. Different voices should be heard. The central issue is that elders, who are themselves repositories of Zimbabwe's culture and history, must assist leaders. They are the old men who occupied the chair of Zimbabwean history. These counsellors and advisors have a strong grasp of governmental principles that are in tandem with the shared philosophy of life of the Zimbabwean people. They are the archives of governmental principle (Mandova and Chingombe 2013: 105). However, if such principles are upheld, sustainable development is easily attainable.

The third proverb depicts that Shona people are wary of a governance system led by a single individual because it runs into danger of becoming dictatorial and absolutist, which would have been detrimental to freedom and the administration of impartial justice. The fourth proverb depicts that a chief or leader is likened to a well where everyone has the right to draw water from, a resource that should be equally accessible for everyone (ibid: 106). The fifth proverb shows that the chief or king belongs to everyone or every person; hence, he should be accessible for everyone and should hear everyone with problems. In settling disputes, the chief or king should be impartial, without nepotism or favouritism, so that he may not jeopardise his governance.

In the sixth proverb, the chief or leader is likened to a rubbish pit where everyone has the right to throw litter. A chief is, thus, reminded to attend all the disputes brought before him. Every subject is entitled to get a fair hearing. The proverb urges the chief to be patient when negotiating during the hearing. According to the seventh proverb, the chieftainship is likened to a cattle-herding roster. This shows that a chief or leader should display democracy in his/her governance system, thereby discouraging undemocratic and individualistic decision making, both despotism, and authoritarianism are against the Shona cultural philosophy of freedom and the administration of justice. Another lesson in leadership, is that people take turns to lead, therefore it is not helpful when one person continuously leads a nation for as long he/she feels, without any meaningful development realized. The eighth proverb – a case is not settled by a spear – addresses the administration of justice: leaders are not expected to use violence or to

intimidate people in settling disputes (Mandova and Chingombe 2013: 106) – and that is public accountability or good governance.

It is, however, important to note that the Shona proverbs depicted above show an indigenous knowledge system. They promote full human life, by imparting good moral behaviour, communal unity, good leadership, and good governance. According to this, it is greed, misgovernment, departure from Shona cultural principles and corruption among African leaders which has prevented the majority of Zimbabweans from living and experiencing life to the fullest. Therefore, some of the acute economic, social and political challenges, which are experienced in Zimbabwe and many African countries, are a result of selfishness and greed among those who are supposed to be servants of the people, as emphasized above. A leader should do whatever is in his/her power to protect and develop the life of the family, community and nation, following the order of the Shona worldviews, established by the ancestors and *Mwari* (the supreme life force) and bequeathed by tradition which does possess instincts, values and characteristics which are anti-oppression and pro-democracy.

### **5.3 Abundant Life in Shona Songs**

Songs or music are an integral part of a people's culture and religion, and can contribute to social transformations in the communities throughout the world. This section approaches songs or music with a developmental motif and depicts how resourceful the indigenous knowledge of Shona culture is. This section is concentrated on Shona songs or music in the preand post-independent times (1980) up to date. The presentation focuses on songs or music within the context of the public domain, with an additional reference to gospel songs or gospel music. Of interest is the popularity of protest, praise, and sorrow songs or music in different stages of the historical development of Zimbabwe. However, the presentation does not seek to go into detail about songs or music, though the sociological influences of music from micro - to macro - level will be considered. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that music has a tremendous impact on human beings: it depicts challenging contexts, whether social, economic or political. Therefore, songs are social commentaries on developments.

Songs are excellent keys in understanding the culture and religion of a people. Songs bring social consciousness, resistance, combat and freedom, a sense of nationalism, identity, death and the fullness of life to the fore. Songs or music are a means of effective communication. Songs liberate those who have broken spirits or live in physical captivity. Like all knowledge systems of a people, songs contain words of empowerment and disempowerment in any given community or society. The philosophy behind songs or music is to communicate messages on the socio-economic situation and the politics of a nation, thereby deconstructing and constructing the *hunhu* (personalities) of all members of society.

According to Moyo, “the nature of Shona songs prior to colonialism has been documented as one of the key ways in which people dealt with political oppression from the colonisers and their own demands for independence. This has been highlighted in countries like Kenya and Cameroon. In South Africa, musicians urged the masses to oppose racial discrimination and support this type of music to be played over the airways” (Moyo 2012: 21). Chitando, another prominent ethnomusicologist, has observed that in most African societies prior to colonialism, music performance was closely tied to communal events. Consequently, most community events were accompanied by music. A Ghanaian scholar, J.H. Kwabena Nketia (1992) and Chitando notes that most community events were accompanied by music and his observations are also applicable to how the Shona people approached music. “Public performance, therefore, takes place on social occasions, that is on occasions when members of a group or a community come together in moments of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any other kind of collective activity, such as building bridges, clearing paths, or putting out fires – activities that, in industrialised societies, might be assigned to specialised agencies” (Nketia, 1992 Cf. Chitando 2002: 20-21). It is, furthermore, highlighted that:

African musicians essentially used music as a type of journalism, that is popular music also plays a journalistic role by communicating messages that are either ignored or underplayed by mainstream mass media, hence music portrays multifaceted versions of realities. Therefore, from African perspectives popular music can represent ordinary people, ridicule the powerful, and serve as the voice of the voiceless and music does not exist independent of social, economic, or political influences. Furthermore, both music and journalism are cultural expressions that can be disseminated through mass communication and is socially constructed and reconstructed by huge audiences. (Moyo 2012: 21)

Mano (2007), quoted in Moyo, argues that the meanings of popular music are socially constructed and communicate messages to the public, as do newspapers, radio, or television (*ibid*). In an African context, music is essential and plays an important role in the social life, as alluded above; hence, “music accompanies one from cradle to the grave” (Chitando 2002: 21). Furthermore, music is a corpus that unlocks the culture of a people from micro to macro contexts, thereby unveiling beliefs, values, the social stratification, and plans in a community.

Like all other African cultures, “Shona music was and is so much more than what westerners associate with music. The Shona indigenous music reveals people’s spiritual beliefs, their modes of expression, patterns of communication and forms of entertainment, in as much as their present day popular music reveals a lot about the people’s lives and past experiences” (Tinotenda 2013: 1-3). “Shona indigenous songs are a medium of instruction through which young boys and girls were taught the values and expectations of adulthood. All social relationships were sealed, bonded and regulated

through songs. Through songs, a daughter-in-law would express her bitterness against a horrible mother-in-law, a bitter wife against a greedy husband, and the whole community would protest against an unjust chief" (*ibid*). Hence, there is a tradition of Shona protest songs (as shall be discussed later). There were songs of praise, sorrow (as again shall be discussed below), urge, ridicule, and reprimand. "Most communication strategies in the pre-literature and oral African societies were musical in one way or another" (*ibid*).

Furthermore, it is asserted by Berliner (1981) and Chitando, that music was important to the indigenous Shona people's society. It included war songs, and signal drumming, as well as music and dances for weddings, funerals, and religious events. Jones points out that music performance found its way to the court of Mutapa, where the ruler had professional praise singers. Court musicians played many different musical instruments and sang a variety of songs for the entertainment and glorification of the king and his court officials (Berliner, 1981 Cf. Chitando 2002: 21). Therefore, we can conclude that music or singing was important since the dawn of the Shona people on earth. "Similarly, it is noted that, based on the available sources, it is convincing to uphold the notion that musical performance has been built into the very way of life of the Shona people from as far back into the past as history can allow us to grasp" (*ibid*: 22). Maraire (1990) and Chitando, also argues that music presentations in pre-colonial Shona society covered the social, political, economic and spiritual areas. Hence, it is explained that, without falling into the misleading reductionism of saying that all traditional music was religious, it remains important to highlight the close relationship that existed between Shona music and the ancestral cult (*ibid*). Songs were presented as part of the Shona cumulative tradition, with ample space for improvisation and innovation, and as in other African societies, music was featured in initiation ceremonies, rituals, and sacrifices, death, and funerals, as well as in work, hunting, and healing. In the day-to-day lives of Shona people, songs played an integral part in expressing dissent, and satisfaction, in correcting mistakes and for lamentation (Maraire, 1990 Cf. Chitando 2002: 21).

According to Tinotenda, the era of colonization in Zimbabwe profoundly affected all aspects of Shona life for ninety years, including its music and songs. Education in Zimbabwe was now the responsibility of the settlers, accompanied by missionaries, and their churches. Through the classroom context, the missionaries were able to condemn Shona indigenous songs, as well as the religious practices and aesthetic values of the Shona people. Tinotenda points out that, as Shona people were converted to Christianity, European four-part a cappella hymn singing was introduced, while traditional drumming with call-and-response singing was discouraged and Mbira was condemned (Tinotenda 2013: 1-3). Furthermore, it is explained that "colonization, as a legacy shared by most African societies, was a significant turning point in their history. It introduced new social and political structures such as urbanization, formal school education, the Christian religion, and new varieties of music such as Christian hymns. The

traditional role of music as a medium of instruction was replaced by the introduction of a formal education system which was closely linked to the new Christian religion” (ibid). The introduction of missionaries’ Christian religion on the other hand completely changed the Shona people’s religious songs and ritual music. It was a clear fact to the missionaries that there was a close relationship between the indigenous Shona people’s religion and music; hence, they ensured a fast departure from Shona culture and religion. They quickly wrote church hymns replacing Shona people’s religious songs, thus:

A choral type of music comprising of four lines, namely soprano, alto, tenor and bass, this type of music emphasized meter a thing that was alien to African music which is based on rhythm and polyphony. It also came with certain dress codes, voice modulation rules, selected instruments and dancing styles that were alien to the religious performances of the people. For example, in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), catholic missionaries castigated the use of the mbira instrument in church ceremonies and dismissed it as unholy and heathen. Christian converts were usually forbidden to play traditional musical instruments. The mbira and the drum which had carried the tradition of the Shona people’s music for a long time were often dismissed as unholy (though it changed after independence)... (Tinotenda 2013: 1-3)

From a critical point of view, songs/or music are integral tools to deal with oppressive systems, they can conscientize civil society on what is going on in the nation, by giving them critical eyes and wisdom to determine their future, as well as defending it from an undemocratic system. Songs are the newspapers of the society, they are the voice of the voiceless, and they solidify the foundation of social consciousness and build resistance and defence against a corrupt and greedy regime. They revive the broken spirits of the weak and the down-trodden in the communities. Through songs, education is transmitted and communicated to the uneducated. They represent the poor by loudly heralding their heartfelt concerns and upholding their bravery against the oppressor. They are a representation of the majority’s views of the elites who are often claiming resources of the nation for themselves which are meant for everyone. Songs are cultural expressions that build up identity. However, they can be used to express bitterness of the heart and sorrows of the individual, families, communities and the nation. Hence, they are contextual; they can be used in war, as well as at weddings, traditional festivals and ceremonies, funerals, and public celebrations. Songs represent the quest for the fullness of life through lyrics, by bringing social consciousness to the fore, and thereby heralding in resistance, combat, nationalism, identity, freedom, and celebrating good, abundant life in Zimbabwe.

### 5.3.1 Protest Songs as Models of Abundant Life

Each context or '*Sitz im Leben*' (setting in life or life setting) has triggered the lyrics and structure of protest songs, and these songs serve as a means to attest the concerned people's sentiments and the context. Kahari points out that "each period has influenced the structure of the protest song and the song serves as a barometer in gauging the people's sensitivity and the tone and atmosphere of the situation or period" (Kahari 1981: 80). The protest song also represents a significant aspect of traditional Shona musical practice. Kahari and Chitando, says that, while it has been tempting for many African cultural nationalists to glorify the African past, it should be noted that life has always been a struggle for all human beings in different historical epochs. It was in the encounter with the frustrations of life that the Shona protest songs emerged. In such desperate situations, individuals appealed to *Mwari* (the supreme life force) for divine intervention, instead of observing the protocol of handling requests to the ancestors for onward transmission to God (Kahari 1981: 80 Cf. Chitando 2002: 22). Protest songs were also directed towards the area of politics. However, it is the contention of many scholars, who researched the impact of songs, that in illiterate societies songs played and are still playing a critical role, as Kahari attested:

It is an accepted truism that songs are newspapers of the non-literate societies of Africa. It is a versatile genre capable of universal application. The songs express sorrow when sung at burial ceremonies; makes people fight and work harder in war or at work; it is satirical when sung by an aggrieved daughter-in-law in her attempts to mould public opinion against her mother-in-law or her husband; ironic when sung by the father whose child he suspects to have been bewitched by his neighbour; it is an expression of extreme joy when sung by victorious soldiers and it relieves tensions and deepens the tragedy in the unfolding of the plot when sung by a narrator(*sarungano*) and his chorus as they try to portray characters in typical situations. (Kahari 1981: 80)

Furthermore, protest songs depict quests for a full life, the continuity of life, belonging, the positive qualities of life, social development, political democracy, good governance, genuine development, and nourish both the inner-person (soul) and the outerperson (body) for combat through their lyrics. Examples of Shona songs include the following:

1. "*Gwindingwi rine shumba inoruma kuzangoma*" (The thick forest has a killer lion – beat the drum)

"*Vana vaPfumojena vachanya hezvo vaTongwo yeMachaona*" (The children of Pfumojena will come and the Tonga will see – they will be dealt with)

"*Hoye, hoye-e-e; Hoye, hoye-e-e*"

"*Gwindingwi rine shumba inoruma hezvoMakoni*" (The thick forest has a killer lion (and we warn) you Makoni)

“*Gwindingwi rine shumba inoruma kuza – ngoma*” (The thick black forest has a killer lion – beat the drum)

“*Vana vaPfumojena vachanya hezvo vaTongawo yemuchaona*” (The children of Pfumojena will come and the Tonga (people) will be dealt with (defeated))

2. “*Mwari iweih-e-e hiyahahaha*” (You O Godihe-e-e hiyahahaha)

“*Mwari wakatonga zvakaipisa*” (God judged wrongly)

“*Ho ihe-bo ihe-e, Ho ihe-bo ihe-e*”

“*Ho ihei-hewo heiho woye, Ho iheihewoheihowoye*”

“*Nhasi ndoru saranani pavamwe*” (Today with whom do I throw away (this plight) in the presence of another)

“*Ho ihei hewo heihei hewohe, Ho ihewoheiheihehewohe*”

“*Ho pasi rakatonga zvakaipisa*” (Ho the earth judged very badly)

“*Mwari iweih-e biya behabe*” (You O God ihe-e hiya hahahe)

“*Ho vakafa vakasiya bwabwa nenyama*” (The dead left beer and meat)

“*Ho ye-e biya behabe*”

“*Amai vangu ndoyendepiko vamwe*” (Mother where do I go to, please)

“*Ho iheihewonde*”

“*Chikara chakatonga zvisina vamwe*” (God (the creator) judged in a way that has not been experienced before). (Kahari 1981: 82-83)

The first song is a Shona traditional war song – it has profound effects in a changed situation. “The thick black forest referred to in the song, is now replaced by an urban city, and the killer lion is the oppressive police force and the tyrannical government. In the modern song, this formula offers hope of a people’s victory over the settlers” (ibid). Such a song encourages soldiers to fight bravely and the angry civil populace to protest fearlessly. The song instills in people a mystical power (from the ancestors and *Mwari*) that turns to action against the enemy (oppressors). The song invigorates people to act, and, hence, imminent victory is attained before the war is won. The song imparts enthusiasm to fighters to defeat enemies. The second example is a religious song of the Shona which is a forerunner of the modern use of hymns as protest songs. It resembles the first song, but now *Mwari* (the supreme life force) is central to its theme (ibid: 83). The song put people in touch with the splendor of *Mwari* and *Mwari*’s unfavorable verdict (for example when someone’s relative is dead). *Mwari* is likened to the earth (*pasi*) and to a creature (*chikara*), showing *Mwari*’s omnipotent nature. In this protest

song, the singers are protesting against *Mwari* for allowing the enemy to kill, but at the same time, they appeal to *Mwari*, to grant them victory.

