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Review

Skewed rural development policies and economic malaise in Zimbabwe

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Rural development hinges on the dictates of the growth poles theory. François Perroux introduced the idea of economic Growth Poles in 1949 whose central notion is based on the concept of abstract economic space. The theory argues that decentralization of activities from the centre to the periphery enables the general populace to access services and opportunities better and helps to curtail migration to the centre. In line with the dictates of the growth poles theory, Zimbabwe in 1980 established growth points which helped in the curtailment of rural-urban migration through the decentralization of services to rural areas and the creation of employment opportunities for the rural folk. This paper deliberates on the practicalities and challenges of implementing the growth poles theory and the theory impacted on rural development in Zimbabwe, on the backdrop of skewed rural development policies and economic malaise. The author suggests that political will and a stable economic environment would unlock the prospects and propensity held by the growth pole theory.

Key words: Rural development, Growth Poles theory, growth points, decentralisation, employment opportunities, populace, services.

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe was a British colony from 1890-1980 and during that period, the country was called Rhodesia. The colonial government passed a myriad of legislative instruments that consolidated land gains by the white settler farmers and ensured that indigenous groups remained disadvantaged and confined to unproductive land among other economic facets. Through instruments such as the Native Reserve Act in 1899, the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1930, the Land Tenure Act of 1969, the Hut Tax, the bottle neck Education System among others, the white settlers were able to consolidate power. The pieces of legislation manifested from the British rule

and ensured that whites owned areas comprising of the best agricultural land while blacks occupied reserves located in agro-ecologically low potential regions. Consequently, the colonial legislation can be attributed to the deterioration of rural areas in Zimbabwe, and not much gain or reversal of the situation has been attained to date. In 1980, the new political dispensation brought a shift in policies meant to redress colonial imbalances brought about by colonialism with a view to promoting rural development. Notable remedial policy positions that were introduced include the Communal Land Act of 1981, Growth with Equity Policy, First Five Year National

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Development Plan (FFYNDP) in 1985, Free Educational Policy, the Land Acquisition Act in 1992, Land Reform Programme in 2000, the Fast Track land Reform Programme (a sequel to the Land Reform Programme of 2000) as well as the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Policy. The paper deliberates on the principal idea of the growth pole theory, and Zimbabwean context. The paper further explores the failure of the growth pole theory in Zimbabwe on the backdrop of skewed developmental policies and the attendant economic challenges that the county has experienced since the mid-1990s. The paper explores rural development colonial legislation, prospects of the growth pole theory in bringing about sustainable rural development and the associated challenges. The paper concludes that economic challenges and skewed implementation of rural development policies on the backdrop of economic challenges have derailed prospects for the successful implementation of the growth pole theory as an alternative to rural-urban migration and centralization of employment and investment opportunities. Lastly the author recommends that the establishment should reconsider, review and revise existing investment policies and Rural District Councils should provide incentives to investors and local communities to promote and enhance rural development.

THE IDEA BEHIND THE GROWTH POLES THEORY

François Perroux introduced the idea of economic *Growth Poles* in 1949 and defined it in terms of abstract economic space. In the theory, François Perroux sought to highlight the fact that policy makers hold the presumption that economists could supply the technical analysis needed to make sense of the policies based upon the concept of growth poles. The central idea of the growth poles theory is that economic development, or growth, is not uniform over an entire region, but instead takes place around a specific pole (or cluster) (James, 1996). On the same note, Hughes and Kozlowski (2008) concurred that poles are usually urban locations, benefiting from agglomeration economies, and should interact with surrounding areas spreading prosperity from the core to the periphery. This pole is often characterized by core (key) industries around which linked industries develop, mainly through direct and indirect effects (Hughes and Kozlowski, 2008). Additionally, core industries can involve (and invoke!) a wide variety of sectors such as automotive, aeronautical, agribusiness, electronics, steel, petrochemical. Direct effects imply the core industry purchasing goods and services from its suppliers (upstream linked industries), or providing goods and services to its customers (downstream linked industries) (Hughes and Kozlowski, 2008). Indirect effects can involve the demand for goods and services by people employed by the core and linked industries supporting the development and expansion of economic activities

such as retail. The expansion of the core industry implies the expansion of output, employment, related investments, as well as new technologies and new industrial sectors (Hirschman, 1999). Hirschman (1999) further argues that because of scale and agglomeration economies near the growth pole, regional development is unbalanced, with transportation, especially transport terminals, playing a significant role in such a process. The more dependent or related an activity is to transportation, the more likely and strong this relationship. At a later stage, the emergence of secondary growth poles is possible, mainly if a secondary industrial sector emerges with its own linked industries, contributing to the regional economic diversity (Johnson, 2000). Global supply chains have challenged several dimensions of the growth poles theory since growth and linkages generated by a core industry could concern activities located elsewhere (Hughes and Kozlowski, 2008). Observation of naturally occurring growth poles has inclined planners to create new growth poles; the best-known attempt at creating growth poles having taken place in the Mezzogiorno (south) of Italy, with industrial complexes planned at Taranto and Bari (Darwent, 1999). In summation the growth poles theory manifests in economic development over entire regions and usually concentrated in urban locations and benefiting from agglomeration economies, interacting with surrounding areas spreading prosperity from the core to the periphery.

Growth poles theory and rural development in Zimbabwe

Taking a cue from François Perroux's discourse on the need to enhance economic space, Zimbabwe at independence in 1980, sought to curtail rural/urban migration and decentralize employment creation and opportunities, set off towards the establishment of growth points, in line with the dictates of the growth poles theory. Given the discussion on the Growth Pole Theory above, it can be inferred that the theory enables the decentralization of economic functions and institutions to local levels. Additionally, the theory enables the government to access the populace much easier by offering job opportunities through facilitating the opening up of industrial concerns within the local environments through deliberate enabling policies. Additionally the implementation of the theory facilitates the erection of infrastructure in rural areas, thereby curtailing rural/urban migration as people come to towns and cities in search of employment opportunities. Through the growth pole theory, the longstanding belief that urban areas are the economic hub of countries would fast lose its attraction as rural areas soon boast of the same/similar infrastructure and institutions previously the preserve of urban areas. In addition to the decentralization of institutions and functions, the growth pole theory also helps in cutting distances which rural people would have to travel to the

nearest town as similar services would be found at growth points. In Zimbabwe the dawn of political independence in 1980, saw the government adopting the growth pole theory through the establishment of growth points in all major rural centres and equipping these with infrastructure akin to that found in urban areas. Through the growth pole theory was to spread its tentacles as it became necessary for local authorities to come up with services at growth points similar to those found in urban areas, such as proper housing for those working and living at growth points. In addition the provision of proper sanitary conditions, including clean drinking water and proper housing became necessary. However, the noble idea of growth points in Zimbabwe soon endured the economic challenges that the country endured, especially from the late 1990s. This provided an impediment to the implementation of the growth pole theory in Zimbabwe's rural areas and this subsequently impacted negatively on rural development as the road network became neglected and provision of clean drinking water difficult.

Rural development and colonial legislation in Zimbabwe

Rural development refers to the process of improving quality life and economic well-being of people in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas (Menes, 2005). Traditionally, the development of rural areas centred on agriculture and forestry. However, due to globalization and the need to diversify, rural development has transformed to mining, tourism and manufacturing. Rural development also caters for locally produced economic development strategies and rural development programmes have seen a shift from a top-down approach form non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The bottom up approach allows for participation of rural people and it has been adopted for rural development. A rural area is a countryside area where the major economic activity is largely agriculture and has less than 500 people per square mile (Conyers, 2001).

The quest for economic space is all that characterized colonial rule in Zimbabwe. Through a plethora of restrictive pieces of legislation, the colonial administration in Zimbabwe was able to take advantage of Africans during which white settlers were able to carve out large pieces of prime land for themselves. To compound the precarious situation in which Africans found themselves under colonial rule, further legislation was enacted to impoverish the indigenous Africans, notably the hut and cattle taxes. These taxes acted as sources of revenue to prop up white colonial rule and at the same time curtail African economic advancement. Additionally, there was no tangible physical development in the areas where the majority of Africans lived, with the only infrastructural development being roads and railway lines meant for the expropriation and ferrying of resources to factories and industries for processing. Consequently rural develop-

ment lagged behind as expropriation of resources was done to benefit the settler administration.

The colonial legislation manifested itself through practices that sought to benefit the colonialists. Discriminatory spatial allocation was one such behaviour of the colonial administration. This included the creation of native reserves or tribal trust lands here indigenous people were relegated to or forced to stay. These native reserves comprised of 42% of Zimbabwe's land area, with as much as 75% of it located in drought prone areas (GoZ, 1998). The colonial settlers reserved prime and fertile land on which they produced cash crops. Tribal trust lands were established as a way of accommodating and keeping indigenous people away from urban areas and would only be allowed into towns to provide cheap labour in industry, mines and on farms, most of which were in peri-urban areas. Zvobgo (1986:3) noted that the colonial government used an Order-In-Council to establish colonial land segregation through the Tribal Trust Lands Act of 1898. This resulted in the creation such communal areas as Shangani and Gwaai which were (and still are!) characterized by infertile land and erratic rainfall patterns. It is therefore commonplace that such areas experienced and continue to experience low agricultural yields and possible famine annually.

