THE MELTING POT: WHERE ARE WE! THE DEMISE OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY SYSTEM IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE OF CHIVHU RURAL COMMUNITIES IN CHIEF NESHANGWE AREA

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Abstract
Prior to this present state of cultural erosion, the Shona tradition in Zimbabwe regarded the extended family system with high esteem. Those good old days seem to have disappeared and the all-embracing family concept is in a melting pot status. The paper sought to investigate the major drivers leading to "social decadence" of the extended family system and attempt to develop an indigenous socio-cultural model meant to resuscitate and revive the dying culture. A qualitative case-based research philosophy was adopted, with thirty families interviewed to provide information required to make informed conclusions on the status of extended family. Data was thematically analyzed and the results of the study indicated that the culture of extended family was in a "decomposition" state, and there was urgent need to find meaningful resuscitating strategies to keep the culture afloat. The paper recommends the adoption of the *ubuntu* philosophy as a basis of revival. The paper also encourages further public debate on the need to revive a culture of collectivism which once upon a time was dominant.

Keywords: Family system, Chivhu Rural Communities

Introduction
The journey that we about to travel (the story of the extended family system in Zimbabwe) can best be summarized by the three following biblical references**:**
- *"Now the Lord said to Abraham, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you…". So Abraham went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran and Abraham took Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother's son…" (Genesis 12:1-5).*
- *"Paul urged timothy saying, "Honour widows who are truly widows. but if a widow has children or grandchildren let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God…. but if anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially members if his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever…. if any believing woman has relatives who are widows let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are really widows (1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8, 16).*
- *"Jesus was not the biological son to Joseph…. but Joseph was his father…."*

In honest, if there is one institution in Zimbabwe and Africa that has stood the test of time, it is our traditional extended system. In Africa, not only Zimbabwe, South of Sahara, we have a system that is foreign to the social life of people in the west (Basil, 1978). This is the extended family system it goes: "my biological father's brothers are also my father's and

my biological mother's sisters are also my mothers. The wives of my biological father's brothers are my mothers and the husband of my biological mother's sisters is my father. In our Shona Tradition, you can go further to say: my father's sisters are not my mothers, they are my aunts, and my mother's brothers are not my fathers, but my uncles. Similarly, their children are not my brothers and sisters, they are my cousins. Even when you go to the next generation, their children are not my children but my nephews and nieces. Yes, they stand in the different relationship with me compared to the grandchildren of my father's brothers and my mother's sisters." Unless we understand this, we will not be able to understand the African extended system, late alone Zimbabwe's. The above scenario can further be explained mathematically. "If my late father had four brothers and late mother had four sisters, and all of them are married and alive, then I have four fathers and four mothers still alive and well on the planet".

This scenario is only understood from an African perspective where we often talk of young father and big father referring to brothers of my father (Bourdilton, 1998). An often told joke about the African concept of families: "An employee got leave from work to attend the funeral of his father and then asks for permission some six months later to attend yet another funeral of his father. The western employer gets angry and says: "how dare you think that you can cheat me, six months ago, I gave you permission to go and bury your father. Do you think that I have already forgotten that? How many fathers have you got? Well, of course, the employer is shocked out of this, when the man begins to count them. That's Africa and its family unit ties.

Background
"If you are the one who invited him, just make sure by the time I get home she is gone. She cannot just come without our consent"- charged a young woman talking to her husband over the mobile phone. The idea of coming home and only to find her husband's sister from Chivhu made her feel disturbed. As far as she was concerned, her family was complete with her husband and their five year old son. She considered other relatives a burden she was not prepared to carry.

The above picture provides the basis upon which this paper hinges on-the demise of the extended family system in Africa. Historically, children were cared for by parents and the extended family until they grew to become independent and as parents grew older, their offsprings and other family members made arrangements on how to care for them (Bhengu, 2010). Orphans were never left without care in our society as they would fit into their immediate relative's families. Surprisingly, these days, many of our grandpas in our communities no longer enjoy the benefit of having quality care from their offsprings in their twilight tears with several of them crowded in old people's institutions and nursing homes. In Zimbabwe, the old people's homes used to be more like homes for destitute and homeless senior citizens and many people do not like having their loved ones in such places. Surprisingly, it is the in-thing. It is like fashionable. A disgrace to our culture!