As the liberation struggle gained momentum in the 1970s, songs were composed to encourage young Africans to rise and take up arms. Other songs sought to highlight the cruel conditions under which blacks lived, while also castigating the white settlers for their intransigence or their refusal to change their views (Chitando 2002:38). Other scholars, who studied protest songs after Zimbabwe's independence, point out that the songs won the liberation war and that they utilized traditional genres, such as the narrative type of song, to provide a history of colonialism. Other songs adopted the protest mode, in which direct appeals were made to *Mwari*, (the creator), to intervene and release the people from the yoke of oppression. Christian hymns were also appropriated in the songs that sought to empower the African masses to overthrow a racist regime (ibid).

Turino (2000) and Lan (1985) and Chitando, explain that, during the struggle for Zimbabwe, ZANU radio programs were broadcast in the country from Radio Mozambique in Maputo, while ZAPU's were broadcast from Lusaka, Dar es Salam, Cairo, and Radio Moscow. The songs that were played on these programs were meant to provide morale for the fighters on the war front, as well as to inspire more people to take up arms. By ridiculing the enemy, praising the exploits of the armed cadres, and highlighting the dispensation that would unfold upon the attainment of independence, the songs were an intricate part of the mobilizing strategy of the nationalist parties. Since the emphasis was on liberating the African in a holistic sense, there was an upsurge in practices associated with African traditional religions in most parts of the country (Lan, 1985; Turino, 2000 Cf. Chitando 2002: 39). Furthermore, it is highlighted that some armed combatants condemned Christianity at the *pungwes* (nightly meetings) and some individuals were made to burn their bibles. Christianity was painted as the religion of the oppressors and there was a revitalization of indigenous cultural practices. However, in some areas, the guerrillas killed missionaries and their African converts. The question of the role of Christianity and traditional African religions during Zimbabwe's liberation war is a big one, and it continues to receive scholarly attention (Chitando 2002: 39). From a critical point of view, if bibles were burnt and African converts to Christianity were killed, then, we can conclude that it was an accepted truism that Christianity was despised by guerrillas or fighters. Therefore, it entails that armed combatants were in deep support of their indigenous ancestral spirits and *Mwari*, and not the Christian God. This is further attested by Zimunya (1993) and Chitando, who claims that, as the guerrilla war intensified, church music went through what one may say is a process of paganization. In this phenomenon, old hymns were stripped of their religious diction and converted into war songs (Zimunya, 1993 Cf. Chitando 2002: 40).

The aforesaid stance of the armed combatants is also anchored in their beliefs in Nehanda, Chaminuka, and Kaguvi who were influential spirit mediums in this struggle,

and were executed around 1898 and adopted as the patron saints of the nationalist movement from the late 1950s. Given the close relationship between the land and African spirituality, the nationalists portrayed the quest for freedom and regaining of ancestral lands as a just war, sanctioned by powerful ancestral spirits (ibid). The period of 1970 to 1980 is noted as a period which represents an important phase in the development of protest songs in Zimbabwe. It is during this period that artists like Thomas Mapfumo, ZexieManatse, Oliver Mtukudzi, Tineyi Chikupo, Jonah Sithole, Susan Mapfumo, Jordan Chataika and others became important players on the local musical front (Chitando 2002: 41). According to Moyo, “Thomas Mapfumo is recognized in various research studies for his protest songs against the unjust government in Zimbabwe, and in the 1970s he was jailed for his music when he was critical of the Rhodesian white minority government” (Moyo 2012: 22). On the one hand, Chitando argues that it was not Thomas Mapfumo alone who composed and sang protest music, but that the likes of Mtukudzi and Manatsa also contributed to the music of resistance in Zimbabwe (Chitando 2002: 41). In the same period, a number of artists recorded protest songs in which they pleaded with *Mwari* (the supreme life force) to intervene and set black people free. Turino (2000) and Chitando, says that while the term gospel music had not yet been used, some songs composed by Mtukudzi and Chataika utilized Christian religious ideas to appeal to the Supreme Being. Manatsa’s songs, such as ‘*Musango Mune Hangaiwa*’ (There are Guinea-Fowls in the Bush), sought the assistance of Shona traditional spirit mediums like Nehanda, and Mtukudzi’s lyrics were more consistent with the liberation context. His song ‘*NdiriBofu*’ (I am Blind) was an expression of surrender in faith, calling upon *Mwari* to guide the suffering blacks. Chataika’s song, ‘*Tirwireiwo Mwari*’ (Fight for us God) retracted God’s interventions in biblical times and called upon Him to do so for the struggling Zimbabweans (Turino, 2000 Cf. Chitando 2002: 42). After Zimbabwe’s independence on 18 April 1980, Thomas Mapfumo continued to sing protest songs that denounced Robert Mugabe’s government. He released the song ‘corruption’ in 1989, to the consequence that his hit album was no longer broadcast. Mano (2007), quoted in Moyo, says:

The song corruption openly attacked growing levels of corruption in government. At that time, students, workers, opposition political parties, and civil groups were demonstrating against the government and private sector. (Moyo 2012: 22)

It is an accepted truism that after independence in 1980, Zimbabwean artists were the voice of hope and the voice of the voiceless majority in Zimbabwe. It is pointed out by Moyo that in the 1980s, progress began to decrease tragically. “The Zimbabwean people and the country’s music industry were losing faith and hope in the new government headed by Robert Mugabe. Music was regarded as a luxury by the government; therefore, government’s policies were to the detriment of the music industry” (Moyo 2012: 22). Not only was the government not helpful to Zimbabwean musicians, but western influences also did not help much. Before the liberation struggle, western music was

played predominantly on the radio by the colonial government. “The ‘I love you, I love you, I love you’ stuff of country and western music and similar songs, carefully selected local ballads would naturally provide the right nutrition for the propaganda machinery in relation to some of the poignant socio-politico-economic commentary emanating from an increasingly disenchanted populace” (ibid).

In the 1990s, absolute poverty, and harsh economic realities as well as political contradictions threatened the unified nationalist project. Corruption of the ruling black elite, wastefulness by the state and intolerance of opposing views brought the painful realization that the government could not deliver the economic miracle that it had promised. The policy statement ‘Growth with Equity’, enunciated by the government to stimulate economic growth within a socialist ideology, now meant shrinkage of the economy with glaring disparities. In his 1990 song *‘Varombo Kuvarombo’* (The Poor Get Poorer), Thomas Mapfumo protested that the black leaders consolidated their wealth, while the poor majorities were caught in a vicious poverty trap (Chitando 2002: 45). The country definitely is in a vicious trap of poverty perpetuated by ZANU-PF leadership who are still wrapped in their intransigence to change their views. From 1990 to 2001, things were getting worse in Zimbabwe because of the ‘Economic Structural Adjustment Program’ (ESAP) discussed in chapter 4; musicians captured the national attitude in their lyrics. Musicians like Edwin Hama, Leonard Zhakata, Simon Chimbetu, Leonard Dembo and others released songs that criticized the regular price increases, the oppressive labour situation, the high tax rate and other issues. Their songs received popular support in terms of high sales figures; this means that they struck a chord with the buying public. Zhakata’s song *‘Mugore’* (Reward), released in 1994, is, particularly of great importance. Zhakata appropriated the biblical story of the prodigal son in order to press for his right to a full life before death. He attacked the political leaders for their insensitivity and for abandoning their followers. “Speaking on behalf of the working class, he sighed that he was oppressed, overworked and thoroughly abused” (Chitando 2002: 46). Zhakata called upon *Mwarito* convene a heavenly council with his angels and to send down showers of blessings on a poor and suffering people (ibid). The aforesaid songs underline that songs are situational and contextual in nature, though protest songs can be used against any undemocratic government. These protest songs’ lyrics communicate clear messages for the protestors to act and rejuvenate their spirits and bodies to fight against the oppressor or to work harder. Fragmented human spirits and bodies are vitalized to claim abundant life and its positive qualities here and now and not in the future or in heaven.

Other artists who went on the stage with protest songs are Andy Brown, who composed a song entitled *‘Nyika Yama tsotsi’* (The Country of Crooks), while King Pharaoh reminds Zimbabwean leaders of their broken promises in the song called *‘Vimbiso 2000’* (Promise for the Year 2000). Surely, many policies from the government were supposed to be fulfilled by the year 2000, including ‘Healthcare for All, Housing for All,

and Education for All'. As the year progressed it was crystal clear that the government had not yet delivered on its policies, and the leaders had developed a kind of selective amnesia. Simon Chimbetu in his song 'Survival' sings in the role of a pained father, pleading with the ruling black elite to allow his children to be granted their basic wish: to be allowed to survive (Chitando 2002: 46). Thomas Mapfumo, on the other hand, declared in his song *Mamvemve* (Tatters) that the country (Zimbabwe) that the people yearned for was now in tatters. He is known as 'The Lion of Zimbabwe' because of his *Chimurenga* music (Revolution Songs) (ibid). He also released another song called '*Munyika Muno Maita Disaster*' (There is Disaster in this Country). After these revolutionary songs, Thomas Mapfumo left the disaster-ridden Zimbabwe in 1999 for the United States of America.

Oliver Mtukudzi released a song called '*Wasakara*' (You Are Used Up) that represents the creative interplay between artists and their audiences. The lyrics of the song advise an old man to accept that he is too old, and the indications are the wrinkles on his face, and he could not accomplish his goals as he used to do when he was young. The urban audiences interpreted the song as a veiled attack on Robert Mugabe who was in his late seventies (ibid: 47). As if this was not enough, Mtukudzi released another song entitled '*Ndomu rumura seyiko Mwana Wokubereka, Arambira Pamukaka*' (How can an older toddler whom I gave birth to, be removed from sucking his mother's milk). Again, the artist's intent is clear. It seems to be a direct attack on Robert Mugabe who has been the president of Zimbabwe since it attained its independence in 1980 – up to date that is four decades. The satirical lyrics of the song seem to depict Mugabe, the oldest president in the world, as still sucking his mother's milk, thus clinging on to power. At the same time, the song includes the line '*Anonzi dzoka uyamwe mukaka ndiye aka murumura*' (The Mother, instead of encouraging the older toddler not to suck her milk, is calling it back). On this note, Mtukudzi seemed to be puzzled by the Zimbabwean electorates who voted for Robert Mugabe to remain the country's president, despite the fact that he is now 91 years old. This calls for a critical analysis of the voting system in Zimbabwe if Robert Mugabe is genuinely winning every election without manipulating the electoral system in Zimbabwe. From 2000 to 2013, despite the acute social, political, and economic challenges in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, and his ZANU-PF party have won presidential elections. This is a confusing and a disturbing scenario to the opposition parties and their electorates. The 2013 general election in Zimbabwe gave Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party the mandate to rule the country up to 2018.

In February 2015, Thomas Mapfumo, though living in the United States of America now, released another bombshell album entitled 'Danger Zone'. According to Mapfumo's manager "the album is not only historic but comprehensive art that is set to move the human race forward. It is a fusion of traditional and new tunes, consolidating *Chimurenga* (revolutionary songs) as authoritative voices on the current affairs in Zimbabwe and brings back oppressed Zimbabweans' voice, which is marginalized within

and outside national frontiers. In his usual show of complexity in addressing socio-political and economic pitfalls, Mapfumo calls for an end to war and its exigencies, calling for global peace and co-existence as important drivers for the nation and global sustainable development" (Viva, 2016). In the album, there are songs about poverty, but of particular interest is the song entitled '*Hatidi Politics*' (We Don't Want Politics), where Thomas Mapfumo declares that the leadership of Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party have failed to deliver what they have promised to the Zimbabwean electorates. He showed that leadership and governance in Zimbabwe seem to be more about talking and shouting at each other rather than solving the bread and butter issues of the Zimbabwean populace. The song declared that the leadership is desperate and ran short of ideas to fix social, economic and political challenges; instead, they are embroiled in empty politics whilst the people are crying for life in its fullness. The Zimbabwean people despise this leadership, which is clueless to fix the freefalling economy and incompetent to transform absolute poverty in Zimbabwe. The lyric '*Mavengeweyi*' (Why Do People Hate You?) is a question which shows the extent of the leadership's failure, corruption and politicizing everything without meaningful developments. The lyrics "*Pasina zviri kufamba, uyezvemapererwa*" (Nothing is moving in Zimbabwe; therefore, you have failed and you are desperate and clueless), are very strong. The song chronicles the needs of the Zimbabwean populace: the people want to be happy, they want a good life, a good living, good clothing, jobs, food, hospitals, schools, cars, and houses. They do not need cheap politics which do not deliver or put a stop to socio-economic and political challenges in the country.

Mapfumo, though living outside of Zimbabwe, is not divorced from the plight and challenges which are pulling down the country profoundly. A country which was once the glorious 'Bread Basket of Africa' (BBA) is now an empty basket. Having said this, it should be kept in mind that Thomas Mapfumo is not the only artist who is boggled by the shrinking, stagnation and polarization in Zimbabwe. Other artists are singing protest songs as well. This subchapter on protest songs has illustrated how these songs can unveil socio-economic and political pitfalls. Protest songs impart means and plans to escape from oppression, and inculcate knowledge on social, economic and political challenges. Protest songs appeal for justice, peace, security, the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy, and good governance, the grander aim being to realize healthy communities for the protection and fostering of life as an integral part of Shona culture which is hinged on its recognition of human life as being of central importance. Furthermore, protest songs restore and transmit life in human beings in the world.

### 5.3.2 Praise Songs as a Model of Abundant Life

Zimbabwe attained its independence on 18 April 1980, bringing to an end ninety years of colonial rule. The independence of Zimbabwe marked the end of a struggle against discrimination, racism, injustice, and oppression. In the euphoria of independence, musical artists ushered in praise songs or music departing from composing protest songs. It is noted that the first artist to grace the celebrations was none other than the reggae maestro, Robert Nesta Marley, who had penned the song 'Zimbabwe' in recognition of the struggle. While reggae had some following before independence, after Marley's performance its profile increased significantly. With the government proclaiming an internationally acknowledged policy of national reconciliation and amidst national optimism, local artists celebrated the attainment of independence. The ZANU-PF choir, Thomas Mapfumo, Zacks Manatsa, the Four Brothers, and many other bands recorded songs that congratulated the ruling party, the masses of Zimbabwe, and Mugabe in particular for their resilience. The songs of *Chimurenga* (revolutionary songs) had moved from protest to praise (Chitando 2002: 43). These praise songs depicted recognition of the manifestation of life in its fullness or abundant life realized here and now. That is ushering in a new dispensation in Zimbabwe, for the poor masses to realize good living standards. The music reflected the celebratory emotions and positively expressed the sense of belonging and true identity. In the same spirit of celebration, war songs, were sung, as cited in Machingura, hence, he pointed out that countless songs were composed and performed about Nehanda (a spirit medium) and Mugabe. One of the popular liberation songs in pre- and post-independent Zimbabwe goes as follows:

"*Mudzimu-we-e-e*"(Oo-o-o Ancestral Spirits)

"*Nandi Nebanda Mudzimu Wedu Baba*"(O-o-o-o Spirit Medium Nehanda our Ancestral Spirit)

"*Titarirei Mambo Tidzose Zimbabwe*" (Help us to Return Zimbabwe)

"*Nandi vaMugabe-e-e Mutungamiriwedu*"(O-o-o-o Mr. Mugabe -e-e our only Leader)

"*Nhayi vaMugabe-e-e Mutungamiri weZimbabwe*"(O-o-o-o Mr. Mugabe the only Leader of Zimbabwe)

"*Titungamireyiwo Titore Zimbabwe*" (Lead us in Taking Zimbabwe)

"*Vana Mai nanaBaba vari kunetseka-a-a*"(Our Mothers and Fathers are facing Difficulties)

"*Nhayi vaNehanda Mudzimu-u weduBaba*"(O-o-o-o Spirit Medium Nehanda our Great Spirit)

"*Nhai vaChaminuka Mudzimu wedu Baba*"(O-o-o-o Spirit Medium Chaminuka our Ancestral Spirits). (Machingura 2012: 205)

