



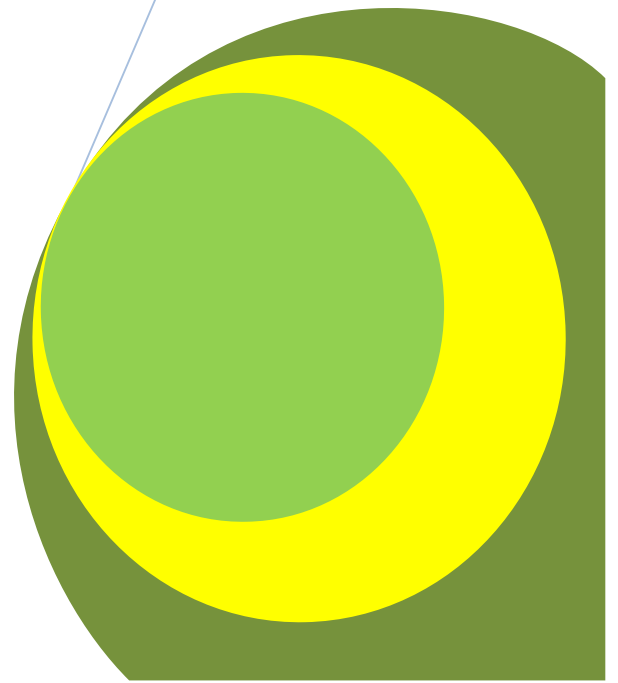
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Experiencing Sex via the 'Blue Tooth': Phenomenological Reflections on the Nature, Use and Impact of Mubobobo in Zimbabwe

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Research Article

Experiencing Sex via the 'Blue Tooth': Phenomenological Reflections on the Nature, Use and Impact of *Mubobobo* in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The belief in the existence of witchcraft and magic still runs strong in the African context. Because of this, early anthropologists, missionaries and colonial administrators tended to describe African indigenous religion and culture through misleading terminologies such as 'primitive', 'superstition', 'magic', 'witchcraft' and 'fetish'. The westerners misunderstood and misinterpreted African religion and sought to pursue the philosophy of the centre to displace everything African. Nevertheless, good and bad heritage exists in African religion and culture. The paper explored the nature, use and impact of *mubobobo*, a magical remote sexual intercourse, metaphorically called 'blue tooth sex', in Masvingo province, Zimbabwe. The study posited that there are some unscrupulous individuals who practice *mubobobo* on unsuspecting people that results in detrimental socio-psychological experiences. The research corroborated methods to gather data and established that *mubobobo* is seen in ambivalence with some regarding it as an outrageous magical spiritual experience whilst others including the legal fraternity consider it as unfounded and illusionary. In the final analysis, the study concluded that *mubobobo* is a mysterious and mystical practice that is true to the Shona believers in phenomenological terms in the Zimbabwean context.

Key Words: African indigenous religion, blue tooth sex, magic, *mubobobo*, witchcraft, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

The postcolonial period in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular has been characterised by 'decolonising the mind' (Wa Thiongo 1986) so as to recover and rejuvenate the African past in all spheres of life. This Africanist stance was meant to reverse the negative impact of colonial and missionary activities and perceptions about African religious beliefs and practices that they 'demonised' such that eventually, African religion and culture was misunderstood, misrepresented and displaced (Mndende 1999:147). A variety of misleading terminologies were formulated by the missionaries and colonisers to describe African religion, culture and people such as 'primitive', 'witchcraft', 'magic', 'fetish' and 'animistic' (Ray 1976; Sibanda 2011). Notwithstanding the existence of witchcraft and magic among Africans, it was a fallacious over-generalisation by the outsiders to equate African religion to 'magic' (Gyekye 1996:6). At another level, the missionaries, just as the colonial administrators in Zimbabwe sought to disarm the indigenes by denying the existence of African religion through legislation that refuted the existence of witchcraft. This explains the promulgation of the infamous Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899 in colonial Zimbabwe. Therefore, despite the standing beliefs among most people on the reality of witchcraft and magic, the colonial and even the postcolonial legislation tended to minimise it.

