



Ubuntu as ‘Public Policy’ among the Tonga of Zambia’s Southern Province

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ABSTRACT

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The paper draws its data from a three-year study entitled ‘Archaeology of Ubuntu’ funded by the ‘National Research Foundation’ (NRF) of South Africa. The data utilised in this paper is drawn from interview discussions conducted with purposefully sampled elders from Tonga communities in Zambia’s Southern Province. The data specifically originates from the views of the elders on ‘their understanding of Ubuntu’. The main premise of the paper is the notion that Ubuntu is a widely theorised concept (Letseka, 2012; Mets, 2011; Ramos, 2006) with various conceptions of it as a consequence of this status quo in scholarly circles. However, of special interest to this paper among the various conceptions of Ubuntu is Nkondo’s (2007) conception of it as ‘public policy’. As such, the paper shows how this conception of Ubuntu is actualised among the Tonga of Zambia’s Southern Province. The paper realistically describes and portrays the practical implications of such a conception of Ubuntu among the Tonga. The conception of Ubuntu as ‘public policy’ is done in relation to the four main functions of ‘public policy’ in society.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Ubuntu is a multifaceted concept which is fully dependent on one’s perception in terms of definition. It is for this reason that the concept of Ubuntu has been widely theorised (Letseka, 2012, 2000; Metz, 2011, 2007; Blessler, 2008; Ramos, 2006, 2002, 1999; Broodryk, 2002; Sindane, 1994; Makgoro, 1998; Shutte, 1994). Among the various conceptions of the concept of Ubuntu is the aspect that it is an epistemological paradigm (Ramose, 2006), it is a human concept (Broodryk, 2002), it is an invented tradition grounded in minimising historical chasms and fractures (Marx, 2002) and simply a moral theory owing to the involvement of an aspect of a shared moral discourse in the concept (Letseka, 2012; Mets & Gaie, 2010; Mets, 2007; Teffo, 1994) among other valid conceptions of the concept.

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The concept has also been conceived of as public policy (Nkondo, 2007). Among the various conceptions of the concept portrayed above, taking centre-stage in this paper is the conception of it as ‘public policy’. This paper intends to show how the conception of Ubuntu as ‘public policy’ is actualised among the Tonga of Zambia’s Southern Province. The paper will specifically describe and portray realistically, the practical implications of such a conception of Ubuntu among the Tonga of Southern Province. It is vital to point out right from the outset that in this paper, the conception of Ubuntu as ‘public policy’ is done in relation to the four main purposes or functions of ‘public policy’ in society or the community.

The paper draws its data from the three-year study entitled ‘Archaeology of Ubuntu’ funded by the South African ‘National Research Foundation’ (NRF). This was an international study involving Southern African countries such as; Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as five provinces of South Africa, namely; the Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West. The study was conducted from 2014 to 2016. The main focus in this paper as pointed out above is the conception of the concept of Ubuntu as a public policy among

the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province. Based on data drawn from research participants, the paper provides a basic understanding of the concept of Ubuntu as a viable public policy which is a guide for action at various levels for the achievement of desired social outcomes particularly in Tonga communities of Zambia's Southern Province.

This paper is divided into eight sections. The first section focuses on the provision of a concise description of the Tonga people of Zambia's Southern Province, the second section provides different conceptions of the concept of Ubuntu, the third section describes the methodology adopted in the study, the fourth section discusses the semantics of the terms 'public' and 'policy' respectively, the fifth section articulates the basic functions of policies in social settings, the sixth section deals with the presentation of study findings, the seventh section discusses the study findings and eighth and final section provides the conclusion of the paper. The structure of the paper is as presented above.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE TONGA PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA'S SOUTHERN PROVINCE