The song was sung in pre- and post-independent Zimbabwe, encouraging Mugabe to lead Zimbabwe. Mugabe was placed in the category of Nehanda and Chaminuka as a sign to show that Mugabe was chosen by the spirits to lead Zimbabwe. They suggest that the spiritual world, the ancestors and *Mwari*, is in approval of Mugabe as a true son of the soil who will rejuvenate and usher in life in its fullness to the Zimbabwean populace socially, economically and politically. Therefore, Mugabe was supposed to pursue black advancement by realizing equality, land, education, health care, housing, peace, security, good governance, the rule of law, the observation of human rights for good life and sustainable development in Zimbabwe. Similarly, it is postulated that:

Songs that were released in the immediate post-colonial period also thanked the ancestral spirits and *Mwari* for their guidance and support. As Nehanda, Kaguvi and Chaminuka were revered as the guardian spirits of the armed struggle. Mugabe, on the other hand, pronounced and pledged development growth with equity to make sure Zimbabweans will enjoy life in its fullness in all aspects. (Chitando 2002:43-44)

Thomas Mapfumo, in the mood of celebrating independent Zimbabwe, released a song entitled '*Pemberai-i Pemberai-i vana Baba vana Mai, Pemberai Tayambuka isu*' (Celebrate, Celebrate Fathers, and Mothers, Celebrate Zimbabwe is independent now, Celebrate Today it's our turn, we are independent) in 1989. The lyrics of this song showed the praising attitude brought by the independence of Zimbabwe. The lyrics declared the attainment of abundant life, suggesting, for example, that "we are masters of our own, war is now over, people can plough their fields without fear, land tax and animal tax is gone, black people and their kids can learn in any school without segregation, and Zimbabweans can walk in any street in central business district without restrictions and Zimbabweans can develop themselves freely". Praise songs are also seen in the old National Anthem of Zimbabwe '*Ishe Komborera Africa, Ngayi simudzirwe Zita Rayo*' (*Mwari*/the supreme life force bless Africa; lift up the name of Africa). It is, however, postulated by many scholars of musicology that, after the independence of Zimbabwe, celebratory songs or music were a common feature:

The decade 1980 – 1990 is often portrayed as a honeymoon period in the history of Zimbabwe. So confident were most people of the prosperity that lay ahead that one political and cultural nationalist declared in 1981 that the protest song proper ended with the independence of Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980. Furthermore, the music in this decade was largely characterized by celebration and optimism. On the other hand, the church songs continued to be composed and performed, though confined to the sacred buildings and holy spaces of the various denominations. It was music for funerals and weddings, and even then it was often eclipsed by music with a fast beat, mainly from South Africa and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo)... Songs of praise now dwelt on the achievements of Mugabe, while all those who did not support his policies were demonized. Mugabe was portrayed as the 'Redeemer and Savior' of Zimbabwe. Christian music, with its tendency to-

wards the eschatological and mournful tone, had no public space in a community that was enjoying life in its fullness. (Chitando 2002: 45)

As time went on, despite acute socio-economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe, a new national anthem was composed in 1994 with lyrics written by Solomon Mutswairo, instrumental sounds by Fred Changundega, and the song was adopted in March of the same year by the government of Zimbabwe. “The adoption was realized after a nation-wide competition to replace ‘*Ishe Komborera Africa*’ with a distinctly Zimbabwean song. It has been translated into all three of the main languages of Zimbabwe, Shona, Ndebele and English. The song is a patriotic musical composition that evokes and eulogizes the history, traditions, and struggles of the people of Zimbabwe, and is used by the government of Zimbabwe as the official national song” (Government of Zimbabwe 2015: 1). “The national anthem of Zimbabwe is used in a wide array of contexts. It is played on national holidays and festivals, and has also been played at sporting events such as the Olympic Games when celebrating the gold medal winner, and to students each day at the start of school as an exercise in patriotism” (*ibid*). The national anthem is played every morning at the beginning of the national broadcast. The National Anthem of Zimbabwe goes as follows:

“*Simudzai mureza wedu weZimbabwe*” (Oh lift the banner, the flag of Zimbabwe)

“*Yakazvarwa nemoto weChimurenga*” (The symbol of freedom proclaiming victory)

“*Neropa zbinji ramagamba*” (We praise our heroes’ sacrifice)

“*Tiidzivirire kumhandu dzose*” (And vow to keep our land from foes)

“*Ngai komborerwe nyika yeZimbabwe*” (And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.)

“*Tarisai Zimbabwe nyikayakashongedzwa*” (Oh lovely Zimbabwe, so wondrously adorned, with)

“*Nemakomo, nehova, zvinoyeredza*” (Mountains, and rivers cascading, flowing free)

“*Mvura ngainaye, mindaipembesa*” (May rain abound, and fertile fields)

“*Vashandi vatuswe ruzinji rugutswe*” (May we be fed, our labor blessed)

“*Ngai komborerwe nyika yeZimbabwe*” (And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.)

“*Mwari ropafadzai nyika yeZimbabwe*” (Oh God, we beseech Thee to bless our native land)

“*Nyika yama dzitateguru edu tose*” (The land of our fathers bestowed upon us all)

“*Kubva Zambezi kusrikira Limpopo*” (From Zambezi to Limpopo)

“*Nera tungamiri vare nenduramo*” (May leaders be exemplary)

*“Ngai komborerwe nyika yeZimbabwe”* (And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.) (Government of Zimbabwe 2015: 2)

From a critical point of view, the lyrics of the national anthem of Zimbabwe are celebratory in nature, in recognition of independent Zimbabwe, by lifting the banner or the flag, and thus declaring freedom and victory against the oppressors. The lyrics also encourage working class people to work hard in order to be paid well to feed their respective families. The aspect of working hard brings with itself good economy. The words *Ruzhinji rugutswe*’ (May we be fed) are mass-oriented and not selective in nature, not directed to the few, but to the whole Zimbabwean populace without discrimination. Therefore, poverty, which is experienced in Zimbabwe, is a human construction of the few elites who are part of the political leadership. Furthermore, the lyrics evoke and praise highly the armed combatants, both the living and the dead, and the ancestors and *Mwari* for the independent Zimbabwe. The national anthem as a praise song appeals to the ancestors and *Mwari* to protect and bless the land of Zimbabwe, for the populace to enjoy the goodness of life in abundance. The song recognizes the close connection between people and land, the land is a gift from the forefathers who bequeathed it to everyone in the country, and hence the land belongs to the ancestors and *Mwari*. Furthermore, the land is blessed with abundant natural resources, for example, gold, platinum, chrome, nickel, diamonds, iron ore, copper, mountains, and rivers. All these need to be protected for the benefit of the Zimbabwean people.

The ancestors and *Mwari* are called upon to impart endurance, courage and tenacity to the leadership and people of Zimbabwe to protect the land for the benefit of the current generation and the posterity to experience life in its fullness, peace and security for a sustainable development. The song reminds leaders to be genuinely exemplary in their governance system, insisting that they are leaders because the ancestors and *Mwari* chose them and that they are bound to respect and be guided by indigenous philosophy for the preservation of human life. The lyrics show that the leadership’s protection and blessings are a direct gift from the ancestors and *Mwari*. Overtly, the lyrics of the national anthem of Zimbabwe praise the independence of Zimbabwe, the Shona culture, and traditions, thereby communicating restoration, identity, maintenance and transmission of life in its abundance. Lastly, although socio-economic and political challenges unfolded in the second decade 1990 – 2000 and up to date (2016), praise songs (or music in general) are celebratory in nature, as a realization of life in its fullness, within a healthy and peaceful nation.

### *5.3.3 Sorrowful Songs as a Model of Abundant Life*

Sorrowful songs are centered on the ‘human spirit’, an important aspect which controls the mind and body. Therefore, the remedy to such a distressful, desperate situation is to

relieve the crushed human spirit by singing sorrow songs. Berger and Luckmann (1966), quoted in Moyo, point out that, “based on the social construction of reality theory, society is composed of dialectical processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Thereby, music is internalized by the self and subjectively meaningful. It becomes a tool which is externalized by a person or group that is projecting the ideas; it is objectified and given form or social structure through the music, and internalized by the individual or group as a social structure. This framework is plausible because it explains why music like the sorrow songs was meaningful in the lives of slaves” (Moyo 2012: 11). Similarly, Du Bois (1970) and Moyo, believes that the sorrow songs created by slaves and highlighted in his book entitled ‘The Souls of Black Folk’ were meaningful in the lives of slaves because these songs provided them with the means to communicate amongst themselves and with the outside world about the cruelty of slavery (ibid). “They sent coded messages about escaping to North America, and they were part of the religious tradition of slaves who longed for their heavenly home since they were unable to return to their worldly home in Africa. Du Bois believes that art, in general, was created from a social compulsion that was made up of an individual impulse, combined with the black’s group compulsion against slavery, and built on feelings of ‘revenge, despair, aspiration, and hatred, as black people fought back to survive’ (ibid). Sorrow songs were messages to the world of slaves weary at heart. “The purpose was propaganda, with the goal of improving the lives of black people, hence sorrow songs originate from the stressed, disappointed, crushed hearts and spirits of black people’s experiences of past and present contexts” (Du Bois, 1970 Cf. Moyo 2012: 12, 5, 6).

Likewise, Zimbabwean sorrowful music and songs have similar contexts. Moyo, posit that music plays a powerful role in society. Research on the role of music in conflict studies shows that it plays a prominent role in its ability to create associations and to cause emotional impact in people. “Music has the potential to influence emotions and to express a sense of belonging to a specific group; it can also communicate antagonistic attitudes towards other groups” (ibid). In Zimbabwe, during the pre-and post-colonial eras, sorrow music or songs played a fundamental role for the purpose of fostering life in its fullness. However, concurring with the aforementioned fact, Mano (2007), cited in Moyo, explains that:

Zimbabwean music has played a major role in social identity formation. In the everyday life of the people, Zimbabwean music threads throughout the society. It not only predates colonialism but also links the Zimbabwean historical and cultural processes. Many of the songs are about the problems of the poor, and most of the musicians live in the same locations as their listeners. Music is a central part of Zimbabwean society, e.g. in times of war and peace, at workplaces, in the home and outdoor, in religion and social ceremonies (rainmaking, collective labor, religion, marriage, death or love for instance). Sorrow songs were used by political leaders to move the masses to act. Thomas Mapfumo used music in particular

ways, the lyrics of the sorrow songs called the slaves to action hence Mapfumo's *Chimurenga* (revolution) sorrow songs with their nationalist imagery captured the emotions of the majority of Zimbabweans who supported the war of liberation. (Moyo 2012: 10)

One example of a complaining sorrow song of the 1970s-pre-independence era was captured by Kahari. The song goes as follows:

Oh Nehanda Nyakasikana! How long shall we the *Vanyai*, groan and suffer? Holy tutelary spirit! How long shall we, the *Vanyai*, suffer oppression? We are weary of drinking our tears. How long shall, we have forbearance? Even trees have a rest. When their leaves are shed; Then when spring time comes, New leaves and blossoms sprout to adorn them. To attract wild beasts and bees by their scent, As for us when will peace and plenty come our way? The young ones our women bear to us, By you –Great Spirit – who should be the inheritors? Of our hard-earned substance, all have an uneasy time, In their own land, and grope for a period of calm. And happiness, everywhere they stand as on hot ashes, Their feet with blisters are covered through hot oppression. Of the forces of *Pfumojena*, How far will the tyrants go? In every house and every village, Our people are being pulled out and punished; In every place and every court... (Kahari 1981: 95)

“The sorrowful cry in the lyrics of the song has indirect allusions to *Pfumojena*, while in fact it is addressed to Nehanda Nyakasikana for abandoning the people in their hour of need –‘How long shall we, the *Vanyai* (Black indigenous people), suffer oppression?’” (ibid) – and ends this poetic argument with the lyrically powerful and unanswerable cry: ‘We are weary of drinking our tears’. “The sorrow song moves from the intolerance at the dispossession of the *Vanyai*, who have lost their lands due to the unfair distribution of land by the despotic *Pfumojena*, and culminates in the phrase: ‘What crime have we committed, that you should abandon us like this?’ The tone and feeling of the entire declaration is one of desperation and is directed towards bringing about a revolution” (ibid). A critical evaluation shows that the sorrow song depicts black Zimbabweans’ hearts, spirits and minds which are distressed, afflicted, disappointed, grieved, saddened, pained, troubled, and crushed. However, by singing the song in whatever manner, the people can relieve their hearts and their spirits as well as strengthen their bodies. Total and holistic emancipation is the grander objective of sorrow songs.

Thomas Mapfumo released a sorrowful song entitled ‘*Pfumvu PaRuzerha*’ (Hardship in the Rural Areas), and it goes as follows: “(Oh! I have become a destitute; you have seen the trouble in the Reserves. Oh! I have become destitute. How fortunate you are to have houses with a fire. How fortunate you are to live in urban areas, how fortunate you are to move around in cars)” (Moyo 2012: 19, 25). There are nationalist and class struggles between the poor masses and those that own wealth. Mapfumo describes how he has become destitute, an indirect way of referring to the majority of the Zimbabwe-

an populace. He describes how the rich are enjoying their wealth, while others suffer in poverty (ibid).

Furthermore, sorrowful songs shifted from a revolutionary or struggle perspective to the wider socio-economic and political challenges of the nation after the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe. As pointed out by Chitando, sociological analysis of the 1990s has shown that HIV and AIDS have had a devastating effect on Zimbabwe. Gospel musicians refer to the many incidences of illness and death while calling upon God to intervene. Many artists portray the reality of HIV and AIDS as a pandemic of eschatological proportions and ask for divine mercy. Charles Charamba attained national fame with his song, '*Mhinduro Iripo*' (There Is an Answer) in which he counseled people on how to treat those who suffer from the infection and advised that Jesus was the salvation. The United Methodist group, Harare West M.U.M.C. Choir presented Jesus as the healer in '*Murapi Aripano*' (The Healer Is Here), while Caloraine Chivengwa explained that Jesus had already carried human illnesses in her song, '*Wakatakura Matenda Edu*' (He Carried Our Diseases). In the context of so much suffering and death, artists called upon *Mwari* (the supreme life force) to intervene and restore health. Death had become a common occurrence throughout Zimbabwe as the economically active age group succumbed to HIV and AIDS, and sorrow songs from gospel artists gave hope and strength to the hearts and spirits of the Zimbabwean populace. Gospel artists addressed the reality of death, recording popular hymns and choruses to console the bereaved (Chitando 2002: 59).

Chitando, noted that most people's interest in gospel music was activated by listening to songs that had featured prominently at funerals and wakes for loved ones. As Zimbabweans cared for their terminally ill relatives, as they travelled on overnight journeys to attend funerals of friends, relatives, and colleagues, and as they paid hospital visits, gospel music offered them a consoling message. Music that addressed the contemporary concerns of disease and death (sorrowful situations) was, therefore, likely to be more appealing than music dwelling on romantic love (ibid). On the one hand, Banning Eyre (2001) and Chitando, contends that gospel music in Zimbabwe represents a refuge from the mounting toll of HIV and AIDS deaths and that it provides solace in trying economic times (Eyre, 2001 Cf. Chitando 2002: 59). Through a wider analysis, gospel and, sorrow songs were and/or are composed to foster hope and pragmatic solutions on the burdened hearts of Zimbabweans.

On the other hand, Mclemore and Romo (2005) and Moyo, argue that sorrowful songs were created out of a sense of desperation about the oppressive conditions of lives of blacks in America. “*Chimurenga* (revolution) sorrowful songs, composed by Thomas Mapfumo, are both socially constructed and are about the experiences of black people living under oppressive social structures (even in an independent Zimbabwe)”(Mclemore and Romo, 2005 Cf. Moyo 2012: 26, 28). The music emanates from their experiences and helps people to fight back. Du Bois also argues that sorrowful

songs were created with a goal of uplifting the lives of African-Americans – which is similar to the Zimbabwean situation. Sorrowful songs were used by slaves to escape from oppression, both spiritually and physically. The sorrowful songs, given their double meanings, are examples of double consciousness (ibid). Lastly, sorrowful songs unlock the floodgates of social consciousness, thereby unveiling the social, economic and political ills from micro to macro perspectives. They invigorate both the inner-person (spirit) and the outerperson (body). It is a coded communicated message, which instills resistance for emancipation, identity, belonging and restoration of holistic life. Sorrowful songs call for change in the here and now, not for an eschatological or futuristic change. They are not confined to political challenges alone, but refer to socio-economic challenges as well, hence, gospel sorrowful songs are composed to impart a spirit of endurance, courage and tenacity under extreme sorrowful and heart crushing contexts, in recognition of the centrality of human life in its fullness.

