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BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY – THE ROLE OF CHIEFS IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN GHANA

ABSTRACT Ghana is regarded as a leader of democracy and stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. Owing to two decades of rapid economic growth and relatively peaceful transitions of power after elections, it is also one of the fastest developing and safest countries in the region. However, some challenges for internal stability and development are still to be addressed, for instance: the quality of leadership, poverty, environmental problems or inadequate and ineffective regulations. While solving these problems Ghanaian politicians and citizens have to either choose between or bring together both tradition and modernity. One of the aspects to analyse is traditional form of governance, in particular the role of traditional leaders, such as chiefs and queen mothers, in development, as well as their relationships and coexistence with the local and state government institutions. Therefore, this article focuses on understanding how traditional ways of thinking and acting, especially in the case of traditional leaders, influence Ghana's strive for national development. The main questions are: whether they can be used as resources or rather constitute impediments? and how are they changing to address contemporary challenges?

Keywords: Africa, Ghana, development, traditional leadership, chieftaincy

INTRODUCTION

Achieving national development is a primary goal of all African countries. Ghana is one that is regarded to be relatively successful in realizing it, as it has managed to avoid major internal conflicts or instability and reduce the level of poverty in the country¹. Since the independence in 1957, Ghana has went through almost all possible stages of state management and development pathways, from military regimes to democratic governments. Success in establishing and maintaining democracy made Ghana *a paragon of good governance in the West African subregion, which over the two decades or so had been better known for a spiral of violent conflicts*².

With the territory (land and water area) of over 238.5 sq km and a population of over 26 million people (July 2015 est.)³, Ghana is a relatively small country, however it plays a significant role in West Africa and the whole African continent as a promoter of democracy, free speech and, what is most important, peace. Although Ghana possesses a huge economic potential⁴ and is developing fast⁵, it has performed very poorly in comparison to some other states, which were on par with Ghana at the beginning of 1960s, for instance Singapore and Malaysia, and which since that time managed to improve their situation significantly and left Ghana far behind. A part of the reasons for this is that it lacked continuity in both political and economic sense. Intermittent military and civilian regimes created an unstable political situation, which led to a decrease of foreign investments. Subsequent governments usually did not continue the policies introduced by their predecessors. Moreover, Ghana followed either the West or the East, depending on the changing governments' ideological leanings⁶.

¹ Strong economic growth that Ghana could have cherished for the last two decades helped in reducing the country's level of poverty in half, from 52.6% in 1991 to 21.4% in 2012. See: The World Bank, 'Poverty Reduction in Ghana: Progress and Challenges', 15 October, 2015, at <<http://www.world-bank.org/en/country/ghana/publication/poverty-reduction-ghana-progress-challenges>>, 10 January 2016.

² S. Sarpong, 'Ghana's Development Dilemma: The Quest for a Pragmatic Approach', *Local Economy*, Vol. 29, No. 1-2 (2014), p. 4, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0269094213515168>>.

³ CIA, The World Factbook, 'Ghana', at <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>>, 20 February 2016.

⁴ Ghana is the second producer of cocoa in the world (810 thousand metric tons in 2015). See: 'Global Cocoa Bean Production from 2012/2013 to 2014/2015, by Country (in 1,000 metric tons)', The Statistics Portal, at <<http://www.statista.com/statistics/263855/cocoa-bean-production-worldwide-by-region/>>. Additionally, Ghana has huge reservoirs of natural resources: gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber, hydropower, petroleum, silver, salt and limestone, which if properly managed could be used for boosting economic growth and enhancement of the wellbeing of its citizens. See: CIA, The World Factbook, 'Ghana'.

⁵ Ghana's real growth rate was: 7.3% (2013 est.), 4% (2014 est.) and 3.5 % (2015 est.). The following years are expected to have a higher growth rate again. See: Ibid.

⁶ S. Sarpong, 'Ghana's Development Dilemma...', pp. 3-4.

A factor which is usually important in other African countries i.e. huge ethnic diversity seems to be of less significance in Ghana. However, if it is followed by or mixed with political polarization, it may cause problems, as ethnic affiliations can be used for political reasons. If we assume that language and culture are the main criteria in the categorization of ethnic groups in Ghana, it can be estimated that there are over 90 different linguistic and cultural groups, belonging to eight major ethnic groups⁷: Akan, Ewe, Ga-Dangme, Mole-Dagbane, Gurma, Grusi, Mande-Busanga and Guan⁸. People belonging to all these groups, including some elites, still cultivate traditions⁹ from the pre-colonial period, differentiate themselves according to their clans and are loyal to traditional leaders. Diversity of these groups is additionally reinforced by religious¹⁰ and regional differences – the predominantly Christian south (around 69 % of the population) and the mainly Muslim north (about 16%). Devastated by colonial exploitation, the “Northerners” (“Mabians”) are still economically backward in comparison to more ethnically diverse and more populous south¹¹.

Bearing in mind this cultural and religious diversity, as well as political freedom and a democratic system of governance, Ghana seems to be one of the few African multi-ethnic countries which live in peace. However, although there are actually no major conflicts or violence in the country, it would be far from the truth to say that there are no conflicts at all. The same statement pertains to Ghana's development – although the country is developing in comparison to the situation a few decades ago, the challenges which remain are still vast and overwhelmingly difficult. One of the challenges is how to accommodate and harmonize traditional forms of lifestyle and modern ones, and more importantly how to face the growing problems resulting from the globalizing world.

An epitome of tradition in political system of Ghana is the institution of chieftaincy. This traditional authority has existed long before the colonial times in many parts of today's Ghana and it would not be an overstatement to say that despite various historical vicissitudes, it managed to survive and still plays a key role in the socio-political and economic development of the country. Somehow, the institution of chieftaincy is a link between the past and the future, because as it adapts itself to new times and challenges it is still serving as a point of reference of social norms and decision-making for local communities. Moreover, chiefs and queen mothers or female chiefs, by maintaining their traditional roles of agents for development are crucial actors in the process of

⁷ Or using local categorization (used by informants): eight tribes.

⁸ S. Tonah, 'Democratization and the Resurgence of Entire Politics in Ghana, 1992-2006' in: G. Rosenthal, A. Bogner (eds.), *Ethnicity, Belonging and Biography. Ethnographical and Biographical Perspectives*, Berlin 2009, p. 65.

⁹ Yet, at the same time they are also acquiring all positive and negative forms of life activities regarded to be representative for the so-called modern times and Western cultures.

¹⁰ Although Ghanaians are mainly Christians (about 71 %), with around 17% Muslims, about 5% believers in traditional religions and about 5% admitting to follow none of the religions (2010 est.). See: CIA, *The World Factbook*, 'Ghana'.