This study seeks to examine the nature, use and impact of *mubobobo*, a mystical and magical remote sexual intercourse in Zimbabwe. *Mubobobo* is a form of magic mostly used by men to engage in spiritual sexual acts without the consent of their victims (Musarurwa 2010). As such the study adopts the term 'blue tooth sex' as a metaphor for *mubobobo* magic as it generally 'connects' perpetrator and victim within an eye-shot distance or even beyond. The study was stimulated by the fact that in recent time, a plethora of reports have come out in the media about people who have had hysteria, hallucinations, miscarriages and other traumatic experiences due to the effects of this mysterious magic, *mubobobo*. Yet, the issue of *mubobobo* remains a mystery that creates more questions than answers in the Zimbabwean context. This merits an academic research of this magnitude. The study posits that there are some unscrupulous individuals who practice *mubobobo* on unsuspecting people that results in detrimental socio-psychological experiences. The situation is made complex by the mystical and mysterious nature of *mubobobo* that defies the blind call to restore African past since it comprises good and bad heritage. The research focuses on Zimbabwe, particularly on Districts in Masvingo province, namely, Bikita, Chivi, Mwenezi, Chiredzi, Gutu, Masvingo and Zaka.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a poly-methodic approach. As such, the anthropological, phenomenological and psychological approaches were utilised. The anthropological method is regarded as the first step in the study of African religion in its various social contexts (Ikenga-Metuh 1991:139). Anthropological method is good for studying grassroots communities such as those found in Masvingo province. The anthropological method “starts where people are, with people’s real questions and interests, rather than by imposing questions from other contexts” (Bevans 1992:48, 53). The anthropological method respects the insider perspective therefore can work well with the phenomenological approach. The phenomenological study of African religion presupposes the anthropological study. The two methods complement each as the phenomenological begins where the anthropological ends (Ikenga-Metuh 1991:142). Furthermore, the element of description is common to both methods. The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, refers to this anthropological aspect as ‘thick description’ (Gellner 1999:29) whereas phenomenologists regard the attribute as ‘descriptive accuracy’ (Chitando 1998). Descriptive accuracy, *epoche* (bracketing) and empathy were some of the useful phenomenological attributes for understanding and presenting the gathered experiences on *mubobobo* from the believer’s perspective. In addition, the study also adopted the psychological method to analyse the varieties of personal experiences such as visions, hysteria, hallucinations and trances that relate to the conscious and subconscious levels of life (Connolly 1999). The method would be vital in evaluating the extent to which *mubobobo* is an illusion – a figment of people’s imagination under the Freudian psycho-analysis. Therefore, a triangulation of these methods should yield a better picture on the nature, use and impact of *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe.

The study also utilised documentary analysis of print and electronic media to collect data from the field. In addition, in-depth interviews were employed. A number of people were interviewed including traditional healers, chiefs, headman, teachers, church leaders, students and some participants with personal experience as victims of *mubobobo*. The researcher also solicited views of BA students undertaking a course on African Traditional Religions at Great Zimbabwe University through class discussions and tutorial presentations on *mubobobo*. Furthermore, students were interviewed to supplement their essay form feedback from a mini fieldwork-based research on *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe.

Magic and Witchcraft Practice in Zimbabwe: An Overview

The belief in the existence of witchcraft and magic is pervasive in African communities inclusive of those in Zimbabwe. The two terms are related but distinct and above all, difficult to define with precision. In a way, witchcraft encompasses the use of magic. Bourdillon (1997:115) asserts that witchcraft practice has a wide variety ranging “from gruesome rituals, through the secret use of physical or magical poisons, to bizarre behaviour that goes against the social norms of society without necessarily doing harm to anyone... it is unpredictable, uncontrollable and frightening.” Therefore, the mystical element of *mubobobo* matches its classification under witchcraft. In addition, the belief in witchcraft is said to be rational since it does not go against empirical evidence and among African communities, witchcraft provides a ready explanation on *why* things go wrong (Bourdillon 1997:116; Sibanda 2011:28). This shows that nothing is left to chance among Africans.

