18 *Emergent decolonial development and youth-focused leadership development programmes*

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Overview

Approximately 700 000 young Africans are exposed to some form of leadership initiative annually. This chapter explores the relationship between transformative leadership and emergent decolonial development, and analyses the African Leadership Institute's leadership programmes, classifying them into transformational or transformative, and for the latter, assessing which could be considered emergent decolonial. The results show that transformational leadership development is the dominant practice on the continent, focusing on remedying the perceived deficit of individual leadership required to build democratic and technocratic institutions. There is an urgent need to: resolve the conflict created by the governance gap caused by a lack of youth representation; remove gerontocratic forms of leadership; and create democratic institutions focused on justice, equity, and democratic rule, while still building technocratic capabilities. Transformative and emergent decolonial leadership programmes are a lot more likely to equip new leaders with this knowledge and these skill sets.

Introduction

Despite the youth representing a significant demographic group in most African countries, young Africans are rarely considered serious political agents. In Africa, a combination of high fertility rates and low life expectancy has resulted in a 'youth bulge', making it, by far, the youngest continent on the globe, and set to remain so for the next 30 years (United Nations, 2015). In fact, by 2100, Africa's youth population could be twice Europe's entire population (United Nations, 2015). The average age on the continent is 19.7 years old, in contrast to the rest of the world, where the average age is between 30 and 40 years old (United Nations, 2019). According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, about 70 per cent of the continent's population is under the age of 30, and more than one-third are between the ages of 15 and 34 (United Nations, 2019).

What is salient is that young people remain conspicuous by their absence at critical deliberations that affect their future and that of the continent. Even though the continent's population is strikingly young, its leadership remains persistently old. While only about 3 per cent of the continent's population are over the age of 65, the average age of African heads of state is 77 years of age (as

calculated by the authors in January 2020) (United Nations, 2019). This puts the average age gap between citizens and their leaders on the continent at about 48 years – just short of the *average life expectancy* on the continent.

The African political and governance landscape can be described as characterised by gerontocracy and a striking governance gap in values, experience, and understanding between those who govern and those who are governed, which has developed distrust and political instability (Amupanda, 2018). This governance gap makes the continent susceptible to power vacuums and political conflict. It is within this context that a rise in youth-led political engagement and protests over the past two decades, such as the 'Revolutions of Dignity' in North Africa; recent youth-led protest movements in Sudan, Algeria, Nigeria and Uganda; and the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa, all indicate a shifting political culture on the continent. This youth-led political engagement invariably challenges governments that are not delivering on development and are increasingly seen by young people as unfit to rule.

African youth, who are largely unburdened by traditional liberation political loyalties, have a growing collective intolerance for unqualified and corrupt leadership. As a result, the continent is witnessing a political shift in which young people reclaim their political agency through informal means. Furthermore, they are not only questioning the structures of their society, but actively demanding their reconfiguration. To put it differently, the decolonial and democratic political shifts that have taken place on the African continent in the 21st century have predominately been ground up and youth led.

During the same period, the continent was characterised as 'being on the rise' in popular media by international businesses, donors, and national communities. They sought to highlight how increased investment and increased technocratic and democratic capacity would 'save' this 'lost continent' from a period of instability. Furthermore, this rhetoric put forward the idea that the continent required a new set of leaders to accomplish this. Consequently, this period saw a rapid growth of leadership development programmes targeted at young Africans, with most of these beginning in the 2010s, during the 'Africa Rising' period (AFLI, 2018).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore whether non-partisan leadership development programmes that are targeted towards young people are focused on equipping them with skills related to transformational leadership, or whether these programmes consider their participants as conduits for decolonial development, which requires leaders equipped with skills related to transformative leadership. Many of these programmes are funded and organised by international development agencies, philanthropic foundations, and international and domestic NGOs. In order to determine the impact of transformational and transformative leadership programmes and whether either

approach may have a decolonial understanding of leadership and its impact, two questions are posed by this chapter.

The first is whether leadership development programmes across the African continent have adopted transformative leadership as a guiding approach to youth development or whether more traditional, transformational ideas inform these leadership programmes. The second is, considering that transformative leadership shares characteristics with decolonial development, whether transformative leadership development programmes are intended to create decolonial outcomes for the African continent. These questions become particularly cogent when reframing the Africa Rising narrative by placing young people as vital political agents at the centre of the development narrative. In this vein, this chapter assesses to what degree young people are being trained to contribute to decolonial development and structural change across the continent.

