10 *We should all be African feminists: Feminism as an integral part of transformative leadership*

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Overview

This chapter is an autoethnography of the author's experiences with transformative leadership training. She highlights the features of her learning environment which resulted in her understanding that transformative leadership is inherently a feminist practice. Grounding herself in bell hook's 1984 definition of feminism and Shield's definition of transformative leadership, she argues that the two are in many ways equivalent and that transformative leaders are, by definition, explicitly feminist. This autoethnography points towards the necessity for all leaders, especially male leaders, to be more gender sensitive and inclusive by intentionally thinking about the impact of gender on their and others' lived experiences. Such a worldview allows for mutually beneficial partnerships as an end is sought to all forms of oppression.

Introduction

My journey with transformative leadership began in September 2017. Through luck and intense preparation, I had been selected as a Mastercard Foundation Scholar at the University of Edinburgh. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program aims to develop Africa's next generation of leaders and does so mainly through academic scholarships for young people from sub-Saharan Africa to selected partner institutions. I accepted the opportunity eagerly, and what followed was a mindset-shifting transformative leadership learning experience.

At the beginning, as scholars, we were all awkward, meeting for the first time and anchored to each other out of necessity and convenience. Community is a necessary prerequisite for growth. One fateful evening, we were invited to the Playfair Library to commemorate the second year of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program in Edinburgh. At this dinner, in one of the oldest parts of the university, a debate began between Emmanuel Jaloba, a male peer, fellow scholar, and a very ambitious future leader in Africa, and Stephanie Oak, an executive member of the programme.[1]

[1] Emmanuel Jaloba and Stephanie Oak are pseudonyms given to protect the identities of the two speakers. I recorded their words in a journal in 2017 as part of my autoethnography.

Stephanie was telling us how proud she was of us and how proud we should be of ourselves. She began by saying:

> There were over 8 000 applicants. And only 10 of you here. While I understand that imposter syndrome might come, tonight allow us to celebrate.

Emmanuel responded:

> Well, Stephanie, I'm sure I can speak for everyone when I say that we are grateful for this opportunity and understand the odds we had to beat to get here. It's just a shame that there aren't more guys.

Stephanie responded, congenially:

> Well, women and girls on the continent have been historically disadvantaged. It's important to address that imbalance. Hence, the Scholars Program made the commitment that 70 per cent of their cohorts would be female (Mastercard Foundation, 2019). It's exciting. And you, as a young man, gain the benefit of working with and learning from these empowered young women.

As a silent bystander during this exchange, I wondered how often she had to explain the gendered recruitment target.

Emmanuel continued:

> I am all for the empowerment of women and girls. We know the thinking that when you educate women and girls you pull communities out of poverty. That being said, you are discriminating against men and boys and depriving them of a life-changing opportunity. Don't get me wrong, I think women deserve an education, but how do you justify excluding men? Men become politicians and leaders of families. They are breadwinners and decision-makers. Educating them creates value in a country and an economy. I'm not saying don't select girls, but I am sad for all the qualified young men you skipped over to meet your 70 per cent target.

Emmanuel responded calmly and his demeanour was sensible and assertive. He believed what he was saying.

But Stephanie was incredulous:

> Young man, you are here because women like myself and Jo [the program director] worked to get this funding. How can you advocate to exclude women when it is women who got you here?

And so, the debate continued, with Stephanie sounding ever more indignant and Emmanuel sounding ever more misogynistic. A few nights later, there

was a knock on my door. Emmanuel had come over to chat about the scholar representative process. We had been asked to democratically select two scholars to act as liaison between the programme team and ourselves. A democracy of ten must be navigated carefully, so Emmanuel was on a campaign trail. He walked into my room and said, 'Lauryn, I don't think you and the other ladies should run for scholar rep. Such positions are easier and come more naturally to guys, so let us take up the responsibility', and he smiled as he said it.

These interactions embedded an important central question in my mind, namely: can one be a transformative leader without being a feminist?

Through this autoethnography, I will critically analyse how my experience, understanding, and co-creating of working definitions of transformative leadership, alongside my burgeoning feminist ideologies, exposed the interplay between the two. This chapter is presented in five parts. First, I briefly explain the critical framework for this autoethnography; second, I provide the uses of autoethnography and clarify the method of choice; third, I reflect on my transformative leadership training and how it aligns with feminist ideologies; fourth, I will engage with the supposed tension between feminism and African-ness; and to conclude, I make the case that feminist transformative leadership is necessary to solve Africa's problems.

