INTERROGATING GENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND CONFLICTS ON THE UTILITY OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AS A CULTURAL DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Africans all over the continent and Zimbabweans in particular, are claiming the cultural heritage of their ancestors. There is a wide spread conviction that the ancestors had a certain self-understanding, a view of the world and a lifestyle that was of their own making. This afforded them to positively interact with their environment. Indeed, there are beliefs and practices which reflect evidence of the existence of a complex epistemological framework characterised by physical and spiritual interconnectedness of humans with other species. Of late, there has been a notable difference between the awareness of possible cosmovisionary issues among youths and the elderly to such an extent that the diffusion of ideas has not only lost momentum but that it is gravitating into oblivion. The hallmark of this study is its deep interest in the traditional relationships between humans, the physical and spiritual worlds which youths are marginalising. African traditional beliefs which appear to be the linchpin of indigenous knowledge are being affected by the changing religiosity of youths. The study estimates the extent to which generational conflict is a serious threat to developmental efforts in developing societies.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Generational Conflict, Tradition, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and Cosmovisionary.

INTRODUCTION

The assumption of a link between growing old and becoming wise seems universal. Oral statements by both young and old paint a picture of harmonious continuity between the generations in the form of advice, stories, knowledge of the past and wisdom. Africans boast of a rich heritage of managing and living with the environment. However, as Viriri (2009) puts it, colonialism broke the umbilical cord which linked the African people with their natural and cultural environments. The destruction of African indigenous values and religious culture during the colonial period has seen a sharp contrast of the post- independence romantic, simplistic return –to-tradition being stressed by politicians and African academics. They have hailed sustainable development through indigenous knowledge systems as the panacea to Africa's development quagmire. Alteri (1995:114) is of the view that since time immemorial, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs) were used by societies in Africa and the rest of the world for various purposes depending on the needs of the society in question. Although indigenous knowledge has failed to die through catastrophes, such as the racial and colonial onslaughts, the point remains that IKSs were and continue to be marginalised. People tend to fall back on IKSs only as a rescue package. It is during moments of desperation that rural communities resort to the long forgotten age-old techniques to cope with hunger and food shortages. Calls are being made to blend the traditional African wisdom and modern technology in relation to farming, health, environmental management and other areas in order to manage ecosystems' sustainability. The blending has become the centre of conflict, creating contestations surrounding the ownership of African cosmic space. What used to be sacred places revered through social relations with ancestors, have, to younger people become symbols of religious ignorance and oppression (Wolmer 2007:45). The irony is that the elderly still have power through traditional institutions. As the old reach into the past and extend their experiences into the present, the young often abandon that past by giving it a totally different meaning. According to Zerubavel (1997:97-9), in this mnemonic battle, not only is the past contested, but experiences, knowledge and social roles of the old are undermined. As a result, rules and rituals in the domestic space no longer hold.

This study makes an effort to unveil and understand better what is at stake when youths set their vision of tradition against their parents and other older people's imagination of modernity. With the young now disconnected from the optimism of the past and dispossessed of any future, feeling stuck and almost lacking direction irrespective of their high educational achievements, one questions the primacy of IKSs in stirring development in Africa.

This study makes use of the Mannheimian perspective on generation as a group of people born into a particular set of historical circumstances that have partially been shaped by the previous generation (Mannheim 1972). Each new generation brings what Prince (2008:62) terms 'fresh contact' to the historical conditions in which they find themselves. This fresh contact entails the reshaping of social and cultural practices, as their enactment under new conditions transforms their effects. Koen Stroeken (2008:289) also shares similar sentiments that cultural convention distinguishes young and old. Both members and non-members of an age cohort (re)produce a generation whose social status, power and values they determine.

CONCEPTUALISING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IKSS)

Larsen (1998), in Ntsoane (2002:72), defines indigenous knowledge systems as 'concepts, facts, perceptions, beliefs, information and values, as well as particular economic, social and traditional political arrangements' associated with any given community. Chikako (2001:262) considers IKSs as a 'common knowledge shared by a community and has a social,

cultural, political and economic significance'. He further asserts that IKSs give people the power to control their lives and establish a relationship and connectedness with their social, spiritual and physical environment. An important aspect about these IKSs is that they are transmitted orally through imitation and demonstration inherited from ancestors and therefore passed from generation to generation. These bodies are developed through the processes of acculturation and through kinship relationships that societal groups form and are handed down to the posterity through oral tradition and cultural practices like rituals and rites. Understanding indigenous knowledge and perceptions can point to important ideas and practices that are necessary for subsistence, but are often overlooked by formal science.

