Traditional Governance Influence on Democracy in Africa

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Abstract

The spread of democracy in the global community has been rampant since the end of World War II. On the continent of Africa, as a collective of countries are recent newcomers as sovereign states to this governmental practice. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the political development of African countries since the end of colonialism and the systems of government that countries are practicing since independence. Alongside the current system of government, there is a need to analysis the connections between pre-colonial institutions whether or not if they are complimentary or antithetical to democracy in African countries. Lastly, to examine the benefits that comes with having a democratic government in Africa.
Chapter One: Introduction

The importance of a stable and functioning government can be taken for granted by both citizens and those in office. Therefore, exploration into the origins and practices of African governance and how they coincide with modern day governments is important for understanding Africa’s political plight. African countries are relatively new to the western practice of a democratic government in comparison to their European and North American counterparts who have been applying the practice for centuries. However, over the past five decades across the continent, countries have gone through dramatic shifts in governance from post-colonialism into the independence era. As Radelet argues, “with the end of the Cold War and apartheid in the early 1990s, authoritarian leaders increasingly were forced to give way to democratically elected governments. The number of democracies in the SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa) jumped from 3 in 1989 to 23 in 2008, including emerging countries.”¹ This broad political change towards a more democratic continent has led to a new era for Africans in terms of how countries are governed and how are considered leaders of their citizens.

Yet even though there have been many strides made towards the democratization of African countries, there are still political imperfections of how governments govern and how poor governance affects the country’s development. Many African countries are making the efforts towards creating a transparent state, whether it is through the citizens holding their governments accountable, or via political leaders making the appropriate

changes. In the past decade alone there has been transformative moments in countries in Africa that have challenged the way governments govern, such as the more recent Arab Spring movement in northern Africa and in South Africa Anti-Apartheid movement in the mid-1990s. As African countries have democratized and governmental stabilization has increased, there has been a boom in development in Africa across the board.²

There remains a question, however: What makes some African democracies more stable than others? In this thesis, I propose to examine the relationship between the incorporation of traditional rulers into modern states and democratic stability, focusing on the relations between the two during the post-independence era in Africa. To formulate a proper analysis of the post independent African governmental progress, we must take into account a few factors starting with the pre-colonial forms of traditional governance before colonialism and how that transitioned to over the centuries into the modern day government structures practiced across Africa. Due to the governing structure during colonial rule, in certain cases colonizers did not disband the practices of traditional forms of governance in which Africans participated. So when African countries attained independence and began structuring their government, role and authority of traditional chiefdoms surfaced as an issue that was not addressed properly in certain African countries. This is often disregarded as an aspect of democratic transitions in Africa, accounting for how pre-colonial and post-independence governments emerged. However, I will argue that only upon gaining clarity about where African governance originated, and accounting for the transitions each country went through, can one properly assess the progress that has been made. Moreover, I will argue that when postcolonial states

integrate traditional rulers into modern governing they are more likely to be stably
democratic.

When assessing the dynamics of African governments, the outside perspective
only focuses on the government that was established during independence. The full scope
of the different levels of governing that was in each established country was never
discussed, from the newly elected presidents to the local chiefs that reigned in the outskirt
villages. Though the international community mainly acknowledges the elected state
government, however, within each country these elected officials do not have complete
power. Countries that were able to smoothly incorporate traditional leaders into the newly
established government were better able to transition towards a stable government,
whereas countries that were unable to initially blend both institutions struggled in the
early stages of their independence. These initial struggles could therefore be detrimental
to a country undergoing processes of reconstruction following colonization – processes
that continue to structure democratic trajectories today.

To determine the degree to which traditional governance can stabilize democratic
governance, this thesis examines the politics of Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. The
study of Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe is valuable because the cases have had widely
varying levels of democratic stability and, as a consequence, divergent developmental
outcomes. In 1966, Botswana attained independence and has remained a stable
democracy since. By contrast, from 1966 until 1992, Ghana’s post-independent
government went through decades of authoritarian regimes. However, in the early 1990s
a new democratic constitution was written and the country has been a stable democracy
since then. Zimbabwe, in turn, has had a working constitution for five decades based on
democratic principles, but the same president has been in office since independence, with
increasing evidence of erratic autocrat tendencies. Corresponding to these different levels
of democratic stability, these countries represent a large range of variation in terms of
their economic prosperity – from the broadly prosperous Botswana, to the recently
disastrous events in Zimbabwe, to Ghana as an intermediate case. The variation among
these three countries will allow me to generate a theory explaining why some African
countries have shown greater democratic stability than others.

The focus of this study will be centered on the post-colonial relationships between
the newly established African governments and the traditional chiefs in these countries. I
hypothesize that each country’s president dealt with the chieftaincy institution differently,
which influenced the trajectory of each country in the years after independence. Long
before Europeans invaded the continent of Africa, the people of the land had their own
system of accountability through their own ruling system. There is a historical
misconception that Europeans brought the concept and practices of governmental
structure to Africans, not acknowledging that there were many great kingdoms that dated
back to at least ancient Egypt. Aside from the pharaohs, there were other empires and
kingdoms that flourished in sub-Saharan African including the Songhai and Mali
empires, various estates like the Yoruba kingdom, the Benin Empire, the Sokoto

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5 Ibid., 314.
6 Ibid., 299.
Caliphate, the Bornu Empires, the Kanem-Bornu, Empires\textsuperscript{7}, Ashanti/Akan kingdom, and the Zulu nation\textsuperscript{8}, just to name a few. It is surprising for a continent that has been described as “barbaric,” to have different types of governance that spread across the continent. Many of these empires had systems of governing that were not centralized government, like modern times. Throughout the many leadership transitions the people of Africa experienced over the centuries; one of the few stable institutions that never left was the institution of chieftaincy. The practice and authority of kings and traditional rulers shifted over the years, but the reverence of chiefs has always remained amongst the people. The first-person connection chieftaincies have with the people through their physical presence, allows for them to be more accessible allowing the practice to carry on for many centuries. The accessibility of chieftaincies to the people has been one of the reasons for the longevity of the practice. This ability is essential in governing, chiefs can be the greater link between government and the citizens, thus creating an atmosphere where all parties stand to benefit – a quality I argue that if incorporated by post-colonial rulers has allowed for greater democracy.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid. , 72.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. , 299.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Throughout this paper I plan to address the concept and practice of democracy and its relevance in Africa. The emphasis on how democratic practices can progress a country’s development and involvement, having implication that all democracies must look the same. However, in the African context, just democratic practices are not enough in having a functioning government. As stated in the first earlier chapter, the role that traditional leaders have in modern (democratic) government has major influences on the stability and functioning of the country's government. In order to better provide insight on this theory, I plan to address some of the academic literature published on democracy and the relevance it holds when dealing with African countries.

Democracy

The principles of democracy have been and continue to be a highly discussed topic in the international community. In recent decades, scholars have analyzed the correlation between democracy and development within a country; this has been the perception of western countries for many years. The correlation of how democracy leads development in country has been a theory in the international community for past few decades. Before I discuss the connection between democracy and development, let me first start off by providing the definition of democracy, which is often contested. Robert Dahl provides a simple definition, as a political system that focuses on institutions and freedom. This is a broad description, which leads to more questions than understanding.

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Many forms of governance such as Communism or Fascism could contend to provide institutions and freedom, but democracy differs from other systems government. As Joseph A. Schumpeter gets more specific with his description of democracy as a "free competition for a free vote…" In its simplest form democracy is a political system that provides the people the freedom to vote for various political parties. Schumpeter provide traits that constitute a democratic country, arguing that “Political forum, a system of beliefs, legitimizing the democratic system and specifying the institutions–parties, a free press, and so forth—which are legitimized…one set of political leaders in office; one or more sets of leaders, out of office, who act as a legitimate opposition attempting to gain office.” But as democratic states continue to grow, what constitutes a democratic political system has become more complex than what Schumpeter, Weber, and Dahl presented it to be. Democratic practices vary from country to country, even western countries observance of democracy differs from each other. Such is the case in Africa; amongst the fifty-six countries there are different forms of democracies being practiced that follow some of the elements that have been listed above.

However, I argue that it is not democracy that gets a country on the right path towards stability. The foundations in democracy such as the right-to-vote, and political opposition are not the only elements that allows for a stable government in Africa. The definitions and examples provided by Schumpeter and Weber are good, but it is not how African history has turn out. There is an element which traditional leaders play a role in bringing stability to a country. There has not been many studies and analysis of how

12 Ibid., 269.
traditional leaders have been a connecting piece that has brought a level of stability and continuity between the people and the government.

Seymour Lipset expands the understanding of democracy by establishing criteria’s of what makes a political system democratic. Lipset argues that different aspects of a country’s development, which includes economy, infrastructure, urbanization, and education, all contribute to the durability of democracy.\(^\text{13}\) For democracy to be thoroughly functional the other elements need to be operating in a complimentary manner; a democratic government does not stand on its own. His perspective was derived from observations of western democracy and how governments operated under those conditions, in the process neglecting how democracy operates in other world regions. Nevertheless, while Lipset’s point of reference was America and Europe, this outlook does, not invalidate his work. His observations on democracy were and are accurate in terms of how democracies come about. But Lipset’s perspective on democracy does not take into account developing countries, whose political history greatly differs from western countries. Lipset briefly acknowledges that historical events in countries’ past reflect their effectiveness of their government on their path towards democracy,\(^\text{14}\) but does not place the emphasis on how much these previous experiences and practices can have retroactive effects on a country.

In African territories before the encounter of Europeans and before the concept of statehood had been introduced the system of traditional leaders though the institution of


chioftaincies had been in practice for countless of centuries prior European encounter. Additionally, during colonialism these institutions were not uniformly addressed across the board by European colonizers, thus creating an issue for African leaders following independence. Taking a step back, analyzing Lipset’s work he does not take into account how countries transitioned into democracy. It is inferred that Lipset assumes that all countries started on same level of stability of governance, which is not the reality. Unless Lipset did not have African countries have in mind while making his claim, which leaves his claims incomplete. There are other well-known scholars who add to the field of democracy in providing more insight to the study.

Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino, add to the study of democracy by describing the qualities that should be associated with democracy. Many countries practice democracy, but there are different levels of democracy that set some countries apart from others. Diamond and Morlino’s characterization of democracy as per above implies that a good democracy accords its citizens ample freedom, political equality, and control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions.15 For Diamond and Morlino, democracy is more than just contested elections. To function properly it requires substantive elements like responsive institutions and the rule of law.16 With this understanding, citizens must support the principles of democracy; simultaneously the people must have clear expectations of what democracy should be, in order for democracy to function. Diamond and Morlino’s study show how countries were able to fully modernize their adaptation to

democracy, and forget about their past. In this case, I feel Diamond and Morlino’s perspective does not tell the full story of how countries attain a *quality democracy*. There are steps missing in what is needed for countries to reach that ideal mixture Diamond and Morlino describe. The element that Diamond and Morlino are missing is the analysis of democracy is the historical past of countries; especially colonized country whose past varies from America and European country experience. Their leader structure and influences have deeper roots than just their colonial past; rather their cultural past before colonialism plays a role in how countries transitioned following independence. In the case of African post-independence transition, traditional leaders were whom the people could tangibly rely on along with the hope of a better future with the emergence of the new African government. Prior to and during colonialism, when leadership of colonizers was changing, the traditional form of organizing people and accountability came from customary leadership. In the African context in regards to Diamond and Morlino for democracy to properly operate as they describe in their work, the relationship of the country’s past needs to be accounted for. Though it is not, Diamond and Morlino analysis offers concepts of democracy as if the country has clean slate of past political or governmental structure.