Historically, again, throughout the world, "cultural erosion" as Helena Norbeg-Hodge refers to "The March of Monoculture" was forced upon "traditional peoples" by world conquerors. According to Goulet, (traditional peoples must be shocked into the realization that they are living in abnormal, in-human conditions as psychological preparation for modernization". Today, however, as Norbeg-Hodge suggests, western influences including advertising, television, the internet and other technologies bring about cultural erosion on their own, by introducing these media, a westernized way of life that seems (erroneously) more luxurious, more glamorous and relatively effortless especially compared to their own jobs, books and lifestyle. Moreover, as DrVaran suggest the imposition by media and trans-globalization, of western values and influences creates:

> *".... cultural abrasion, resulting from friction between contrasting values reflected in a cultural terrain and a foreign media agent, cultural deflation, whereby least consolidated facets within a culture".*

It appears by allowing the desire for personal gain and aggrandizement to overcome our righteousness and sense of social obligation, Africans have fallen into the evil ways and this perverted our original nature. Thus relying on our sense of perception without subjecting them to control of mind we have neglected out traditions and values without asking questions about our children and grandchildren's future in a cultureless society from the peripheral, our traditional values are sinking and we are facing cultural death.

Last but not least, most of us went to school on the strength of the extended family system, including this researcher, otherwise we would have been stark illiterates, walking, sulking or even marauding about with native and naïve intelligence. In Zimbabwe, the situation in most homes is not easy to look, untouched and unperturbed at an indigent family especially if one is in a position to at least render a little help. Sometimes money is not everything but just subtle words of encouragement to struggling members who have manifested positive potentialities (Murove, 2007). There are raw talents in our communities that what most of them need is just a little pep talk to move them to aspire and aim higher.

We should explore this extended system in Zimbabwe bearing in mind that the country has been experiencing severe socio-economic and political problems that have impacted negatively on the culture of its people. Poverty in Zimbabwe has not only widened but it has also deepened as more and more people join ranks of the unemployed and low-income earners. Thus the process of re-awakening and recovery has to be one of a historical deconstruction, consciousness raising and restatement not in the way the post-modernity and post-structuralists have argued, but by Africans, tracing the origins and achievements of their civilization with a view to developing new epistemologies of knowledge production based on African new experiences in their own communities.

Zimbabwe is a patriotic nation managed by mostly African, black middle-class, heterosexual male nationalists who participated in the national liberation war for independence from the British colonial agents. Blood et al (1998) argue that "Patriarchy is not just a power structure "out there"; it is mainly enforced by our own acceptance of its character ideals for our lives". The Zimbabwean network of cultural systems operates from a dual cultural point of view with was born and raised in colonial Zimbabwe, most of the political leadership were educated in west or in the former eastern block.

My personal experience of a black Zimbabwean extended families is that one which is not limited to siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, nephews, grandparents, grandchildren and current in-laws, instead the network may extend to former in-laws, in-laws of other relatives, relatives of in-laws, close neighbours, church members, close workmates and friends (*madzisahwira)* of both the individual and his/her spouse as well as the friends of the parents.

Traditionally, the extended families were sustained by collective family production in which kingship groups worked together and shared economic wealth (Nkomo 1998 and Mikeu, 1997). With the advert of the western nuclear type of family, many Zimbabwean families started to move away from kingship dependences.

Statement of the problems

The rapacious and venal individualism and selfishness we are experiencing, is a cause for concern as the spirit of solidarity, *ubuntuism*, oneness and social responsibility seems to unreservedly continuing and causing cultural decay throwing to the terraces the extended family philosophy which is part of African history. The thorn issue, that has motivated this study is the cultural erosion, decay, decadence underpinned by ubuntu deferment and

abrasion of the extended family system which the western world would otherwise refer to as the state welfare system.