Kaya and Maleka (1996), however, argue that indigenous does not necessarily mean traditional. Their stance is augmented by Lalonde and Morin-Labatut (1993) who also advance that indigenous knowledge systems are not monolithic. Instead, they undergo constant transformation through knowledge transmission across generations as well as the subsequent innovations and integration of foreign practices. Undeniably, cultures have changed to move in the same wave length of technological advancement and globalization.

Globalization has witnessed the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This in turn has changed peoples' IKSs to keep in tandem with the modern lifestyle. Cultures have been lost and foreign cultures have been adopted which fit the newly invented technology from generation to generation. According to Warren (1990;86) IKSs acknowledge the on -going transformation and change that traditional systems have gone through and are continuing to undergo by incorporating other knowledge systems in their own. This explains why, today many indigenous knowledge systems are at risk of becoming extinct because of rapidly changing natural environments and fast pacing economic, political and cultural changes on a global scale. What is worrisome is the marginalization of elements of indigenous knowledge and know-how, their steady withering and impoverishment, and in worst cases, their sheer disappearing and vanishing out of people's conscious memory. It is largely in the light of Warren's view that Ntsoane (2002:70) warns against searching for a definition based on the colonizers' language and culture. Ntsoane (2000) argues that, the definition, conceptualization and operationalisation of the term Indigenous Knowledge Systems should be based on the need to reintroduce an Afro-optimistic approach to knowledge production.

Indigenous knowledge embraces both the physical and metaphysical world. Despite the fact that the metaphysical is non-technical or intangible, it carries 'insights, wisdom, ideas, perceptions and innovative capabilities that pertain to ecological, biological, geographical and physical phenomena (Ntsoane, 2002). In other words, indigenous knowledge connotes local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society and as already alluded to, is usually, orally passed from generation to generation. The term indigenous knowledge according to Warren (1995) has to be differentiated from the knowledge developed by a given community from knowledge systems generated through universities, government research centres and private industry. The above shows that Indigenous Knowledge Systems are complex, broad and dynamic because they are passed from one generation to another through oral tradition and practice, needless to reiterate that they are unique to a local area, culture or specific society. What is paramount here is that indigenous knowledge systems have a heritage component, which emphatically acknowledges that as Africans, we have inherited our own method of knowledge from our ancestors.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF IKSS

Cosmovision or world view, refers to the way a certain population perceives the world or cosmos. It includes the assumed relations between people, nature and the spiritual world. Gonese and Haverkort (2000:71), note that in the cosmovision of the Shona people, there are three central pillars making up the living world, namely the spiritual, the human and the natural world. God (*Mwari*) created the natural and human worlds. The spiritual world is composed of different spirits, which have different meeting places where they are delegated specific responsibilities. The entire composition of the spiritual world inhabits the natural and human world. Spirits can dwell in sacred places such as shrines and can also inhabit certain ecosystems, human bodies, or certain species of animals or plants within the natural world. In the animal kingdom, there are selected sacred species such as lions, pythons, pangolins, baboons and certain birds and snakes. The human world to a large extent depends on special messages from the spiritual world transmitted via these sacred animals. For the sacred animals to be able to perform their function as intermediaries, they need a dwelling place which requires biological diversity. Once biological diversity is degraded or denuded, the valuable messengers between the spiritual world and humans would migrate to other places and would no longer serve the humans in the area. This explains why, among the Shona, rules and regulations for the management of natural resources are rooted in the belief of sustaining the communication channels between the spiritual and the human worlds. Ethnographic studies show how people commonly attribute human dispositions and behaviour to plants and animals or expand the realm of non-human living organisms to include spirits and artefacts. Humans and their changing environments are reciprocally inscribed in cosmological ideas and cultural understanding. As Croll and Parkin (1992:30) put it, 'they are part of each other; the forest is the people, in the same way the ancestors can be extensions of the living'. What can be deduced from the above is that the landscape is a living cosmology in which the present and the past, the living and the dead, and the secular and religious are intertwined. Wolmer (2007:42) observed that to the African inhabitants of Zimbabwe's lowveld, each hill, grove, pool, stream and fence is invested with meaning and memory. Conversely, a variety of ecological and spiritual understandings as well as livelihood strategies are brought to bear on and in the landscape. As elsewhere in Zimbabwe, and much of Africa, the spirits of the dead ancestors are part and parcel of the land and life of the people, serving ecological, social and political functions as 'guardians of the land' (Schoffeleers 1978). These spirits need to be respected, consulted and ritually honoured if crops are to yield a good harvest, if good weather is to prevail, if illness is to be avoided or healing effected. In other words, the 'living dead' take care of their descendants by guaranteeing ecological wellbeing through providing rain and ensuring the fertility of the soil and the health of cattle and crops (Mbiti 1969:84). The living know that they depend on the dead, especially the ancestors, while on the other hand, the dead, including the ancestors, cannot live happily without the support of the earthly community**.** The admonitions, commandments and prohibitions of ancestors and of community elders and the central position of ancestral veneration within African societies are highly esteemed. At the same time, it underlines the indispensable role of old people, who are the support of the community through their experience and wisdom, so that a harmonious and unconstrained life is made possible. For this reason, it is important in Africa to live in a community with old people so as to learn from them (Benezet Bujo: 1993:199).

