



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Gender roles in traditional healing practices in Busoga

Isiko, A.P.

Citation

Isiko, A. P. (2018, June 20). *Gender roles in traditional healing practices in Busoga*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/63215>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/63215>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/63215> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Isiko, Alexander Paul

Title: Gender roles in traditional healing practices in Busoga

Date: 2018-06-20

Gender Roles in Traditional Healing Practices in Busoga

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
ter verdediging op 20 juni 2018 om 13.45

door

Alexander Paul Isiko

geboren te Bulagala, Uganda
in 1978

Promotor

Prof. dr. E.J. van Alphen

Co-promotor

Dr. A.L.B. van Weyenberg

Promotiecommissie

Dr. A. Akinyoade (ASC, Leiden)

Prof. dr. M.P.G. Mous

Prof. dr. D. Merolla (University of Paris)

Prof. dr. P.J. Pels

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother, Mukyala Edisa Isiko Namwase, who has spent much of her lifetime raising her sons, daughters and grandchildren

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	iii
List of Maps.....	viii
Abbreviations.....	ix
‘SOGA’ Derivatives.....	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
BACKGROUND, LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Contextual Definition and Background to Traditional Healing	3
1.3 Conceptual Relationship between Healing, Sorcery and Witchcraft	6
1.4 Notions of ‘African(s) and African Perception(s)’ in Traditional Healing	11
1.5 Ideologies of ‘Tradition’ and ‘Traditional’ in Healing	14
1.6 Conceptualising Gender and Gender Roles	22
1.7 Statement of the Problem.....	26
1.8 General Objective	27
1.9 Research Questions	27
1.10 Significance of the Study	27
1.11 Theoretical Framework: Ethnomedicine.....	29
1.11.1 Social theoretical Framework on Health.....	30
1.12 Colonial Influence on Gender Roles in Traditional Healing Practices in Africa.....	31
1.13 Gender and Access to Traditional Healing Practices.....	33
1.14 Factors that Influence Preference for the Utilization of Traditional Healing Practices	34
1.15 Data Collection and the Research Process.....	37
1.15.1 Cultural Analysis	37
1.15.2 Sources, Methods and Tools of collecting Information	38
1.15.4 Characteristics of Respondents and Implications on the Study	43
1.15.5 Sampling Methods and Procedure	46
1.16 Organisation and Overview of the Thesis.....	50
CHAPTER TWO	51
THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE BUSOGA SOCIETY	51
2.1 Introduction.....	51
2.2 Geography of Busoga	52
2.3 Origins and Settlements of the Basoga	57

2.4 Demography of Busoga	62
2.5 Social-Cultural Organisation of Busoga Society	66
2.6 Religious Setting of Busoga.....	72
2.7 Busoga Society Economic Organisation.....	77
2.8 Political Setting of Busoga: Cultural and Central Governance.....	85
2.9 Gender Roles in Pre-colonial, Colonial and Present Busoga Society	91
2.10 Conclusion	94
CHAPTER THREE	96
PERSPECTIVES OF TRADITIONAL BUSOGA SOCIETY ON TRADITIONAL HEALING.....	96
3.1 Introduction.....	96
3.2 Health and Well-Being among the Basoga	97
3.3 The Concept of ‘Illness and Healing’ in Busoga Traditional Society.....	103
3.4 Women and Health in Traditional Busoga Society.....	107
3.5 Categories of Traditional Healers among the Basoga.....	111
3.5.1 Diviners.....	113
3.5.2 Herbalists - <i>abayigha</i>	121
3.5.3 Bone Setters	122
3.5.4 Koranic Healers - Abalaguzi Abaghalimu	123
3.5.5 Traditional Birth Attendants - <i>Balerwa</i>	124
3.6 Rituals Involved in Traditional Healing among the Basoga	125
3.7 Diseases and Illnesses Treated by Traditional Medicine among the Basoga.....	127
3.8 Causes of Sicknesses and Ill-Being among the Basoga	132
3.8.1 Witchcraft	134
3.8.2 Spirits	138
3.8.3 Curses.....	138
3.8.4 Failure to Observe Certain Taboos and Rituals	139
3.8.5 Pregnancy of Mothers	140
3.9 Taboos observed in Traditional Healing Practice in Busoga	141
3.10 Dispensing Traditional Medicine and Healing Among the Basoga.....	143
3.10.1 Dispensing Herbs	143
3.10.2 Cleansing (<i>okwambulula, okwogolola</i>).....	143
3.10.3 Incision of Medicine (<i>Okusandaga obulezi</i>).....	144
3.10.4 Fumigating - ‘ <i>okunioteza obulezi</i> ’	144