Research Question
Given the platform of problems stated above, the major research question is therefore:
- What are the major drives of the erosion of the extended family system in Zimbabwe?
- Can the extended family system be regarded as a burden to African tradition?
- How do we save our valued culture and tradition of belonging to many "fathers and mothers", "sisters and brothers", "nephews and nieces" and "uncles and cousins"?

Research Objectives
- To investigate the major drivers causing the erosion and decay of the extended family system in Zimbabwe
- To evaluate whether the extended family system is a burden or not to African tradition
- To establish ways in which the extended family system can be resuscitated

Significance of the study
The study is significant in many ways. We can not comfortably watch the death of a culture that we so cherish as Africans. The study is an attempt to open a "Pandora box" full of cultural worms. Society and Africans in particular should begin to debate ways of resuscitating, rejuvenating, re-birth of a once popular practice that brought families, villages, clans and communities together. The study should also provide guidance to cultural leaders, government and societies in general on ethical and moral construction.

Methodology
This study is a phenomenon in design and a case study based approach was adopted focusing at Chief Neshangwe area, in Chivhu an area dominated by Shona speaking people. I happen to be a son born and bread in the same area. The study was done in two phases: Phase one, was entirely devoted to literature review on extended family systems in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Most of the sources and happen to be newspaper articles, textbooks and a sizeable number researches done. Phase two was based on actual field work in Chief Neshangwe area, which bordered Buhera, Sadza and Masasa. Areas under Neshangwe include Guvamombe, St Pauls, Dzidze, Zinatsa, Munyimi and Govere. Thus interviews were carried out with heads of families, the headman themselves and Chief Neshangwe. Thirty families, whose information is used in this paper, are servants of Chief Neshangwe. The families were chosen conveniently and through snowballing. The discussions and interviews held drew on the families' responses to questions pertaining to their family experiences. The study attested to determine how these families' experiences and communities around then affected their family trajectories. As part of the gathering, I also relied heavily on my personal experience of the Shona culture, used observations and general discussions at various for a. The information obtained here, provided a rich context upon which translation became a reliable approach to get the "most out of the least".

Literature Review
There are quite a handful of studies on the extended family systems in Africa, late alone Zimbabwe. However, a sizeable volume of the literature is built upon from my personal experience and as a beneficiary of the extended family system in Zimbabwe.

Definition of key terms
Ubuntu: It is an African philosophy that spells out that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings, (Nelson, Mandela, 1994).
Extended family: literally, it means a collection of members of a family (fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunties, nephews, nieces and in-laws put-together). It is defined by relationships (kinship) and ensures that communities support each other. This kinship helps to define marriage patterns, dictates inheritance, provides a safety net for disadvantaged members and makes it mandatory for the community to accord their deceased a decent burial (Bhengu, 2010).
Kinship: Kinship is the web of relationship woven by family and marriage. Traditional relations of kinship have affected the lives of African people and ethnic groups by determining what laws they could form, whom they could marry, and their status in the communities (Dangarembwa, 1989).

Types of extended family set-up
These are classified broadly under four major types:
Patrilineal descent: this emphasizes the male side of the family tracing relationships through generations from fathers (Masubane, 1999). It is mostly practiced in China, the Middle East, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Islamic people of North Africa and Arabia.
Matrilined descent: traces lineage mothers, and is found in many African societies including the Bemba people of Zambia and Malawi. Mothers own fields and can pass them on to their daughters.
Double descent : is where every individual belongs to the patrilineal group of the father and matrilineal group of the mother. Rights, obligations and inheritance are split between the two. Double descent exists in Western and Southern Africa among such people as the Yako of Nigeria and the Herero of Namibia and Botswana.
Bilateral descent: refers to a kinship set-up in which an individual is considered equally related to kin on the father's and mother's sides. This system is uncommon in Africa and is practiced in other parts of the world.