As already alluded to, in the natural world, the spiritual world would speak through animals and habitats in certain places in the ecosystem. The spiritual world owns both society and nature because that is where all spirits live. As for natural resources management, the spirit would state the rules and regulations surrounding the conservation of natural resources.

Conservation is understood as a by-law. Should people violate taboos, for example, unlawful cutting down of trees, hunting of certain animals and birds, violating the laws of totemic relationships by killing or eating your own totem, incest and adultery, the voice of *Mwari* would vacate the place. The fundamental principle is that the habitat of these sacred natural species should be jealously guarded or preserved so as not to lose those valuable messages from the spiritual world.

Gonese and Haverkort (2000:75) emphasise that the conservation effort from an African perspective is not to envy the existence of a balanced biological diversity alone, but more importantly to sustain the interconnectedness and interdependence of the natural, human and spiritual worlds. Plants and animals reflect the complex physical and spiritual connection of the people with the natural world. This also explains why the behaviour of certain animal species and their occurrence at certain places seem to communicate some messages or trigger certain beliefs, thereby creating a basis for their reverence.

The Manyika of Chief Tangwena in the Nyanga area of Zimbabwe for example, learnt the art of weather forecasting through experience based on observation of weather patterns and bird behaviour and this helped them to plan for the farming activities. Some forest birds are known at the local level to behave in ways which explain or signal certain events. When a *haya* or *kohwiro* bird sings in early summer, the Shona believe that it will rain within a day or two. This bird rarely sings but when it does sing in a particular way, rain comes within a few days. According to Mararike, Dzingai and Pottier (1994), the *shezhu* (the honey bird) is well known among the Shona for guiding hunters, or indeed anybody who may happen to be passing by, to a beehive. It uses three distinct calls to guide someone to a beehive. Shona hunters say that if you do not reward this bird with some honey, it will lead you to some savage animal the next time. Mokuku and Mokuku (2004) note that the association of some organisms with fearsome consequences if destroyed and if seen or encountered, shrouds them with spiritual powers, sacredness and awe, creating a basis for their respect. What is clearly observable from the above is that natural communities are characterised by complex kinship systems of relationships among people, animals, the earth and the cosmos from which knowing emanates.

TRADITION AND MODERNITY AT CROSSROADS

In Zimbabwe, people find themselves between two worlds namely tradition and modernity. Now, the dilemma is whether to stick blindly to tradition which would deny the reality of change; or to give in completely to modernity which would rob them of a mooring in the whirlwind of change. With the rapid environmental, social, economic and political changes in many areas inhabited by indigenous people, comes the danger that the IKSs they possess would be overwhelmed and lost forever. The young generation has acquired different values and life styles as a result of exposure to the global world that we live in. In addition, traditional communication links are breaking down, meaning that elders are dying without passing and or transferring their knowledge to the young generation. Overall, the transfer of skills within the community is weak because of the generational gap and an educational curriculum that does not value IKSs. Also, village experts are reluctant to teach issues on traditional culture. The young also tend to be highly migratory hence there is no time to learn some of the surviving cultural skills. Schools, as an aspect of modernity, have drawn off the youngsters who once sought fish, mice and birds and learned all the plant and animal life whilst herding cattle in the bush.

