

The Chieftaincy Institution Among The Banyang And Ejagham Ethnic Groups Of Cameroon (1884-1990): An Intersection Of Flexibility, Partiality And Interference

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Abstract: The paper examines the mode of transfer of power in the chieftaincy institution among the Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups of Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon. The succession principles in this land was liberally democratic but not without some shortcomings. The paper made use of secondary and primary sources for the collection of data. Concerning the secondary sources, use was made of literature that offered some general and specific information about the paper. To ensure an easy understanding of the paper, we adopted a conventional analytical pattern. We used both the chronological and topical approaches. Our findings reveal three central issues: Firstly, the chieftaincy institution among the Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups was flexible and unpredictable. Secondly, the transfer power was smooth to an extent. Finally, the magnitude of power alternation made chieftaincy disputes obvious. Above all, the paper argues that the mode of power transfer had had considerable negative peaceful co-existence and stability in the society.

Key words: Banyang, Chieftaincy, Chief, Elective, Ejagham, Flexibility, Hereditary, Interference, Partiality, and Rotatory.

Introduction

Leadership in traditional societies is inherited given that the source of legitimacy for traditional authorities is historic and dates back to the pre-colonial period. They are usually not only regarded as political leaders, but also as spiritual leaders of the society. Traditional leaders can claim special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because these institutions embody the people's history, culture, values, religion and remnants of pre-colonial sovereignty. Citizens accept authority when they see political authorities and their decisions as legitimate. Legitimacy is therefore an important mechanism that links people with authority. This is an important distinction to note because it does not matter what citizens think about each issue as much as whether or not they view the institutions and or political authorities as legitimate. If people do not accept the decision-making process as legitimate, they will not accept a decision that does not correspond with their own preferences. The consequence of this will be that they will act on their own behalf, irrespective of the decision of the authorities. Before the imposition of the European colonial rule, the people of Banyang and Ejagham were not united under one chiefdom. They were scattered throughout the forest in many small separate settlements with larger recognized political groupings likely to have exceeded more than 200 people and in many cases much fewer. These communities had dotted hamlets until Alfred Mansfeld, the first German explorer, came into the area when they were transformed reflecting present day communities. What was common with these communities were the characteristic qualities and attributes of the languages they spoke and their culture which united and distinguished them from other polities in the area. The Banyang and Ejagham were stateless societies with a system of democratic arrangement at the village level. The villages consisted of several lineages which were represented in the informal village council by lineage heads. There also

existed clans with clan councils made up of the various village heads. It was in view of this virtue that these ethnic groups during and after the colonial period was administered as different polities with various villages and clans well mapped out. Man as a social being needed systematic norms for his welfare; he was naturally forced to choose from among himself and for himself a responsible elder who commanded influence and respect to be his leader or ruler. Very often, the man chosen was from the quarter of founder's family or from a noble family. He was both the administrator of the village and the libational authority (Nfor etak or libation man). As time went on, the village head or the traditional elder carried out functions pertaining to traditional rites and the internal administration of the village, whereas the external functions were the responsibilities of government agents. In effect, this system introduced a sort of dual administration and authority in the village that hasten the rate of progress. But, occasions arose which generated conflicts and misunderstandings between the two authorities. However, as the village administrative functions and those of the central government of Cameroon became enhanced, the power of the libational authority *Nfor Etak* began to decline and this situation dictated a need for the fusion of the two authorities into one. For instance, in the Ntenako Village, chief Egbe-Achang and chief Eyong-erap in the early 1920s and late 1930s respectively gave a clear historical redress of this awkward situation when the two ruling authorities were amalgamated, thus marking the gradual end of the dual system in the village. Hence, the system of ruling in the village was regularized by the people and by government instruments. Under the government, a Chief of the village was unanimously presented by his people and of course, from a royal family or from a chieftaincy-line of decent and was appointed and installed by the government. He automatically became the voice and authority of the people and the government agent. Combining therefore

