ABSTRACT

WITCHCRAFT, SORCERY, ACADEMIC AND LOCAL CHANGE IN EAST AFRICA

By Larry A. Bellamy II

Witchcraft and sorcery have been a focus of anthropologists, religionists and many other scholars for a long time. The study of witchcraft and sorcery has largely shifted from its evolutionist and functionalist beginnings. In recent years, scholars have become increasingly interested in the connections between witchcraft and sorcery on the one hand, and power, politics, and race on the other. This new scholarly interest has helped to spur a resurgence in the study of witchcraft that focuses in part on demonstrating the modernity of witchcraft and sorcery.

This approach is particularly relevant in East Africa, where witchcraft and sorcery are now used to explain global and state politics, the attainment and loss of political power, and other issues relevant to the region. Witchcraft and sorcery have become modern concerns. Over time the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery have spread beyond the traditional rural setting into the urban East African environment and traditional witchcraft beliefs and practices have been adapted to cope with urban society. This thesis attempts to show that witchcraft and sorcery have adapted to modernization and urbanization as well as how the perceptions of these phenomena have changed. In addition, it seeks to show that witchcraft and sorcery have taken their place in modernity as modern phenomena.

Witchcraft, Sorcery, Academic and Local Change in East Africa

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Thesis Introduction

Witchcraft and sorcery have been a focus of anthropologists, religionists and many other scholars for a long time.[1] The study of witchcraft and sorcery has largely shifted from its evolutionist and functionalist beginnings. In recent years, there has been a resurgence in the study of witchcraft and sorcery that is in part due to interest in their connections to politics, power and race. This resurgence in study is also in part due to desires to demonstrate the modernity of witchcraft and sorcery.[2]

Many scholars of witchcraft who are part of this resurgence of witchcraft studies have taken a different stance toward witchcraft from their predecessors such as Evans-Pritchard, Marwick and Middleton.[3] The new vantage point taken by a large number of scholars of witchcraft and sorcery is that witchcraft and sorcery in Africa explain modernity and reactions to it. However, within this school of relatively new thought concerning witchcraft and sorcery a few scholars have a slightly different view. Todd Sanders and scholars of like mind believe that while witchcraft and sorcery may be part of modernity, witchcraft and sorcery may not be about modernity alone. The shift in thought amongst scholars of witchcraft and sorcery, particularly those concerned with East-Africa, and the new ways individuals within East-African cultures think about witchcraft and sorcery are the central focus of this thesis.

Concepts of witchcraft and sorcery have changed in East Africa with urbanization. Witchcraft and sorcery are now used to explain global and state politics, the attainment and loss of political power, and other issues relevant to the region. Witchcraft and sorcery have become modern concerns. Traditional witchcraft beliefs and

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[1] Todd Sanders, "Reconsidering Witchcraft: Postcolonial Africa and Analytic (Un)Certainites," *American Anthropologist* 105(2), no. June 2003 (2003), 339.

[2] Henrietta L. Moore and Todd Sanders, *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities : Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-27   Sanders, "Reconsidering Witchcraft: Postcolonial Africa and Analytic (Un)Certainites.", 339.

[3] Sanders, 339.

practices have been adapted to cope with urban society. I believe Geschiere is correct in declaring that to understand the resilience of representations of witchcraft and the occult in many parts of Africa, the challenge is to explore the possibilities offered by these discourses for attempts to gain control over the modern changes.[4] However, I also concur with the point made by both Sanders and Geschiere that witchcraft is not only about modernity. This thesis attempts to show that witchcraft and sorcery have adapted to modernization and urbanization as well as how the perceptions of these phenomena have changed. In addition, it seeks to show that witchcraft and sorcery have taken their place in modernity as modern phenomena.

Prologue

Before I enter into a discussion of witchcraft and sorcery itself it is necessary to discuss the terminology. Scholars such as Peter Geschiere have noticed problems with terminology such as witchcraft, sorcery, and occult force.[5] A significant issue concerning terms such as witchcraft, sorcery and the occult is their moralizing nature. Geschiere notes that many scholars, including several in this thesis, still tend to reduce witchcraft to an unequivocal opposition between good and evil although the local terminology often does not reduce the concept in this way.[6] In many societies the concepts of witchcraft and sorcery cannot be defined so simply and in some cases moralizing terminology may be misleading.

An alternative to the moralizing terminology such as witchcraft and sorcery is the use of the phrase "occult forces". Geschiere states the use of the word "occult" leaves open the question of whether the force is being used for good or evil.[7] At the same time, Geschiere also observes that many Africans translate local terms for the occult into the European terms "witchcraft", "sorcery" and their equivalents.[8] Geschiere and many scholars argue that these translations do not negate the intricate nature of the concepts. In

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[4] Geschiere, 15.
[5] Peter Geschiere, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, trans. Peter Geschiere and Janet Roitman (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 12-13.
[6] Geschiere, 12.
[7] Geschiere, 14.
[8] Geschiere, 14.

short, the use of European terminology does not reduce the concepts to an opposition between good or evil.

Other scholars interested in the topic of evil have agreed that the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery cannot be reduced to an opposition between good and evil.[9] Edwin M. Lemert, a scholar interested in evil and social deviance, refers to Evans-Pritchard's work to state the difficulty in reducing witchcraft and sorcery to forms of evil.

> Another difficulty that denies easy acceptance of the Azandes' witchcraft as a generic model for evil is the apparently minimal influence of religious beliefs in relation to witchcraft. On this point Harwood[10] challenged the model, based on his comparisons with the Safwa and other societies in South Africa. He noted that for the Safwa, insofar as vital forces were believed to reside in ancestral spirits having a protective function, their interference into the affairs of the people could be either for good or bad. [11]

The fact that many African societies do not equate witchcraft with the opposition between good or evil resists scholarly reduction of witchcraft to an opposition between good and evil in the African context. If a scholar is interested in studying how a culture or society understands and makes use of witchcraft and sorcery, it is necessary for that scholar to pay attention to the perceptions of the subject group.

In addition Lemert makes use of Gluckman's reference[12] to history. The Sudanese government had recently relocated the Azande before Evans-Pritchard's study.[13] Lemert states that this may have accounted for shifts in witchcraft beliefs and the frequency of accusations. For a society whose beliefs are arranged around a lineal descent system and whose descent system relates in many ways to a physical locality, a shift in location can cause a shift in beliefs.

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[9] Alan Harwood, *Witchcraft: Sorcery and Social Categories among the Safwa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 75.
[10] Harwood, 75.
[11] Edwin M. Lemert, *The Trouble with Evil: Social Control at the Edge of Morality* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 20.
[12] Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).
[13] Lemert, 20.

In short, the issue of terminology does not have an easy solution. Geschiere states that the dilemma is whether to avoid loaded terms such as witchcraft and sorcery in favor of terms such as "occult forces" which avoid many of undesirable connotations of the former terminology.[14] Like Geschiere, I chose to use the terms "witchcraft" and "sorcery".

While Elias Bongmba asserts the term "occult practices" can avoid the problems of simple reductions and moralizing terminology[15], in an effort to avoid the academic isolation described by Peter Geschiere I prefer to use the terms "witchcraft" and "sorcery". However, I recognize the academic connotations of "witchcraft" and "sorcery" acquired through anthropological use, especially

> … witchcraft as a necessarily conservative force, as a specter that these societies evoke in order to defend themselves against changes. [16]

However, in spite of the academic connotation attached to the above terms I still believe "witchcraft" and "sorcery" are the appropriate terms for use in this thesis.

Chapter 1: Theories concerning witchcraft and sorcery.

Introduction

Chapter one seeks to address the major theories that may be used to place witchcraft outside of the realm of religious phenomena. In an effort to raise doubt upon the idea that witchcraft and sorcery are not viable topics for the religionist, chapter one seeks to show how witchcraft and sorcery may fit into some of the major theories and definitions of religion. If it can be shown that many of the major theories of religion can also be used to explain witchcraft and sorcery, then the scholar of religion can make a case for the study of witchcraft and sorcery in the field of Comparative Religion.

In addition, Chapter one also notes Talal Asad's argument that a consensus does not exist concerning a definition of religion. Asad's argument is used to pose the idea

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[14] Geschiere, 14.

[15] Elias Bongmba, "African Witchcraft: From Ethnography to Critique," in *Witchcraft Dialogues*, ed. George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001)., 45.

[16] Geschiere, 14.

that without a definition of religion that delineates its boundaries it is difficult to exclude witchcraft and sorcery from a discussion of religious phenomena.

Chapter one then discusses witchcraft and sorcery in light of several theories that link them to social concerns. Early twentieth century concepts are approached as a starting point in the contrast between them and more recent ideas surrounding witchcraft and sorcery. The goal is to explore the way in which witchcraft and sorcery beliefs affect and are affected by societies.

Chapter one then approaches more recent ideas, such as the concept that witchcraft and sorcery, although features of traditional religion, are also about modernity. The works of scholars, such as Lemert, are discussed in order to demonstrate the difficulty in reducing witchcraft and sorcery to forms of evil.

Chapter one seeks to address some of the major theories surrounding witchcraft and sorcery. The author's goal is not to recount a history or chronology of the study of witchcraft and sorcery. Chapter one simply wishes to show that ideas and concepts surrounding the topic have broadened from an early functionalist, evolutionist and sociological focus to discussions that include modernity and its associated institutions and phenomena.

Theories of religion concerning magical phenomena

Many scholars have been influential in the study of witchcraft and sorcery, and their theories changed how academia understands these phenomena. Scholars such as James Frazer, Edward Tylor, Emile Durkheim, Clyde Kluckhohn and Bronislaw Malinowski have contributed to our understanding of witchcraft and sorcery. E.E. Evans-Pritchard is one of the most significant. Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande yielded several concepts that have been used extensively by later scholars. Many scholars have used his scholarship as the foundation of their own work. It is my intention to use Evans-Pritchard's work, and as a starting point of thesis as well. Evans-Pritchard was instrumental in defining witchcraft and sorcery for the academic world. Several authors have advanced definitions of these terms; however, Evans-Pritchard's definitions of witchcraft and sorcery have been widely accepted and used throughout the study of these phenomena. Evans-Pritchard defines witchcraft as an innate psychic ability of an

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individual within a community to affect the supernatural and natural world. Sorcery is the skillful use of substances to affect the supernatural and natural world.

Evans-Pritchard's definitions of sorcery and witchcraft have been used to clarify other aspects of these phenomena. The process of defining witchcraft and sorcery moved from definition to categorization with the work of Evans-Pritchard's predecessors which include Durkheim, Frazer and Freud. Through the study of witchcraft and sorcery it became necessary to identify witchcraft, sorcery and magic as either aspects of religion or as separate classes of phenomena. While Frazer's theories concerning the mechanics of magic can be used to categorize witchcraft and sorcery as aspects of magic, several scholars have been reluctant to place magic in the realm of religion.

Durkheim asserted that witchcraft and sorcery, as well as related concepts, could not be associated with religion. The basis of Durkheim's argument rested on the institution of the church. Durkheim believed a fundamental difference between the magic and religion was that magic does not have an established church while religion does.[17] Magic was also established as the predecessor of religion in Durkheim's work, and this idea led to social evolutionist overtones in his literature. Durkheim was attempting to understand the roots of religion. Although Durkheim did not witness tribal religious practices first hand, they represented a simple form of religion. The practices witnessed by Durkheim among the aborigines of Australia were considered to be on the margin of religion and magic. According to Durkheim other religions were elaborations on a basic model. Understanding the basic model would aid in the understanding of what Durkheim considered more complicated forms.

