Safeguarding Cultural Heritage as a Strategy for Development in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Batswana communities have always relied on cultural frameworks for economic development and Tswana norms and values have established acceptable standards for sustainable livelihoods. As such, individuals and families were (and still are) expected to activate and maintain cultural systems in order to earn a living. The cultural economic system is organized around the head of the family (father or mother), the ward head or headman (kgosana), and the chief (kgosi) who leads the community's food production and development. The cultural process followed a calling (pitso) principle where community members and the chief would invoke ancestors to mark the commencement of the ploughing season. In this way, the chief authorized the ploughing season, thereby safeguarding the community's culture. As a result, developmental strategies that ignores cultural principles, values, and norms, risk being viewed as totally inappropriate by the community. This study posited that lack of reference to indigenous knowledge systems and processes render modern developmental methods and institutions ineffective. It is based on a review of professional experience, and informal conversations with custodians of culture on methods of promoting culturally appropriate developmental processes in Botswana. It also adopted a social work perspective that encourages agents of change to pay attention to cultural processes when facilitating development programmes. Lack of reference to cultural systems was reported as one of the factors that destabilize communities and threatened social development levels in Botswana.
Keywords: Economic development, cultural heritage, culture, , norms, values

INTRODUCTION

Culture is not only an anthropological subject as it is of relevance to a variety of disciplines including economics and development (Woolcock, 2002; Giddens, 1996). Anthropologists view culture as an integrated system of socially acquired values, beliefs, and rules of conduct which delimit the range of accepted behaviour in any given society (Mbakogu, 2004). Diffusionism theory defines culture as a collection of traits and that spread from one society to another while the ecological approach views it as the different ways people around the world live, not in terms of their degree of evolution but rather as a distinct adaptation to a variety of environments (Cole, 2005). The structural functionalists define it as a system of normative beliefs that reinforces social institutions (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2007). According to Human Culture site (2010) culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morality, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Kevin (1998) on the other hand suggests that culture is a slippery concept having not only many possible meanings but also used in ways that are

related but at times quite distinct. Tswana speaking communities have a rich cultural heritage that dates back hundreds of years and is preserved in various forms in the different districts of Botswana and other southern African countries. This unique characteristic may serve several purposes and provide a platform for cross cultural development. A Setswana maxim (expressed in the vernacular) as *"Chaba e e senang ngwao e sule"* paints a wonderful picture implying that a nation without a cultural heritage is dead. This statement echoes the fundamental philosophical view of the late Sir Seretse Khama which was repeated by his successors, Sir Keitumile Masire, and Festus Gontebane Mogae. Seretse Khama, and his government, at the time of independence in 1966, incorporated some Setswana values as guiding principles in national development policies and programmes. These values are Botho (humanity), Bonatla (productivity), Botswerere (diligence) and Bothakga (excellence). They have also been included in Botswana Vision 2016 to acknowledge their fundamentality and to promote ownership by citizens of the country.

Drawing national principles from culture is crucial building good relationships which are essential for national development. The adoption of these foundational principles was (and still is) necessary in challenging Batswana be committed to culturally relevant national development processes. These values have evolved over time to guide acceptable standards of behaviour for individuals, families, groups, and communities. At national level, these principles act as indicators for national identity, pride, unity, and transformation. The incorporation of cultural values and norms in the political, judicial, economic, and social systems of a country harmonizes relationships amongst and between people. In this way, ownership of development projects is promoted while at the same time preserving the values and norms of communities. The contention is that developmental strategies, policies or programmes that disregard the culture of a people risk becoming irrelevant and a source of dissatisfaction and unrest. This paper posits that lack of reference to cultural systems destabilizes communities and threatens social development at different levels of the nation.