Theoretical foundation

This chapter is theoretically grounded in transformative leadership theory (Shields, 2010) and bell hooks's (1984) definition of feminism as stated in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. These two theories provide the foundation through on which I situate the effective leadership training and practices that are reflected in my own lived experience.

Transformative leadership theory

Transformative leadership theory (Shields, 2010) is a critical leadership theory that focuses explicitly on inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice. Generally, transformative leadership theory 'begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others' (Shields, 2010, p. 559). According to Shields (2010), for a leadership practice to be considered transformative, it must fulfil the following tenets:

- Acknowledge power and privilege.
- Articulate both individual and collective purposes.
- Deconstruct sociocultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequality, and reconstruct them.
- Balance critique and promise.

- Effect deep and equitable change.
- Work towards transformation, liberation, emancipation, democracy, equality, and excellence.
- Deconstruct moral courage and activism.

Transformative leadership is distinct from other modes, such as servant and authoritarian leadership, because of the way in which it engages its followers: transformative leaders create leaders.

Feminism

In her now widely acclaimed TEDx video, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie proclaims that 'we should all be feminists' (Adichie, 2013). But what does that mean? Feminism has seen many waves and advocates for many priorities. For clarity, the following definition will underpin this chapter: '[F]eminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression' (hooks, 1984, p. xii).

In *Feminism Is for Everybody*, hooks (2000, p. 1) explains:

> I liked this definition because it did not imply that men were the enemy…Practically, it is a definition which implies that all sexist thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult. It is also broad enough to include an understanding of systemic institutionalized sexism. As a definition it is open-ended. To understand feminism it implies one has to necessarily understand sexism.

I selected this definition for similar reasons. In my personal understanding of feminism, feminism is not about hating men nor is it a movement against men. Centring the end of sexism is the end goal of feminism and achieving this goal will result in women, as a collective, making massive strides in economic ability, personal freedoms, and social supports. Feminism is not taking from men. It is not moving men into the secondary role that women currently occupy, but providing women with access and opportunity to bridge the historical gap and ultimately leave us on an equal playing field.

A comment about autoethnography

Autoethnography for research and writing, and as a method, connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social (Ellis, 2004). Through autoethnography, I use introspection and reflection to engage with and discuss feminist theory as I grew to understand it during my time as a Mastercard Foundation Scholar who was explicitly required to understand, reflect on, and practise transformative leadership. According to Spry (2001), an autoethnography is a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social

contexts. In this chapter, I share my own perspective on my transformative leadership development; a process that occurred alongside the journeys of nine other young people who have their own perspectives.

In this process, I referred to old journals and blog entries, and used active recall. I did not live the experience with the aim of recording its significance (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), so the experiences are collected in hindsight and a process of sense-making occurred to construct a robust narrative. This chapter aims to contribute to documentation on transformative leadership, given its underrepresentation in literature. As a reader, you are welcome to agree or disagree with my assertions. Whatever your response, there remains great value in an individual's record of their experience; only I can adequately convey the layers and intricate complexities of my experience (Guy-Sheftall, 1995), and there is value in the thought and debate it inspires.

Understanding transformative leadership

As Mastercard Foundation Scholars at the University of Edinburgh, we attended biweekly Scholar Saturdays. The frequency and nature of these changed as we advanced in our studies; with more frequent sessions in the earlier years and fewer sessions as our academic workload increased in difficulty and importance. During the first Scholar Saturday of the year, we co-created a list of values that we believed were necessary in order for us to embody transformative leadership. We reflected on their use in effective leadership and how we would go about developing these skills over the year. Some Scholar Saturdays were centred on soft skills such as public speaking, collaboration, reflecting on imposter syndrome, and so on. In my first year, due to the small number of scholars on site, most Scholar Saturdays involved a mixed cohort of first- and second-year undergraduates working alongside postgraduate scholars. From my second year onwards, as the numbers had increased significantly, separate Scholar Saturdays were hosted for each cohort.

We were expected to record and reflect on our evolving thoughts. This included contributing to scholar blogs, which were captured on personalised WordPress websites. Occasionally, blog entries were considered part of core programming and had to be completed by set deadlines.