While understandings of leadership development, both popular and scholarly, focus on adult leadership development, there is barely any work on youth leadership development (Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018; MacNeil, 2006). With the purpose of these programmes being to nurture, equip, and disseminate young leaders across the continent, the question should be posed whether the leaders being developed are equipped to push transformative objectives that are decolonial in nature. This chapter uses an empirical analysis of 93 youth leadership initiatives from across the African continent, as identified by the African Leadership Institute (AFLI), including leadership development programmes, leadership mentoring programmes, leadership network platforms, and leadership impact platforms. This follows the categorisation in the AFLI's report of 2018, which mapped the continent's non-partisan leadership offerings. Using a framework devised by the authors, these programmes are categorised as either transformational or transformative and, from there, categorised further as being emergent decolonial in nature and output or not. Our inferences are informed by the selected initiatives' mission statements, methodological approaches, and any other publicly available information.

The ideal of ameliorating the crisis of leadership on the continent through leadership development programmes has been primarily undertaken through a transformational lens, resulting in it being the predominant type of leadership development available on the continent. While this kind of leadership training has its merits and value, we argue that so long as transformational programmes remain the predominant form of leadership training, it is less likely that the continent's youth will use this training or these platforms for systemic change.

If leadership programmes seek to do more than simply give African youth a seat at the table, assuming space is made for them, then there is an urgent need to resolve the conflict created by the governance gap caused by a lack of youth

representation; remove gerontocratic forms of leadership; and create democratic institutions focused on justice, equity, and democratic rule, while still building technocratic capabilities. This chapter will argue that transformative and emergent decolonial leadership programmes are a lot more likely to equip new leaders with this knowledge and these skill sets.

Is Africa rising or stuck in 'waithood'?

Following the backlash from *The Economist's* (2000) infamous announcement that Africa was 'hopeless', the Africa Rising narrative quickly dominated international and local rhetoric surrounding the continent and its trajectory. In the 2000s and 2010s, a narrative of Africa Rising was popularised by businesses, donors, media, and political leaders. The end of the Cold War ushered in a wave of democracy across the continent. As Mills, Obasanjo, Herbst, and Biti (2019, p. 10) write, 'The post–1990 reality of the continent is starkly different. Since then, there have been significantly more elections. By 2016, there had been 118 democratic elections, 77 undemocratic or contested elections and 77 undemocratic regime changes'. This era has likewise been described as 'Africa's Third Liberation', marking a democratic shift in which the debates that many African countries are having now around how to create and improve economic and political systems are perceived to reflect the will of their people (Mills et al., 2019).

The Africa Rising narrative became an allegory for the leaders of the continent that encouraged the belief that an improvement in governance would ultimately lead to economic growth, rising incomes, and the emergence of a new middle class (Pillay, 2015). This narrative shared a concomitant emergence with leadership development programmes on the continent targeted towards young Africans. As explained by AFLI (2018), most African leadership development initiatives that currently exist were launched during the 2010s, as the continent was emerging from a period of instability characterised by conflicts and wars.

Though many of these programmes were targeted towards young people, who are seen as conduits of change, it must be noted that the notion of youth is not a universally understood or fixed concept within the African context. While most Western, 'developed' countries limit youth to 25, Africa remains less conformed (Paalo, 2017). Countries such as Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania view 35 as the demographic limit for youth, while others such as Botswana and Zambia use 29 and 25, respectively. The African Union Youth Charter utilises the more accommodating 15 to 35 years of age to define youth (African Union Commission, 2006). However, this definition remains fluid, giving rise to questions regarding which 'youth' are targeted by leadership development programmes.

To avoid this challenge, we argue that for the African continent, rather than using a demographic definition of youth, it is more beneficial to consider youth as a social construct – an approach well suited to the African context in which youth are often conceptualised by their overall potential rather than their demographic make-up. This view is informed by Honwana's (2014, p. 2433) work on youth and waithood, in which waithood is understood as the 'prolonged period of suspension when young people's access to social adulthood is delayed or denied'. She views the youth not as a demographic group, but rather as a social construct defined by societal expectations and responsibilities (Honwana, 2014). For Honwana (2014, p. 2434), even though age may function as a means to disaggregate youth from adults, youths across the continent 'have not been able to attain the social markers of adulthood: earning a living, being independent, establishing families, providing for their offspring and other relatives, and becoming taxpayers'. Therefore, in many African contexts characterised by high youth unemployment and low educational and social prospects, it can be argued that young Africans are structurally locked into artificial waithood and out of adulthood.

