Fred Kasongu

**ID: UM69327HCO78461**

**Masters in Conflict Resolution**

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Assignment Title:

**FROM ETHNIC IDENTITY TO TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUSINSHIP AND ONE ZAMBIA ONE NATION**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to this webinar on CONFLICT RESOLUTION and PEACE. We are looking at examples of how conflicts were resolved in Zambia among ethnic groupings and tribes that previously waged war against each other but now are living together peacefully.

* Hello, my name is Fred Kasongu from Solwezi, North Western Province of Zambia. I am a student in the school of Humanities. This is my assignment in conflict resolution.
* Thank you also for giving me another opportunity to share on this webinar on the topic:
* **From ethnic identity to Traditional Tribal Cousinship and One Zambia One Nation**
* **The alternative title for this webinar would be; SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND UNITY THROUGH TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUSINSHIP IN ZAMBIA**
* This topic has a three significant position in the agenda of the country
1. Promoting History of the country
2. End discrimination and promote Peace and unity of tribes based on the motto: One Zambia One Nation
3. Cultural identity and diversity: based on the Traditional Tribal Cousinship

The objective for this webinar is to be able:

1. To understand what Traditional Tribal Cousinship is
2. To understand the history of Traditional Tribal Cousinship and conflict resolution in Zambia
3. To appreciate How conflicts were resolved among ethnic groupings
4. To understand the Zambian motto “One Zambia and One Nation” and Traditional Tribal Cousinship relationship
5. To appreciate how Traditional Tribal Cousinship contribute to identity, peace and unity in Zambia

**Historical Background and Conceptual Definition of Traditional Tribal Cousinship**

**What Traditional Tribal Cousinship is?**

Zambia consists of 73 ethnic groups living together as one in various part of the country and intermarrying without challenges of tribal identity. There are few Zambian families or none communities today who can claim to have a family with only one tribe or ethnic background. Many families have mixed blood and names of various ethnic groupings. (Affairs, 2003)

To define Zambian Traditional Cousinship, we need to refer to the relationships between different tribes and ethnic groupings in the country from a historical background. To identify the Traditional Tribal Cousins in the communities, the word “cousin” or “musense” mean the same and are used by Zambians to relate to one another.

Traditional Tribal Cousinship can be referred to as a peaceful relationship between two or more tribes that historically fought each other and resolved to settle together as cousins not as enemies. This cousinship has no blood ties or family tree relationship but a relationship based on promoting peace and unity that their forefathers had agreed upon as a resolution to settle their ethnic differences.

Hence, Zambian Traditional Cousinship can also be referred to as an ideology and an example of conflict resolution method that was successfully used to settle the disputes, and ceased the fight, struggle or battle, clash, contention, confrontation, or hostility and brought these groupings together as one community.

**Historical background**

Previously, there was protection of interests for single ethnic group and its identity. Not anymore, they are a team of combined tribes. The tribes were enemies but now they are cousins. The tribes agreed to live together as cousins and each tribe was allowed to continue with its cultural practices without interference from anybody.

In other words, the word Traditional Tribal Cousinship came about as a result of the wars that were settled between different tribes and ethnic groupings in Zambia. These wars between tribes refer back to historical conflicts within the nation and before independence, involving differences of local ethic groups; it has nothing to do with the colonialism or colonial matters. Hence, we refer to the tribal strife as intra-group conflicts. Mostly the local ethnic groups differed over land boundaries, food security issues and settlements and caused a lot of displacements. The wars can be traced back in the 19th century within the country, Zambia. (Meebelo, 1971)

It is with this view that Traditional Tribal Cousinship can also be referred to as Peace agreements to cease tribal wars and conflicts that occurred within the country between ethnic groups of different tribes that dates back in 19th century.

**DESCRIPTION**

Traditional Tribal Cousinship relationships can be described as tribes that historically clashed each other and then discarded the wars by calling for dialogue and successfully resolved to live with each peacefully. It is believed that grieving parties satisfactory had their best interest taken care by agreeing to stay together as traditional cousins instead of fights. For instance, they agreed to intermarry, to stay together and men were allowed to choose women of their choice from either side of the tribes. It is believed it also reduced relationships blood cousin marriage affairs. This approach brought about lasting resolution to conflict and the genesis of traditional cousinship in Zambia.