The concept of magic is also understood variedly by different people. Bourdillon (1997:98) says that magic involves the use of symbols that possess symbolic actions and special meanings. Thus, *mubobobo* is a magic that is not illusionary but a reality characterised by symbolic actions practiced by those with the mystical power. The belief in mystical powers is pervasive among Africans such that some of those who tap from it use the powers for good or for bad. For Gyekye (1996:6), “magic is a manifestation of a certain feature of the religious mentality. It is the result of belief in the existence of some occult or evil spiritual agents whose powers can consciously and purposively used or manipulated for beneficial or evil ends.” This observation confirms *mubobobo* magic as mysterious, mystical and detrimental to people on whom it is applied.

Imaging and Imagining Sexual Intimacy?: The Impact of *Mubobobo* in Zimbabwe

This section serves to present the major findings on the common but yet sombre, dark and hair-raising practice of *mubobobo* in Masvingo province. This practice is not confined to one ethnic group or region and neither is it restricted by the rural-urban, gender, social class and age divides. In order to fully explore the findings of the study, some sub-headings have been created. The presentation begins with the nature of *mubobobo* by focusing on terminology and typology correlated to it; next comes the contextual uses of *mubobobo*; and then finally, the impact of *mubobobo*.

Terminology and Typology

The terminology and typology associated with *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe tell a lot about the mysterious and complex nature of this magic. Essentially, the concept '*mubobobo*' and the practice itself is said to have originated from neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Mozambique and Malawi. It refers to the magic for engaging in a sexual intercourse without consent and physical contact. As such one could not lose virginity or contract HIV because there is no physical contact (Musarurwa 2010). Some believe that the practice is prevalent in rural areas, mining and resettlement areas as well as in towns and cities. The other name for *mubobobo* is '*gonzoturike*'. Maragade (2012) refers to *mubobobo* as '*mupindira*' (magic for invading or trespassing into private property). The study further established from students in class discussions that the magic is today identified by a variety of terms such as 'blue tooth sex', 'remote control sex', 'African wireless sex', 'African technology sex' and 'witchcraft sex'. Most of these terms resonate with those in existing literature (Kuzipa 2012b). Apparently, *mubobobo* has been accorded terms that moving with times and technological advancement. The idea behind these terms is that *mubobobo* is done from a distance which allows connection between the perpetrator of magic and the victim. Another method used in connecting the victim of *mubobobo* is by using symbolic objects such as an under wear. In addition, the over-arching influence of magical powers makes the term 'witchcraft sex' to be befitting. Thus, all the terms reflect apt-naming on *mubobobo* magic.

The study established three main types of *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe. Firstly, there is the one in which *mubobi* (that is, the one that uses *mubobobo*; the perpetrator) performs the sexual act during day light and there is no physical contact with the victim. These are regarded as daring users of *mubobobo* who may employ the magic in public even at gatherings such as soccer matches, *pamusika* (market places) and on public transport like buses and *mukombi* (commuter omnibuses). This aspect echoes what was noted in existing literature (Kwayedza 2011:1, 3). Secondly, there is the nocturnal one whereby the man or woman perpetrator operates at night in the fashion of a typical witch or wizard. In this sense, the victim usually has visions of having sex with someone during their sleep such that on waking up they feel as though they had sexual intercourse.

Thirdly, *mubobi* may use symbolic objects. This can be done in two different ways. On one hand, this is whereby the perpetrator uses objects belonging to the would-be victim such as an under wear. This type was confirmed by a traditional healer who was interviewed in Masvingo urban (Chikunya 2012). Similarly, a Zion Christian Churchman of Chadzimura Village in Zaka District was found with 58 under pants belonging to women in the locality (Kuzipa 2012a:1). The underpants, clothes or string from it are symbolic objects that are *pars pro toto* (part of the whole) and therefore utilised as the connection point to the victims. The pants can be treated with medicine that effect abuse through *mubobobo*. In line with the idea of *pars pro toto*, the study also established that urine of the victim could be utilised to effect 'blue tooth sex'. For instance, after spotting a woman or man urinating in public space, a *Mubobi* would sniff the urine which mysteriously triggers the spiritual sexual connection with the victim (Gwinji 2012). On the other hand, the symbolic objects can manifest as *zviumwa* (witch or animal familiars) such as snakes, lizards or *zvikuwambo* (goblins) to perform their *mubobobo* magic. Phallic symbolic objects also feature under the nature of *mubobobo*. One interviewee said that the magic comprised a full set of sexual organs taken or plucked from a dead man by a wizard to perform the spiritual sexual act (Gwinji 2012).