¹¹ S. Tonah, 'Democratization...', p. 66.

national development. Any attempt at understanding Ghana and its development path is not possible without considering the role of chiefs and their position in the society, as well as their influence on the political scene in the country.

This article presents an analysis of Ghana's struggle between tradition and modernity on the example of chieftaincy institution. One of the aspects studied is the role of traditional leaders, such as chiefs and queen mothers, in the development, as well as their relationships and co-existence with the local and state government institutions that can be regarded as a modern form of governance. The author attempts to understand how traditional ways of thinking and acting, especially in the case of traditional leaders, influence Ghana's strive for national development. The main questions asked are: whether the institution of chieftaincy can be used as resource or rather constitute impediments to development of the country? And how is it changing to address contemporary challenges?

As far as the structure is concerned, the article is divided into four parts and ends with a conclusion. The first part is introductory in character, as it explains the main concepts and presents the philosophical background for the discussed problem that is the struggle between tradition and modernity. The second part reflects on the importance of chieftaincy and traditional roles of chiefs in the past, as well as in the contemporary Ghanaian society. The part which follows features an analysis of relationships between traditional authority and modern state and local governments. A subsequent fragment refers to the chiefs' role as development agents, and involvement of migrants and foreigners in the chieftaincy institution and development in Ghana. In the conclusion, the author refers to the friction between tradition and modernity and the chiefs' role on how to manage this eternal struggle for the benefit of national development.

In terms of methodology, it should be stated that this article is a reflection on a very small part (only one of the aspects examined) of a bigger research project¹² that is about the analysis of internal and external factors influencing development paths in Sub-Saharan Africa – Ghana and Rwanda being two case studies. It is based on the review and synthesis of secondary data coming from a variety of sources: scholarly journals, textbooks and the Internet sources, as well as articles from news websites. The findings were supported by conclusions drawn from field research during a research stay in Ghana – observations, interviews conducted, mostly among academics, and information obtained from everyday discussions with people met on the streets or means of public transport¹³.

¹² The text of the article is the result of research done within the doctoral project (PRELUDIUM 5), entitled "Opportunities and risks in the quest of internal stabilization of an African state and enhancing of its role on the international arena. Case study of development paths of chosen Sub-Saharan African countries after 2001", realized by the author at the Jagiellonian University. The project was financed by the National Science Centre (No. DEC-2013/09/N/HS5/04269).

¹³ The whole research stay in Ghana lasted from 8th February to 20th March 2016. Research used for this article was conducted during the first three weeks of the stay.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

What is meant by tradition and what is meant by modernity? How to achieve modernity? How to manage the relations between tradition and modernity? These questions, though not new, seem to be some of the major and most discussed ones by the philosophers, sociologists, political thinkers, anthropologists or representatives of developmental studies if we take into consideration only human sciences. This short introduction into the problem does not give an answer to all of these questions rising from the debate on the struggle between tradition and modernity, nor does it intend to do so. It only signals certain tendencies and points to the fact that this problem has been widely debated also among African intellectuals, and especially among African philosophers.

In order to clarify the conceptual framework, it would be good to start with arbitrarily selected¹⁴ definitions of the terms: tradition and modernity. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, tradition (traditions) is *a set of social practices which seek to celebrate and inculcate certain behavioural norms and values, implying continuity with a real or imagined past, and usually associated with widely accepted rituals or other forms of symbolic behaviour*¹⁵. As for modernity, it is often contrasted with traditional forms of society that were built upon homogenous and closely regulated communities, in which people hold strong beliefs, values and norms. The transition from tradition to modernity involved a variety of aspects: migration from rural to urban areas, rapid growth and specialized division of labour, loosening of social relations and solidarity and growing individuality and freedom¹⁶.

Taking into consideration only these definitions, not delving into a wide range of other interpretations and scholarly works, it is possible to notice that African societies, and Ghana specifically, seem to be still somewhere between tradition and modernity, although at the same time we cannot say that they are not modern at all, as they experience all the aspects of modernity with its positive and negative consequences. However, they are also cultivating old traditions and maintain various customs and beliefs of the past.

One of the prominent African philosophers of Ghanaian origin, Kwasi Wiredu, claims that: *Contemporary Africa is in the middle of transition from a traditional to modern society. This process of modernization entails changes not only in the physical environment but also in the mental outlook of our peoples, manifested both in their explicit beliefs and in their customs and their ordinary daily habits and pursuits. Since the fundamental rationale behind any changes in a world outlook is principally a philosophical matter, it*

¹⁴ Because of the limits of this work, as well as its main topic, it is not possible to present a wider representation of definitions or to make any comparisons.

¹⁵ J. Scott, G. Marshall (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, New York 2009, p. 767 (*Oxford Paperback Reference*).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

*is plain that the philosophical evaluation of our traditional thought is of very considerable relevance to the process of modernization on our continent*¹⁷. As others also observe, modernity is introduced into African societies by a continual processes of adapting the familiar and the new to each other. The boundaries and competition between the two visions of the world are not sharp and undergo a constant change¹⁸. It is not difficult to agree with these two statements, especially when there is an opportunity to make simple observation just on the streets in towns and villages of African countries.

To provide an example, when walking or going along the streets in Accra and its neighbourhoods, the capital of Ghana, it can be easily noticed that, although it is probably the fastest developing and modernizing area in the country, there are still traces and manifestations of old customs and ways of behaviour. Along a huge highway or streets close to main bus stations there are small shops or stalls with a variety of food (one can see men selling whole cocoa nuts directly from trolleys or women offering baked fish from huge bowls carried on their heads) and other goods for trade; this way of trading is the same as at the huge old markets such as the Makola market in Accra. Next to expensive luxury cars there are also old and used *tro-tros*¹⁹ regarded as the cheapest and typical means of transport in Ghana. People wear world famous brands, but also shirts and dresses made from traditional fabric or with traditional patterns, which is a form of manifesting African identity and can be seen as a very positive trend. On television, it is possible to watch political debates or meetings with the participation of traditional leaders (chiefs or queen mothers) who always wear traditional attires. In public institutions, or even hotels, is also not difficult to notice the great reverence with which people address their bosses or people higher in a hierarchy, which is a manifestation of the traditional way of behaviour based on the respect to the elders. And finally, apart from the official language which is English, people are using a variety of local languages such as Twi, Ga or Ewe²⁰, which also helps them preserve their identities and cultures.

Therefore the next question that arises from these simple observations is whether maintaining traditions is beneficial and whether they can be used for the purpose of national development of African countries and Ghana in particular. Moreover, the question is also how some positive old tradition can be incorporated again into everyday life and political practices. To some extent, there is always a need of some reference to tradition, as without it a society cannot go further and cannot develop in agreement with its past²¹.

¹⁷ K. Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*, Cambridge 1980, p. x.

