

A sustainable educational response to the recent increased witch killing and ritual murder ‘*Liretlo*’ in Lesotho: Introducing Basotho Traditional Religion in Lesotho schools

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ABSTRACT

Witch killing and ritual murder have been increasing in Lesotho since 1999 even though there is absolute silence from different social sectors including academic community. This paper is an attempt to break such silence from the angle of religious education proposing that Basotho Traditional Religion should be introduced in Lesotho schools to teach Basotho youth about the real meaning of belief in witchcraft and vital force as the main source behind witch killing and ritual murder. The paper highlights that the susceptibility of Basotho youth to crimes of witch killings and ritual murder is due to cultural alienation in which they have been estranged from their own religious beliefs by neglect of traditional beliefs in formal education system. They are ignorant of their traditional beliefs which they could also not be totally divorced from owing to the fact that religion is so inherent in African culture to the extent that it accompanies an individual before birth up until after death. Practicing a religion that they are ignorant of has put them in a situation in which they may either misrepresent it or misuse it for criminal acts. Even though there are many factors suggested including economic factors, rationality behind unusual occurrences, and strengthening of vital force to be the motives for witch killing and ritual murder, this review argues that those are opportunistic factors while at the heart is ‘belief’ – religion that has to be addressed through reorientation of the same religious beliefs within moral education and culturally appropriate education.

Keywords: Religious education, witch killing, ritual murder, Basotho Traditional Religion, moral education, multicultural education, culturally appropriate education.

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INTRODUCTION

Lesotho has experienced a continuous witch killing and ritual murder in recent years even though there is a complete silence on these issues from different social sectors and more importantly from academic circles, mainly anthropologists, religion studies and educationists. The issues seemed to be left for police who are responsible for the arrest of witch killers and ritual murderers, journalists who usually reports court proceedings and courts of law that have deal with such cases. This paper cross-examines these problems from religious education perspective.

Witch killing (also witch purging) refers to the hunting of

and murdering of people accused of witchcraft. Both the terms ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ are difficult to explain in an African understanding. Cimpric (2010) proposes that in the contemporary Africa the term ‘witch’ refers to an individual with disconcerting character, who operates undercover or secretly, and who employs occult knowledge and controls certain objects and magic techniques. This definition includes both the female witch on her broom and the seers consulted by the local population. Witchcraft on the other hand refers to a set of beliefs, structured and shared by a given population, that addresses the origin of misfortune, illness and death, and

the set of practices for detection, treatment and punishment that corresponds to these beliefs in which the witch is responsible for the cause, detection and treatment. These definitions of witch and witchcraft do not differentiate between a witch, a diviner and a doctor.

In Sesotho culture there is a difference between a witch (*moloji*), diviner (*selaoli*), and doctor (*ngaka*), but all of them acquired inherent mystical powers and ability to use mystical medicinal substances. The difference is that a witch (*moloji*) uses his/her inherent mystical powers and knowledge of medicinal substances to harm others while traditional doctor (*ngaka*) uses his/her knowledge of medicinal substances for the welfare of the people (Lapointe, 1993). Mbiti (1997) cautions that the term 'witchcraft' in African culture is used broadly to describe all sorts of evil intended to harm others, which are operated in secret manner. Witchcraft is used to include sorcery, evil magic, evil eye and other ways of employing mystical powers to harm other people and their properties. It cannot therefore be equated to traditional healers whose work is to use their knowledge for benevolent purposes. Also, Tebbe (2007) and Carstens (1999) support that a witch is a human being who secretly uses supernatural power for wicked purposes and this practice of secretly using supernatural evil powers to harm others or to help oneself at the expense of others is witchcraft. While traditional healers on the other hand use their supernatural powers to counteract witchcraft. The main problem is that in most cases witches (*baloi*) do not describe themselves as such, they are only detected by a diviner (*selaoli*) who also provides treatment against witchcraft, and who is the source of witch killings in Lesotho which raises serious questions. Looking at the role of a diviner, this paper proposes to adopt the definition of Cimpric (2010) which defines witchcraft as ability to use, detect and treat mystical powers.

It also has to be noted that there are different specializations in Sesotho medicine. Some are traditional healers/doctors (*lingaka*) who are mainly herbalists and whose knowledge of medicinal herbs may have been acquired through the process of learning from other *lingaka* or from revelation by ancestors. Others are diviners (*lilaoli*) whose work is more like ancestral messenger who only reveals the unknown and gives explanations to the supernatural phenomena. However they both claim knowledge of medicinal plants and objects that is not limited to sickness but extends to supernatural forces including witchcraft (Tebbe, 2007). It also has to be noted that in modern Africa including Lesotho witch detection and treatment is not limited to traditional doctors but pastors in revivalist and Pentecostal churches who have a specific role to play in diagnosis and treatment of witchcraft (Foxcroft, 2009).