To seal the fate of African claim to land, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was enacted and this exacerbated indigenous people's loss of land rights and can subsequently be blamed for the current state of rural areas in Zimbabwe. The Land Apportionment Act shaped the character of landlessness as well as the attendant congestion that became commonplace in the country's rural areas, on the backdrop of population increase. Culminations of the Land Apportionment Act included inequitable land distribution, submission to over-exploitation of natural resources all leading to environmental degradation and a threat to sustainable livelihoods. Accordingly, Moyo (2000) has noted that the colonial government established state forests for conservation at the expense of local people, thereby leading to the exclusion of local people from the exploitation of resources. The establishment of state forests also forced people in communal areas to submit through over-exploitation, the few available timber resources and thereby leading to the depletion of timber reserves as well as the subsequent environmental degradation. It can therefore be argued that colonial legislation could be responsible for the current state of rural areas in Zimbabwe due to skewed land tenure policies and the attendant implementation of the cited pieces of legislation.

In 1969, the Land Tenure Act was enacted and it provided a platform for further land alienation. This piece of legislation favoured the white minority race at the expense of the black majority. The Act enabled white settlers to seize 18 million hectares of prime fertile arable land in agro-ecological regions. Black people were subjected to low lying areas with poor soils. Chemhuru and Masaka (2010) cited that colonial settlers targeted

areas which are classified in natural region 1, 2 and 3 with good and reliable rainfall patterns, while most communal areas where blacks had been moved to fell in the regions 4 and 5 which had the least potential to support even small scale farming. As a result, food insecurity and persistent low agricultural production became characteristic of most rural areas such as Bubi where people would survive on low communal production system. Available literature (Scoones, 2008; Manjengwa, 2010) has concurred that areas in regions 4 and 5 have experienced sporadic dry spells and outbreaks of livestock diseases due to the nature and location of such places. Subsequently the relegation of indigenous people to these regions exposed them to the natural calamities associated with these geographical locations.

To further impoverish Africans and justify their need to seek employment to raise levies imposed upon them, the Hut Tax Ordinance of 1894 was proclaimed requiring every adult male to pay an annual hut tax of 10 shillings. Accordingly, Maravanyika and Huljzenveld (2010:25) have maintained that taxation was used as a weapon to coerce Africans into the labour system. The ordinance was amended in 1901 to detect and bring to book African males who defaulted or evaded paying tax. To further tighten the tax regime, the Hut Tax Ordinance was further amended, giving birth to the Native Tax Ordinance of 1904 making the payment of the hut tax incumbent upon individuals and not on the number of huts in existence. This meant that those evading tax or those male adults who stayed together in the same hut would each be obliged to pay 20 shillings per annum. As a result, the taxation system improvised people further as some ended up having to sell their livestock in order to acquire the prerequisite financial resources to either pay current taxes or offset overdue taxes or debts in terms of the hut tax.

The education sector was not spared by the segregatory colonial policies that sought to serve the interests of the white male-dominated colonial socio-economic order. The colonial education system in the then Rhodesia did not have a specific policy for the education of women and girls (Gordon, 1994), with limited opportunities for African males as well. Through the bottle-neck system of education, the colonial policies ensured a pyramidal structure of education provision where less Africans would access educational opportunities outside the primary school levels. Dalelo (2010: 5) has concurred that the educational system during the colonial era was a type of a bottleneck and rural areas had few schools. Only 12, 5% of all African children completing primary school could proceed for secondary education and this policy further marginalised female children who were already under-represented in the educational system (Dalelo, 2010: 5). In light of the above, it can be noted that colonial legislation can be blamed for the sparse school population in rural areas at independence and subsequently the current state of rural areas in Zimbabwe as few schools were built, a situation which

became the post-colonial dispensation's first task to increase education opportunities for Africans, mostly in rural areas. However the new schools continue to be dogged by lack of adequate resources to be able to maintain high educational standards in line with international best practices.

To exacerbate the deteriorating conditions of land in reserves and land expropriation, the colonial regime passed the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, through the Legislative Assembly (Selby, 2006:7). The Act imposed destocking and conservational practice both of which disadvantaged Africans. These measures were disruptive to the already fragile economies of the reserves and contradicted traditional culture of accumulation of livestock, thereby exacerbating poverty among the indigenous populace. The Land Husbandry Act usurped the powers of land appropriation, management and tenure out of the hands of chiefs as traditional leaders. In Shangani, destocking of cattle impacted negatively on the very core of the Ndebele people's social economy which depended on cattle as a symbol of wealth and social status. Before the promulgation of the Land Husbandry Act, the Ndebele State boasted of possibly the largest herd in the region. Consequently the scanty cattle herd in the region as well as the attendant regular bouts of cattle herd depletion can be attributed to colonial administration practices of destocking. Consequently, despite their perceived abolition, most colonial legislation still haunts much of the rural populace and impact on rural development in general. Manjengwa (2010) points out that we cannot divorce the current state of most rural areas in Zimbabwe to the colonial legacy of promulgations and ordinances.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH POLE THEORY IN POST-COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

When the new democratic dispensation took over the reins of political power in 1980, it had to immediately address the imbalances that existed in various political and socio-economic sectors, with the education sector having taken precedence. In a paper entitled *Information for Rural Development: A Zimbabwean Perspective*¹, Lawton Hikwa roundly summarizes the endeavours by the new democratic government in Zimbabwe towards alleviation of rural poverty as follows:

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had a dual economy, inherited from its colonial past. It was characterized by "... a relatively well-developed modern sector and a largely rural sector that employed about 80% of the labour force. The newly independent government sought to address some of these inequalities..."

¹Information for Rural Development: a Zimbabwean Perspective: paper presented at the ProLISSA Conference held on 7 – 11 March, 2011, Pretoria, South Africa by Lawton Hikwa

(Government of Zimbabwe, 2004: 11). The new government gave priority to the reduction of poverty and government geared its spending towards increased "... social sector expenditures, expansion of rural infrastructure and redressing social and economic inequality including land reform." (Ibid). Among major and positive developments was the primary school enrolment which became almost universal. This development had a direct bearing on the need to develop structures for the delivery of information, especially in the rural areas (p 11).

Pursuant to that, the new government introduced deliberate policies that were geared towards creating an egalitarian society based on equal employment opportunities and maintain a uniform education system. According to Zvobgo (1984:4), the government abolished the distinction between African and European education, introduced free and compulsory primary and secondary education for all. Government sought help from donors to construct schools in rural areas. The quality of African education improved and more to that, girls had now greater chances of acquiring education. Education was heavily subsidized especially in rural areas and children who could not go to school due to financial problems were now in a position to acquire education. Literacy levels in rural areas increased remarkably and the government ensured that children could not walk for than 5 kilometres to reach a school, thus enhancing accessibility to education. This was a stride towards rural development and upliftment.

Another contentious issue that acted as a catalyst and a precursor to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was the visibly evident land shortage, which land had been expropriated during colonialism. This created imbalances in terms of land possession and tenure. Upon attainment of independence, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on a serious and accelerated land resettlement programme in order to de-congest rural areas which had become increasingly overpopulated. This also created an opportunity for poor and landless rural farmers to own land, thereby economically empowering them on the aftermath of the enduring colonial legislation on rural development. Additionally the agrarian post-colonial epoch brought abandoned and underutilized land into production. According to Moyo (2000), with monetary assistance from the British Government, Zimbabwe resettled 52,000 families with differing schemes, including Model A, B, C and D, prior to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme that came on the dawn of the new millennium.. Under the Model A, families received permits to reside, cultivate de-pasture on resettlement lands. Despite the fact that the initial resettlement programme uplifted and enhanced the position of black Africans to be in possession of fertile land, the willing-buyer-willing-seller did little to have an impact on land ownership for blacks as many white commercial farmers were not

willing to sell their prime land. Hence, Africans were still disadvantaged, leaving the Government in a quandary on how best to expeditiously allocate land to the landless people.

The post-colonial dispensation made frantic efforts to further improve the livelihoods of its people, especially the rural folk. In a bid to improve lives of the rural population, the government developed the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP) in 1982 and The First-Five-Year National Development Plan (FFYDP) which focused on reducing inequality, reduce poverty and create employment (GoZ, 1998). The TNDP created over 150.000 jobs and enhanced agricultural production of small scale communal land farmers. The government launched the Second-First-Five Year Development Plan (SFFYDP) whose thrust was to improve service delivery in the education and health sectors. Rural planning of the SFFYDP aimed at constructing infrastructure in rural areas, and in most rural areas, clinics, roads and schools were constructed. Improvement in service delivery culminated in enhanced reproductive health services, with rural people enjoying free medical treatment.