Sigmund Freud's concepts of magic and religion also contained social evolutionist overtones. Freud believed as a society matured it would follow a succession of belief systems.[18] Freud's continuum led from magic to religion, and from religion to science. According to Freud, magic is primitive and all societies will eventually move through the stage of religion and into science. However all societies may not progress at

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[17] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (New York: Oxford University Press, inc, 2001), 41-44.
[18] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. 1961 James Strachey (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 24.

the same pace. As with Durkheim, the social evolutionist tones of Freud's work caused later scholars to be wary of it.

Frazer's basis for distinguishing between magic and religion concerned their interaction with supernatural beings.[19] According to Frazer practitioners of magic command supernatural beings to behave in a particular manner and supernatural entities must obey. As long as the ritual or incantation is performed correctly the supernatural being will follow the practitioners instructions. In the case of religion, practitioners use prayer as their primary means of communicating with the supernatural. However, when a practitioner of religion prays the supernatural entity chooses whether he/she/it will fulfill the request.

Frazer's most significant contributions to the study of magic concerned the concept of sympathetic magic.[20] Frazer asserted that magic operates through two principles. Imitative magic uses one object to affect a similar object or person. Contagious magic uses an object to affect another object or person it has come into contact with.

> He points out that the main connections made by the sympathetic magician are basically two types: imitative, the magic that connects things on the principle of similarity; and contagious, the magic of contact, which connects on the principle of attachment. (Pals 1996)

The mechanisms of magic described by Frazer helped to explain other phenomena other than the traditional tribal religions. Frazer's theory of contagious magic has been applied to the transubstantiation of the Eucharist during Catholic Mass as well as other phenomena. The bread and the wine of the Eucharist are assumed to have a connection to the body and blood of Christ though similarity.

However, according to Frazer's classification of magic and religion the Eucharist cannot be considered both magic and religion. Nevertheless, the transubstantiation of the Eucharist clearly shows magical properties while simultaneously

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[19] Daniel L. Pals, ed., *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 34-37.
[20] Pals, 34-37.

being considered a religious ritual. Thus, religion and magic aren't as clearly delineated as Frazer proposed. Religion and magic often coincide in the same setting.

Although various scholars have differed on whether magic belongs to the realm of religion, religion and magic have at least one thing in common according to Bronislaw Malinowski. Malinowski asserts both religion and magic function to alleviate anxiety due to uncertainty.[21] However, Evans-Pritchard notes that it is not necessarily the case that magical or religious acts automatically produce the effects proposed by Malinowski.[22]

Even though scholars differ on the definition of religion, magic can often be placed in the realm of religion according to some definitions proposed. The definition advanced by Edward Tylor could accommodate magic as well as religion. Tylor asserted that religion is an attempt by human beings to make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live.[23] Magic, witchcraft and sorcery can be viewed as attempts to explain occurrences in a logical manner and in turn to affect the world through the understanding of its operation.

Clifford Geertz also proposed a definition of religion that could encompass magic:

> (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.[24]

Geertz's definition of religion can be used to categorize witchcraft and sorcery under the domain of religion with the understanding that Frazer's concepts of the mechanics of magic still apply.

Moreover, interpreting Geertz's definition of religion as exclusive of magic would be mistaken for one important reason. According to Talal Asad, Geertz's definition

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[21] Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Blackwell Publishers, inc & Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000; reprint, 2000), 16

[22] Bowie, 16.

[23] Bowie, 22

[24] Bowie, 23. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York,: Basic Books, 1973), 4 .

excludes phenomena that many people instinctually identify as religion.[25] Geertz's definition makes interiority the locus of the religious as is evident by the his use of the words "symbols, moods, motivations, and conceptions". This definition focuses on the beliefs and emotions of the participant. However, phenomena such as Catholicism and Islam are oriented less toward the beliefs of the participant and more toward embodied practice, discipline, and community. Yet, Catholicism and Islam are widely acknowledged to be religions.

Talal Asad also asserts that any definition or religion is problematic. Asad then states, because of the inherent properties of any definition view of religion there cannot exist a universal definition of religion:

> The view of religion as delimited, and therefore definable, is thus itself culturally bound, historically recent, and discursively loaded. "There cannot be a universal definition of religion,"… [26]

I state the above critique of Geertz's definition to make this point. How can we exclude magic, witchcraft, and sorcery from a definition of religion when scholars cannot come to a consensus concerning the definition of religion itself? I propose that until we can concretely define what religion is, we cannot exclude magic, witchcraft, and sorcery from a definition of religion.

While Geertz asserted that symbols, the establishment of pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations and the aura of factuality were essential to the definition of religion, Durkheim's concepts of religion as an extension of social relationships influenced scholars attempting to define religion. However while Durkheim's work asserted a difference between magic and religion, his concept of the extension of social relationships allows magic to become the domain of the religious scholar. Many cultures understand witchcraft, sorcery and magic in relation to their affects or implications on society.

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[25] Talal Asad, "Chapter 1: The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Catagory," in *Geneologies of Religion: Discipline and Reason of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 27-54. Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion after September 11* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1-2.
[26] Lincoln, 2.

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Robin Horton extended Durkheim's concept of religion and social relationships by adding human dependence on "non-human alters" to a definition of religion.[27] However, even with the specification of dependence on a non-human alter, magic, witchcraft and sorcery find their way into the realm of religious study. For example, in several East-African societies witches are not considered human. Witches are an "other" within the society. Witches embody the opposite of humanity. These societies often use the concept of witches and witchcraft not only to explain events but also to solidify their own identity. By personifying what a human in the particular culture is not or does not do, the culture simultaneously points toward what a human is and does. I propose that the humans within the society are dependent on the concept of witches to help identify who they are. I also assert that whether or not magic, witchcraft and sorcery are aspects of religion, magic, they exist in the realm of religious analysis and are thus subject to study by the scholar of religion. Simultaneously, I believe that witchcraft and sorcery studies are not the exclusive domain of religionist. I assert that where ever a study of these phenomena becomes necessary, whether it is anthropology, sociology or any other field, witchcraft and sorcery are viable topics for analysis.

While some scholars focused on whether witchcraft and sorcery were related to religion, and while Frazer discussed the mechanics of magic, Evans-Pritchard broadened the discussion with his work on the Azande. Evans-Pritchard observed the part witchcraft and sorcery played in Azande society. Evans-Pritchard noticed that among the Azande witchcraft is hereditary. It is contained in a bodily material called "witchcraft substance". Witchcraft substance is located in the belly of a witch in the form of a small, dark pouch. Evans-Pritchard also noted that the practice of witchcraft is not necessarily conscious. Witches can harm another person through ill will alone. Unconscious witchcraft is possible because witchcraft substance reacts to a witch's emotions.

Scholarship concerning witchcraft

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[27] Bowie, 23.

According to Evans-Pritchard, sorcery is always a conscious act. Defined within several East-African cultures as the skillful use of substances to harm another, the practitioner usually knows exactly what he or she is doing. The necessarily conscious nature of sorcery and the possibility of unconscious witchcraft establish an important distinction concerning how society deals with them. In many societies a witch acting unconsciously may return to society after restitution; because of the conscious nature of sorcery, a sorcerer may not always have this option. This leads to the assumption that conscious intent to harm is an important concept in the society.

The distinction between sorcery and witchcraft proposed by Evans-Pritchard predated his use of it. Moreover, this distinction between witchcraft and sorcery is somewhat flawed. The distinction used by Evans-Pritchard does not exist in every society.[28] The intention to harm another individual is more important than the use of substances in determining sorcery in many East-African societies. In addition, in many East-African societies many individuals practice both witchcraft and sorcery simultaneously. However, Evans-Pritchard's distinction is applicable to some cultures.

The co-existence of witchcraft and sorcery in many societies leads to the conclusion that these two phenomena serve different functions.[29] Co-existence of witchcraft and sorcery would not occur if the concepts were identical; this would lead to a redundancy in the culture. Middleton purposes that the terms witchcraft and sorcery have their own implications. In many cultures witches are considered the personification of evil. Witches are considered to be the opposite of moral humanity. The concept that witches personify evil leads to specific characterizations. The characterizations of witches are opposed to the cultural ideal for community. Witches are thought to commit incest, function at night, associate with wild animals, and endanger other community members. This pattern exists in many East-African societies and most cultures have a well-known description of witches. However, the possibility of witchcraft is only ascribed to a subset of the population and only a portion of the subset is considered to practice witchcraft.

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[28] Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 562.

While witchcraft is attributed to a portion of the society, sorcery is available to the entire populace. In many societies everyone is thought to have practiced sorcery at one time or another. However, point of view must be taken into account to identify possible witches; the subset of possible witches changes with the point of view. For example, in some societies the subset of possible witches is identified as a class of relatives. To each person the class of relatives also identified as potential witches may include different individuals.

While some scholars have studied the implications of the terminology, several scholars have been concerned with the function and presence of witchcraft and sorcery in society and the explanation of practices since Evans-Pritchard's time. For example, Malinowski advanced the idea that magic arose from humanity's desire to control situations outside of human control.[30] Malinowski also asserted that cultures use science and magic simultaneously. According to Malinowski, when science reaches its limits of explaining phenomena, magic is used to explain what science cannot. In essence, the presence of science within a culture does not guarantee the absence of magic.

The presence of witches and sorcerers in society and their harmful behavior toward society often prompts a witch-hunt. The community attempts to locate witches and sorcerers and subsequently the source of harmful phenomena. Accusations are a common method of identifying individuals who utilize sorcery and witchcraft. A number of scholars have noticed accusations play a significant role in the society. In addition, scholars have also noticed a general pattern to accusations. Middleton explains that witchcraft and sorcery accusations are expressions of social stress.

> Accusations or suggestions of witchcraft or sorcery, whether put to and confirmed by
> oracles and diviners, or merely accepted by public opinion, reflect certain stresses which
> arise at various times within the local field of social relations of a given individual,
> homestead, family-cluster or local community. [31]

[29] John Middleton and E. H. Winter, "Introduction," in *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, ed. John Middleton (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 1-25.

[30] John R. Bowen, *Religions in Practice* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), 85.

[31] Thomas Barfield, ed., *The Dictionary of Anthropology* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 493.

A mutual social relationship always exists between the accuser and the accused.[32]

In addition to recognizing a mutual relationship, Kluckholn noted that accusations provide scapegoats for the misfortunes of society. According to Kluckhohn accused individuals have usually deviated from the social or cultural norm or do not fit easily into the social structure. Accusations point out the deviation and stigmatize the differences between the cultural norm and the accused.[33]

In many East African societies fulfillment of mutual obligations are considered the cultural norm and an expectation in regard to the attainment of social status. Refusal to fulfill social obligations may affect the community and can be considered harmful to the community. Because of its affect on the community, neglect of social obligations is considered evil. The conclusion follows that refusal to fulfill social obligations is considered witchcraft since witchcraft is culturally defined as a harmful act against another individual or group.

While outbreaks of sorcery can be considered a societal issue, scholars such as Winters assert sorcery does not affect the group.[34] While in many situations it is considered malevolent, it is also considered to be a private matter between the two individuals involved. Sorcery may or may not amount to the denial of social obligations. The conclusion emerges that there are social differences between in accusations and responses to witchcraft and sorcery.

Marwick coined the phrase "social strain gauge" for discussing accusations in the areas of greatest social tension. According to Marwick accusations and beliefs about witchcraft and sorcery form an institution which functions to relieve social tension.[35] Marwick uses von Wiese's theory concerning social tension in order to make his case. Social tension occupies the center point while conflict is situated on one side and competition on the opposite side. Marwick equates witchcraft suspicion and gossip with social tension and witchcraft accusation with conflict. Accusations can serve to resolve

[32] John Middleton and E. H. Winter, ed., *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa* (New York, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, inc., 1963), 11.
[33] Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, *Cultural Anthropology*, Seventh Edition ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson learning center, 2002), 353.
[34] Winter, ed., *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, 1-25.
[35] Winter, 1-25.

conflict without open violence, which would be detrimental to the entire community. However, Marwick admits his analogy to von Wiese's theory of social tension is tenuous. He states that when accusations become out of hand they may be classified as conflict. Finally, competition and social tension occur in a dynamic state within a social relationship. Barfield recognizes yet another flaw in the functionalist argument, asserting the functionalist concept that the cost of witchcraft beliefs is lower than the cost of violence cannot be independently proven.