¹⁸ D. A. Masolo, 'The Making of a Tradition. African Philosophy in the New Millennium', *Polylog. Forum for Intellectual Philosophy*, No. 6 (2005), <<http://them.polylog.org/6/amd-en.htm>>, 15 January 2016.

¹⁹ A tro-tro is a Twi (one of the commonly used languages) name for a privately owned mini-bus.

²⁰ In Ghana people can speak around 80-90 different languages depending on the ethnic group and which region they come.

²¹ Interestingly, one of the traditional Adinkra symbols (symbols representing concepts or aphorisms, originally created by the Ashanti, used in textiles, pottery or even on fences and house elevations),

These questions constitute the basis of a long-lasting debate among African philosophers. Here, it is worth noticing that the conflict between tradition and modernity is the basic problem that defines also various schools of development. The school of modernization theory claims that traditional thinking and institutions are the main causes of underdevelopment, while the school of dependency school rejects this argument, pointing out that the real reason for underdevelopment is the dependency of African societies on Western metropolises. Another school, the mode of production approach, suggests that underdevelopment takes place when *traditional methods and structures batten on advanced systems to perpetuate themselves*²². The friction between what is “old” and what is “new” is therefore one of the most important problems in the history of development.

As for African philosophers, the ongoing debate on the relationship between tradition and modernity concentrates on the question whether traditional ways of thinking and behaving can serve as resources or create obstacles to development and modernization in Africa and how the indigenous African traditions can be applicable to the challenges of contemporary life. Discussion of these questions shows that there are two major perspectives among various schools of African philosophy²³. They can be presented even as two conflicting approaches: ethnophilosophy²⁴ and professional philosophy. Ethnophilosophers claim that the restoration of African traditions is a condition for successful modernization, while professional philosophers believe that the success is built through exchanging traditional culture for modern ideas and institutions^{25,26}.

According to the first perspective, referred to as “cultural revivalism” by Kwame Gyekye²⁷, the effective addressing of contemporary challenges requires reclaiming and

Sankofa can be translated from Twi as “Go back and get it”. Its meaning is that one should not be afraid of returning to old days in order to use wisdom from tradition and history to build future prosperity.

²² M. Kebede, ‘Development and the African Philosophical Debate’, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 1. No. 2 (1999), p 42.

²³ J. A. Ciaffa, ‘Tradition and Modernity in Postcolonial African Philosophy’, *Humanitas*, Vol. 21, No. 1-2 (2008), p 121.

²⁴ Often called cultural revivalism.

²⁵ M. Kebede, ‘Development...’, p 39.

²⁶ To expand the categorization, there are four main schools in African philosophy: ethnophilosophy (represented by Placide Tempels, Alexis Kagame, and John Mbiti), philosophic sagacity (Henry Odera Oruka and his followers), national and ideological philosophy (e.g. Amical Cabral, Julius Nyerere) and professional philosophy (e.g. Paulin J. Hountondji, Kwasi Wiredu, Peter Bodunrin). Ethnophilosophers regard the collective worldviews of traditional Africa as philosophy. Representatives of philosophic sagacity search for individuals thinkers with traditional background, but at the same time they are critical of traditional beliefs. National and ideological philosophers emphasize the importance of African collective destiny and the necessity of a theory deriving from traditional African socialism and familyhood as the best recipe for effective liberation of Africa. Finally, professional philosophers argue that only rationality and critical argumentation make works philosophical. See: M. Kebede, ‘Development...’, p 44.

²⁷ He is a Ghanaian philosopher, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ghana.

revitalizing indigenous traditions that were inhibited by colonialism. Revivalists are frequently sceptical of development and modernization, perceiving them as a hidden continuation of European cultural influence. They do not view their own perspective to be anti-modern, but they underline that real modernization of Africa can be achieved only if there is the revitalization of African cultural norms²⁸. The second perspective is more critical toward the indigenous heritage. Supporters of this perspective claim that cultural revivalism does not address the challenges of contemporary Africa properly. Moreover, they accuse cultural revivalism of distracting attention from crucial political issues, and promoting thoughts that are in opposition to scientific and technological advancement. According to them, modernization requires thinking adequate to the problems of the present, not restoration of ideas from the past²⁹.

The most ardent critique of cultural revivalism (ethnophilosophy) is presented in the works of a Beninese philosopher, Paulin Hountondji, who argues that this project is based on mistaken assumptions about African peoples and about the nature of philosophy. He even claims that such an approach does not facilitate the effort to address the challenges of the present³⁰. Hountondji takes the position that local knowledges create a foundation for sustainable development in African societies. However, in order to be politically meaningful, they have to continually undergo criticism and modification. According to Hountondji, African people live in a “dual language” world, that is the one in which the “recent” co-exists with the “ancient” in almost every aspect of life. Therefore, they should transform the old indigenous knowledge to address new challenges³¹. Nevertheless, Hountondji does not underappreciate Africa’s indigenous knowledge systems, quite on the contrary, he defends the value of local knowledges, claiming at the same time that they need criticism. He points out also another problem – Africa’s intellectual and scientific dependence on the outside world. In this way, he calls for taking responsibility by Africans for their own intellectual, social, political, scientific and economic life³².

Both attitudes have become popular among their supporters throughout the whole African continent. Ethnophilosophy is suitable for those who want to underline their African origin and are very proud of their tradition. However, it lacks recognition that traditions are not always the best solutions for everything, especially if these traditions stand in opposition to rational thinking and, what is more, cannot be used for addressing contemporary challenges. Therefore, the perspective presented by Hountondji seems to be more relevant, as it combines both the “old” and the “recent” in looking for best answers to new problems, especially those that come through globalization process, but simultaneously does not undervalue traditions.

²⁸ J. A. Ciaffa, ‘Tradition and Modernity...’, pp. 121-122.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 122.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 127.

³¹ D. A. Masolo, ‘The Making of a Tradition...’

³² Ibid.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES IN GHANA

As it was already mentioned, one of the main manifestations of tradition in socio-political life of Ghanaians is the institution of chieftaincy. It would not be an overstatement to say that the Ghanaian society is rooted in chieftaincy – people easily identify with this institution and believe that chiefs should be incorporated at all levels of government³³. Chieftaincy in Ghana is then *an important institution on which efforts towards social, economic and political development of the country are firmly anchored*³⁴ and which is linked with almost every aspect of Ghanaian community life³⁵. The rank and significance and prestige of the institution of chieftaincy is underlined by the fact that is it a lifetime function. In the past, a chief was also rarely criticized, regarded as a guardian of tradition, he ruled in an aura of holiness³⁶.

Ghana has had an indigenous system of governance at executive, judicial and legislative levels since pre-colonial times. 80% of the land in Ghana is managed by various traditional authorities who are also the custodians of the resources within their communities³⁷. For ages, traditional leaders have played a significant role in the development of society, serving as guides for societal progress and making decisions regarding peace and conflict and generally contributing to community welfare. These roles are continued to be played also in contemporary national development and, what is interesting, traditional authorities are starting to use innovative and modern tools to address new challenges³⁸.