The Tonga people or the 'Batonga' as they are sometimes referred to, live in southern Zambia along the Zambezi River (Aldridge, 1978; Holmes, 1998). According to Burdette (1988), the name 'Tonga' is apparently derived from the Shona language which entails 'independent'. This is owing to the fact that unlike in many other ethnic groups in southern Africa where recognition of a centralized form of government was a mandatory aspect, the Tonga people of both Zambia and neighbouring Zimbabwe, recognized no such centralized form of government (Laure, 1994; Karplan, 1984; Carmody, 1992). In fact, in most instances the Tonga of both Zambia and Zimbabwe recognized no chiefs at all in their villages. However, despite the aforementioned, there were some form of authority structures among the Tonga of Zambia in the form of people such as the *Sikatongo* (a priest in charge of the people's religious affairs) and the *Ulanyika* (the owner of the land), a title gotten by virtue of being the first settler in the neighbourhood or a grouping of several villages.

The Tonga form part of the Bantu ethnic group of peoples of southern Africa. Their language is very similar to many other Bantu languages of southern Africa hence the reason why they form part of the Bantu ethnic group of people in this part of the African continent. It is estimated that about 1.38 million people in Zambia speak the Tonga language and that it is an important language not only in southern Zambia but the rest of the country as well (Hopgood, 1992; Karpfinger 1993; Gordon, 2005).

The Tonga people together with the Tumbuka (a small tribe) people of Eastern Zambia are known to be the oldest inhabitants of Zambia. In fact among the various Bantu ethnic groupings in Zambia, the Tonga and the Tumbuka are known to be the oldest. In Zambia, the Tonga people are divided into two distinct dialects namely 'Plateau Tonga' and 'Valley Tonga' respectively (Hopgood, 1992). This entails that the

two Tonga dialects are spoken across a vast area in southern Zambia.

Like many of Africa's peoples, the Tonga people have always had history but most of it was not written down until the 1850s following the arrival of Sir David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary and explorer. As the case in other African ethnic groups, the Tonga people have a rich tradition of oral history and folklore (Saha, 1994; Aldridge, 1978; Vickery, 1986). At the core of this rich tradition of oral history and folklore are the elders in Tonga traditional settings. This is because they are the keepers of this tradition as they are the custodians of the Tonga mythical stories which form the basis for the rich tradition of oral history and folklore (Holmes, 1998; Saha, 1994). In Tonga culture, the most ideal time for the elders to tell these mythical, historical and folkloric stories to the young is in the evening, after supper, around a fire. These stories are central to the maintenance and sustenance of the Tonga tradition and culture as they are meant to convey Tonga traditional principles, values and customs to the young as they are perceived as the future generation. Therefore, Tonga principles, values and customs are orally passed on to the young by the elders for the sake of the well-being of future generations.

No account of the Tonga people of southern Zambia would be complete without alluding to their religious beliefs. In fact, it can be stated that as the case in other African ethnic groups who are said to be notoriously religious (Magesa, 1998: 499), the Tonga people are exactly the same as religion is a fundamental aspect of their lives. As such, religion is an integral part of the Tonga people as it is clearly evident in their cultural practices. This aspect is specifically evidenced by the Tonga ancient belief in the high God or Leza as well as the Mizimu (Spirits) or Muzimu (Spirit). Apart from believing in these religious aspects, the Tonga people have also developed well-developed cults for both Leza and the Mizimu. It is also important to mention here that, in addition to the Tonga religious beliefs highlighted above are the witchcraft and sorcery beliefs which also form part of their traditional religious beliefs.

The other vital aspect of the traditional life of the Tonga people of southern Zambia is farming. From ancient times they have been farmers and pastoralists fully participating in agriculture as not only a business but also a way of life. Their early acceptance of agricultural improvements mostly initiated by the Catholic missionaries that settled among them enhanced their easy transition from generally subsistence farmers to a relatively wealthy group of commercial farmers (Vickery, 1986; Aldridge, 1978).

Family is very important in Tonga traditional life. As the case in other African societies, among the Tonga the term 'family' does not refer only to the 'nuclear family' (father, mother and children). This is because Tonga families are mostly extended to also include extended family members too. Therefore, for the Tonga people, the term 'family' entails an extended family system similar to a clan (Holmes, 1998; Saha, 1994).