Furthermore, decentralization of resources and opportunities to rural areas was the most notable post-colonial development. To curb the insistent migratory behaviour of most Africans through urbanization, sparked by the dictates of the 'bright lights theory', the growth pole policy was activated, formulated and adopted to try and promote rural development through physical development at designated centres. These designated centres of physical development in rural areas came to be known as *growth points*. According to Manyanhaire et al. (2011), the adoption of the growth pole policy resulted in the establishment of centres that included Murambinda, Mubayira, Juru, Mupandawana and Gokwe. In no time, these centres were accorded town status, thereby further enhancing employment and business opportunities for the rural folk and building investor confidence. The town status bestowed upon growth points also boosted the revenue base for rural district councils that manned such centres. Infrastructural development was enhanced and the government supported rural growth centres for public and private investment as well as for the creation of equal job opportunities for the rural folk. Davies (1999) concurs that the growth pole policy deliberately sought to address regional disparities that had long existed between urban and rural areas through decentralization of services and investor focus. Decentralisation of power was enhanced, and Rural District Councils were established and equally empowered to execute duties just like their urban counterparts. The implementation of the growth pole policy in rural areas had numerous positive spin-offs for the rural folk. The policy promoted rural development through infrastructural development, enhanced agricultural diversification and increased employment opportunities and creation), all of which had been the preserve of towns and cities. Physical infrastructure such

as banks, modern transport and health facilities, departmental stores, tarred road networks and even modern food outlets began to make their appearance at such growth centres. In addition, processing of agricultural products, such as cotton ginneries, were established at most growth points, further increasing employment opportunities, availing markets for agricultural productions and reducing transport costs to rural farmers.

In addition to the various rural development initiatives by government, electrification of rural growth points increased the rural resemblance of urban areas and provided convenience and a conducive environment for business operations. On electrification of rural areas as a rural development strategy, Mapako and Prasad² (2011) have argued that national electrification programmes have been given priority in many developing countries and the level of electrification has been generally seen as one of the key indicators of development. However, on the contrary, it has been noted that power utilities find rural electrification programmes a challenge because the returns on the investment made in grid extension are minimal given the usually low levels of power consumption in rural areas (Mapako and Prasad, 2011). Similarly the electrification of growth points attracted investment and created business and employment opportunities for the rural folk. It has also been noted that in addition to rural electrification, the Rural Electrification Agency, at the insinuation of the GoZ, has extended the grid to the growth points where it has provided loans and deliver to site electrical machinery like grinding mills, irrigation equipment and welding machines that local entrepreneurs may order (Mapako and Prasad, 2011). Such a move has further enhanced rural business opportunities and development. A survey conducted by Mapako and Prasad (2011) concluded that the increase in both the scope and number of enterprises at specific growth points suggests that electrification contributes to an increase in rural enterprise opportunities. Many of the activities like running nightclubs, bottle stores, grinding mills and welding activities are greatly driven by presence/existence of electricity. The findings of the survey suggest that the impact of rural electrification in rural development cannot be under-estimated.

In 1998, the Government of Zimbabwe launched the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Transformation (ZIMPREST), a clear indication and evidence of the adoption of the neoliberal approach to economic development (GoZ, 1998). The aim of the policy was to reduce inflation, facilitate public and private savings and investment and provide safety nets for disadvantaged people in rural areas. However, due to the impacts of the IMF/World Bank-induced Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAP), ZIMPREST failed to live to its

expectations. On the devastating impact of ESAP, Hikwa had this to say:

The decade of the 1990s saw a decline of the economy and the problems of high poverty and inequality persisted, all of which was largely blamed on recurrent droughts and floods and the failure of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP).

Hikwa further notes that

the decline could also be attributed to internal political challenges that have led to the isolation of the country from those nations that otherwise hold the necessary altruism to support service infrastructure. This created an identifiable development gap where the establishment of information infrastructure could guard against deterioration of the near-universal primary school enrolment and the general development of communities.

In addition to the failure of macro-economic policies such as ESAP, at micro/communal level, community empowerment programmes began to take shape. Unlike the colonial regime which did not recognize indigenous people's right to the ownership and management of natural resources, the new political dispensation put in place polices in this regard. Thus the new government came up with the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), "a Zimbabwean community-based natural resource management programme introduced in the postcolonial era to empower communities and promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources (Satchell, 1996: 19). The CAMPFIRE became one of the first programmes to consider wildlife as renewable natural resources, while addressing the allocation of its ownership to indigenous peoples in and around conservation protected areas. Natural resources management and intervention improved the social and economic well-being of local communities in rural areas.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The growth pole theory holds the propensity for rural development in Zimbabwe if applied correctly and under a stable economic environment. The idea of the growth pole theory to bring to curtail rural-urban migration by bringing employment and investment opportunities to rural areas is a noble idea since the competition for opportunities in urban areas would be minimized. Although rural development became the thrust of the new post-colonial dispensation, but the pace that it was taking was not agreeable enough. The acquisition of land for resettlement purposes was moving at snail pace, culminating in increased demands for the speedy process of resettlement from the increasingly impatient rural folk,

² Maxwell Mapako¹ and Gisela Prasad² (2011) "Rural electrification in Zimbabwe reduces poverty by targeting income-generating activities" CSIR Natural Resources and the Environment, and 2Energy Research Centre, University of Cape Town.

as evidenced by the Svosve community which initiated the expedited land resettlement process in 1999. The slow pace of resettlement emanated from a clause in the Lancaster House Constitution (1979) which not only provided for the willing-buy-willing settler land acquisition, but gave a 10 year grace period for the compulsory acquisition of land. Although it can be acknowledged that from 1981 up to the late 1990s many people were resettled, economic and political challenges as well as population increase led to expression of impatience and restlessness with the land issue as people thought it was delaying. In May 2000, using the Presentational Powers (Temporary Measures Act) of 1986, more changes were made to the Land Acquisition Act and Zimbabwe implemented the second Land Reform Programme (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). According to Scoones (2013), the Land Reform Programme reconfigured Zimbabwe's rural areas dramatically and small scale farmers were relocated near medium and large scale farms, sharing labour, technologies, market, chains, skills and expertise. The land reform policy enhanced on-farm investment for increasing levels of productivity and enhanced smallholder farmer's progression on the socio-economic ladder and livestock ownership became an agri-business that was enhanced by land reform in rural areas. This reconfigured the face and mode of rural development to some extent.

Furthermore, it can be argued that one of the deliberate remedial measures to promote rural development in the country was through the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Programme. Matunhu (2012:4) has contended that the Zimbabwean Government committed itself to empowering the historically marginalised members of the society to climb out of poverty and under-development through deliberate policies. It was envisaged that the policy would enhance economic empowerment of rural communities to develop themselves, promote the delivery of critical infrastructure such as roads, and enhance social and economic equality and prevention of exploitation. Additionally, Matunhu (2012:12) maintains that the indigenisation policy embedded opportunities for rural development and enhanced the transfer and transformation of wealth from a capitalist system to the previously marginalised rural people. The policy provided opportunities for narrowing the gap between rural and urban economies and encouraged the establishment of Communal Development Trusts. However, these efforts were eroded by the economic challenges that bedeviled the country as a result of 'sanctions' imposed on the country culminating in an economic meltdown of the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium. The ensuing unfriendly hyper-inflationary environment eroded investor confidence and led to a gradual decline in foreign direct investment (FDI), which is the ideal driver of economic development. However, the benefits drawing from these policies are yet to be seen. As a result the possible opportunities drawing from the economic policies are as

in limbo given the obtaining economic and political challenges bedeviling the country, with the prospects for economic development equally fading.

TUNNEL AT THE END OF THE LIGHT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The economic challenges bedeviling the country present a bleak picture of the way forward for the application and enhancement of the growth pole theory in Zimbabwe's rural areas. Additionally, prospects for the fruition of the growth pole theory require a complete overhaul of the economic set-up as well as evident political will to achieve the same. The ensuing economic and political challenges of the first decade of the new millennium provided a gloomy picture for rural development. With the hyperinflation of the early 2000s, an exchange rate that the country could not sustain and a country riling under economic sanctions, these became symptoms of ensuing fissures in the country and a barrier to rural development. Unlike the rosy days of political independence in the early 1980s, when growth points manifested themselves as an epitome for rural development, the economic (and political meltdown) of the early years of the new millennium saw the former rural economic flagship depleting to unprecedented levels. Thebe (2010) concurred that the late 1990s experienced a general economic malaise that impacted negatively on rural development and eroded investor confidence. However Sachikonye (2011) disputes that with the attainment of political independence was to come assured rural development through the dismantling of the enduring impact of colonial rural legislation and the attendant empowerment of the rural folk through the resettlement programmes. Sachikonye (2011) further notes that colonial legislation had set the tone for rural under-development and would take much political will (and not half-hearted attempts) to reverse the impact of such policies. Setting aside the foregoing arguments, the picture that presented itself was that of a state that was enduring not only the impact of colonial policies but that was at the receiving end of its own skewed policies. This left the state (including local authorities) with a lot to do to promote and enhance rural development.