The significance of culture in development

Elliot (1999) refers to development as a multidimensional concept encapsulating widespread improvement in the social as well as the material well-being of all in society. The emphasis is on social and material well being without which improvement is incomplete. Elliot (1999) further alludes to the fact that development should not follow a single model and that sustainable investment must be made in areas such as agriculture and industry. Sustainability is achieved through activities of the population, use of natural resources, and the resulting impact on the social and economic environment. Lerner, Theokas and Bobek (2005) assert that, in contemporary developmental science, the basic process of development involves mutual and influential relations between levels of organization ranging from the biological (individual and social functioning) to societal, ecological, and historical levels of organization. They further argue that development refers to change but that change and development are not equivalent terms because not all changes are developmental. Hooper (2005) argues that development should not be construed as a matter of engineering a transition from subsistence to dynamic monetary economies as postulated by theories of modernization. Modernization theorists Emile Durkheim and Max Weber influenced the

superimposition of western culture (organic solidarity) over mechanical solidarity (cultural approach) (Elliot, 1999). Organic solidarity was preferred by the colonizers because it was considered more cultured, less rigid, and allowed individual expression of self (Webster, 1990). Furthermore, Webster (1999) shows that the modernists, in constructing their accounts of development drew on the tradition-modernity distinction of classical sociologists. The beneficiaries of this modernity were African and third world countries which became the testing ground for the theories. Mbakogu (2004) affirms that development defined by the modernization theory placed European culture above African culture. The proponents of modernity associated it with the release of the individual from the bonds of tradition into the emergence of civil society, social equality, innovation, and change. All these accomplishments could not be realized through mechanical solidarity (cultural system) but rather capitalism, industrialism, secularization, urbanization, and rationalization (Schech and Haggis, 2000). This approach contributed to the devaluation of African culture by international and donor agencies. Lerner, Theokas and Bobek (2005) argue that for change to qualify as developmental, it must not only be systematic and organized but also successive (sustainable) in character. Schech and Haggis (2000) identified an Australian developmental project in Kenya which did not succeed because it failed to take cognizance of culture, derive lessons from past experiences, examine local historical circumstances, and harness indigenous knowledge, through taking for granted the superiority of western knowledge and experience. Gasper (2008) states that policy is priority for basic needs fulfillment should draw support from a wide range of philosophical, cultural, religious, and political positions. This is the mindset that should characterize development agencies and protagonists in the post modern era.

Sociologists and anthropologists argue that every culture, like every religion, has something important to contribute to the world and that no culture has all the answers (Cole, 2005). Therefore, cultural diversity in the global system, like ecological diversity within ecosystems, is ultimately an asset when it is valued and motivates the desire to learn from other groups and cultures (Ong King Yong, 2003; Human Culture, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial that different cultures exercise tolerance for each other in order to benefit from the richness that may be derived from inter cultural experiences and transactions. There is a Setswana maxim, *"chaba di bapileng di a tshegana"* which means that a foreign culture may appear barbaric to strangers, unless it is well understood and thus it is important for development practitioners to study cultures and understand how they are practised in community contexts. Though Radcliffe (2005) affirms that building bridges of communication and mutual respect creates intercultural understanding amongst people, yet Giddens (1996) argues that norms may vary between cultures and sub cultures and what is considered normal in one cultural setting may be deviant in another. He believes that variations should not be taken for granted but must serve as an important part of the process when working with community groups. The Botswana National Policy on Culture (2001) has taken the variation of culture into consideration and its objective is to promote cultural exhibitions and exchanges between different groups for progressive learning and economic growth. The current Botswana policy process promotes cross cultural knowledge and skills transfer,

language acquisition, and integration of foreign cultures. In Singapore, the Asean cultural heritage holds puppetry festivals annually to market and sell traditional textile to other groups (Ong King Yong, 2003). Cultural commemorations in Asia provide a platform for different tribes and nations to showcase their cultural attributes and technologies. These activities are meant to demystify prejudices, encourage common understanding, and identify areas of leverage for techno-economic growth. It has been realized that cross-cultural synchronization reduces insecurity, social injustice, economic inequality, political and religious radicalism, acute racism, and nationalism amongst people (Mbakogu, 2004). Therefore, cross-cultural relationships within and between ethnic groups, strengthen consultative governance and promote intercultural economic activity. Consultative governance as a principle is rooted in the culture as portrayed in the idiom *kgosi ke kgosi ka batho* (a leader is appointed by the people) which is enshrined in the Botswana's national development plans and Vision 2016 (Taskforce, 1997: Vision Council, 2009). Mbakogu (2004:37) argues that the pride of any society lies in its culture since no society in the world could be considered great without reference to its tradition and culture. Therefore, any modernization that disregards the culture of African societies destroys pride and promotes confusion, disorientation, and disorder. Cultural disintegration in Africa is considered a product of internal or external factors such as war, conquests, slave trade, migrations, and contact with European colonialism, urban overcrowding, and industrialization (Mbakogu, 2004).