Moreover, in such type of family tasks such as farming, provision of food and religious obligations are shared among the members. According to Aldridge (1978), during hard times or times of extreme troubles, such extended families serve as a safety net to all extended family members.

An oral cultural heritage takes centre-stage in Tonga traditional life. At the core of this cultural heritage are aspects such as music, dance and oral literature which form part of the daily traditional lives of the people in Tongaland. As indicated earlier, the elders tell stories on the principles, values and customs to the young in order to pass on Tonga traditions to the future generations. Such stories told by the elders have different lessons based on the aspects indicated above. It is vital to mention here that most of the lessons are meant to regulate human conduct or behaviour for the sake of moulding individuals that can be characterized as a Muntu. These are socially desired individuals possessing all the socially desired or accepted principles, values and customs hence their characterization as a Muntu.

3.0 DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF UBUNTU

The concept of Ubuntu is not a simple but complex phenomenon. This is because it is multi-faceted involving various social and cultural aspects of the Bantu speaking peoples of Africa. In fact how one defines the concept of Ubuntu depends on the perception they decide to take in analysing it. Due to the various perspectives from which the concept has been viewed in scholarly circles already, it can be stated that the concept has been widely theorized (Letseka, 2012, 2000; Metz, 2011, 2007; Blessler, 2008; Ramos, 2006, 2002, 1999; Broodryk, 2002; Sindane, 1994; Makgoro, 1998; Shutte, 1994).

In line with the aforementioned, it can be stated that the link between the concept of Ubuntu and cultural practices as well as matters of laws and regulations in African traditional contexts has compelled Ramose (2006) to contend that Ubuntu represents the epistemological paradigm that informs the cultural practices, including the law, of Bantu speaking people. Ubuntu is also a humane concept and this aspect comes out vividly in Broodryk's (2002) sentiments in his definition of the concept as he conceives of it as a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on values of humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family.

Ubuntu's close association with indigenous African epistemologies enables Marx (2002) to cast it as an invented tradition whose task is to minimize historical chasms and fractures. Moreover, perceiving the concept of Ubuntu from a different viewpoint is the similar case advanced by various scholars when they argue that Ubuntu is simply a moral theory, (Letseka, 2012; Mets & Gaie, 2010; Mets, 2007; Teffo, 1994). This is owing to the involvement of an aspect of a shared moral discourse in the concept of Ubuntu. Also that in the concept of Ubuntu lies many of our choices,

whether personal or political, or bridging the division between the two.

The concept of Ubuntu has also been defined as a normative concept. In stating how the normative aspects of Ubuntu have been theorized it can be stated that Ubuntu is a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on values of intense humaneness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values (Broodryk, 2002:13). In another publication, Ramose (2002) locates Ubuntu within the realm of the African existential world and African conceptions of knowledge. As such, he describes Ubuntu as the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology.

Taking a slightly different view on what the concept of Ubuntu entails, Nussbaum (2003:21) contends that Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity. This is because Ubuntu sees community rather than self-determination as the essential aspect of personhood. This is in line with Nussbaum's (2003:22), contention that people are distinctive beings, able to recognize and acknowledge each other through mutual encounters and cultural integration.

According to Shutte (2001), through Ubuntu, "our deepest moral obligation is to become fully human". In his article entitled *Education for Ubuntu/Botho: Lessons from Basotho Indigenous Education*, Letseka (2013:340) somewhat concurs with Shutte when he opines that failure to be fully human is an aspect tantamount to depersonalising oneself. This is because a person living a life that is imbued with Ubuntu morality demonstrates concern for others and other good things (fully human) and one without has inclination to evil acts such as; rapes, murders, hate and others that dehumanise or depersonalises him/her. The aspect of Ubuntu as a deep obligation to become fully human is also echoed in the sentiments by Shanafelt (1988:51), when she posits that Ubuntu features prominently in debates in Sesotho literary works as "the full expression of one's humanity.