The relationship of species deviates from the dominant Western scientific thought. Without fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other agricultural inputs they have since grown accustomed to, the modern farmers fail. The fact that

Africans lacked the competitive edge and a raft of coercive strategies instituted by the colonial governments against IKSs has seen them relinquishing their traditional practices. Resultantly, IKSs' traditional practices have continued to suffer massive denigration despite the huge potential they offer in alleviating poverty and suffering in rural communities. This profound loss of IKSs has been accompanied by neglect and the marginalisation of their practices and beliefs often figured as inferior forms of knowing to be replaced by universalised knowledge derived from Western scientific tradition. To develop is now taken to mean breaking away from rural life to become modern men, ideally wealthy and powerful, in a modern world. The scope of this modernist sense of development measured against economic accumulation and political aspirations fails to embrace and promote the cultural dimension of development which makes the bedrock of IKSs.

What is sad is that the umbilical code through which a sense of reconnecting different generations should have been conveyed; is no longer clearly traceable to establish a sense of continuity. Such mnemonic decapitations as Zerubavel (2003:93-94) puts it, 'have further enabled the young to blame the elderly for the consequences of the accusations they make'. Resultantly, the young now tend to emphasise historical distance and distinction and now challenge the elderly as being old fashioned. In addition, Africa's struggle with macro-economic pressures, income disparities, culturally insensitive education and the AIDS pandemic continues to be reflected in highly strained intergenerational relations. Changing environmental and political dynamics over time have led to land-use transformations, as well as complex accommodations and adaptations such as changes in the social context and landscape location of agricultural and other development related practices. The drifts towards modernisation of rural economy and changes in the standards of living since the turn of the century have triggered this dynamism of indigenous resource management systems as well as cultural norms. While governments have resorted to arguments of Africanness, heritage and tradition to consolidate their popular support, many youths vehemently claim that traditions yield no profit. This has rendered the African origin obscure. From the point of view of the elderly, the far reaching effects of modernity on the status and authority of male elders are too ghastly to contemplate.

In Africa, traditional values are not static; they are not fixed qualities but rather projects linked to actual human and societal realities. The actual realities of Africa for instance, are marked by drastic external and internal changes. Tradition was used by men to secure power in the generational structure and in relation to seniority between fathers and sons, husbands and wives and among brothers. Conversely, sons are using tradition against their fathers, who live in town and have neglected the rural home.

Rain-making ceremonies were a common feature among the Shona of Zimbabwe during periods of drought. Beer was brewed and the spirit mediums and the elderly would lead people through the paces according to prescribed conditions. Today, the youth would question how far this compares with cloud seeding. While artificial rain-making is not peculiar to Africa alone, African methods might have their peculiar features. The present state of indigenous knowledge in the discipline of atmospheric physics as evidenced through rain-making ceremonies remains a mystery. Rain-making ceremonies set conditions which youths cannot meet, for example, brewing traditional beer. As a result, people now rely on technology for example the dependency on meteorological information to plan farming to ensure food security instead of conducting rain-making ceremonies. The absence of a scientific formula is equally frustrating. As such, the young continue to question why Africa has been living through devastating droughts if the African elderly could bring traditional knowledge to focus on atmospheric management techniques in a search for solutions to this problem. A crucial question which remains unanswered is how in our time, we can test, check and verify this knowledge so as to

retrieve it for active use. Dah-Lokonon (1997:98) laments times when people meticulously follow their traditional rain-making instructions in every detail and bring together all the ingredients they ask for but fail to get the expected results. No rain falls and yet when people appeal to Christian priests to pray for rain, results are positive. As such, old age has lost its connotations of knowledge, maturity and status, with young people radically redefining the conditions for them on issues where the elderly could have earned respect.