3.10.5 Healing by unearthing hidden or planted witchcraft.....	145
3.10.6 Bone setting - ‘ <i>Okuyunga amagumba</i> ’	145
3.10.7 Arresting evil spirits - ‘ <i>okugema emizimu emibi</i> ’	146
3.11 Conclusion	146
CHAPTER FOUR.....	148
THE COLONIAL IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL HEALING AMONG THE BASOGA.....	148
4.1 Introduction.....	148
4.2 The Diffusion of African Medicinal Knowledge	149
4.3 Altered Traditional Conceptions of Health and Healing.....	162
4.4 The Influence of Christian Missionaries on Traditional Healing in Busoga.....	165
4.5 Undermined Traditional Societal Mechanisms of Disease Control	166
4.6 The Invisibility of Women Healers in Busoga.....	172
4.7 From Endemic to Epidemic Health Conditions	174
4.8 Conclusion	182
CHAPTER FIVE	184
GENDERED PATTERNS OF ACCESS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN HEALING	184
5.1 Introduction.....	184
5.2 Urban-Rural Gender differences in Traditional Healing in Busoga	184
5.3 Gendered Knowledge of Traditional Medicine.....	186
5.4 Sex and Menstruation Taboos in Traditional Healing	191
5.5 The Unmarried Women Diviners: <i>Lukowe-Isejja</i> Relationship.....	192
5.6 Gendered Images of Articles and Objects Used in Traditional Healing	193
5.7 Roles of Women and Men in Contemporary <i>Kisoga</i> Healing Practices	202
5.8 Sickesses and Challenges handled by Traditional Healers	213
5.9 Factors Influencing the Use of Traditional Medicine among Women in Busoga.....	218
5.10 Conclusion	226
CHAPTER SIX.....	228
GENERAL CONCLUSION	228
Bibliography	233
Archival Resources	248
Newspaper Articles.....	248
APPENDICES	249
Appendix I: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	249

Appendix II: OBSERVATION GUIDE	252
Appendix III: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED	253
SAMENVATTING.....	256
SUMMARY	259
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	264
CURRICULUM VITAE	266

List of Maps

Figure 1: Map of Uganda showing the Different Sub Regions

Figure 2: Map of Busoga Sub-Region

Abbreviations

WHO	-----	World Health Organization
THP	-----	Traditional Healing Practices
TM	-----	Traditional Medicine

‘SOGA’ Derivatives

It is imperative for the reader to know the meaning of all the ‘soga’ derivatives as used in this thesis, so that contextual meanings are made of statements containing any of these derivatives.

Lusoga- This is the language spoken by the Basoga. Just like it appears with other Bantu languages spoken by people around the Lake Victoria basin, nouns among the ‘Basoga’ are reflected by changing prefixes: human beings are indicated by prefix ‘Ba’ (plural)-therefore, the people are called ‘Basoga’ and ‘Mu’ (singular), a person is called ‘Musoga’; name of the country (region) ‘Bu’-*therefore being ‘Busoga’*; the language ‘Lu’-*therefore becoming ‘Lusoga’* and an adjective from these is ‘Ki’. Thus, the region is called Busoga; the people are Basoga (singular, Musoga); the language is Lusoga; and "anything of the Basoga," is described as ‘Kisoga’. Therefore, I at times write ‘Kisoga traditional healing’ or Kisoga traditional medicine, Kisoga medicine or Kisoga herbs and so on.

Busoga- this is the name given to the territorial boundary of the area under study, meaning ‘land of the ‘Soga’. But in the thesis, I use ‘Busoga’ to refer to the ‘society’ of people who live in the territorial boundary under study.