> The one problem of this approach is that it is derived from cases in Africa that occurred after colonial authorities had banned witch killing. So the central claim of the functionalist explanation, which is that the cost of witch beliefs to the society is less than the cost of outright confrontation, could not be demonstrated independently.[36]

Barfield's notation of a ban on the killing of witches is actually relevant to Evans-Pritchard's study of the Azande as well. According to Lemert, this statement corresponds to an omission in Evans-Pritchard's research.

> Evans-Pritchard offered only passing references to the reactions of the Azande to colonial laws that forbade vengence killings and compensation damages for witchcraft. This in retrospect was an unfortunate omission, in the light of reactions attributed to East African natives among whom such laws generated social tensions, leading them to believe the State had aligned itself on the side of evil.[37]

Even though Marwick's theory of witchcraft accusations as a social strain gauge is tenuous, Marwick helped to shed light on the topic of witchcraft and sorcery in other ways. Marwick labeled "dramatization" the way in which witchcraft and sorcery accusations were used to turn individuals away from what a particular society perceived as evil.[38]

> It is widely held that beliefs in witchcraft – and the same would hold true for sorcery – are an effective means of dramatizing social norms in that they

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[36] Barfield, 493.
[37] Lemert, 20.
[38] Lemert, 40.

provide in the person of a mystical evil-doer a symbol of all that is held to be

anti social and illegitimate.[39]

Yet Lemert attacks Winter's[40] and Middleton's[41] notions that the characterization of witches and sorcerers relates to morality. Lemert states that

Dramatization and personification by means of texts, songs, and plays have long

been regarded as means of moral indoctrination; but the stereotypes of the

African witch seem more like bestialization than personification. I fail to see or

comprehend why or how such things as feasting on corpses, rats, and toads,

handing upside down, and consuming salt to slake one's thirst, or consorting

with leopards and riding hyenas has any plausible connection with moral

indoctrination. This despite one ingenious contention that the African witch's

behavior was a reverse or mirror image of moral goodness necessary to to

personify evil.

The witch pictured in African studies is viewed as inhuman rather than human,

an alien, an outsider, or as one beyond redemption or control, whose behavior

was gross, capricious and unpredictable –hardly a candidate for a role in a drama

in which moral ideas compete with one another and lead to some ultimate

resolution.[42]

Lemert goes on to refer to Znaniecki[43] to assert that at most the African characterization of the witch provides a means of justifying the extreme measures taken to rid groups or communities of those typified as enemy aliens.

While Lemert reasserts the concept of scape-goating, posed by scholars such as Kluckhohn, increasingly contemporary authors have pressed a new explanation of witchcraft and sorcery. Recent scholars of witchcraft and sorcery have begun to explain witchcraft in light of modernity. Peter Geschiere has also noted the interplay between state government and

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[39] M. G. Marwick, ""the Sociology of Sorcery in a Central African Tribe."" in *Magic, Witchcraft, and Curing*, ed. John Middleton (Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1967), 124.
[40] E. H. Winter, "The Enemy Within: Amba Witchcraft and Sociological Theory," in *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, ed. John Middleton and E. H. Winter (London: Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1963), 292.
[41] John Middleton, "Some Social Aspects of Lugbara Myth" Africa 24 (July)," (1954),188.
[42] Lemert, 45.
[43] Florian Znaniecki, *Cultural Sciences: Their Origin and Development.* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 347.

witchcraft beliefs. Geschiere realized that witchcraft and sorcery concepts apply to national and state politics as well as local issues.[44]

> … to the Maka, it is hardly possible to talk about power without referring to the
> *djambe* (sorcery/witchcraft) And, most importantly, I came to realize that this
> applies not only to local politics within the village but also to modern relations
> to the state and national politics. [45]

Geschiere's study of the Maka revealed in both local and state arenas that witchcraft and sorcery signify more than access to occult power. Because of the ties between witchcraft sorcery and state politics, Geschiere asserts that witchcraft and sorcery will not disappear with modernization. Politics, witchcraft and sorcery have become intertwined with modernization. For example, witchcraft and sorcery accusations are regularly printed in the *Radio Trottoir*.[46]

According to Geschiere and other scholars, images of witchcraft have come to symbolize political and economic changes and the struggle to control or cope with them in modern Africa. Witchcraft is not simply a traditional belief in Africa; it is also the concern of the traditional elite. Just as in the politics of the traditional African societies ;witchcraft takes its place in modern politics as a means of obtaining power on one hand and a means of leveling power on the other. Geschiere also asserts that the issue of witchcraft may have different implications depending on the situation and the individuals involved. In certain cases the regional courts of law have convicted people of witchcraft.

Increasingly, due to urbanization and modernization, witchcraft and sorcery have encountered governmental institutions with the urbanization and modernization. Various communities have had to deal with sanctions on their witchcraft and sorcery beliefs. On the other hand, witchcraft and sorcery beliefs have adapted to urbanizations and modernization. Witchcraft and sorcery have become tools of access to governmental power.

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[44] Geschiere, 1997, 5.

[45] Geschiere, *1997, 37.*

[46] Geschiere, 1997, 2.

Various authors have stated that if a new political system (democracy, for example) is to survive it must make use of local concepts of power. The connections between witchcraft and power in east Africa have become stronger with time. Witchcraft serves as a hidden means to obtain power as well as serving to hide sources of power. It is necessary to study these connections from the point of culture as well as politics.

Geschiere notes the link between witchcraft and kinship as many previous scholars have:

> As emphasized above, witchcraft/sorcery still is, in many respects, the reverse – one might say the dark side – of kinship.[47]

> Witchcraft is still the flip side of kinship. But it is also a discourse that incorporates new inequalities, to relate them again to kinship frameworks, and hence to dynamize kinship.[48]

According to Geschiere, contemporary kinship and witchcraft beliefs attempt to relate the new inequalities of modern urban life.

Other recent and contemporary scholars have dealt studied the interaction of witchcraft and modernity as well. Many contemporary scholars of witchcraft and sorcery have taken a different vantage point from their predecessors. The relatively new vantage point is that witchcraft has come to explain modernity.[49] Several scholars have proposed that witchcraft cannot be separated from issues such as global and local politics or economic transformation.[50] The dynamics between the witchcraft and sorcery phenomena and the modern world are alive and well. Scholars also assert that witchcraft and sorcery economies are on the rise along with global economics and modernization.[51]

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[47] Geschiere, 1997, 24.
[48] Geschiere, 1997, 25.
[49] Sanders, 338.
[50] Mark Auslander, ""Open the Wounds": The Symbolic Politics of Modern Ngoni Witchfinding.," in *Modernity and Its Malcontents : Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa*, ed. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 167-192. Peter Geschiere, "Sorcery and the State: Popular Modes of Action among the Maka of Southeast Cameroon. Critique of Anthropology," 8:1 (1988), 35-63. Sanders, 339.
[51] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony.," *American Ethnologist* 26(2) (1999). Sanders, 339.

The viewpoint expressed above which is taken by many scholars of witchcraft and sorcery, offers the idea that the contemporary witchcraft and sorcery phenomena in East Africa are only about modernity. However,

> It would be, therefore, unwise to assume, as the collective weight of the current literature seems to do, that all African witchcraft must today be "about" modernity; that all Africans' fears and fantasies, trials and tribulations concerning witches must necessarily "personify the conflicts of modernity, the ways in which foreign forces invade local worlds, turning ordinary people into monsters, and endangering established life-ways." [52]

Todd Sanders points out that although contemporary witchcraft and sorcery may be in modernity, they do not necessarily have to be about modernity.[53] Sanders has also opined the phenomena of African witchcraft has proved extremely flexible in the new modern context. However, although witchcraft and sorcery have adapted to survive in the postcolonial and modern context, they retain the flexibility to express ideas that are not directly related to modernity. Todd Sanders's work with the Ihanzu in north-central Tanzania has leads him to conclude that witchcraft can express tradition in the modern world. With Todd Sanders concept of witchcraft's conceptual flexibility within modernity, a third scholarly viewpoint has emerged.

Although there may exist numerous viewpoints concerning witchcraft and its relation to modernity and kinship, all scholars have had to deal with one particular issue. Peter Geschiere addresses the viewpoints concerning witchcraft and sorcery taken by many scholars. Geschiere expresses an issue many anthropologist and other scholars of witchcraft have faced when approaching with the subject. When in the field many scholars are asked why they are interested in witchcraft and sorcery if they do not believe in either phenomenon.[54] Many informants cannot quite fathom why witchcraft and sorcery intrigue scholars. Secondly, the scholar of witchcraft is often formally or informally evaluated by his or her colleagues, who are interested in proving that the scholar has not "gone native" or begun to believe in witchcraft or sorcery.

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[52] Sanders, 340.
[53] Sanders, 338.

Geschiere states that the questions raised by a scholars informants and colleagues are vital. The questions from informants and colleagues force the scholar of witchcraft and sorcery to confront his or her concept of reality. The scholar must decide if witchcraft, sorcery, and their practitioners are real or imaginary. Moreover, if witchcraft and sorcery are deemed to be reality by the scholar, in what sense are the phenomena "real"?

However Geschiere agrees with De Rosny when he mentions that the distinction between what is "imaginary" and "reality" is not a clear domain.[55] Geschiere quickly points out that if the belief in the effectiveness of witchcraft is widespread in a particular society then it is likely individuals within that society will try to utilize it. Geschiere states that in this sense, witches do exist regardless of whether witchcraft as the society conceives of it exists or not. According to Geschiere, the term "witch" denotes an individual who acts according to their beliefs to hurt another person or acquire power.[56] Many scholars who have been inducted into the world of witchcraft practice have accepted this concept.

However, initiation into the world of witchcraft holds its own problems. Initiation into the practice of witchcraft often leads to an uncritical acceptance of existence of witchcraft in the as the practitioner describes it.[57] Uncritical acceptance of the truth of witchcraft can lead to an affirmation of the reality and effectiveness of witchcraft and sorcery.[58]

Although it is not prudent for a scholar to affirm the validity of witchcraft without question it can also be dangerous to deny its reality. Absolute denial without analysis can lead to treating the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery as pure fantasy, and the scholar risks becoming sidetracked.[59] The goal of understanding the phenomena of witchcraft can be made increasingly difficult when a scholar emphatically denies its validity. Geschiere states that in order to understand the hold of witchcraft and sorcery over

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[54] Geschiere, 1997, 20.
[55] Geschiere, 1997, 20.
[56] Geschiere, 1997, 20-21.
[57] Geschiere, 1997, 21.
[58] Geschiere, 1997, 21.
[59] Geschiere. 1997, 21.

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people's minds it is necessary to resist the urge simply to place reality and fantasy in opposition to one another. The scholar must evaluate the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery on their own terms, taking neither as reality or fantasy without study. Just as Geschiere takes witchcraft and sorcery seriously, regardless of their root in reality or fantasy, this thesis endeavors to do the same.

The theories spanning those proposed by Evans-Pritchard and his contemporaries to Sanders's, Geschiere's and other recent authors, have added a great deal to the discussion and evaluation of the witchcraft and sorcery phenomena. Without the work of the many scholars interested in witchcraft and sorcery an analysis of the change in the perceptions of witchcraft and sorcery in both academia and the East-African society would not be possible.