Ritual murder on the other hand is defined by Igwe (2012) as a sacred practice found in different occult religions including African Traditional Religion. In this

sacred ritual, perpetrators hunt for and harvest human body parts to prepare charms that are believed to work mystically for different purposes including the acquisition of power to manipulate events that result in harm, healing, protection, initiation, transformation, achieving knowledge, self-deification, enhance fortunes in business and during elections. In Lesotho, ritual murder is referred to as '*liretlo*,' a term derived from the Sesotho word '*retla*' which means slicing of animal flesh prepared to be cooked for eating (Jones, 1951).

Both witch killing and ritual murder have a long history in Lesotho. Casalis (1861) recorded the belief in the existence of witchcraft in pre-colonial Basotho society in which its origin is not known except different myths that could not be sustained. However, as early as such, there was some skepticisms against belief in witchcraft as one Basotho chief quoted saying: "Sorcery only exists in the mouths of those who speak of it. It is no more in the power of man to kill his fellow by mere effect of his will, than it would be to raise him from the dead..." (Casalis, 1861:275). It is further renowned that unlike in many African tribes where punishment to those identified through divination as witches whose punishment was death, Basotho could only 'eat up' (confiscate) the property and banish the perpetrator (Gill, 1997; Mahao, 1993). Belief in witchcraft continued during the colonial period as chronicled by Widdicombe (1891) with the same method of detecting witches and giving the same punishment. However, it was realized that at this time both believing in witchcraft and detecting it was not done as openly as it was in pre-colonial period and was dramatically declining. Lapointe (1993) indicates that contrary to many African tribes, chief Mohlomi, of the Basotho tribe who became an important mentor of Moshoeshoe (the founding father of Basotho nation) had as early as pre-colonial period, condemned the belief, the diagnosis and punishment of witchcraft. Moshoeshoe followed his example and issued an edict against witchcraft accusation.

The origin of ritual murder or medicine murder in Lesotho is not known. According to Jones (1951) there are two theories of the origin of ritual murder (*Liretlo* in Sesotho) in Lesotho. One theory is that *liretlo* is not indigenous to Basotho culture but had been imported from the Zulu culture. Protective medicine (*Lenaka*) which *liretlo* is mainly for, had been already in use in Basotho culture, but it was made up of animal parts instead of human parts. The other theory is that *liretlo* is as ancient as Basotho nation, to the extent that it is not possible to trace its origin. However, it has been noted that Moshoeshoe had *lenaka* with human parts ingredients even though those parts were obtained from corpses of enemies killed in wars. Maake (1996) mentions that occurrences of *liretlo* were recorded in the early colonial period in 1895 in which about 6 cases were reported and then declined. Epprecht (1992) avows that *liretlo* became a Lesotho 'epidemic' and reached a peak in the years

between 1940 and 1955 in which over 120 cases were reported during this period.

RECENT WITCH KILLING AND RITUAL MURDER IN LESOTHO

Even though it seems there is quietness to the problem of witch killing and ritual murder from different sectors of Basotho society, these phenomena have recently reemerged and it is worrying and requires an immediate response.

Table 1 highlights recent witch killings and ritual murders in Lesotho as reported by the police in which there could be more unreported cases.

From the information in Table 1, it can be detected that there has been a case of either ritual murder or witch killing from 1996. The murders seem to be so spread that they almost occur in every angle of Lesotho. There is also a pattern that the youth are the ones who commit both witch killing and ritual murders, while children, females and elderly people are victims of witch killing and ritual murder because of their physical vulnerability.

Motive for witch killing and ritual murder

There have been different opinions with regard to the occurrences of witch killings and *liretlo* in the African continent. At the midpoint of witch accusation is a 'belief' in witchcraft. It is believed that other people have supernatural powers to harm others. Belief in witchcraft does not in itself translate to the evils of the phenomenon. Belief may lead to suspicion and precautions, but such propensities do not raise concern. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives everyone a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and this right includes freedom to change religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's own religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (Cimpric, 2010; Foxcroft, 2009). Furthermore, it has been suggested that belief in witchcraft can act positively in a society as a check and balance against economic and power inequality. People may fear to have excessive material accumulation or boast about their wealth in fear that others may be filled with jealousy as a result bewitch them (Nyabwari and Kagema, 2014). The main problem that is of concern is why people are being accused and murdered because of witchcraft? There have been different theories attempting to answer this question in relation to the recent witchcraft.