The relationship between culture and development
Culture and development are inseparable because man as a cultural being relies on culturally defined tools to survive in the physical environment. Ong King Yong (2003) argues that culture defines heritage and helps in personal and national development, though at times economists and policy makers down play its significance. Mbakogu (2004) asserts that development cannot disregard culture as it defines mankind and man cannot be developed in a vacuum. Ife and Tesoriero (2006) maintain that every culture has six dimensions: (a) technology: capital, tools and skills and ways of dealing with the environment; (b) economy: various modes of production and allocation of scarce resources (goods and services); (c) political: means of allocating power, influence, and decision making; (d) institutional (social): ways in which people act, interact between each other, react, and their expectations; (e) aesthetic: values and structures of ideas, sometimes paradoxical, inconsistent, or contradictory; and (f) Belief: conceptual ideas about the nature of the universe. The thrust of development is centered on these six dimensions of culture because a change in one affects the others and progressive improvement cannot be effected without affecting the culture of the people. Hooper (2005) confirms that culture in one form or another is at the heart of national economic and political life, that is, the traditional domain, the private sector domain, and public sector domain. Schech and Haggis (2000) acknowledge that culture no longer makes sense as a separate entity but that it is intrinsic to all social relations and structures. Therefore, development practitioners and policy makers must refrain from imposing dominant cultures on the so called weak cultures. Mbakogu (2004) asserts that development defined by modernization theory must not impose European culture on African culture and development should not be construed as an adoption of the systems and

practices of the dominant cultures (acculturation). In addition, the west or dominant cultures are no longer interlocutors in defining development and modernity (Radcliffe, 2005). Anthropological thinking proposes that development must incorporate the qualitative and quantitative positive transformation of the lives of a people to enhance their material as well as their social wellbeing (Mbakogu, 2004). Cole (2005) contends that culturally sensitive human development must address three components which are: physical and social settings, culturally regulated child-bearing and socialization practices, and psychological characteristics of the child's parents, especially parental theories about the processes of child development. This rebuts the assertion that culture can easily be rubbed off the minds of the people. Gasper (2008) argues that culture is not some totality preserved in a museum, temple or archives, let alone one that can be controlled and modified by the wishes of a societal development engineer. This is a complex process that needs to be treated with care, sensitivity, and respect. It is crucial to underscore the fact that culture defines and determines values and attitudes, ways of thinking, and the feelings of people.

If these cannot be carefully assessed, then modernization approaches and strategies will continue to fail (Elliot, 1999). Governments overseeing land and mineral rights must determine whether relevant policies contribute to national development in a culturally sensitive way. The revenue from mineral resources must be used for developments guided by the cultural principle of *"Botho"* or *"Ubuntu"*. All districts or regions in the country must benefit equally from mineral and water resources. They must be provided with educational facilities, infrastructure, health services, safety and security, water, electricity, and employment opportunities for citizen within a cultural context (Vision Council, 2009). The Botswana Review (2010) reports that Botswana's mineral policy aims at striking a balance between maximizing economic benefits and ensuring competitive returns for investors. Although that is the motive, mineral mining continues to offer employment to Botswana regardless of locality. In addition, the public service policy emphasizes cross-cultural learning amongst people in the country and the willingness to serve in other cultures (Tlou and Campbell, 1999). Public officials are posted to any area in the country where their services are required which facilitates fine-tuning to cultural differences and acquisition of cross-cultural communication skills.

The expectation in Botswana is that every person must exercise initiative, diligence, and act swiftly in their work. The cultural principle of *'Ubuntu'* or *'Botho'* is meant to steer individuals towards enhanced family or household productivity. Devore (1983) argues that black families in USA are embedded in a network of mutually interdependent relationships with the black community and the wider society (parents, children, relatives and non-relatives). The family system becomes the reference point for work, relationship, and mutual support in the event of catastrophic situations. Tswana culture exhibits similar traditions derived from cultural commonalities of various ethnic groups, dialects, and languages, as well as the values of being productive *(go tsenya marapo mo nameng).* Productivity amongst Batswana derives from the cultural concept of self reliance championed by the values of the society. The culture of self-reliance *(ipelegeng)* reduced dependency on aid provided and promoted hard work amongst different Tswana groups

(Botswana National Policy on Culture, 2001). People in the past applied these principles to ensure an atmosphere of socio-economic growth and prosperity. Today, Botswana is experiencing a culture of dependency reinforced by material support programmes. Government *ipelegeng* programme is an attempt to rekindle the cultural belief in hard work and community support.