**GENERAL ANALYSIS**

It is a fact that Zambia was rocked with tribal wars and here are examples of this historical truth. For instance, Monica Fisher in her book, Nswana-The Heir, gave an example of disputes about boundaries in Barotseland between the year 1905 and 1913. (Fisher, 1991) To resolve this matter, the colonial masters, in 1958 draw a map to mark boundaries for traditional leadership which to date is still under use and valid. (Zambia, 1958)

**CURRENT INFORMATION**

An article known as *Life: What a journey* by Charles Chalala, in the Zambia Daily Mail newspaper dated 3rd September, 2017 reported that the Bemba tribe broke away from Luba Kingdom in Congo as a rebel group against imperialistic Portuguese in search of land to settle (Chalala, 3rd September, 2017). As they moved out of Congo, they embarked on brutal expansions of their kingdom into the Northern part of Zambia where they fought several tribes and displaced them around 17thC.

About 1840, the Bembas met a stronger tribe the Ngoni warriors and they had tough time with them. Both tribes were highly tactical in terms of war skills and knowledge. The Ngoni were also a breakaway group of the Shaka Zulu influence from the Southern Africa wars. (https//www.bembaencyclopedia.com) )

This historical background of the clashes between the Bembas and Ngonis, gave rise to the tribes from Northern, Luapula and Muchinga Provinces refer to tribes from Eastern Province to refer to each other tribal cousins after resolving their conflicts. The two tribes resolved their battle peacefully by becoming traditional tribal cousins to date. Notwithstanding the bitter wars that saw people being killed and abandon their original inhabitants due to the fear of other stronger tribes, peace had to be restored to protect the women, older people, the sick and children.

Similarly historical tribal conflict resolutions and peace agreement brought several relationships of this nature. To mention a few, the Southern and Central Provinces have their traditional cousins in North-Western and Western Provinces, among the Lozis and Tongas, Ila and Lenje ethnic groupings. As the Lozis were trying to expand their influence they also clashed with Lambas around somewhere in Senior Chief Kalilele area in Solwezi District and also some Kaondes in Kasempa District on Mountain Called Kamusongolwa and fought battles. The Kaondes tribal cousins also include the Lundas, and Luvales. Other tribal battles include the Mbundas and Chokwes tribal cousins.

According to history, all these tribes had fought each other during the time they were searching for land to settle permanently in their present day geographical regions or provinces of the country. By independence in 1964, the country was divided in nine provinces geographic locations namely; Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Northern, North-Western, Southern and Western Provinces.

These provinces are divided into tribal groupings as follows: just to mention some of the tribes not all of them. By 2011, Muchinga Province was added as a tenth province. The regions have tribes with similar dialects and share common history.

**One Zambia and One Nation**

To understand the Zambian motto “One Zambia and One Nation” and Traditional Tribal Cousinship relationship we get back to the time of the First Republican President Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda. After independence on 24th October, 1964, the motto One Zambia One Nation was coined in order to bring all the tribes and ethnic groupings together. It was one way to remove the seed of division, tribalism and regionalism. In other word, the motto is fundamental to transformation of Zambia into a better country for every tribe. The objective is to embrace every citizen and partnership. The motto is backed by all loving Zambians. The motto is also in line with SDG no 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, and the biblical teachings in accordance with Mathew 7:7*, “*Do unto others what you would want them to do unto you.” (Society, 2010)

Tribalism would have meant each tribe on their own, but with traditional cousinship it meant caring for one another as Zambians not as tribes. Primary, the motto One Zambia One Nation is similar with Traditional Tribal Cousinship Practices which focuses on inclusion and discards discrimination based on tribal background. So that different tribes are able to tolerate one another and live peacefully (as cousins or musense).

The motto also promotes economic growth and stability of the nation together. One Zambia One nation motto also reduces claims of tribalism, regionalism and conflicts. It promotes all human beings regardless of their color, creed or gender.

Tribalism is negative as focuses on agenda that sideline others and disadvantage or advantage them the basis of the tribe they belong too.