The first theory is *income shock theory (IST)* (Miguel, 2005; Golooba-Mutebi, 2005; Federici, 2010; Ally, 2009). According to this theory, witch accusations are manufactured to respond to different economic challenges. Sometimes there may be income shock that

result from global economic arrangement that has dramatically transformed local economies where it became apparent that people fail to identify forces governing their lives and to comprehend why other people prosper in this changing economic system while others are impoverished. As a result, those who benefit from the new economic system develop suspicion of fear of being bewitched by those who are penurious, and the poor on the other hand develop suspicion that the wealth in which they are excluded from is evil. At other times, the shock may be a result of insufficient income, particularly land in rural subsistence farming. The decline in income from the land may force some community members to blame others of witchcraft so that they could be banished or murdered in order to confiscate their land. This theory may be sustained. From Table 1, Tiheli Tekane and his family were murdered by villagers who have been instigated by his brother Pule Tekane that Tiheli and his wife are responsible for the death of some children in the village (Lesotho Times, 2009). Also 'Mankuebe Tšehlo was murdered by his grandson, John Tšehlo (Lesotho Times, 2010). In Lesotho the property of the deceased is inherited by immediate relatives which may be a push factor for relatives to murder members of their families in order to have access to their property, mainly land.

Another theory is the *Scapegoat Theory (ST)* (Miguel, 2005; Golooba-Mutebi, 2005; Federici, 2010; Ally, 2009). Scapegoat theory suggests the conceptualization of witchcraft as an attempt by people to rationalize the misfortunes occurring in their life. It provides an answer to 'why me' question, when a disaster or any calamity strikes an individual directly or indirectly. Witch accusations provide an explanation for what would be otherwise unexplainable or solution to that which would not be solved. As such, witchcraft accusations therefore follow the patterns of tension and conflict in societies and some people become the victims of such social factors. This theory is sustainable as many African communities find solutions of most social calamities from witchcraft. Death of a close relative is not easily accepted. Therefore there should be something or somebody to carry the blame.

Another theory is *Religious Income Theory (RIT)* (Monila, 2005; Federici, 2010). This theory postulates that revivalist pastors and African religion priests are the main source behind witch accusations. Most of them operate on a profit-making basis and nearly all of them demonstrate exorcism and witchcraft healing in public places in order to ensure people of their power over witchcraft for the purposes of financial gain. When it comes to exorcism and witchcraft healing they tend to target "clients" and not the faithful as might be expect. These churches and traditional doctors operate as reference points for families who have neither access to nor confidence in basic or social services. To be possessed with witchcraft or to be bewitched does not go without accusing those responsible for witchcraft. This

Table 1. Recent witch killing and ritual murder in Lesotho.

Year	Nature of murder	District	Perpetrator(s)	Age	Sex	Victims	Age	Sex	Motive	
1999	Mutilation	Maseru	Chief Masupha Posholi	N/p	M	N/P	4	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
2004	Strangled	Mafeteng	John Tšehlo	21	M	'Mankuebe Tšehlo (perpetrator's grandchild)	N/p	F	Witchcraft accusation	
2005	Mutilated	Thaba-tseka	Nyatso Ratalane, Mapitikoe Ratalane, Mapolao Pitso, Matumelo Mafenoane	N/p	M F F F	Matšelis Mokhathatsi	30	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
2009	Burnt to death	Mafeteng	8 villagers	N/p	M/s	Tiheli Tekane, his wife and their two children	N/p	M/s & F/s	Witchcraft accusation	
	Mutilation	Qacha	Lebohang Pitso	25	M	Unnamed	87	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
2010	Stabbed to death	Maseru	Unknown	U/k	U/k	'Manapo Ramootsi	72	F	Witchcraft accusation	
	Assaulted to death	Maseru	Nthejane Lelimo,	24	M	Libuseng Mosandeli	30	F	Witchcraft accusation	
			Tebello Lelimo, Matšelis Lelimo, Malefetsane Mokele, Mantšoti Khutlang	20 26	F N/p N/p					
Burnt to death	Berea	Villagers	N/p	M/s & F/s	Mapaulosi Marou Malitšeoane Lefaphane	Both 54	F/s	Witchcraft accusation		
	Burnt to death	Mafeteng	Villagers	N/p	F	Unnamed	78	F	Witchcraft accusation	
2011	Not described	Mohale's hoek	Villagers	Bt 20 & 40	M/s	3 Unnamed women	N/p	F/s	Witchcraft accusation	
	Mutilation	Berea	Unknown	U/k	U/k	'Malintle Qothela	N/p	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
2012	Mutilation	Berea	Lehlohonolo Scott	29	M	Moholobela Seetsa	13	M	Body parts (Medicine)	
			Malehlohonolo Scott	59	F					
	Mutilation	Berea	Lehlohonolo Scott Malehlohonolo Scott			M F	Kamohelo Mohata	20	M	Body parts (Medicine)
	Mutilation	Berea	Unknown	U/k	U/k	Unamed	N/p	M	Body parts (Medicine)	
	Mutilation	Berea	Unknown	U/k	U/k	Nthati Alice Mothokho	N/p	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
	Mutilation	Maseru	3 men including Husband brother	N/p	N/p	Unnamed	78	F	Body parts (Medicine)	
2013	Mutilation	Leribe	Unknown	U/k	U/k	Unnamed	35	M	Body parts (Medicine)	

Table 1. Continues.