Finally, all scholars were expected to earn annual Edinburgh Awards in Transformative Leadership. The Edinburgh Award is a programme run by the university that wraps around extra-curricular activities and allows students to receive official recognition for their involvement (University of Edinburgh, 2017). As first-year scholars, we sought to understand transformative leadership. In our second year, we sought to participate in transformative leadership, and in the third year, we sought to embody transformative leadership. In our fourth and

final year, the Edinburgh Award was not compulsory, but was still supported by the Mastercard Foundation team, and it would be a year to embody transformative leadership and/or create transformative leaders in our communities and networks. The Edinburgh Award experience involved submitting three written reflections on our development of and/or struggles with embodying three individually selected values from the long list of transformative leadership qualities we created as a group. Attaining the award required participants to provide evidence of at least 50 hours of voluntary work related to their goal.

This programming was intense, and having this responsibility over and above academic commitments could feel overwhelming. As with many situations, you got out what you put in. Thankfully, the standard set prevented shallow engagement. For example, if I wrote an Edinburgh Award entry which my supervisor believed to be hastily thrown together, or one that lacked a clear connection to a previous entry, I was asked to redo the assignment. Deep reflection was the requirement, and deep reflection begets growth.

My personal experience in understanding transformative leadership was explicitly feminist; that is to say that in my perception of Shields' seven tenets of transformative leadership, the recognition of gender differences and the need to account for them in creating leaders and transforming society are essential. With hindsight, I believe that this is due to four main reasons.

First, I benefitted from feminist facilitators. As I stated previously, the mandate of the Mastercard Foundation scholarship requires that cohorts are 70 per cent female. Thus, scholar spaces were dominated by young women, and this impacted the facilitation we received. Regular time was given to explicit discussion about gender. During public speaking training, the facilitator made sure to give gender-conscious advice. This involved discussing the traits that make any speaker compelling, before zooming in to the way audiences react to men and women differently and providing advice on how to correct for audience bias on the basis of gender. When we discussed politics or issues of global importance, our facilitators made intentional space for the opinions of female scholars.

Being in the majority did not automatically mean that our worldviews dominated. Research has found that in university faculty meetings, the men speak more often and for longer than the women, and that each of the men in the faculty meetings interrupts more often than each of the women, even when taking into account the total number of turns taken (Eakins & Ekins, 1976). One interesting finding of this study states that the longest comment recorded by a woman at all seven gatherings was shorter than the shortest comment by a man. Would structure improve interruptions? Yes, but reducing interruptions does not completely remedy the issue. According to Edelsky (1981), while there are fewer interruptions during structured segments, men take longer turns to speak when compared to women. Given this empirical and social reality,

feminist facilitators who ensured that the conversation remained balanced were vital for equal participation. This equal participation led to richer conversations and greater empathy.

One session in our first year was with a visiting professor from the United States. She provided a pre-reading (an excerpt from Audre Lorde's *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*) and grouped us by gender. I was grouped with the six other female undergraduates in my cohort for the discussion. Fifteen minutes into the session, we were all crying. While the pre-reading had implied a different path, we had a heart to heart about our fears and anxieties as young women aspiring to the title of transformative leader. In that safe space, we were able to be vulnerable about not feeling ready for the label and not being given the social capital as women to truly transform our home countries. That remains the most important discussion I have participated in about women in leadership.

Second, I benefitted from exposure to more advanced feminists. On occasion, we had mixed discussions involving both undergraduates and postgraduates, and the presence of these more settled and evolved female transformative leaders radicalised the discussions. They reminded the group to centre the perspectives of refugee women, disabled women, and mothers, whose double identities impacted their needs, lived experiences, and the list of priorities with which we would need to engage in order for them to participate in and experience transformative leadership. It was within these sessions that I first began to develop my understanding of intersectional feminism, a feminist practice which considers factors such as race, class, and education, and how they overlap and interact. The energy and passion they expressed when advocating for people outside of generic assumptions imbued me with an urgency, and an openness to listening and being corrected.