#### **5.4 Traces of Abundant Life in Shona Idioms**

Like proverbs, idioms are grounded in Shona philosophy. Idioms are a body of knowledge attributed to the wise progenitors (men and women) in communities and are regarded as philosophically significant for both their content and their critical approach to the sustenance and growth of knowledge at the communal level. Oruka, cited in Gwavaranda, “sees sage philosophy as a body of thought produced by persons considered wise in African communities, specifically referring to those who seek a rational foundation for ideas and concepts used to view the world, by critically examining the justification of those ideas and concepts” (Gwaravanda 2011: 148-155). This kind of philosophy is evident in Shona culture where rational idiomatic expressions are exercised with the objective of preserving human life in its fullness. However, this Shona cultural philosophy makes idioms an integral part of Shona communities, since idioms serve to sustain human life, by expressing warnings where life is threatened. Additionally, the nature of idioms is to inculcate *Unhu* (good behavior or good character) among the people in the community for the purpose of fostering human life. As such, idioms are yardsticks which are concerned with the restoration, maintenance and transmission and /or communication of life.

In the Shona worldview, idioms (*Madimikira*) inculcate *Unhu* (good behavior) and are used to refer *totsika* (good character). Gelfand (1973), quoted in Masaka and Chemhuru, says that a person with a commendable disposition is referred to as *munhuchayiye*, meaning a person of good character. “For the Shona, *Unhu* plays a supreme role in people’s lives, as they interact with fellow human beings and all that constitutes the world external to them. Thus, for the Shona, a good person is the one who exhibits good behavior towards others, as reflected in his/her actions and interactions with not only fellow human beings but also the whole of nature. Such a person is liked and re-

spected in the community because of his/her good disposition”(Masaka and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148). Good dispositions build a strong community and a strong nation, and peace, security, prosperity and the general health of the community are visible proof of this (ibid). In such an environment development is guaranteed to take-off easily. Besides, producing good dispositions, idioms are in fact important keys to comprehending the Shona worldview. “Idioms inculcate a moral education conducted by, among others, parents, sages and group practices that are inherited from past generations” (ibid). Every human culture teaches its members idioms because they build strong personalities in the young and the adult people for the promotion of human life.

The Shona culture, like all other African and world cultures, is rich in sage philosophy that has been inspired and bequeathed by the ancestors in the form of idioms. Idioms are an essential part of the Shona culture and its communities because through them *Unhu* (good behavior), identity, communal unity, peace, preservation of human and ecological life, ethics, beliefs, and values are realized. “This is why it is pointed out that, idioms (*Madimikira*) are traditionally used to inculcate traditional values, customary laws and the general rules of conduct in Shona society; hence, it is in these sociological models that the position of the Shona people concerning abundant life for sustainable development is laid out” (Mawere 2009: 101-116). Therefore, the focus of this section is to comprehend the uses and meanings of Shona cultural idioms and their instructional, pedagogic and communicative values. Thus, to concentrate particularly on the preservation of human and ecological life for sustainable development in relation to self-respect and self-worth, as well as the respect for peers, authority, obligations, and responsibilities of community belonging.

John Saeed defines an idiom as words placed together and metamorphosing into a fossilized term. This collocation of words redefines each component in the word-group and becomes an idiomatic expression. “Idioms usually do not translate well; in some cases, when an idiom is translated directly word-for-word into another language, either its meaning is changed or it is meaningless” (Saeed 2003: 60). “Idioms are a group of words (brief metaphors) that allude to a disguised subject in the description of another subject. Literally, the words state something obvious, but the disguised meaning is important and can be applied to different contexts. Idioms are attempts by people to understand themselves and explain the world around them”(Louw and Schenck 2002: 93-108). Furthermore, in linguistics, idioms are usually presumed to be figures of speech contradicting the principle of compositionality. “This principle states that the meaning of a whole should be constructed from the meanings of the parts that make up the whole. In other words, one should be in a position to understand the whole if one understands the meanings of each of the parts that make up the whole” (ibid).

According to Chindongo, cited in Louw and Schenck, idioms are a corpus of indigenous African knowledge that allows for an understanding of the multiplicity of conceptions of African worldviews and ideas about humanity. The ultimate goal is the

preservation of human life as central (ibid). These idioms constitute knowledge for African posterity and in fact for the global public domain. “Idioms, like any other African sage philosophy, reveal how knowledgeable indigenous Africans are and they encourage responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness, identity, and sustainability which include the four interconnected domains: ecology, economics, politics and culture in the communities” (Louw and Schenck 2002: 98). Idioms constitute an integral part of indigenous Africans’ epistemological systems and bring to the fore the consciousness of self, group, society, and nature and the complex nexus of the visible and invisible world. Idioms are African cultural expressions that unveil their profound philosophies which are keys to understanding their worldviews, validating their existence as a people for the African progenies to appreciate themselves and their progenitors. This, in turn, encourages social responsibility, ethics, beliefs, morality and community belonging. Similarly, Grice, quoted in Boaduo, explains that “an idiom is meant to identify the belief that it was conventionally invented to produce. The significance of this is the heart of the mechanism by which expressive beliefs are supposed to be the product of such utterances. The implication is that when a speaker communicates a belief by way of uttering a sentence idiomatically, it is done by getting the listeners to recognize both the belief intended as well as the whole meaning idioms represent as the primary intention” (Boaduo 2012: 106-117).

Furthermore, idioms are used profusely, especially during gatherings of the elders. They are used to illustrate and emphasize statements. In order to understand idioms, one has to understand the culture from which they come. The acquisition of knowledge and skills in idioms are learned by listening to the elders, and it is important to pass on this cherished wisdom to the young. However, idioms are essentially used in the settlement of disputes (ibid). This depiction unveils how resourceful African cultures are, and emphasizes that their knowledge qualifies African religions to play a profound role in bringing about sustainable development partnered with development practitioners from Euro-Western countries. It is of great importance to merge African religious knowledge and Euro-Western knowledge to allow mutual development initiatives without prejudices. If African idioms are capable of settling disputes and are used in legal proceedings, such African religious resourcefulness must be used to play a fundamental role in sustainable development for the eradication of the absolute poverty, the high levels of unemployment and inequality in Africa.

#### *5.4.1 Selected Shona Cultural Idioms That Promote Life in Its Fullness*

In the preceding section, the researcher discussed idioms from Shona people pointing to their pedagogic and instructional relevance on human and ecological life as central, in relation to abundant life, thereby encouraging sustainable development in Zimbabwe. Below follows a discussion of idioms that promote life in its fullness.

“*Kufa izuva rimwe, kuoraigore*” (Death is one day, corruption is a year). “This idiom warns people to beware of what may harm a person and has long-lasting consequences for oneself and one’s community. It emphasizes that the preservation of human life is central. In the Shona community, a murder is considered harmful, destructive and a loss to the bearer of life, and to the family, friends, and the community of the victim” (Mawere 2009: 101-116). For this reason, Shona culture agrees with Thomas Aquinas that killing is morally wrong. Shona culture respects the sanctity of life and it is in conformity with the biblical ethics of ‘Do not kill’ which is commonly taken as the foundation for the preservation of human life in Shona culture and African cultures in general (ibid).

“*Kubura munhu mumoto*” (Munjanja 1968: 28): To help a person from a dangerous or threatening circumstance. This idiom encourages people in the community to render help to anybody who is in a dangerous situation. Like the above idiom, it promotes the preservation of human life, inculcates a sense of community (underlining the sacredness of the community) because the individuals build the community and the community identifies itself through the individuals. The idiom recognizes the Shona cultural philosophy and belief that emphasizes the first-person plural ‘we’ and ‘us’ as more fundamental than the singular first person ‘I’ or ‘me’. Therefore, the concept of communitarianism is dominant. By helping a person whose life is in danger, preference is given to the ‘we’ and ‘us’ concept. However, the idiom does not abandon the importance of individualism but emphasizes that individualism has to be pursued within the matrix of the welfare of the community, which brings honor and pride to the community. Individualism is accepted when it correlates with communal aspirations. Every member of the Shona culture has a role to play and communal obligations to fulfill but also has a private life. The individual, therefore, has to strike a balance between the claims of individuality and community because individual welfare and communal welfare are not mutually exclusive.

“*Chembere ndeyembwa yomurume ndibaba revana*” “(Respect should be accorded also to the aged because they are human beings and their life is equally important). For the Shona, anyone’s life (whether poor, rich, young or old) is sacrosanct and precious in itself. This idiom expresses the refusal to accept any form of terminating a human life, even that of the extremely aged and the ill and believes in the saying “*Kuwanda huuya, kwakarambwa nemuroyi*” (The more we are, the better, only the witch is against being many)” (Mawere 2009: 101-116). This saying encourages people to value life in all circumstances and discourages individualism and all forms of killing or terminating human life. Thus, anyone who kills or terminates human life is considered individualistic or a witch and all members of the community are bound to assist the sick (ibid).

“*Kukwira gomo kusendamara*” (Munjanja 1968: 30): When climbing a mountain one has to go round and round until one reaches the top. This idiom expresses the notion that, if one wants to be successful in life, one has to work hard and be patient, and gradually one can be a rich person. This is a success; there is no short-cut. This idiom discour-

ages overnight riches or successes, a common phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, Shona culture teaches its members to work hard in order to be successful in life. “However, the key aspect of self-reliance is the ownership of natural resources by Shona indigenous people in Zimbabwe, the most important being the land” (Mandova and Chigombe 2013: 100-108). The land is the basis of the people’s material life. It is the backbone of the national economy and is, as a result, a very important natural resource. Furthermore, life comes from the land and the land is life, its use is essential for human social development. The Shona people believe that hard work does not exhaust one’s power; therefore, they encourage the spirit of perseverance. This philosophy can be used to foster sustainable development, by working closely with the communities in Zimbabwe. The idiom condemns overnight riches which are sometimes acquired through killing other people or animals and theft which threatens communal and national peace, security, prosperity and development and invites greed, chaos, and disharmony as well as breeding absolute poverty in the community.

“*Kuiita meso meso*” (ibid: 32), (A man or a woman who is lustful to the extent that he/she can end up with many lovers and sleep with them). The idiom is targeted to both men and women to exercise the virtue of self-control and encourages a person to exercise restraint. This entails subjecting one’s inclinations and desires to the service of reason. Therefore, in Shona cultural thought, the virtue of self-control is essential and is highly valued. A person who does not control his/her desires is compared to lowly animals such as goats and dogs, and becomes a prisoner of his/her desires. Self-control is a virtue and it is very important since it reduces the risk of HIV and AIDS. With the pandemic of this disease and other sexually transmitted diseases, human life is at risk, and all young men and women who are potential leaders of today and tomorrow should exercise self-control and abstinence. The idiom, therefore, becomes very important in inculcating advice in the face of moral dilemmas regarding young men and women who are sexually active. Abstinence in the sphere of sex, in Shona cultural context, does not permit premarital sex and multiple sex partners outside of marriage. Therefore, it emphasizes both self-respect as well as respect for family and community which is an element of the Shona ethos of *Unhu* (good behavior) and *tsika* (good character).

“*Muto wetsenza mumwe chete*” (ibid: 34) (Men and Women are the same). This idiom is normally used for young married men and women facing a possible divorce. Therefore, it entails that all men and women are the same in relation to sexual intercourse. The idiom rejects divorce, as divorce in Shona culture kills the social fiber and communitarianism is seen as a sign of lacking *Unhu* and *tsika* (good behavior and good character). This shows how important marriage is in Shona culture. It is a sacred union sanctioned by the ancestors and *Mwari*. Therefore, it should be protected at all cost. It is an efficacious union that is completely different from modern marriages. The characteristics constituting the efficacy of African marriage are different from those that apply to a

marriage that is merely of a statutory nature. Ceremonies do not mark African marriage, but the finality of the marriage itself goes far beyond ceremonies. Marriage in Africa is not merely a contract to be signed; rather, it is seen as a step-by-step, progressive development undertaken in a community framework (Magesa 1997: 124-125). On the other hand, Aylward Shorter, quoted in Magesa, describes marriage in Africa as “diachronic and notes that it may be interrupted if the partners prove incompatible, or if essential conditions, such as fertility, appear not to be present”. This interruption is not regarded as divorce or dissolution but simply as the recognition that marriage has been attempted, but has not come into existence (*ibid*). Hence, it is to assure the true meaning and purpose of marriage that the process is taken with such seriousness and that such caveats are in place, for without children – who are proof of the transmission and preservation of the force of life – marriage has no meaning (*ibid*: 126). A marriage that bears children in Shona culture is a fulfillment of a human beings’ existence, to themselves, to the community, to the ancestors, and to Mwari. Magesa asserts that “what truly completes the humanization of a person in this world is the mystical union with the ancestors, which is achieved only through the birth of children” (*ibid*: 126). The moral requirement to transmit life is achieved and the ethical need to preserve life is attained through the actual representation (or making present) of the ancestors through the naming of children (*ibid*). The idiom, however, encourages a more solid and lasting marriage union especially in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that takes away human life, thereby compromising sustainable development.

This idiom fosters the virtue of faithfulness and abstinence and to be true to your wife or husband, thereby encouraging moral behavior and moral values of honesty and prudence. The main objective is the preservation of human life in its fullness. Young couples are the most vulnerable since most of them are not satisfied with one partner. In the same context, young men and women are the ones who propel development in the community. Their disappearance through HIV and AIDS threatens development. Thus, the idiom equips them to be vigilant. There is a need for moral responsibilities which recognize human life as central in all aspects. Shona cultural idioms and other sage philosophies are against irresponsible behavior that negatively affects individuals, families, communities, the nation, and nature – resulting in the retrogression of progressive sustainable development.

## 5.5 Shona Prayers for Abundant Life

Prayers are an integral part of many cultures and religions in the world. This section approaches Shona prayers as an integral part of the family, clan, community and nation fostering unity in order to influence holistic development. The section will also concentrate on rituals as an essential part of prayers to enhance life in its fullness. The presentation depicts how resourceful Shona culture is, and how prayers can unlock the spiritu-

al world (of the ancestors and *Mwari*) to hearken the petitionary prayers, prayers of supplication, thanksgivings and praises from the mundane world. However, the supplication of prayers to *Mwari* through the ancestors is a fundamental act among Shona people. The supplication of prayers has no season. Therefore, at any given moment when there is a sickness in the family, clan, or community prayers are conducted, as well as when there is a funeral, bumper crops, and new-born babies. Prayers are conducted in good times and bad times, even when they receive good and poor rainfall or there is no rainfall. Furthermore, the supplication of prayers is important during the implementation of development projects and when there are no development projects in the community. Additionally, when there is anything that threatens nature, domesticated and non-domesticated animals, or the family and community, prayers are conducted. Therefore, prayers are widely perceived to be efficacious within Shona culture. Prayers are also conducted in relation to socio-economic and political challenges within Shona communities. They are anchored on their recognition of human life as being central. They are a deliberate form of communication of the families and communities through the ancestors to *Mwari*. Furthermore, prayers bring to the fore all heartfelt needs of a people. They depict wishes that cannot be satisfied with a material accumulation of wealth and money, hence the ultimate goal is for the role of *Mwari* in the visible world and there is the realization of the reality of evil forces on earth. These evil forces are beyond ordinary people's control (the powerful and the weak). Therefore, Shona people rely on the power of prayers to *Mwari* through the ancestors for healing, restoration, maintenance and transmission of life in its abundance.

According to Magesa, prayer:

Is a time to express oneself in an uninhibited way; it is the time to let go of one's whole being, to be more forthright and honest than usual. Africans realize that prayer is a time to communicate and commune with the spiritual beings which are most intimate with and most caring for humanity. (Magesa 1997: 196)

Furthermore, it is pointed out that, there are different forms of prayers such as prayers of petition, prayers of supplication, prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of praise. Prayer may be directed towards a deity, spirits, deceased persons, ancestors or higher deities for the purpose of worshipping, requesting guidance, requesting assistance, confessing transgressions or to express one's thoughts and emotions. Thus, people pray for many reasons such as personal benefit or for the sake of others (*ibid*), and for the family, clan, community and national benefit.