Conclusion

Conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery have broadened from their functionalist and evolutionist beginnings to include discussion of their relation to modern institutions and phenomena such as modern politics. The study of witchcraft and sorcery has proven to be a dynamic and ever-changing field. In recent years, scholars have sought to trace connections between witchcraft, sorcery and modern institutions and phenomena widely considered to be modern entities. Chapter one attempts to make the reader aware of the way in which the study of witchcraft and sorcery continues to broaden.

Chapter 2: "Functionalist" ethnographic approaches to the occult in east Africa.
Introduction

In chapter two the work of three authors is used as examples of the way the East African witchcraft and sorcery was approached by 20th century anthropologists. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, T. O. Beidelman, and John Middleton's work can be considered functionalist. In addition each scholar contributes to the study of witchcraft and sorcery in an important way. Evans-Pritchard was instrumental in establishing the sociology of

witchcraft and sorcery,[60] and this legacy has become influential in the study of witchcraft and sorcery as a whole. Middleton's work can be considered the forerunner of many other works that relate witchcraft and sorcery to politics and authority. His work approached witchcraft and sorcery as a means of obtaining social order, a concept that has repeatedly resurfaced in the work of many other scholars.

Beidelman's work approaches witchcraft and sorcery in terms of social obligation and relationships. It views witchcraft and sorcery as expressions of what a particular society considers abnormal and undesirable. It also links with Middleton's work through the concept of scapegoating and stigmatization, because stigmatization and scapegoating in turn can become a method of enforcing social control.

Chapter two will explore the work of these three authors while making connections to the work of other authors. It also highlights the fact that the works of these three authors were groundbreaking. Ultimately, Chapter two endeavors to offer a glimpse into the way in which witchcraft and sorcery studies were carried out in the mid-twentieth century.

Functionalism, witchcraft and sorcery.

Early 20th century studies of occult practices were often done from a functionalist perspective and were dedicated to understanding how occult practices affected the societies in which they were present. Authors such as Evans-Pritchard, John Middleton and T.O. Beidelman were interested in understanding witchcraft's place in traditional societies. Chapter two will discuss the work of these three authors among the Azande, Lugbara and Kaguru respectively. A shared functionalist perspective produced several common themes in the above works; however, each author's work contributes uniquely to the study of occult practices as well.

It is necessary to understand the history of witchcraft and sorcery concepts in an effort to evaluate how the perceptions of the phenomena have adapted. Evans-Pritchard's work with the Azande, Middleton's analysis of Lugbara society, and T.O. Beidelman's study of the Kaguru help to place the past into context by giving examples of

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[60] M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen, "Witchcraft and Sorcery," in African Systems of Thought, ed. M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), 25.

anthropological perceptions of witchcraft and sorcery in history. While Evans-Pritchard, Middleton and Beidelman have been influential in understanding the phenomena in question, I emphasize the use of their works as examples of historical examples of the functionalist approach to the witchcraft and sorcery phenomena. Chapter two may refer to other authors on occasion if a specific author's work is of value in understanding historical perceptions of witchcraft and sorcery.

Early in the study of witchcraft and sorcery scholars were inclined to deal with an issue scholars in other fields were also encountering. The issue of the proper method of evaluating a culture has been in the forefront of scholarly discussions from early on.[61] Many scholars of witchcraft and sorcery, as well as of culture in general, hold that the researcher should attempt to understand the phenomena from the "native's point of view". Scholars have used various terms and concepts to discuss this issue including "outside" versus "inside", "first-person" versus "third-person", and "phenomenological" versus "objectivist". However, Clifford Geertz's reference to terms used by Heinz Kohut is an efficient way of explaining the method of evaluating cultures used by many early scholars of witchcraft and sorcery such as Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski. Kohut used the terms "experience-near" and "experience-distant".[62]

According to Kohut, an experience-near concept is a concept that a person can easily use to describe what he or she is experiencing. An experience-distant concept is a concept used by scholars to advance academic aims.

> An experience-near concept is, roughly, one which someone – a patient, a
> subject, in our case an informant – might himself naturally and effortlessly use
> to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which
> he would readily understand when similarly applied to others. An experience-
> distant concept is one which specialists of one sort or another – an analyst, an
> experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or an ideologist – employ to
> forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims.[63]

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[61] Clifford Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," in *Meaning in Anthropology*, ed. Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby (Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1976), 222.
[62] Geertz, 1976, 223.

Concepts such as "love" can be considered experience-near, while concepts such as "object cathexis" are experience-distant. However, it is wise to note that concepts categorized by Kohut's terminology should be recognized as located on a gradient, not in polar opposition to one another. For instance, according to Kohut, "fear" is experience-nearer than "phobia", and "phobia" experience-nearer than "ego dyssntonic".[64]

Scholars of witchcraft and sorcery have dealt with the dilemma of phenomena from an experience-near versus and experience-distant point of view. Geertz explains that total devotion to experience-nearer concepts keep the scholar confined to immediacies and the vernacular. On the other hand, experience-distant concepts leave the scholar stranded in academic lingo and abstractions.

The scholar of culture is left with a decision regarding how to evaluate and describe the culture under examination. Should the scholar take the experience-nearer or experience-distant approach? However, Geertz notes that the more significant question is what role Kohut's concept plays in scholarly research.

For early scholars of witchcraft and sorcery it was important to understand how the individuals within the specific society understood these phenomena. However, it was necessary for the scholar to balance the need to understand the phenomena through experience-near conceptions with the need to describe the phenomena to other scholars from an experience-distant vantage point.

Geertz noted that Malinowski demonstrated that one does not have to be a "native" to understand "native concepts".[65]

> The real question, and the one Malinowski raised by demonstrating that, in the case of "natives", you don't have to be one to know one, is what role the two sorts of concepts play in anthropological analysis. Or, more exactly, how, in each, case, ought one to deploy them so as to produce an interpretation of the way a people lives which is neither imprisoned within their mental horizons, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch, nor systematically deaf to the

[63] Geertz,1976, 223.
[64] Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding.", 223.
[65] Geertz, 1976, 222.

distinctive tonalities of their existence, an ethnography of witchcraft as written

by a geometer. [66]

Scholars of witchcraft and sorcery such as Evans-Pritchard used concepts akin to Kohut's concepts to "see things from the 'native' point of view". As Geertz noted, "the trick [to ethnographic research] is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to".[67]

While Geertz focused on what the native thought other scholars were also interested in what the native was "actually" doing. Evans-Pritchard and other early scholars of witchcraft and sorcery were not only interested in what the "native" thought he/she was up to, but were also interested in what the "native" was actually up to. Evans-Pritchard was instrumental in establishing what can be called "the sociology of witchcraft and sorcery".[68]

Evans-Pritchard

Evans-Pritchard sought to map the logical interrelations of beliefs in magic, witchcraft, and sorcery among the Azande and witchcraft and sorcery's links to Zande social institutions.[69] Fortes and Dieterlan relate that all subsequent advances in the study of witchcraft and sorcery represent a shift in emphasis. Subsequent scholars have focused on the structural and normative significance of beliefs in sorcery and witchcraft. Various scholars have also attempted a comparative approach to the study of witchcraft and sorcery. However, much of the study of witchcraft and sorcery has been enabled by Evans-Pritchard's work among the Azande.

Although Evans-Pritchard's work was never intended to function as more than a full description of logical consistencies and social institutions in Zande culture, his terminology has become foundational in the study of witchcraft and sorcery.

His [Evans-Pritchard's] Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande,

despite the author's explicit statement that his usage of terminology represents

nothing more than convenient translation of Zande concepts, has become a

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[66] Geertz , 1976, 223.

[67] Geertz, 1976, 224.

[68] M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen, "Witchcraft and Sorcery," in *African Systems of Thought*, ed. M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), 25.

[69] Fortes and Dieterlen, 25.

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> standard text, so wide is the currency of Evans-Pritchard's terminology and the
> influence of his approach.[70]

Although Evans-Pritchard's terminology has become influential in the study of witchcraft and sorcery, some scholars have pressed the necessity of using "native" terminology. Fr. Haulstaert insisted on the use of native concepts and terms. Since Fr. Haulstaert's paper, [71] several later scholars such as Peter Geschiere have pressed the concept of the use of native terminology.

According to Peter Geschiere the terminology many scholars have been using since the beginning of African witchcraft studies, the terms presented as translations of traditional African terminology by Evans-Pritchard, reduce the phenomena to a simple opposition between good and evil.[72] However, witchcraft studies have shown that a simple opposition between good and evil is sufficient to describe not what is taking place. The phenomena of African witchcraft and sorcery have proven more complicated than the simple reduction presented in popular terminology.

While Geschiere and other scholars debate the use of popular terminology, many scholars of African witchcraft and sorcery continue to consider Evans-Pritchard work, along with Kluckhohn's, to be the foundation of the of witchcraft studies.

> Evans-Pritchard's study was followed by that of Kluckhohn, who published his
> *Navaho witchcraft* in 1944. The study of these matters rest upon the work of
> these two men and their influence, particularly that of Evans-Pritchard…. [73]

His work was influential in establishing the distinction between sorcery and witchcraft as stated above and it, like Evans-Pritchard's translations of traditional African terms, was used extensively throughout the academic world. The concept that witchcraft is part of an individual while sorcery is an act completed by an individual has also been attributed

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[70] Fortes and Dieterlen,21.

[71] Fr. Hulsteart first reviewed this subject. M.G. Marwick added this idea to the discussion concerning. The comment concerns papers written by Fr. Haulstaert, Professor Mitchell, and M.G. Marwick. Fortes and Dieterlen, 21.

[72] Bongmba, Elias. "African Witchcraft: From Ethnography to Critique." In *Witchcraft Dialogues*, edited by George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy, 39-79. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001, 44.

[73] Winters, 1-25.

to him and he also advanced the idea that witchcraft explained misfortune particularly events which are not completely understandable.[74] His work concerning Azande witchcraft proposes that witchcraft may not explain the reasons for an event but does explain why an event occurred to a specific person at a specific place during a specific time. According to Evans-Pritchard, Azande witchcraft does not explain the reasons for a given event but answers the more specific question stated in Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, Nuer Religion, and The Azande: History and Political Institutions.

Evans-Pritchard did not believe witchcraft existed in the manner in which traditional societies believed it existed. The psychic manipulation of the natural and the supernatural world was not a concept he subscribed to, yet Evans-Pritchard recognized the manipulation of various substances for harmful purposes as a reality. Conversely, according to Evans-Pritchard sorcery is quite possible. The disbelief in the existence of witchcraft is a concept that appears in many later works by various authors.

The trend towards disbelieving witchcraft as the native conceives of it yet attempting to understand its function within society has become the norm within the study of witchcraft and sorcery. This mindset held by Evans-Pritchard and many of his successors can be considered part of his legacy. Through his groundbreaking work, Evans-Pritchard prompted many authors to take an increasingly analytical approach to these phenomena.

However, there have been a few scholars of witchcraft and sorcery who have begun to take the possibility of the existence of witches and sorcerers seriously. De Rosny, in addition to pointing out the lack of a clear-cut distinction between what is "real" and what is "imaginary" concerning witchcraft and sorcery, accepts the existence of *sorciers*.

> Due to my direct and constant involvement in Duala with victims and sometimes
> also with accusers, I came to see that evil *sorciers* do exist in flesh and blood.
> No doubt they are infinitely less numerous than… my panicky spokesmen
> affirmed, but they are nonetheless all too real. They are either people who

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[74] Bowen, 85.