Ghanaian traditional leaders, chiefs, are a powerful and important institution embedded in both local and transnational context of development. Their position was strengthened by the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic which guaranteed further existence of chieftaincy³⁹. Chapter Twenty-Two of the Constitution states: (1) *The*

³³ T. D. Dawda, F. Dapilah, 'Challenges of the Collaboration between Formal Local Government Actors and the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana: Lessons from the Sissala East District of the Upper West Region of Ghana', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 3 No. 12 (Special Issue – June 2013), p. 239.

³⁴ A.I. Abdulai, 'The Ghanaian Chief as a Manager: between Tradition and Modernity' in: I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana. Culture, Governance and Development*, Legon 2006, p. 565.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 565.

³⁶ However, there were cases when an unpopular and unaccepted chief could be removed from his position. See: K. Trzciński, *Demokratyzacja w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej. Perspektywy zachodnioafrykańskiej myśli politycznej*, Warszawa 2013, p. 145.

³⁷ G. M. Bob-Milliar, 'Chieftaincy, Diaspora, and Development: The Institution of Nkosuohene in Ghana', *African Affairs*, Vol. 108, No. 433 (2009), p. 543, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adp045>>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 544. See also: P. Nutakor, 'Traditional Leadership and Development in Contemporary Ghana', *Modern Ghana*, 21 March 2013, at <<https://www.modernghana.com/news/453969/50/traditional-leadership-and-development-in-contempo.html>>, 10 January 2016.

³⁹ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs: Tradition, Development and Return among Traditional Authorities in Ghana', *African Affairs*, Vol. 110, No. 441 (2011), pp. 630-631, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adr041>>.

*institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage, is hereby guaranteed. (2) Parliament shall have no power to enact any law which (a) confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever; or (b) in any way detracts or derogates from the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy*⁴⁰. Nevertheless, there are still certain conditions that chiefs have to fulfil. It should be emphasised then that chiefs, both in the past and today, are required by the Constitution to be from appropriate families or lineages⁴¹, and they must be flawless⁴²: *A person shall not be qualified as a chief if he has been convicted for high treason, treason, high crime or for an offence involving the security of the State, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude*⁴³. And finally what is extremely important, the Constitution states that: *A chief shall not take part in active party politics; and any chief wishing to do so and seeking election to Parliament shall abdicate his stool or skin*⁴⁴. In other words, chiefs should abstain from any political activities and party affiliation⁴⁵.

As for the structure of traditional authority, it is not homogenous, but one may assume that it consists of the Chief and the Elders. The chief is at the top of the hierarchy of traditional authorities, which varies depending on local culture and traditions⁴⁶. In most cases, the structure goes from the bottom up in the following way: the clan head (*Abusuapannin* in Akan), the village or town chief (*Odikuro*; in Akan dialects meaning literally the owner of the village or the town), the paramount chief (*Omanhene* in Akan) who is the traditional leader at the district level, and finally the head of a tribal

⁴⁰ *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*, 1992, Art. 270.

⁴¹ One of the interviewees said that in the past this rule was strictly followed – only someone from a royal family could be a chief, but nowadays anybody who has money, but is not from of a royal family can be chosen a chief. In this way, such a chief has no respect for the people and their support. This also causes local conflicts over who should be the chief.

⁴² According to one of the informants, in the past, a person appointed to be a chief was expected to be “perfect” also physically, that is for instance, not to have any scars or signs of previous illnesses. There was then a time, when children who were coming from royal families and were expected to become chiefs in the future stayed away from school in order to avoid being hurt which could inevitably lead to having scars.

⁴³ *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*, 1992, Art. 274.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Art. 276.

⁴⁵ However, as some of the interviewees claim, there are some chiefs who are involved in the political system in Ghana. There are accusations that they support political parties to gain financial resources for realization of local development projects. Because of this engagement into politics, chiefs have lost their respect. On the other hand, as Nana Arhin Brempong and Mariano Pavanello claim, some chiefs may be pressed to ally with, openly or secretly, with a ruling party and support some Members of Parliament, because there are situations in which an intolerant ruling party may penalize a community by denying it development facilities for what it perceives as chiefly opposition to it. See: N. A. Brempong, M. Pavanello, *Chiefs in Development in Ghana. Interviews with Four Paramount Chiefs in Ghana*, Legon 2006, p. 35 (*Perspectives On Research. Materials and Studies*, 1).

⁴⁶ C. Mahama, ‘Local Government and Traditional Authorities in Ghana: Towards a More Productive Relationship’, *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*, No. 4 (2009), p. 11, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v0i4.1331>>.

group (for example: the King of Asante or the Ga Mantse of the Gas). They are all responsible for their respective areas by protecting their ancestral and community land, customary laws, culture, traditions and history, but main area of their activities is promoting development^{47,48}.

Traditional authority is very strong especially in rural areas, where village chiefs and elders still play important roles. The institution of chieftaincy is important particularly when it can complement or substitute ineffective or non-existing state institutions⁴⁹. Their organizational structure varies according to tribe or area, but generally villages belong to sub-divisions, divisions and finally paramountcies. All paramount chiefs are members of Regional Houses of Chiefs, while chosen ones constitute the National House of Chiefs. The structures of traditional authority differ mainly in terms of the degree of centralization. The most centralized traditional authorities (kingdoms with chieftaincies down to the village level) can be found among the Akans (especially the Ashanti with their centralized hierarchical society), Dagbon and Mamprugu⁵⁰. No centralized systems, but rather clan heads-based society can be found among such groups as the Tallensi, the Dagaba and the Kokomba⁵¹.

Contemporary chieftaincy is an institution with two sets of functions – statutory and non-statutory. The first ones refer mainly to the settlement of chieftaincy disputes⁵² and the codification of customary laws that requires unification in various regions. Non-statutory functions are to complement the role of central and local government agencies in the field of socio-economic development⁵³. To elaborate more on the roles of chiefs in Ghana, they are supposed to help not only to keep order and maintain law, but also to sustain unity and cultural values of community, such as respect for the elderly, the principles of reciprocity and hospitality. However, their greatest concern is the development of the community⁵⁴. The responsibilities and the roles of chiefs in their communities are wide and not easy. Being leaders among their subjects, chiefs perform interpersonal, informational and decision-making roles. Their duties include also attending important meetings and ceremonies, transmitting information to their people or serving as spokespersons for their communities. The most crucial is

⁴⁷ K. Asumadu, 'The Role of Traditional Rulers in Ghana's Socio-economic Development, GhanaWeb. 8 January 2006, at <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/The-role-of-traditional-rulers-in-Ghana-s-socio-economic-development-97239>>, 20 January 2016.