In his other attempt to argue a case for Ubuntu, Letseka (2000: 186) refers to it as something to do with desirable moral norms and values in African society. This is because Ubuntu is a normative concept that prescribes desirable and accepted forms of human conduct in a particular community of people. It is for this reason that Letseka argues strongly that we are batho or abantu (persons) because we live lives that are consistent with communally accepted and desirable ethical standards.

In his sentiments on what the concept of Ubuntu entails, in an article entitled 'Education for Ubuntu', Letseka (2013) further locates the concept as something which extends beyond matters of fairness, that is, the requirement to treat others the way they want to be treated as it also encompasses a multiplicity of normative values such as caring, sharing, respect for others, compassion, altruism, kindness, generosity, benevolence and courtesy. In traditional African societies, these normative values are linked to conceptions of how personhood plays itself out with respect to morality. At

the heart of this argument is the notion of Ubuntu, understood as personhood and morality. Therefore, educating for Ubuntu should entail equipping young people with the kinds of attributes and dispositions that enable them to live lives anchored in communal understandings of personhood and humaneness (Mokgoro, 1998; Letseka, 2000; Masolo, 2010; 2004; 2003).

Since the concept of Ubuntu is a social construct initiated by social norms and values meant for the people in a public sphere a scholar by the name of Nkondo (2007) conceives of it as public policy. A public policy is something which guides action on a particular aspect in society and the concept of Ubuntu does exactly this. This is because it guides or controls human conduct in the public sphere according to socially desired norms and values. It is this aspect of guiding or indeed controlling human conduct in the public sphere which qualifies the concept of Ubuntu as public policy.

When viewed from within African traditional thought, Ubuntu can be said to articulate our communal interconnectedness, our common humanity, our interdependence and our common membership to a community. In line with this, Metz (2007:323) observes that Ubuntu raises very strong normative issues. He further observes that Ubuntu grounds a normative ethical theory of right action, analytically setting aside Ubuntu as a comprehensive worldview or a description of a way of life as a whole. In another publication Metz and Gaie (2010:285), contend that this grounding is premised on the assumption that in African moral theory, actions are right roughly insofar as they are a matter of living harmoniously with others or honouring communal relationships. Mosolo (2010:249), echoes similar sentiments in his observation that the sense of belonging, or the realization and acceptance that the self is located in the midst of others becomes the basis of his or her moral outlook within the context of a common set of values. In this mode of thought, no person is considered to be a self-sufficient entity in and for him or herself. Rather, the existence of others is an essential part of the very structure of the self, from which emanates the communitarian exigency. For Masolo, the community is thus crucially differentiated from the 'masses'. It is not just a collectivity. Rather, it is built through deeds in which are inscribed a person's contribution to the building of the community.

4.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

As stated already, the data in this paper comes from a study entitled 'Archaeology of Ubuntu' which was funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa. It was conducted in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and five South African provinces namely; Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West. The paper reports on the Zambian version of the study. The study was a qualitative case-study design which utilised interview discussions grounded in oral historical discussions/conversations with six purposefully sampled elders from prototypical Tonga communities in Zambia's

Southern Province. Structured interviews formulated in the lines of the main concerns of the study were used to collect data from the Tonga elders. Tape recorders were used to gather the data from the interview discussions. Notes were also taken in the course of the interview discussions as a way of recording important issues raised in the discussions. This study was qualitative in nature because one of its primary aims was the generation of theories. This is in line with Atkinson's (1983:20) in Hambulo (2016:21), when he contends that one of the major goals of qualitative research is extensive narrative understanding of what is being studied as well as the development of theories. Purposive sampling was used in the study because it involves selection of a specific universe of population to provide solutions to the overall purpose of the study (Creswell, 2009). Purposive sampling also enhances the selection of information cases which promotes an in-depth study. Moreover, Patton (1990:169), argues that purposive sampling also involves selecting respondents from whom the researcher can learn a great deal in respect of issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