The previous contribution of traditional systems in development

Tswana traditional governance and economic systems are built upon cultural beliefs some of which were adopted by the Botswana Government at independence in 1966. The traditional role of *dikgosi* (chiefs) in Botswana somehow diminished with the advent of modernization. The role of chiefs in governance and leading community development has been transformed dramatically. The principal duty of a chief (*kgosi*) today is to settle minor civil and criminal disputes within the community but not to oversee and coordinate community development. Chiefs conduct their work at the *"kgotla"* (kraal system), common in Botswana and other African countries. Nyamnjoh (2003) argues that traditional leaders, chiefs, and elders still play an important role in the lives of many Africans. The Setswana phrase that describes the crucial duty of a chief is *"kgosi ke pilara ya sechaba"*, meaning that the *kgosi* (chief) is a pillar of the community, one who supports and ensures that there is unity and stability. Nyamnjoh (2003) further asserts that the *kgotla* (community gathering) is meant to offer an opportunity for a wide array of community members to voice their opinion on community affairs and participate in consensus-based decision making. This is no longer possible because community members are employed outside the community and rarely attend the meetings. This practice has meant that *kgotla* meetings tend to be dominated by the elderly and children. They are also no longer the prerogative of the kgosi but of political leaders and civil servants, with the *kgosi* acting as an intermediary.

Another phrase that emphasizes the traditional mandate and authority of the chief in community development is *"kgosi ke mma batho"* meaning that he or she is the guardian of the community. Davis (1996) states that the chief, before colonialism, was recognized as the leader of all civil, military, judicial, and religious matters affecting his people. This is emphasis that the *kgosi* was a cultural figure, the personification of a community, and the central point of community progress. This responsibility has been transferred by the constitution to the head of state, who is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The *kgosi* was the basis of identity and protection, and the custodian of community welfare systems (Davis, 1996: Nyamnjoh, 2003). This role was replaced by that of social welfare programmes provided by the state which meant that community members depended more on the state than the chieftaincy. However, a 2007 study by Ditshwanelo, a human rights organization in Botswana found that the majority of Batswana place greater confidence in traditional structures than in centralized legal system (Ditshwanelo, 2007). Therefore, there is need to redefine the roles and responsibilities of traditional legal systems based on positive aspects of the peoples' culture. This mindset should characterize all organizations that are interested in the socio-economic development of Batswana or African people.

Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) concede that shared identity develops

around some symbol of unity such as a particular well-known leader. The social identity theory explains that people who strive for positive self concept derive a sense of self-esteem from their social identity as members of the in-group (Sears, Peplau and Taylor, 1991). Social identity in Africa generally and in Botswana in particular was built around the chief from whom the tribe derived its identity. Nyamnjoh (2003) argues that chiefs *(dikgosi)* are often perceived as the guardians of their community's culture and play an important role in cultural events and rituals. In addition, the religious and political power of a chief was often judged in terms of his or her ability to make rain and lead their people during hard times. It was the spiritual qualities of a king that brought the people together to consult on various community developments related matters. The chief encouraged community members to make sacrifices to maintain high communal productivity spirit.

In the 1800, cross-cultural marriages were used by African chiefs as a means to neutralize conflict and build economic leverage, particularly between kingdoms. The marital relationships were used by the kingdoms to solicit support in many ways. Sometimes, it was an additional strength to fight invading forces, share grazing lands and water, and hold joint celebrations for achievements. Historically, the culture of the two kingdoms would set the standard for functioning, behaviour and relationships, and marriage within the 'extended' family members was even encouraged (Shillington, 2002). Culture is an organization or integration of conventional understanding, that is the acts and objects that represent society and which express and maintain this understanding (Redfield, 1988). As a result, culture cannot be ignored as a basis of societal survival and existence in the social and physical environment. Giddens (1996) consolidates the arguments that culture consists of the values that members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create.