While tradition is taken to be an ideological device that has come down through time and is wielded by senior over junior, nowadays, young people can also wield traditional arguments against their parents who have neglected rural homes. These differences underline how cultural and social practices may be passed from one generation to another and also how the different historical conditions that each generation faces shape these practices and their effects. While tradition is deployed to re-orientate growth, kinship and the social order in the rural home, land pressure, unemployment, sickness and death continue to challenge growth and exacerbate kinship conflicts. Prince (2008:153) distinguished between the old –fashioned modernists of the past and the late modern traditionalists of the present. The former continued to fulfil obligations to rural kin and poorer relatives; respecting their dead, while leading Christian lives. The process of progress however has never been free of contradictions. The attachment of the old generation to traditional values and the way they deployed this persistent link to the past to support their great leap forward is different from the situation of today's youth. The latter do not draw upon tradition as a continuously flowing idiom that can be used to bolster one's progress in the world.

Since IKSs have not received adequate attention in communicating with the young generation, foreign knowledge has remained dominant. In some instances, the actual existence of IKSs and the local people is vastly threatened due to modernity and globalisation. The distinct culture of indigenous people and their identity, their economic activities, religious beliefs, notions and traditional ways of managing natural resources are often regarded as backward and superstitious. Principles of authority, solidarity, duty and reciprocity between grandparents, parents and children are not just being transformed, but have become obsolete.

In Zimbabwe, people in rural areas apparently differ from their kith and kin in urban areas in terms of how they relate to culture. Modernization has seen people in the urban areas developing a new sense of culture, level of adherence and general lifestyle. In rural areas, the level of social relations and interaction are very close. In urban areas there are no strong forces of social and community based moral restraint as people of different and unrelated backgrounds live independent from community control. Thus the rural areas still constitute greater elements of collectiveness when approaching cultural issues. Traditionally, the individual was seen to be subordinate to the group he was living in. Without the group, the individual would not exist and likewise the group would be null and void without its individual members. Here, we notice however that processes of modernity are eroding the reciprocity among people of the same communal network. Modern economics with its own values of aggressiveness, acquisitiveness and individualism leaves little room for traditional practices such as the sense of community and sharing.

CHRISTIAN LANDSCAPES

Both Christianity and other western influences were significant in transforming African societies and their identity. Indeed, these changes have not occurred easily, as the contestations between African values have left the African in a

dilemma. Missionaries consistently mounted vigorous campaigns aimed at discouraging consultation of healers, spirit mediums and diviners, largely because they saw aspects of African IKSs as irrational, superstitious witchcraft and magic.

While religion sets in motion interconnections across space, it ironically promotes boundary formation and contestations among otherwise related people. Religion also relates to politics in ways that are themselves linked to individual societies' particular historical and developmental trajectories, both traditional and modern. Socio-economic and political concerns permeate to the heart of the religious sphere. For example, in traditional societies, even political power is underpinned by religious beliefs and practices. Rulers who are the elderly chiefs and headmen are not only political heads but also religious leaders, whose well-being is thought to be closely linked to their people's health and welfare. In other circumstances, intergenerational struggle in the religious sphere results in negotiations and compromises which ultimately lead to the reform of practices, sometimes with the younger generation replacing the seniors in positions of power and authority.

Pentecostal churches which have attracted the young generation have launched a rejection of cultural practices such as the veneration of ancestors. With the young also inspired by cyber space-assisted religiosity and the idea of standardised ritual practices, they are now criticising and subsequently rejecting some traditional practices. The Pentecostal churches pressurise their followers to stop the 'age-old' tradition of consulting spirit mediums and to abandon cultural practices. The new religiosity has empowered members of the new generation to the extent of breaking them loose from the authority and control of the older generations. Hence, youth religiosity from a generational perspective has serious implications for established traditions of intergenerational relations. In a study on youth religiosity in Ethiopia, Dea (2008) observed that youth groups had started to experiment with new ways of being religious which posed a challenge to the authority of elders. The introduction of mission-based religion in particular, saw youths starting to challenge the prerogatives of their seniors entrenched in local culture. Christianity accelerated socio-cultural ruptures that have marked African societies and generational relations over the past century. In some circumstances, conflict in the religious arena has led to generational rupture while in others the intergenerational struggle has resulted in negotiations and compromises which have led to the reform of practices. As David Maxwell (1999:218) shows, Christianity in Zimbabwe has, despite global claims, been legitimated in a highly localised fashion 'pitting itself against local demons, making links with indigenous concepts of illness, and resacralising the landscape through the creation of its own holy places'. Churches have challenged the power of ancestral spirits even though for many Christians, this has resulted in a change in the relative authority of ancestors rather than a total loss of belief. The burning of effigies, ritual plants and other symbols of the indigenous religion is a condition of full admission into the church. As elsewhere in Zimbabwe in recent years, there has been a massive growth in membership of new Pentecostal churches such as Apostolic Faith Mission, Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), Zionist and Alliance Church. The result has been that certain features in the landscape are acquiring new symbolism and , in a sense, being 'converted' to Christian purposes (Ranger 1997).This is particularly evident in respect of the pools in the rivers used by the churches for baptisms or collecting 'holy water' and the outdoor spots used for congregations or revivals (Wolmer 2007:65).New churches have, to some extent, provided a means by which young men and women can contest the authority of patriarchal ancestor religion (Maxwell 1999). The youths question the means through which traditional rainmakers manage to influence the atmosphere in order to precipitate rain. They would ask whether in order to harness traditional knowledge to the development effort, it is indispensable to believe in these rituals. Unless convincing explanations are given, the young would continue to wonder why we cannot create schools where people would get trained in divination and spirit possession.