Where Diamond and Morlino fall short in their discussion on democracy is their case studies and focus. Providing characteristics that are based on *western* practice does not always apply to the whole international community. For most countries democracy has been a governing system for the past three decade, which as short time compared to America’s two centuries of democratic practice. When Diamond and Morlino’s discuss *qualities of a good democracy*, they leave out countries that have unique circumstances
that lead to democracy. “The definitions above imply that a good democracy accords its citizens ample freedom, political equality, and control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functions of stable institutions.” (page 22)

Again I find the problem that scholars are making when critiquing governments in Africa is using the western framework to critique African countries. Tandeka C. Nkiwane, a current scholar in international relations with regards to African politics, shares this sentiment:

The assumption is made by many liberal theorists that Africa has little to contribute with respect to either liberal democracy or consumer capitalism. The ignorance ingrained in this assumption exposes liberalism not only to a vast array of critiques, particularly from African scholars, but leaves the theory untested in a variety of important circumstances.17

There is a level of frustration that African scholars have when Africa is not properly acknowledged in its progress in the international community. Africa is usually left out of the conversations when discussions about political progress are had. As the advocacy of democracy is being promoted internationally, African countries are left out due to their political past. Countries for the fifty years since their independence have struggled, but have made progress that has gone without acknowledgement. The African experience with state government in connection to development is very different from other regions of the world. As Nkiwane discusses in her work from a liberal perspective states that has been deemed “failed states” or “collapsed state” have deep-rooted unaddressed issues, which are centered on the reconfiguration of power post-

independence. The heavily influenced pre-colonial nature of African traditions of power became a post-independence issue. An issue of not having a clear conjunction between traditional leaders and raising political leaders as countries attained independence. Not having a union between traditional leaders and the rising government disrupted the flow of order on the land. For centuries, citizens were accustomed in receiving law and order from chiefs. However, with the new wave of political leaders fighting for independence without the assistance of traditional leader created friction between the two groups. These factors play pivotal roles in the establishment of a country. This along with other things, such as economic independence, and lack of infrastructure I feel sets the African experience of post-independence apart from other colonized regions on the globe.

Having an understanding of what democracy is great; knowing the standards and terms that come along with the practice allows a country to go far. However, we would need to know the historical context in which Africans governed themselves before the European encounter, in order to properly understand their form of democracy. The exploration into pre-colonial cultures of African societies opens the doors towards discerning Africa’s present state of governing. There has been an instrumental foundation that was set in place by traditional leadership. The practices based on foundation, still permeate cultures across Africa. The understanding of that foundational history can help create the link between current governments and traditional leaders, and will better serve the people as the government intended.

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18 Ibid., 287.
Development and Democracy in Africa

Diamond and Morlino’s insight in the progression of democracy is related in the context of Africa post-independence era. It sets up a standard for democracy that can be used when looking at a country’s post-independence political transition. In many countries the initial form of democracy consisted of a one-party regime, which did not create the element of competition that is needed in a democratic system. One-party democracies created more political issues that were not anticipated. Leaders like Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Sékou Touré of Guinea governed under a one party regime, that eventually led to coup d'états in their countries. Without an electoral process in a democratic system, the country’s political system would appear to be an authoritarian regime, which is the far opposite of democracy.

One-party democracies are not democratic if we are using the definitions that we established earlier in the section. Though the founding fathers of the African Independence Movement had the right intentions for their countries, the political execution should have been restructured in a manner that other parties had the option of sharing their political views more openly.

Normally, the general understanding and discussions that surround the concept of democracy are based on the western notions and theories. This has led to the European and American standard of democracy to be known as the universal standard, which can be understandable due to development of western democratic systems. Due to the fact

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20 Ibid., 30.
after American Revolution, their form of democracy became the template to follow. There are other scholars who have a different perspective on the origins of democracy that are not in line with the western concept. There are scholars who date some of the principle elements of democracy to other regions of the earth aside from Europe and North America. This is especially true in the African context where traditional ethics play major roles in their societies’ understanding of what democracy is. An example of an African society when ethics play major roles in the creation of society is Botswana. As I stated earlier, the modern concept of democracy is associated with western ideals, as a golden standard of what democracy should be which leaves early eastern forms of democracy unaccounted for. Their historical practices are derived from open discussions, which were an essential aspect, which is an essential aspect of democratic institutions and ideals.

After independence, most countries fell under authoritarian rule. In later years, when countries turned into democracies, the process discouraged people from taking interest in legitimizing the different values that democracy represented. Democracy requires a system of procedures, as well as a system of values to be consolidated into permanent, consistent, autonomous institutions.21 Due to the experiences that citizens have had with colonial rule, their faith in government is based on the provisions that they

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can receive; their view on democracy is founded on the government’s ability to provide adequate resources.22

Africa’s transition post-independence was a momentous occasion in the international community. As nations were gradually attaining autonomy, restructuring the government and economy were high priorities across Africa. With this new chapter, came the pressures of how efficiently countries were able to support themselves without direct assistance from their colonizers. In her book Dead Aid, Dambisa Moyo, looks at how foreign aid from western donors was used as an incentive for African countries to economic development post-Cold War.23 In many of the agreements that African countries made with western donors such as the United States, was the development and promotion of democratic government. During this time, African governments were poorly guided and irresponsible with their financial obligations to their people. With failed prior loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, many African countries found themselves moving backwards rather forward following independence.24 This created an international concern, where an intervention was created in aiding African countries that were struggle financially post-independence.

An aspect of Moyo’s book looks at how the restructuring of international assistance through the establishment of legitimate democratic governments would be the foundation that countries needed to create the reformation they needed to head down the

24 Ibid. , 21.
proper path.\textsuperscript{25} Along with the stability that democracy would provide to government, the
great potential of economic development was also associated with democracy.\textsuperscript{26} Having a
liberal democratic government creates the opportunity for free trade to occur. Steven
Radelet shares the same beliefs on the benefits of democracy in his book \textit{Emerging}
\textit{Africa}. Radelet picks up where Moyo’s left off by making the argument of the major
benefits of how democracy has helped certain African countries transition their economic
position over the years. The new wave of governmental reforms came in the in 1990’s on
the continent of Africa, where Radelet notes “…the improvements in democracy and
governance have helped put into place better economic policies that have helped
accelerate growth, while the faster rates have helped deliver tangible benefits to citizens
that reinforce the shift to democracy and better governance.\textsuperscript{27}

I am in agreement with the notions that Radelet and Moyo’s make in their
literature. In the reference to Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe, it is very evident of how
democratic practices or lack thereof have influenced their countries development.
Botswana’s ability to quickly adapt to the democratic practices effectually gave them the
bases to create institutions that have served the country well so far. The country of
Botswana has greatly profited from their fusion of traditional and modern government
Ghana whose transition was not as smooth as Botswana, but eventually figured out their
path towards a stable of government. Zimbabwe has struggled more than their African
counterparts, in terms establishing a practical voting system. There still has been a
change in power since their independence. Improper donor funding has enabled

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. , 24.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. , 40.
\textsuperscript{27} Radelet, Steven C. \textit{Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries are Leading the Way}
(Maryland: Center for Global Development, 2010), p. 66.
Zimbabwe’s president Robert Mugabe to remain in power, because of the lack of accountability established in his country.\textsuperscript{28} I plan to elaborate more during my analyses of Zimbabwe’s post-independence transition.

The weight that came with international aid and interference in the political development in Africa has been \textit{Achilles heel} of development on the African continent. As Moyo points out in her book, there was a gap between the ambitions of where African leaders desired to take their country and where they were in terms of resources. With the absence of adequate experience and resources address the needs of the people; there was a loss of hope in the government. People were more concerned about providing for their families rather than who was in office.\textsuperscript{29} During this transitional period post-independence period, there was little to no citizen accountability of their newly established government; which created the space for funding and resources to go unaccounted for. As many scholars of democracy have noted in their work, accountability by the citizens is a major foundation of having a functional democracy.\textsuperscript{30}

With the international resources that were being giving to African countries in order for them to establish as democratic governments came with demands that some countries were unable handle. The eagerness of the international community for Africa to democratize without the proper institutions to uphold it was unbearable for some countries. “The Western pressure to democratize, coupled with the lack of external material support to bolster the weak states of developing areas, will no doubt undermine

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\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 44.
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the sustainability of democratization. Unreasonable expectations leads to devastating results when the envisioned results are not achieved; this was the case in the political development of African countries in regard to the funding that were giving for them to democratize. In order to get the greater picture of African countries transition post-independence we must understand the pressures that were being applied on the state level as well as the international level.

The wave of democracy that swept through the global community, especially in developing countries post their independence established the changing of an era, an era where the people of the country would have liberty and control of their politics and progress. Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle build their case of looking at democracy as a tool for accountability. Through the process of elections and multi political parties the creation of giving the people power of choice of choosing their leader.

Understanding the linkage between traditional forms of governance and the alterations that occurred during and after colonialism is necessary to understand the current state that African countries are currently in. Catherine Boone analyzes this transitional period in Africa; arguing that there were “risks, dilemmas, and opportunities that new rulers confronted in trying to establish political arrangements that would allow them to both control and tax rural producers.” This shows how traditional leaders such as chiefs were and were not considered in the transitional period of certain African states

post-independence. Boone argues that there is a difference between rural government and state institutions that allows countries to operate, which differs country to country. A misconception and overlooked aspect of African governments is that they are all organized similarly. Previous studies have focused on the on how Europeans gave African systems of government. Boone depicts how there was a structural process of government and taxation system that African clans practiced.

Boone does a good job showing the power that institutions have in the development of a country’s transition, as she demonstrated with Ghana. Institutional development is an important foundation for any country, especially in Africa. Due to the lack of infrastructure during colonialism, the post-independence conversation in African leadership was burdensome task to fix many issues at once. Boone has the position of showing how political leaders had to involve local chiefs and farmers in the establishment of their countries trade and export institutions.33

Boone makes good points, but where I would advance Boone’s work would be looking at the institutions that are needed to help state government and local traditional leaders find common grounds such as development. Though I see the agriculture being important aspect of a country’s development because of its local and international value, it then becomes a dispute between two parties’ versus being about the people, which are needed for a democracy. Rather than focusing on institutions that focuses on more of the collective of people such as education or employment, when emphasizes is placed on

agriculture as Boone layout her work swift the focus on two interest groups competing for leverage.

Within the African context, there has been a great push internally and internationally for countries to concretely establish governments that are fair and equal, and allow for people to participate in government and be heard. Though history has shown that is has not been easy in Africa, there has been a high level of citizens holding their governments accountable. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in bridging the gap of between for this reason, governmental structures and the acknowledgment of their traditional governance. I plan to prove in my work, the value of having a democratic government that successfully engages traditional leaders in their countries. In the following chapter, I provide some background on my research design before I go into my case studies.
Chapter Three: Research Design

Throughout this paper, I hope to uncover the relationship between traditional governance and present day governments in Africa by focusing on three specific countries, Botswana Zimbabwe and Ghana. Discussing different periods in African history, I will focus on the post-colonial relations between traditional institutions and state governments. That is, I will examine the ways in which postcolonial governments have either chosen to incorporate political processes and actors typically associated with pre-colonial governance – like chiefs or traditional court systems – in order to understand the degree to which this incorporation is either beneficial or harmful to governance. Although my focus is specific to the African continent, I hope for this study to be used as a framework when looking at countries in the global south and their progress in governmental development.