⁴⁸ According to the Constitution, Omanhene is the head of the traditional area (the traditional state); sometimes there can also be the head of the division (a group of villages of a traditional area) that is called Ohene. See: N. A. Brempong, M. Pavanello, *Chiefs in Development in Ghana...*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ K. Trzciński, *Demokratyzacja w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej...*, p. 146.

⁵⁰ A. W. Seini, 'The Role of Traditional Authorities in Rural Development' in: I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana...*, p. 548.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

⁵² Chieftaincy disputes are very frequent, especially in rural areas, over who should be the next chief. Sometimes they lead to some local conflicts or even acts of violence and aggression.

⁵³ N. A. Brempong, M. Pavanello, *Chiefs in Development in Ghana...*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ P. Nutakor, 'Traditional Leadership...'

the decision-making role, as it is according to chiefs to initiate changes, innovations and strategies for the development of the community. Last but not least, the chiefs' role in settling disputes and managing negotiations between various parties in their communities is also important⁵⁵.

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that chiefs are major authorities in the area of traditions and norms, and have capacity to organize and mobilize their people. Most Ghanaians, especially in rural areas, find it easier to turn for help and leadership to traditional authorities than local councils in the case of emergency situations or natural disasters⁵⁶. In rural areas, chiefs organize community initiatives – they usually summon people on appointed days to provide labour to local projects. In urban areas, especially wealthier ones, they support local projects more frequently by raising money. One of the ways is organizing *durbars* that is festivals at which for instance the development plans are presented so that the visitors can contribute financially. What is interesting is that this fundraising is not limited to local people, but it also mobilizes Ghanaians living abroad^{57,58}.

Traditional dimensions of chieftaincy are now being supplemented by its modern dimension. There is a trend in Ghanaian chieftaincy that more and more chiefs are chosen from well-educated migrants who returned, accordingly called *return chiefs*. Their position is not easy, as they are expected to bring development and progress, but at the same time remain guardians of tradition and custom⁵⁹. Thus, beside such functions as settling disputes, custody of stool land⁶⁰, organization of rituals, ceremonies and festivals or codification of customary law, there are some new functions that require adjusting to contemporary challenges of a novel nature, for instance good governance, information and communication techniques (ITC) or building international networks. In this way, a category of a modern chief able to bring progress and oriented internationally has evolved⁶¹.

⁵⁵ K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study of Chieftaincy and Local Government in Ghana', *Journal of African Studies and Development*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2012), p. 93.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁵⁷ K. Baldwin, *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa*, New York 2016, pp. 164-165 (*Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*).

⁵⁸ Festivals that are held every year are not only an old or revived tradition, some of them are newly invented. They became public relations exercises, as they serve to bring together people from different parts of the country and from outside of Ghana, government officials from various levels, ambassadors and representatives of development organizations. During such gatherings, chiefs inform about local needs for basic facilities (water and electricity), as well as infrastructure, educational and health facilities. Festivals serve then as a way to attract financial support for development needs. See: N. A. Brempong, M. Pavanello, *Chiefs in Development in Ghana...*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', pp. 631-632.

⁶⁰ In Ghana, the traditional state is called the 'seat' (in the central and southern parts – the 'stool', in the northern parts – an animal 'skin'), upon which the chief sits. Therefore, when referring to property or land, the expressions of 'stool (skin) property' or stool (skin) land' are used. See: R. Silverman, 'Of Chiefs, Tourists, and Culture: Heritage Production in Contemporary Ghana' in: D. K. Peterson, K. Gavua, C. Rassool (eds.), *The Politics of Heritage in Africa. Economies, Histories and Infrastructures*, New York 2015, p. 128 (*International African Library*).

⁶¹ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', p. 634.

Another interesting form of traditional authorities are queen mothers, but their position also varies across the country. They play a distinguished role among the Akans, as they are said to be the founders of the clans, but the Gur-speaking ethnic groups in the North have no queen mothers, and the people of Dagbon have female chiefs, instead of queen mothers⁶². Queen mothers are now the major agents in the fights for women's rights and their safety, acting against female genital mutilation or cutting, against the institution of *trokosi*⁶³, and advocating in campaigns against HIV/AIDS, as well as promoting the education of girls⁶⁴.

As for the status of traditional leaders in Ghana, although it is still powerful, it also remains very ambivalent. While they are respected as defenders of social values and promoters of development, they can be seen as obstacles on the way to the country's progress. To some extent, by continuing the recognition of traditional leaders, Ghana involved itself in the struggle between these old political structures and modern nation. What is more, despite constitutional guarantee for the institution of chieftaincy, it is sometimes perceived as anachronistic. Nevertheless, most Ghanaians still believe in the importance of the social role played in their communities by chiefs⁶⁵.

Another problematic aspect of chieftaincy is its past. Under the British rule, chiefs were recognized and utilized to serve the interests of the colonial administration through including them into the indirect rule system⁶⁶. Indirect rule empowered chiefs – with the support from the colonial administration they could play many administrative and adjudicative roles as managers of community resources. Throughout native courts they could decide about a variety of cases, e.g. land and property, inheritance, violence or matrimonial cases. In the long run, however, the system weakened chieftaincy, because the society started to perceive chiefs as agents of colonialism. They were strongly opposed, especially by the educated elite⁶⁷.

It is also worth mentioning that the colonialists manipulated the institution of traditional rule for the purposes of the Empire. There were no centralized authority systems in such parts of today's Ghana as the Upper-east and Upper-west Region or the Volta Region; people practiced there rather communal consensus. However, the colonialists introduced administrative offices for "chiefs" and gave them the same rights as kings and other traditional leaders had in other areas. They included "Native Authorities", as they called them, also in the colonial judiciary system, so that they could

⁶² A. W. Seini, 'The Role of Traditional Authorities...', p. 549.

⁶³ *Trokosi* means a young girl who is made a slave (to the gods) in order to atone for the crimes committed by her male family members. These young girls live in the shrines also called *trokosi* and usually serve as sexual slaves to the priests. The practice was banned by law in Ghana in 1988, but is still maintained, because the law is not executed. See: 'What Is *Trokosi*?', *Trokosi Dictionary/Encyclopedia*, at <<http://www.trokosidictionary.com/>>, 10 February 2016.

⁶⁴ C. Fayorsey, 'Gender, Culture and Governance: Ghanaian Queenmothers as Leaders in Development' in I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana...*, p. 660.

⁶⁵ R. Silverman, 'Of Chiefs...', p. 126-127.

⁶⁶ T. D. Dawda, F. Dapilah, 'Challenges of the Collaboration...', p 239.