	Mutilation	Berea	Unknown	U/k	U/k	Unnamed	79	M	Body parts (Medicine)
2014	Mutilation	Maseru	Unknown	U/k	U/k	Puleng Sejane	15	F	Body parts (Medicine)
2015	Mutilation	Quthing	Maphatsoe Ntjilo & his unnamed wife	24 23	M & F	Unnamed 4 children	Bt 3mth & 10yrs	F/s & M/s	Body parts (Medicine)
	Mutilation	Maseru	Unnamed 2 men	N/p	M	Unnamed	43	F	Body parts (Medicine)
	Mutilation	Mohale's hoek	Unnamed 2 people	34 & 41	N/p	Unnamed woman	43	F	Body parts (Medicine)

Source: Lesotho Times and Sunday Express (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015) recorded from court proceedings.
Abbreviation: Bt → Between; F → Female; F/s → Females; M → Male; M/s → Males; N/p → Not provided; U/k → Unknown.

theory is also sustainable as Africa is experiencing a boom in Pentecostal revivalist who have capitalized on African indigenous beliefs about mystical forces and powers and through their books and open-air sermons in public spaces, have increased people's anxiety about their social security in relation to evil forces, and preach a connection between Satan and witchcraft. African traditional priests/healers have increased in numbers in recent years with more emphasis on the existence of witchcraft and their spiritual ability to heal people from witchcraft. Many diseases and misfortunes are diagnosed by these healers as witchcraft that can be cured through mystical powers.

Even though these theories may be supported to the certain extend, it is the position of this paper that they do not explain the motive for witch accusations and killings, but opportunistic factors while the central motive is "belief – religion."

With regard to ritual murders, particularly in the context of Lesotho, Jones (1951) argues that they should not be referred to as ritual murders but medicine murder since they were not committed for religious purposes that is suggested by the term 'ritual' but were perpetuated mainly for material purposes. The flesh that is cut off from

'*liretlo*' victim is mixed with other ingredients to produce a powerful magical medicine. However, Jones (1951) still maintains that magical medicine made with ingredients of human blood and flesh was considered powerful since it is believed that human blood and flesh have properties of mystical powers. Murders were initiated and pre-determined by traditional doctors who also prescribed the relevant qualities and characteristics of the victim. Which means ritual murders are motivated by 'belief' which is religion and are initiated for prescriptions by traditional doctors who are also religious priests in African culture. In ritual murders, religion is exploited for material gains. From the general belief of the power of magical concoctions with human flesh and blood, medicines from *liretlo* is used for different purposes including fortification, luck, bravery, power and riches.

SUSCEPTIBILITY OF BASOTHO YOUTH FOR COMMITTING WITCH KILLING AND RITUAL MURDER

Table 1 shows that witch killings and ritual murders are committed by young people at the

ages of between 20 and 40. Not ignoring other secondary factors such as unemployment, economic inequalities and new diseases such as HIV/AIDS which may force the youth for different options to overcome such social realities, this paper argues that the root cause which is 'belief – religion' has to be addressed.

The continued neglect of Basotho Traditional Religion while focusing mainly on Christian religious education in the Lesotho education system might be one of the factors for the susceptibility of Basotho youth to the crimes of witch killing and ritual murder. Religious Education is the mother of Western formal education in Lesotho. Western formal education in Lesotho was introduced by the PEMS missionaries in the mid-1830s well before many African countries. They were later joined by the Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries (Chirwa and Naidoo, 2014; Frankema, 2012; State University, 2014). The main reason for the missionaries to leave their homes abroad to come to Lesotho and other African countries was to convert Africans to Christian religion. However, they realized that conversion to Christianity was not possible amongst the Africans due to cultural beliefs and language barriers, and owing to the fact that the

prospective converts were illiterate, that is, they could not read nor interpret the Bible. As a result, education became essential to serve the purpose of educating Basotho a new Christian life that is incompatible with or even hostile to the traditional way of life but attuned to the Western civilization which missionaries understood to be inseparable with Christian moral values. The dominance of the mission education that places Christian religious education at the center of education continued during the colonial rule up to the present-day. Presently, about 90% percent of primary schools are operated by Christian churches, while the Government operates only 10%. Only 7% of secondary schools is under the government control while 93% is under Christian churches control which still prioritize Christian religious education (Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, 2012).