Focus on extended family practices
It should be borne in mind that connectivity and collectivism are central tenets of the traditional Shona culture, as illustrated in the typical greeting exchange among them. Connectivity and collectivism are central tenets in the development of effective African Communities (Nkomo, 1998; Adjibolosoo, 1998; Chombo 1998; Maphosa 1998). Mugo (2003) uses the Shona greeting as an illustration "the initiator of greetings among the Shona people in Zimbabwe asks: "How are you?" the one being greeted will respond by saying "I am only well, if you are well". What it implies is that one's wellness depends on the wellbeing of the others. Hence, it is not surprising that members of the extended family obligated to support and assist fellow members despite their own personal or immediate family needs.
In black Zimbabwean culture, relatives come together to comfort each other in times of trouble (Nicholson, 1997). Therefore, funerals have been known to be good places to meet relations one might not have known about.
With reference to the African context, Toungara (1997) writes about the way traditional marriages were and still are arranged by elder male members of the extended patriarchal and patrilineal family where traditional marriages involved adult male members of the extended patriarchal and patrilineal family. According to Nyathi (2001), in Zimbabwe "marriage is not between two individuals but between two families. The intricate

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involvement of the family makes marriage a more socially and economically inclusive unit that places more burdens on women than men.

Traditional kinship generally means much more than blood ties of a family or household. It does include a network of responsibilities. Privileges and support in which individuals and families are expected to fill certain roles. In modern Africa, society and economic changes have begun to loosen the ties of traditional kinship especially in the cities.

It is clearly understood that kinship is based on relationships of descent in which kin groups define themselves as descendants of common ancestors (Nyathi, 2001). In one type of descent group the lineage- all members know their exact relationships to one another. The clan is another type of group larger than the lineage. Members recognize that they are all part of a group but do not know how they are related to each other.

Individual have important ties with two different kin groups, the mother's and the father's. As such kinship is not limited to lineage. Such ties are extended to outside the village or community, offering certain advantages. If a community suffers from drought, war disease, food shortages or other disasters its members may go to live with their kin in other areas (Hams, 1972). This is brief African kinship in a cooperative relationship between household members and a set of social obligation and expectations that ensures that no one faces tragedy alone. Thus in societies without welfare services, especially sub-Sahara, African kinship provides a safety net for vulnerable members such as orphans, widows, the elderly, the disabled and divorced women. Though in Zimbabwe, kinship appears to grow weaker and weaker everyday, they continue to serve this function. It remains a critical part and practice of life in contemporary Africa.

One of the key features of social life in Africa's patrilineal societies is the close relationships between a man and his sister's son- his nephew. Anthropologists call this relationship avanculism (brother of the mother/uncle) and in African cultures it is mandatory for the uncle to give his best cattle to his nephew or to accept teasing from the nephew (Boudillion, 1998). A brother might also be expected to support his sister's children or to participate in the rituals that mark certain stages of their lives.

In southern Africa where avanculism is a common practice, a boy's uncle on his mother's side may be called his "male mother" in recognition of the special link. In other groups, the opposite relationship occurs with a boy's father's sister- his aunt seen as an authority figure called the "female father". The Tonga of Mozambique, the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Nama of Namibia are some of the groups that practice avanculism.

Technology has brought a global media influence to even the most isolated villages of Zimbabwe, so that parents and custodians of our culture and traditions have been caught up in the web of cultural erosion (Aneku, 2008). The general feeling is that they are worried elders who say young people and some adults suffer a disconnect that gets some of the blame for chronic problems in communities – alcoholism, cultism, domestic violence, ritual killings, get -rich quick syndrome. It appears nobody is fighting back. Villagers have watched cultural dances, festivals and stories of our forefathers *(ngano)* disappear, replaced by hip hop and novels characterized by violence and sex.

According to the principle idea advanced by MeniMengi Tzu (c 372-c289) known under his Latin name Mencius, every human being is born well, hence if man maintains his original nature, he will remain good. In man's original nature there is a sense of shame, a sense or courtesy and a sense of right and wrong. If a man relies only on his sense of perception without subjecting them to the control of mind, he falls into evil and prevents his original nature. The bane of moral decadence in Zimbabwe and Africa at large is the erosion of that sense of shame, courtesy and right and wrong in the past two decades. It should be noted that the cultural erosion and re-orientation of our traditional core values of honest,

integrity, equity communal social responsibility and good behaviour has left us in this dire state of social and cultural corrosion of the extended system.