the traditional functions of his village and that of the government as a rider on the auxiliary of the administration, he became a unified authority of the traditional authority in the village. Under the same instrument, it was the chief that appointed and installed the quarter heads of his village and they were therefore answerable to him. Following this constitutional structure therefore, the powers of the libation man (nfor etak) who later became quarter head appointed by the chief run parallel or superseded those of the chief of the village although it was an absolute abnormality. The quarter heads by this arrangement became responsible to the chief who was the head or chairman of the traditional council. The traditional council had a vice chair who assisted the chair in his absence to preside at council meetings. As a matter of fact, in their respective and collective responsibilities in the village, each quarter head was a friend among equals and had no powers over the others unless with their own agreement endorsed by the chief. Their powers descended from the chief to the common people. It is worthwhile to mention that one of the most important functions was to assist the tax collector nominated by the chief to act as immediate advisers to him in the councils. The forgoing observations reflected the outlook of the village structure and administration in Banyang and Ejagham.

Criteria for Selection of Chiefs

Since the laws and customs governing succession in Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups were not generally unwritten, anybody could obstruct the law and customs or could interpret them to suit his desires. No matter the position which one adopts, one just needs to rally followers behind him in order to make his course to be known. For as long as one was able to rally supporters, he could contest the throne irrespective of the fact that the other party was right or wrong. One could look for documents to support his stance or position; one could try to make the administration also give a listening ear to his explanations or course. However, some criteria were put in place for the selection of an authority in the land.

Socio- Cultural and Religious Criteria for Succession of a Chief

Culture plays an important role in the process of choosing a traditional ruler. In the Banyang and Ejagham polities, culture was the backbone of the society. It thus had to be respected and practiced by all asunderly. The people of the area paid much attention to their culture that explains why it is often said in Banyang and Ejagham polities “he who does not know the culture of the land is not a complete man”. This takes us to what Fonlon says about culture:

We have been let to believe that culture is to a country what the soul is to a man, that is, the principle of life, of unity and continuity, and therefore that a nation is not just merely so many millions of people living on the same land, stemming from the same ancestral origin, but that a nation is united thanked to its culture is essentially a unit of thought and feeling and willing and action.

This criterion was necessary as it made the rulers interact with all the classes of people in the society. Prominent among these criteria were the moral and family background of the would-be chief. He was to have a convincing moral background and came from a family lineage that was directly or indirectly related to the founder of the village. He was to be someone who respected the elders. Indeed, he had to possess the necessary psychological attribute like an upright character, charismatic qualities and wisdom. Also, the prospective chief had to be kind and generous. Unlike in the grassland where Fons expected financial assistance from their subjects, in Banyang and Ejagham land, Subjects instead expected much from their Chiefs as they put it “Ma nyeh nfor nyeh”. This is a Phenomenon in the area where when a person is made a Chief, much was expected from him both in kind and in cash. Furthermore, it was required of him to be a good orator, he was to be eloquent since he was expected to be at the service of the people. The successor of a chief in the area must also be one who was physically fit. This, because a handicapped person could not fully run the affairs of the village. In addition to the above social criteria, the successor of a chief was one who was obedient, respectful and commanded the confidence of all. In this case, children of chiefs who were not respectful and obedient were hardly chosen to succeed him. It was also required of the successor of a chief in Banyang and Ejagham land to be tolerant and friendly. Above all, the candidate had to be a member of *Ekpe*. This criterion was used to choose Chief Arrey Raymond Otang of Ntenako in 1998. But by 1970, some villages added social criteria in the selection of chiefs in order to meet up with the test of time. Such villages were Afab, Nchang, Bachuo-Ntai and Tinto. These criteria indicated that the candidate must be educated; he should be abreast with current affairs of the chieftom in order to flourish his people with government’s information . Although the religious criterion was similar to the cultural criteria, they however had differences. For example, they all required that the successor be able to communicate with the gods of the village through the ancestral language. But the slight difference was that there were certain places in some villages beside the palace shrine where sacrifices were also made to some gods such as the *obasinjom* and that of the forest. In some villages, for example, there were the forests where such sacrifices were usually offered or performed. These sacrifices were usually performed by the chief of the village and his successor was also required to know how to go about this. Even though this did not apply to all the villages of the area, it held true for others like Ossing, Okoyong Ekwelle and Eyang-Nchang.