The initial intention in the study was to sample eight (8) community elders but we only managed to sample six (6) elders from Tonga communities in Zambia's Southern Province. The sample consisted of four (4) males and two (2) females and their ages ranged from 65 to 87 years. As researchers we were convinced that this age-range was adequate to represent individuals that fall under the age bracket of the elderly in Tonga communities. Based on the age-range above and also on their long life experiences in Tonga communities in Zambia's Southern Province, the sampled research participants were deemed highly knowledgeable about different aspects of Tonga social life. This paper is based on the data provided by the participants specifically on 'their understanding of Ubuntu'. The table below gives the demographic profile of the research participants.

4.1 Table: The ages and genders of the research participants

Participant	Age	Male	Female
Participant 1	84		X
Participant 2	70	X	
Participant 3	87	X	
Participant 4	74	X	
Participant 5	80	X	
Participant 6	67		X

4.2 Ethical considerations employed in the study

Some important standard practices of research ethics and principles were followed in this study. Therefore, as researchers we ensured that consent forms were availed to the research participants before their involvement in the study. We also ensured that all the major details of the study were thoroughly explained to the research participants before their involvement in the study. As researchers we also ensured that the study fully respected and protected the rights and interests of research participants. As such matters of the research participant's dignity, privacy and confidentiality were taken care of in the study. It is also vital to mention that the ethical considerations of the study were done in accordance with the UNISA (University of South Africa) Policy on Research Ethics, with a special concentration on the guidelines therein on the ethical issues to follow when dealing with human participants. Such guidelines are meant to safeguard the interests of research participants.

5.0 THE SEMANTICS OF THE TERMS 'PUBLIC' AND 'POLICY'

The word 'public' is a commonly used word in our daily conversations in our contemporary lives. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2012), the word 'public' refers to the aspect of relating to or affecting a population or a community as a whole. In this case, referring to Ubuntu as a 'public policy' entails a policy which relates to or affects a population or a community as a whole. An Online dictionary, Wikipedia (2018:1), provides us with a broadened although somewhat similar meaning of the word 'public' when it points out that the word refers to the people and society of a nation or community, or indeed the whole of humanity. What can be deduced from the definitions of the word 'public' highlighted above is that it generally relates to people or a community. Therefore, associating the concept of Ubuntu to a 'public policy' is in fact relating it to people or a community thereby making it a social policy.

Another word which is used very often in our daily conversations is 'policy'. This is because policy occurs at various levels and points of interaction. By this is meant that policy can be personal, organisational and public. In short, the word 'policy' refers to the guidelines, rules, regulations, principles or directions which regulate the actions of people in the society or community (Dye, 1972; Howlett and Ramesh, 1995). Therefore, at this point, it suffices to state that policies are simply a guide for our actions in the community. Dodd and Boyd (2000:12) provide additional information to what a policy is when they argue that it is "a plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it".

6.0 FUNCTIONS OF POLICIES IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

Scrupulous scrutiny of a public policy reveals four significant functions they perform in the society or community. These

functions are universal and apply to anything which acquires the status of a public policy. In line with the aforementioned, Fisher (1993:10) posits that policies say; what needs to be done, who should do what needs to be done, how it should be done and for (or to) whom it should be done. Therefore, in this paper, the conception of Ubuntu as a 'public policy' among the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province is perceived from the four distinct areas highlighted above.

7.0 PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

The interview discussions conducted in this study generated the following as research findings linked to 'the elder's understandings of Ubuntu';

Most of the elders understood Ubuntu as a normative concept which qualified Ubuntu as a public policy. This is because the elders held the view that Ubuntu prescribes desirable and acceptable forms of behaviour or conduct in Tonga community. In line with this, participant 2 said the following:

In Tonga society people are obliged to live good lives. They must always follow the agreed communal rules in order to be accepted as good people in the community. If one does not follow what is acceptable in the community they are perceived as social misfits and they are not tolerated wherever they go in the community.