While the transformation of growth points to towns provided a semblance of urbanizing rural areas and promoting rural development, but economic (and to some extent political) challenges tended to denigrate these formerly promising growth points to white elephants. In most former growth points, the prevailing economic challenges have devastated most business outlets which have succumbed to the existing economic climate, leading to closure. Shortage of commodities and an unfriendly economic climate eroded investor confidence, leading to the diminishing of business and employment opportunities at growth points, which had been the

essence behind the establishment of such centres. Rural District Councils, which had benefited from the growth of business outlets and an increased revenue base has continued to experience the impact of business closures and employment opportunities as their revenue based was threatened (Matunhu, 2012). The future of growth points as centres of economic development is now in limbo with remote prospects of recovery, at least in the foreseeable future. There have been numerous costs (and deprivations) to local authorities, business and local communities. Local authorities have lost out on revenue and the prestige of managing a town centre. Local communities have also lost out on services and employment opportunities as well as the idea of neighbouring a town centre, while business enterprises have lost out on business, with remote chances of recovery. Consequently, the current unfriendly economic climate in the country (on the backdrop of economic sanctions) has made growth points an epitome of failed economic policies. This has been further exacerbated by the failure of the political establishment to align and harmonise existing local government legislation to the new constitutional order, culminating in overlaps, duplication and stalled development. Additionally, the lack of political will to concentrate development at growth points through deliberate policies has also seen many enterprises and business opportunities being lost, let alone the erosion of investor confidence. The debilitating provisions of some of the existing policies such as the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy³ have been blamed for the erosion of investor confidence. Thebe (2010) has concurred that current economic policies have crippled investor confidence. It can therefore be argued that with the absence of vibrant rural economic activity on the backdrop of failed implementation of the growth pole theory, it has become reminiscent of days when urban areas were the predominant centres of economic activity and employment opportunities. With no major economic activity in both urban and rural areas and limited employment opportunities, migration to other countries have already started to take shape once again, a situation reminiscent of the period during the last decade of the 1990s when millions of Zimbabweans flocked to neighbouring countries as well as to faraway destinations in the diaspora.

Subsequently there is currently a wave of pessimism on the prospects of rural economic development. Hence there is now a tunnel at the end of the light, which implies that there are impediments to rural development which would require strong and appropriate policies to eradicate. There is also a dire need for political will to revamp both urban and rural economic development so as to reactivate and reignite rural business activity and create

employment opportunities, mainly for the rural population.

Conclusion

The growth points that were established in the 1980s have served their purposes but economic and political challenges have presented barriers to further rural development. The essence of the centres had been to address the economic challenges and imbalances created by the colonial legislation which placed unequitable distribution of resources. Vibrant growth points and attendant industrial concerns that had come up were all foiled by economic problems such as an exchange rate that the country could not sustain, inflation and sanctions that the country endured from the early 2000s. All these factors as well as natural calamities such as drought and unpredictable weather patterns put a damper on the efforts of the government to establish flourishing growth points. To some extent the Land Redistribution Programme of the late 1990s went a long way in redressing the imbalances created by colonial legislation on resource allocation and utilization thereof. From the discussions of this paper, one may argue that the colonial legislation retarded the development of rural areas and can be blamed for the current state of rural areas. On the other hand, colonial legislation provided a catalyst for the execution of the Land Reform Programme and all its attendant benefits for the rural populace. A number of Acts such as the Native Reserve Act in 1899, the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1930, the Land Tenure Act of 1969 and the Hut Tax impacted negatively and contributed to the under-development of rural areas in Zimbabwe. However, remedial measures were introduced in the post-colonial era through policies and programmes include the Communal Land Act of 1981, Growth with Equity Policy, First Five Year National Development Plan (FFYNDP) in 1985, Free Educational Policy, the Land Acquisition Act in 1992, Land Reform Programme in 2000, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy to develop rural areas. These policies and programmes went a long way in alleviating rural poverty, though economic challenges kept poverty levels high. In addition, economic challenges as well as erratic weather patterns as a result of bouts of climate change have all combined to paint a gloomy picture of prospects for rural development and recovery thereof.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into consideration the current economic climate, this paper would recommend that in order to curtail rural-urban migration, promote rural investment and economic activity, it is incumbent upon the establishment to reconsider, review and revise existing investment policies, notably the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Policy. Such a review and revision of the said policy framework would most likely incite investor

³ The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Policy provides for 49-51% share holding capacity between the foreign investor and the Government and local investors respectively.

confidence. Additionally political will should be evident so as to incite investors and promote infrastructural development. Local authorities, notably Rural District Councils, should provide incentives to investors as well as local communities so as to promote and enhance rural development. Local communities should also take the initiatives to promote economic development within their areas of jurisdiction by making concerted efforts to engage their local authorities for seed resources to start business enterprises that would act as a catalyst and an enticement for outside investors to invest in those communities. Additionally continued engagements between local authorities and line Ministries should also be a common feature and a continuous process to assist in revamping local economies and infrastructural development. The government should engage local communities and local authorities when taking major policies positions that affect these institutions. An example is the privatization of the Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED) which would have helped in infrastructural development and whose mandate to provide road infrastructure would go a long way in enticing investors and provide an efficient road network. With the privatization of the CMED, services are expensive and beyond the reach of local authorities leading to dilapidated and dysfunctional road infrastructure. With such bad road network, investors would most likely be discouraged. Local communities would need a good road network for the transportation of their agricultural produce. There is need for the political establishment to mend fences with the international financial institutions as well as investors. It is also mandatory that the establishment cease the politicization of public institutions, programmes and policies as experience have shown that such behaviour has not augured well with international financial institutions, business sector as well as NGOs who usually provide for the much needed relief in times of need. Corruption and corrupt practices should be monitored and curtailed is citizens are to benefit from the proceeds of the exploitation and expropriation of natural resources in the country. Lastly, and possibly most importantly, active citizen participation in policy formulation and implementation is mandatory if citizen trust is to be enhanced. Bestowed with an abundant of natural resources, there is a big chance that the country could recover from the economic (and political?) malaise and become a bastion for economic development on the African continent. However, it remains to be seen whether the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), a post-2013 economic blue print will transform the country's economic quagmire.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

The contributions of Ilorin scholars to Islam in West Africa: A study of Alfa Salaudeen (a.k.a. Alfa Parakoyi) in Ijesha land

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Despite the fact that, the actual date of the introduction of Islam to the Yoruba speaking people of south western Nigeria is not known, it is believed that the Muslim empires in West Africa knew of Yoruba land long before its introduction to Islam. The spread of Islam to other areas is very important in Islam and this serves as a challenge to all Islamic scholars to champion the course of evangelizing the non-believers or idol worshippers as the case may be. Ilorin scholars cannot be exempted from this role. Even though there were many systems in which Islam was introduced to many areas but the emergence of Islam in Yoruba land and Ijesha land to be specific is a unique one. In this case, this article discussed one Ilorin Islamic scholar called Alfa Salaudeen (aka. Alfa Parakoyi) as one of the indispensable dramatic personae in the spread of Islam in Ijesha land. Even though, the land was dominated by pagans but Alfa Salaudeen has done fantastic Jihad diplomatically without any chaos to Islamise the people of Ijesha land. And his legacies can be felt through his mosque and Madrasat (school) that he built couple with his role in converting Ijesha people to Muslim. Apart from that, to show the extent of his role and the appreciation from Ijesha people, Alfa Salaudeen (aka Alfa Parakoyi) were conferred a title by their traditional ruler despite the fact that he was not from the area.

Key words: Alfa Salaudeen, Islam, Ilorin, Yoruba land, Ijesa-Land, West Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Although the actual date of the introduction of Islam to the Yoruba speaking people of south western Nigeria is not known, it is believed that the Muslim empires in West Africa knew of Yorubaland long before its introduction to Islam. The scholars Balogun, Nasiru and Al-Iluri have asserted that Islam had spread in the land long before

the jihad of Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodiyo in 1804 C.E. Al-Iluri in his book *Al-Islam fi Najiriyah*, traces the emergence of Islam in Yorubaland to the time of Mansa Musa of Mali Empire in the 13th century (Adebayo, 2006). With this, the advent of Islam differs from one place to another likewise its spread and its

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consolidation. In some places it entered with war and violence while in some others it came through peace and conviction (<http://www.egodiuchendu.com/index.php>: 2014). The latter is the case in Ijesha land. This article discusses the personality involved which is an itinerant Ilorin Islamic scholar called Alfa Salaudeen (a.k.a. Alfa Parakoyi) in the spread of Islam in Ijesha land.

Ijeshaland is located in the forest zone of Nigeria but adjacent to the Savannah; it lies in an area with a rich history of ancient human settlement. Most of Ijeshaland today is bounded by Ife and Osogbo to the West, Ondo area to the South, Ekiti to the East and the Igbomina area to the North. Much of Ijeshaland lies around the upper reaches of the Rivers Oni, Shasha and Osun. Ijesha country sits on land rising from about 800 ft in the forests along the Oni valley to about 1700ft in the hills around Imesi Ile to the North and close to about 2,000 ft in the Eastern boundaries with Ekiti State. The typical soil is largely red laterite with heavy rainfall during the rainy season which lasts from late March to early November. Underneath the laterite soil is the precambrian basement complex largely of folded pelitic schists, older granites, quartzites, gneisses and sporadic amphibolites bodies. Occurrence of gold is found in the Ilesha schist and amphibolite belt (http://www.nigerianwiki.com/Ijesha_land:2013).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IJESHA LAND

Ilesha which was founded in the sixteenth century emerged as the modern center of power in Ijeshaland outstripping ancient centers at Ibokun, Ipole and Ijebu-jesha. Ilesha is located in the deciduous rain forest zone of Nigeria.

Interestingly, to locate the origin of African societies have always result in controversy due to heavy dependence on oral tradition, the study of Ijeshas history is indeed no exception. According to Rev. Samuel Johnson, the account on the origin of Ijeshas are premised on two distinct account, both may practically be regarded as in the main correct, so far as they are not really contradictory; for it would appear that the Ijeshas of the present day are not the same people or, rather, not the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of that province (Johnson, 1921).