> manipulate others' credulity for their own profit (sometimes even using
> poison); or persons who are not conscious of their perversity… Aren't there in
> every society certain perverted persons who – without even knowing it – make
> their fellow men ill by draining their vital energy from them, thus
> depersonalizing them – in other words "eating" them?[75]

Geschiere notes De Rosny attacks the western tendency to deny the existence of sorcerers. Although it seems Geschiere agrees with De Rosny on the existence of sorcerers, an unstated stipulation is present in Geschiere's argument. Geschiere states

> If the belief in the effectiveness of witchcraft is widespread in society, it is
> indeed highly probable that certain individuals will try to use it. In that respect
> witches do exist – that is, men and women who act according to these beliefs in
> order to hurt others and acquire additional forms of power.[76]

The unspoken sentiment is that sorcerers may exist, although not in the manner explained by the native. Individuals may in fact use poisons and other medicines to cause harm to other individuals, however this is not to say there is anything magical about such methods. If we follow Geschiere's line of thought, sorcerers are merely individuals who consciously and willfully bring harm to another individual. An interesting point appears at this point in the discussion. Although Geschiere is considered to be a relatively new scholar of witchcraft and sorcery compared to Evans-Pritchard and his contemporaries, Geschiere's argument is consistent with Evans-Pritchard's argument in this case. Sorcerers are individuals who may use substances to consciously and intentionally harm others. Nothing within this statement implies the use of magical forces. Thus, Evans-Pritchard's legacy can still be seen within the works of recent scholars of religion even when he is only unconsciously referenced.

Middleton

While Evans-Pritchard work has become foundational for many scholars interested in the study of witchcraft and sorcery and is repeatedly cited time and time again, the work of John Middleton has also become influential in the in the study in

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[75] Geschiere refers to and quote a testimony Eric de Rosny stated in 1992. De Rosny is a French priest who has been initiated into the world of the nganga "healers" in Duala.   Geschiere, 1997, 20.
[76] Geschiere, 1997, 20.

question as well. John Middleton discusses concepts that socially denoted witches and sorcerers. Much of Middleton's work focuses on the Lugbara and the concept of the fulfillment of social obligation. Middleton's explanation of social obligation and its importance to the community has added an important dimension to the study of witchcraft and sorcery in East Africa. His work suggests the centrality of social obligation in the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery. In some cases failure to perform social obligations can be considered to be the root of witchcraft speculations.

Middleton asserts Lugbara witchcraft is based on the idea of social obligation. To deny or fail to complete one's obligations is to disrupt harmonious relations within the community, or to commit an *ezata*[77]. *Ezata* is the Lugbara word denoting an action that "destroys the home" and often has its basis in jealousy or envy, known to the Lugbara as *ole*.

In Lugbara society a witch's behavior is often in some way unusual. Individuals with extraordinary success in an aspect of life may be thought to have used witchcraft to obtain such success. Conversely, individuals who are experiencing difficulty and show signs of envy may also be considered witches. Witches have recognizable qualities. Occult practitioners may have red eyes, be crippled or possess other physical signs. In Lugbara society however physical signs are representative of behavioral traits rather a possessing inherent importance.[78] An example of this is Middleton's example of the belief that red eyes may signify a bad temper.

According to Middleton, in Lugbara society witches and sorcerers are perceived separately, and the definitions of witches and sorcerers are similar to those given by Evans-Pritchard. Witches possess innate psychic power while sorcerers utilize various substances; but this does not negate the possibility of an individual utilizing both avenues of access to occult power. Witches and sorcerers are also dealt with differently. Sorcery against a relative is considered a more malevolent act than witchcraft.

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[77] John Middleton, "Witchcraft and Sorcery in Lugbara," in *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, ed. John Middleton (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 258.
[78] Middleton, 1963, 262.

> To ensorcell a kinsman is considered a very heinous act, and amounts to a denial of the kinship bond itself. It is tantamount to fratricide, for sorcery is believed to kill whereas ghost invocation and witchcraft rarely do.[79]

Sorcery in Lugbara culture is considered a deliberate and conscious act.

Witches and sorcerers are *onzi*, roughly translated "evil", in Lugbara society. *Onzi* is any power which comes to destroy or change authority and power relations.[80] Kinship seniority is an important aspect of authority in Lugbara life and thus seniority forms the framework of much of the relationships and interactions within the society. Authority and seniority also sanction the use of occult power. Ghost invocation, mentioned in the previous quote, is considered an acceptable use of occult power and for this reason it is not considered evil. It is also the method used to punish individuals who have committed *ezata*. However, if a senior kinsman cannot prove that the accused has committed *ezata* or is not justified in using certain measures, his actions are considered witchcraft.

The world of witches is perceived to be inversely proportional to the world of humans in Lugbara society. Witchcraft is considered to be the converse power of authority as well.[81] Middleton explains that individuals who are envious or covet authority and are devoid of it often resort to witchcraft in order to gain it. Individuals who are devoid of authority and power often lack them due to kinship status.

Thus, according to Middleton, witchcraft and sorcery are not isolated phenomena. Witchcraft and sorcery are both the cause and the effect of failure to fulfill social obligation. Witchcraft and sorcery are also means to authority and power. Witchcraft and sorcery are even intimately linked to kinship systems within East Africa. Middleton's discussion of the links between social obligation and witchcraft and sorcery open the topic of witchcraft studies to the discussion of local politics and authority. With Middleton, witchcraft and sorcery continue to expand from the realm of sociology into the political realm. Middleton's works such as The Political System of the Lugbara of the

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[79] Middleton, 1963, 269.
[80] Middleton, 1963, 261.
[81] Middleton, 1963, 271.

Nile Congo Divide[82] have influenced scholarship concerning politics and society in Africa.

Although John Middleton's work is the forerunner of many other works concerning politics, authority and witchcraft in Africa, a significant thread still connected Middleton with many other scholars such as Evans-Pritchard and Kluckholn. Middleton asserted witchcraft and sorcery aided the maintenance of social order. Middleton advanced the concept that witchcraft and sorcery were connected to authority and local politics in his work Witchcraft and Sorcery in Lugbara. However, in the introduction of Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems[83] Middleton and John Tait connected political relations to the maintenance of social order.

> Radcliffe-Brown, in his preface to *African Political Systems*, a collection of eight short monographs which inaugurated the study of political anthropology in traditional Africa, states that 'the political organisation of a society is that aspect of the total organisation which is concerned with the control and regulation of the use of physical power. Nearly twenty years later, John Middleton and David Tait redefined political relations in terms of their function, that is, to assure social order.[84]

In this regard Middleton did not stray far from colleagues who proposed the same concept; a list that includes scholars such as Evans-Pritchard, M.G. Marwick, Radcliffe-Brown, and Clyde Kluckholn. Witchcraft and sorcery may operate as maintenance systems within the society. This concept is a common thread through the scholarship of the study of witchcraft and sorcery.

Beidelman

Beidelman, like Evans- Pritchard and Middleton, is also interested in how witchcraft functioned in societies. Beidelman describes Kaguru witchcraft beliefs in his work *Moral Imagination in Kaguru Modes of Thought*. In Kaguru belief, witches hold an

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[82] John Middleton, "The Political System of the Lugbara of the Nile Congo Divide," in *Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems*, ed. John Middleton and David Tait (London: Routledge And Keagan Paul Ltd, 1958).

[83] John Middleton and David Tait, "Introduction," in *Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems*, ed. John Middleton and David Tait (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1958), 1.

antithetical position to moral society. Witches in Kaguru life are the embodiment of evil.[85] Witches do not honor social obligations, thus they are not considered human although they appear as such. Within Kaguru society social obligations and relationships are extremely important and it is believed that any true human will honor his or her obligations.

Kaguru witches are characterized as possessing the opposite qualities relative to those of a Kaguru human. Witches often associate with wild animals, prefer the night, commit incest and cannibalism and endanger the community. One interesting point concerning Kaguru witches is that they are always aware of their evil actions; this is opposed to Evans-Pritchard's notion that witches may not always be conscious of their malevolent dealings. Witches in Kaguru society hold true to one theme in occult studies: they harm because of ill will, jealousy greed or the desire for power.[86]

Beidelman's observations of Kaguru society and beliefs concerning witches and sorcerers add to the sociological dimension of the study of witchcraft and sorcery. From Beidelman's observations we can conclude that the issues of witchcraft and sorcery within East African societies are, at least in part, about the community as a whole. Practitioners of witchcraft are dangerous because they endanger the community. It is quite possible that any particular action that does not endanger the community may or may not be considered to be witchcraft. Therefore if the person who has committed the action will not be considered a witch based on this action, whether or not he or she is considered a witch based on other actions.

As stated above, Beidelman's observations point to the concept that witches are witches because of failure to fulfill social obligations and witchcraft is the failure to fulfill the social obligation. From this it is easy to understand why witchcraft was so important for the Kaguru people during the time of Beidelman's study. The Kaguru economy was agricultural in nature, although livestock remained valuable[87], and at any

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[84] Jacques Jérôme Pierre Maquet, *Power and Society in Africa*, trans. Translated from the French by Jeannette Kupfermann. (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 87.
[85] T.O. Beidelman, *Moral Imagination in Kaguru Modes of Thought*, ed. 1st Smithsonian edition (Smithsonian Institution, 1993, 1993), 138.
[86] Beidelman,1993, 140.
[87] Beidelman, 1993, 14.

point in time failure to harvest crops, tend livestock, hunt, or even keep a promise could be detrimental or cause the death of another member of the community. For this reason anyone who could not be counted on to fulfill his/her social obligations were putting someone else at risk and in turn were labeled witches.

> Witches are not fully accountable in a world where social beliefs and rules
> should provide a working order by which by which people secure their ends and
> means in the company of others.[88]

While Beidelman remained within the sociological and anthropological camp in the study of witchcraft and sorcery, his contribution to the study has greatly benefited scholars of the subject who are interested in the dynamics of witchcraft and sorcery within large groups.

      T.O. Beidelman's research along with the research of Evans-Pritchard, Middleton and many20th century scholars has enriched the study of witchcraft and sorcery by providing fundamental knowledge of the subject to the academic community. Without Evans-Pritchard's groundbreaking work which started the sociology of witchcraft and sorcery, Middleton's work which reiterated the connections between witchcraft, sorcery and politics, and Beidelman's research into how witchcraft and sorcery affect the entire community as well as small groups, many of the scholars interested in related subjects not have be able to progress with their own research.

      It is also worth noting that the study of witchcraft and sorcery has not developed in a vacuum. With this statement I assert that the work of scholars that do not seem to have any direct connection to the study of witchcraft and sorcery have also become invaluable to the research of the study. Levi-Strauss's work, _The Elementary Structures of Kinship_[89], outlined the patterns that organize kinship relationship.

> Levi-Strauss applied his structuralist method to tease out the patterns of
> exchange that organized kinship relations, writing a groundbreaking

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[88] Beidelman, 1993, 138.
[89] Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949,1969), 253.

comparative study that he entitled The Elementary Structures of Kinship in

homage to Durkheim. [90]

Levi-Strauss offered the academic community information concerning relationship between various individuals and groups within the community. With the knowledge that phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery are intimately related to the subject of kinship in many cultures, Levi-Strauss's work becomes a valuable tool for the scholar of witchcraft and sorcery.