Among the Shona, close associations such as church, family, neighborhood family, or friendship-family seem inadequate. Zimbabweans seem to legitimize these "relationships" via some totem connections regardless of how distant the connections might be. Tong (1998) in her discussion of patriarchy determines the totem as "the symbol of the father". Therefore, the boundless extended family network usually extends to other acquaintances who share the same totem (*mutupo*) with the immediate family members, blood relatives, and or with other members of the existing extended family.

Bourdillon (1998) states, among the Shona "the relationship between individuals is treated as a relationship between two clans". The boundless extended family has deep roots in the Zimbabwean culture and is an integral part of everyday activities even for the modern and educated people. Though we have a lot of people now living in urban areas, they also have extended family networks, most of these members are somewhat related to them either through close/remote blood ties or marriages. The boundless extended families actually gets broader in close-knit rural areas where it includes many with no traceable blood or clan ties such as relatives of neighbours, friends and some-totem relations as alluded to earlier. TsitsiDangarembwa (1989) portrayed of the extended family in nervous conditions provides a good overview of the working of a typical, albeit not very extensive extended Zimbabwean family. Bourdillon (1998) discusses the role played by the Shona clans and sub-clans in kingship. he write, "when two people with no traceable kingship ties meet, they may adopt rules of behaviour towards each other based on any relationship they know exists between other members of their respective clans. Thus if a Shona meets an elderly stranger and discovers that a young man from her clan has married a young girl from his, she can address him as "father-in-law".

The phenomena of the extended family is consistent with the African ethic of collectivism which Maphosa (1998) posits as the emergence of the importance of the group over the individual

Results and Analysis
Major drivers of the demise of extended family system

The study`s intention was to investigate causal factors for the demise of the extended family system in Zimbabwe. A number of responses emerged as cited by respondents from Chief Neshangwe area. In view of the cultural tenets of the Zimbabwe people, the live response are provided below and the phase provide the clue in-terms of the state of the extended family system in Zimbabwe. In the presentation, for anonymity purposes, names of the respondents are not given, and what are given are pseudo-names. It should also be noted that, most of the interviews' were done in Shona and then translated to English. Effort was made to try to be as accurate as possible in the translation to avoid loosing meaning of ''first instance''.

Many respondents (90%) pointed out that the major driver of the erosion of the extended family system was modernization, which they constantly referred to as ''*chizvino-zvino*''. The main issue was that Zimbabweans no longer respect their cultures' due to western influences. Headman Jambwa had this to say ''*the inner culture which is for accessing the 'programme of order' that is shaping force of the harmonious social life, an essential pre-requisite for man's spiritual growth and the flourishing of all social institutions has been replaced by the western 'outer culture'*. He went on to say: ''*western cultures which are unique to their own rights have been introduced to Africa, brought contradictions to our traditional values such as respect, sense of caring for others and a concern for the well-being of others. This is obviously a clash of civilizational cultures. The most unfortunate thing is*

that western culture seems to be more dominant and as such our traditions have been undergoing abrasion for some time now. ''HIV and its influence, theDiaspora effect too are other causes.'' These findings concur with findings by Dowdon (1998) who argued that modernization and western influence played a central role in eroding Shona culture. Father Guvamombe a prominent farmer in Chivhu took his time to shed light on the demise of extended family in Chivhu and Zimbabwe in General. His major concern was that urbanization, industrialization and economic hardships and the adoption of western values were major hurdles to the death of extended family system. His sentiments were: *''due to economic hardships some people now try to avoid extended families and some people do not even disclose to relatives where they are staying and working.''* He continued on *''the cost of living that has been going up since the introduction of economic reforms in 1991has made our situation worse than ever. It was from this period that we have been experiencing the cultural shift. Prior to that people used to help each other but (pakauyamhukaiya)-(when this animal come) things started to navigate wrongly''.*

Mudziwapera, a father of six children also expressed sentiments on the problems of the extended family practices: "*In the last decades people used to do things together and there was a strong bond between and among families. We used to go to our holidays during school holidays. I was personally supported by my uncle; all my school fees were paid by him when my father had passed away. These days it's one man for himself and God for us all''*.