Tlou and Campbell (1999) state that Bakhalagari, Batswana, and Basotho practised similar adult initiation practices (*bogwera* and *bojale*), marriage of cousins *(ntsala wa motho ke mogatse)*, and wife inheritance by the first son of the most important house. Therefore, as a result of their commonalities, it was easier for these groups to inter marry. African societies had institutions that ensured that members were socialized intensely in their culture. For example, tribes ran initiation schools and observed cultural ceremonies for girls and boys who were graduating to adulthood (Giddens, 1996). Initiation rites and ceremonies in Botswana are some of the cultural activities meant to facilitate community members' transition from childhood to adulthood. The initiated are grouped into regiments *(mephato)* that have to ensure that the various villages of the *morafe* (tribe) are bound under the central authority of the *kgosi.* Amongst the *Bangwato*, initiation was administered by the *kgosi* for all members of the morafe and subjugated tribes.

Young men of subject groups were initiated into Bangwato regiments and became much closer to *Bangwato* than their original group or culture (Tlou and Campbell, 1997). Retrospectively, the Constitution of Botswana (2006), section 15, protects any person from discrimination on the grounds of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex. The protection is further pronounced in the National Policy on Culture (2001) which defines culture as the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material,

intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or small group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs of Batswana. However, Ditshwanelo (2007) argues that customary law discriminates against children and women prohibiting them from speaking in *kgotla* meetings, community gatherings, and consultations. It further advocates that culture should ensure that children learn their responsibilities and the rights of others as well as their own so that the rights of all citizens are respected and protected.

Modernized and limited role of chiefs in Botswana
The current role of chiefs is narrowly defined and skewed compared to the time before independence. It is limited to settling menial civil matters and petty crimes at the kgotla and welcoming government officials who visit the community. As far as the constitution is concerned, their role is recognized to only a limited extent. In recognition of the traditional role played by chiefs, the Government of Botswana established *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* (House of Chiefs). Section 77(1) of the Botswana Constitution (2006, 48) states that "there shall be *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* for Botswana which shall consist of not less than 33 or more than 35 members…." It was established to guide the modern system of government to address culturally oriented matters at the highest level. *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* is headed by traditional leaders from the different ethnic groups in the country "to discuss any matter within the executive or legislative authority of Botswana considered desirable to take cognizance of the interest of the tribes and tribal organizations it represents and to make representation thereon to the President, or to send messages thereon to the National Assembly" (Constitution of Botswana, 2006:52). Therefore, the existence of the *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* to some extent harmonize the differences between the traditional and modern political systems. Although the modern political leadership minimizes the image of the chiefs, it recognizes their role in modern society and has created a forum for dialogue. Section 88 (2) of the Botswana Constitution (2006) states that the National Assembly shall not proceed upon any Bill that in the opinion of the person presiding would, if enacted, alter any of the provisions of this Constitution or affect:

(a)   The designation, recognition, removal of powers of *Dikgosi* or *Dikgosana*;
(b)   The organization, powers or administration of customary courts;
(c)   Customary law, or the ascertainment of recording of customary law; or
(d)   Tribal organization or tribal property; unless a copy of the Bill has been referred to the *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* after it has been introduced in the National Assembly.

The House of Chiefs is not only a cultural symbol but also a significant recognition the role chiefs played and continue to play in the development of the country. Whether this organ has made any significant contribution to political and economic decisions in Botswana is yet to be established. It must be acknowledged that it has limited powers and cannot call the executive to account on issues of governance except those concerning customary matters.

The Tswana traditional economic system.
The Batswana culture promoted the *mafisa* system which permitted the loaning of cattle

to poorer dependants for milk and meat of the offspring (Shillington, 2002). This system provided support that did not enslave the needy but rather built their self-reliance. The maxim is *"kgomo ya lefisa re e gama relibile tsela"* meaning that the one recurring the loan must work hard to become self-sufficient before the owner takes back his or her cattle. The system was also used to neutralize those who sought to be more powerful than others through accumulation of wealth. The *Kgosi* redistributed the wealth amongst community members to reduce rebellion and maintain stability in the community. *Kgosi Kgari* of the Bakwena neutralized the royal relatives who would oppose him and built unity in the *morafe* by giving *kgamelo* (milk container) cattle which worked like mafisa to his *basimane ba mafatshe* (commoners) (Tlou and Campbell, 1997). The approach displays wisdom that permeated the indigenous culture through diffusing conflict and maintaining political and economic stability in the community (morafe). It successfully prevented division and tribal break-away, thus building solidarity and peace.