The work of E.E. Evans-Pritchard, John Middleton, and T.O. Beidelman helped to form the sociological and anthropological framework that is the basis of the majority of research into the study of witchcraft and sorcery. While various scholars have developed new ideas concerning the subject, most of the concepts are based on the concepts of the early scholars or are an elaboration of these early concepts. Even when a recent scholar disagrees with an earlier scholar, his or her opinion is in reference to and related to the original concepts established by scholars that came before. Examples of recent authors advancing ideas related in some way to the work of early scholars include Peter Geshiere's disagreement with Evans-Pritchard's use of terminology[91], Karen Field's proposal that early concepts of witchcraft and sorcery are intimately connected with race[92] frequently refers to Evans-Pritchard's work entitled *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*. Micheal Jackson's recasting of ethnography is based on Levi-Strauss' theory that anthropology is the general theory of relationships[93]. There is also Bongmba's reference to T.O. Beidelman's work as a shining entry point to moral imagination of African communities[94]. Even Bongmba's agreement with Geschiere's preference for the term "occult forces" instead of "witchcraft and sorcery" harks back to

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[90] Charles Lindholm, *Culture Identity: The History, Theory, and Practice of Psychological Anthroplogy* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001), 240.
[91] Geshiere, 1997, 15.
[92] Karen E. Fields, "Witchcraft and Racecraft: Invisible Onotology in Its Sensible Manifestations.," in *Witchcraft Dialogues*, ed. George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001)., 283-315.
[93] Bongmba, 2001a, 42.
[94] Elias Kifon Bongmba, *African Witchcraft and Otherness : A Philosophical and Theological Critique of Intersubjective Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001)., 108.

Evans-Pritchard's use of the terminology in the first place[95], and Levi-Strauss referred to Durkheim's work enough for his book *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* to be considered an act homage toward Durkheim.

It is evident that the work of the earlier scholars of witchcraft and sorcery has been a catalyst for new concepts within the newer works on the subject regardless of whether those new ideas agree or disagree with the original concepts. I propose that without the work of the earlier scholars recent scholars may not have been able to develop the recent concepts that they are purposing.

In effect the works of the earlier scholars of witchcraft and sorcery have become not only fundamental but also essential to the research of any new scholar of the subject. It has become necessary to understand the works of the earlier scholars in order to understand the concepts of the contemporary scholars. This is the reason why I have included this chapter within this thesis. Without an understanding of the work of Evans-Pritchard, Middleton, Beidelman and their contemporaries is very difficult to understand the work of Karen E. Fields, Luise White, Peter Geschiere and their contemporaries. The latter class is based upon the work of the former, and their thoughts represent the progression and adaptation of the works of earlier scholars. Likewise, this thesis represents a progression and adaptation of the work of Peter Geschiere, Todd Sanders and their colleagues.

Conclusion

Chapter two discusses three influential scholars in the study of Eat African witchcraft and sorcery. These three scholars used functionalist methodologies, however, their works were also groundbreaking and set the stage for later discussions of the topic. The concepts and methods that arose from their works and the works of their contemporaries, concepts such as the sociology of witchcraft and sorcery, scapegoating and stigmatization, and the connections between witchcraft sorcery and politics, have lain the groundwork for the study of witchcraft and sorcery for later scholars.

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[95] Bongmba, 2001b, 44.

Chapter 3: Modern institutions, phenomena, and Witchcraft and Sorcery.
Introduction

Chapter three seeks to show that witchcraft and sorcery can have effects on other areas of modernity. Concepts and institutions such as politics, race, the legal system, and even the business world have or potentially may come into contact with the concept of witchcraft and sorcery in East Africa. If witchcraft and sorcery can affect modern phenomena and institutions, it is plausible to assert that witchcraft and sorcery are modern phenomena as well as traditional conceptions.

As stated in chapter one, some early scholars interested in religion, magic, witchcraft and sorcery believed these phenomena would disappear with the advancement of society and culture. History and modernization has proven Freud, Durkheim, Marx and their contemporaries wrong and it has been the social evolutionist mentality that has proven outdated, not the religious phenomena. Witchcraft and sorcery have not vanished with development and modernization. Instead conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery have adapted to address new situations associated with modernization in East Africa, while continuing to express traditional East African concepts.

Scholars such as Karen E. Fields and Peter Geschiere have begun to explore the recent connections between witchcraft, sorcery and other phenomena. Witchcraft and sorcery have been found to have connections with the political and legal arenas, academia, media, and the business world.

Before I continue with this chapter, I would like to reiterate an important point concerning the subject in general. This thesis does not intend or attempt to prove the reality or fantasy of witchcraft and/or sorcery in East Africa or anywhere else. It operates on the premise that the perception held by a portion of the East African population that witchcraft exists has not faded into obscurity. This perception of the existence of witchcraft and sorcery has come to affect modernity in East Africa, whether witchcraft or sorcery actually exists or not. Just as in previous chapters, any reference to witchcraft, sorcery or their practitioners should be read as "the perception of the existence of witchcraft/sorcery/ to their practitioners" unless otherwise stated.

Witchcraft, Sorcery and East African Law

Witchcraft and sorcery beliefs have come into contact with various phenomena and institutions generally consider "modern". Among the institutions touched by the discussion of witchcraft and sorcery is the legal arena. There have been occasions when the legal world has reacted to the concepts of witchcraft and sorcery. In 1969, M. Gluckman noted that within the international legal arena African ideas of what was considered a threat to life and limb were often dismissed as trifling and eccentric.

> This reference to mystical notions also serves as a reminder that in traditional African thought the gravest threat to life and limb was not always provided by physical violence alone. There was – and is – a whole range of acts which Africans would immediately recognize as serious offences, actionable in customary law, but which the modern European would ordinarily react to which scepticism or dismiss as trifling or eccentric.[96]

The international community dismissed the idea that the use of witchcraft is an offense that should be considered serious enough to warrant a penalty under criminal or civil law. However, many courts recognize the issue of witchcraft in customary law. By 1967 the Court of Appeals for East Africa had established legal conditions for defense of provocation in witchcraft cases. Galikuwa v. R. (18 E.A.C.A. 175), R v. Fabiano Kinene s/o Mukye (8 E.A.C.A. 96), and R. v. Kajuna s/o Mbake (12 E.A.C.A. 104) are all cases that dealt with necessary preconditions for the killing of an individual in self-defense who is believed to be harming another or one's self though the use of witchcraft.[97] In one case, Galikuwa v. R., a witchdoctor threatened an appellant who was unable to pay. The appellant killed the witchdoctor in the belief it would save his life. The court found that fear of imminent death is not considered a physical provocation in the case of witchcraft although in some cases an overt physical act of witchcraft may amount to provocation.

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[96] A.L. Epstein, "Injury and Liablity in African Customary Law in Zambia," in *Ideas and Procedures in African Customary Law: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Eighth International African Seminar at the Haile Sellassie I University, Addis Ababa, January 1966*, ed. Max Gluckman, International African Institute., and Haile Selassie I University. (London,: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford U.P., 1969), 301.

[97] J.J.R. Collingwood, *Criminal Law of East and Central Africa* (Lagos and London: Sweet and Maxwell, and African Universities Press, 1967), 169.

In <u>R. v. Fabiano Kiene s/o Mukye</u> the Court of Appeals held that an overt physical act of witchcraft may amount to provocation.[98] In the case of <u>R. v. Kajuna s/o Mbake</u> an appellant believed that his father was killing his child through the use of witchcraft. He proceeded to travel to his father's location with the intent to kill him. The Court of Appeals for East Africa ruled the appellant was guilty of murder, on the grounds that the belief that a person was causing the death of a relative is not reasonable and not provocation to retaliation.

These three cases led to four conditions for provocation to retaliation in witchcraft cases.

    (i)   The act causing death must be shown to be in the heat of passion, *i.e.*, in anger; fear of immediate death is not sufficient

    (ii)   If the facts establish that the deceased was performing some act in the presence of the accused which he genuinely believed, was an act of witchcraft against him, and the accused was so angered as to be deprived of his self-control, the defence of grave and sudden provocation is open to the accused.

    (iii)   A belief in witchcraft *per se* does not constitute a circumstance of excuse of mitigation for killing a person believed to be a witch or a wizard when there is no immediate provocative act.

    (iv)   The provocative act must amount to an offence under criminal law.[99]

While the conditions established by the Court of Appeals for East Africa are not considered conclusive or exhaustive, these conditions prove an important point in the discussion of witchcraft and modernity. While international legal system may dismiss the belief in witchcraft as backward, international courts recognize they must deal with the belief in witchcraft in East Africa in cases where the issue is relevant. In addition, while international European courts may scoff at the belief in witchcraft, international

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[98] The appellants believed that a witchdoctor had caused the death of a number of relatives by witchcraft. One night, they found the witchdoctor crawling naked in the compound and believing him to be in the act of bewitching themselves, they fell upon him and killed him in a gruesome manner considered fitting for the death of a witchdoctor in olden days. Convictions for murder were reduced to manslaughter, because of the deceased's provocative act. Although the deceased's actions were not considered an offense under the witchcraft ordinance in Zambia (Cap. 30), his actions were considered an offence under criminal law (witchcraft) ordinance of Uganda and similar legislation in some other East African countries" Collingwood, 170.

East African courts take the belief in witchcraft as a serious issue relevant to certain cases. International courts have recognized the need to respect a society's laws and conventions.[100]

The idea that courts should respect the conventions and customary law of a society allows moral and social norms and practices to enter the courtroom. In addition, this concept allows the study of law to reach beyond legal documentation and make use of "collateral matters"[101]. In the words of A.L. Epstein in reference to the mentality of most international courts " 'reason' does not operate in a vacuum."[102] Allott, Epstein, and Gluckman assert that here, at this point where collateral matters are taken into consideration, is the point where the lawyer and the social anthropologist meet.[103]

Witchcraft, Sorcery and Politics in East Africa

Witchcraft and sorcery beliefs have come into contact with the political arena as well as the legal arena. Witchcraft and sorcery accusations have been raised against political leaders by other members of the culture. Heike Behrend recounts Alice Lakwena's accusations of and struggle against witchcraft in the Ugandan government in his book Alice Lakwena and the holy spirits: War in Uganda 1985-97.[104] Lakwena believed that Idi Amin, Obote, Museveni and other members of the Ugandan government fostered connections between witchcraft and the government. Lakwena believed that because of these connections the Acholi people in Uganda were suffering. Alice Lakwena and her followers rose in rebellion against the Ugandan government under an organization titled "The Holy Spirit Movement".

Alice Lakwena's accusations concerning witchcraft in the Ugandan government can be used as an example of how the politics can come into direct contact with the concept of witchcraft. The Ugandan government was accused of witchcraft. Whether or

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[99] Collingwood, 169.
[100] A.L. Epstein A.N. Allott, and M. Gluckman, "Introduction," in *Ideas and Procedures in African Customary Law*, ed. M. Gluckman (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 34.
[101] Collateral matters are concerns that at first may seem irrelevant to a particular case but become guides in the ruling of the court because they are the accepted norms of the society and culture. Epstein, 1966, 35.
[102] Epstein, 34.
[103] Epstein, 35.
[104] Heike Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Uganda 1985-97*, trans. Mitch Cohen (Fountain Publishers, 1999).

not the Ugandan government actually had connections to witchcraft and its practitioners it inevitably had to deal with the accusers and their accusations to insure political stability.

Geschiere notes the links between politics and witchcraft in <u>The Modernity of Witchcraft</u>.

> But what is even more confusing is that, alongside such references to witchcraft as a leveling force, which opposes new inequalities and relations of domination, other interpretations emphasize the role of these forces in the accumulation of wealth and power. And it is especially this version of sorcery/witchcraft as an accumulative force that prevails in more modern forms of politics.[105]

> This association of politics with witchcraft was reinforced by the political climate created after independence (1960) by President Ahmajou Ahidjo and his "unified party", The national ideology of the new regime heavily emphasized the need for "unity" and "vigilance" against omnipresent "subversion". [106]

By stating that witchcraft/sorcery prevails as a presumed means of obtaining power in modern politics, Geschiere acknowledges the connection between African politics and African witchcraft beliefs.

Geschiere also observes that within the Maka group he was studying it was quite evident to the members of the community that a connection between politics and witchcraft/sorcery exists.