Third, my development as a transformative leader occurred alongside my consciousness raising as an intersectional feminist. Like many young people, I grew into my feminist consciousness at university. I had always identified as a feminist because it seemed foolish not to believe in the rights of women as a person assigned the female gender at birth. However, it takes conscious effort to develop a deep understanding and appreciation of womanhood in its various forms, as well as the true meaning of feminism, and I committed to this work while at university. It was during this time that I attended talks given by people like Kimberlé Crenshaw Williams who, in 1989, conceptualised intersectionality as an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). This means that, for example, the feminist priorities of an impoverished young girl in a rural area and a woman in the workplace will be very different because of who they are. I read books such as *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

(2017), a prolific, if controversial, Nigerian author, and *The Seven Necessary Sins for Women and Girls* by Mona Eltahawy (2020), an Egyptian feminist and journalist. I watched Scotland become the first country in the world to offer free sanitary products for all (Diamond, 2022), and dreamed of the impact such a move would have on the millions of young African girls who miss school every month because they are in period poverty. I cannot separate and differentiate transformative leadership and feminism because the two ideas evolved and became concrete ideologies for me at the same time.

The fourth reason centres around advocacy and defence. According to the statistics shared earlier, men interrupt other speakers more often. That is not to say men interrupt women speakers only, but all speakers. What is an interruption really? Person A is speaking and person B jumps in while person A is still speaking. Person A stops speaking, and person B now has the metaphorical floor. While I do not yet know of a silver bullet to prevent interruptions, I have unlearned the instinct to yield the floor. That does not mean to block everyone and everything out. Many interruptions are for the benefit of the speaker. They might highlight holes in your argument, ask relevant follow-up questions that could substantiate your arguments, or even be an expression of passion and agreement. That does not mean that once you hear someone speaking over you, you stop speaking. I learned this from watching great debaters, and I practised this whenever I was corrected out of hand, and whenever I needed to advocate for the feminist angle. The presence of active detractors such as Emmanuel required me to communicate effectively and compellingly the feminist perspective and layer of the transformative leadership framework we were co-creating and attempting to embody.

The interplay between feminism and transformative leadership

I have discussed how my lived experiences brought me to the conclusion that transformative leadership and feminism are intrinsically linked. It still remains to prove that equivalence via the academic definitions of the concepts. In mathematical proofs, equivalence is a bi-directional assertion. If A is B and B is A, then they must be the same. Thus, I will use the same logic to prove equivalence in the scenario at hand.

Is feminism a form of transformative leadership?

Recalling Shields' (2010) seven tenets of transformative leadership, I will now demonstrate how hooks's (1984) definition of feminism meets each criterion.

Acknowledge power and privilege – Feminism as a movement actively works to end sexism because it recognises the power imbalance at play, with men generally enjoying access to more power and autonomy than women. The

advantages men are allotted on the basis of their gender can be described as male privilege and feminism's pursuit of the end of sexist oppression acknowledges the reality of male privilege.

Articulate both individual and collective purposes – There is a great diversity to the systemic challenges housed under the banner of sexist oppression. While there are shared problems, classed as women's issues, such as violence against women and girls, the gender pay gap, underrepresentation in positions of power, the digital gender divide, period poverty and stigma, these issues impact women and girls differently due to their other identifiable characteristics. Consider the right to an abortion. Ensuring that reproductive health is robust, safe, and readily accessible serves women as a collective, while also ensuring that individual women can choose how they wish to exercise their reproductive rights.

Deconstruct sociocultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequality and reconstruct them – One of the underlying assumptions of feminism is present in its definition: sexism exists, oppression exists, and that is why a movement is necessary to end those prevailing conditions. Ending oppression requires changes and interventions at multiple levels. For example, ending sexism will require changes to the socially accepted rules and expectations for behaviour. Research on the causes of the gender pay gap has yielded many hypotheses, one of which is the undervaluation theory (Koskinen Sandberg, Törnroos, & Kohvakka, 2017). It posits that pay practices are socially constructed and so the historical subjugation of women has resulted in related economic insufficiencies.

Balance critique and promise – A necessary feature of any social movement is an ability to flex and evolve. Feminism, like other movements made up of a diverse collective, has seen relevant and timely critique. With each generation, more and different kinds of people are welcomed and better accommodated within its tent. Achieving the end of sexism and sexist exploitation and oppression is ambitious, inspiring, and necessary. The demand we place on an inclusive and intersectional kind of feminism is that it accepts relevant critique and evolves because of it.

Effect deep and equitable change – If the current status quo is a patriarchy, then ending sexism and moving towards to equity and equality for the sexes will fundamentally alter society.

Work towards transformation, liberation, emancipation, democracy, equality, and excellence – Ending oppression in all its forms will serve all of these ends. The end of oppression must be true liberation for us all.

Deconstructing moral courage and activism – Feminism as a movement and practice explicitly engages in activism and moral courage by existing within a sexist and patriarchal context.