Economic and Political Criteria

Another important criterion used in choosing a chief to the throne in the Banyang and Ejagham land was based on wealth acquired. In choosing their successor, they considered the ability of the son to manage resources. Therefore, extravagant children were hardly ever chosen as successors of the throne. Since riches also commanded respect and authority, rich personalities had higher probabilities of being selected. The children who were hard working and ambitious were usually preferred to lazy ones. He had to be able to encourage development. This

criterion contributed much to the choice of Chief Solomon Ashu Arrey of Ossing village in the 1950s. According to the tradition, a prince was eligible to succeed his father only when he could command or know the history of the village and to keep village secrets. He had to be able to trace the origin of the village and the line of succession. He equally had to know the limit or the boundaries of the village. In addition to this, he had to be someone who could command and provide good leadership and good knowledge of managing conflicts. He also had to be intelligent and wise. Above all, a successor had to be a member of the *Ekpe* association and the *Nfor* was crowned by the *Ekpe*. These were some of the qualities that led to the selection of Moses Ndip Epie as the chief of Nchang in 1956. Another example can be found in Bachuo-Ntai village where Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong succeeded Chief Eyongnayri Mathias in 1957, even though this later resulted to serious chieftaincy conflict in Bachuo-Ntai resulting to a split within the village. Furthermore, the successor of a chief in Banyang and Ejagham land had to be brave and courageous. This criterion was used to select Chief Tanyi Tambe of Besongabang as was seen when he led the Mpawmanku wars (Mamfe resistance) of 1904-1908. However, Western culture and the desire for power deviated and diluted some of the traditional criteria leading to power alternation or succession squabbles in the Banyang and Ejagham area. Certain rules were adopted to ease power alternation in the Banyang and Ejagham polities.

Chieftaincy Succession Principles

The nature of the succession principles determines whether a community would generally be free from chieftaincy conflicts or not. In Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups, there were generally three succession principles namely; Hereditary, Rotatory and Elective Succession Principles.

Hereditary Succession Principle

Hereditary is classified into pure and semi, pure hereditary succession was from father to son. In the event of the death of the father who was chief or in case of his inability due to age, blindness, sickness or any other natural handicap, the eldest son took precedence over the others, though in cases where the eldest son was not judged competent or responsible enough, the second eldest son succeeded the position. To begin with, a good example of pure hereditary can be traced in the following chiefdoms: In the Upper Banyang region precisely in Tinto, Ta is an appellative prefix for Mr. in Kenyang language, one of the languages of the people of Manyu Division. The feminine gender is Mma. Ta is not only used on males, it is even used on male kids as a sign of respect as any male child is considered a head of household in patriarchal society. Ebai Enow was the first community head long before the Europeans. When he died, he was succeeded by his son, Mfoto Ebai Enow. Mfoto was also succeeded by his son, Agborndakaw, whose son Enow Obi equally succeeded him. When Enow Obi died, he was succeeded by his brother Afue Tiku who acted as regent since the children of Enow Obi were still young. Another pure hereditary case was in Ntenako village where Chieftaincy began in Boh-Manyi quarters from Ta Esong-Esim- father of Ta-Arreyayuk-manyoh. When he died, Mbiachem Enowbangha took over. When Mbiachem died, the