> To the villagers, it is obvious that the ascension of the new elites – in this area nearly exclusively civil servants and politicians – is linked, in one way or another, to the occult force of the djambe (a term that the Maka now translate as *sorcellerie*).[107]

Geschiere also notes that the connections between witchcraft, sorcery and politics are not localized phenomena. Geschiere notices that these connections are being generated throughout African continent.[108]

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[105] Geschiere, 5.
[106] Geschiere, 5.
[107] Geschiere, 5.
[108] Geschiere, 6.

Interestingly enough, while indigenous belief systems, including the belief in the existence of witchcraft, have come into contact with the African political arena, the political world generally has not chosen to recognize traditional belief systems. For example, Ali A. Mazrui observes that no African countries have established national holidays for native religions or beliefs.

> No African country has officially allocated a national holiday in honor of indigenous religions. All African countries, on the other hand, have a national holiday either in favor of Christian festivals (especially Christmas) or Muslim festivals (such as Idd el Fitr) or both catagories of imported festivals. The Semitic religions (Christianity and Islam) are nationally honored in much of Africa; the indigenous religions are at best ethnic occasions rather than national ones.[109]

Although certain discussions concerning witchcraft, sorcery and politics are officially recognized in the legal realm, for instances Geschiere's concepts, it seems that the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery have affected African politics although they remain officially unrecognized by the state.

Witchcraft, sorcery and potential contact with international business.

While conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery in African have affected the legal and political arenas, these phenomena have also affected international marketing and advertising in the region. In an effort to explain the importance of culture on marketing in East Africa, Abel Adekola refers to Vern Terpstra's model which outlines necessary considerations for marketers.[110] Terpstra's model takes into account cultural factors that affect the international marketing field. Within these various factors it is quite evident that Terpstra believes aspects of the religious arena affect marketing and advertising. Terpstra asserts sacred objects, beliefs and norms, taboos, rituals, kinship and social institutions among various other factors should be considered when marketing on an

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[109] Ali A. Mazrui, "Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter-Conquest," in *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*, ed. John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 111.

[110] Abel Adekola, "The Impact of Culture on Marketing Management Functions in Africa: The Relevance of Hofstede's Typology and Cross-Cultural Management Training," in *Dynamics of Marketing in African Nations*, ed. Sonny Nwankwo and Joseph F. Aiyeku (Westport, CT and London: Quorum Books, 2002), 157-8.

international level. George and Michel Belch, the authors of <u>*Advertising and Promotion:*</u> <u>*an integrated marketing communications perspective,*</u> agree that understanding the cultural values of a society is necessary to a marketing campaign.

> Another aspect of culture that is very important for international marketers to understand is values. Cultural values are beliefs and goals shared by members of a society regarding ideal end states of life and modes of conduct. Society shapes consumers' basic values, which affect their behavior and determine how they respond to various situations... Values and beliefs of a society can also affect its members' attitudes and receptivity toward foreign products and services.[111]

Interestingly enough, sacred objects, beliefs and norms, taboos, rituals, and social institutions are all concerns of the anthropologist, comparative religionist and other social scientists and humanists. Moreover, within East African contexts, the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery deal with sacred objects, beliefs, norms, taboos, rituals and social institutions. Although many marketers do not initially think of witchcraft beliefs when considering religious factors within a country, we have already shown in chapter one the difficulty in excluding witchcraft, sorcery and magic from the realm of religious phenomena, and some businesspeople have begun to acknowledge the influence of religion on society.

> Many businesspeople ignored the influence religion may have on the marketing environment. Religion can have a profound impact on societies. It helps determine attitudes toward social structure and economic development. Its traditions and rules may dictate what goods and services are purchased, when they are purchased, and by whom.[112]

Also, it is inevitable that international marketers will encounter witchcraft and sorcery beliefs in some shape or form if they operate within an East African context and make use of symbols and cultural norms in his or her marketing campaign.

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[111] George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, Irwin, 2004), 665.
[112] Jean-Pierre Jeannet and H. David Hennessey Katie Gillespie, *Global Marketing: An Interactive Approach* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 49.

Terpstra's model also asserts that religious factors can affect a business's success or failure in marketing.

> Part of the significance of the model lies in the cultural context that emphasizes political, legal, religious and ethnic factors on business success or failure.[113]

It seems that it would behoove a company interested in marketing to an East African population, in which a portion of the population believes in the existence of witchcraft, to take into account religious and ethnic factors, including those that concern witchcraft and sorcery beliefs.[114] If an international advertiser does not take into account cultural symbols and signs within their campaign he or she may encounter problems concerning the message conveyed through the advertisement.[115] For example, a company interested in marketing in East Africa would be wise to understand the cultural relevance of the symbols and locations for filming it chooses to utilize before undertaking a specific marketing campaign. The use of certain symbols and locations may arouse unanticipated emotions and concerns among the East African population. These unanticipated factors may in turn affect the efficiency of the marketing campaign. Furthermore, Abel Adekola states that differences in cultural values affect business and employees.

> Cultural-value disparity affects both the business processes and the managers within the system. Reconciling the influences of the indigenous and expatriate culture on both the manager and the system within which he or she is operating in a manner that provides for an efficient realization of company objectives could be enhanced by an understanding of how each culture approaches Hofstede's four cultural-value dimensions. A management-training program that embraces an individual culture's positions on the dimensions of individualism-collectivism, uncertainty-avoidance, power-distance, and masculinity-femininity would hypothetically yield managers capable of operating in the increasingly cross-cultural business environment.[116]

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[113] Adekola, "The Impact of Culture on Marketing Management Functions in Africa: The Relevance of Hofstede's Typology and Cross-Cultural Management Training.", 157.
[114]Belch, George E. Belch and Michael A. *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*. 6th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, Irwin, 2004, 665.
[115] Belch, 2004, 664.
[116] Adekola,162.

Hofstede's four dimensions; individualism-collectivism, uncertainty-avoidance, power-distance, and masculinity-femininity are all factors that may interact with witchcraft beliefs in an East African context.

According to Hofstede, the "power-distance" cultural value deals with how cultures view inequality.[117] Within an East African setting, witchcraft beliefs deal with power, who has it, how he or she obtained it and, how it is maintained. If a manager from another region of the world wants to understand how to deal with employees from the area who may hold the belief that witchcraft exists, and the instance arises where the employer must deal with the beliefs of his or her employees in a situation which requires personal management skills, it may be helpful to understand the beliefs of his or her employees. In the least it will allow the manager to relate to his or her employees more effectively. Although this situation may seem improbable to some readers, Adekola states that a manager is often placed in a situation in which he or she must make a decision while taking into account the culture of his or her employees.

> It is widely held that global managers are subject to decision-making situations that must take cultural differences into consideration.[118]

On the marketing side of the coin, it is wise to know how power relations are viewed within the country before running an advertisement that features an employee dealing with his or her manager. Actions and conversations within the marketing advertisement may be construed in a manner that is not intended.

Hofstede states that the "uncertainty-avoidance" dimension is based on the extent to which people in a culture strive to avoid unstructured, unpredictable or unclear situations. This dimension deals with norms, values and beliefs in reference to a tolerance for ambiguity. In East Africa an advertisement that presents a situation that is unclear about the cultural rules may reek of witchcraft to the local population. Indeed, Adekola refers to African countries as "high uncertainty-avoidance" countries.[119] Adekola states that African countries in consensus have norms, values and beliefs that involve avoiding conflict; belief in experts and authorities; belief in following rules,

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[117] Adekola,161.
[118] Adekola, 169.

regulations and laws; and lack of tolerance for deviant people and ideas. Thus, to advertise a service that guarantees an experience that frees the consumer from rules and regulations, even temporarily may draw suspicions of witchcraft by a portion of the population. From this point, the advertiser has immediately lost a portion of the consumer pool, which in turn lowers the overall potential profit from the advertising campaign.

In reference to the "individualism" dimension, Hofstede asserts that this cultural value describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that exists in a given society.[120] Hofstede continues on to state that the values, norms and beliefs associated with individualism focus on the relationship between the individual and the group. We have already shown that the concept of witchcraft encompasses both the failure to fulfill social obligations and the isolation of one's self. It would be unwise for a marketing company to utilize an advertising campaign that demonstrates how a service can advance an African consumer's career without showing how it may also help the consumer fulfill his or her social obligations. Regardless of the potential for personal advancement, individuals who affirm the existence of witchcraft may be repelled by such a marketing campaign.

The final aspect of Hofstede's four dimensions is titled the "masculinity-femininity" dimension. Hofestede recognizes that different cultures have different expectations for men and women.[121] Within an East African context, witchcraft beliefs often deal with the expectations placed upon the two sexes. In addition, because of cultural criteria, one sex within a particular society may be considered more prone to witchcraft than the other. Also, deviations from the norm, including norms that deal with gender expectations, may hint toward witchcraft or sorcery in the minds of some members of the culture. Thus, advertising that displays actions that drastically deviate from the cultural norm of a specific sex may draw suspicions of witchcraft and sorcery.

Hofstede's four dimensions model for cultural considerations in marketing and advertising can be used to show how the advertising and marketing world may come into

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[119] Adekola, 161.
[120] G. Hofstede, *Cultures' Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980), 107-110.

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contact with the witchcraft and sorcery beliefs held by some members of East African societies. It is also clear that regardless of the stance taken by the marketer or advertiser, the advertiser will have to discover a way to deal with or avoid arousing suspicions of witchcraft and sorcery in his or her campaign.

Witchcraft, Sorcery, Race and Academic Scholarship

Another author who has raised interesting concepts about witchcraft, sorcery and other modern phenomena is Karen E. Fields. Karen E. Fields contributes an interesting point by observing that the phenomenon of witchcraft in East Africa is linked with race. Fields states that throughout the academic history of the study of witchcraft academia has attempted to treat witchcraft and race as unrelated phenomena.

> We approach witchcraft and racecraft as if they belonged to two different orders of phenomena: the one is compelling belief and the other; a bad choice in matters of belief; the one truth of a different order, and the other, false beliefs destructible through the propagation of truth; the one, and element of human diversity, and the other, and ugly reaction to that diversity. [122]

Before I continue it is necessary to discuss Fields' terminology. Fields's has coined a word with the use of "racecraft". However, Fields defined the coined word in an effort to clarify her train of thought and at the same time shed light on her conception of witchcraft. Fields' definition states:

> First witchcraft: Setting aside the various issues posed by different terms in different languages, the English word *witchcraft* can be defined this way: one among a complex system of beliefs, with combined moral and cognitive content, that presupposes invisible, spiritual (i.e. nonmaterial) entities underlying, and continually acting upon, the visible, material realm of beings and events. Now *racecraft*: one among a complex system of beliefs, also with combined moral and cognitive content, that presuppose invisible, spiritual qualities underlying, and continually acting upon, the material realm of beings and events.[123]

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[121] Adekola, 162.

[122] Fields, Karen E. "Witchcraft and Racecraft: Invisible Onotology in Its Sensible Manifestations." In *Witchcraft Dialogues*, edited by George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy, 283-315. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001, 283.

[123] Fields, 291-292.

Fields asserts the addition of "–*craft*" to the end of both "witchcraft" and "racecraft" denotes recognition that both phenomena affect the society, and also that both phenomena have connotations accepted by the general public that precede and follow them.

It is also worth noting that Fields subtly uncovers an important idea with her definition. The concept of race presupposes qualities that are not physically visible. The concept of race does not simply imply physical, genetic, and biological qualities; the concept of race suggests an intellectual, social, cultural and technological predisposition. Race implies more than an individual's skin color.

Likewise, the belief in witchcraft implies more than recognition of a complex set of beliefs. For many individuals, belief in witchcraft is connected with negative stigma associated with racism. I discovered that this is true even of individual within the culture upon attending and speaking at the fifth S.I.R.A.S. conference[124] held at Kentucky State University. The stigma in question places the individual who believes in the existence of witchcraft, particularly the individuals of African descent, in a category of decreased intellectual capability, technological infancy and primitiveness. However many social scientific, humanistic and international organizations assert that there is no scientific basis for racism.