⁶⁷ C. Mahama, 'Local Government...', p. 9.

administer justice, but only within the laws approved by the colonial administration⁶⁸. The installation of a chief or removing him from his position had to be approved by the colonial administration. This, to some extent, weakened the existing bond between traditional rulers and their people and led to *the uprooting of traditional rulership from its cultural or customary matrix that led to its alienation from the people (...)*⁶⁹.

However, in contemporary Ghana the institution of chieftaincy is still very influential, despite all past and previous controversial entanglements with power and politics. The thing that has changed⁷⁰, however is that nowadays people discuss the roles chiefs are playing and debate over the necessity of chieftaincy. In the past it was not frequent to criticize or discuss what the chief was doing. Recent behaviour of chiefs, that is involvement in politics and using money for gaining the stool led to decrease of respect for the institution of chieftaincy. However, it remains a fundamental part of the social system and people are not able to live without it.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES VS. STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Ghana is one of the first African countries that started political decentralization. Local government authorities were established in 1988 through the PNDC Law 207. Then, with the 1992 Constitution, a new Local Government Act, Act 462 of 1993, was introduced. Today, there are 170 local government units in Ghana, divided into Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies⁷¹. They were created to transfer power to the local communities to encourage people to participate in governance, including decision-making processes. Local governing units serve as the political and planning authorities in their areas of jurisdiction, and are responsible for the development of their communities⁷².

Therefore the chiefs and the government have the same goals to achieve, that is socio-economic and political development of the country. However, there are significant tensions between the values and practices exercised by the chieftaincy institution and by a nation state⁷³. Still, the institution of chieftaincy is crucial to local government in Ghana in relation to the socio-economic development, as it embodies Ghanaian diverse culture and acts as a catalyst of change. The views that chiefs are obstacles to

⁶⁸ N. A. Brempong, 'Chieftaincy, an Overview' in: I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana...*, p. 28.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Information provided by one of the informants.

⁷¹ Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies are similar in terms of structure and functions, but differ in population sizes: 250,000, 95,000 and 75,000 respectively. They are the administrative and economic hubs and agents of change at the local level, with the main focus on national development. See: C. Mahama, 'Local Government...', p. 13.

⁷² Ibid., p. 8.

⁷³ R. Silverman, 'Of Chiefs...', p. 129.

progress and nation-building and represent no relevance to local government, so prevailing among many post-independent African political elites are therefore not well-founded⁷⁴. Chiefs and government administration has a long history of relationships, although their intensity varied according to the times.

Cooperation of chiefs with the local government started during the colonial period. The British way of indirect rule utilized native administrative institutions to increase local participation. Chiefs played a prominent role in the local government – they maintained law and order, collected taxes, settled disputes and promoted socio-economic development⁷⁵. Later, the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, aware of powerful social, economic and political power of chiefs at every level, from national to local, intended to restrain their authority and influence⁷⁶. The position of chiefs was slowly declining, as he excluded them from the local councils and abolished their courts. Moreover, Nkrumah deprived them also of the managing of the stool lands which were to be under the control of the local councils. The regional and district Commissioners could easily accord or withdraw recognition to chiefs, which resulted in manipulation of chiefs on the political arena. In 1961 Nkrumah regulated the chiefs' role by passing the first Chieftaincy Act⁷⁷. The Local Government Act from 1961 abolished traditional representation on District Councils whose members were to be elected⁷⁸. After Nkrumah was removed from office, chiefs regained their position. The 1969 Constitution established Local, District and Regional Councils and restored the membership of chiefs⁷⁹ to the Councils. The membership of chiefs in the Local Councils was recognized also in the 1979 Republican Constitution⁸⁰.

Finally, the 1992 Constitution abolished the representation of traditional authorities in District Councils and District Assemblies. Therefore, in contemporary Ghana traditional authorities are not represented in the Local Government System⁸¹. The 1992 Constitution on the one hand excluded chiefs from any active exercise of political power (for instance, from candidacy in parliamentary election), but on the other hand it empowered the institution of chieftaincy by making it a sort of consultancy body for the President⁸². The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, guaranteed the establishment of the

⁷⁴ K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study...', p. 90.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷⁶ R. Silverman, 'Of Chiefs...', p. 128.

⁷⁷ K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study...', p. 91.

⁷⁸ However, a Paramount Chief was appointed by the Minister of Justice to preside over the first meeting of the District Council to elect the Chairman of the Council.

⁷⁹ The Republican Constitution of 1969 re-established regional and national Houses of Chiefs and assigned more functions to them. Chiefs were to codify and unify customary laws; they were also granted seats in local and districts councils. However, the government still had the right to make and un-make chiefs. See: K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study...', p. 91.

⁸⁰ The 1979 Constitution recognized the institution of chieftaincy with its traditional councils based on customary law and guaranteed their independence from the government. See: *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁸¹ T. D. Dawda, F. Dapilah, 'Challenges of the Collaboration...', p. 239.

⁸² K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study...', p. 91.

institution of chieftaincy together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage. The main goals of this change were better governance, empowerment of local communities, accountability and efficiency. The role of chiefs is then to provide advice and support to the local government in order to improve the living conditions of the local people. Thus, by assumption, the local government system is a form of partnership of three types of actors: formal government actors and the chiefs and their people. Their cooperation is to ensure that government policies, programs and projects, especially the ones related to development, are properly implemented⁸³.

The lack of institutional representation of chiefs in the District Assemblies and the sub-district structures results in misgivings on performance and unwillingness to cooperate both by some chiefs or some District Assemblies' officials. On the other hand, the exclusion of traditional leaders is a guarantee of their political neutrality. What is more, traditional leaders are also expected to defend local communities' rights and oppose any excesses by local government that pose the threat of undermining national development. Successful development projects require paramount involvement of chiefs, which leads to the conclusion that *chieftaincy is an indispensable institution in Ghana's developmental efforts*⁸⁴. Successful development projects require also community involvement. Traditional leaders are the primary institution of reference for the communities, while the District Assembly is the agent of the national government at the local level. Still, both the DA and the traditional leaders seek to achieve a shared goal – enhancement of national development⁸⁵.

Research⁸⁶ conducted in one of the districts in Ghana showed that cooperation between chiefs, their elders and the District Assembly had contributed significantly to the development of the area despite some challenges. Chiefs concentrated on the maintenance of law and order through the settling of disputes, mobilizing people for communal labour and enabling the release of land for infrastructural development. The DA supported the provision of educational and health infrastructure, and other social services, as well as helped to maintain peace and security⁸⁷.

Without the assistance encouragement and support of chiefs, administration at the local level would be more difficult and less effective. Accordingly, without chiefs the central government in Ghana would have problems with realizing the development agenda. It is worth noticing that traditional authorities have always encouraged the participation of the subjects in decision-making related to their communities, such as choosing which development projects should be prioritized. Traditional authorities are recognized and promoted also by international organizations. A good example is the World Bank's 'Promoting partnerships with traditional authorities' project in Ghana

⁸³ T. D. Dawda, F. Dapilah, 'Challenges of the Collaboration...', p. 240.