Beyond the usefulness of viewing young people as conceptually defined by their ability to transition from waithood to adulthood, this framing also represents this critical stage in life as an essential window of opportunity that determines a young person's pathway towards prosperity (OECD netFWD, 2014). During this stage, young people are at risk of falling into 'poverty traps, with long-standing implications for their future health, earning potential and well-being, and that of subsequent generations' (OECD netFWD, 2014, p. 15).

In addition to being locked out of adulthood, young Africans are also structurally denied real political agency to change their circumstances. From a political perspective, waithood also represents a time to train and develop young leaders as conduits of political change. Young people in Africa face many barriers to formal political participation. One of the most conspicuous is age restrictions in political contests for elections. Considering that most African youths are eligible to vote at 18 – with the exceptions of Cameroon, Gabon, and Côte d'Ivoire – the continent's voter base is predominantly constituted by young people (AFLI, 2018). However, many young Africans never make it past the gatekeepers in party politics:

> Even though historical African liberation politics, in which many African leaders have their origins, were historically and disproportionately young and youth-led, formal politics has remained the domain of elders, mostly male, powerful and wealthy members of society. This has created a culture of the systematic exclusion of young people from political processes, debates, and decision-making. This culture is pervasive at every level of politics. (AFLI, 2020, p. 18)

From a decolonial perspective, the post–Africa Rising period provides the opportunity to realise the systemic impact that coloniality has on youth pathways, both prosperous and treacherous. Here, coloniality means the ongoing influence of colonialism that imposes a hierarchical structure of human populations, knowledge, and cosmologic life systems based on Eurocentric perspectives of the world. This hierarchy is underpinned by race and sexism as its organising principles (Grosfoguel, 2011; Walsh, 2010). Furthermore, this period of waithood provides an opportunity to delink the transition from waithood to adulthood from the need to move from the non-ideal towards the ideal.

Transformational leadership feedback within technocratic institutions

The purpose of leadership development programmes across the continent seems to be – at least upon an initial analysis – focused on either identifying young individuals who showcase particular leadership traits, or on building these traits within young people. Many of these programmes are quite explicit in their underlying objective, i.e., to address the crisis of bad leadership on the continent. These programmes represent attempts to develop an individual's current leadership traits and imbue them with skills assumed to be at a deficit within a larger political community. As argued earlier, leadership development programmes targeted at young people within the African context are often seen as an essential tool to make up for the deficit of leadership required to build both democratic and technocratic institutions. The latter is illustrated by a related growing shift towards technocracy and the demand for qualified and capable leadership on the continent. Increasing demands from African youth for capable leadership and the growing intolerance of corruption and inept political leadership have placed pressure on African governments to justify their rule through improved governance and economic performance.

This political and cultural shift is reflected in the objectives and methodologies in a growing number of leadership programmes on the continent and their predilection for equipping chosen leaders with leaderships skills, either while they acquire specialised degrees in prestigious Western and Ivy League universities, or by giving preferential treatment to those leaders who have such academic qualifications. The focus this places on developing and supporting an individual leader's qualifications and expertise incidentally prioritises their potential role within these institutions and those related to them, as well as a predilection to certain funding partners. This results in a more indirect social impact. This chapter finds that the predominant trend towards transformational leadership development on the continent marks an elitist shift, carving out a new class of young Africans, as characterised by the social capital of these leadership networks, affiliated to prestigious international institutions and influential leaders.

This trend moves these young leaders further away from their context and communities, for which these programmes are meant to be training them to serve and lead, while enabling a form of isomorphic internal feedback loop between networks of institutions of learning, donors, and alumni. These kinds of transformational leadership programmes streamline leaders through certain forms of learning and working, in order to prepare them to lead institutions of governance that are likewise aligned to the ideologies of the very same network of institutions that prepared them. Inherently, creating forms of negative feedback loops – intended to create transformational leaders who have the same education, the same form of technocratic skills and experience, and who all interact with each other – creates a self-perpetuating idea of what the ideal-type leader is for the continent.