Contextual Uses

In order to understand the contextual uses of *mubobobo* it is important to relate it to how it is acquired by looking at the reasons why it is acquired. By and large, the medicine is purchased from traditional healers. Yet others also acquire it through hereditary means whereby the magic is passed on to younger people. When this magic expires, it is renewed (Musarurwa 2010). There are diverse reasons why *mubobobo* magic is practiced. For some, it was done as a habit (*chijairira*) and also out of *ruchiva* (lust; envy). For instance, some participants pointed out since the majority of those that use *mubobobo* are usually elderly men who are single or divorced, this explains why they would resort to this magic for solace in sexual terms. This suggests that these perpetrators are enticed by the physical outlook of their victims such that when they are denied love by young women they resort to the use of the 'blue tooth sex' with people of their pick. In addition, *mubobobo* is used by people who are shy to propose love to women such that they fulfil their sexual desire without saying a word to women they victimise. Yet others use *mubobobo* out of cruelty as revealed by an interviewee who had this to say: "Men could be cruel and may yearn to humiliate women by sexually abusing them in dreams. At times if a man's love proposals are turned down, some men regard *mubobobo* as an alternative means of revenge" (Chenjerai 2012).

Mubobobo is also used for economic reasons to increase crop and livestock production through *divisi* (charm for producing bumper harvest). The ugly side of this *divisi* type of magic is that the practitioner of *mubobobo* would practise it on a close relative such as one's daughter or one's mother, which is incestuous. One interviewee from Zaka, Chaitezvi (2012) said the magic is used to increase the fertility of the soil and to have a bumper harvest. In his words: "*Mubobobo unoita kuti munhu ave negoho guru kumbesa dzakasiyana-siyana. Kuti izvi zvishande munhu anotofanira kusangana nevakadzi vakasiyana-siyana.*" (*Mubobobo* makes one to have a bumper harvest from a variety of crops. In order to make this magic to work, one has to have the 'blue tooth sex' with various

women). This resonates with a Muzarabani man, Elvis Gundura, who confessed that his harvest was charm-based, subtended by *mubobobo* before the rains come, failure of which disaster would prevail in his fields for that season (Kwayedza 2011:4).

Some people use *mubobobo* to enhance their business ventures. In the case of those who own shops, they utilise *mubobobo* magic to boost their sales. One businessman of Mushava village in Mwenezi District confessed before a *Tsikamutanda* (witch-hunter) who visited the area that he used *mubobobo* on his two daughters. He confessed that he had abandoned his wife at home and lived with his daughters as shopkeepers but who remained unmarried due to *mubobobo* (Muchipisi and Chinhara 2012). Thus, his business was enhanced through the incestuous spiritual relationship with his daughters. Furthermore, those who are into gambling also use the magic for betting in *njuga/makasi* (playing cards for money), *mabhiza* (horse racing as that run by the Mashonaland Turf Club) or Lotto. Thus, one practises the magic in order to increase his or her luck in the games or races at hand (Jack 2012). There are strict instructions associated with the use of such magic usually given by traditional healers for selfish ends.

In line with the above, the study also established that some people use *mubobobo* to enhance their power and authority at the work place. For instance, it was revealed that there are some school heads employ *mubobobo* for luck as well as to protect and enhance their leadership posts. This has been registered at a number of schools in Zaka, Bikita, Mwenezi and Chivi Districts in recent years. One example will suffice to show the reality of this issue. The study established that as far back as 2003 schools in Chivi District could not accept a male school head to be in charge of their schools because of known history of using *mubobobo* on his female subordinates (Mhambure 2012). Reporting from his personal experience, Mhambure (2012) reported that the new head was sent back to the District Education office by the School Development Committee (SDC) for redeployment. This particular school head was transferred to a school in Chivi South close to Ngundu Halt, along the Beitbridge-Masvingo highway. However, the parents and the SDC did not accept him to the new station. The same thing occurred when he was later deployed to a school in Chivi North. It was established that on the day when he was expected to assume duty at the new school, parents told their children to boycott classes. Eventually, this particular school head known for *mubobobo* powers in schools in Masvingo province was transferred to a school in Mashonaland Central where his bizarre history was still unknown. Similarly, some church leaders, particularly in New Religious Movements, use *mubobobo* to attract congregants to join their churches. It is said the leaders spiritually engage in sexual abuse to the people they want to join their church (Musoni 2012). This is not surprising since church affairs have become a brisk business in Zimbabwe.