The hypothesis that I have is that the more integrated traditional governments are with the established democratic governments of a country, the stronger democratic institutions are likely to be. I will detail my agreement through a comparative-historical analysis of three African countries, Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. I choose these cases because they vary on the dependent variable: democratic stability. My more democratic country will be Botswana, which has been practicing a stable and functioning democracy since the early years of independence beginning in 1966. By contrast, Zimbabwe has not held free and fair elections in years, making it the least democratic country in my sample. Ghana, which has cycled through periods of democratic and authoritarian governance, serves as an intermediate case, which will allow me to tease out the causal relationships among traditional and postcolonial governance within one case as
different Ghanaian regimes have taken different policies to traditional governance institutions. With each case study, I will have three organized three sections. Each section is meant to serve as an in-depth analysis of the three important phases in the countries’ history.

These three particular cases have the advantage of allowing us to “control” for alternative explanations like economic growth, resource capabilities, and a host of other possible explanations.

In each chapter, I plan to have four comparative sections. In the first section, I will be analyzing the pre-colonial history of each country by looking at the traditional form of rule, before European encounter. Each country and region had different forms of kingdoms and the amount of power that different types obtained having soft or hard power varied across Africa. My second controlled comparison will be the colonial era of each country. Although Britain colonized all three countries during colonization era, each country had a colonial experience that differed from one another. From their natural resources that were poached from them, to the role traditional leaders were able to have during this traditional period in their country. This is an important aspect of Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe colonial experience at the end of colonialism the British regime left each at different places in their country’s stability and development.

My third controlled comparison is the independence period of each country. As stated earlier, although each country was colonized by the British regime, they each attained sovereignty at different years. Their fight for independence varied between Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe as each country’s independence leaders used different tactics in
attaining sovereignty for each country. Ghana and Botswana had a similar method of achieving independence, using diplomatic tactics in reaching an agreement with the British government through elections. Whereas in Zimbabwe, physical combat along with diplomatic negotiation with the British government eventually leading to independence. Each country attained independence in different years over more a two-decade period, with each country choosing different political paths.

Lastly, my fourth controlled comparison is the post-independence era that each country is in currently. There have been many changes since each country gained independence. The paths that Botswana, Ghana, and Zimbabwe followed are all diverge from one another, which led each country towards different levels of development or lack thereof. With the comparison of this stage in my case countries, I plan to show the current state of each country and their ability and lack-thereof to interconnect traditional leaders into their current governmental structure.

In each country there can be possible alternative explanations on how these countries were directed on the trajectory they went on post-independence. Across Africa, every country on the continent attained independence at different levels of economic and country stability, so the starting off point into an independent state varied throughout the continent. For example, at the time of independence Ghana and Zimbabwe had relatively high levels of development but Botswana was relatively underdeveloped. However as each country progressed towards becoming a sovereign state, their level of development did not always favor the country. Today Botswana is by far the wealthiest, implying that the level of development at decolonization didn’t determine a country’s future path, while Ghana is gradually showing signs of stable development and Zimbabwe is still figuring
out a path that benefits the country as a whole. Another alternative explanation is the economic resources that each country directly after independence, this played various influences on how each country navigated their way through this transitional period.
Chapter Four: Botswana

In this chapter I will analyze the history of Botswana and show the chronology of the country. As stated in earlier chapters, Botswana is an important country in the context of African governmental development. Botswana has been one of the few countries in Africa since independence that has had little to any civil or political unrest in the country. Looking at events that occurred in Botswana will give us a detailed account of how the country was able to transition towards independence.

Botswana's historical past is worth analyzing in the totality of African governments. The country is unique in many ways when it comes to its post-colonial process, especially the decisions made during its state-building process. Wanting to retain the practice of traditional governance and simultaneously progress towards an operating democracy was a challenge for many African countries. However, Botswana was a pioneering country that was able to incorporate both styles of governance successfully. Because of this, I have chosen to highlight its success as my case study of how an African country can have a functioning democratic government, while incorporating traditional governance practices that benefits the people.

Since independence in 1966 Botswana has been on the fast track in economic development and has had one of the most effective, functional, and stable democracies on the African continent. When it comes to democracy and development, Botswana’s progress distinctively differs from other countries transitions following independence. Botswana’s uniqueness in being a country that has consistently been able to sustain a democratic government comes from obligations to its people. Despite Botswana being landlocked by countries that have struggled and continue to struggle to uphold the same
level of governmental integrity Botswana leads the region in holding free and fair elections. To understand how Botswana has been able to achieve this level of economic and democratic stability, I will examine the country’s history to show and explain the decisions that were made and the impacts that led the country to where it is today.

**Pre-Colonial (Traditional Ruling)**

The pre-colonial history of Botswana is similar to all African history in that its interpretation greatly differs depending on the speaker. This is due to the variance in a tribe’s perspective of their history. Paralleling other African countries, the concept of modern statehood varies in the African perspective as discussed in earlier chapters. Instead of countries, people identified themselves as being from a specific clan rather than a state. Before the European encounter, Africans had formulated a system that effectively consisted of groups of societies that operated in a fashion where order and customs were set in place. Clans in Botswana such as the Tswana people were building their own civil societies, which on the surface seemed to be a democratic in its early stages. “Traditional Batswana society is noted for its open discourse on public issues, which takes place in the communities through the kgotla, an institution of the chieftaincy system in which the chief and community leaders discuss issues of concern in a neutral setting.” These early institutions of democratic practices are what helped the civil

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society transition into statehood. Having an intersecting history of similar governing structures paved the way for traditional rule and contemporary government to merge together.

Within the Batswana traditional form of rule, the chiefs held forums in the village for people to come and voice their opinions and concerns on issues that they needed or were of importance.\(^{38}\) These forums were meant to properly dispute disagreements over land, crops, and property.\(^{39}\) As Andrew Milnor outlines in his book, issues that the Kgosi (chief) dealt with varied from criminal to land disputes. “The hierarchy of traditional courts runs from the paramount chief’s kgotla (council) in each district down through the subchiefs…”\(^{40}\) In return the issues that were presented to the Kgosi and his council were expected to be addressed accordingly. In the instances that the Kgosi’s decision was ignored the kgotla would prosecute the individuals, which possibly meant imprisonment.\(^{41}\) This is significant to Botswana’s history for many reasons; one being that this tradition and solidarity that was established amongst kings and chiefs maintained itself throughout colonialism.

Koss’ and Kgotlas’ have had a deep and rich cultural influence in communities for centuries. Practicing traditional governance has been sustained for so long because, as Francis Nyamanjoh argues, it has remained “central to ongoing efforts at harnessing democracy to the expectations of Batswana as individual ‘citizens’ and also as ‘subjects’

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39 Ibid. , 236.
of various cultural and ethnic communities.” The ability for Botswana to maintain its traditional governance was through the creation of laws that protected chiefs and the willingness of the British regime to honor such institutions. This combination allowed the country to transition post-independence. As I will discuss further in this chapter, another reason is that traditional governance maintained ordinance in Botswana. Unlike other parts in Africa where conflict had become an aspect of their culture, the history of Botswana demonstrates the benefits of having a state and government with strong ties to its traditional governances. The country has reaped the benefits of this governmental stability.

Colonial Era

Botswana was a major territorial acquisition for the British regime, one that initially Britain was reluctant to acquire. With the efforts of Cecil Rhodes, Britain wanted to build a major trade route from South Africa to Egypt. “A protectorate was viewed as a necessity in order to maintain access to the missionary road (the so-called Suez Canal to Southern Africa), a potentially vital link in Rhodes scheme of a Cape-to-Cairo railway.” To the dismay of the chiefs in Botswana, Britain went on with their plans, even after protest against it. Botswana was known as Bechuanaland Protectorate

after the British colonized the territory in 1885. Like most British colonies, Botswana was governed through indirect rule; where there was chain of leadership that started with British leaders that trickled down to local chiefs that were already there before the European invasion. “Only a very limited form of administration was established in 1891, and not until after 1895 did the dominance of the colonial bureaucracy, rather than the South African company, become a certainty.” There was not an immediate need to have hands-on British leaders in Bechuanaland at the time, for the British government were benefiting from the having the chiefs do their work for them. George Padmore provides a great definition of what indirect rule was during colonization as a “system of governing Blacks through their own Chiefs and political institutions under the control of European officials with the minimum of interference. The Whites, however, hold the real political, financial, and military powers in their hands, while the Chiefs serve as marionettes.”

This format stripped away power from the local chiefs that were inherently governing the land. Seeking to make their governing system convenient, they appointed chiefs that were in accordance with the British, thus leading to the creation of the National Advisory Council. The National Advisory Council was meant to recognize the institution of chieftaincy that was already being practiced in the country. “From the perspective of the

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50 Ibid. , 315.
British, the prime goal in Bechuanaland was to maintain a minimal level of order, with as little cost to the British taxpayer as possible.”

The formation of the National Advisory Council was an important aspect to Botswana’s political future during colonization. The council was commissioned together by the orders of the High Commissioner at the time, B.C. Carter. The council was placed into the constitution of Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1920. The ability to have a cabinet where local chiefs were able to represent their people on a governmental level set the foundation for Botswana to keep a similar practice as their traditional government once they achieved independence. This establishment did not come easily, due to moral discontentment with the businesses that the British were introducing to the natives; with the introduction of European liquor to natives, Kgosi Khama refused to join the National Advisory Council. After resolving issues between all parties, the National Advisory Council was able to bring together the chiefs of the major clans (the Batlokwa, the Bakgatla, the Bakwena, the Bangwaketse and the Bamalete) of Bechuanaland Protectorate, with Kgosi Khama to join shortly after.

The National Advisory Council was a major foundation of what was to be the House of Chiefs in the current Botswana parliament system. National Advisory Council ultimately became the staple in the country that was unshakable throughout the periods of transition that occurred in that region of Africa. The role that the National Advisory Council played was significant in shaping Botswana’s political landscape.

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53 Ibid., 28.
Council played in the country was vital; as leadership changed amongst British colonizers. Throughout all of this the National Advisory Council remained consistent in representing the people to the best of their abilities. One particular issue that the National Advisory Council should have been stronger on was the Union of South Africa Act 1909, which would have placed Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana) under South Africa rule. The National Advisory Council agreed that this union would not be in the best interest of the people in the land. “…Kgosi Isang Pilane referred to the clause in the Act of Union of South Africa (1909) which provided that Britain could transfer the High Commission territories to the Union. He spoke at length about the conditions of the black people in the Union, and said the Batswana therefore did not want to be incorporated into the Union.”

Being the voice of the people has always been the intention of the chiefs (Kgosi), and with the National Advisory Council each clan had a representative to speak on their behalf.

This set Botswana apart from most African countries. In most countries there was not an established cabinet for chiefs of the country to be properly acknowledged by the colonizer of Britain. In other African countries tribal leaders were either fighting against each other, striped of their influence and land, or simply unrecognized by colonial leaders. The establishment of the National Advisory Council years before independence allowed the country to get used to the entity as being needed for the country to function for the better.

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In many ways the National Advisory Council was before its time. For native Batswana to have a vocal presence to negotiate terms and agreements to the benefit of its people while existing within a system that was exploiting its people and natural resources was truly revolutionary. Such movements rarely occurred in Africa, even as countries were a few years away from attaining their independence. For the tribal chiefs to have created such an influence decades before independence showed their importance to the country’s development.