The first account relates to the earliest period when the Yorubas have just entered into and subdued, the country, and the Alaafins then resided at Ile-Ife, i.e., prior to the reign of *Sango*. Human sacrifices were common in those days, and in order to have victims ready to hand, it is said that a number of slaves were purchased and located in the district of Ibokun; there they were tendered as cattle, under the care of *Owaju*, and from them selections were made from time to time for sacrificial purposes; hence the term *Ijesha* from *IjeOrisa* (the food of the gods) (Johnson, 1921). They are described as stumpy, muscular and sheepish looking, with a marked want of intelligence; they

never offered any resistance to this system, hence the saying:

“Ijesa Omo Owajutiifeopoiya” (Ijesas children of *Owaju*, subject to much sufferings) (Johnson, 1921).

In consonance with the above, Johnson also further said that, there was legend that the Royal Family were appointed kings and rulers in divers places, a young and brave scion of the house was appointed the first Owa or King over the Ijeshas, but that he returned to the Alaafin and complained that his territory was too small, and his subjects few, the sire thereupon ordered a large bundle of sticks to be brought to him, and these sticks he converted into human beings for the Owa, in order to increase the number of his subjects (Johnson, 1921). Hence, to this day the Ijesas are often termed by their neighbours *Omoigi* (offspring of sticks!) (Johnson: 1921).

This of course, is a pure myth invented by their more wily neighbours to account for the notorious characteristics of the Ijesas generally, who are as proverbially deficient in wit as they are remarkably distinguished for brute strength (Johnson, 1921).

According to Johnson, but one fact holds good down even to our days, viz., that up to the recent total abolition of human sacrifice by the British Government (1893) the Ifes, who, far more than any other, were addicted to the practice, always preferred for the purpose to have an Ijesa victim to any other; such sacrifices were considered more acceptable, the victims being the “the food of the gods” (Johnson, 1921).

The second account relates chiefly to the present day Ijesa of Ilesha (the home of the gods) the chief town. According to this account, they hailed from Ekitis; or as some would more correctly have it, they were the Ijesas from the neighbourhood of *Ibokun* who first migrated to Ipole near Ondo, and thence back to Ilesha. It appears that a custom then prevailed of going out hunting for their king three months in the year, and on one such occasion they found game so plentiful in the neighbourhood of Ilesha, the climate very agreeable, the country well-watered, and the Ijesas there extremely simple, peaceful, and unwarlike (probably the remnants and descendants of the old sacrificial victims) whilst at home they endured much oppression from their Owa, that they there and then conceived and carried out the idea of settling on the spot at once, making it their home, and of reducing into subjection of the aboriginal inhabitants (Johnson, 1921).

These objects were easily enough accomplished; but they spared the principal chief, a kindly old gentleman who had an extensive garden plantation. He was called *Oba Ila* i.e. Okra king, from his Okra plantation, and he was placed the next rank to the chief of the marauders (Johnson, 1921). That nickname continues to the present time as a title *Oba’la* or *Obanla* and is conferred on the most distinguished chief after the Owa of Ilesha. It would appear then that although the term *Ijesha* is retained by the people of that district, and those who are ignorant of

the origin of the term take some pride in it, yet it is evident that the present inhabitants are not all of them the descendants of the aboriginal settlers, the “food of the gods”, but are largely from the Ekitis by admixture; the pure type Ijesas are now and again met with at Ilesa and neighbourhood (Johnson, 1921).

According to Peel J.D.Y. the foundation traditions of the Ijesa, just like other Yoruba kingdoms, take the form of a dynastic migration from Ile-Ife, the sacred centre of Yoruba mythology. The progenitor of the Ijesa was Owa Ajibogun, aka Obokun, the son of Oduduwa. According to Ijesa traditions, when Oduduwa became blind as a result of old age, it was Ajibogun, one of his children, who succeeded in fetching the sea water which was used to cure their father's blindness. This earned him the appellation “*Obokun*” i.e. “He who fetched the sea water” (Mike, 2011).

But according to Michael Oke, he postulated that Yoruba historian regarded Ijeshaland as a single kingdom under the *OwaObokun*; this is because by the 17th century, the OwaObokun who is resident in the capital city of Ilesa had become the paramount ruler in Ijeshaland (Michael, 1948). Although the *Owa* was not the only Oba in the area, he was ‘Emperor per Excellence’ hence the title ‘*OloriAlade*’ i.e. the leader of the crowned heads. There are other rulers and leaders of communities in Ijeshaland apart from the *OwaObokun*.

From the foregoing, we have seen that historically, Ijesahland is made up of different communities that are fused together by the hegemony of the various OwaObokun of Ijeshaland. Consequently, upon the fact that the historical background of a settlement is often presented as an accounts of rulers and notable, who to a great extent influence the destiny of the community for good or evil. It is paramount to trace the historical background of Ijeshaland to its first ruler of notable (Micheal, 1948).

The first ruler of Ijeshaland in this case was *Owa Ajibogun* who led a group of warriors from Ile-Ife and established his kingdom in Ijeshaland. It was these powerful immigrants led by *Ajibogun* from *Ile-Ife* that gradually brought the aborigines of Ijeshaland under their own military and political administration; and they came together to form Ijeshaland (Micheal, 1948). To some extent, the historical background of Ijeshaland is related to Ife but they are not Ife indigenes. Rather, they were brought together by some Ife warriors under *Ajibogun*. Thus, the historical background of Ijeshaland is unique in that it is a combination of aborigines and immigrants from Ife and Ekiti. Therefore, Ijesha is a distinct dialectical group related to Ekiti and Ife in particular (Micheal, 1948).

ISLAM IN IJESHA LAND AND ALFA SALAUDEEN

The early religion in Ijesha land as applicable to all African society is African Traditional Religion (ATR). The Ijesha people worship god and goddesses but the most

popular one is Ogun (god of Iron) (Jimoh: 2013). Initially, they use human being as sacrifices for *Ogun* during Ogun Festival where Owa will go to the shrine pray even up till today. But later on they change it as civilization is trying to key-in into their environment (Jimoh, 2013). Coupled with this, the spread of Islam and Christianity so to say had hindered such an act. The incursion of Islam into Ijesha land can say to meet various challenges because it was not easy in any Africa society to change their philosophy of religion and what they believe in. Interestingly, the unrelented, courage and commitment of Alfa Salaudeen (aka Alfa Parakoyi) cannot be exempted as one of the major straw that broke the camel back in re-orientating and reforming the people of Ijesha land religiously (Jimoh, 2013).

Alfa Salaudeen was born around early 19th Century to a family of *Abdulkadir Agunbiade* and *Safuriatu (Sofiat) Agunbiade*. He has only a brother called *Baba Moro*. The emergences of his parent in Ilorin were obscured because the information was subjected to many reports. Be that as it may, his parents found their way to Ilorin during the interwar period in Yoruba land (Jimoh, 2013). According to a source, it was noted that they found their way to their present abode due to succession dispute at Oyo Ile because they were also part of the royal family. As a result the Agunbiade family departed the place and founded another place which is Iwo and from there to Offa, subsequently, they later settled in Ilorin. Even though their emergence in Ilorin surrounded with different information, put differently, what is matter is that they settled in Ilorin as other settlers in Ilorin (Jimoh, 2013).

As an itinerant Islamic scholar, Alfa Salaudeen (a.k.a. Alfa Parakoyi) married too many wives, not because of his greediness for women but it showcase the appreciation from the people he visited because they gave out their daughter as a gift for the cleric to take away. Surprisingly, it was noted that he got married to ninety nine wives. Coincidentally, not all of them were able to bear a child for him because he also faced challenges of still birth “*Abiku*” (Jimoh, 2013).

In order to appraise the indispensable role of Alfa Salaudeen (a.k.a. Parakoyi), it is imperative to discuss his educational background and this will provide a surgical explanation to his great effort in Islamising Ijesha people. He started his education background at Ile Alalubosa (around Popo Igbonna area) with Alfa Alalubosa, who was referred as a disciplinarian and must know Islamic cleric to his students. It is from this mallam that he finished all his Quranic School (Jimoh: 2013).

The impact and status of Alfa Salaudeen in Ijesa land

Interestingly, the emergence of Alfa Salaudeen into Ijesha land was invitational in nature but later metamorphoses to inspirational. Meanwhile, he was invited to Ijesha land by Seedu Ogun who was said to have embraced Islam while sojourning to Ilorin (Monsuru,

2011). He invited Alfa Salaudeen, a native of Ilorin to Ilesha for the purpose of preaching Islam in the area (Adebayo: 2006). However, after the death of Seedu Ogun it was Alfa Salaudeen that championed the overhaul course of upholding Islam in the area. Interestingly, the emergence of the man coincided with the issue of drought in the territory and so many attempts have been made by notable traditional priests especially *Daro* in the area but all their efforts were futile (Agunbiade, 2013).