⁸⁴ C. Mahama, 'Local Government...', p. 15.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

⁸⁶ It was an examination of the nature of collaboration between the chieftaincy institution and formal local government actors in the Sissala-East District of the Upper West Region of Ghana.

⁸⁷ T. D. Dawda, F. Dapilah, 'Challenges of the Collaboration...', p. 245.

(a \$5 million grant directed to two traditional authorities, the Asanteman Council and the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Council in order to, among other, improve the standards of health and education in the traditional areas and strengthen the capacities of traditional authorities)⁸⁸.

The role of traditional authorities in local governance has been enriched also by chiefs themselves who are usually well-educated, top professionals in their fields, among others medical doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers and successful businessmen. They are competent, well-organized and determined to achieve their goals. Therefore, chiefs constitute a really effective part of the local government in the rural areas⁸⁹.

TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AS DEVELOPMENT AGENTS AND A NEW DIMENSION OF CHIEFTAINCY

The involvement of chiefs in the development process depends mainly on their scope of authority. In more centralized systems (the Akan, Dagbon⁹⁰, or Mamprugu), in which chiefs have a strong position and are the owners of the land, they decide about its use and allocation. In non-centralized systems, chiefs can only manage their clan land, but before a piece of land is used for a certain project the clan head has to give his permission⁹¹.

The involvement of chiefs into pro-development initiatives is not limited to local or national scope, but expands into transnational form of activities. Traditional authorities are engaging migrants, NGOs and international donors, realizing prestigious projects regarded to be more efficient than the government ones⁹². One of the examples is the *Asantehene*, Otumfou Osei Tutu II, king of the Ashantis, who in 2000 launched the Otumfou Educational Fund in 2000 and between 2003 and 2006 realized a Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project, funded by the World Bank (a \$4.5 million grant)⁹³. Another visionary tradition leader is Osahene Katekyi Busumakura III (the Takoradiman-Hene), the paramount chief of Takoradi, who launched the Osahene III Sustainable Development Project in Takoradi, the Western Region in Ghana. His plan was also to establish a university, the Takoradi Institute of Science and Technology (TIST) in the Western Region, in order to offer courses in Oil and Gas Engineering, Petro-Chemical Engineering and Biological Sciences to meet the current demands of the market. The Takoradiman-Hene wants to make Takoradi an attractive port city and an investment centre by 2025⁹⁴. A praise-

⁸⁸ K. Asamoah, 'A Qualitative Study...', p. 93.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 94.

⁹⁰ Chieftaincy among the people of Dagbon is so strong that chiefs control even the economic trees, for instance dawadawa and shea butter tree.

⁹¹ A. W. Seini, 'The Role of Traditional Authorities...', pp. 551-552.

⁹² N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', p. 641.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ P. Nutakor, 'Traditional Leadership...'

worthy example of a traditional leader engaging himself in development and environmental issues is also *Okyenhene*, Osagyefuo Amoatia Ofori Panin, the paramount chief of the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area, who is regarded to be one of the most powerful chiefs in Ghana⁹⁵. He is known for the establishment of the Okyenhene Environmental Foundation Programme and a University College of Agriculture and Environmental Studies in the Eastern Region, all with the cooperation with American and Dutch universities⁹⁶.

Taking such performance into account, chiefs are perceived by the politicians rather positively, as they can cooperate on local development, being at the same time lobbyists for their own communities. In rural areas especially, constituents forward their messages through chiefs or queen mothers to members of parliament⁹⁷. The importance of the role of chiefs, especially in rural parts of Ghana, in motivating communities to participate in local projects, even small ones, such as repairing school buildings or cleaning roads, is visible e.g. in Berekun, a town in the Brong Ahafo Region. Once announced the cleanest town in Ghana, it had difficulties with keeping its cleanness when there was no one chosen for the position of chief. Before a new paramount chief was installed, there were even street protests during which people displayed slogans: *No chief, no development* and *We need leadership for development*⁹⁸.

As far as development in Ghana is concerned, a very interesting phenomenon is also the so-called development chiefs and development queen mothers – *Nkosuohene* or *Nkosuohemaa* in Akan⁹⁹. These honorary titles are given to people who have significantly supported local development, frequently to international migrants or donors from other countries¹⁰⁰. For instance, one of the development activists, Bob Geldof was installed as an *Nkosuehene*, with the name of Nana Kofi Kumasah in the town of Ajumako-Bisease in the Central Region of Ghana¹⁰¹. Among foreigners installed as development chiefs a big group is constituted by Africans from the diaspora, African-Americans and people from the Caribbean who visited Ghana. Some of them are even famous people such as Issac Hayes, Stevie Wonder or Rita Marley¹⁰².

⁹⁵ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', p. 636.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 641.

⁹⁷ K. Baldwin, *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs...*, p. 165.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

⁹⁹ Development chiefs were adopted also by other ethnic groups. Thus, it is worth noticing that there are also other names for a development chief: Dangme people use the term Manoryam, Ewe people – Ngoryifia. See: M. Steegstra, "White" Chiefs and Queens in Ghana: Personification of "Development" in: I. K. Odotei, A. K. Awedoba (eds.), *Chieftaincy in Ghana...*, p. 607.

¹⁰⁰ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', p. 645.

¹⁰¹ The example of Bob Geldof shows that the honour of an Nkosuehene/hemaa is often not appreciated by the white Westerners as they either do not fully understand its meaning or do not fulfil their obligations. People from Ajumako-Bisease claim that Geldof used the title for promoting the 2005 Live 8 concerns and forgot about helping them. See more: G. M. Bob-Milliar, 'Chieftaincy, Diaspora, and Development...', p. 554.

¹⁰² M. Steegstra, "White" Chiefs..., p. 608.

The concept of *Nkosuohene/hemaa* was promoted by the late Asantehene Opoku Ware II, who in 1985 created the *Nkosuo* stool division in Kumase in order to boost development in the region. The first person to be given this title was an Asante businessman E. K. Osei, with the stool name Nana Osei Nkwantabisa¹⁰³. The idea behind *Nkosuohene/hemaa* is that this title should be given to an accomplished person, capable of motivating the community for participation in development projects¹⁰⁴. While the title of *Nkosuohene/hemaa* may not be of much value to foreigners, it is regarded as a great honour for migrants, for diasporan Africans. Enstooling them as development chiefs or queen mothers is at the same time an incentive to be reintegrated into the traditional clan system and chieftaincy institution. The title is also a way of showing that its recipients are people who are excellent leaders in their communities¹⁰⁵. The appearance of these new titles and changing functions of chieftaincy institution are simply evidence of its flexibility and adaptability to new challenges, but at the same time lead to discussion about the power in modern times¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷.