COMMUNICATION

The African elders tend not to trust the young and so are reluctant to share their secrets with them (Sjaak van der Geest 2005, Buto 1998). They suppose young people, once they get hold of such secrets, will misuse them to cause harm. As a close-mouthed set, the African elders open up only to initiates or to the few lay persons who gain their confidence. It is on account of these reasons that in our traditional communities, young people are required to watch their behaviour when they are around elders. What this translates to is that the elders would rather die with their secrets than share them with the youth unless they are given the respect they deserve. Vanity, pride and irreverence among the young are some of the qualities which are believed to block our way from gaining the confidence of the elders. The protection of knowledge in our oral cultures however, has to be understood as something similar to developments in the industrialised countries where, scientific and technological research linked to national defence is closely guarded by parallel police organisations along with powerful military or paramilitary organisations. The purpose is the same: to prevent knowledge, along with the power it confers, from falling into enemy hands. It is the methods that differ. According to Dah-Lokonon (1997:101), holding on to this esoteric knowledge, preserving and developing it as part of a genuine scientific tradition, ensures the protection of intellectual property rights. Secrecy is one of a number of protective stratagems used by our ancestors to reinforce the confidentiality of this type of knowledge, in much the same way as the industrialised countries use their techniques to protect their nuclear secrets.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that there are two systems of knowledge available to separate groups. On one hand, there is formal scientific knowledge which is normally recorded in textbooks and available to those educated in the formal scientific tradition especially the youth. On the other hand, there is indigenous knowledge normally developed in the educational process of socialisation within an indigenous society. Admittedly, traditional knowledge has evolved within a specific set of constraints, conditions and practices which are sometimes continued with harmful effect because they are traditional although the original reason and basis is no longer relevant. Some cultural practices should not be romanticised to suggest that traditional or indigenous environmental knowledge and practice necessarily nurtures nature in sustainable ways. The main challenge which Africa and Zimbabwe in particular faces, relates to how young professionals can practically relate to this indigenous knowledge and use the wider world scientific foundation of knowledge to strengthen rather than weaken the indigenous foundation. What transpires from an African discussion of tradition and modernity is that, within the process of change, there is a kind of continuity where traditional values should not be replaced but transformed. Continuity, however, does not necessarily mean a continuation of an existing system or forms but rather continuation of a mentality and patterns of behaviour. The change- aspect implies possibilities where: some values have to disappear (e.g. many interdictions and taboos); other values seem to be missing and should be introduced; certain old values in relation to building up a new society have to undergo adaptation, or even a metamorphosis. The study has shown the importance of maintaining a good relationship between the old and young people to ensure generational connections which foster development. A Shona proverb fittingly says: "An old man's mouth smells bad, but it does not lie" (*Mukanwa mavakuru zinhuhwakamwe, mangwana munofuma moreva zvibvira*).This, however does not mean that an old man/woman always expresses the truth in the Western sense, but that his/her words make people think and initiate them to life experience. From the African point of view, to erase old people from our memory is tantamount to the usurpation of knowledge endowed in us. It is only in the comradeship or dialogue between tradition and modernity that

generational connections, inconsistencies and conflicts which tend to retard the prominence and utility of indigenous knowledge systems in Africa's of development can be normalized.

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