The study also identified the employment of *mubobobo* in acquiring physical strength. For instance, Muchipisi and Chinhara (2012) gathered in their mini fieldwork-based research in Mwenezi District that Ngwenya, a *Tsikamutanda*, (witch-hunter) referred to a Shangani grandmother, Mwamamiyele who resided with her grandson and his wife. The grandmother is reported to have confessed before Ngwenya about how she used to draw semen of her grandson which she stored in a calabash and utilise to satisfy herself at night and in the process, renew her physical strength for the next day. In the words of the grandmother, she narrated, thus: "*Ndinotora tsvina yomuzukuru wangu ndozora kusvikira ndagutsikana uye kuti ndiwane simba kuita mabasa ese*" (I collect the semen of my grandson and smear it on my genitals until I get gratified and to make it a well-spring of strength to do all chores). This shows that *Mubobobo* is used for ritual purposes with different consequences.

The other use to which *mubobobo* has been accorded is in the area of reproductive health and hygiene. In particular it has been popularised due to the fear of contracting HIV and AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections. The study established that some perpetrators prefer to use *mubobobo* because it is disease-free, cost effective as it is virtually free of charge once the practitioner has the magical powers (Machinda 2012). It was also regarded as self-gratifying venture in which they could action it on victims of their choice without fear of getting '*siki neAIDS*' (venereal diseases and HIV and AIDS) (Nyajena 2012). Similarly, one young participant interviewed in Masvingo urban by Muchipisi and Chinhara (2012) was fully contented to continue using *mubobobo* on grounds of health. In his remarks he categorically stated: "*Zvirinani kuboba pane kuwana chirwere nekuita zvepabonde*" (It is better for one to use Mubobobo than to contract HIV and AIDS following physical sexual intercourse). Thus, the imagined and experienced satisfaction by the perpetrators with the magical powers has popularised *mubobobo* in society.

Yet another use of *mubobobo* is based on *ruvengo* (jealous) towards one's relatives and neighbours in a typical witchcraft practice. The use of *mubobobo* can operate like a 'double-edged' sword. One villager in Bikita District who wished to increase the size of his livestock dared to commit bestiality whereby he became intimate with cattle (especially cows) belonging to his neighbours. This resulted in the death, barrenness and miscarriages of the cows in question. The courage to engage in such bizarre acts was necessitated by jealous with success of his neighbours and the desire to enhance the rapid growth of his own livestock. Such use of *mubobobo* denotes a typical *muroyi wemasikati* (daytime witch) noted by Gelfand (1973:128) and Sibanda (2011) emanating from sheer jealous with detrimental effects to animal and human life. Therefore, use of *mubobobo* cannot be conceived in monolithic terms, just as its impact.

Impact

In general, *mubobobo* has had various negative effects on human life pertaining to the physical, spiritual and psychological well-being; livestock; social relations and moral values in society. Firstly, *mubobobo* poses a serious threat to the life factor of human beings and livestock alike. For instance, *mubobobo* is sometimes usually utilised by the elderly widowed people or those who are known as *tsikombi* or *tsvimborume* (female or male still unmarried but have passed their ripe age to get married). The ideal situation is for such people to remain single.

If they decide to get married, *mubobobo* magical spirit would kill the spouse (Takaindisa 2012). According to Gordon Chavunduka, the President of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) as reported by Musarurwa (2010), one condition that enables *mubobobo* to thrive is for one not to get married or have a woman in one's household. Therefore, this explains why most people who are accused of using 'blue tooth sex' are elderly, single or divorced.

