BUT
this is not necessarily the important social variable

Lots of ethno-linguistic diversity
Identity Groups

“Tribe”
Descent Group
Religious community
Educational cohort
Gang
Class
Craft guild
Local Community
Ethno-linguistic grouping
City neighborhood
Social Networks

Who connects to whom, why, and how is it manifested?

- Loyalty and emotional support?
- Personal service?
- Money and other resources?
Social Networks in Africa

- New political elites
- Commercial
- Kinship-based
- Pre-colonial elites
- Women’s associations
- Professional groups
- Patron-client nets
Kinship is Important

Corporate kinship groups

- Security
- Common ownership
- Mechanism for mobilizing manpower and women power
Important Distinctions
Within the Social Connections

The differences (and overlaps) between...

...“authority”...

...legitimacy...

...and “prestige”

These distinctions are critical to knowing:

...how decisions are made...

...who has society’s blessing in making them...

...how far their warrant extends
Individual Africans live in a variety of social networks.
If We Want Influence

Let’s learn how to use the social networks. . .that Africans use!

And apply incentives that appeal to Africans. . .

. . .employing the connections familiar to Africans. . .

. . .tho these might differ greatly from your cultural experience
Do I give up now??

OK. . .So how do I get a grasp on the fundamental constructs that underlie African social organisation??

This brings us to “World View”
World View
Answers to the most important questions of life

✓ Sources of authority/nature of “truth”
✓ Nature of beauty, good, evil and deviance
✓ Causality
✓ Meaning and value of human life
✓ Life of the spirit, life of the mind
✓ Definition of the “good life”
✓ Man’s relations to Creator, cosmos, and fellow man
  -- Power, prestige and legitimacy
  -- Degree of human agency and potential
  -- Sorcery
✓ Tolerance of coercion, violence and ambiguity
✓ Role of individual versus collective
✓ Relative importance of rules and relationships
World View:
In Africa, a trap for the unwary

We may look very similar. . .
. . . but we don’t necessarily think alike
African Christian Commitment

African Christianity is ancient... But most of its variants are recent arrivals.

The Most “Christian” Continent
With a sizable Muslim minority

Islam in Africa spread significantly after the arrival of European colonialism.