When Alfa Salaudeen reached the place, he was obliged to surpass their problem. Hence, he prayed for them and there was heavy rain. According to a source, at the spot of that praying ground the rain has started to the extent that the rain lasted for seven days (Agunbiade, 2013). Though, this was not the first and the last of miraculous activities by Ilorin Islamic cleric in Yorubaland, for instance, there was a case of Alfa Ahmed in *Ikire* a town near Osogbo. Alfa Ahmed was a muslim spiritualist, he was asked to use his effective and powerful charms to solve the problem of marauders who had besieged the town and the problem was solved (Adebayo: 2006). In addition, there was also the case of Alfa Buraimoh (Ibraheem) in Ede. Alfa Buraimoh was said to have saved the people of Ede from Ibadan invasion by providing them concoction buried it in the ground. Thus, miraculously, Ede was saved without a single shot being fired (Adebayo, 2006). Indeed, the miraculous action of Alfa Salaudeen (a.ka. Alfa Parakoyi) in Ileshaland was not an exception. But what is obscured is that, was it coincidental or accidental? Nevertheless, it was a unique event in the History of Ilesha people and obviously it showcases the commitment of Ilorin scholars in spreading Islam to other areas because at the long run so many Ilesha people embrace Islam due to that miraculous event.

Consequently, this effort has made Alfa Salaudeen to be famous in the area and he had a great relationship with the then Owa of Ilesha, *Oba Ataiyero* (1901-1920). According to oral source, through the relationship he had with the Owa, *Alaafin Lawani Agogojija* (1905-1911) got to know him and the Alaafin commanded Owa to confer on his great friend a title (Agunbiade, 2013). It thus explains why the *Oba Ataiyero* created a title known as 'Parakoyi of Ilesha' (Agunbiade, 2013). But death cheated on *Oba Ataiyero* not to carry out the conferment. Then, it was the reign of *Oba Aromalaran I* (1920-1942) that the conferment was later carried out (Agunbiade, 2013). Interestingly, this was an attempt to adhere to the command of *Alaafin Lawani Agogojija* and to consolidate fantastic role Alfa Salaudeen have played in the development of Ileshaland and couple with the spread of Islam in West Africa. Even though, he was called some sort of names by Ilorin people like:

"Salautibaaraigbo lo ooo" (Jimoh, 2013)
"Salau has followed the people of forest go"

But due to his commitment and dedication, he stands tall to maintain the status quo in spreading Islam and consolidate it in Ilesha land.

Interestingly, Alfa Salaudeen was popularly referred to as Alfa Parakoyi by some Islamic scholars after he was conferred a title in order to have a sense of respect for him. No wonder, when T.G.A. Gbadamosi in his book *"The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba (1891-1908)"* through his reference, it indicated that Late Sheikh Abdulazeez Ajagbemakeferi (a well known Ilesha Islamic cleric) referred to Alfa Salaudeen as Alfa Parakoyi (Monsuru, 2011) as a sign of respect or it may be memory lose and obviously it is necessary to mention his name. Be that as it may, he was popularly called Alfa Parakoyi even after his death.

Following the above, Alfa Salaudeen (aka Alfa Parakoyi) was able to build a mosque and Madrasat (Islamic school) at *Isinkin* and *Itagun* area respectively. This showcase that is not only the Mujizah (miracle) of Alfa Salaudeen that make him to be famous but also the teaching and preaching of Islam in the area via his mosque and his Madrasat (Islamic school) (Jimoh, 2014). In the same vein, through him many Ilesha people highly educated and indoctrinated to Islamic jurisprudence.

At this juncture, it is imperative to examine the fact that Alfa Salaudeen not only played religious role but also political role. Hence, it is important to examine the uniqueness of the title "Parakoyi of Ilesha". As a matter of fact, he is the only chief in Ilesha who has the right to wear turban and Alkimba (a thick gallery worn on top of a dress) in the Owa's palace. Occasionally, he is eligible to wear the Chieftaincy bead and all other decorations (Agunbiade, 2013). To a large extent, whenever there is congress Owa will call upon Alfa Salaudeen alongside other chiefs to deliberate on the issues concerning Ilesha people and this shows that Owa recognize the indispensable role of Alfa Salaudeen in his land. Put differently, Alfa Salaudeen also plays a pivotal role between Owa (Ilesha traditional ruler) and other groups in Ilesha. In the sense that, whenever the leader of any particular groups be it Hausa, Nupe or any group they have to contact Alfa Salaudeen and vice versa. Thus, Alfa Salaudeen was the only Mallam, chief and non-indigene of the area that collect monthly salary like other chiefs in Ilesha land and Ilesha in particular (Jimoh: 2014).

After the death of Alfa Salaudeen (aka Alfa Parakoyi) in 1959, there was the need for a successor. And in an attempt to make sure that the family of Alfa Salaudeen nominate a credible successor not only to uphold his title but to champion the course of spreading Islam in the area there was delay. At the course of the nomination, an interim Parakoyi was nominated. And after the death of interim Parakoyi, the biological son of the first Parakoyi, Alhaji Jimoh Adio Salaudeen Agunbiade ascended the throne of his father (Agunbiade, 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is obvious that the spread of Islam in Yoruba land cannot be disconnected from the activities of Ilorin Islamic scholars in which Alfa Salaudeen was part and parcel of them. And till today among the Yoruba land that cannot breakaway their connection in the spread of Islam to their area through Ilorin is Ijesha land. Obviously, the ends justify the means, and this explains while there was sporadic increase in the population of Ijesha Muslim in Nigeria in which Alfa Salaudeen cannot be exempted among the founding father in introduction of Islam in to Ilesha and Ijesha land in general.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Review

Syncretism of Basotho traditional religion and Christianity: Gateway to the syncretistic teaching of Basotho traditional religion and Christianity in Lesotho schools

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The article recommends that the teaching and learning of religious education in Lesotho schools should capitalize on the existing syncretism of Basotho Traditional Religion and Christianity in the church to extend it to the classroom setting. The discussion begins with a brief history leading to the acceptance of syncretism in the Church, then argues for the use of the term “syncretism” instead of the theologically accepted term “inculturation.” Factors that necessitated the formalization of syncretism in the church and which may be even more demanding to the school setting have been discussed. The avenues of why syncretism is needed in Lesotho schools in the teaching of religious education have been explored and the recommendations of how such venture could be advanced have been made.

Key words: Religious education, African traditional religion, syncretism, inculturation, Christianity, Afrocentrism.

INTRODUCTION

The current Religious Education taught in Lesotho schools is basically Christian oriented. Education system introduced in Lesotho and in Africa as general was the work of Christian missionaries with the aim of evangelization. The Christian missionaries were eager to use literacy training to introduce Christianity and be successful in converting Africans to their religion (Mart, 2011). The PEMS (Paris Evangelical Mission Society), Catholic and Anglican missionary groups were continuing to use education as a tool for expanding religious convictions and enlarging their own sphere of influence in Lesotho (Gill, 1997). The introduction of Christianity

mistakenly assumed that to become Christians, Basotho had to be removed from their indigenous cultural religiosity. Mothibe and Ntabeni (2002) noted that missionaries, and in particular the PEMS who arrived first in Lesotho, did not compromise to demand the Basotho who were converted to Christianity to discard of their religious and cultural beliefs and practices. Gill (1997) indicates that Basotho converts were further alienated from their religious and cultural practices by removing them from their villages and encouraging them to live in the mission stations even though they were later returned to their respective villages with the mandate to ‘leaven’

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paganism. According to Mothibe and Ntabeni (2002), this is why their work was met with minimal success, in which after a decade of their missionary work they had only converted 393 people out of 80,000 Basotho population in total in 1843 and only 13,733 converts out of the total population of 200, 000. Mart (2011) realized that Western missionaries believed that traditional religious beliefs and practices were inferior, and to accept Christianity, traditional customs had to be totally abandoned. However, acceptance to Christianity amongst the Basotho did not happen without resistance or problems, and as such, gave rise to the process which can be described as religious syncretism which still exists even today.

Syncretism in Lesotho according to Gill (1997) began in the 1860s when the prophetess 'Mantsopa blended Christianity and Traditional religion to call on abandonment of Western civilization and Christianity and for a return to the Basotho traditions and customs. 'Mantsopa had argued that a way to God is broader than narrowly presented by the missionaries as to renounce traditional culture in order to join Christianity. It further took root in the 1890s with the appearance of Ethiopian movement which joined forces with Methodist Episcopal Church to reject Western Christianity and Western education. Later on, another underground movement called Secret Prayer (*Thapelo ea Sephir*) which fused Christianity and Basotho Traditional Religion was formed and became popular with animal sacrifices for ancestors as much the indigenous religion does. Then in the 1920s Walter Matitta broke away from the PEMS mission church to form his own church that incorporated Christianity and Basotho Traditional Religion. Later on the Zionist and Apostolic churches were formed with the same aspirations.

Gill (1997) states that with the realization of the emergence of these movements, W.C. Willoughby, an LMS missionary in Botswana had made a remark at the Third South African Missionary Conference in 1909 that:

“To sneer at any form of religion, no matter how rude, is unworthy of a missionary of the Cross. We wrong the native by our sneer: but we wrong our own religion more. These primitive methods of worship should be the gateway by which we enter into the soul of the worshiper” (Gill, 1997:152).

Indeed selective formalization of syncretism of Basotho Traditional Religion and Christianity by the church was on the way.