The main problem is that Basotho youth can only be taught and learn from Christian beliefs while denied such an opportunity with their traditional religion in schools. Even though Lesotho is considered a Christian country due to the statistical information that shows almost 90% of Basotho Christians while the remaining 10% is shared by the minority religious groups such as Islam, Hindu, Buddhism and Basotho Indigenous Religion (Stoddard, 2000; United States Department of State, 2013), the statistics may not be reliable since Basotho religion is not hostile to other religions and many who are believed to be belong to other religions are also active members of their traditional religion. As Mbiti (1997) indicates, in African culture, religion is the general way of life. It is inseparable with culture and the general mode of existence. It accompanies an individual from before birth to after death. Therefore there could be no complete divorce from traditional beliefs, yet those beliefs have to be nurtured, cultured, inculcated and developed through education so that their meaning should be internalized other than believing in a religion that one is ignorant of. It is therefore the position of this review that it is imperative to re-orientate Basotho to their cultural beliefs through a planned education system.

The positive meaning of witchcraft and vital force for planned education strategy

The main motive for witch killing and ritual murder is “belief”, therefore Basotho Traditional Religion has to be introduced in the schools in which Basotho students learn about their belief systems. This approach would be indeed a sustainable education response to the problems of witch killing and ritual murder and even other crimes and anti-social behavior that are committed in the name of traditional beliefs.

Witchcraft and ritual medicine in African culture cannot be understood as separate entities that could be explained in isolation from the general religious system in which they exist. These practices can be comprehended

mainly within a system of belief which cannot be selected and interpreted without getting in to foundations upon which they stand. Every religion is continuous, that is, is subject to new meanings over years, hence why we have different theologies in Christian tradition. Theology is a planned educational program to consciously and continuously make Christian religion meaningful and relevant to Christians in different contexts and experiences. Witchcraft and ritual medicine are central to African Traditional Religion, and the argument here is not whether witchcraft is real or not, or whether human flesh does provide protection, luck, fortification and other associated beliefs, but the crust is “belief” which has to be given a new meaning within a broader context of religion itself. In this sense, Basotho Religion would not be understood as validating cultural roots of the African religious thought and philosophy, but as negotiating its meaning to respond to the current challenges.

Even though the origin of belief in witchcraft in the context of Lesotho is not clear, it has been argued that just as many African religious beliefs, it is supposed to have been developed within religious moral principles of community ethics. In the context where it leads to murdering people, it is used on a reversal side. Magesa (1997) points that witchcraft is a moral principle against unacceptable behavior within a community setting. Everybody is a potential witch but others are dormant witches while others are active witches. That is, everybody is likely to experience psycho-negative emotions including envy, hatred, anger, jealousy, pride and lust, and others are able to control these vices, and those who are able to suppress these natural human depravities avoid to be labelled witches, while those who exhibit them are active witches. Undeniably, in Sesotho culture, anybody who act and behave abnormally is referred to as *moloi* – witch. van Wyk (2004) supports that witchcraft could be used to describe the bad things done by good people (normal people). In many cases the term “witchcraft” is used to describe the situation where good people suddenly and for no reason whatsoever engage in unacceptable behavior. Witches therefore are usually not strange people in society. Any ordinary man and woman in a village could suddenly become a witch. Witchcraft is a powerful deterrent against evil intentions like stealing, incest and murder. It also has an educational function in that it keeps the norms and values of society alive. It teaches a powerful lesson against non-conformity. As such, it acts as a strong force for social cohesion. Which means that an individual is not expected to depart from accepted societal norms, for such an attempt may bring isolation and destruction upon an individual and the community at large (Nyabwari and Kagema, 2014). Through this understanding, belief in witchcraft has positive moral implications for society. Therefore within a planned school curriculum, witchcraft has to be taught and learnt as a moral code against unacceptable behavior which every individual should

avoid to be called or labelled as such. van Wyk (2004) concurs that witchcraft has an educational function. Teaching about witchcraft should help children to:

Learn about the good values of society, such as harmony, good order, good neighborliness, good company, cooperation, sharing, honesty, transparency and equitableness. Children are taught that witches are unsociable people. They are people that eat alone; they do not share food. They show no solidarity. They are arrogant people; they do not greet others. They are people who reject all normal things of society...children are constantly reminded of what social life is all about and what not... Education on witchcraft teaches children that nonconformity is dangerous and that one should not depart from accepted norms, because it raises the suspicion of others and can lead to isolation and eventual destruction (p. 1223).