Independence

When Botswana attained independence in 1966, the country was set in motion towards establishing a democratic constitution. Across Africa many countries had not successfully achieved this height during this time period of liberation in Africa. After independence leaders such as Seretse Khama in Botswana “prioritized the building of a democratic nation whose objectives were to give birth to the development of a socially, economically, and politically independent state.”\(^{56}\) But the economic reality of their development at that time was Botswana was one of the poorest African countries at the time of their independence. Learning and adapting from previous African countries’ process of gaining their independence, Botswana approached this juncture with a clear plan of strategic outline of how their government was going to operate and how economic development was to occur. How was the government going to achieve this? What were the plans for this goal? “The regularity of Botswana’s elections since gaining independence in 1966 is commendable. Efforts to foster a sense of national unity, especially by Botswana’s first president, Sir Seretse Khama, proved successful in many

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regards during the post-independence process of nation-building and peace-keeping.”\textsuperscript{57}

With the great leadership that Botswana had during their independence process enabled the country to have a foundation for an accountability structure and political standard. Along with the political leadership on the behalf of Sir Seretse Khama, his cooperation with the chiefs within Botswana was vital. “Local leadership and a partially homegrown political framework already existed at independence, whereas other liberated countries had to recreate such frameworks nearly from scratch.”\textsuperscript{58} The initial partnership of these two institutions allowed the new African Botswana government to form without many major hitches. The ability to be transparent when it came to political endeavors gave the transitioning government credibility in the eyes of its people. The execution of building a stable and functioning government was a major stepping-stone for Botswana in making a change in their country’s history. Having the platform for citizens to express their concerns, gave the people faith and confidence in their leader to have their best interests at heart.

Looking at the history of democracy in Botswana, John Holm analyses the government status of the Batswana state. The country was able to constructively transition out of the colonial era to the stable functioning government post-independence without major setbacks in the country’s political progress and development. Holm lays out how the government of Botswana was able to create a system that acknowledged both the traditional system and modern form of government by establishing a national and local government that creates a linkage between the local people and the overall

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 467
The country is able to cater the different classes and ethnic groups by incorporating them in the different political parties. Parties are not established by ethnic or class distinctions. As a result, the state was able to transition from their colonial past into a future of where modern governmental practices and traditional practices are intertwined together. For those who think that the two times of governance cannot exist together in a functioning properly, Botswana demonstrates how it is possible.

Before Botswana could attain independence in 1966, there were hurdles of regional politics the country had to go through. There were talks of allowing the South African government to take political control of Bechuanaland, modern day Botswana. As stated in the South Africa Act of 1909, “…whereas it is expedient to make provision for the union of the Colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange River Colony on terms and conditions to which they have agreed by resolution of their respective Parliaments, and to define the executive, legislative, and judicial powers to be exercised in the government of the Union…” which called for the unification of all southern African territories under British rule to become one. However, because of the efforts of the rising political leaders in these countries, their colonized state was not combined to be a part of South Africa; rather there were provisions made for Bechuanaland (Botswana), Basutoland, Swaziland and the Rhodesias in their efforts to establish their individual sovereignty as an independent country. The process of state building took time for each country to finalize their sovereignty from Britain; each new

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60 Ibid. , 22
61 The Union of South Africa, South Africa Act, 1909
country had their own leaders fighting for their independence. This was one of the many roadblocks that would occur before Botswana would become an independent state. This is significant to the history of Botswana, as this was one of the many failed attempts for Bechuanaland (Botswana) to become a part of South Africa. Bechuanaland (Botswana) joining South Africa would have mainly benefited the British government and the taxpayers of Britain.63

Other aspects of the independence movement that are overlooked in Botswana’s political history are the different political parties that were emerging as the country was gearing up for independence. One of the earlier established political parties was the Botswana Democratic Party (B.D.P). The original members consisted of a mixture of Europeans and Africans.64 The opposing party to the B.D.P was the Botswana Peoples Party (B.P.P), originally known as the Bechuanaland People’s Party. The party “was founded in December 1960 partly in response of the establishment of the legislative assembly and partly as an outgrowth of the ban placed on the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress…”65 The leaders of B.P.P based their campaign on the removal of traditional leaders having political influence. They saw no need for Kgosi and kings in the new political arena of Botswana. “The party leaders tried to gear action in the mold of the West African independence movements, especially the C.P.P. of Ghana. Demands of immediate independence, Africanization of the administration, an end to the rule by chiefs…”66 Unlike their opposition, B.P.P frontrunners Kgelemang Motsete, Philip Matante, and Motsamai Mpho wanted to follow the blueprint of Kwame Nkrumah

63 Ibid., 27.
64 Ibid., 81.
65 Ibid., 81.
66 Ibid., 81.
in restructuring Botswana where the government stood independently outside of traditional leaders and foreign influences. Their campaign would not last due to internal rivalry and the influence of chiefs not allowing B.P.P to campaign in their territory.

Post-Independence

Botswana is governed through a parliamentary system where there are different branches that allow the space for accountability on a national level. Within this system, there are two main branches within the parliament, one “the National Assembly, has power to make laws and approve appropriations and taxes.”67 And the second branch, the House of Chiefs, functions as advisors to “the Assembly or the president on such matters as relate to the interests and organization of the country’s tribe.”68 Having a cabinet that is dedicated to acknowledging the element of traditional governance that came before democracy is a valuable asset that has allowed Botswana to get to the level of development it is at currently. Botswana’s growth as a country continues to set a standard for the rest of Africa. “The BDP’s democratic structure has been in place only two decades. Not surprisingly, the chiefs and their headmen still survive as a potent force in politics. The government is very aware of their popular status. It uses the chiefs to legitimize its new structures, to lead community where government policies are discussed…”69 The BDP government ability to transition the state of Botswana into a country where traditional are considered valuable and work alongside elected officials has done wonders for the stability of Botswana and their people. The level of engagement

68 Ibid. , 21
69 Ibid. , 26.
that the government has with traditional leaders displays how much of an asset these chiefs are to the government officials when it comes to local affairs of Botswana.

A great part of the country’s stability is its growing economy. Botswana has had one of the leading Gross Domestic Product’s (GDP) in Africa.\textsuperscript{70} Since independence the government has made strategic economic moves that have allowed the country to continue its good fortune. Among the natural resources that Botswana has, diamonds have been particularly valuable commodity. “Botswana’s leadership has ensured that it has utilized the wealth afforded by its natural resources wisely and accomplished great economic feats.”\textsuperscript{71} It takes great leadership for countries to perform to a high standard. The collaboration of traditional and current political leaders propelled the country onto the trajectory that benefited all parties. With traditional chiefs being in charge of the land, where the resources are found, allows the operating government to strike constructive deals with foreign investors, allowing Botswana to be able to sustain itself.

Aside from the national government there is a local government, were there is an established council who represents the different districts in Botswana. Their role as a council is to advocate for development of infrastructures such as schools, roads, and employment, along with other things.\textsuperscript{72} The role that local chiefs play in this is that they act as advisors or \textit{board members} to the council, giving insight to the council about the different communities that they represent and serve. “In reality, the local councils act as

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 464.
an intermediary between the central government and local communities.” This system has proven to work for Botswana for many decades, where there has not been major conflict in the country. The country of Botswana for the past decades has been able to work towards a sustainable governmental that has a balance of democracy and traditional government. Their ability to properly construct a government that included leaders of the traditional leaders involved in national discussion has proven beneficial to the nation, being a prime example of how a country can implement the two styles of governing for other African countries to follow.

73 Ibid. , 22.
Chapter Five: Zimbabwe

In this chapter, I set out to examine the chronological history of the different forms of governances of modern day Zimbabwe. Starting with Zimbabwe’s traditional leaders within the different clans and how they governed themselves independently from other groups. Next I explore the role of colonialism post the European invasion in southern Africa, which shaped the state formation of the country leading to the independence of current Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has a unique past that allows the country to provide great insight to how certain African countries’ governments operate today.

Currently Zimbabwe is one of the handfuls of countries in Africa that has not had a change in president in more than three decades. Following independence in 1980, when Robert Mugabe attained independence and become president, he not stepped down in leadership. Zimbabwe is classified as a parliamentary democracy; where elections are held but President Mugabe has somehow been elected to remain in office. Over the years, Zimbabwe has received several international sanctions imposed on the country, which has made the living conditions rough for the average citizen. Faith in the government is low to nonexistent, even the institution of traditional leaders have lost their place and influence in the country and over the people. The changes of leaders within Zimbabwe over the centuries have not always benefited the people. In the days of traditional leadership things were a bit different, with the transitions from European colonizers and current leaders; there has not been a consistent collaborative effort amongst all sides.
Pre-Colonial (Traditional Ruling)

Similar to most regions in Africa, prior to colonialism there were various clans that occupied the territory we now know as Zimbabwe, each clan had their own leadership on governing the people. There were many clans and empires that occupied the land of the time such as “the Great Zimbabwe, the Mutapa, the Torwa, the Rozvi, and the Ndele states.” Every clan had autonomy to govern and rule how the leaders felt was just for them and their people. Prior to European encounter, there were great civilizations that lived and roamed through the land of southern Africa. Scholars such as David Beach, in his work trace the lineage ancient civilizations in the region of southern Africa that date back to 300A.D to 1300A.D according to archeological findings. All across Africa there is a rich history of how civilizations that dates back to cradle civilization. Southern region of Africa has a rich history of events and I plan expose most of it in relevance to traditional governance in the region.

The pre-colonial past of Zimbabwe has always been dismissed in the full context of the country’s history. The creation of civilizations and architecture such as stone-hedges dating back to early 200 B.C are discredited or not accounted by certain European historians in the global context of human civilizations. Due to the vastness of the land, the people and clans of Zimbabwe were vastly spread out through the land. The ancient kingdoms though isolated in terms of locations, but would frequently trade

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amongst themselves for natural resources and goods.⁷⁷ Amongst the San people, there is “archaeological evidence of Stone Age cultures going back some 100,000 years, such as stone implements and arrowheads, as well as thousand sites containing rock paintings throughout Zimbabwe…”⁷⁸ San civilization were one of the earliest inhabitants of current Zimbabwe. Though their civilization may seem primitive in comparison to modern society, for their time there was a system of order. In any society throughout time has always found their own way of keeping their history, whether it is in the form of lecture or even paintings. This is just one aspect of the advancement of the earlier civilizations of Zimbabwe prior to European encounter.

The history and traditions of the people of Zimbabwe date back more than 2,000 years prior to Europeans first settlement in 1890.⁷⁹ The migration and arrival of the Bantu-speaking clan occurred two millennia prior to the European encounter. There is evidence of civilizations existing then, which paved the way for many clans of southern Africa to learn to follow after. “…Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa, and the Torwa/Rozvi states, all of which were established by the ancestors of the present Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe.”⁸⁰ These civilizations either coexisted with each other having had autonomy of their own state, unless there was a war being fought. “…Great Zimbabwe (1270-1550); the ‘Togwa’ (Torwa) of the north-west (1450-1690), the Mutapa in the north (1450-1902) and the ‘Rozvi’ in the south-west (1690-1830), and other

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⁸⁰ Ibid. , 10.
numerous small groups who never belonged to one monolithic groups.”\textsuperscript{81} There were
generations of communities that preceded each other adding to the history and culture of
the region in Africa. Most of southern Africa is descended from the many clans that lived
in modern day Zimbabwe.

Within the San culture their history is known to date back 100,000 years during
the Stone Age era. They are believed to be the early forms of humans through the process
of evolution.\textsuperscript{82} Even the first kinds of Homo sapiens race had their own form of recording
their history. “Early San society left a rich legacy of magnificent cave paintings that
abound throughout southern Africa in general and in Zimbabwe, particularly notable in
the Matopos Hills…”\textsuperscript{83} Though their society was not a sophisticated as modern society,
the San people has systems of organization. The San culture provided the platform for
people to work equal and to make decisions based on the consensus of the collective,\textsuperscript{84}
which shows the San society practiced democracy even before democracy had a title.