In addition, participant 3 stated that:

If you want to be in good terms with others in Tonga community, you need to get along with them by doing the right thing or what is required of you as an individual in the community.

The other thing which was revealed from the elders about their understanding of Ubuntu was the centrality attached to the need for everyone especially the elders in Tonga community to see to it that the Tonga tradition and culture was maintained and sustained. This aspect came out very strongly and clearly as they all pointed out that Tonga principles, values and customs needed to be passed on to the young by the elders for the sake of the well-being of future generations. Linked to this particular aspect, participant 5 noted the following:

In order for our Tonga society to flourish, there is need for the elders to ensure that the younger generations understand and practice the Tonga tradition and culture failure to which our values and customs will be totally lost in future. Elders need to take their role in Tonga communities to ensure that the young are well socialised in Tonga tradition and culture.

The other notable revelation from the views of the elders on their understanding of Ubuntu was the aspect that Tonga principles, values, norms and customs are meant to enhance a moral sense in the people or a sense of right-living among the people for the primary purpose of promoting life in the community. This is because through Tonga tradition and culture, people are obliged to ensure that life flourishes

because the Tonga people love and cherish life. In line with this aspect, participant 6 opined the following:

In Tonga communities, tradition and culture is practiced in order to control the conduct of people so that people can live in socially acceptable ways for the sake of social tranquillity. This leads to social unity which further promotes a better life in the community.

Lastly in terms of their understanding of Ubuntu, the elders pointed out the importance of people to live harmoniously with others. Therefore, to the elders Ubuntu partly means a person's ability to honour communal relationships through right conduct in the community. Participant 1 pointed out the following in line with the aforementioned:

From childhood in Tonga communities, people are taught of the importance of living in harmony with others because this ultimately promotes unity and peace in the entire community.

In the same lines, participant 4 contended that:

Good communal relations are important for the wellbeing of the community and people should behave themselves properly to guarantee this. Those that misbehave and disrupt communal relations are perceived as a menace to the whole community.

8.0 DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

8.1 Ubuntu as a public policy among the Tonga

From the findings of the study regarding the elder's understanding of Ubuntu in Tonga community, it can be stated that it is justified to hold a conception of Ubuntu as a 'public policy' because of valid specific reasons. As pointed out earlier, the word 'public' refers to the aspect of relating to or affecting a population or a community as a whole (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012:202). From all the views provided by the elders on their understanding of Ubuntu, it is evident that the concept relates to people and also affects them in the community. Moreover, Ubuntu assumes its status as a policy because the views of the elders clearly confirm that Ubuntu values and principles regulate the actions of people in Tonga communities. This is in agreement with Howlett and Ramesh (1995) who argue that a policy is a guide, rule, regulation, principle or direction which regulates the actions of people in the community or society. Further, that it is "a plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it" (Dodd and Boyd, 2000:12). Once again from the views of the elders, it is clearly evident that Ubuntu as a Tonga action plan is agreed upon by members of the Tonga community themselves and from the elder's views, it is also evident that, it is them that have the power to carry it out and enforce it in their respective communities.

8.2 Functions of a public policy as reflected in Ubuntu among the Tonga

It was also pointed out earlier that a 'public policy' has four basic functions in the community. In line with this aspect, it was pointed out that policies always say; what needs to be

done, who should what needs to be done, how to do what needs to be done and for (or to) whom it should be done (Fisher, 1993:10). Therefore, all policies in social life, especially at public level, always point out in clear terms what needs to be done, the people tasked to do what needs be done, how to go about what needs to be done or ways through which something should be done and finally for whom it should be done. Any guide of action at a public level leading to the achievement of the aspects highlighted above qualifies such action as being guided by a 'public policy'.