> It was stressed that all the scientific evidence pointed to the fact that no
> significant psychological difference correlated with race. This stand point is
> generally accepted by virtually all nations of the world, and by the values that
> international organizations such as UNESCO. [125]

Yet, the stigma of backwardness seems to remain attached to the belief in the existence witchcraft by many international groups.

Fields also makes another intriguing observation. It is illogical for a scholar to consider either the concept of race or the phenomena of witchcraft rational while

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[124] 5th S.I.R.A.S.: The fifth Southern Interdisciplinary Roundtable on African Studies. Held March 25-27, 2004 on the campus of Kentucky State University in Frankfort, KY 40601. The theme for the conference was "Globalization and the New World Order: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa and the African Diaspora. The Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences at Kentucky State University hosted this conference.

considering the other irrational. Fields states that the inherent qualities of both phenomena should cause both to be discounted as false or affirmed as rational.

> If we judge by the dependence of both on presuppositions that are demonstrably
> false according to modern science, the both sets of traditional beliefs should go
> down together as irrational. But if we discount their falsity by that standard,
> then they should rise together as rational. Under our usual practice, they do
> neither: It is as though they were as different as cabbages – a mistake, it seems
> to me.

Although race and witchcraft should both be discounted or affirmed based on the inherent qualities of the phenomena and the connotations and assumptions surrounding these phenomena, this is not the case. The academic arena has attempted to separate the concepts of race and witchcraft, and in the process it has attempted to give validity to the concept of race by affirming it as "truth of a different order" and to discount the concept of witchcraft as irrational regardless of whether it is logical within the proper cultural context.

Fields credits Evans-Pritchard's work for the trend to separate witchcraft from the issue of race.[126] Evans-Pritchard disputed the concept that Africans were intellectually inferior to other human groups, and in an effort to dispute this concept he attempted to separate race's stigma of inferiority, where Africans are concerned, with the rational conception of witchcraft in an African cultural setting. However, as Fields states, Evans-Pritchard wrote during a time when old arguments and theories were being replaced by new ideas. However, I assert that new ideas were not always applied as intended.

As we have discussed in chapter one, although Evans-Pritchard's intention was to separate the concept of racial inferiority from the idea that belief in witchcraft can be rational, his work may have been used by some racists in an attempt to prove the inferiority of Africans just as Darwin's work was used by social Darwinists to a similar end.

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[125] Peter G. Forster, Michael Hitchcock, and F. F. Lyimo, *Race and Ethnicity in East Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 32.
[126] Fields, 286.

Although Evans-Pritchard may not have intended race to play a part in the study of witchcraft, Evans-Pritchard's legacy still allows for race to take an underlying position. As stated in chapter one, Evans-Pritchard's work treated the Azande in a patronizing manner.[127] Part of Evans-Pritchard's ethnographic legacy is that many scholars still treat their subjects in a patronizing manner, although now the scholars generally see the rationality of their beliefs. Karen Fields notes:

> Since Evans-Pritchard's own doubt – and his readers' – remains as strong at the end of *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* as at its beginning, that very doubt set up a fundamental inequality. An elitism of getting it right raises the ethnographer and his readers above the Azande, who, for reasons carefully laid out, could not help getting it wrong. The truth remained that there are no spirits and that there is nothing in the world that can do what the Azande expected them to do.[128]

Reading this carefully we notice that race and racecraft do play parts in the analysis of witchcraft in this case. Evans-Prichard took a vantage point that placed himself and his readers in a superior position to his subject group not because he "got it right" or the Azande "got it wrong" but because he assumed "the Azande could not help getting it wrong". This implies an inherent quality within the Azande population; there was no other possibility for the Azande except "to get it wrong". While Evans-Pritchard was asserting that Africans were not inherently intellectually inferior, he himself fell into the trap of assuming Africans may be inherently intellectually backward. If I may speak candidly, it is as if Evans-Pritchard was saying, "While Africans do not suffer from cultural retardation, Africans are culturally 'slow'." To some, this concept would be considered gravely offensive. Additionally, if we refer Karen E. Fields' definition of *racecraft* we notice that the concept of race includes presupposed inherent qualities that do not fall within the biological category. Despite Evans-Pritchard's best efforts and good intentions to separate the issue of race from witchcraft, the issue of race was still retained in his argument on an underlying level. Furthermore if we accept Karen Fields's concept of *racecraft* as viable this leads the scholar to another conclusion. Subscribing to the idea that a subject group cannot help "getting it wrong", and inadvertently placing

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[127] Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion*, 226.
[128] Fields, "Witchcraft and Racecraft: Invisible Onotology in Its Sensible Manifestations.", 310.

oneself and another group in a superior position is nothing less than an act of racism, regardless of whether this act is intentional or not.

The concept that racism can be linked to the idea that a particular group will exhibit a certain behavior is supported by Banton's definition of racism.

> Banton suggests that 'racism' can be identified as a doctrine that a person's behaviour is determined by stable inherited characters derived from separate racial stocks having distinctive attributes and usually considered to stand to one another in relations of superiority and inferiority.[129]

Banton's definition ties the idea of presupposed inherent qualities in the concept of race to the notion that racecraft is a continual act of creation and recreation of convictions. In turn, the idea of dynamic racecraft is tied to the system of convictions encompassed in racism that include the idea that another racial group is predisposed to believing in a faulty system of logic. Finally, it is the belief in witchcraft that many individuals hold to be a faulty system of logic. Thus the issues race, racecraft and racism are intimately linked to the phenomena of witchcraft, particularly witchcraft in the African context.

Before I move forward I would like to emphasize one point. I do not intend to state that Evans-Pritchard was a racist. I am however asserting that in spite of Evans-Pritchard's effort to separate the study of witchcraft from the issue of race, the issue of race has never been detached from the phenomena of witchcraft. While the ideas that the biological portion of the race equation have been distanced from the phenomena and study of witchcraft, the connections between the psychological portion of the race concept and the phenomena of witchcraft were never detached. The psychological portion of the race equation has persisted with the phenomenon of witchcraft into modernity. Over time the evolution of ideas surrounding witchcraft have yielded the sentiment that is paraphrased here: "Africans are not inherently inferior in anyway, but the belief in witchcraft that originated in an African context is backward. Thus, those African individuals who believe in witchcraft in the least have a backward quality about them." It is this perception that is considered offensive, and it is wise to note that an individual or group's beliefs do not necessarily make them backward. Yet, these

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[129] M. Banton, *Race Relations* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967), 8.   Forster, 19.

connections between the concepts of race and witchcraft in East Africa have begun to affect other areas of modernity. While many individuals, international groups and international government agencies have opposed racism, the belief in witchcraft in an African context has continued to be viewed as a form of backwardness. For this reason, witchcraft beliefs originating from East Africa, and other portions of Africa, have frequently not been taken seriously and have been subsequently dismissed by institutions of modernity.

The subtle, possibly unintentional, racecraft that exists in Evans-Pritchard's work also exists as part of his legacy. While many social scientists and humanists recognized this aspect of Evans-Pritchard's work and subsequently have shied away from this viewpoint, Evans-Pritchard's stance has appeared in subtle ways since his scholarship. Although Evans-Pritchard's work focused on the Azande in East-Africa, his scholarship has been influential enough to influence issues concerning Africa in general as well as academic and professional fields other than the social sciences and humanities.

Karen Fields' argument also sheds light on the fact that while scholars of witchcraft and sorcery have recognized that witchcraft and sorcery have come to explain modernity as well as tradition and the past, the study of witchcraft and sorcery has not completely escaped its legacy of exoticizing the concept of witchcraft and sorcery or those who subscribe to it.

Scholars such as Geschiere, Todd Sandars and other contemporary scholars still seem to exoticize the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery. Karen Fields' argument forces the scholars interested in the study of witchcraft and sorcery to take note of this tendency to exoticize and to search for ways to refrain from it. However, refraining from exoticizing is a difficult task, and in fact it may be impossible to completely separate oneself from the tendency to do it.

From these three examples of modern institutions that have the potential to encounter the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery in contemporary East Africa, it is easy to understand why contemporary scholars of witchcraft and sorcery assert that witchcraft and sorcery beliefs have become modern phenomena. If modern institutions and phenomena such as race, the legal profession, and the business arena can encounter witchcraft and sorcery beliefs, these beliefs must have a least some connection to

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modernity. Whether, witchcraft beliefs explain the changes in modern society, express deeply rooted traditions, or accomplish both it is apparent that these beliefs have not become outdated. Conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery are active participants within East African society even if the majority of the population never claims to have encountered a witch.

Conclusion

Chapter three has shown that witchcraft and sorcery have or potentially can have an effect on modern phenomena, institutions, and conceptions. Witchcraft and sorcery are not isolated entities that do not interact with their modern surroundings. Witchcraft and sorcery are dynamic phenomena and have taken their place in modernity while they remain part of tradition.

However, Karen E. Fields has raised an interesting point. The study of witchcraft and sorcery has not escaped its legacy of exoticizing the racialized others who believe in such things. Fields' argument compels us to acknowledge this legacy and obliges us to search for ways to escape the cycle of exoticization.

Chapter three has shown that the study of witchcraft and sorcery has come to be broadened from its functionalist, evolutionist and sociological beginnings without totally escaping their influence. The study of witchcraft and sorcery has proven to be as dynamic as the concepts of witchcraft and sorcery themselves, and to be as much about the past as about modernity.

Thesis Conclusion

From the early theories of scholars concerned with the function of witchcraft and sorcery, to the recent conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery by contemporary scholars and East Africans, the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery have proven to be cultural factors that have attracted the attention of various generations. Over time conceptions of witchcraft, its practitioners, and the East African population have adapted to explain social situations faced by the East African people.

The belief in witchcraft and sorcery has helped to establish cultural norms within African societies, it has arisen as a "collateral" consideration in legal cases; it has intrigued many scholars, and has affected conceptions of racism and international

business. For this reason I cannot help but agree with Todd Sandars; the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery are about both modernity and tradition, both the present and the past. Moreover, conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery are also about the future because the topic of race will continue to be an issue in spite of science's stance that there is no biological factuality to the concept Also with the increasing international business interest in African countries, corporations will need to understand local beliefs and norms in order to sell their goods and services.

Modernity has not abandoned the issues of witchcraft and sorcery in East Africa, it has embraced them. As modernity progresses it creates new possibilities that beg explanation, and the belief in witchcraft and sorcery will continue to adapt to explain and interact with these possibilities just as science and religion have also done. I believe that the act of ignoring any cultural aspect is detrimental to understanding any society, and I also believe that every cultural factor affects the others in some way or another. Thus, simply to ignore the conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery within a modern East African context would hinder an understanding of East African culture as well as other East African cultural factors. It is imperative that we continue to study the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery if we intend to understand the social, political, business and legal positions of East African nations, because regardless of whether we consider conceptions of witchcraft and sorcery to be fanciful, there are individuals within East African societies who take these conceptions quite seriously and are going to continue to operate on that premise.

As modernity progresses, witchcraft, sorcery and other religious phenomena will continue to persist within societies throughout the world. Religious phenomena help humanity to explain phenomena which science can not explain at present. It is wise to take religious phenomena just as seriously as science whether we personally choose to believe in either. Ultimately both science and religion are two aspects of epistemology; they are simply two ways of explaining our reality and the world. Neither is "better" than the other, each is necessary in its own way. Both persist because they are not identical concepts; neither do they perform the same functions for humanity in the same way that witchcraft and sorcery exist simultaneously in many societies without causing cultural redundancy.

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