An aspect of the Zimbabwean culture is that kings and chiefs during pre-
colonialism were believed to be choosing onto the throne by spirit-mediums and
ancestors.\textsuperscript{85} Through the leadership of senior elders in the community who serves as the
medium between ancestors and the chieftaincy throne in certain villages in Zimbabwean

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\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{83} Garlake, Peter. The Painted Caves: An Introduction to the Prehistoric Art of Zimbabwe.
\textsuperscript{85} Makahamadze, Tompson, Nesbeth Grand, and Baxter Tavuyanago. "The Role of
Traditional Leaders in Fostering Democracy, Justice and Human Rights in Zimbabwe."
\end{flushright}
In most African cultures the power and authority is considered to a divine arrangement, so the appointments of chiefs were taken seriously. The value of the position of the chiefs was divine, they were perceived to go the divine existence of a god. They were to be the keepers of the land. This was the early form of how chiefs and kings came to power across the different clans of Zimbabwe. Though it may seem to be unorthodox form of election in the perception of western scholars, but this was highly practiced tradition in southern Africa.

In the Mapungubwe civilization that existed from the 1040 AD to 1270 AD, this society, like many African civilizations, had its own autonomy of land and people. The Mapungubwe civilization was located in southern region of current Zimbabwe. The layout of the land in the region consisted of wetlands in a semi-arid, where the land was located near the Shashe-Limpopo. Their main source of revenue for the community was based in cattle along with “spinning and weaving of fabrics and ivory and bone carving.” Another aspect of the Mapungubwe culture was trade, during the existence of their society; the Mapungubwe controlled the gold trade around Indian Ocean towns. The advancement of their society allowed them to gain major influence over neighboring settlements around them, near and far. Not just in commerce and trade, but in system of governing as well.

After the decline in hegemony from the Mapungubwe, the people of Great Zimbabwe were next in power of the region. Within every civilization there are a

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86 Ibid., 35.
88 Ibid., 15.
89 Ibid., 15.
collective of people who govern the land and people, similar in the early civilization of Zimbabwe. Custodian of the land was a major responsibility of the chiefs in Africa.

“Senior domestic stewards reciprocated allegiance with governance and ritual–assuaging the ancestors and acting as chief rainmakers. Legitimization of political power of domestic stewards is likely to have been enhanced when linked to traditional supernatural powers.”

Their selection of chiefs and elders may seem unorthodox in western society, but this tradition is still practiced across Africa currently in traditional settings. Many civilizations proceeded after the Great Zimbabwe culture, but the influence that Great Zimbabwe had was significant in the history of the region, thus leading to Zimbabwe gaining its name after independence. Prior to independence, the southern region of Africa experienced centuries of exploitation and colonialism.

**Colonial Era**

Zimbabwe due to its location was able to escape the aspects of slavery, unlike the western Africa, which felt the brunt of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Not to say that slavery did not exist in southern Africa, but it was not as prevalent as in other parts of Africa. The first encounter of Europeans, which were the Portuguese, dates back to 1505. The initial bases of their relationship were founded on trading of goods. The Portuguese continued to trade with people of Zimbabwe without much conflict. It was not until the invasion of the British Empire where the dynamics changed between the people of Zimbabwe and Europeans.

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92 Ibid. , 10.
Though colonialism was similar across Africa, there was a slight alternative in southern Africa, where Europeans were moving into these southern countries. Unlike the western and eastern Africa, there was a migration of Europeans to southern Africa (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique), which changed the colonial experience for the natives to the land. The reason for this invasion was the weather climate in southern Africa was very similar to that of Europe; this drew in more whites towards the continent to establish them on the new land they conquered. Unlike other parts of Africa, a system of governance was created that had many Europeans in the country, southern Africa experienced influxes of Europeans in the region.

Zimbabwe was colonized by Great Britain in the 1890s, a much-needed territory for the British to build their empire from South Africa to Egypt. Led by Cecil Rhodes, who the country was named after during the colonial era, Southern Rhodesia was the name of Zimbabwe when the British captured the land, and modern day Zambia was called Northern Rhodesia. Rhodes believed that Africa was destined for European conquest; Rhodes noted in his writings that “…Africa is still lying ready for us, it is our duty to take it. It is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race of the best, the most human, most honourable race of the world.

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94 Ibid. , 354.
97 Ibid. , 362.
possesses." This was the state of mind that many Europeans held when it came to the colonization of Africa. The concept that Africa was a barren land with savage people occupying the territory and waiting to be enslaved, not realizing or accepting that Africans had richer history of their own. The efforts of conquering Africans spread throughout the entire continent leading to the capture of territories. As natural resources were being exploited through exports, so was the governing practice in the newly founded country of Southern Rhodesia. Instead of traditional leader providing law, they were replaced with bureaucratic figure with the only intention of expanding their companies.

Leading up to the Britain’s conquest of the territory of Zimbabwe, their one-sided deals set between the British and the native leaders. These deals were manipulative and would eventually lead to the eradication of the natives off their land. “The democratic structure and function of the institution of the chieftaincy that existed in the pre-colonial period came to an end with the coming of colonial authorities in the country in 1980. The colonial masters introduced administrative structure and legislative laws that reduced

With the establishment of The Rudd Concession, 1888, which was a deal struck by Charles Dunell Rudd and the chief Lobengula Khumalo, land was exchanged for guns and powder. “…Lobengula was promised guns, a gun-boat on the Zambezi River and the some cash… Lobengula signed the document that became known as the Rudd Concession. Shortly afterwards, however, Lobengula discovered that he had been conned

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98 Cecil Rhodes’s Confession of Faith, 1877
and that the document he had signed contained more than what he had been told it said. This was one of many ways that natives were stripped and robbed of their land and resources. The autonomy that the clans of Zimbabwe has enjoyed for generations had immediately disappeared, and with the traditional who were supposed to lead and protect them making questionable deals did not serve to the best interest of the people.

The colonial period signified the departure from the entire African traditional ruling; for example, the 1898 Southern Rhodesia Order-In-Council, was a legislative mechanism used to establish the colonial land segregation; through the creation of Tribal Trust Lands for Africans. This led to the creation of reserves in zones with erratic rainfall, hot climate and infertile soil for the native Africans to live on, while the favorable conditions were thus taken away from the blacks, marking the inequitable and racial distribution of land in Rhodesia. The effects of creating the reserves were that there followed environmental damages. The natives of Zimbabwe were stripped of much of their culture during colonialism, from the land to the influence of their leaders; with their ability to live like how they use and practice their cultures openly and freely were limited, nearly destroyed. Laws like these are ways that imperialism in Africa turned into colonialism and exploitation of Zimbabwe, similarly across Africa. Chiefs were being barred from the significant leadership titles and roles that they held. Unlike other parts of Africa, for example in Botswana where in the early stages of independence, chiefs were

incorporated in the constructing of the new government post-colonialism. This collaboration with political leaders and chiefs allowed for their country to reconstruct itself in a manner that kept traditional customs and allowed for a new governmental system to take place in the country.

In terms of the power and role of the chieftaincy when European invaded Zimbabwe in 1890’s, things changed for the worse. As the British settled in more on the continent, they stripped away the power and influence that the chiefs had built for centuries.\(^{104}\) As with Botswana’s experience with colonialism under the British, there was no council created for the chiefs of Zimbabwe to organize and find a place within the country’s colonial period. This foreshadowed the treatment of traditional leaders. The spiritual elements that chieftaincies practiced were detached unlike before. The spiritual connection that chiefs had with the ancestral realm was devalued under British rule. Chiefs were now banned from traditional practices and altered their governing practice.\(^{105}\) Similar to the chieftaincy transition of Botswana, there was created and established in Zimbabwe, “…the Rhodesian High Commissioner’s proclamation in November 1898 introduced the Southern Rhodesia Native Department to administer Africans.”\(^{106}\) Wanting to monitor and confine the power of chiefs in order to make sure that chiefs did not overstep their boundaries.

Another element of chieftaincy role during colonial rule was being a puppet for the British agenda. Chiefs were made to do the groundwork for the new leaders of the

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\(^{105}\) Ibid., 34.

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 34.
British governors.\textsuperscript{107} Chiefs at this point had become figureheads for the territories that they once owned and ruled over, they were not able to exercise their power as once before. The Southern Rhodesia Order-in-Council was an off branch of the Order-in-Council created by Great Britain to pass legislation for the colonies that were under the British Empire in 1898.\textsuperscript{108} This committee in Zimbabwe took away the land of the chiefs and turned the chiefs to tax collectors; making the position of the chief into a job, rather than a spiritually ordained responsibility that was giving by ancestors as traditionally intended. “In 1913, the government introduced the hut tax, poll tax and dog tax. All had to be levied by the chief on his people on behalf of the colonial government.”\textsuperscript{109} The role and place of chiefs in the traditional settings were being transformed into a position without power and major influence. This had been the gradual digression of the chiefs’ role in colonial Zimbabwe. Their value was little and unrecognized by Britain, besides the responsibility to collecting revenue to the British agenda.

The social and economic cultures that were created during colonialism had an influence of how the country was developed. The amount of natural resources in Zimbabwe is what drove Cecil Rhodes in wanting to create a railroad line from “Cape-to-Cairo.”\textsuperscript{110} From gold to agriculture such as grain, hay, and beans, all had major consumers in European market. This drove companies to Zimbabwe along with white farmers. The urgency of gaining capital in Zimbabwe was the driving force behind

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. , 25.
\end{flushright}
Europeans coming to the country. To be able to establish a thriving business the
acquisition of land was needed. Through many forms of manipulation and exploitation
white Europeans had acquisition of land. “The colonial settlers claimed ownership by
conquest and proceeded to parcel land out on the basis of English law, which was based
on individual private ownership of land.”111 The practices of the early 1900s were still
being used in the 1950s of imperialism and colonialism; the value of traditional
Zimbabwe formalities became completely sidelined for the British agenda.

Independence

In the 1940s a shift began in the international community, World War II has come
to end; simultaneously the Pan-African movement had begun to spread across Africa and
the Caribbean. Protest and strikes were occurring across the diaspora, including Southern
Rhodesia where railway strikes were taking place.112 “The Southern Rhodesian railway
workers’ strike began after higher-wage-earning workers, who organized into a union in
1944, were told by Europeans management that their demands for better overtime pay
would be heard.”113 This was the early beginning of freedom fighting Southern
Rhodesians at the time. There had not been the formation of a political agenda at the
time, mainly the fight for equality and fair treatment by the ruling British government.
Through the creation of unions is how the development of a political agenda was created,
led by people such as Charles Mzingeli.114 With the assistance of the labor movement

111 Ibid. , 58.
112 Scarnecchia, Timothy. The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in
29.
113 Ibid. , 30.
114 Ibid. , 30.
gave birth to the political movement, the labor movement provided the sense of
nationalism that was needed for the political leaders to continue the battle on a political
platform.