Ritual murder derives from the belief in the mystical vital force. This vital force is a unit of supernatural power that is universal energy active in the cosmos as it is in every element and every creature, present in man and present with a greatly enhanced intensity in the dead. African life is tight to the belief in vital force, life force or to live stronger. This force permeates animate and inanimate and connects all the living and non-living beings into life-web connectivity. One's vital force can be strengthened or weakened through manipulation of forces from other beings, be they living or non-living. When weakened it lends one into a feebler social position of poverty, misfortune, sickness, insignificance and subservience, and when strengthened, it empowers an individual with political power, fortune, wealth, brave and domination. Vital force can be weakened through witchcraft in which the witches may use magic to tap on other's forces to make it prone to all enemies of the vital force such as poverty, sickness, and death and unidentified. Life force could also be weakened by one's own moral behavior. Stealing, dishonest, cowardice, sexual immoral and other unacceptable social behavior weakens a person's life force. Life force can be strengthened through invoking additional force from other beings and such knowledge is the monopoly of traditional doctor. These beings may be objects, living or dead beings such as dried plants, dead animals or humans. It can also be strengthened through good moral behavior. One who humbles himself, trustworthy, intelligent, kind, patient, brave and loving enhances the strength of the life force. He is honored, respected, elevated and commended (Temples, 2006; Nel, 2008; Masoga, 2012; Beyers, 2010).

Vellem (2010) plainly explains that the word for life force in Sesotho is "*Serithi*" that literally means 'dignity' and a person who has ability to command respect in the community is often described using the terms *serithi*.

People always refer to such dignified person as the one with *serithi*. Such a person will always enjoy warmth, respect and love from the community. This is a loveable person. The aura of '*serithi*' enhances respectability, reputability and moral integrity. Such person in most cases is elected to the positions of leadership in the community and in most cases his/her '*serithi*' awards him/her with different opportunities. Ritual murders are therefore committed because perpetrators want to augment or strengthen their vital force so that they could have it in its fullness that is to be rich, respected and admired. Since there are two ways in which one may strengthen the vita force mainly through obtaining additional vita force from other beings as recommended by the traditional doctor or through moral upright in which one increases his/her vital force by maintaining socially accepted values virtues, students of Basotho Traditional Religion could be taught a selective method of strengthening vita force. The method which serves moral development other than through magical ways that would turn them into murderers.

RATIONALIZATION FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF BASOTHO TRADITIONAL RELIGION IN LESOTHO SCHOOLS

According to Amaele (2009), schools are socializing institutions aimed at building individuals through education. There is a common trend to explain education from its etymological derivation which are two Latin words '*educare*' which means to form, make, build or train, and the other is '*educere*' which means to lead out, to uphold or to guide (Amaele, 2009; Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi, 2012). From this etymology education has acquired different meanings from different educationists and philosophers at different times and places to the extent that some have proposed that the concept education can only be explained within the context in which it is used such as formal institutional processes and informal activities (Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi, 2012). For the purpose of this review, the adopted explanation of education is provided by Singh (2011) that:

Education is an intentional attempt to pass on such a complex whole because it is the design by which cultural contents are transmitted from one generation to another...the structure of educational system, the role of the school, and the teacher-learner relationships reflect the social organization and cultural norms of the society...no part of educative process, neither its contents nor products, is free from cultural influence (p.12).

The other definition of relevance for this paper is provided by Akinpelu (1981) is an initiation into a worthwhile activity. Expounding on this definition, Amaele (2009)

indicates that worthwhileness is synonymous to values and therefore education is an instrument for moral reform aimed at moulding and transforming human souls in order to inculcate the right values of selfless duty towards all, and as such helps to develop an individual function in society and in attaining fulfillment. Education moulds the character of the people, leading them to know and appreciate things that are worthy and good.

Moral and cultural aspects that are highlighted in these two definitions of education supports the introduction of the teaching of Basotho Traditional Religion within the following accepted educational systems:

Culturally appropriate education

Culturally appropriate education has its mandate from The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that highlights the importance of culture, under which, Governments are obliged to preserve and protect the child's cultural identity, as an indispensable factor for child growth and development. The emphasis is put on the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each particular group that act as protection and harmonious development of the child (The United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues, 2014). UNESCO reiterates that education systems need to be responsive to the specific educational needs of indigenous peoples by fostering the cultural vitality of such cultural groups through effective and adequate educational programs that are based on the cultural perspectives and orientations of the learners (UNESCO, 2006). One of the Lesotho national goals of education as stated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework is that: "Educational programs shall incorporate cultural values and activities that are compatible with individual and social development" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008).

A culturally appropriate education is an educational strategy that combines instruction to fit in to the expectations and cultural patterns of a given cultural group. The cultural meaning-makings and its worldview are incorporated in to the national curriculum. It is grounded on imparting values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, and language that are the foundation of a culture. It is based on the idea that these "cultural standards" promotes a firm grounding in the cultural milieu of a particular place for a particular group and are fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally-healthy students and communities within that particular group and place (Singh, 2011). Culturally appropriate education is recommended with the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, and more easily to put into practice. It is imperative therefore that education should take into

consideration the content, values and knowledge of indigenous cultures in such a way that cultures become important pedagogical resources. Therefore schools should not only teach about the outside world, but should also support and value traditional knowledge, culture, livelihoods and worldviews (Gay, 2002).