In addition, the life factor is also notable through miscarriages, still births, infertility or even death in women and livestock due to the 'blue tooth' sexual encounter. The study established that if *mubobobo* is used in pregnant women it would result in miscarriages, still births or cancer of the womb. This was noted in alarming proportions in Mwenezi District at the time of fieldwork resulting in pronounced conflict (Marinda 2012). The case of miscarriages and death of livestock (cattle) has been explored above under the element of jealousy. Also the case of the Mwenezi grandmother, Mwamamiyele, who abused her married grandson has been noted above. However, the result of this abuse was infertility because the manhood of the grandson was weakened through *mubobobo*. As is usually the case, in typical African traditional contexts involving failure to bear children, the wife suffered accusations of barrenness and infertility yet she was not the cause of the problem (Muchipisi and Chinhara 2012). This case of infertility due to *mubobobo* resonates with that reported in the electronic media in which a Mvuma man severely thrashed his father-in-law for using *mubobobo* power on his daughter resulting in her infertility (Muchemwa 2012). Thus, the magic causes conflict in families, assault, separation or divorce.

In spiritual terms, *mubobobo* has led to the prevalence of spiritual husbands and spiritual wives. This spirit causes a lot of turbulence in marriages. In a Shona set up, such a person under the influence of *mubobobo* is said to have *mamhepo* (evil spirits) that result in death or divorce with spouse. This reverberates with existing literature in which the *mubobobo* sexual partner is regarded as a demonic being – spiritual husband or wife (Bangarozzi 1989; Goodman 2006). Along the same lines, the televangelism screened on Emmanuel TV features prophet T.B. Joshua of the Synagogue of All Nations (SCOAN) of Nigeria delivering people with spiritual husbands and spiritual wives. In some cases the spiritual beings manifest through the possessed victim saying that they have spiritual children in the world of the spirit which could be a cause of conflict, anger and jealousy to the husband, wife or children in the physical world (Joshua 2006). What also comes under the context of deliverance are SCOAN businesses. In this study, it was established that business ventures can plummet due to *mubobobo*. The case of Tawanda Bvari, a married informal trader who owns flea market stalls in Masvingo urban, is a typical example of one whose sales go down each time he dreams of a woman whose face he does not recognise. The couple is affected in the same manner and they believe their experience is due to *mubobobo* (Bvari 2012).

There is also a psychological-physical impact on those who are victims of *mubobobo*. Kuzipa (2012) reporting in the print media for the Masvingo Mirror referred to the traumatic experience of a woman who was twice sexually molested by a sixty-year-old man in a queue to collect her passport at Masvingo passport offices. The man unleashed the 'blue tooth sex' magical antics which made the woman feel dizzy and eventually fall unconscious. When she came to her full conscience she narrated her ordeal and reported that she felt as though she was having sex with a man (Kuzipa 2012). There is no doubt that *mubobobo* leaves the victim physically weak, psychologically traumatised and depressed as well as sociologically stigmatised and embarrassed. Similarly, the B-Metro (2012) reported about a victim of *mubobobo* magic in a park where a traditional healer was selling the charm in public at two USD (\$2). This magic was tested on an unsuspecting victim in the park who resultantly fell into a deep slumber. Without her consent, the victim was dehumanised by this spiritual sexual abuse that had some psychological effects on the victim. Both the perpetrator and the victim have some psychological effects in that during the 'blue tooth' sexual connection the victim may feel like one in a trance whereas *mubobi* may tap his foot as though responding to a musical beat, sweats, fixes his eyes on the victim and shows expressions of one engaged in sexual intercourse. This is true of the case of Clifford Mavete at Mandava Bus terminus in Zvishavane (The Chronicle 2012). Along similar lines, Aaron Mubvumo Musuka, a Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in Zaka District was found with 58 underpants belonging to women who he had spiritual sex with resulting in some women saying they woke up tired and having a back-ache because of the magic (Kuzipa 2012a). In other instances, some school heads and school Night Watchmen have molested students with *mubobobo*, making pupils to experience hysteria and hallucinations (Sithole 2012). Thus, *mubobobo* has created a cause for fear due to its multiplicity of effects in society.