Justification on the use of the phrase “formalized syncretism”

The wake of African independence in the 1960s marked the end of a local church that is run by the foreign missionaries and governed by mother church abroad. It was a time when the indigenous leadership took over

from the missionaries. The phasing out of missionaries endeavors was characterized by continuity and change in which African Christianity continued to be faithful to the inherited missionary Christianity with its education system in which religion and education are inseparable. African church leaders demonstrated uncompromising determination to carry on the Christian faith, church structures and education system planted by the missionaries. Change became eminent in other areas such as the development of different theologies that seek to incarnate Christian teaching in the African context (Baur, 1998).

The remarkable achievement of African theologians in the process of change was the formalization of syncretism in the church by recognizing the value and contribution of African Traditional Religion in the understanding of Gospel within an African worldview.

Syncretism refers to the synthesis of different religious forms. Syncretism is a contentious and contested term. Some understand it to refer to the Christian traditions which are believed to be ‘impure’ or ‘inauthentic’ because they are permeated by local ideas and practices. Others understand it as an explanation of religious synthesis that arose from resistance to cultural dominance. For example, African Indigenous Churches are described by others as syncretistic because they are believed to be impure, while others believe they are syncretistic because of their resistance against Western-Christianity that had colonized African culture. Generally, syncretism is understood negatively from theological point of view particularly scholars from Islam and Christian traditions, while it is accepted and used positively by anthropologist and religious studies scholars who work without any particular religious affiliation or commitment. Even though some historians and religion studies scholars have observed long ago that syncretism is a feature of all religions it has been difficult to be accepted in theological circles (van der Veer, 2005).

Theologians prefer to use the concepts such as *inculturation*, *contextualization*, *concretization*, *accommodation*, *adaptation*, *indigenization*, *localization*, *incarnation*, *Africanisation*, *hybridity* and *reformulation* to explain the formalization of the integration of African beliefs and practices with Christianity. The term syncretism comes from the Greek etymology *synkratein* which means pouring together. It is related to pouring one form of liquid into another just like pouring water into wine, as a result, obtaining a totally different substance which is neither purely water nor solely wine. From this etymological meaning, syncretism in religion came to mean a tendency of Hellenistic thought which tended to mix and to confuse most diversified cults. It refers to a mixture of rituals, practices and doctrines (Umoh, 2013). Syncretism therefore from theological perspective constitutes religious adultery. It means an inauthentic principle of combining bits of various creeds, ideologies and views including those contradicting in order to formulate a doctrine that is completely new. As such,

theologians believe that it is far beyond the scope and even deviates from the target of inculturation, which has been promoted by African Theologians (Umoh, 2013).

Oleska (1995) argues that syncretism must at all costs be avoided because it distorts and corrupts the gospel message, while inculturation is inevitable and necessary. Schineller (1992) supports the idea that rejects syncretism as an appropriate word to be used in favor of inculturation because syncretism presupposes the replacement of critical and basic elements of the Gospel in the contextualization process by religious elements from the receiving culture. Schineller (1992) further mention that syncretism is the unjustifiable fusion of irreconcilable belief systems and practices or fusion of incompatible doctrinal elements or the mingling of authentic notions and realities of the revealed faith with other religious claims. In this process, elements of another religion are borrowed without being screened critically through Christianity lenses. At the end the basic Christian teachings are diluted or totally destroyed. In itself syncretism, has to be understood as a process of rejecting Christ or Christian teaching according to Schineller (1992).

However, in this paper where a stand view point is religious studies, syncretism is not used in this negative sense, but positively as Goosen (2002) argues that syncretism may have negative meaning just like the word *discrimination* which in today's society has acquired negative connotation of being associated with *unjust discrimination* while people may be encouraged to be discriminative in what they eat, drink, view, accept and so on. Other people have resorted to the use of *discernment* as a more positive word than discrimination. Syncretism as used in religious studies or social sciences, that is, in the fields of phenomenological or comparative studies or objective, scientific study of religion refers to the situation when "the facts of a fusion of beliefs or practices is reported" (Goosen, 2002).

The traditional concern over syncretism obscures the cultural process while imposing theological interests that do not explain those cultural processes, to the extent that theological explanations do not relate to the actual cultural situation and leave the consequential cultural formation largely unaffected by theological judgments. To substitute syncretism with terms such as inculturation can obscure the important point that syncretism concerns with, which is the relation between theological developments and cultural processes (Schreiter, 1993). Inculturation as a theologically preferred concept cannot happen without creating something new which is rooted in both the Gospel and the culture.

In theological terms, inculturation denotes a process wherein the priest or church agent evangelizes through the norms of the local community, using them as a sieve of interpretation, producing the hybrid "indigenous theology" (Norget, 2007:82-83).

When used positively syncretism and inculturation may

have the same meaning of producing something new when Christian teaching is fused with cultural beliefs.

This paper comfortably infers that the acceptance or formalization of inculturation was the same as the formalization of syncretism in the church. Stewart and Shaw (2005) maintain that religious scholars would always be comfortable to label many instances of inculturation 'syncretism' as long they involve the combination of diverse traditions in the area of religion. Van der Veer (2005) refers to syncretism as the process of borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another through selection and reconciliation. Objection to syncretism is simply driven by politics of difference and identity and at stake is the power to identify true religion and to authorize some practices as truthful and others as false. Inculturation occurs when a dominant culture attempts to make itself accessible to a subdominant one without losing its own particular character, while syncretism denotes equal and mutual borrowing. Objectively, religious scholars will continue to use syncretism as an explanation of religious synthesis in human history.

Lindenfeld (2014) refers to syncretism from the above which is sanctioned by church authorities as opposed to the one from below which is perpetuated by local Christians who synthesis their traditional beliefs and Christianity. Lindenfeld (2014) explains that formalization of syncretism in the church could be understood from the pronouncements of Pope John Paul II when addressing a Native American audience in Phoenix, Arizona in 1987 in which he said:

"The early encounter between your traditional cultures and the European way of life was a harsh and painful reality for your peoples . . . I encourage you, as Native people . . . to preserve and keep alive your cultures, your languages, the values and customs which have served you well in the past and which provide a solid foundation for the future . . . These things benefit not only yourselves but the entire human family" (Lindenfeld, 2014:5).

Also Adamo (2011) states that in 1986 at the Assisi inter-religious prayer meetings for peace, Pope John Paul II asked for forgiveness for the past mistakes of the church from traditional religious leaders. In the same year Cardinal Arinze wrote a pastoral letter entitled 'Attention to African Traditional Religions' which signified the first Vatican document to recognize syncretism of ATR and Christianity in the African context. In 1988, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue issued a letter titled 'Pastoral Attention to ATR' in which the council recommended theological research on dialogue with Islam and ATR in Africa. In the first African synod of the Catholic Church of 1995 held in Rome, 'Interreligious dialogue' became one of the top priorities of the Church in Africa. At the Catholic Bishop Conference in the

Philippines in 1996, it was proposed that there should be a dialogue with followers of traditional religions, and it was at this conference where Archbishop Fernando Capalla asked for forgiveness from the traditional religious leaders, just as Pope John Paul II did (Adamo, 2011).

The formalization of syncretism was directed to the teaching in the church through theological discourse while in Lesotho schools Christianity is taught as purely as it has been implanted by the missionaries. Official teaching on inculturation is that all cultures have the right to an independent existence within Christianity and that the introduction of Christian teachings in a new culture must involve an 'adoption' that preserves the essential integrity of culture, its values, institutions, and customs. The main question is why the church got forced for syncretism in its teaching about Christian beliefs and practices. Are those driving forces not applicable to the school setting?

Reasons for formalization of syncretism in Lesotho

There are different factors that forced the church to formalize syncretism both internal and external, and some socially, some economically, others politically, and others religiously. Since the scope of this paper is on internal religious developments, only religious factors will be examined.

The overarching factor was that Basotho could not simply relinquish or surrender their traditional beliefs in order to become Christians for different reasons:

a) *Many Basotho had joined Christianity mainly for material gains other than religious purposes.*

From the very beginning of the invitation of the missionaries to come to Lesotho, Moshoeshoe 1 who was the paramount chief (*morena e moholo*) at the time had hoped to use missionaries in order to acquire guns and defend his nation against the Kora depredations and wanted to have diplomatic ties with these people who had powers to control the Kora (Gill, 1997). Eldredge (1993) opines that the missionaries themselves reported that the adoption to the European goods imported by the missionaries had contributed to the increased number of Basotho who were converted to Christianity.

b) *Christian teaching discounted the supernatural powers*

One of the tasks of the Christian priests was to instruct the converts in Christian religion and to encourage them to abandon their 'superstitions'. The so labeled superstitions were beliefs and practices that were in line with the basic principles of ATR (African Traditional Religion). The priests denounced these beliefs and

practices claiming that they were not based on facts. They concluded that they were simply the made-up explanations by primitive and unscientific people in order to explain events which they could not logically understand. Therefore, as results, priests opined that the Basotho understanding of sickness (as broad phenomenon not just bodily ailments) was caused by evil spirits or the living-dead was based on lack of scientific understanding of how illness worked. The priests also taught that the reason for the drought could be ascribed to meteorological causes and not the curse of the living-dead or the supernatural powers as the Basotho traditionally believed. Almost all the traditional beliefs that the Basotho held concerning the supernatural powers were considered to be a result of their ignorance in scientific thought. According to the Christian teaching, the supernatural only occurred within the sacraments. Christianity could not be taken to where people are in everyday life experiences but within the confined of the church building. ATR was untouched by Christianity to continue giving explanations and answers to the reality of the world in which the Basotho lived every day. African religion is principally practical. There are problem-solving sets of beliefs and rituals which provides immediate solution, whereas Christianity is based on faith and hope. In other words, Basotho resorted to syncretism because Christianity was seen as impractical. The result was that everything outside the church walls was still seen in light of ATR (Cox, 2008; Gill, 1997; Manyeli and Machobane, 2001).

c) *Christianity is foreign*

Basotho regard Christianity as a foreign religion. There is a sense amongst the Basotho in which they understand Christianity as foreign and different. The fact that Christianity first came to the land through white men from Europe and established mission stations in separation from Basotho villages has some foreign legacy. Basotho who joined Christianity are given new Christian names which are different from their traditional Sesotho names, the way the Church celebrates mass is very different from their traditional religious celebrations, and the education and health systems are different from their traditional education and health systems (Cox, 2008; Gill, 1997; Moitse, 1994).

d) *ATR permits syncretism*

ATR allows a person to practice both Christianity and ATR. In ATR, one is free to be baptized, attend church services, and take part in the sacraments of the church, while still practicing ATR. It is not necessary for Basotho to hold a tightly structured and logical belief system in order to function in their everyday life. Their theology is what they act out, not what they profess to believe (Cox, 2008; Manyeli and Machobane, 2001).