8.3 What needs to be done related to Ubuntu in Tonga Communities?

As indicated already above, one of the primary functions of a 'public policy' is that it needs to spell out in clear terms 'what needs to be done'. Among the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province, Ubuntu qualifies as a 'public policy' because it does point out, in clear terms, exactly what the Tonga people are supposed to do in order to achieve particular desired social outcomes.

The interview discussions conducted with the elders revealed what needs to be done related to Ubuntu in Tonga communities. From the elder's understandings of Ubuntu, it was clear that in Tonga communities, the people ought to behave themselves or conduct themselves in accordance with prescribed and acceptable forms of behaviour or conduct. In order for an individual to be fully integrated and accepted in Tonga communities, they need to conform to all socially acceptable conventions or standards of behaviour or conduct. The other aspect which emerged from the interview discussions with the elders revealing what needs to be done related to Ubuntu in Tonga communities concerns the urgent need for the socialisation of the young by the elders in Tonga tradition and culture. This entails the enhancement and proper maintenance and sustenance of the Tonga tradition and culture. All elderly people in these communities are obliged to socialise the young in Tonga principles, values and customs in order to ensure the well-being of future generations. Failure to socialise the young in Tonga tradition would increase the chances of the tradition being completely lost especially in our contemporary world characterised by the inevitable challenge from modernisation and its alien values. Therefore, as an act of compliance to this important Tonga traditional call, the elders in Tonga communities are supposed to socialise the young in the traditional ways of the Tonga people.

What needs to be done related to Ubuntu also comes out vividly from the elder's understanding of Ubuntu through the need to promote a moral sense or a sense of right-living grounded in right-actions in the people in Tonga communities. This should be achieved through the people's adherence to Tonga principles, values, norms and customs for the overall purpose of enhancing or promoting life. This is in agreement with the stance taken by most African theologians and philosophers on this aspect when they state that most things Africans do in their traditional settings are meant to

make life flourish because they love life (Mbiti, 1991, 1990; Idowu, 1973; Mugambi and Kirima, 1976).

That which should be done related to Ubuntu is also based on the primary importance granted to the aspect of living harmoniously with others. This Tonga custom implores everyone in Tonga communities to honour communal relationships through right-conduct in the community. This Tonga custom is common in most ethnic groups in Africa as noted by Metz and Gaie (2010:285), when they contend that in African moral theory, actions are right roughly insofar as they are a matter of living harmoniously with others or honouring communal relationships. Mosolo (2010:249), echoes similar sentiments in his observation that for Africans, the sense of belonging, or the realization and acceptance that the self is located in the midst of others becomes the basis of a moral outlook within the context of a common set of values. In this mode of thought, no person is considered to be a self-sufficient entity in and for him or herself. Rather, the existence of others is an essential part of the very structure of the self, from which emanates the communitarian exigency. This points to the importance attached to the enhancement of positive relations with others in African communities and Tonga communities of Zambia's Southern Province are not an exception to this aspect as indicated in the interview verbatims shown above.

8.4 Who should do things related to Ubuntu in Tonga Communities?

The other primary functions of a 'public policy' is to state in clear terms 'who should do what needs to be done'. Among the Tonga, Ubuntu qualifies as a 'public policy' because it states the people obliged to accomplish or fulfil particular communal aspects for the achievement of specific desired communal outcomes. Through the interviews conducted with the elders, it was evident that in Tonga communities, the people ought to behave themselves or conduct themselves in accordance with prescribed and acceptable forms of behaviour in order for them to be fully integrated or accepted in Tonga communities. It was also evident that elders are obliged to socialise the young in Tonga tradition and culture for the enhancement of its maintenance and sustenance as well as the well-being of future generations. The people are also implored to develop a strong moral sense grounded in right-action through adherence to Tonga principles, values, norms and customs. Finally, through the interviews with the elders, it was also revealed that in Tonga traditional settings, the people are obliged to learn to live in harmony with others through the development of cordial communal relationships with others in order to the flourishing of life.