Zimbabwe’s independence struggle was fought on different battlegrounds, one
with combat front with guerilla fighters, and the other in the political arena. There were
physical confrontations between militia and government forces. The Guerrilla War took
place in the 1960s and 1970s in the efforts to bring the people of Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{115} The
message of the Mau Mau movement that took place in Kenya had found its way to
Zimbabwe, which political leaders such as Robert Mugabe questioned. In his work,
Mugabe doubted the effectiveness of the Mau Mau movement due to the failures in other
Madagascar was and of the UPC insurrections in conditions are even less favourable in
postcolonial Africa.”\textsuperscript{116} These were the early stages of the fight for independence that had
begun in Zimbabwe. But it would take more than a decade for to Africans to fully attain
sovereignty of the country. The Mau Mau movement did not address the entire political
dynamic that was in Zimbabwe. Their main concern was the removal of the British
regime without clarity how power would be shared and operated after. “Mau Mau never
possessed any modernization leadership save that they could produce out their own
ranks.”\textsuperscript{117} Lack of clear directions and their violent tactics were some of the reasons why
the ideas of the Mau Mau movement were not fully embraced in Zimbabwe. There was

\textsuperscript{115} Ranger, Terence. Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 138.
\textsuperscript{117} Ranger, Terence. Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A
resistance from Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) along with the chiefs across the country, not to mention the British government.

Chieftaincies were not warmly embraced by the rising political leaders of Zimbabwe during the independence movement. Wanting to stray away from traditional form of governance, the ZANU-PF political party had drafted in the new state constitution laws that constrained the power chiefs had in their local towns. Their authority on land distribution was stripped away and turned into a department in the establishing government of ZANU-PF as District Council, Ward Committees (WADCO) and Village Development Committee (VIDCO). The political agenda of the ZANU-PF similar to British colonial rule was to eliminate the influence and power that traditional chiefs had during this period of transition.

Zimbabwe has a unique fight for independence; the battle was fought in different fields, one being in the political arena and in the grounds combat. There were different factions who had the separate ideology on how Zimbabwe should get independence. Chiefs were caught in the middle of this conflict, which became problematic for them. Choosing sides was a costly decision, with punishments that varied from imprisonment to death. “In the 1970’s, village head Amandios Njerema…was imprisoned and tortured for providing food and shelter to the liberation fighters…headmen Kurewa of Matasu and Chikomba of Chivhu were murdered on suspicion that they sympathised with the colonial

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120 Ibid. , 40.
government.”121 The tension in Zimbabwe had risen to a higher level, in the late 1970’s. Chiefs were put in positions where they had to pick a side to support, which had major influence over the people in their townships. Having to adjust from collaborating with the British regime, to now the emerging African leaders was not an easy decision. Especially with uncertainties of how this new government would treat chiefs in their new administration. After decades of adapting to British influence of the role chieftaincies, chiefs had familiarized themselves with outside power influencing how they governed their land. Now with the rise of ZANU-PF another adjustment period was on the rise, which made chiefs across Zimbabwe unprepared for the change.

The ZANU-PF continued the fight for independence where the Mau Mau movement was unable to take it. Most of the mid 1960s through 1970s consisted of endless meetings of the ZANU-PF and countless organizations and groups negotiating how the transition of African government would take place. Before the ZANU-PF would take office there was a push for Zimbabwe to attain independence under a white government.122 The Rhodesian Front Party campaigned for independence; within their movement there was an aim to end racial segregation in Zimbabwe.123 The British government not wanting to agree to the terms that the Rhodesian Front Party wanted in their independence forced the Rhodesian Front Party to unilaterally declare their own independence from Great Britain on November 11, 1965.124 This led to international sanctions imposed on the country. Internally there was conflict the Rhodesian Front Party and the African nationalist parties fighting for African independence. During this period

121 Ibid., 40.
123 Ibid., 151.
124 Ibid., 151.
there were many political issues and agendas going on in Zimbabwe, all part of the reason why the country was unable to fully attain independence until the late 1970s.

The approach that the ZANU-PF took to independence was through diplomatic means primarily during the Lancaster House Conference. During this conference, which was organized by the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa members of the British government, Rhodesian Front Party, and ZANU-PF met to discuss and negotiate the next steps for Zimbabwe. Throughout this conference there were high and low moments where progress was made and conflict was had over difference, but in the end a resolution was achieved. By end of the year in 1979 a deal was brokered between all parties. “The Lancaster House Conference finally broke the Rhodesian impasse on 21 December 1979, paving the way for national multiracial elections that would eventually end colonial rule and usher in the independence government of Robert Mugabe and the now renamed ZANU-Patriotic Front (PF) on 18 April 1980.” A new era in the country had finally come to pass, where Africans of the country would govern Zimbabwe. This led to the creation of the Zimbabwe Independence Constitution and the establishment of the parliament structure. The road to a free Zimbabwe state was paved, with new leadership and high ambitions; the next generation had begun for Zimbabwe.

The name Zimbabwe derives from the Shona clan as *dzimba dza mabwe*, which means “houses of stone.” Paying homage to the ancient clans that were native to the land, the ruling government ZANU-PF felt that it was fitting to name the country

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125 Ibid., 186.
126 Ibid., 191.
Zimbabwe to show solidarity of their people and land. Also, after decades of colonization their land being labeled at *Southern Rhodesia*, the ZANU-PF wanted show the transition of have country being under African rule in the reflection of its name as Zimbabwe.\footnote{Douglas, R.G.S. (ed.) 1984. Zimbabwe Epic. Harare: National Archives of Zimbabwe. p. 41.} Having the name of the country changed to strictly Zimbabwe did not come easily. Initially in 1978, the Rhodesian government wanted to comprise with forcefulness of the ZANU-PF and change the country’s name to *Zimbabwe-Rhodesia*, in hopes of finding a compromise.\footnote{Hubbard, Paul. Prehistory Society of Zimbabwe, Society of Zimbabwe Newsletter 138. p. 3.} Though there have been discussion on initially suggested the name, with various theories on the origin of the name in the political; the name has stuck within the culture since September 7, 1979.\footnote{Ibid. , 3.} Mugabe and his administration began to reconstruct the nation in hopes of correcting the errors of the past governments and rulers. This did not come easy, as addressing decades of inequality and oppression was not an overnight task. Time would be needed along with cooperation from all parties, and this is where conflict lied. The inability for full cooperation by the government and other influential parties blocked possibilities of Zimbabwe from becoming a thriving independent country.

**Post-Independence**

When Mugabe and the ZANU-PF attained independence, a new era dawned in Zimbabwe. The regime of an African government had finally been achieved in country, the hopes of equality and prosperity was the attitude had come over the people. Their struggle had been worth the change in office from white colonizers to having a government of black Africans who was of the people. These ideals were shortly lived, as

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Mugabe and his cabinet members had their own intentions for the country. Starting with the place of traditional leaders as chiefs and leaders in the villages in the different regions across Zimbabwe, the power and influence that chiefs had in their territories would be further taken away.

During the struggle for independence ZANU-PF party felt some of the local chiefs were conspiring against their party and their agenda for autonomy. Due to these allegations when Mugabe came into office he continued and tightened the power that local chiefs had in their territories.131 “The ZANU-PF government that replaced the colonial regime in 1980 discredited the institution of chieftainship. It further clipped the powers of chiefs, which were already adversely reduced by the colonial government. At independence, the government adopted socialist policies that excluded the roles of the traditional.”132 Chiefly authority had been distributed amongst different cabinet members who wanted to display their authority Mugabe and the ZANU-PF and systematically dissolved the traditional institution of chieftaincies in the process. There had always been tension between traditional leaders and the ruling government, which had never been properly addressed. The dynamics of these relations was forever evolving, much like in most African countries; which later on in Zimbabwe’s history would serve to be a detriment to the country’s development and political progression.

With the disablement of the institution of chieftaincies, Mugabe began his reign as commander and chief in Zimbabwe. Mugabe’s political plan was of a socialist agenda,

132 Ibid. , 40.
he had no initial intentions of having a democratic government. Though the ZANU-PF political agenda was one-sided, the ZANU-PF public engagement was high. By providing basic resources the people needed, this also allowed the ZANU-PF to gain the people vote of confidence in their regime. “There were many pro-people policies that made a real positive difference in the people’s lives. The incoming government expanded the country’s education facilities and provided free primary school education and free health services to the poor majority.” These optimistic incentives did not last in Zimbabwe, within a decade of independence the overall development in the country was on the decline. The mid 1990s, Zimbabwe’s unemployment level was on the rise, with increase inflation, along with other area of the country’s economy.

In terms of the political system for Zimbabwe, Mugabe replicated the one-party government in Ghana, and Kenya. He initially felt that through this one-party system there could be democratic elections that would allow people to choose their leaders within the same party. “Proponents of the one-party ideology maintained that democratic debate could be conducted within one party just as well as in a multiparty configuration.” There was an immediate opposition to this practice of governance in Zimbabwe, several resistant political parties fought to change this through general elections and protest. This contest was in vain, due to the power and influence Mugabe and the ZANU-PF had in parliament, and the violence that opposition groups faced by ZANU-PF supports. Since the early days of independence in Zimbabwe, the one-party

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133 Ibid. , 40.
135 Ibid. , 194.
136 Ibid. , 202.
137 Ibid. , 202.
political system has not changed. Zimbabwe over the past two decades has been on the loosing of international sanctions. These sanctions were due to human rights violations that Mugabe has been accused of imposing on his people. Robert Mugabe is still in office as the president of Zimbabwe, which has led to international isolation and decline in the overall decline of the economy.
Chapter Six: Ghana

The Republic of Ghana has gone through different stages in the country’s short fifty-seven years of independence. Being the first sub-Saharan African country to attain political sovereignty of Great Britain in 1957, paved the way other African nations. This was a major accomplishment that paved the way for many African countries on the road to independence; the blueprint was created that countries could follow and adapt to suit their specific condition. Ghana being the torchbearer of independence provides much context to the African plight in governance, with the history of being the first Sub-Saharan country to attain independence. This set precedence for other African countries to follow.

Ghana provides insight on how African countries can eventually shift their political practices that serve the country for the betterment of the people despite the country’s past history. In Ghana, there has been an array of different forms of governments that reigned over the people, from traditional leaders to colonialism to one-party rule to military dictatorship, and currently practicing parliamentary democracy. The uniqueness of Ghana’s history being the first sub-Saharan country to attain independence paved the way for many African countries to follow their blueprint for others to do the same thus making Ghana an important case study in my analysis of traditional governance and democratic government. Because Ghana has gone through periods of democratic, military, and one-party rule it serves as an important intermediate case.
Pre-Colonial (Traditional Ruling)

The history of Ghana dates back for many centuries in West Africa. The meaning of the name Ghana in itself holds high value; “Warrior King”\(^{138}\) has high implications of the country’s historical path. The name was taken up by Kwame Nkrumah as an ode to the ancient civilization named Ghana Empire, which dates back 830 Before Common Era (BCE).\(^{139}\) The pre-colonial history of Ghana dates back many centuries with countless leaders and governmental practices that have altered and shifted over the years\(^{140}\). Now the republic Ghana has taken the helm of the name and has been a journey to become a prominent and stable country in Africa. The republic has had fifty-seven years of autonomy from colonial rule. To fully understand the current state of Ghana, we must examine and analyze the historical transitional of the nation and people.