Mother Guruuswa, whose husband passed away twenty years ago, was not amused. She said:*''relatives are more concerned with their immediate families, with some even failing to look after their own children. Urbanization has added on to the problems forcing people to adopt different cultures, some of them focuses on individualism which in turn will result in values such as sharing and consultation fading''*.

An elder, MrModzi expressed his disappointment of political; leadership and parents for failing to uphold African principles and values. He has this to say; *"In the past grandmothers and Aunties played the role of counsillors to our children but nowadays, it is not the same. Do you know that the care of the elderly in African culture has been the responsibility of the community? We are now send to old people's home as if ''hatinakubereka''(we did not bear children). Aaah, pasipapanduka"* (the world has badly changed-spiting on the ground) . These sentiments echoed here agrees with Onwujesgwu(2000) where he found in his study of the extended system in Nigeria, that community neglects their culture due to globalization.

Ambuya(Grandmother) Nzungudzaora questioned the role of government and community leaders for failing to uphold the extended family system. She even alluded that this could be why *''rains are no longer consistent-hainganayezvakadai''* (which literally mean, it cannot rain when it is like this.) Some of the narrations are;"*Children are cared for by parents and the extended family until they grew to become independent and as parents grew older. Our orphans were not neglected as we see today. Tradition is no longer considered in this modern society. The current generations of young couples is concerned with the nuclear family. Budgetary constraints have been ordering relatives to notify them if they want to pay a visit so that they would be factored into the budget.''*

With all the above sentiments above, one is left wordless. Gone are the days when kinship was the pillar to Zimbabwean culture. There are more questions than answers as the general feeling among many Zimbabweans is that we need to uphold this noble collective practice for cultural survival and modernization.

Resuscitating the extended system

A question was proposed on what respondents thought would revive the once popular collective practice. More than 75% of the respondents expressed mixed feelings on this

matter, others saying it was too late to resuscitate. ''*with the current state of the extended family system, no one is able to bring its fortunes back, there is a lot of individualism, diaspora effect and western culture influence. The sense of collectivism is dwindling*''.

Those who feel that something can be done to resuscitate provided various ideologies impressing upon that culture is learnt, hence it is possible to orient the Zimbabwean people on the significance of collective orientations, selfishness and in calculating a spirit of oneness…''we can orient our children first through introducing a curriculum on extended family system from primary until the tertiary education level.''

Zimbabweans should emulate what is good. As a Christian nation, we need to practice what we preach. The spirit of extended family is more Christian than just being an African culture, so why can not we preach about it in our churches, schools, homes and all gatherings.

Discussion

We must realize that from the study, the extended family system has been portrayed as just culture which is not worth loosing. It is unfortunate that the state of these systems is in an erosional state, undergoing decay, in a melting state and almost reaching a point of no return. It is imperative from cultural point of view that every Zimbabwean contributes in one way or the other in attempting to bring back the spirit of collectivism and the sense of sharing. The outcome of the study clearly indicates that the major drivers of socio-cultural degradation with reference to the extended family system is western cultural influence, urbanization, industrialization, diasporism, HIV scourge and the other related factors.

Traditionally extended families were sustained by the collective familial production where by kinships groups worked together and shared economic wealth (Nkomo, 1998, Mikell 1997). This is no longer the case as societies have changed. In an African setup, you cannot separate or treat for example, culture and economy separately or you cannot separate philosophy from science and you cannot separate mathematics from culture or philosophies neither can anyone separate ontology from metaphysics. The interconnectedness of disciplines enabled Africans to serve humans best. What it implied then was, no vacuum was allowed and the more there is a vacuum, the inner part of an African fails to communicate with the outer part because the outer part is foreign and the ultimate occurrence is imbalance, lucid as it were lacking power to direct the process that shape African behavior and culture (Auttenni, 2005). The implications are that the concept of separate beings of substance which find themselves side by side from an actual perspective, entirely independent of one another, an intimate ontology relationship, comparable with the casual tie which the creative and creator animates is created.