8.5 How should things related to Ubuntu be done in Tonga Communities?

It is a primary function of any 'public policy' to state in clear terms 'how a policy should be done or realised'. Among the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province, this aspect of a 'public policy' is evident. Since Ubuntu is conceptualised as a 'public policy' (Nkondo, 2007), it relates to people or it affects

people (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012:202) because most social actions and events in any public space are based on the people. Keeping this in view, it can be stated that the interviews conducted with the elders from Tonga communities indicated, in vivid terms, that Ubuntu is a 'public policy' which is fully dependent on the people themselves. In terms of how things related to Ubuntu should be done, the interviews conducted with the elders further revealed that Ubuntu values and principles are not from an external or unknown culture but the Tonga culture itself. Moreover, that such values and principles are also not imposed on the people as they are agreed upon by the people themselves in Tonga communities. Still in line with the aforementioned, it was further revealed from the interviews conducted with the elders that, Ubuntu values were actually put into effect by the people in Tonga communities not people from other communities. This is in line with Dodd and Boyd's (2000:12) definition of a 'policy' when they contend that it is "a plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it". Therefore, from the elder's views on their understanding of Ubuntu, it was evident that, in Tonga communities, Ubuntu is a social plan of action agreed and carried out or enforced by the Tonga themselves not any other ethnic grouping in Zambia's Southern province of the nation at large.

From the interviews with the elders, it was also evident that 'what needs to be done related to Ubuntu in Tonga communities' also portrays 'how things related to Ubuntu should be done in the same communities'. Therefore, firstly, the people are supposed to behave in accordance with prescribed and acceptable forms of behaviour in order for them to be fully accepted in Tonga communities. Secondly, Ubuntu values and principles promote the socialisation of young people in Tonga tradition and culture in order to ensure its maintenance and sustenance for the good of future generations. Thirdly, the encouragement of right-actions among the people for the promotion of life in Tonga traditional communities. Fourthly and finally, the promotion of harmonious living among community members through proper honouring of communal relationships in order to make life flourish.

8.6 For whom should things related to Ubuntu be done in Tonga Communities?

As indicated above, policies have four different major functions and one of them involves stating for whom a particular aspect of social life should be done. Since it is very clear the beneficiaries of the application of Ubuntu values, principles, norms and customs in Tonga communities, it is therefore justified to refer to Ubuntu as a 'public policy' among the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province.

The data from the interviews with the elders revealed that in Tonga communities, all Ubuntu values, principles, norms and customs are meant for all the people in such communities. This is because such values relate to all the people in such communities and they affect the entire population or the

community as a whole. This makes Ubuntu as both a public phenomenon and a social guide which affects people's lives as it regulates their actions in various communally agreed desirable distinct ways in the public sphere in such communities. The guiding and regulation of life in the Tonga traditional public space is intended for the overarching purpose of the promotion of life. Keeping this aspect in view, it can be opined that most African traditions are there to make life flourish (Mbiti, 1991; Idowu, 1973; Mugambi & Kirima, 1976).

9.0 CONCLUSION

The paper has indicated that the concept of Ubuntu has been widely theorised. As such, the outcome of such a status quo has been the generation of various conceptions of Ubuntu in academic circles. Among the various conceptions of Ubuntu, the paper granted special attention to the conceptualisation of Ubuntu as 'public policy' (Nkondo, 2007). Due to this particular viewpoint of the conception of Ubuntu taken in the paper, it was pointed out in vivid terms how Ubuntu is actualised as a 'public policy' among the Tonga of Zambia's Southern Province. This was achieved through the provision of a realistic description and portrayal of Ubuntu while paying particular attention to the details of the practical implications of such an articulation of Ubuntu in Zambia's Southern Province. The conception of Ubuntu as 'public policy' was done in relation to the four main functions of public policies in society namely; what needs to be done, who should do what needs to be done, how to do what needs to be done and for or to whom things should be done.

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