chieftaincy went back to Ta Essong-Esim's direct Family, Ta Arrey-Ayukmanyoh became chief. He was succeeded by Ta Nchenge-Amba who was a regent chief. Although chieftaincy was hereditary, there was still direct democracy in the selection of the chief. Boh Manyi being the first people to settle on the land brought all the other people who later formed the village and they became the official royal family line. So he handed the royal authority to Ta Nchem-Mba. When Ta Nchem-Mba died, Besong-Ngem and Hans Ebot-Arrey-Ebangha- son of Ta Esong-Manyiyah took over. During the reign of Ta Arrey-Ayukmanyoh, the British wanted a representative from Ntenako to act as the spokesperson and at the same time the liaison officer between the colonizers and the villagers in the local customary court council. They selected Ta Enow-Atabe from Boh-Mbi as a representative in the court to represent the chief of Ntenako. When he died, Aiyuketang Peter was designated for the chieftaincy. Nevertheless, there was a barrier; he was not a member of the *Epke*, an institution that was a show of manhood with its membership strictly limited to men only as we have seen above. The councilors then initiated him into *Ekpe* without him going to the secret bush. This meant that some people had more rights and were superior over the others in *Ekpe*. After the death of Chief Peter Aiyuk Etang Aiyuk is a variant of Ayuk., Arrey Raymond Etang became the chief and Ferdinand Besong became the regent chief. The second hereditary succession principle is the semi-hereditary principle. After the demise of a chief who suffers from an inability that prevents him from exercising his duties as chief, he could be succeeded by his son, brother or paternal relative. This principle implies that members of his extended family enjoyed the chieftaincy title as well. The only conditions being competence, character and endorsement by the ancestors. Chiefdoms that practiced this type of succession were many namely: In the chiefdom of Ossing, it should be recalled that both pure hereditary and semi-hereditary was practiced. For instance, when chief Apak Mbet, founder of the chiefdom died, he was succeeded by his son Apak Asik Mfung. Leadership was inherited by Asik Mfung's son Ngegaw. Ngegaw was succeeded by his brother Ebot Arrey in 1890. Ebot Arrey was the choice of the Germans due to his efficiency. From thence, pure hereditary was abandoned in favour of semi hereditary. In 1929, Tanyi Enow Mbagenem succeeded his uncle, Ebot Arrey. When Tanyi Enow Mbagenem died, he was succeeded by a relative J. A. Tataw in 1932. In instances where the chief's sons were young, infirm or handicapped and had poor reputation in behaviour, an uncle or cousin could take precedence over them. In support of this, the chief of Ossing, Ashu Arrey Solomon, clearly said: "A chief could be a son, brother, paternal cousin or at least any member of the ruling family. A chief had to be one of the children or grand children of time immemorial." Another case of semi-hereditary succession also existed where any person of the chieftaincy could become chief. This type could be seen with the case of Besongabang village as follows: Chief Tanyi Tambe was the first chief. He was succeeded by his son Tambe Ako Anwang. When Tambe Ako Anwang died, he was succeeded by his brother Agbor Bang. Agbor Bang died and was also succeeded by his brother, Eno Ebangha. When Eno Ebangha died, another son of Tanyi Tambe, Asunyo (Tanyi Asu) became chief,

he was then succeeded by his brother Eno Agbor Araw. After Eno Agbor Araw, the chieftaincy went to another son of Tanyi Tambe, Orok Agborsong (Orock Tanyi), and when he died, he was succeeded by his brother Tambe Ayuk Mbechang. When he died in 1971, Moritz Mbiwan was designated to succeed him but after consultation the chief makers of the four headquarters decided to ignore the chieftaincy succession principles and never considered the will left behind by the late Chief Tambe Ayukmbechang. They rather unanimously agreed that it was the turn of Boh-Abane to succeed to the throne. Dr. Henry Ndifor Abi Enowchong from Boh-Abane was seen as the right heir to the vacant Besongabang throne. This was the beginning of Chieftaincy Crisis in Besongabang because some subjects did see him legitimate to take the throne. Just like in Western Banyang, the Ejagham village of Mfuni equally practiced the semi-hereditary principle of succession as follows: The first chief of Mfuni, Mbeng Changerakpo, was succeeded by his son Agborkang. Meanwhile, in the transition period between the two of them, Mbeng Ojong Oru was to guard the throne until the vacancy was filled by the eldest person in the community which influenced his choice as "caretaker." Mbeng Ojong Oru handed over after six months to Agborkang who was succeeded by his son, Enow Tanya. When Enow Tanya died, he was succeeded by his son Enow Mfon. After Enow Mfon, the family was divided over which son was to succeed him. During this period, Tanyi Akem, by virtue of his age was made "caretaker" of the Chieftaincy throne. A candidate was named after a few months by the "Chief Makers College." Nso Enow succeeded his father Enow Mfon as chief.

Rotatory Succession Principle

The second principle of succession is the rotatory or alternative. As far as this principle is concerned, the transfer of power in the village alternated from one quarter to another and from one ruling family to another. For instance, in case of the death of say the chief from "quarter A", the next chief automatically came from "quarter B"; in case of the death of the chief of quarter B", the next chief was chosen from "quarter C" and so on and so forth, depending on the number of ruling quarters or families that were found in the chiefdom. For instance, there were seven quarters in Eyanchang. Among the seven quarters, the chieftaincy rotated among three *boh*-Tabot, *boh*-Eyong and *boh*-Bate. In Takwai village, there were six quarters, chieftaincy alternated between two quarters—Nfeinjie and Ekpeti. In Mamfe town, the ruling families or quarters were *boh*-Mbi-Atem, *boh*-Besong, *boh*-Agbor Atah and *boh*-Oben. Upon the death of Chief Mbeng Besong in 1994, the *boh*-Mbi-Atem provided a chief in the person of Chief Mbi Atem. When Chief Mbi Atem died in 2003, chieftaincy title went to *boh*-Oben in which Chief Oben Godson Orock was made chief. It should be recalled that this succession principle is very common in the land.