Doing without Doing?: Some Critical Reflections

The nature, use and impact of *mubobobo* shows that the phenomenon is another kind of rape. Yet it is paradoxical that the perpetrators virtually engage in 'doing without doing' whereby they sexually molest their victims without consent. The phrase 'doing without doing' is loaded but useful in its literal sense as a point of departure for some critical reflections on the nature, use and impact of *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe. Notably, in Taoism, 'doing without doing' is referred to as '*wu-wei*' meaning non-action. It is one of the most central elements in Taoism that ensures oneness with the Tao. As such, *wu-wei* stresses simplicity and the way of nature (Loy 1985). Nevertheless, when this imagery of *wu-wei* is applied to *mubobobo* in Zimbabwe, an ambivalent picture arises. For instance, those who believe in the reality of *mubobobo* as a cause for negative physical, spiritual, social and psychological effects to victims would regard the perpetrators as blameworthy. This view is against dismissing the spiritual experiences of *mubobobo* as unfounded and 'impossible'. The spiritual nature of *mubobobo* makes the perpetrators to be literally 'doing (sex) without doing'. Therefore, anthropologically and phenomenologically, *mubobobo* is a religious and cultural element that is true to the believers.

At face value, one would think that the perpetrators of *mubobobo* are innocent because there is no tangible evidence to prove the existence of this magic and to detect the 'blue tooth' sexual connection when it is on. Such metaphysical experiences are regarded as highly personal and subjective. Therefore, scepticism shrouds the existence of *mubobobo* particularly in legal frameworks of Zimbabwe. As such, the perpetrators of *mubobobo* have often been found not guilty before the courts. For instance, the H-Metro (2012:2) refers to a 44 year old man who was found not guilty and acquitted before a Mbare magistrate from the accusation that he had used 'remote sexual intercourse' (*mubobobo*) against a woman complainant. The magistrate dismissed the case as lacking evidence. In this way, the magistrates are maintaining the Freudian perspective that dismisses *mubobobo* as an illusion and therefore a figment of imagination. This is a legal flaw that could be stemmed through cooperation with registered traditional practitioners such as ZINATHA who are experts in traditional metaphysical issues such as *mubobobo*. In some of the cases presented, it was through traditional healers such as *Tsikamutandas* (witch-hunters) that perpetrators of *mubobobo* were detected. In addition, some traditional healers have also given solutions to counter *mubobobo* such as the use of cotton seed oil put on women's under garments; putting a needle or razor in a new bottle of Vaseline petroleum jelly; moving around with pepper and wearing a black petticoat and black pant (Sithole 2012). Yet, the traditional healers are also 'suspects' in this whole game since some of them are the sources of the very magic of *mubobobo* which some claim to be fighting. Such charlatans who are double-edged seem to confirm that they are 'doctors' who are 'witches' and not necessarily 'doctors to the bewitched'. Thus, the 'blue tooth sex' is an anti-social device that emanates from 'untamed' conservative practitioners driven by egocentric innuendos steeped in witchcraft and magic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has explored the complex nature, uses and impact of *mubobobo* in Masvingo province. Essentially, *mubobobo* is a magical and spiritual practice that mainly exists in three main forms in Zimbabwe but which are not exclusive to each other. The 'blue tooth sex' practice is difficult to separate from witchcraft practice. The uses to which *mubobobo* has been put include enhancing business ventures, sexual gratification, physical strength, jealous and lust. These uses show that Indigenous Knowledge Systems are being abused given that the perpetrators lack the African philosophy of *ubuntu/hunhu* (humanness) as they end up pursuing individual interests at the expense of the communal ones. The wealth that emanates from *mubobobo* is 'bloody' and unwarranted on the basis of African norms and values in the context of medical sociology. The impact of *mubobobo* encompasses sociological, psychological, economical and spiritual elements in the lives of the victims such as infertility, conflict, miscarriages and divorce. This shows that *mubobobo* is a diabolic magical practice with detrimental experiences that are traumatic to individual victims and contemporary Zimbabwean society alike.

In view of these findings and conclusions, the study suggests the following recommendations:

- The government should revise the legal statutes on issues relating to magic and witchcraft so that perpetrators of *mubobobo* would not go Scot-free.
- The call for cultural and heritage reclamation should be wary of upholding bad heritage in the form of *mubobobo*.

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