Before discussing Shona prayers, it is fundamental to discuss first the Shona spiritual hierarchy. Like all African cultures, Shona spiritual hierarchies have three categories: *Vadzimu* (family spirits); *Mhondoro* (tribal or clan spirits), and *Mwari*. The first two categories are highly revered and have a constant interaction with the living or the visible world. They act as mediators between the living in the visible world and *Mwari* in the

invisible world. The first category on the spiritual hierarchy is *Vadzimu*. As Matiure points out, these are normally a generation away from the progeny. They are responsible for the welfare of the immediate family members. They make sure that the family members are not affected by avenging spirits or any impending danger like war and diseases. Lastly, they also protect those members who are away from the villages (Matiure 2011: 32). However, it is also important to note that family spirits can cause sickness if the living no longer revere them or conduct prayers to them; hence, through sickness they can be accorded attention and, if the living revere them, sickness easily disappears. They also protect the family from harm and from a witch entering the home (Gelfand 1962: 37).

The second category is that of *Mhondoro* (tribal or clan spirits). According to Gelfand, “the Shona people believe that their tutelary spirits (*Mhondoro*) can prevent and facilitate the fall of rain. When they pray in order to ask for something, they do not address *Mwari* directly but pray to the spirits. It is possible that on closer questioning the Shona might admit that the *Mhondoro* or *Vadzimu* refer everything to *Mwari*, but this is not the way they usually explain the powers of the spirit mediums between man and *Mwari*” (Gelfand 1962: 37). However, it is also important to point out that the Shona people do not directly pray to the family spirits and tribal or clan spirits. Instead, they give reverence to them, and the belief is that these spirits are intermediaries who carry the petitionary prayers to *Mwari* in the same order; answers are delivered through these intermediaries back to the living in the visible world. This belief is confirmed by Matiure when he says that:

*Mhondoro* (tribal or clan spirits) are believed to be the spirits that are responsible for the protection of the whole clan, especially those of the same totem (*Midzimu yedunhu*). The spirits are generations away and are believed to have the powers to communicate with *Mwari* and can intermediate between the people and *Mwari* (Supreme life force). Famous spirits like Nehanda, Chaminuka, Kaguvi and Nehoreka belong to this category. (Matiure 2011: 32-33)

Furthermore, the *Mhondoro* are also responsible for rainfall as well as for making sure that all norms and values are adhered to. If someone misbehaves in the village, the lion appears to the person as a sign that the ancestors are not amused. Bad behavior like abusive language, destruction of natural resources, improper sexual relationships and working during days set aside for the spirits (*Chisi*) will attract the intervention of this spirit in the form of a spiritual lion (*ibid*). *Mwari* is the last category. Shona people believe that one cannot talk directly to *Mwari*. Hence, whenever they want *Mwari* to do something for them, they forward their petitionary prayers, thanksgiving, praise prayers to the ancestors (family spirits and tribal spirits) to take their words of prayers to *Mwari*, whom they believe to be the supreme life force above all spiritual beings, an omnipotent spirit (*Chikara* or *Musikavarhu*). This is why Gelfand notes that “the Christian faith, like that of the Shona, has its own great spirits like angels and the different saints who

can be appealed to and from whom help and comfort can be sought. On the other hand, whereas the Christian approaches God directly, this is not the case with the Shona. They do not pray to *Mwari* himself, but always contact the lesser spirits who, living as they do in the spiritual world, are in communication with all the other spirits including *Mwari*” (Gelfand 1962: 37). *Mwari* has made them all and everything in this world, the good and the bad. *Mwari* is responsible for the good ancestral spirits as well as those of the evil ones (ibid).

As Ejizu points out, “from an African perspective prayers play an important role in the promotion of the sense of community. Most African prayers are intensely communitarian in content and orientation. Whether offered by the individual elder in front of his/her family shrine, or by other ritual experts in public shrines, the prayers contain a lot of references to the community, nature and everything that matters in the visible world” Ejizu 2013: 17). The elder in most communities begins the day by offering prayer and supplications for him/herself, members of the kindred and the entire community and even the country as a whole. “He/she would pray to the Creator or the supreme life force through the ancestors, divinities and other spiritual beings for his/her health, that of his/her family, for the progress of members of the lineage, both the young and the old, for peace and harmony, for protection from the attack of evil forces, sorcerers and witches, and for the elimination of his/her enemies and evil doers in the community” (ibid). It is asserted by Magesa that prayers, sacrifices, and offerings are considered to be central elements of an ethical life and feature prominently in the practice of African religions. Prayer is the most common act of worship in Africa. Rarely does any important moment pass during an adult’s life without a verbal or mental recollection of the power of the Supreme Being or the ancestors. An accidental bruise or a gift received evokes a prayer. Sickness or good health in the morning, a feast or a funeral, good or bad news – all are recognized by appropriate prayers (Magesa 1997: 195). However, Mbiti, recited in Magesa, characterizes the practice of prayer as “one of the most ancient items of African spiritual riches. On the one hand, furthermore, Magesa explains that, when life is threatened or weakened, prayer is most abundant, both private and public, as a means of restoring wholeness and balance in life. In African religions, prayer is comprehensive, requesting the removal of all that is bad and anti-life in society, and demanding the restoration of all that is good” (ibid). On the other hand, according to Ejizu, African prayers are very contextual. They profoundly reflect the concrete needs, aspirations, values and relevant life-situation of the people making the intercession. As noted earlier, African prayers conducted by an elder show keen interest and concern for both the needs of individuals and the general well-being of the entire community. “The individual’s need for protection, good health, and material wealth has its full meaning within the context of the needs of the entire community” (Ejizu 2013: 20-21). The prayers are directed to the supreme life force through the ancestors for the health of the entire lineage, and for the well-being of the fields. Rains are needed for

everything in the visible world, and prosperity in the means of livelihood (daily works of the entire community) and also for a large community with an abundance of children (*ibid*), - as well as for the reproduction of domesticated and undomesticated animals. The supplication of prayers sheds light on the importance and centrality of relationships in the African worldviews. To that effect, Magesa notes that:

African prayer acknowledges the mutual interdependence of the visible and invisible worlds. Prayer, however, emphasizes more the dependence of the living on the ancestors and the Supreme Being. The prayer says there comes a time when order and harmony in human life and in the world depend on powers greater than human power. This is especially so when humanity has done wrong or harbors anti-life elements within it... This is why an individual or the community at prayer is often humble before the Supreme Being and the ancestors, referring to itself as a worm or an ant. However, as Africans approach prayer, they find it proper to be confident even in humility, precisely because the powers addressed in prayer are to the Supreme Being and the ancestors, who have obligations towards their children, the living. And it is perfectly legitimate for the living to express their deepest emotions of frustrations, confusion, and anger in prayer to these invisible, mystical powers when things are not going well in the world. (Magesa 1997: 196)

Therefore, the ultimate goal of a prayer is to seek an abundant or good life which can only be imparted by the supreme life force. Mbiti, quoted in Magesa, posits that in public prayer people are addressing the invisible world, to strengthen ties between the spirits, the living, the living-dead, the yet-to-be-born, and the cosmos. Communal prayers help to bind together the members of the group in one intention, for one purpose, and in one act of worship (Magesa 2013: 64). Its ultimate goal is to confirm existing harmony in thanksgiving or to remedy transgressions in petitionary prayers in the sincerest manner human beings can muster. The word of prayer and the power it bears play an important role in the integration or breakup of relationships in African societies, but in every utterance, and especially in prayer, the emphasis is placed not on the words as such, but on the unity between the words uttered at the ritual (*ibid*). Zahan (2000) cited in Magesa, says that:

The African accords eminent value to the efficacy of his word accompanied by gestures directed toward the invisible and if then, for example, prayers are said for rain, or fertility, or victory in battle, the words must be formulated in such a way as to be capable of bringing the answers to those needs into effect. On the other hand, he posits that prayers are said to end negative, anti-life situations such as illness, conflict, injustice and more. (Magesa 2013: 64)

The aforementioned aspects of the nature of African prayer depict worldviews that depend much on the supra-mundane world for life in its fullness. Hence, to attain this good and abundant life, prayer should be enduring, and the main goal is the uninterrupted transmission or communication of life from the supreme life force (*Mwari*).

Prayers are confirmed to have been answered when peace, prosperity and the general welfare of the community prevail over misfortunes. That is the nature of African prayers; therefore, the good life is guaranteed in such contexts. Having discussed the background, definitions and Shona prayers within the Zimbabwean context as models on abundant life in relation to sustainable development and the African perspective on prayer, in brief, the forthcoming part explores prayers and rituals as models of abundant life.

### *5.5.1 Prayers and Rituals as Models of Abundant Life*

In Shona culture, “people congregate in different environments for different types of prayers. When they choose a particular placethey do so not because they believe that the spirits and *Mwari* live in the chosen place, but because they associate the environment with certain activities. If they choose a particular rock or place of prayer, it should not be taken to mean that they believe that the spirits and *Mwari* live there or that this place or rock is the deity” (Kazembe 2010: 64). They do not go there to pray to the place and they do not pray to objects. They do like Christians when they build churches. They will not be praying to the building, neither do they think that God lives in the building. The same applies to the prayers of the followers of Shona religion (ibid). However, these places are conducive for the worshippers to freely express their heartfelt emotions to *Mwari* through the ancestors. This is in recognition that the ancestors and *Mwari* are not bound by space and time, and can hearken their prayers from any place at any time. Of importance to the Shona people is that they are in communion with the spiritual world through prayers and that their prayers are heard and answered in the present, rather than the future. In addition, what is fundamental in these prayers is the faith that their uttered words are carried to *Mwari* by the ancestors, and that sometimes replies are delivered back. These Shona prayers are contextual, that is to say, there are prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and petitions. Gelfand captures one prayer uttered in times of bereavement and he claims that the Shona show their belief in *Mwari* and approach Him directly by complaining to Him. Thus, they cry *Mwari ndaita sei* (O Creator, what have I done to deserve this). Furthermore, “should one of his children die, a Shona may exclaim, *Mwari akapa nyendije atora* (The Creator has given and the Creator has taken away)” (Gelfand 1962: 37). He also captures a longer prayer which is a model of abundant life (Shona words from the researcher):

“*Tapindawo Munyika yenyu Mudzimu Mukuru*” (We have entered your country the Great tribal spirit).

“*Tisvitsireiwo mashoko edu kuMudzimu Mikuru*” (We are asking you to forward our words to the Great tribal spirits).

*“Tinokutendai zvikuru kutitendera kugara Munyika yenu, uyezve nokutitendera kurima”*  
(We thank you very much for allowing us to come into your area and to plant our crops).

*“Mudzimu Mukuru tichengetireino zvirimwa zvedu izvi”* (Keep our crops for us, the Great tribal Spirit).

*“Tinokumbirawo mvura inoyibvisa zvirimwa zvedu”* (Give us good rain for our crops to ripe).

*“Takutaurirai kuti tiri Munyika yenu nokuti ndimwi varidzi venyika ino”* (We only tell you this because you are the owner of this area).

*“Tapota musa kanganwa kutaurira Midzimu Mikuru mashoko edu aya”* (But do not forget to take our words to the Great tribal Spirits). (ibid)

From a critical point of view, the prayer shows a fundamental tenet of Shona culture—the belief in contextual communication with the spiritual world. The above prayer is directed to the great tribal spirit through a local *Mhondoro* (small tribal or clan spirit). The prayer seeks a communion with the spiritual world, and the Shona people communicate everything first before they take action, because they need protection from the ancestors against the evil enemies. “The Shona alert the ancestral spirits before they embark on anything they consider to be important” (Kazembe 2010: 64). The prayer stipulates pragmatic needs, and aspirations, not for the family elder alone, but for the general well-being of the entire community: ‘Give us good rain for our crops to ripe’. “In the prayer, the word which features most is ‘we’, not ‘I’, showing that in Shona culture the community is more important than the individual; the importance of an individual is enhanced in the community and the community is enhanced by individuals. Therefore, for any development to be sustainable, it needs a good and healthy community, made up of healthy individuals” (ibid). Idowu, quoted in Magesa, posits that African prayers are pragmatic and that they ask for practical needs that comply with their religious perception of a full life. Protection from all affliction, or removal of it, is a primary concern; they pray for longevity, an abundance of food and drink, animals and, above all, offspring. If a final reward is expected from the Supreme Being and the ancestors, it is that they provide the means to affirm life in the world (Magesa 1997: 197). In synopsis, the thrust of the prayer aforementioned is on abundant life.

In Shona culture, the prayers are not written down, but every prayer is said or uttered in relation to the context of the occasion; the person who offers a prayer expresses him/herself in relation to the feeling and experience, of the community and nation. It is also important to note that prayers can be addressed to *Mwari* through the ancestors, extending gratitude or joyfulness, despondency or despair, hopefulness or thanksgiving. If words of despondency or despair are uttered in Shona prayers, it is a sign of the quest for the fullness of life and the good life which only *Mwari* can provide. Petitionary prayers are always directed at the ancestors. These ancestors are ultimately asked to

pass on messages to the supreme life force (*Mwari*). Furthermore, in Shona culture medication requires the intervention of prayers to work. If a person who is sick seeks some herbs from the traditional healer (*N'anga* or *Nganga*), he/she has to utter words of prayer to the ancestors so that they can allow the herbs or medication to heal the sick person. Therefore, prayers in Shona culture are a continuous way of living and are a recognition of the power of the supernatural or the supreme life force (*Mwari*), who is the sustainer and the giver of abundant life. Hence, the worshippers create a communion of vital power in their daily worship – a sign of humility, trust, and tranquility on the part of the worshippers, furthering health, and healing in the community. This facilitates a good relationship between the worshippers and the ancestors, forming part of the spirituality of aesthetics in Shona communities, although the ultimate goal of the petition prayers is the preservation and proliferation of life.

However, a ritual maybe understood as one of the key components of religion. “The ritual itself may be broken down into four dimensions: content, frequency, intensity, and centrality. The content of a ritual may vary from ritual to ritual, as does the frequency of its practice, the intensity of the ritual (how much of an impact it has on the practitioner), and the centrality of the ritual (in that religious tradition)” (ibid). For Cox, quoted in Matiure, “a ritual is a repeated and symbolic dramatization that directs attention to a place where the sacred enters life, thereby granting identity to participants in the drama. Thus, transforming them into a new state of being, communicating social meaning verbally and non-verbally, and offering a paradigm for how the world ought to be” (Matiure 2011: 34). Cox (1998) furthermore explains that rituals are repeatable according to established patterns and gives some very elaborate general characteristics which can be summarized as pointing towards the sacred through dramatic actions and symbols, taking place in extraordinary settings, providing shared identity, and possessing transformative powers for the participants (ibid: 34). Furthermore, Matiure, points out that, “a ritual is above all else the yardstick by which people measure their state of connection with the hidden ancestral realm, with which the entire community is genetically connected” (ibid: 34). However, from the aforesaid definitions, it is clear that rituals form the pillars of a people’s religious culture. Hence, the rituals’ aim is still a petition for the protection and good living standards. Therefore, they are concerned with the restoration, maintenance and transmission of abundant life from the ancestors and the supreme life force (*Mwari*).