Thus, we can conclude that feminism meets the seven tenets set out by Shields (2010) and qualifies as a form of transformative leadership.

Is transformative leadership feminist?

In her introduction, Shields (2011, p. 3) asserts the following:

> Transformative leadership requires the leader to have a clear sense of the values and beliefs that undergird his or her own identity, be willing to take stands that may require moral courage, to live with tension, and, to some degree, to engage in activism and advocacy.

Working to generate equitable change requires courage. Shifting the world from imbalance to balance means going against those who benefit from the status quo and who will work against you to maintain it. Sometimes that includes yourself. My introduction to feminism, long before university, was hearing dialogue on what I now describe as choice feminism. Choice feminism states that women can do anything, have the indelible right to choose their own life trajectories, and deserve the ability to exercise that right. This kind of feminism works if you have the privilege to be afforded options to choose from. It does not work when these options are absent. Recognising my privilege, and reckoning with the choices and opportunities I have (including the opportunity to write this chapter) and the reality that many women similar to me in some ways and nothing like me in others do not have these choices, was a necessary anchor to my understanding of Shields' theoretical definition of transformative leadership. I gravitate towards hooks' conceptualisation of feminism because it is all-encompassing. Because it recognises layers, and while it explicitly calls out sexist oppression, it acknowledges that there is more wrong in this world. Reckoning with privilege, engaging with critique, and working towards equality are integral to both achieving the end of all forms of oppression, including sexism, as well as practising a definitively transformative style of leadership.

Thus, we can conclude that transformative leadership is feminist.

Is feminism un-African?

Gleefully proclaiming one's feminism in front of others will elicit a reaction. Some people will react with disgust, and some will not understand the need for feminism or exactly what it encompasses. Some might be contrarian: they believe in human rights and equality, but they may not believe that women require specific support and systemic interventions in order to enjoy liberation. Feminism is not the domain of women only and many women do not believe that feminism has anything to offer them. I have frequently heard comments such as 'I don't need female empowerment because I am not weak', 'I am not a feminist because I do not hate men', and 'I do not need feminism because I enjoy being a woman'. An overarching response is 'Feminism is un-African'. I cannot tell you the number of times and ways I have been told that being a feminist means that I hate men, I do not appreciate culture, or both. I always find that

confusing. I am African and I am a feminist, so I believe that feminism and African-ness can co-exist peacefully and productively.

In my own development of a feminism that worked for me as a young African woman, I explored the debate from both sides. I remember encountering writings by Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (2011, p. 544), who widely proclaims, 'We had equality till Britain came', arguing that the arrival and acceptance of Christian values from Britain brought with it systemic gender oppression. Wangari Maathai (2007, p. 54), the Kenyan Nobel prize laureate, politician, and environmental activist, has this to say about the idea of African womanhood in her memoir, *Unbowed*:

> A proper woman in the African tradition has always been imagined within the context of the family; she is expected to accept marriage and have children because marriage is assumed to be the end goal for most African women. A proper woman puts the family interest first before even her own personal interest. A proper African woman is not concerned about trees and the environment; rather she is supposed to be concerned about her family and children. If she were to be concerned about trees, it would be in terms of firewood which she needs to provide fuel for her kitchen.

Maathai was critiquing this notion as an applauded environmental activist.

In her *We Should All Be Feminists* TEDx Talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013) has this to say: 'We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller, we say to girls, "You can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful, otherwise you would threaten the man"'.

Much of this is culturally and socially ingrained. And while culture is the lifeblood of society, and the vibrant beauty of our African cultures should be safeguarded, what does it mean that African women and African men have a culturally defined place in the set social structures? What does it mean for women and girls if the social and cultural script dictates that we are required to be secondary? Why must I accept that?

A worldview can be thought of as a way of understanding an individual or society which encompasses one's knowledge and point of view. Culture is defined as 'the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, and a way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic or social background' (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2002, pp. 9–10). Thus, an African worldview brings with it a deep appreciation for and understanding of African cultural values. According to Graham (1999), the main principles of an African-centred worldview are (1) the interconnectedness of all things, (2) the spiritual nature of human beings, (3) collective individual identity, (4) the collective/inclusive nature

of family structure, (5) the oneness of mind, body, and spirit, and (6) the value of interpersonal relationships. How can one concretise the connection between all of these aspects and the need for feminism? As a person who believes in equality, I understand that the two must seamlessly co-exist, and if concessions must be made, they should still foreground the advancement of women.