Before the arrival of European colonizers, there existed in West Africa a number of tribal groups who lived and thrived on the land of modern day Ghana. They were predominantly of Akan ancestry of which the most famous in the Ashanti clan group.\(^{141}\) Aside from the Ashanti clans, there were other group of clans that rose in prominence in this area such as the Akwamu, the Akyem, the Bonoman, the Fanti, and the Denkyira, along with many others.\(^{142}\) History shows the cohesiveness about the Ashanti/Akan clan

\(^{139}\) Ajayi, J. F. Ade and Ian Espie, A Thousand Years of West African History 2\textsuperscript{nd} Ed. (New York: Humanities, 1972), p. 481.
\(^{140}\) Ibid., 481.
\(^{142}\) Ibid., 10.
and their capabilities but it needs to be said that the lot of these kingdoms were not a coercive unit particularly because of the dominance of the Ashanti group, who perhaps because of their wealth and their population size were able to easily dominate the other groups. The Ashanti were able to effectively govern their territories through a complex system of governance that took into account various aspect of their cultural backgrounds. For example, the Ashanti had a constitution that was set in stone. Their constitution “aman mmu”\textsuperscript{143} and “aman bre”\textsuperscript{144} which means immemorial customs and the

In traditional governance, chiefs have been at the forefront over the years of effectively exercising their executive, legislative and judicial function to the satisfaction of many. The chiefs are the custodians of the land and have the culture of the people in trust. The future of the chieftaincy institution is in hands of the governed that continue to show reverence and have confidence in the institution against the backdrop of several challenges.\textsuperscript{145}

According to folktale passed on from generations to generations, the Ashanti became the overlords of which later became the Ashanti/Akan Empire. The Ashanti were able to effectively govern their territories through a complex system of governance that took into account various aspect of their cultural backgrounds. An example of this would be if a township were captured during war, instead of killing or removing the chief from power, the Ashantihene would make the losing chief pledge their allegiance to the

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 47.
Ashanti kingdom.\textsuperscript{146} This allowed the Ashantihene to maximize his resources by expanding his territory and at the same time have subjects under him.\textsuperscript{147} In the Ashanti culture, there was an established written constitution, which set order and customs into stone. In the constitution it was outlined the responsibilities and role of Ashanti chief, he was expected to mediate, negotiate, arbitrate and adjudicate.\textsuperscript{148} “Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries much of the attention of the Asantehene was taken up with the processes of monitoring and modifying that segment of rural custom defined as aman bre, as the state was relentlessly interventionist in relation to the social order.”\textsuperscript{149} Aside from the legal system, the Ashanti culture utilized a system of chieftaincy that granted local chiefs some autonomy over their people as long as they proclaimed loyalty to the Ashanti kingdom.

Experts of the political structures of West African empires have usually concentrated their focus largely with higher levels of authority and the achievements that the chiefs made. However, in various West African cultures the influence of less chieftaincy became an interknit aspect of how the governance system operated.\textsuperscript{150} The appointment of these lesser chiefs represented the growth of the main chief’s spread of power, with a political structure that allowed semi-autonomy to other chiefs; nevertheless, they were still connected to the high chief whether it kinship, reciprocal obligation, or just customary laws. The structure of power and authority in pre-colonial Ghana was a multi-

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 72.
level system of governance that functioned and served the citizens of the land.\textsuperscript{151}

Contrary to popular belief that Africans were unorganized as a civilization and people, there is substantial amount of evidence to prove otherwise. “The undisputed authority of a court is the chief in a chief’s court or the queen mother in a queen mother’s court. But like all other Asante occasions in which a chief or queen mother appears, in court he or she will be accompanied by one or more akuyeame, elders, and servants, and the interaction will be very formalized.”\textsuperscript{152}

For many centuries prior to Europeans landing in West Africa, the people of the land operated and functioned amongst themselves for centuries, with structure and order. One might suggest that due European encounter and invasion is what has led to the decades of disorder across Africa. On the other hand, because of European encounter it changed the way African clans governed themselves, challenging chiefs to adjust their form of governing.

Prior to the invasion of Europeans, traditional leaders governed and lead the people and land. The purpose of traditional institutions was to stabilize and organize their terrain. The impact that traditional leaders held in their communities would transcend the coming stages the African continent would go through throughout the different stages of European influence that penetrated the African people.

\textbf{Colonial Era}

The Bond of 1844 signified the beginning of the decline of the Ashanti power and the arrival of the British rule in Ghana. The policy of indirect rule was effective because the chiefs still ruled and had authority of the land on a local level. “This bond introduced

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. , 7.
\end{flushleft}
English justice into the Gold Coast territories and abolished such customs as human sacrifice, but stopped short of any direct intrusion in the government of these communities."¹⁵³ This agreement was primary between the British and Fanti clan who used this relationship with the British as a form of protection from the Ashanti clan.¹⁵⁴ The British regime created a system of governance that they appointed a Governor to the country who would have authority over the chiefs in the country, which in turn influenced the people. The system on indirect rule was how the British maintained their authority across Ghana. Many European colonizers used this similar tactic to govern their colonies, but the British had modifications to their form indirect rule.

In the eyes of the British, they had functioning system of colonization; the power of recognition of a chief was in the British favor.¹⁵⁵ When there would be conflict with a chief, the way the British governor handle it would strip the chief of the power and authority, with the lack of British recognition diminished his power thus leading his people in having little to no faith in his authority. The legitimacy of a chief’s power and role during colonialism operated as strategic move on the part of the British regime.¹⁵⁶ In the case where there was a chief who was unwilling to subscribe to way of the British regime, they would be forcefully dethroned. A famous incident in Ghana’s history that occurred during colonialism was the exile of the Ashantihene and the Queen mother. This was the first time in Ashanti history that leaders of their clan were stripped of their power

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. , 13.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid. , 13.
and influence over their land and people.\textsuperscript{157} When the British would take away the power of authority from a local chief would weaken the influence of the chiefs. Their role amongst their people minimized making them appear weak and powerless, creating a disturbance in structure of the chiefs in the regions of Ghana. The order of political practice when the British would strip power away from a chief would create confusion, due to the lack of immediate leadership. The council that the chiefs kept would also disassemble, thus removing all forms of the democratic practices that the chiefs had.

Ghana’s democratic credentials date back to the colonial era, many years before it attained independence. The desire to be part of the political system dates back to 1870s, when there were Africans in the Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{158} During this time period,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Governor
  \item Resident
  \item District Officer \quad Adviser to Chief
  \item District Chiefs (Subordinate Chiefs)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Independence}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Governor
  \item Resident
  \item District Officer \quad Adviser to Chief
  \item District Chiefs (Subordinate Chiefs)
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 385.
Ghanaians with western education were becoming progressively acknowledged in the political affairs of the Gold Coast (Ghana). The aspiration to be a part of governance led Ghanaian elites to form the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) with the aim of promoting their interest by holding the British colonizers accountable. In 1947, the Gold Coast experienced many grassroots organizations developing with the intention of political activities; with the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in the forefront led by J.B Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah. As Danquah and Nkrumah’s political agenda’s shifted from each other, it led Nkrumah to establish his own political party.

Nkrumah and his cohorts, known as “Big Six”, led Ghana’s independence process in their struggle for independence. After decades of being governed by the British regime, Nkrumah and his peers knew it was time for a change in governance. A new era was approaching where Africans would have ability and capability to lead their own government without western interference and influence. There was a change approaching the international community where colonized countries were aggressively fighting for their autonomy. During that time there were not any Ghanaian political parties that were being presented in parliament. It was not until 1956 the Convention People Party (CPP) was put on the ballot for the people to vote for.

Boone examines the countries in the central export producing regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, using the correlation between rural developments of agriculture, state

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organizations that export the crop, and regional and local forms of government\textsuperscript{161} to show all these factors working together. The importance of agriculture is a major element that allows countries to gain trade relations and grow their economies. Boone provides the example of Ghana and their institutional development and the difference that each country underwent post-independence. In the case of Ghana, the ruling government decided it would be best to have a centralized system that took away power and influence from the rural authorities such as the local chiefs\textsuperscript{162}. In the case of Ghana this strategy was not the best way for the country to transition. Not only was there resistance to the movement, it was apparent that local chiefs had more influence than the state government. Unlike other countries, local chiefs in Ghana had resources in land and crop that allowed them to sustain themselves and their position in getting the state government to recognize them.

Within the transitional years of Ghana’s independent history, a nationalist movement arose leading to a one-party system that was initially instituted in Ghana. Led by Nkrumah, this political structure though different in leadership from colonial rulers, did not give the people a choice or the ability to elect their leader.\textsuperscript{163} There are those who argue that this initial one-party was needed for the beginning stages of Ghana’s new development, while on the other hand there are those who think that the one-party system was not the best option in hindsight of the country. Nkrumah stated in his address to the members of the National Assembly in his Sessional Address. “A one-party system of

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid. , 12.
government is an effective and safe instrument only when it operates in a socialist society…it must be a political expression of the will of the masses working for the ultimate good and welfare of the people as a whole.”

Leading up to gaining independence and establishing a constitution, a major concern of Nkrumah’s, was how to properly address the institution of chieftaincy. Nkrumah enlisted the assistance of Alan Lennox-Boyd, who during the colonial era operated as the British Colonial Secretary.

Lennox-Boyd acknowledged, “that he found very real anxiety among the chiefs that their important office was lost in the new constitution. He believed in tradition, and he was sure that the chiefs would play an important role in the century for many years came to come.” Though on the surface level it seemed that Nkrumah had limited the power and role of chiefs, but in hindsight, he wanted to develop a cabinet for them with the government through the constitution. Nkrumah entering office felt that for the new country of Ghana to initially build towards stability, there should a one-party system and the abolishment of the chieftaincy institution.

With multiple transitions going on simultaneously in the transitioning government of the new founded country of Ghana, Nkrumah could not fully address every issue as immediate as it needed to be addressed. Nkrumah initially wanted to restrict the power of chiefs in Ghana in hopes of creating a central government. Although he felt that the institutions of chieftaincies were outdated in the African context, he simultaneously knew

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165 Ibid., 62.
the role that chiefs played in the country and the influence they held. Upon establishing a function government, Nkrumah intended to form a cabinet for all the chiefs in Ghana, but he saw some problematic issues within moving forward with that idea. “On reflection even though I trusted too much in the power of a reformed chieftaincy I was not mistaken in attempting to use popularly chosen chiefs within the framework of the government…while I believe we had largely eliminated tribalism as an active force, its by-products and those of the family system were still with us.”

Self-admittedly Nkrumah was unsure how to fully handle the intuition of chieftaincy; though the institution was outdated it still had reverence in Ghanaian culture. But a decision needed to be made and the easiest way for the new government to centralized authority was to phase out chiefs, which would later prove to be an uncollected action. “At this juncture it is worth recalling how far chieftaincy had been altered in the six years in which the CPP had dominated domestic policy. In short order chiefs had lost most of their local government and local judicial junctions. Their command of patronage had been profoundly undermined by their loss of control of stool reverence.”

Wanting to phase out the power of chieftaincy was quick decision that was made in efforts of stabilizing the newly constructed country and government. The process started with the restrictions of power that chiefs held for generations prior to the independence era in Ghana. Nkrumah during the time of independence had on his agenda to bring a new era and form of governance to Ghana that benefit Ghana in his mind, which did not incorporate chiefs as part of the government.

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The process of recognition of chiefs under the British reign continued after Ghana attained independence under the tenure of Kwame Nkrumah. There are many speculations of what President Nkrumah continued this practice policy when Ghana attained autonomy, during the first years of Nkrumah’s administration he passed several laws that limited and diminished the role of local leaders in Ghana. Like the Akim Abuakwa Act of 1958, Ashanti Stool Act of 1958, and the Stool Land Control Act of 1960. To Nkrumah, the institution of chieftaincies was a hindrance towards the new path of an independent Ghana.\(^{170}\) “Under the Stool Lands Amendment Act of 1960, the president was now empowered to act as ‘substitute [d] for the occupants of Stools as trustee of the Stool Lands’…” \(^{171}\) As Richard Rathbone notes in his work, the emerging leaders in Ghana did not see the full role that chiefs had in the new Ghanaian government was approaching. And Jeffrey Herbst points out in the passage below of how the British government benefited by using chiefs and the emerging leaders against each other, as the emerging country of Ghana was in the process of dealing with its government formation.