From the Shona perspective, rituals accompany prayers. In other words, prayers, whether public, private, or semi-public, are accompanied by rituals. To that effect, Magesa posits that when it is an issue of restoring or maintaining the power of life, such rituals take the form of sacrifice or offering. Both sacrifice and offering involve the setting-apart of an item, usually associated with human use, for the supernatural powers (Magesa 1997: 201). Furthermore, he explains the difference between a sacrifice and an offering:

The item in a sacrifice is killed or destroyed by ceremonial immolation, by fire, or by destruction. Items for the offering are not as a rule directly destroyed by the person or community offering them. Instead, these items are simply dedicated to the recipient. They may remain in the household or village; less often, they may also be cast away, like sacrificial items, depending on the nature of the offering. The emphasis here is on separation by dedication (not necessarily involving destruction)... In either case, however, the item is meant to be removed from human possession or use and transferred to the mystical powers, who become the new owners of the sacrificial or offered item. If the sacrifice is meat, human beings may partake in consuming it, but according to specific rules. During the sacrifice and after the dedication, they do so essentially as guests, for the purpose of obtaining blessings and these blessings are bestowed from the sacrifice, which now is a gift from the invisible, mystical powers. (Magesa 1997: 202)

According to Gelfand, “the main element of a Shona religious ceremony is the union with the spiritual world through the medium (*Svikiro*) who, when possessed, affords immediate contact with a spirit of the Shona celestial hierarchy. This spirit is honored with prayers, gifts, or an animal sacrifice. Through the medium, the spirit advises and warns its worshippers” (Gelfand 1962: 43). The rituals are always prompted by certain negative events such as sickness, death, drought and famine. “What stands out so strongly is that the ceremony is mostly a family affair, in which the family group gathers to communicate with its tribal spirit” (ibid). In such rituals, a prayer is uttered by the senior or elder member of the family and the words or content of the prayer is petitionary whereby the propositions ‘we’ resp. ‘us’ are dominant. For example, Gelfand captures a prayer which was uttered during an animal sacrifice to an ancestral spirit: “Grandfather, we have gathered today to give you your beast so that your grandchildren can become better and we have roasted the meat for you – keep us well and happy and do not forget us” (ibid). In this ritual prayer, there is an element of great decency and humility, and the ultimate goal of the ritual accompanied by a prayer is the protection of a good life in its fullness.

There are also rituals for rainmaking accompanied by prayers in Shona culture. This is why Ndlovu and Manjeru assert that the “rainmaking ceremony can also be practiced to sustain life. The rainmaking ceremony is the ancestral worship in order to ask for rainfall. “Chief Mabika (in Zimbabwe) and his people sometimes brew beer in the late days of November if the rains have not yet approached the earth” (Ndlovu and Manjeru 2014: 2). The rainmaking ceremony is practiced to exacerbate rainfall. It is usually done in sacred places like Matojeni, Domboshava, Great Zimbabwe and others (ibid). These ceremonies are directed to the powerful tribal spirits (*Mhondoro*), who control the rainfall which is vital for a good harvest. “This indicates that the ripening of the crops is credited to the ancestors of the tribe and that they will continue to bring more rains to sustain the fields” (ibid). However, these rituals are family, clan, and community-

oriented and are anchored by human life, hence encourage and propel sustainable development.

The other dimension of rituals in the Shona culture is meant to ward off or protect from witches. “The Shona believe that all events in their lives and in nature depend on supernatural forces; everything that exists, every success or failure, originates in the spiritual world. The supreme life force is responsible for the entire spiritual world, but he is too far removed, powerful and indifferent to be contacted by man. The Shona believe that just as *Mwari* made the good spirits help and heal man, so also he made the evil ones. Consequently, there is a link between the *Muroyi* (the evil witch) and the *Nganga* (the good traditional healer); both are mediums of an ancestral spirit” (Gelfand 1962: 42). Hence, in the case of *Muroyi* (the evil witch), the traditional healer would be consulted by the family of the sick person, and the healer can pray and communicate with the spirits. Herbs will be given to the sick person, and other herbs are used for the protection of the whole family against witches. If it is a serious sickness caused by *Ngazi* (avenging spirits), the traditional healer conducts a ritual, a cleansing ceremony, releasing the affected person and the entire family from any sickness. Although in most cases a *Ngazi* (avenging spirits) is appeased or compensated in the form of cattle, a ritual and prayers are conducted by a traditional healer. In Shona culture the situation is straightforward; the aggrieved must be compensated or the *Ngazi* (avenging spirits) will be devastating. The suffering of the perpetrator(s) and/or their families, usually in the form of illness or misfortune, will not end until full compensation is made. “No amount or type of medicine will cure the illness. No trials will end the illness or misfortunes. The only cure is compensation” (Kazembe 2010: 68).

Lastly, the discussion has depicted Shona cultural prayers and rituals in an African context. The Shona cultural knowledge on prayers and rituals has shown that the central aim is human life in its fullness which is hinged on a strict connection with the ancestors and *Mwari*. The more prayers and rituals directed to the invisible world, the more the visible world can realize a good life; this is a sign of the mutual correlation between the spiritual and physical world. Furthermore, they emphasize the reliance of the living on the ancestors and *Mwari* (the supreme life force). Prayers and rituals in every Shona community foster the dimensions of unity and peace which are favorable elements for sustainable development in order to achieve life in its fullness.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has critically discussed Shona cultural resources and how they can be used in the development, and appropriately interpreted Shona proverbs, songs, idioms and prayers as important cultural resources of the Shona community. These Shona cultural knowledge systems can play an important role in development. Proverbs promote good leadership and governance: since leaders are the servants of the people, they are there

to restore and protect the lives of their people through practicing democracy in the nation. There are proverbs that promote communal unity. Hence, if there is no unity which translates into peace and harmony in the community, there is no sustainable development. Where there is peace, there is development and the protection of human rights. These proverbs are critical tools in Shona culture because they foster the spirit of humanity. Proverbs that promote good moral behavior are fundamental in any society, and for the Shona community “good moral behavior” is a key, since it preserves life and ensures the continuation of healthy generations. In the midst of HIV and AIDS, the good moral behavior is important for abundant life.

Songs of protest, praise and sorrow were also discussed. The fundamental findings are that songs are great keys to unlock hidden issues; they conscientize, educate, revive, and reinvigorate human life. They encourage an individual, family, and a community to be critical and conscious of their surroundings and give strength and hope for a fullness of life here and now. This encourages them to take action in the face of an oppressive system, to celebrate and appeal for justice in different contexts. An oppressive system is also castigated by protest and sorrow songs. Songs can reconstruct a society, they are newspapers where everyone can read and understand the context. Songs can be easily understood by those who are either educated or uneducated and they can comprehend the socio-economic and political situation in their own life. They simplify a complex society, and give meaning to existential issues and suggest remedies where appropriate. Songs demystify the few elites’ philosophical ways of corruption, monopoly, greed, and hegemony. Shona idioms are important in serving to sustain human life by giving warnings where life may be threatened. They build personality (good character) or *Unhu*. They also show how religious Shona people are and describe their worldview. Hence, there is no separation between the mundane world and the supra-mundane world. It is a philosophy that respects and elevates human and ecological life, recognizing the three pillars of social, economic and environmental development. Finally, Shona prayers and rituals depict how the Shona culture gives precedence to the fullness of life and the necessity to preserve it by all means.

Therefore, there is a great positive role Shona religion can play in development if their spirituality is considered seriously in development discourses. The consideration of Shona culture as a resource that can play an important role in development discourse will help development practitioners, non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to respect and incorporate indigenous people’ knowledge systems in development. Lastly, Shona culture’s aim is to enhance human and ecological life, thus it is concerned with restoration, maintenance and transmission and/or communication of life in its fullness. Having said this, there is a need for promoting *honest dialogue, active engagement* and a serious consideration of African religions in development discourses for sustainable development as the utmost goal of this study. The next chapter is the last chapter; hence it focuses on a way forward and rec-

ommendations in relation to the incorporation of Shona religion in development. The main goal is in the spirit of finding a common remedy for the development professionals and indigenous religion to work together and appreciate each other's contribution to eradicating absolute poverty in Africa.

## CHAPTER 6: A WAY FORWARD: SHONA RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT

### 6.1 Introduction

The title of this chapter attempts to capture the central focus of this entire study. Throughout this concluding chapter, we will be critically analyzing, examining and assessing the importance, persistence, and uniqueness of Shona religion in Africa. We will briefly evaluate Shona religious elements and their impact on development. In chapter 1, we noted why Shona religion is marginalized, sidelined, and left at the periphery, whilst the attention is focused only on the so-called ‘proselytizing major world religions’ (such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). Considering the historical developments on the African continent, it is an undisputed truism that Shona religion in Zimbabwe struggled against many negative exponents who were targeting to completely supplant and uproot the indigenous people’s religious belief systems. Surprisingly, Shona religion as we know it contemporarily is far from disappearing from Zimbabwean communities. In this concluding Chapter, we will also suggest a wayforward that is inclusive and pluralistic in nature – seeking an honest and balanced incorporation of Shona religion as a resource for sustainable development. Thereby, the gulf between indigenous religion and development discourses can be ameliorated, giving a lasting solution for Zimbabwean communities, to experience good living standards. Therefore, critical writings on the importance, persistence, and uniqueness of indigenous religion will be epitomized, to pave the way for academic, professional and indigenous peoples’ recommendations. Above all, taking into account that religion is no panacea but is a crucial factor everywhere, people take decisions in the planning and implementation of development programs. The religion and spirituality of the indigenous people are determinant factors to reckon with in development processes.

### 6.2 The Importance, Persistence, and Uniqueness of Shona Religion

As critically discussed in Chapter 2, Shona religion’s spiritual hierarchy was venerated before the advent of the colonizers in Zimbabwe and is still revered in the post-colonial era. At its lowest level, there are the *Midzimu yepaMusha* (family spirits), superior to them are the *Midzimu yeDunhu* (Clan spirits), and at the highest position there is *Mwari*. This hierarchy is sacrosanct. It maintains a cordial relationship between the visible world and the invisible spiritual world, which together form the whole cosmos according to the Shona. Therefore, the Shona worldview does not separate these two worlds. “It is one world, indivisible, with one touching on another”(Laussane Committee 1980: 1-5). One African proverb affirms that, saying our world is like a drum; strike any part and the vibration is felt all over. When a borehole is sunk in into the land of a

community by a development organization, it rings in the ears of the ancestors, who are the owners of the land (*ibid*). If the hierarchy is not respected, there are negative consequences: there is no longer a harmonious relationship between the mundane world and the supra-mundane world. There will be wanton deaths and intense sicknesses as well as misfortunes in the communities. In light of this situation, Shona people believe that development initiatives will not be blessed. The ancestors and *Mwari* are the owners of the land, hence they have powers to **make** and **unmake** the sustainability of development programs. Therefore, Shona religion is important for the indigenous people of Zimbabwe. During the colonial era, it was a well-known factor that “the flag followed the Cross” (Olinga 2009: 7, in the Minne-Africa of 2009 Article), Christianity or Christian faith was supposed to supplant indigenous people’s religion and spirituality. To achieve this goal, there was a long tradition of denouncing, demonizing and derogating local people’s religion in schools, churches, streets, and public places – it was described as, “primitive, paganism, polytheism, fetishism, magic, animism, heathenism, and savage religion” (Mbiti 1997: 7-9).

In Zimbabwe, this went on for nearly 100 years, whilst in the whole continent of Africa for over 300 years. This being the case, indigenous people’s religion and spirituality could have disappeared completely. However, this is not the case. Instead, indigenous religion and spirituality are gaining more strength, by leaps and bounds. although, most of its adherents do not show it in public. True, attention is given to local religion in the nation. Most Zimbabweans, who converted to other religions like Christianity and Islam among others, never left their local religion and spirituality they were born into. This is evident when they face different socio-economic, political and religious crises: they confidently visit traditional practitioners, and they travel to their rural areas for traditional ritual ceremonies, for instance, *Kurovagura* (beating the grave – when loosely translated into English). This traditional ritual ceremony was christianized, in contemporary Zimbabwe, being called ‘unveiling of the tombstone’. In secret, traditional rituals are performed. Indigenous people with serious social challenges such as *Ngozi* (avenging spirits) visit diviners and traditional doctors for cleansing, and reparations. This is a sign that these profound socio-economic, political and religious crises cannot be solved by other religions such as Christianity and Islam. In other words, we can say that most indigenous people are attending their indigenous religion six days per week whilst they attend to their new converted religion Christianity one day per week, on a Sunday. To this effect, B. J. Van der Walt agrees with the writer when he explained that:

Christianity was weakened when missionaries ignored the traditional African worldview and packaged the gospel with colonialism and western culture. This approach produced a dualistic Christendom which brought about schizophrenia in the life of the African. The unfortunate result of this approach was a divided soul. The average African ‘convert’ was not helped to ‘experience’ the gospel as adequate for life. For that reason, we get the phenomenon all over Africa today that

Christians, in a time of need and crises, (such as illness or death) often revert to their traditional faith... So, the deepest core of the African culture remained untouched. Only a veneer of Christianity was embraced. (Van der Walt 1994: 8-9 Cf. Mathema 2007: 5-9, 19)

In the same vein, Mutua Makau points out that, “the role of mission Christianity, with its near exclusive delivery of services in formal western education and health, was central in coercing conversion from African religions” (Mutua 1999: 172). Missionaries saw themselves as agents of westernization and made little distinction between the Church and the colonial state. According to one European author whose mission was in Africa, the entire colonial project had to involve all those responsible for the ‘development of a primitive people’ (Shropshire 1938: Xiii, Cf. Mutua 1999: 172). He used the term ‘primitive’ to define all peoples who, in the main, are in the barbaric and pre-literary stage of sociological and cultural development (*ibid*). These derogatory misconceptions and attitudes toward Africans and their religions found fertile ground in the interpretations, dogma and philosophy of Christianity and other Semitic regions (Mutua 1999: 172). This stance crippled the indigenous people’s religion, but it could not be completely destroyed because it is essential for the African communities. On the one hand, western education in sciences and technologies took the stage, crippling the indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), and relegating them to the periphery – hence creating an epistemological hegemony in favor of the global north. This being the case, to date (2016) indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are disadvantaged in Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa. On the other hand, agreeing with the above, Hoverkort et al. posit that:

The colonial past has had a strong impact on the indigenous cultures and peoples, limiting their capacity to solve their own problems and develop technologies and skills that serve their own needs... The most productive agricultural lands, forestry, and mineral resources have been, and often still are, exploited by entrepreneurs with a colonial background. Most of the present nations, those that exist less than 50 years, still reflect major aspects of the colonial system rather than the pre-colonial indigenous systems of governance. The same holds true for the legal system and education system. The religions of colonizers and missionaries over the past centuries, though they introduced alien concepts and rituals, have not been able to suppress the value attached to ancestors, funerals, and a host of other traditional practices. Most health practices in rural Africa today are based on traditional healers and knowledge, using a wide range of herbs and rituals. (Haverkort, Millar and Gonesse 2003: 137-157)

Consequently, the persistence of Shona religion cannot be overemphasized, though Christian and western notions have overshadowed the indigenous people’s religion and spirituality, so that the latter have come to be seen exclusively in the light of the former. This has led to the suppression of local religion intellectually and practically. However,

the local people's religion and spirituality are still sticking in the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans. Therefore, today we witness the local religion's persistence and determination. This being the case, Magesa says that:

The suppression has truly been minimal more apparent than real. Despite the influences of Christianity and westernization, the basic attitudes and religious philosophy of many Africans have been similar to that expressed many years ago. This thinking has been that the western concepts would destroy African religious thinking and replace it with what is western and Christian but this has not been the case. (Magesa 1997: 5)

Furthermore, it may appear as if the Africans have grown out of their African religions but they do not take off their religiosity (ibid: 6). In the same vein, Mbiti pointed out that, if there are any changes, they are generally on the surface, affecting only the material side of life. "Traditional concepts still form the essential background of many African peoples" (Mbiti 1969: ix). Magesa again postulates that:

The most interesting display of the pertinacity or persistence of African religions is the dual thought system, which has been noted by many scholars, and this has been a thorn in the flesh of many Christian pastors. It has been noted that the western-educated Africans show their true African face particularly in times of crises. Many African professors, ministers of government and members of parliaments have been known to 'revert' in secret to the diviners or mediums in order to know what lies ahead, while at the same time vigorously protesting in public that diviners are relics of by-gone primitive times and that they possess more mystical powers. (Magesa 1997: 9)

However, in light of the aforesaid persistence of Shona religion, as one of the African religions, it would be naïve to simply override it as something archaic and non-existent. Shona religion informs the thinking patterns, "language content, mental images, emotions, beliefs and responses in situations of need" (Buba 2005-2007: 1). It affects development-related decisions and actions. Therefore, development organizations need to consider indigenous religious beliefs, the reactions of the people to an initiative, the thoughts or actions they can build upon, and so on. In this way, the development practitioners can make important and good decisions (as outsiders). Hence, knowledge on indigenous religion is fundamental. This process of understanding local religion and spirituality is very important if development initiative is to be effective and sustainable. The above discussion serves to strongly highlight that indigenous religion cannot be discarded or relegated to the dustbin because it is not something accidental to the Shona peoples. It constitutes the Africanness of the African, thereby his/her true identity which cannot be concealed during times of need and crises. In regard to the above, the question arises: 'is there any true conversion in Africa?' This remains a topic for further research beyond the scope of this study.