The hunters and gatherers of Botswana (the Basarwa), gathered together once a year when food was plentiful into larger groups of a hundred or more to exchange news, pass on new technology or find marriage partners (Shillington, 2002). If there was a dispute between individuals then the aggrieved would use these large gatherings to leave their own group and join another. In this manner members maintained cultural harmony and avoided unnecessary conflict. In addition, the success of hunting and gathering depended very much on mutual cooperation between men and women who were equally dependent upon each other. Redfield (1988) argues that the members of the hunters and gatherers society have a strong sense of belonging. This symbolized an attitude of tranquility that led to successes in hunting expeditions by the entire group (Bodley, 1988). They celebrated group success in hunting and gathering and no one boasted about personal achievements (communalism rather than individualism). The culture of success was related to community survival rather than individualistic selfishness that characterize the modern capitalist system.

The approach to work, activities, and success in various expeditions was culturally oriented and endorsed oneness, reliance on others, and group achievement *(matlo go sha mabapi)*. Bodley (1988) asserts that tribal societies lack social classes and communally organized, kin-based systems in which people are differentiated by age, sex, and personal characteristics, not primarily by ownership of property or productive resources. This encouraged a spirit of communal mutual support and understanding amongst people and discouraged division and segmentation (Redfield, 1988). According to Giddens (1996) hunters and gatherers were more preoccupied with religious values and ceremonial ritual activities than material wealth. They participated regularly in preparing the dress, masks, paintings or other sacred objects used in rituals to appease the gods. He further denotes that the hunters and gatherers are not primitive people whose ways of life no longer hold any interest for others (Tlou and Campbell, 1999). Thus studying their culture allows others to see more clearly that some modern institutions are far from being natural features of human life. The absence of war, the lack of major inequalities of wealth and power, and the emphasis on cooperation rather than competition are all instructive reminders that the world created by modern industrial civilization is not necessarily equated by progress

(Giddens, 1996). This calls for cultural introspection to identify the values that might have been lost due to modernization and to reincorporate them into development projects.

Synergy between Modern Development Systems (MDS) and Traditional Systems (TS)
Culture must be instrumental in building a common identity, unification, stability, and economic progress for the community. The Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN, 2010) contends that cultural activities must instill a sense of pride and unity in the entire nation. For the purpose of self preservation, a community's culture must be shared, practised, and integrated into development from generation to generation. The process will ensure continuity in building solidarity and commonality amongst community members. Thus culture has to guide various processes including the understanding of sources of underdevelopment which are pervasive and possibly rooted in the culture of the people (UN Secretary General, 1992). Sears, Peplau and Taylor (1991) explain that cultural conflict can help or harm societal development, depending on how it is conceived. It can provide an opportunity for clarifying disagreements and changing expectations about developments, thus reducing the predisposing factors to retrogression. Culturally sensitive development will require the utmost effort of all community members to embrace human rights and fundamental freedoms and promote sustainable economic and social development for wider prosperity (Sear, Peplau and Taylor, 1991). This is possible where there is cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of differences that characterize groups of people. The commitment to cross-cultural development is captured by the Botswana National Population Policy (1997) which asserts that sustainable development requires that the interrelationship between population, resources, and the environment should be fully recognized, properly managed, and brought into harmonious and dynamic balance.

Cultural values should be translated into a language that motivates common action by educationists and development practitioners. The education system has to socialize young people based on their culture to contribute meaningfully to economic growth. Batswana and other African societies speak some common languages and practice similar cultures, which should make it easier to relate to and associate with each other. Africans share a number of commonalities besides boundaries such as disease, values, leadership structures, and political and economic challenges which set a platform for joint action. Giddens, 1996 states that values are a belief that something is desirable and they provide general guidelines for the upholders. Values define for communities what is important and worth striving towards (Brager, Specht and Torczyner, 1987). Setswana values are fundamental to Botswana socio-economic progress losing cultural values may contribute to anomie in the community or family resulting in a state of cultural confusion.