…That the colonial government made the traditional rulers its agent and that some of the wealthy and educated citizens of Ghana felt they were better qualified than traditional rulers. The few people who wanted to take the place of the traditional rulers were unsuccessful in their demands, therefore the colonial government remained and the traditional rulers exercised authority under the Colonial government.\(^{172}\)

During the transitional era in Ghana, Nkrumah considered some of the chiefs in Ghana as a form of the colonial regime that he wanted the country to transition away from. In his nationalist movement, Nkrumah considered the institution of chieftaincy to be feudal; the


\(^{171}\) Ibid., 156.

The system of chieftaincy did not fit the need of the people in the new era that Ghana was approaching.\textsuperscript{173} The power of chiefs during this time was shifting from being once the most influential people to now being marginalized. Though the institution of chieftaincy faced major obstacles during the independence era, the institution was able to survive and sustain. As the government was establishing itself as a legitimate institution, the system of chieftaincy remained stable, especially when Ghana went through several coup d'états in a span of less than two decades.

Post-Independence

Post-independence in Ghana did not bring political fruit and freedom and independent leaders thought it would initially; though they know that development in the country was not going to be easy. Within the ten years that Nkrumah was in office, Ghana had a one-party electoral system, which did not allow opposition parties to run for office. The country was more politically authoritarian than democratic; the strategy for the original leaders was to centralize power in hopes a unified country. “The absence of checks and balances can quickly transform democracy into tyranny, as it did in Ghana…”\textsuperscript{174} The political promises that were made during the CPP’s campaign were not being fulfilled. Nkrumah who was known to be Marxist, by studying the literature and work of Karl Marx, as Pinkney points out did not best serve his agenda for the country economically and developmentally.\textsuperscript{175} “…Nkrumah and perhaps even Rawlings in Ghana,

saw democracy as ineffective unless it relieved the masses of poverty and gave more political participation to the underprivileged. Their alternative might have been described as ‘socialist democracy’ in that it implied a redistribution of wealth and greater state control over the economy…”176 This was not the initial goal of Nkrumah, opposition parties did not agree with the direction that Nkrumah and the CPP government were steering the country. The initial lack of opposition being allowed to voice their political views, Nkrumah and his cabinet felt it was have been a disturbance for the building nations.

With the coup d'état that occurred in Ghana in 1966, was the physical manifestation of the frustration that opposition parties felt for years. Military leaders and several members within the CPP cabinet led the coup d’état.177 The National Liberation Council (NLC) was the main opposition party that their political voices were not being heard and acknowledged.

Democracy, especially the early form in Ghana put emphases on the power of elections. With the concept of free and fair elections the power of choice was giving to the people in electing their officials, as multiple parties promoted their ideas on how to make the country better. Across Africa in the early 1990s many countries were in the practice of having presidential elections, as governmental reforms were occurring across the continent with the goals of free market and good governments.178

176 Ibid., 12.
In the current operating constitution that is abided by in Ghana, the standing definition of a chief is framed in Article 277 of the Constitution of Ghana, where it states “a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage has been validly nominated, elected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the requisite applicable customary law and usage.” The institution of chieftaincy is prized because of the high level of influence it has in the Ghanaian culture; the system has been engrained in the culture for centuries that has become an irreplaceable staple in the society. Chieftaincy has survived many obstacles from the pre-colonial period to modern days. It has attempted to adapt itself to changing conditions in redefining itself to suit societal needs. Chiefs have had influence in the Ghanaian culture for years; they have ability to dictate the law of the land to the people. In the transition government, chiefs are finding their path into the political field where they can coexist with the changing political system.

In the current governmental structure in Ghana, though chiefs cannot hold a place in office, they work alongside the elected alimental district leaders in properly addressing the needs of the people region and district. The collaboration between chiefs and district leaders works to address the concerns of diseases, poverty, education, and environmental perversion, amongst many other things. District leaders are required to visit towns within their district on a weekly basis to collaborate on how the government

179 Chapter 22 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
can better provide resources to the towns.\textsuperscript{182} After decades of many attempts of creating a functioning government, it was not until the early 1990’s where chiefs and political leaders began to slowly work together. The durability of chieftaincies in Ghana has remained for centuries, even though there were attempts to limit and abolish their authority there is no sign of the institution losing its relevance with the people. The union of traditional and democratic governments of Ghana continues to build, though there have been many roadblocks throughout the country’s history. Ever since the first coup d'état that took place in Ghana in 1966, the country had a hard time stabilizing itself. The problems that were there during the earlier years of independence were still prevalent post Nkrumah’s era, for almost two decades the country of Ghana was in a downward spiral.

During the period from 1982 to 1993, the operating form of government that Ghana was administered through a quasi-military dictatorship with then leader Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, whose political party was Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC).\textsuperscript{183} Prior to the elections of 1992, Ghana’s political system mirrored an authoritarian regime. It was not until the Fourth Republic in 1993 when Ghana regained stability and practiced civilian rule to choose state officials, showing a new era in the country for a democratic government.\textsuperscript{184} After his two terms in office, the people elected John Agyekum Kuffour of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) who was elected into office for eight years followed by John Atta Mills of National Democratic Congress (NDC) who served in office almost year, until his untimely death in office. Currently, John Mahama

\textsuperscript{182} Chapter 22 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 12.
also of NDC is in office; this is the fifth electoral process that has gone in Ghana without conflict. The political stability has shown to be overall beneficial to the country. The government’s current willingness to collaborate with chiefs across the different regions and districts of Ghana has done wonders for the country’s development on many fronts.

This is not unique to Ghana or country...any other African chiefs overwhelmingly hold MPs accountable for community development, towards which it seems, especially in rural areas, that chiefs are primarily oriented. Especially in the more rural areas, constituents channel their demands through the chiefs or queen mothers when they want to put pressure on the MP to ‘bring home’ development projects.  

Following independence Ghana went through governmental changes that altered the effectiveness of the national government. The changes in regimes brought chaos on a national level, but on a local level where chiefs’ reign still remained to have influence even though political figures were constantly changing. The instability of the government validated the importance of chieftaincy in Ghana political structure being a major staple in Ghanaian culture.

The informal institution of being a ‘family head’ also plays an enhancing role in making it a primary concern of MPs to bring development projects to their communities. Here it should also be noted that the traditional duties of the chiefs to represent and look out for their communities, rather than for certain individuals, also seem to play a positive role in promoting the provision of club and collective, rather than private and personal, goods.

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The union of the two forms of governance has proven to serve the needs of the people. In the current parliamentary system of Ghana’s government appointed Parliamentary leaders of the 15 districts in Ghana, work in conjunction with the regional and local level chiefs to provide for people. As stated earlier, chiefs cannot run for political office unless they formally denounce their throne or their title before they are able to run for political office. Nonetheless the calibration of the forms of governance has come a long way, and as the country continues to progress politically there are not any limits to which the country’s political development can achieve.

In sum, assessing the relationship between traditional governance and democratic in Ghana, there has been a major transition and embracement by two sides. Over the nearly sixty years of independence there has been an evolution and collaboration that has benefited both sides in providing for the country. The embracement that Ghanaians current parliament has towards traditional leaders and the willing to work together has created the avenue for progress in education, agriculture, and trade, amongst many other things has gradually shifted for the better for the country.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In my thesis I set out to analyze the correlation between traditional governments and the practice of democratic governments in Africa. I argued that for an African country to have a stable and functioning government their needs to be a fusion between the two forms of governing systems. My objective was to use my three case studies (Botswana, Ghana and Zimbabwe) to illustrate how in Africa there are different levels of engagement of traditional government and democratic government. With these cases I focused on the historical events of each country’s past into their current state, and the progress that each country has made over the decades.

A commonality amongst my case countries were that they were colonized by the British Empire, yet each country had different experiences when it came to the influence which Britain had within the country; a factor that influenced how each country’s independence process transpired. All three countries in their own regard campaigned for their independence differently from each other, learning from countries within and out of Africa as reference points for their liberation. These countries have struggled for sovereignty and continue to fight for the most efficient system of governance to better serve their people, though some of their actions have been questionable.

As one of the few African countries that have upheld democratic government, Botswana has demonstrated the economic and developmental possibilities that are available for countries. The ability to establish a stable political atmosphere where the recognition of traditional governance within the parliamentary system collaborating in making the country a better place. There have been great rewards in the country for the government’s ability to provide for the country. Another important point is the Botswana
government’s ability to maintain the practice of democracy with the influence of traditional leaders has been able to fully function without a coup d’état or a civil war breaking out in the country. This among other factors is what sets Botswana apart from many African countries.

By contrast, in Zimbabwe there still is not a collective effort between the government and chiefs. The country has been in disorder for decades to the point where the people have lost faith in its political leaders. There are layers to the disorder and misconduct that continues to go on in Zimbabwe. A major aspect of Zimbabwe’s struggle is based around the country’s political system that. For over four decades Zimbabwe has been ruled by the same political party without the complete collaboration of traditional leaders, has piled onto the instability of the country. The government’s inability to properly address the needs of the people has proven to be detrimental to the country’s overall development and progress. The cycle of false promises being made by the governing party continue while the goals are not met, there are gaps that are created in the country. A greater level of governmental reform and practice needs to happen in Zimbabwe for the country to thoroughly progress towards a path that political and economic development.

Ghana is a great example of the country that has gone through the various changes post-independence. It has not been until more recent years where the national government has been able to hold consecutive elections along with the implementation of traditional leaders into cooperating within the governmental structure to providing a stable country. The government's willingness to incorporate traditional leaders has proven to benefit the country stability and progress. There has been growth in the country’s economy,
education and international trade. Ghana is considered to a model country for struggling
countries to model after. To see a country that has experienced the different types of
government structures and to still find its way into having a stable and functioning
country that is referred as an example within the international community.

Based on my research I conclude that the model of African governments have
great impact on the progress of a country. Clearly, in the African context having a
combination of open and democratic elections along traditional leadership serves in the
best interest of the country. As in the case of Botswana, where in the earlier formation of
their government the notion of including traditional leaders as a cabinet within the larger
government order proved to be pivotal. This link between the traditional leaders and the
democratic government allowed for the stability on the political front to be established,
which had influences in other aspects in the country’s reformation.

While the international community has an abundance of political practices,
democracy seems to be the main electoral process that most countries practice. Various
forms of democracy being practiced across the globe, and as the international arena
continues to expand and globalize, in the context of African traditional governance has
been and continues to be a cornerstone in the culture. As research show there is an eternal
bond between local traditional leaders and the people, this is a relationship that cannot be
broken. For that reason, the betterment of the people and the country, there needs to be
continuous effort by the standing governments to include these traditional institutions in
the current governmental structure. As it has been proven in certain African countries
already, a harmonious government is a sign and stability and progress.
Finally, while democracy is not a system of government practiced across of Africa, there have been signs of progress on the continent. As governments continue to find ways to incorporate their traditional institutions into their current governmental systems the possibilities of economic development and international trade are endless. As history has shown us, when there stability within country especially if the country has a democratic political system, the international community is willing to trade and conduct business with them. Thus, in the final analysis, the responsibility rests with African governments to do the right thing such as exploring ways to keep the balance with traditional and modern governments.
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