Another characteristic we witness is the persistence of Shona indigenous knowledge systems through agricultural skills, which must be used by the Zimbabwe government to curb food insecurity which is common in many communities. There is a sound Shona or African science that should be followed seriously in Zimbabwe for effective food security. To this end, there is a Shona science in agriculture (partly discussed in Chapter two) that sustained the people before the advent of western science in agricultural systems. There was no food insecurity experienced. Against this backdrop, Sheunesu Mpepereki's profound views and insights on Shona or African science can help us to unpack further the indigenous people's knowledge systems. He seriously argues that:

The western scientists have recently come to realize that Shona (African) science practices of minimum tillage are sustainable. Shona (African) knowledge is African science and is equivalent to western science that is taught in schools and colleges. Shona (African) science is learned on the job as it were, as people grapple with various challenges of life. Hunting science and technology is learned through practice, as older and more experienced members of society pass on their skills and knowledge to the younger and less experienced. African science has stood the test of thousands of years. African food insecurity has largely been a result of substituting non-sustainable European science for sustainable African agricultural science practices. The colonizing political agenda was to demonize all things African and impoverish the colonized blacks by banishing their productive sciences as backward, inferior or downright superstition and black magic. (Mpepereki 2015: 16)

The foregoing explanation drawn from Mpepereki clearly depicts how Shona people are privileged in terms of their knowledge systems. Right now, they are prompted to despise their indigenous science and technology which brought sustainability in their communities for thousands of years. Nowadays, it's a common knowledge in Africa that the western science of using chemical pesticides has caused many human body problems or diseases. To this effect, Mpepereki again explains that, "starchy diets mainly composed of *Sadza* (maize thick porridge) and a very limited range of relishes are partly a result of the forced abandonment of the African scientific practice of relying on a highly diverse diet: millets, sorghum, insects, game meat, fish, and vegetables of a wide variety. Both in Churches and at school, the White men made a laughing stock of those who preferred to eat African diets. Today the educated Africans are lumbering under a high burden of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes" (ibid). Furthermore, he argues that:

Africans must be careful, your ancestors discovered valuable sciences and technologies despised by the western as 'indigenous knowledge'. The stigmatization of African scientific knowledge and practices resulted in the erosion of the productive base of African communities as the Africans were forced to abandon the wisdom of their forefathers (sic) and found themselves with the few working technologies accepted by the western colonizers. Thus, western agricultural sciences

and practices have caused environmental damage and proved to be unsustainable. While African science has stressed harmony with nature, western science has caused disharmony and environmental pollution. Instead, of working with, it has worked against nature... (Mpepereki 2015: 16)

The critical account stated above is challenging the global north's epistemological hegemony on development by means of African knowledge. This calls for an African epistemological and religious beliefs' revivalism, resurgence, and renaissance, and will prove that Africans are capable people, who are endowed with scientific geniuses, as well as skills that can sustainably develop their communities. Africans must be creative, innovative and make technologies that are home grown. By doing that, it can profoundly benefit the current generation in abating high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality as well as the future generation. Furthermore, this will prove that science is embedded in Africans; therefore, it's not a unique feature and a borrowed phenomenon from the global north. In light of the above, Thornton Jessi, drawing conclusions from the Inuit-Circumpolar Council (2013), noted that:

Traditional knowledge is very important because it's a systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. It includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct and long-term experiences and extensive and multi-generational observations, lessons and skills. It has developed over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation. (Thornton 2014: 1-5)

Shona religion's uniqueness is an undisputed fact. It is a tried and tested religious tradition which is anchored on its African worldview. Let's outline its uniqueness in brief through a depiction of its hierarchies and their entities of power, which are integral to the faith they have kept for thousands of years. They believe that entities of power can **make** and **unmake** development on individuals, families, clan, communities and the nation at large. These entities strictly guard the ecology, the living and the unborn. They are omnipotent. These entities are family spirits/ancestors, clan spirits, and the supreme life force. In this hierarchy, the supreme life force is the most powerful. Therefore, Shona religious hierarchy is one of the pillars that should not be disturbed; if it is disturbed there is a separation between the mundane and the invisible world. The neglect of communication with the invisible world through prayers and ritual ceremonies, among others, brings intense misery to the visible world. In simple terms, this is the Shona worldview. Likewise, from Hubert Bucher, cited by Mathema, we gain a construct of hierarchies of the spiritual world of the Shona people of Zimbabwe and others of Southern Africa in concurrence with the foregoing perspective. According to this construct, the hierarchical organization with its entities of power has *Mwari* as its ultimate reality. "In between are divinities, ancestors, mystical powers, sacred days with specific features and events, rites of passage, religious specialists, and prohibitive laws

and taboos. At the lowest level of the hierarchy, there is the sacredness of interpersonal relationships and kinships" (Mathema 2007: 6). Furthermore, he posits that:

For the traditional African, in general, human existence remains orderly and structured although the construct of the hierarchies varies from culture to culture. Whatever the setup, systems are such that each person lives under those entities of power and depends on them for the good life: abundant life pursued by most human beings. Hierarchies and entities of power are there for the good of the people who fall under them. While the traditional African believes in a Supreme Being, they also believe that the Supreme Being lives far from those who are alive. In order to access Him, His power, and all His other benefits, the living has to go through intermediaries who are between those on the level of human existence and Supreme Being Himself. The difficulty lies in attempting to break ties that bind the individual to these hierarchies and entities of power. To break away from this system or to be 'converted' to another system means that one gets cut from the connections that make life complete, meaningful, and safe. (ibid)

For individuals, families and the nation to experience a good and abundant life and in order to experience sustainable development, they need to address their immediate entities of power, for example, family ancestors, elders, traditional practitioners, diviners etc. Therefore, the Shona worldview must be considered or taken seriously when development practitioners are working in African communities. "When they plan and implement development programs without incorporating indigenous people's religious beliefs, they are breaking the ties that bind the individual to these hierarchies and entities of power" (ibid). This can negatively affect the sustainability of development programs and projects. In the indigenous people's perception, the hierarchies and entities of power give blessings for development programs to take off; therefore, incorporating these religious beliefs is fundamental for the communities' development.

Community unity or solidarity is another essential feature which constitutes Shona religion's uniqueness. Community unity is one of the greatest and precious gifts endowed unto Shona religion and culture. In times of socio-economic and political difficulties, indigenous people believe that it bestows individuals, families, communities and the nation with security. They help one another genuinely. In community solidarity, there is a network of kinship which is instituted through the extended family. People care for each other during bereavements, they help each other after having experiencing droughts, they take care of their elders and orphaned children, because of kinship and community unity/solidarity, they provide social welfare among themselves. Community unity or solidarity is still visible and a common phenomenon in contemporary Zimbabwe communities, though it was heavily threatened by the philosophy of individualism which crept in during colonial era. Accordingly, Theuri Matthew explain that:

Prior to the coming of the colonialists, Africa had its own traditional system. This system encouraged Africans to live in harmony and to share the goods of the land

communally. The aim of production was not profit but sustenance of the community. In addition, labor provision was a mutual social responsibility. However, with the coming of the foreign culture the seeds of individualism and consumerism have overtaken the African spirit of generosity, hospitality, and solidarity. The spirit where each person was for the others' welfare is long gone and the class structure system has taken root in Africa. The sharp class divisions that existed in Euro-Western countries have now replaced the traditional system. (Theuri Matthew 2001: 194)

Through oral tradition, we are reliably informed about Shona societies in Zimbabwe and other societies in Africa during the pre-colonial era. There were no street children and orphanage institutions which are now a common feature or sight in the 21<sup>st</sup> century throughout African communities. Community solidarity and moral fiber are weak. Some scholars attribute this erosion of moral fiber and identity in African societies to the mystical powers of contemporary globalization. To date (2016), community solidarity/unity is visible though shaken by cultures which emphasize individualism. Concurring with the foregoing perspective, Mathema postulates that:

One of the greatest gifts of the Africans to the world consists of a strong sense of community. In the turbulent environment of our contemporary world, redemptive communities have become important in shaping human beings. For the traditional African, harmonious relationships are central to the formation of the people and are, therefore, imperative to cultivate in order to maintain relational harmony within the community. We cannot understand persons, indeed we cannot have a personal identity without reference to other persons, bondedness, is the key to the understanding that, what falls on one, falls on all. (Matema 2007: 6)

Shona cosmology is another unique feature that rendered the adherents' faith to be steadfast during difficult periods in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, as well as in other African communities. This African cosmology forbids cruelty towards all living creatures. In the same vein, Masaka and Chemhuru, drawing from the ESS Gaia Case Study Zimbabwe (2010), pointed out that:

The Shona have an environmental ethic that takes into account the interests of not only sentient beings but the whole of nature in general. Though they do not disapprove of the sustainable use of nature's resources including other living creatures for, among others, draft power, and food, they are against the wanton destruction of fauna and flora without justification. They also take great exception to the cruelty to animals because for them, all animals are sentient and therefore deserve to be given moral consideration. Therefore, there is a common cultural belief in the African cosmology that forbade unwarranted killing and brutalization of wild animals..., and there can be little doubt that these strategies emanated from people who had concern for their environment and ecosystems, an attitude which enabled societies to conserve their resources on a sustainable basis without written legislation... (Masaka and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148)

“African societies have positive traditional management practices that have been adopted and passed down over countless generations in harmony with the short and long-term carrying capacities of the local ecosystem” (La Londe 2010 quoted in Masa-ka and Chemhuru 2011: 132-148). Some of the positive practices are based on symbolism and involve spiritual rituals, religious practices, social taboos, and sacred animal totems (*ibid*). “Among Shona people, the natural environment has certain sacred places that must not be disturbed, such as certain mountains, caves, rivers, grave sites and forests. They ought not to be defiled through, among others, undue cutting down of trees that grace them and killing of other living creatures only for the sake of it. Therefore, the Shona cherish a life of living in harmony with the natural environment and the riches it provides. The Shona people’s dislike for cruelty to other living creatures and the environment, in general, is reflected through a number of *Zviera* (avoidance rules)” (*ibid*) – as was critically explored in chapter two.

The discussion above has depicted why Shona peoples are still clinging to their religion and spirituality, despite religious colonialism and post-colonial marginalization which were and are still seeking its extinction. It has clearly shown how difficult it is to count Shona peoples in Zimbabwe who profess to be Christians and Muslims, among others. This is evidently shown when a Shona person faces crises and is in a time of need. Despite the fact that she/he is a Christian or Muslim, during life-disturbing setbacks such as illness, death, persistence poverty, unemployment, and all forms of suffering, he/she turns back to his/her indigenous religion for solutions. Christianity’s belief in eschatological good life and abundant life is not considered in such contexts. Africans believe in combating anything that threatens human life. Therefore, an African can ‘revert’ back to his/her roots – to the traditional religious belief systems, thereby consulting traditional practitioners, diviners, and other specialists, appealing to the entities of power such as ancestors etc. for abundant life and life in its fullness. For this reason, Africans, as individuals, families, and communities as well as a nation, seek for powers to protect themselves against evil mystical powers that threaten their lives. To this end, Shona religion’s importance, persistence, and uniqueness are a force to reckon with in development discourses. This shows that Shona religion commands great power among Shona. However, it is inevitable not to integrate Shona religion in development initiatives. Furthermore, it becomes imperative for approaches to development in Zimbabwe and other African countries, to take note of the effects of Shona religion on socio-economic, political and religious dimensions of life. Development professionals need to take a serious consideration of the following Shona religious elements that have a positive impact on development.

## 6.3 Shona Religious Elements and Their Positive Impact in Development

When evaluating this study, it is apparent that there are many Shona religious elements which have a positive impact on development. Like any other religion in the world, Shona religion has a social, economic, and political impact. The indigenous traditional beliefs have an impact in transforming individuals' hearts and this inner transformation is taken as a necessary condition for changing the society. Therefore, community belief system, rituals, ethics, and sacredness among others are going to be discussed briefly as indigenous religion's elements that have a positive impact on development.

**Community belief system or worldview** – Shona belief systems bind the community together and through these beliefs, there is solidarity, unity, and peace in the community. Development initiatives are sustainable in a peaceful environment. These beliefs have an impact on how Shona people make “sense of the universe and their place in it” (Patrick 2016: 1-17). They have positive effects on their day-to-day activities and on their relationships, on human dignity as well as on living in peace with their environment. They encourage strength of the family unit and community cohesion, which are intertwined with practices and beliefs of indigenous religion. The regular practice of indigenous religious values, norms and beliefs helps poor people move out of poverty. Shona religious beliefs generally inoculate indigenous people against a host of social ills that impede development. These beliefs contribute substantially to the formation of *unhu* (personhood), or moral character and sound moral judgment. Moral behavior increases longevity and lessens the likelihood of contracting diseases like HIV and AIDS, as well as other killer diseases that threaten human development. A community with a shared belief system or worldview can easily come together in development activities: the Shona people call it *zunde/nhimbe*. The concept of *zunde/nhimbe* is very important to Shona people. Community people help each other through labor to members for farming or other works. This creates a greater connection between community members in a physical, emotional and spiritual way. Therefore, it can be a factor in facilitating development. Given the prevalence of poverty in communities, *zunde/nhimbe* can help poor families to live a good life. Therefore, this element can positively contribute to sustainable development in respect of the above explanation.

**Rituals** – as discussed in chapter 5 ('Prayer(s) and rituals as a model on abundant life'), it is important to note that beliefs are actively explained, inculcated and transformed to be real during ceremonies. As noted by Some M.P., quoted in Matuire, “rituals are above all, the yardstick by which people measure their state of connection with the hidden ancestral realm, with which the entire community is genetically connected” (Matuire 2011: 34). For this reason, it is clear why Shona people insist on performing rituals whenever development programs and projects are implemented in Zimbabwe. Rituals are fundamental in seeking ancestral and *Mwari*'s blessings on development pro-

jects. As was noted by the interviewees in chapter 4, ritual ceremonies have a positive impact on development. From a religious perspective, rituals can retard development initiatives if they are not performed. This is evidenced by the interviewees' experiences or reports on development programs and projects that failed because of ignoring indigenous religion's practices. Rituals are an element of Shona religion that has a profound impact on development, therefore they should be considered in development programs for the sake of their sustainability. Sustainability of development projects alleviates extreme poverty in communities.

**Ethics** – as discussed in chapter 2 ('The institution of avoidance rules in Shona religion'), ethics control individuals' behaviors in a community. These ethical rules are inculcated in communities to guide, and regulate *unhu* (personhood), so that people conform and behave like human beings and avoid life-threatening activities, as well as offenses, wickedness, violation of societal norms, and other sinful acts. Individuals who violate ethical rules will invite curses from ancestors and *Mwari*, and these curses might affect any development initiative in the community. Ethical rules preserve peace and keep chaos away from the family, community, and nation. Shona people believe that these ethical rules were handed down to them by their forefathers, and their forefathers received them from *Mwari*. One could say that ethical rules stem from the supreme life force itself and are passed on from generation to generation. Ethical rules are part of Shona culture and they have a religious flavor that supports sustainable use of the environment. Ethical rules have a profound moral authority and therefore prevent the violation of societal norms which can impede development. Development initiatives grow tremendously in communities that uphold ethical rules and good behaviors. However, Shona people believe that ancestral spirits play a big role in making sure that individuals in communities pick up desirable *unhu* and avoid wicked behaviors. In essence, one can speak of ethics as a Shona religious element that has a positive impact on development projects.