Brager, Specht and Torczyner (1987) assert that values represent beliefs concerning goals towards which people should strive and a code of conduct for realizing them. They further attest that they are beliefs that find collective expression which emerge as they do from past experience and they serve to shape societal expectations for all cultural dimensions. Southern African Regional Poverty Network (2010) identifies Botswana's National Development Plans as non-racial and the society that maintains freedom of speech, the press, and association, affording all citizens equal rights. Botswana's National Population

Policy (1997) states that the human person must be the central subject of development and that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. This is regardless of their ethnicity, and thus they deserve to be given the opportunity to enjoy and develop their humanity without discrimination. Bodley (1988) argues that development planners must understand specific features of tribal life that might be affected by developmental changes before the change occurs. Therefore, it is critical to study common cultural values that promote development amongst various ethnic groups within a country.

Culture defines production and distribution of goods, the kind of food people eat, the clothes they wear, their rituals, and the crops they grow. It sets the standard for, ceremonies and rituals that bring the community together thus building spirit of commonality. Cultural identity has been a major factor of unity that African societies have built for many generations. Their pride is sustained by safeguarding their identity and culture within traditional boundaries. When the chiefs' role of administrating their communities was minimized, the members scattered like sheep without a shepherd, each going their own way. Productivity in communities, participation in projects, and contribution in decision making at the kgotla diminished. United Nations Security Council (2000) states that internal conflict in Africa is stimulated by poverty coupled with sharp ethnic or religious cleavages where minorities are not respected. Culture thus plays a major role in the unification of tribal groups and is a vital strategy for development. The accommodation of diverse cultures creates the basis for cross-cultural communication, understanding, and pursuit of economic growth. Progressive improvement according to the Nyamnjoh (2003) requires active engagement with local parties and should be multidimensional in nature. The cultural context of the people must be understood and taken into account. This is meant to ensure that all people enjoy human and cultural security within their geographic environments.

Human security, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, and social equity are important elements for sustainable global development. They must be culturally contextualised in order to be translated into a way of life for societies and values and norms that are shared within cultural initiation schools and ceremonies, festivals, and rituals in ways that make sense for communities. Mbakogu (2004) argues that modern development strategies must be built on the attitudes and socio-economic status of ordinary persons. The purpose is to promote greater inter-group contact and relationships which are critical issues in development. Furthermore, it must be realized that contact alone is not sufficient to promote positive development. It must incorporate forgiveness, super-ordinate goals, economic development, confidence building, and mutual and multi-cultural education across age groups. Prejudice will be minimized by adopting cultural programs within formal education systems, community conferences or festivals, mass media campaigns, encouragement from respected leaders, and individual therapy. Intellectuals must examine cultural traditions and myths, deconstruct exclusionists' myths, and reconstruct a more pluralist, inclusive set of cultural values and traditions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Culture, though dynamic and changing, is an important factor for inclusion in development programmes in Africa. It is the basis for functional relationships, economic and political systems, and community survival. Culture is instrumental in shaping mindsets, perceptions, acquisition of wealth, and self organization. The history of the Bantu-speaking peoples has shown those commonalities and cultural attributes fundamental survival. Therefore, to attain lasting socio-economic improvements amongst African societies culture is an important factor. In Africa, a greater part of underdevelopment has resulted from racism, ethnic tensions and differences, and cultural intolerance. This demonstrates that promoting cultural exchanges between nation's and-groups is a positive move towards socio-economic stability and growth. Initiation schools promoted a similar process amongst initiates from the inner-ethnic groupings in the past. The initiates recognized one another as equals regardless of age and ethnicity which diffused unnecessary tensions and cultural conflicts.

Although African cultural values were relegated to the scrapheap by the introduction of western systems, the latter have proved to be problematic within African societies. Therefore, development programmes and agencies that ignore African culture in their interventions are arguably doing more harm than good. Unless the approach is changed, the development process will perpetuate intolerance, animosity, and hatred within and between African populations. Project failure through cultural exclusion will be the order of the day in many countries some of whom have continued to experience the failure of structural adjustment programmes due to this issue. To resolve these failures and establish a lasting solution there is need to examine factors that might have contributed to the disorganization and chart a more appropriate way-forward. This will ensure that Seretse Khama's contention that a people without a culture are a people without a soul will never apply to Botswana

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