It is within culturally appropriate education mandate in which the introduction of Basotho Traditional Religion is proposed. Religion in African context is both cultural expression and worldview of the people. Worldview refers to a set of assumptions held consciously or unconsciously in relation to peoples' beliefs about the general makeup of the world and how it works. Peoples' worldview involves their beliefs and attitudes towards the origin, the nature and the structure of the universe and how it relates to all beings with particular reference to human beings. The worldview of a people is a very important aspect of their general way of life as it dictates their total belief and thought system. It is the way people perceive and understand the world as it presents itself to them. It provides ideas and answers to the questions of existence, and the relationship between people, things and events. The worldview is taught and internalize to people from birth, and it is so believable that the people who held it always believe that their view of reality is the only one that is accurate (van der Walt, 2003; Ekeke, 2009). Culture on the other hand refers to the values, traditions, social and political relationships, and the created worldview which are shared and transmitted from one generation to another by a social group that is bounded together by a common history, geographic location, language and religion. Culture acts as a factor to communicate people's world-view. Culture shapes the worldview and interprets ideologies, values, constructed identities. It produces knowledge, goods, social practices capabilities, acquired habits and customs, and continuing social changes congruent with that particular social group (Giroux, 2004; Felix, 2012; Kamwaria and Katola, 2012).

This means that culture and worldview are interwoven, and each is embedded in each other. Both culture and worldview in African context are the description of religion. African worldview and culture are basically considered religious. In the African view of reality, everything that exists is related and interconnected to each other through the spiritual web and all that exists is an element of spiritually unified whole. Therefore it can be deduced that African culture and worldview are purely religious. This notion is expressed by Mbiti (1997) that "Africans are notoriously religious" and this is why the entire African culture is permeated with religious practices, explanations and references. Worldview and culture are intertwined with religion. Religion is so infused into the general life of an African to the extent that it is difficult to explain African mode of existence without reference to religion. Religion is the strongest element in African culture, so powerful that it influences the pattern of thinking and living for the group belonging to that

culture. Wherever an African is there is religion, and whatever an African is doing is the observance and expression of religion. Religion dominates and dictates for cultural heritage, social life, political and economic activities.

It is no exaggeration, therefore to say that the introduction of Basotho Traditional Religion in schools is justifiable within culturally appropriate education system.

Multicultural education

Cultural appropriate education is further catalyzed in multicultural education. Multicultural education is endorsed by UNESCO's declaration that education should be infused with the aims and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the Constitution of UNESCO on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 26.2, highlights that: 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance UNESCO of peace' (UNESCO, 2006). In relation to this declaration, education policy should be geared towards promoting understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures and cultures of other nations (UNESCO, 1974). The Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy affirms that education should be aimed at 'developing appreciation and acceptance of national culture and cultural diversity, history, values and norms basic for national unity and development' (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008). The emphasis here is that understanding and appreciating one's culture is a gateway to acceptance of cultural diversity, hence why multicultural should consider students own cultural knowledge as a starting point towards appreciation of cultural diversity.

Multicultural education refers to educational approach that critiques and addresses the short shortcomings of monoculture educational approach, which fails, and discriminates against students' cultural backgrounds. It is underpinned by the ideals of social justice, education equity, and a purpose of facilitating educational experiences in which all students from different cultural backgrounds fully participants in learning process as well as becoming socially active beings, locally, nationally, and globally. Multicultural education is a reaction against mono-cultural education that promotes instructional discrimination and curriculum bias and neglect of the concept of ancestral connectedness in education. Instructional discrimination occurs in the context where instruction is delivered without reference to the cultural orientation of students, and curriculum bias refers to

favoritism towards one cultural group while other excluded groups are expected to respond as though they are included (Mwonga, 2005; Todd, 2000).

The inclusion of Basotho Traditional Religion is justifiable in the multicultural education. Zirkel (2008) explains five core dimensions of the multicultural education framework as proposed by James Bank, a multicultural education expert, which are *content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture*. Amongst these five dimensions of importance to this review is *content integration* that refers to infusing the curriculum with material from diverse cultural groups. Multiculturalism seeks to incorporate some aspects of cultural diversity such as diversity of religion into the curriculum. Integration of Basotho Traditional Religion expands educational materials that will serve to foster the development of a strong, positive cultural identity for students whose lives and experiences have been relatively ignored in the teaching and learning of religious education. Such intervention will not only empower the students with cultural knowledge to address cultural problems but it will provide room for them to specifically discuss issues related to different religious cultures (Christianity and African Religion) in classrooms and such discussions can lead to less stereotyping and prejudice. Religious education in multicultural classroom makes possible for students to draw solutions to human problems from different religious backgrounds. Witch killing and ritual murder can be addressed from the religion in which they are inherited from.