For example, any Zambian can stand as a member of parliament in any part of the country without being questioned on the tribe background. For instance, the first MP for Zambezi district in North-Western Province among the Luvale and Lunda tribes was the late Mr. Sebastian Zulu. His original homeland was Eastern Province.

To date all the citizens of this nation Zambia emphasize on protecting the peace and unity that the country has preserved since independence basing on the motto one Zambia one nation and traditional cousinship. It is suffice to say that the legal system has not been misplaced. Zambia has a clear system of justice that from traditional and local courts, subordinate courts to magistrates, through to the high courts and supreme.

**DISCUSSIONS**

**HOW TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUSINSHIP IS PRACTICED**

The practice has been adopted by many tribes and it has contributed to funny, peace and unity among different ethnic groupings living together for a very long time. All over Zambia wherever, you go you will hear the “Cousin” or “musense” they mean the same.

For the first time, if you meet Zambians, it is very difficult for an outsider to understand how the Traditional tribal cousins interact with each other.

* For example, Zambians will refer to each other’s tribal cousin as god given wives and husbands. While a man will be with his wife, his traditional cousin would refer to his spouse as his god given wife and there is no offence at all. It only becomes an offence if the man is not a tribal cousin. An old person would refer to the young people as his parents and grandparents, my sons and daughters or vice versa.
* The women can also refer to their tribal cousins as husbands. It is also normal to hear a greeting such as*, how are my colleague and my children*?
* For example if there is a problem, a traditional cousin has the right to rebuke the other tribe and restore peace without necessary taken offence of any words used.
* It is also normal to hear among Zambians, jokingly refer to their tribal cousins in any situation. For example when covid 19 vaccines were launched, the Guest of Honor was a Kaonde man. In his speech, he asked all his tribal cousins the Lozis, Lundas and Luvales to accompany him for vaccination, because if he did not do so, they were going to run away.
* Traditional cousins joke about the food they eat, about names given to their children and they remind each other about the history. Here is an example of a song where the Traditional cousinship: The Northerners wondered jokingly why the Easterners eat the rats as food. The Easterners also wondered jokingly why the Northerners eat monkeys as meat. The Westerners among the Lozis eat water lizards and the North-Westerns eat crabs.
* Most people will exhibit their remarks with jokes but honest remarks about a situation not using hurtful words, but corrections. When there is conflict it gives an opportunity to unity the tribes not necessarily tribalism but just recognition of what tribe a person is.

**HOW TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUSINSHIP CONTRIBUTE TO IDENTITY, PEACE AND UNITY IN ZAMBIA**

Tribal Groupings have become part of the Zambian Culture. It has created the country and made the Zambians to be who they are as jovial and warm through the traditional cousinship relationship, counsel and interactions.

To this day, Zambian tribes commemorate 70 historical traditional ceremonies annually which are not only preserves of history but have also become part of ethno tourism. The ceremonies commemorate harvest, rituals and victorious wars. During the ceremonies, Traditional Tribal Cousinship is highly practiced as part of entertainment. Examples of traditional ceremonies include:

* Ncwala Traditional Ceremony by the Ngoni celebrated annually in February under Chief Mpezeni
* Kusefya Pa Ngwena by the Bemba celebrated in July under Chief Chitimukulu.
* Juba Ba Nsomo in Kasempa District under Senior Chief Kasempa

Other than traditional ceremonies, it is common in Zambia to plan events such as sports and fundraising with a face of Traditional Tribe cousinship. For example, there would be a football game between:

* Southerners, Central region and Westerners
* Southerners and North-Westerners
* Northerners, Luapula, Muchinga and Easterners

You may wish to know that the Bembas or Aba Bemba are a broad group that encompass Aushi, Bisa, Chishinga, Kunda, Swaka, Tabwa or Unga tribes. The Easterners popularly referred to as Nyanja speaking group are also a large group the include Tumbuka, Nsenga and Ngoni

This is not promotion of tribalism but brotherly hood and strong bonds of teamwork. It has worked well for the nation’s peace and unity has been promoted in this arrangement. Traditional Tribal Cousins gives Zambians a unique identity and warm character.