An African psychology cannot conceive of a man as an individual, as a force existing by itself and apart from its ontological relationships with the living beings and from its connection with animals or intimate forces around but human beings are regarded as ''a collection of beings''. One cannot be above group interests. That is African. That is the extended concept. In terms of Ubuntu, apart from Nelson Mandela emphasis-what Mahatma Gandhi of India once said: '*I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social-being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint, willing submission to social restraint for the sake of well being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.*''

Given the above views of Gandhi, I am also at liberty to say that any harmful action against another individual is a threat to the whole society, a restriction on individuals cultural and social activity places severe constraints on the social and cultural welfare of the whole society and if the individual prospers, so does his family, extended family and society at

large. An individual could prosper so long as his/her pursuit of prosperity does not conflict with the interests of the community, the society's interests have to be paramount. Any action taken by an individual in society should be ubuntu oriented, it should of course preserve the totality, fullness and harmonious collectivism of a human person and should not contradict the fullness and totality of humanism, upon which the extended family system is an offshoot. I believe that for Zimbabwe late alone Africa to have universal human collectivism, it would have to have a strong African-oriented ''substantivist'' socio-cultural philosophy, that is culturally routed and grounded in African ideology. The ideology of 'Hunhu' (*ubuntu*).

Recommendations

It is important at this juncture of the study to point out a few workable suggestions that we see continuous sustenance of the extended family system in Zimbabwe and in Africa. Parents should play a pivotal role in liberating the dying culture of the extended family through adopting an indigenous extended family framework which emphasize on *ubuntuism*as a pillar to societal development. A merge of *ubuntuism* and Christian values will provide a good starting point to resuscitate the dying culture which we cannot do without.

The genuine involvement of men in breaking the unfair patriarchal-set gender practices is necessary (Hooks, 1984, Collins 1990), for example husbands could liberate their wives by advising their parents, siblings and relatives to retain from anti-retrogressive behaviours. Massy et al (1998), contributing to extended family issues can be adopted as a recommendations too. He concludes that due to men`s structural and patriarchal advantages, which have more power to exercise their values and make choices than women, they can more easily change the status in promoting collectivism of individualism.

There is need for targeted educational drive on the importance of extended family. The school and the church should play a pivotal role in this drive. Government can give tax rebates to members of family who are taking care of children or elders from other families. This will increase their net income and leave them with more income to meet the needs of the extended family system. There is need to promote an African -centric and Afro-centric philosophy that promotes'' I am African'' and 'I am because, there are' motto.

Africans should attempt, through an organized process to de-colonize and overhaul western culture so that it can serve humanity well and we can do that we move from ''outside to the inside'' concept and begin to domesticate all the socio-cultural methodology, approaches and practices that are ideologically constructive. We need to begin to problematise new epistemological approach that are based on our own cosmogonies, that is look at the world and society events from within and re-humanise the socio-cultural order.

Simply and straightfor*ward, we need to uphold the core-values of extended family system as people born out of ubuntu.*

Conclusion

The challenge we have as Africans is to continue from where we started erring, where we ended our goodness, our collectively thinking, our hope and start to develop our locally brewed socio-cultural constitutive rules, norms and values, untangle the western and eastern constitutive rules, and set in place our new cultural normative tenets, which will be globally competitive and create equilibrium in the global socio-cultural order. I am aware that it is easier said than done but we have to and it has to be done, by you and me. We need to extend our thinking, extent the way we do things and uphold the value of the extended family system. Remember, Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus but he looked after him well. The extended family system is biblical illustrated by Joseph-Jesus scenario, Abraham – Lot, Timothy and the case on widows (Genesis 12 v1-5; Timothy 5 v3-4; 8, 16). It is a sin,

not to look after even those who are not of your blood ties .Where could we be, if Jesus was abandoned? *Aluta extended family culture! Aluta!*

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