Elective Succession Principle

The third principle of succession, though not enshrined in the unwritten Banyang and Ejagham customary law and customs was the elective principle. By this principle, any person in the community found to be competent, of good behaviour or reputation or wealthy could become a chief.

This principle originated from the colonial period and spilled over into the post-colonial period. However, this principle of succession was not standard in the area as compared to the first two principles. It came up because certain people due to their wealth, political power, position in government or community laid claims to the chieftaincy throne on grounds that the community (their supporters) wanted them to become chiefs. On the other hand, unlike in communities or chiefdoms where chieftaincy succession was purely hereditary, in communities where succession was either semi-hereditary or rotative, there usually arose conflicts among the protagonists with respect to which principle is enforced in that community. While some people may hold the argument that chieftaincy in their chiefdoms is not hereditary, others cling to the fact that it is hereditary.

Shortcomings of Chieftaincy Succession Principles

The issue is not only about which succession principle to be upheld, but it is also about obeying the principle generally practiced. That is, sometimes people defy the principles in question in order to have continuous entitlement to the chieftaincy throne. This is true of the rotative succession principle. Upon the death of the chief of a particular quarter or family, the family in question may decide to cling to the throne, hence causing a crisis. It is worthy of note that according to the proponents of the elective principle of succession, the central idea (the unwritten law in the minds of the people) is that there is an existing law and custom as to the making of a chief. This law is based on choice through unanimity in contradiction to hereditary, the one being diametrically opposed to the other. The pertinent fact is that the unanimity is equated with popularity, an unequivocal manifestation of support for any given candidate by all or the majority of quarters forming the entire chiefdom composition. Moreover, proponents of the hereditary principle of succession argue that chieftaincy is the family affair of the one and only family whose ancestral lineage is traceable to the founder of the chiefdom before the German occupation. Nevertheless, critics of the hereditary principle argue that the said founder was installed by his family members, hence a mere *de facto* situation is wholly unfounded. Therefore, leadership in Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups was reserved within members of one family or particular quarter and excluded members of other families and quarters. More so, a clear-cut understanding as to who was genuine or not for leadership in the area was complicated. It was not easy to determine the subjects of possible traditional authority in communities with a common ethnic background living in a limited geographical area. But geographical borders never corresponded to ethnic communities after migration. In this case, there is need for some clear understanding about who a traditional ruler was. Was he a leader of a particular family or quarter, or for all the people living in one area? Restricting power to one family or quarter and excluding others is against human rights leading to chieftaincy conflicts in some villages such as; Kembong in 1960, Tinto11 in 1963 and Eyangnchang in 1970. From another perspective, all decisions arrived at in the running of a community and nations represent the majority of the population. However, traditional authority in Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups was not socially or gender

inclusive. Usually titles and functions of traditional leaders were by inheritance passed on to male successors. Consequently, women were excluded from traditional leadership. This has been heavily criticised and has influenced the debates about the role of traditional leadership in countries like South Africa where the women's movement has a large impact on the ruling party, African National Congress (ANC) government's gender policies. It states as follows:

Chiefs are not elected but inherited. Second, chiefs are mostly men, who go against the principles of non-sexism. Third, only Black Africans can become chiefs, which go against the grain of having a non-racial society. Fourth, the chieftaincy serves to accentuate the forces of ethnicity, which had become thoroughly discredited in the apartheid years when it was used as the organising principle in the divide and rule strategy of the ethnic homelands. In the popular mind, chieftaincy was equated with tribalism, which could divide the African majority and derail the process of democratisation and nation building.