For instance, whenever there is a problem, especially funerals the Traditional Tribal Cousins contribute to held their tribal cousins who are bereaved with some finances. While they may appear as if they are giving trouble to the bereaved family, they make the event funny and relieve pain among the mourners through their funny actions. How are these funny actions? A bereaved tribe would be identified by the white power or white traditional power applied on their bodies on burial day.

Today, Zambians may differ but still discuss issues of tribal conflicts in public domain with jokes and laughter as they reflect on the past and the history of the country. It would be wrong to pretend that there are no conflicts among the Zambian but that friction is inevitable to occur among people staying together.

It is for this reason that not all conflict can be subjected to the laws of the land with due respect to the learned lawyers, we also look to the traditional wisdom. Certain disputes can be resolved using the both the traditional approach and the legal system. Disputes must be resolved amicably with the patriotism at heart: One Zambia One Nation.

**Advantages of Traditional Tribal Cousinship**

* Encourages teamwork among regions and strengths the motto One Zambia One nation
* Creates strong bonds among tribal cousins
* No one would boost as stronger than the other person
* They all equal as they both freely practices the culture of their choice
* Opportunities to marry outside the closest relatives
* It is funny and entertainment which contributes to laughter and healthy
* It preserves the history of the country
* It promotes cultural identity in diversity
* Discourages oppression but free expression

**CAUTION**

It would be unfair to look at Traditional Tribal Cousinship as immoral practice or a practice promoting tribalism. It must also be understood that it is difficult and a bit complex to understand Zambian conversations for the first time. You can mistake them for being immoral and tribal. It must also be understood that there are Zambians that take offence in traditional tribal cousinship. This could be also attributed to lack of historical knowledge or other beliefs. Sometimes what is referred to as tribalism is misrepresentation of facts.

**ACTUALIZATION**

Other parts of the world seem to be plagued by armed conflict, crime, torture and exploitation, all of which hinders their development. We can attest to the fact that Zambia has enjoyed relative stability and it has to be protected. With this view, the government does not take for granted the relative peace, but strives to protect it from disintegrating. Thus there are several efforts that strive to promote the goal for peace and justice for all her citizens in order to reduce all forms of violence and find lasting solutions to conflict and insecurity. (Planning, 2018)

For instance, all the Republican Presidents of Zambia have emphasized the Motto One Zambia One Nation to avoid perpetuation of tribalism, political regionalism and disputes and protect the Zambia people from human rights violence. There is a moral part and conscious of promoting humanity and love for one another. In his book Humanism in Zambia 1974:129, the first Republican President Dr. Kenneth D. Kaunda wrote;

“We must do everything possible to leave this world with less of those factors that are a source of exploitation of man by man and all those that divide the human race. The problem can be solved when Man accepts that he is his brother’s keeper materially, spiritually and morally.” (Kaunda, 20th September, 1974)

Like any other progressive country, Zambia cannot detach itself for SDGs in the agenda to transform the country into a better place to live. (Nations, Transforming OUR world 2030 AGENDA FOR Sustainable Development, 2015)

Hence, the motto also facilitates a fulfillment of the SDGs in making progress economically, socially and psychologically promoting oneness and peace not forgetting the cultural identity of Traditional Tribal cousinship. It supports the reason Government has also deployed civil servants to all parts of the country in various decision making positions based on qualifications not tribes.

You would also realize that, all over Zambia wherever, you go you will hear the word “cousin” or “musemse”. It is about traditional tribal cousinship relationship which means well for every loving Zambian, among the politicians, traditional and faith based leaders, and the community at large.

**CONCLUSION**

Lastly, our topic: From ethnic identity to Traditional Tribal Cousinship and One Zambia One Nation was looking conflicts resolution and peace. The historical background of TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUSINSHIP PRACTICE has a strong base for the PEACE, unity and teamwork IN ZAMBIA and as appreciation of diversity in culture.

Furthermore, the social construction of traditional tribal cousinship and the motto One Zambia One Nation have strengthened social order and maintained social cohesion in the multi-ethnic society like Zambia. Like a saying goes, “A paradise should be a world advocated for.”

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