In developing my own personal worldview and dealing with the many layers within it, I had lengthy conversations with my maternal grandfather. We discussed traditional matrilineal societies, and I kept having to ask why men hold the role of chief and women continue to 'lead from behind' by influencing and supporting. Because patriarchy, to me, meant men in charge, I assumed matriarchy would mean women in charge. No. From our conversations I realised that matriarchy does not mean female domination the way patriarchy means male domination. I was disheartened to realise that there was never a place where women were truly the ones in charge; at the same time, I recognised that flipping the genders still resulted in oppression. Where was the middle ground? Where was equality? One fateful Sunday, he said:

> The many cultures on the continent must be protected and valued for the next generation, and the generation after that. At the same time, we must correct historical and systemic imbalances. We are no longer hunters nor are we warriors. The physical strength expected of the male body is not the only way and arguably is not the most effective way to succeed in our society today. My generation has done you a disservice and yours is a righteous fight. Fight it with my blessing. (Maternal grandfather, 2019)

In that short exchange, he freed me. Not because I needed his blessing, but because he said: 'Your fight is righteous'.

Through reflection, debate, and study, I have come to see the function of the statement 'Feminism is un-African' the way that Toni Morrison (1975) describes the function of racism:

> The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend 20 years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing.

As an African whose feminist awakening was prompted by Africans and who has great hopes for the advancement of the continent, I now choose to use my energy elsewhere. There are more important and impactful questions.

Conclusion: Tomorrow's Africa needs feminist leaders

What are the challenges facing Africa today? Among other issues, we are contending with the adverse impact of climate change, an energy crisis, lower than expected penetration of information and communications technology (ICT) services and benefits, limited benefits from globalisation, and instances of active political conflict and their impact. These problems have a gendered layer to them. For example, according to the UN, women in sub-Saharan Africa are more affected than men by climate change because they constitute more of the world's poor and are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods (WomenWatch, 2009). This includes agriculture and the responsibility for carrying out household chores such as collecting firewood and water, which will be made more difficult by climate change. As of October 2021, the digital divide was growing for women (Rodríguez Pulgarín & Woodhouse, 2021). That is to say that, annually, fewer women are accessing the internet; more women are therefore being deprived of its positive effects, such as educational opportunities, knowledge sharing, and employment, while their governments are being deprived of the economic growth and tax revenues their participation would produce.

Shields (2011, p. 5) states that 'to be truly transformative, the processes of leadership must be linked to the ends of equity, inclusion, and social justice'. Given these problems, a transformative leader should seek and support solutions that are linked to equity, inclusion, and social justice – explicitly a feminist mandate, especially given the gendered impact of these problems. In your pursuit of and engagement with transformative leadership, I implore you to employ feminist ideology. I will you to actively work in a way which ends sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression in all its forms. You need the perspectives of women in order to develop and inculcate effective and equitable solutions to local problems. You also need the perspectives of women in order to be fair, equitable, and honest in your leadership practices. I am not saying that all leaders must be women (but that would be a nice change). I am saying that all transformative leaders must respect and meaningfully include people of all identities in their work and teams. Expertise born of a lived experience outweighs empathy. If we intend to overcome complicated problems, our multifaceted interventions must be, among other things, gender sensitive and explicitly feminist. Transformative leaders of tomorrow, I require you to take that in.

Epilogue

Remember Emmanuel? Over the course of our studies, I wore him down, or, more accurately, after countless conversations, debates, arguments, and his own reflection and evolution as an individual, Emmanuel began to appreciate the

feminist perspective on transformative leadership. The fact is that a continent, a country, a community is only as well off as its worst-off members. Oppressing women and girls does not serve the development of communities, countries, and continents. As members of communities with valuable experiences and perspectives, women have much of value to share and a responsibility to contribute. So, as transformative leaders, let us open up and welcome them into the fold.

#WeShouldAllBeFeminists

Feminism is for everyone: Africa's leaders of tomorrow MUST be feminists to practise transformative leadership. This chapter follows my journey through feminist consciousness raising and transformative leadership training.

Questions for discussion

1. How do we embed feminist theory within transformative leadership training and discussions?
2. Can you give examples of African challenges in your context that would benefit from a feminist perspective?
3. How do we engage young boys and men in feminist transformative leadership?

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