The foregoing statement is representative of the major criticisms against traditional leadership in South Africa. Through inheritance, the position of a traditional leader is not subject to any democratic procedures and since leadership selection is based on customary law, the access of women to traditional leadership is limited because they usually cannot inherit chief title that is against fundamental rights. As in other tradition, inheritance rules are transformable and can be changed in such a way that women can inherit titles. For instance, the Ewondo ethnic group in the central region of Cameroon has chosen a woman as their paramount ruler. This is a clear indication for the respect of fundamental rights of all people. Therefore, inclusiveness is a serious source of division and conflict because in modern democratic states, leadership is supposed to be opened to both the adult male and the female with the right to vote and be voted to any office making governance attractive to all. In reality, the direct distinction between gender and the chieftaincy crown in the Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups is not cleared, particularly when women were appointed to others top leadership positions in the society. It is unacceptable for traditional crown to be denied to women in this land. After the reorganization of chieftaincies by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), following decree No 77/245 of July 15, 1977, MINAT became the sole organizer of chiefdoms, fondoms and Lamibe. To determine the rightful heir, three things were to be taken into consideration: the genealogy of the future heir, customs and tradition of enthronement and geriatric witnesses, gender was not included. Sections 10 and 11 of the same decree, the government put the official coronation in the hands of MINAT, though its still prescribes for MINAT to follow the customs and traditions of each kingdom. Consequently, MINAT through the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) or Divisional Officer (DO) could not unilaterally appoint a chief without the vetting process. The foregoing analysis raises a concern as to the definition of the relationship between

traditional authorities and the state. The enthronement and survival of these chiefs was not supposed to depend on how well they manage their role as state auxiliaries but on how they reconcile their role as the representatives of the people and custodians of tradition. On the contrary, they believed that their survival depended on how successful they can reconcile the interest of the state and theirs, leaving out that of their people. The people of Banyang and Ejagham therefore considered some of their chiefs as mere praise singers to the government. Interview with Christopher Tiku Tambe This is because they took decisions without consulting their people and the fact that political decisions are embedded in the wider social structure based on the consensus of the whole community. With the advent of multipartyism in the early 1990s, the political space was widely opened and like other Cameroonians, chiefs had the right to belong to any political party of their choice even against the wishes of their subjects. Based on this, the chiefs who were custodians of the tradition, unifiers, power brokers, ceased to actively fulfill these roles. They lost respect before the eyes of their subjects, given that some of their subjects doubted their legitimacy as divine rulers or true leaders. This caused some chiefs to align with the government to maintain and secure their positions. As a matter of fact, most of them decided to belong to the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), but denied their subjects the right to choose the political party of their choice. Subjects were forced to belong to the same political party of chiefs and in trying to dictate to their subjects, it resulted to serious conflicts between them especially chiefdoms where chiefs were no more respected. Against this backdrop, many villages were divided between supporters of the chiefs and those against them resulting to a slowdown in the development of an already backward Manyu division. The greatest traditional responsibility which was to safeguard the culture and tradition of the people was gradually neglected and the rich cultural heritage suffered threats of extinction. Many traditional rulers did not take up permanent residence in their chiefdoms to allow them advise and ensure that tradition was maintained and upheld. Confusion as to who ought to be or ought not to be chief introduced a phenomenon where people could no longer separate high social status that came with political appointments from the sacredness of traditional leadership. Due to the flexible nature of chieftaincy institution in Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups, some elite seek for the chieftaincy crown as soon as they became wealthy or were appointed to posts of responsibility like Minister, Governor, Rector and Director, to name these posts only, they aspired to hold the traditional title of a Chief. This often resulted to copious chieftaincy disputes in some areas. On the other hand, when one was made a chief the tendency was for him to participate in partisan politics. Meanwhile, in Mali, chiefs were effective administrative appointees confirmed by periodic local elections under decentralization laws.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, the question of the legitimacy of traditional rulers arose as people wondered if chiefs in the area were still legitimate. Although traditional leaders were not subjected to any electoral process, they were selected according to traditional norms

and accountable to their subjects. However, Political leaders became involved in traditional leadership with different forms of legitimacy as opposed to the traditional context where legitimacy was rooted in history and culture. We realized that the peoples of the study area respected their traditional succession principles to an extent because the semi-hereditary principle was most commonly practiced in the area than the pure hereditary and other principles.

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