Awarding traditional titles is only one of the methods devised by Ghana to engage Ghanaian diaspora into development projects in the country. Ghana's government and its people are also using other policies, such as granting a free land or advocacy for Pan-Africanism. In this way, they Ghanaian diasporans have been transformed *from passive visitors to the country into active cultural brokers, marketers, willing ambassadors abroad, and active participants in the country's economic development efforts*¹⁰⁸. Ghanaian diasporans have contributed to the development of Ghana for a long time, usually by sending remittances to relatives. It is estimated that only official flows rose from 263 million dollars in 1995 to around 753 million dollars in 2001, while informal ones were almost \$3 billion.¹⁰⁹. The stimulation of the local economy by returning diasporans through the expenditures on local goods and services (e.g. buying a house or starting a new business) is also very important. Furthermore, the activities of Ghanaians abroad through cooperatives and various kinds of associations also matter. For instance, there is a Ghanaian cooperative in Italy importing pineapples from Ghana. Ghanaian associations in the Netherlands, Sankofa and Sikaman, are raising capital for development initiatives in Ghana¹¹⁰.

¹⁰³ G.M. Bob-Milliar, 'Chieftaincy, Diaspora, and Development...', p. 545.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 545.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 555.

¹⁰⁶ M. Steegstra, "'White' Chiefs...", p. 615.

¹⁰⁷ According to one of the interviewees, giving chief titles to foreigners is weakening the institutions and the chiefs' position, depriving them of respect. As it is a sign that local chiefs somehow are not able to do their job, especially to provide development project, and someone from outside has to come and do his job.

¹⁰⁸ P. Ankomah et al., 'A Creative Approach to Development: The Case for Active Engagement of African Diaspora in Ghana', *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2012), pp. 387-388, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021934711425488>>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 389-390.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 390.

FRICTION BETWEEN THE “OLD” AND THE “NEW”

Chieftaincy in Ghana is driven by tradition. The nature and symbol of chief's office, the structure of chieftaincy and relations with other chiefs are imposed by tradition. Even the lifestyle of a chief, his meals or clothes are also guided by a code of conduct rooted in traditional norms¹¹¹. From the perspective of ethnophilosophy it is good as helps to maintain both old customs and identity. However, the question will remain whether it is rational and beneficial for the society? As the institution of chieftaincy somehow seem to overlap (whether it is complementation or substitution), at least in some areas, with modern local administration. If traditional leaders have to support local and central government in their roles, what are then the functions of these “modern” versions of political authorities? There is also the question of how the chiefs are responding to new challenges and what is their own attitude to tradition? Whether they are able to adjust their way of thinking to new circumstances, and at the same time manage to persuade their people that some of the traditions perhaps need revision?

The thing is that some cultural practices can exert a negative impact both on the society and country's development. An example of such practices are highly-cost funerals¹¹² and long period of mourning. It could be a problem especially in poor rural areas when during the mourning people stopped going to the farms, which affected their productivity, usually already very low due to lack of mechanization. Another example of cultural practices impeding economic development in Ghana is the land tenure system. Because of this investors are not able to acquire enough land for large-scale economic activities¹¹³.

Moreover, the problem in Ghana is that traditional leaders are somehow caught between tradition and modernity on the one hand, and between self-interest and community interest on the other hand. As for traditions, there are certain regulations and a circumscribed space of power within which chiefs can operate. Any introduction of innovations has to be negotiated with the subjects (the community) and other chiefs as well and meet their expectations. Overstepping these rules and limits can endanger a chief's status¹¹⁴.

Furthermore, traditional leaders in Ghana are not willing to support any reforms and abolish traditions that are not beneficial for development, even though many of these leaders are highly educated people. There has been a failure of leadership in Ghana since independence, as successive governments were unable to find solutions to some national problems. In relation to culture, there was also a failure of traditional lead-

¹¹¹ A.I. Abdulai, ‘The Ghanaian Chief as a Manager...’, p. 579.

¹¹² Ghanaian funerals are exceptionally interesting social events (they usually last even up to three days, frequently cost more than weddings, always bring together family and friends from across the country and abroad, always require time for preparations and travelling, etc.). So at the same time, there is a need to continue this tradition due to its social significance.

¹¹³ K. Asumadu, ‘The Role of Traditional Rulers...’

¹¹⁴ N. Kleist, ‘Modern Chiefs...’, p. 636.

ership as many modern and educated chiefs continue some antiquated customs and norms, usually suitable for their own interests. Moreover, preserving old traditions ensures them the position and the access to wealth, power and influence in society¹¹⁵.

What is then missing is a modern chief, the one who has *the ability to simultaneously master the statutory, leadership, and development aspects of the chieftaincy institution – and, not least, the ability to successfully negotiate what should be seen as praiseworthy traditions to be celebrated and respected*¹¹⁶. However, this ability to determine the boundaries between tradition and modernity depends on the degree of power – more powerful chiefs are supposed to have a greater say¹¹⁷.

CONCLUSION

The problem of the struggle between tradition and modernity – the older ways of governance, familiar beliefs and antiquated styles of life clash with the new and frequently foreign ones – is not recent and it is not limited to Ghana as it is shown in the works of philosophers and development studies experts. It would not be an overstatement to say that it is a problem of all or the majority of African countries, and even all developing parts of the world. Ghana's search for equilibrium in this matter, in order to achieve success in national development, is yet not representative, but it is one of many varieties and just a case study of this struggle between tradition and modernity on the African continent.

Two questions that were guiding the whole analysis, that is whether the institution of chieftaincy can be used as a resource or rather constitute impediments to development of the country and how it is changing to address contemporary challenges, are not easy to answer. It seems that although chieftaincy itself does not constitute an impediment to development, as its fundamental role is promoting development, there are certain aspects of chieftaincy, especially the behaviour of chiefs, such as involvement in politics and money-oriented approach that may lead to counterproductive effects. The same applies to chieftaincy's changing character. As it is embedded in tradition and simultaneously is drawn to new and more modern solutions, it can both be beneficial and result in deterioration of the current situation in the national development of Ghana.

However, the best summary would be to refer again to one of the commonly known Adinkra symbols in Ghana, *Sankofa*. Using traditional wisdom can always help society to build its future prosperity. Ghanaians should not give up chieftaincy, and certainly they will not, as it is a basic and deeply rooted institution of political power that is socially accepted. However, this reference to tradition, in this case the existence of chieftaincy, has to be in accordance with the needs and expectations of the people.

¹¹⁵ K. Asumadu, 'The Role of Traditional Rulers...'

¹¹⁶ N. Kleist, 'Modern Chiefs...', p. 637.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

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