**Sacredness** – every religion regards some objects, people, places etc. as sacred and others as profane or unholy. Shona religion considers many objects, people (ancestors), places or land, rivers, as well as animals to be sacred. For this reason, they accord great veneration to ancestors who are seen as the living dead. Ancestors of the Shona people are the owners of sacred places, rivers, and animals and forests. Therefore, any development program initiated near or at a sacred place/land, river, forest, and tree, among others, should be moved to another place which they consider not to be sacred. Shona people believe that ancestral spirits and *Mwari* can cause development projects to be successful. It is the sacredness of the ancestors and the supreme life force that allows families, communities and the nation to prosper. In light of the above, Shona people perform ritual ceremonies frequently to appease ancestral spirits in order to experience the good life. Therefore, development professionals should not start development programs and projects before traditional leaders have asked the ancestral spirits as to

whether or not the development program or project is going to be accepted. If ancestors and *Mwari* accept a program or project, it will not encounter challenges. Indigenous people will support such a development program or project and poor community members will move out of poverty. It is apparent that this element has a positive impact on development.

It is apparent from the discussion above as well as from chapters 2, 4, and 5, that the overall positive impact of Shona religious beliefs and practices are fundamental in development discourses. The beliefs and practices appear to have an enormous potential for addressing social vices that impede sustainable development. In that respect, it is important to point out that Shona religion is a resource in facilitating development. Such evidence indicates clearly that indigenous religious beliefs and practices contribute significantly to good living standards of the Zimbabweans. Therefore, Shona religious beliefs contain a balanced development approach that takes into account the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the development process.

## 6.4 Recommendations

During the course of this study, it has become evident that besides socio-economic and political hegemony, religious colonialism, cultural dominance, and superiority were part and parcel of the historic colonial trajectory in Africa by the global north. Therefore, it is almost always explicit that in the contemporary situation in Zimbabwe communities and other communities in Africa, there is a desire for cultural, spiritual, and socio-economic as well as political revival. It is a limpid or clear sign that indigenous religion was not profoundly contaminated and influenced by Euro-Western cultures, though its bruises are not easy to be dismissed. However, building on aforementioned religious elements of Shona culture and their positive impact on development, the following theoretical and practical scholarly recommendations must be understood as suggested remedies for achieving sustainable development programs in Zimbabwe communities – for abundant life to be experienced. For this reason, sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are meant to transform the world till 2030, can be effective and realizable. The recommendations read as follows:

- There is a clear need to enhance development in African countries through a spiritualized structure or worldview that reflects the perspectives, values, and moral order of African societies – it would have as its primary goal the enrichment of the social, spiritual, and non-material conditions of the people and would allow them to develop and utilize their full potential (Dei 1993: 19, Cf. McDonnell 2012: 20).
- On a larger scale, “if indigenous peoples’ approaches are to truly challenge the current epistemological dominance of development, we must also ad-

dress and challenge the dismissal of African spiritual knowledge in the overarching ‘international development’ agenda. This means examining the ways in which spiritual worldviews may enter into the conversations of the larger international development agendas, and how they may support a genuine African development that is grounded in the epistemology, ontology, and axiology of the African people” (McDonnell 2012: 23).

- For a deeper and proper understanding of Shona religion there should be a ‘religious literacy’ that will enable international development professionals to appreciate, accept and incorporate indigenous religion in development discourses.
- In light of development programs and projects that failed due to disrespect of indigenous religious beliefs, for instance, the Chiadzwa diamonds mining or the, water development programs for consumption and agricultural irrigations in Zimbabwe (as discussed in Chapter 4), it is imperative not to dismiss indigenous belief systems, since they are a force to reckon with. Therefore, Chiefs should be incorporated in policy-making processes. Chiefs in Zimbabwe must fight against corruption and injustice – their influence in public policy must be to promote the common good and sustainable development in Zimbabwe communities.
- Religious commitment requires a highly-developed understanding of the faith-based world. “Actors and agencies need to be aware of the role that faith plays in communities so that they can develop effective strategies to work with different faiths or spiritualities. However, religious awareness, religious literacy, and skills relevant to religious engagement are not routinely part of the training of diplomats and development professionals, and, to a certain extent, religion has been driven out of academic institutions and isolated from the mainstream. This compounds the problem of low religious literacy among policy makers who often do not understand the multi-faceted nature of religious communities, the diverse authority structures of different religions or the political significance of emergent religious movements” (Wilton Park 2014: 1-9). Therefore, there is a clear need to train diplomats and civil servants in religious matters, so that skill sets can be developed for addressing opportunities and issues arising out of indigenous religions. “It is important for officials to understand how people of different faiths think and act, not just what they believe in, and to appreciate the influence of the different development and transitional contexts in which they operate” (ibid).
- There is a clear need for the development professionals or workers to seriously apply impartiality or evenhandedness in order for them to effectively

understand indigenous religions (because of their prior religious affiliations). If they apply fair-mindedness, there will be genuine development because religion and spirituality deal with people's identity. They will not only tolerate, but accept spiritual resources of the local peoples, to the effect that most development programs will kick off.

- Since development workers and diplomats rotate regularly, depending on their contracts, there is a need for seminars, workshops, and conferences to orient them on indigenous belief systems, customs, values, and tradition. Above all, the Zimbabwe government must ensure that indigenous religion is profoundly taught in schools (primary and secondary), colleges, and universities to breed generations of future leaders who know and understand their indigenous religion in the midst of globalization which has eroded the identities of the different nationalities. In order to achieve this goal, however, traditional institutions must be involved in the process.
- Indigenous religions in developing nations are central for development issues: they shape the indigenous ideas of health, agriculture, mining, they accomplish environmental conservation, they reduce or eliminate corruption, they preserve peace in communities, they accomplish good governance and conflict prevention among others – therefore, development organizations should take advantage of indigenous religion, by considering it in development initiatives.
- Indigenous religion and knowledge systems are not completely isolated from Euro-Western knowledge – therefore, people will incorporate and re-interpret aspects of Euro-Western knowledge and practice into their traditions as part of the ongoing process of positive globalization. However, an inclusion of indigenous religion and knowledge systems does not imply their overall relevance and adequacy in addressing developmental issues. While they are regarded to be important, there are also examples from Africa where indigenous belief systems and knowledge systems have been barriers in other areas to development interventions. Therefore, there is a clear need for co-operation that takes cognizance of religious and knowledge systems in inclusive and pluralistic models.
- There is a clear need to write more material in English and other languages to be used by different development organizations in order to understand better the indigenous people's religion and spirituality in Africa.
- Special care, therefore, must be taken to employ the phenomenological approach to understanding the people and their religion, in this case, the Shona. Martey explains that the task of a phenomenological approach is to describe, not to reduce. It helps to collect relevant information without bias.

“This method proceeds by description rather than by deduction and it is a way of pointing at phenomena as they present themselves without the interference of negative or positive prejudices and explanations” (Martey 1993: 74).

## 6.5Conclusion

The incorporation of African religions (Shona religion) as a resource for sustainable development is fraught with methodological, theoretical, socio-economic, political, and religious challenges. These challenges set aside, drawing from Tibi B., the study has shown that, cultural and religious systems do not only profoundly influence the lives of the vast majority of developing nations or third world inhabitants, but also remain pervasive and vital institutions that can be used in creating consensus and influencing changes in society. Religion as a cultural system of the indigenous peoples plays a vibrant role for the mobilizing of development projects (Tibi 2008:28, Cf. Agbiboa 2012: 202). “Therefore, if development processes fail to take indigenous religion and spirituality adequately into account, there (is) a real risk of a backlash and of developing countries rejecting the development projects altogether” (Deneulin and Bano 2009: 46, Cf. Agbiboa 2012: 213). Furthermore, religious systems do not only profoundly influence a person’s *Weltanschauung* or worldview, but also remain a pervasive and vital force for creating consensus and mobilizing a society towards developmental changes. However, this fundamental role of religion is still very much an unrecognized potential in mainstream development thinking, its path only lightly trodden. It would be careless, of course, to ignore the fact that religion is not only a constructive force in the world, it also can be destructive (Agbiboa 2012: 213) – for example, extremist Islamic groups (ISIS, Boko Haram, etc.). Their killings through suicidal bombs and war against civilians are impeding development initiatives in the world. In Africa, some religious beliefs are hindrances to human development, for example, they prevent their people from seeking health treatments, some tenets prohibit girls to go to school and encourage them to get married early. These retard socio-economic and political developments since women have a fundamental role to play in such domains.

Whether constructive or destructive, it is evident that:

Religion continues to fundamentally shape development in the developing world in numerous ways; it is clearly not retreating in all parts of the world into the private sphere as foretold by Max Weber and many contemporary Euro-Western commentators. Against this backdrop, the germane or relevant question is not whether religion should be incorporated in the development discourses, but ‘*How should the presence of religion in the development planning and implementation be considered in order to create desirable development outcomes that are sustainable?*’ In addressing this pertinent question, mainstream international development practitioners are well advised to

avoid what this study calls the ‘orthodox development sin’ of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The suggestion here is to adopt an ‘*inclusive*’ or ‘*plural*’ strategy to international development, one that internalizes indigenous religious systems. (Agbibo 2012: 214)

The aforementioned views and insights from different scholars on the importance of indigenous people’s religion and spirituality in developing nations are essential, considering religions’ momentum in shaping the socio-economic and political landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This being the case, religion is a force to reckon with in development discourses. Furthermore, indigenous religions and spiritualities have resisted religious colonialism, which is why they are still existing. Above all, they have shown resilience and pragmatism in the way they secretly and publicly heal and comfort their adherents in times of crises, such as deaths, illnesses, and in facing evil spirits. To the indigenous people, this assurance is fundamental. Therefore, it is worth noting that matters of religion and spirituality are difficult to understand. Drawing from Mtapuri and Muzengwa, “the onus is on human development practitioners to take into account indigenous people’s cultural beliefs if human development interventions are to have positive impacts on their lives” (Mtapuri and Muzengwa 2013: 8). In addition, Thomas et al. offer some insightful words: “the poor can be targeted once they are identified, but poverty can be reduced when policies aim at its causes” (Thomas, De Groot and De Ruijter 2009: 254, Cf. Mtapuri and Muzengwa 2013: 8).

Overall, the study has discussed abundant life in Shona religion; it has also evaluated the basic needs development strategy, as well as the origin of the concept of sustainable development. It has discussed the perspectives on development and indigenous religion of the Zimbabwean government, chiefs and headmen, NGOs and FBOs, and religious experts. The cultural resources of Shona religion concerning development were examined. Finally, the study has evaluated Shona religious elements and their positive impact on development, and has offered recommendations on indigenous religion and spirituality and knowledge systems for consideration in development discourses. Its overall purpose is for the Zimbabwean communities and other African communities to experience a sustainable development. Indigenous religion and spirituality have at its very core the notion of human life as being central and the unbreakable connection between the visible world and the invisible world, as well as an amazing reverence accorded to the ecology, the living, dead, and the unborn. It is a cosmovision or worldview that believes that the world is a composite, - as Magesa explains, where the divine, spirits, humans, animates and inanimate elements are hierarchically perceived but directly related and always interacting on another. “At the top of the hierarchy of the universe is the Supreme Being/Divine Force, which is the primary and the ultimate life-giving power, Supreme Being the Creator and Sustainer, the Holy” (Magesa 1997: 7). What is worth noting with regards to the holy/sacred in African religions is that it does not only encourage commitment, rather it demands it. The people do not have a choice

on that. Commitment then is anchored in the people's conception of the Supreme Being and in their interpretation of what that Supreme Being demands of them (*ibid*). Non-Conformism or individualism which is a common phenomenon in the Euro-Western culture is clearly discouraged; in fact, co-operation is encouraged in African culture – a factor that can augment sustainable development, in Africa. It is hoped for that the recommendations of this study will build robust long-term solutions for development programs to be sustainable and to be able to abate ever skyrocketing levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality experienced in various African communities.

## APPENDIX

### List of Formal Interviews

#### *Chiefs and Headmen*

All interviews were conducted from 2 – 30 November 2015 to 1 – 31 December 2015.

Mr. A.A.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. B.B.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. C.C.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. K.K.	Headman interviewed in Harare
Mr. L.L.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. M.M.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. D.D.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. E.E.	Chief interviewed in Seke
Mr. F.F.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. N.N.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. O.O.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. P.P.	Headman interviewed in Harare
Mr. Q.Q.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. G.G.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. H.H.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. R.R.	Headman interviewed in Harare
Mr. S.S.	Headman interviewed in Seke
Mr. I.I.	Chief, interviewed in Harare
Mr. J.J.	Chief interviewed in Harare
Mr. T.T.	Headman interviewed in Seke

#### *Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) Personnel*

All interviews were conducted from 4 – 31 January 2016 to 1 – 10 February 2016.

Mr. A.	National Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. I.	National Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. J.	Area Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. B.	Area Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mrs. C.	Assistant Area Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare

Mrs. K.	Assistant National Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Miss. L.	Programs Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. D.	Programs Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. M.	Assistant Programs Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Ms. E.	Assistant Programs Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mr. N.	Projects Training Manager, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mrs. F.	Assistant National Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mrs. O.	Programs Coordinator, an FBO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mrs. G.	Assistant Projects Training Manager, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare
Mrs. H.	National Director, an NGO employee, interviewed in Harare

### *Religious Experts*

All interviews were conducted from 13 February 2016 – 20 March 2016 at the University of Zimbabwe and Catholic University in Zimbabwe.

Professor, L.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Doctor, Q.	Assistant Professor, interviewed in Harare
Reverend Doctor, X.	Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Professor, M.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Doctor, R.	Lecturer interviewed in Harare
Professor, N.	Senior Lecturer interviewed in Harare
Reverend Doctor, Y.	Senior Lecturer interviewed in Harare
Doctor, S.	Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Professor, O.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Doctor, T.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Reverend Doctor, Z.	Lecturer interviewed in Harare
Professor, P.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Doctor, U.	Senior Lecturer interviewed in Harare
Doctor, V.	Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Doctor, W.	Senior Lecturer, interviewed in Harare
Reverend Doctor, X.	Lecturer, interviewed in Harare

### **Interview Guide Schedule for All Interviewees**

1. In your opinion, is there a connection between religion and development? If so, in which respect are they connected? If not, why do you think they are disconnected from each other?

2. Do you think that indigenous ('traditional') religion in Zimbabwe is a hindrance to development or rather a factor for facilitating development? If yes / no, why?
3. Do you think that indigenous ('traditional') religion should be incorporated into the designing/planning and the execution/operation of development projects? If yes / no, why?
4. What do you think: can the government of Zimbabwe or governmental authorities incorporate indigenous religious beliefs into the designing/planning and the execution/operation of development projects? If yes / no, why?
5. To what extent are NGOs and FBOs considering the local peoples' religious beliefs when implementing development programs?
6. What must be done to conscientize development agencies and their personnel in Zimbabwe to seriously consider indigenous ('traditional') religious beliefs when implementing development programs?
7. How can policy-makers in Zimbabwe integrate indigenous religious beliefs, norms, and values into policy making?
8. What do you think are the Chiefs' duties in making sure that indigenous ('traditional') religion is respected and taken into consideration in development projects in Zimbabwe?
9. In which areas do you see the relevance of indigenous religious belief systems in development programs and projects in Zimbabwe?
10. Please describe the working relations between traditional Chiefs and the state, the government, NGOs, and FBOs in development programs.
11. Sometimes, development programs in mining and agriculture are operating on sacred land. In this case, how should chiefs or other traditional authorities react?
12. Do you have experiences to share on development initiatives that failed because indigenous religious beliefs were ignored or disrespected?
13. What do you think are the pros and cons of incorporating indigenous peoples' belief systems into development programs and projects?
14. The international development institutions' (like World Bank and IMF) vision is "a world free of poverty". To what extent do you think that the inclusion of local peoples' religious belief systems and traditions can contribute to implementing this vision?
15. Could Ubuntu, indigenous religious good governance, and good leadership have a positive impact on Zimbabwe's future development?

16. In which areas could there be synergies between FBOs and indigenous ('traditional') religion in the struggle for sustainable development in Zimbabwe?

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