Even though there is no clear guidelines on how to integrate multicultural content in the school curriculum, Mwonga (2005) draws from James Bank, the four approaches of integrating multicultural content into school curriculum which are *the contributions approach, the additive approach, the Transformation approach and the social action approach*. From these four, the transformative and the social action approaches provide a workable framework to introduce Basotho Traditional Religion. *The transformative approach* proposes that the structure of curriculum should be transformed or changed to include information from different cultural perspectives as to enable students to make informed decision on social issues and take action to solve them. The transformed curriculum can provide a sustainable educational response to social problems of witch killings and ritual murder.

Moral education

Moral education is directed in series of International Declarations and Conventions. For example, in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (a) and (b) mentions that Governments agree that the education of the child shall be directed to development of the national

values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). In Article 1 of Declaration on a Culture of Peace, the Governments commit themselves to promote and strengthen a culture of peace founded on a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life within their respective countries (UN, 1999). UNESCO (1949) on the international agenda on 'fundamental education' opined that "spiritual and moral development; belief in ethical ideals, and the habit of acting upon them; with the duty to examine traditional standards of behavior and to modify them to suit new conditions" should form part of fundamental education. The Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy concurs to moral education by stipulating that one of the aims of secondary is to "Provide students with moral and religious education for the development of a socially and culturally acceptable character, promoting the spirit of co-operation and service to others" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008).

As Eddy et al. (1986) and Temitayo et al. (2014) realized, it is not an easy venture to define moral education because moral education is as an old idea as society and education and it has had different definitions in different places, times and contexts in which it has been applied. This paper therefore wishes to propose the definition of moral education congruent with the topic under discussion. In this usage, moral education is defined as the education designed to develop moral thinking and decision-making skills associated moral situations or problems. It is a planned education designed for inculcation of desirable values, norms, attitudes that are approved by the society in order to have good future citizens. Moral education according to this definition is aimed at inculcating core moral values, such as care, respect for human life and helps to raise morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens to respond to the challenges of national insecurities (Temitayo et al., 2014). Nyabul (2009) makes a difference between 'moral education' and 'moral training' in which the former refers to activities aimed at helping students to acquire an understanding and appreciation of leading an ethically upright life, while the latter denotes activities employed to cause students to adhere to a set of moral rules without necessarily understanding and appreciating the functions of such rules. Moral education therefore is an attempt to develop dignity in human person by encouraging a rational decision in determining what is right and wrong. It develops capacity, knowledge, freedom and willingness to subscribe to ethical values in one's daily decision making.

Although moral education is not exclusively an adventure of religious education it has always been accepted that religious education is one of the teaching subjects in which moral education can be taught to students (Nord and Haynes, 1998). Religion is said to influence many people's lives. Religious activities are

regarded major source of everyday pleasure. In the contemporary socio-political debates that involve moral decisions such as gay marriage, abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, the teaching of evolution in schools, and others are heavily influenced by people's religious beliefs. Generally, it is not possible to make sense of most of human activities related to law, morality, war and culture without reference to religion (Bloom, 2012), hence why religious education is always believed to have special contribution in moral education.

However, there are some arguments against religious moral upbringing. For example, it is argued that religious fanaticism and extremism usually motivate people to do immoral acts, and some of religious practices and beliefs are unethical (Bloom, 2012). This paper concurs to the fact that religion may have terrible and detriment beliefs to the people just like beliefs of concern for this review which result in witch killing and ritual murder. However, it is the position of this paper that religious problems can only be corrected through reorientation of harmful religious beliefs through planned education system. Therefore cultural appropriate and moral education through Basotho Traditional Religion is hoped to provide students with moral values and culturally appropriate education to curb unethical and criminal acts in the name of the same religion.

CONCLUSION

As highlighted, religion and culture in an African context are identical and culture is explained by Cortez (2005) as "the total set of learned behaviors passed on from one generation to another or, even more broadly, on the sum total of ways of living developed by a group of human beings and passed on socially." However, this does not mean that culture should be viewed as a deterministic factor in which people are fashioned by it, instead, it is a conditioning factor in which it provides a framework of meanings that conditions people's understanding of reality. People themselves are active participants in the culture-shaping process. They are not only shaped by culture but they also shape and participate in the transmission of culture. They influence it and contribute to its reshaping. In other words, people are not only shaped by their culture but are also part of that culture which shapes them. The influence between the person and the culture is not a one-way direction as people and culture are continually shaping each other. This is to say that being part of culture enables one to identify areas that need to be reshaped and given new meanings. Witchcraft and ritual murder can therefore be reshaped and given new meanings within the same culture in which they exist through school educations system. Giving new meanings to traditional cultural/religious beliefs is a culturally responsive teaching and it is also liberating education in that it guides students in understanding that no single version of "truth" is total and permanent.

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