The need for formalization of syncretism in Lesotho schools

Syncretism/inculturation in Lesotho has been within the church walls as Lapointe (1993) indicates that it concerns itself with liturgy, doctrine and preaching yet the religious factors that necessitated integration of ATR in the church are also found in the schools and may be even more demanding in the school than in the church, and may be even compelling in this postcolonial period.

Post-colonialism is a controversial and complex term. It is used to describe the position of the once colonized country after it gained independence from colonial power as well after it has achieved a sense of economic and cultural autonomy. However, a country can be postcolonial in terms of political independence and remains economic and culturally colonized at the same time. This would mean the dismantling as well as continuation of colonialism and therefore denies the assertion that post-colonialism is the period after once-colonized countries gained independence. It may mark an end of political domination and control but continues in what has been popularly known as neocolonialism. Furthermore, it has been argued on how Christian mission and education could be linked to colonialism since the term mainly refers to the conquest and control of other people's land and goods. That is, colonialism is largely explained in political and economic terms. This would imply that colonialism had begun after the colonizers imposed their political power and social influence over the colonies and ended after colonies had reclaimed their political power, which does not correspond to missionary activities before and after colonialism. Even though many have analyzed how much colonial governments have worked hand in hand with the mission church and education, it has been argued that mission religion and education was not forced on Africans, but through negotiations and agreements (Pilario, 2007). However, colonialism had some social implications of civilizing component which did not restrict it simply to the occupation of a territory, but extends it to cultural and religious transformation and this is type of colonialism is popularly referred to in the postcolonial studies as 'colonization of mind' (Ducker, 2008). Colonization of the mind according to Dascal (2006) is a process in which there is an intervention of an external source - the 'colonizer' in the mental sphere of the subjects - the 'colonized.' This intervention works upon central functioning of mind's structure, mode of operation, and contents and has long-lasting effects that are not easily removable. This intervention is marked by uneven of power relations between the parties involved.

Dascal (2006) continues to show that the success of 'colonization of the mind' is achieved by inducing a set of beliefs in the colonized mind through a process that is cognitive by nature. When achieved, it is demonstrated by an implicit acceptance by the colonized to the

superiority of the colonizer. In other words, colonization of the mind is achieved when the colonized admits to existence between a 'primitive' mind – that of himself – and a 'superior' or 'civilized' one – that of the colonizer. Ducker (2008) opines that missionary religious education was and is still colonizing because its intention is to replace rather than interacting with local culture and religion, it is a one-way, non-reciprocal process. It has both financial and political power that enables it to dominate or subjugate local alternatives. The tool that is used by mission schools for colonization of African mind was to cut off Africans from their heritage and culture because people who are cut off from their heritage and culture are more easily manipulated and controlled. This process of 'deculturalization' and 'brainwashing' is still imminent even today where Africans feel ashamed of themselves and their culture, admire and respect foreign culture and religion, and be rewarded with more indoctrination to remain in the state of colonized. Deculturalization is continued through mis-education in the use of a pedagogy and curriculum that deliberately omits, distorts or trivialize the role and benefits of African Traditional Religion.

The teaching of ATR in schools would be a tool for de-colonization of the mind. As Dascal (2006) indicates, de-colonization process would mean a way to frame a psycho educational approach for cleansing African minds off cultural invasion by designing new-old (ATR-Christianity) structure and install it in African mind. The strategy used by the colonizer was the transmission of accepted beliefs, patterns of behavior and thought that are considered congruent with the intended 'culture' or 'identity.' Such strategy would be as well essential for the de-colonization process. Incorporation of ATR in religious education in Lesotho schools as a postcolonial strategy has a potential to feed the minds of Basotho with those life-sustaining social values, beliefs and customs that had enabled their ancestors to live harmonious, decent and peaceful life before their mental invasion. Postcolonial religious education would be truly an attempt to develop African Christian identity. Ferdinando (2007) argues that African quest for an authentic Christian identity has been bedeviled by the very missionary activities that brought the gospel in the first place. In consequence Christianity is still seen by some Africans as a foreign imposition and a religion that is alien to their African culture. The need to create a distinctively African Christian identity depends in large measure on a positive reevaluation and recovery of the traditional African religious past which was the precursor of Christianity.

Furthermore, negligence of ATR is to disregard the source of African Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) in general as Domfeh (2007) cites that Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) is a knowledge systems acquired over generations by communities through their interaction with the environment. It is a knowledge that is embedded in African traditional beliefs and has been

handed down through generations by cultural transmission. It encompasses spiritual relationships, religious beliefs in relationships with the natural environment and the use of natural resources, relationships between people, and is reflected in language, social organization, values, institutions and laws. Negation of ATR is the reflection of colonized mind in which according Nyuot Yoh (2004) Africans have been transformed to have negative perception of their culture. They have abandoned their knowledge of how they perceive the cause of rain; different types of crops and their growth, how diseases are cured and how babies are conceived. Rusinga and Maposa (2010) have realized that ATR is the main source for the production of indigenous knowledge. In a traditional African context religion provides guidelines for the use of natural resource, management and conservation maintained through spirituality, cultural practices, taboo systems and knowledge accumulated over centuries. The incorporation of ATR in Religious education taught in schools would be as well promoting and developing an integrated curriculum in which religious beliefs, moral values, ecology, health, history, agriculture and meteorological studies would be taught in single subject of religious study.

After all, the word education itself presupposes that education and culture are inherently related. The English word "education" comes from the Latin *e (out)-ducare* (to lead) or "to lead out" (Groome, 1980). The etymology of the word education points to the fact that education is meant to help people find a truth that is already within them. It is not just about a teacher transmitting knowledge to learners, but, about helping learners remember what they know so that they can critically reflect on their existing knowledge. It is to develop something new for the future. In other words, a good education that integrates the past, the present, and the future together helps learners develop their own pedagogy. The concept syncretism in which ATR and Christianity are hybridized can help Christian religious education to pay attention to the issues raised by the Basotho Christians in the context of their traditional beliefs and practices, and try to be attentive to cultural needs of Basotho society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The gap between Basotho Christians and Christian life in Lesotho in which Basotho may continue to regard Christianity as foreign, can only be bridged by an effective religious education strategy. This strategy should be an Afrocentric approach. Afrocentric approach according to Mhlongo (2014) is a decolonization process of Africans from cultural and psychological chains of Eurocentric Christian tradition. Afrocentricity as van Wyk (2014) explains is educational, philosophical and theoretical paradigm which can be used for any educational setting. It involves an inclusive classroom in which educators, students and parents syncretize both

traditional and Christian beliefs for comprehensive learning. Afrocentric approach uses indigenous knowledge which is a set of traditional beliefs that are regarded as primitive and superstitious by Western education and Christianity and their legacy. Indigenous knowledge includes beliefs, values, symbols, art, oral narratives, proverbs, and performance such as songs, storytelling, wise sayings, riddles, and dances. Indigenous knowledge is a process of learning and sharing social life, histories, identities, economic, and political practices unique to each cultural group. van Wyk (2014) continues to show that Afrocentric approach is a critical pedagogy that seeks to make visible those traditional religious values and belief systems that have been suppressed by Euro-Christianity. Gay (2000) shows that Afrocentric approach is culturally responsive teaching that uses the cultural knowledge and prior experiences to make learning more appropriate and effective for the learners. It is an educational paradigm that builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities. It acknowledges the legitimacy of ATR as a legacy that affect students' disposition and attitudes, and as having educational content to be taught in the formal curriculum.

Afrocentric approach to religious education attempts to reconstruct the so-called classical Christian teaching from the perspective of Western culture that provides students with Western social customs, definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, religious symbols, Western acceptable moral values and virtues. It is a way of forwarding beliefs and practices that were formerly suppressed by dominant Euro-Christian teaching. In essence, this means rejecting the pro-European and anti-African teachings of Christian education as well as disregarding the pro-European and anti-African messages conveyed to the students and deconstructing the pro-European and anti-African Christian indoctrination of the public schools.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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