While it is commendable and understandable for leadership programmes to develop highly qualified leaders with a particular expertise, this should not come at the cost of developing deeply rooted, community-embedded leaders who are aware of their own history and needs, and of those of the people around them.

Transformative leadership and emergent decolonial development

Unlike transformational leadership, which has been shown to be inadequate for democratic empowerment, transformative leadership provides a more appropriate tool for achieving structural societal transformation (Shields, 2010). According to Shields, transformative leadership equips individuals with the awareness of how they and others are impacted by the inequities and struggles present in society (Shields, 2010). Therefore, to be a transformative leader, one must be cognisant of the material reality of both the social and political spheres in which one functions (Shields, 2010). In comparison, transformational leadership defines leadership through a more charismatic leadership style, focusing on self-development to empower selected leaders to lead by developing individualised skills expected to impact the organisations and societies they work in. Transformational leadership places a premium on individual goals and visions instead of goals informed by a community or society.

Those who undertake transformative leadership critically reflect on how to embark on actions focused on redressing historical and contemporary wrongs and injustices, both within institutions and structurally in the larger society in which they exist, striving towards an equal playing field across its academic, social, and civic outcomes (Shields, 2010). Transformative leadership programmes prioritise ethics, positionality, and a critical view of structures of power. A transformative leadership programme will aim to empower agents of change within a community or society, prioritising the values of justice, democracy, and equity both through its methodology and in its greater purpose.

Emergent decolonial development, a conceptual tool devised by the authors, combines the theories of emergence from the field of complexity economics and decoloniality from decolonial thought. Emergence refers to the idea that specific characteristics of the behaviour of a system cannot be broken down into its constituent elements. In other words, an entity has properties its parts do not have on their own – properties or behaviours that only emerge when the parts interact as a whole, in the same way that a symphony is a collection of sounds, but a collection of sounds is not necessarily a symphony (Beinhocker, 2006). Similarly, decoloniality is derived from theories of decolonial thought primarily influenced by the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group. It refers to the understanding that decolonisation must be an ongoing process that goes beyond economic and political liberation because of the emergent nature of coloniality. Thus, emergent decolonial development creates emergent outcomes in society that challenge the nature of coloniality by initiating the emergence of decolonial outcomes within a society.

Emergent decolonial development is underpinned by Anibal Quijano's 'colonial matrix of power', and focuses on undoing coloniality's influence on four interrelated domains, namely (1) the economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labour, control of natural resources); (2) forms of authority (institutions, army); (3) control of gender and sexuality (family, education); and (4) control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education, and formation of subjectivity). Quijano (cited in Walsh, 2010) theorises that the expression of coloniality can be understood through this matrix, which provides a means of understanding coloniality's interrelated and self-perpetuating logic that entrenches forms of legitimised relations of domination; superiority/inferiority; and the historically informed structural dependence related to the movement and accumulation of wealth. Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, in order to achieve decolonial outcomes, leadership development programmes must focus on two or more of the interrelated domains in this matrix to create emergent outcomes that challenge the influence of coloniality.

The following three conditions characterise the tools and techniques proposed by the framework. The first is that the pursuit of historical and contemporary justice, preferably procedural, must underpin any intervention. That is to say, the advancement of others, when predicated on the accepted and shared form of the freedom that is universally acceptable, is only agreeable so long as the opportunity to pursue this advancement is conceivably possible for all and the outcomes of the pursuit are just. The second condition is acknowledging and accepting that any intervention is carried out within the context of the inherent conflict and violence (ontological, epistemic, and physical) resulting from coloniality within a society. Finally, the third condition necessitates an understanding of the notion of Fanonian reciprocal recognition among all individuals involved

in the intervention with the intent to create a phase transition within a society: reciprocal interactions that create 'sudden, critical turning points, in which small changes, in the context of complex systems, give rise to bifurcations and new paths of development that are self-sustaining' (Walby, 2003, p. 3).

This entails leadership development programmes equipping young people with skills related to recognising that injustices within society, specifically created and maintained by coloniality, must be rectified. However, this rectification process cannot be undertaken by pursuing an ideal world modelled on Eurocentric modernist understandings of development.

The Africa Rising narrative is one off-shoot of this form of modernist development. Therefore, from a decolonial perspective, the narrative is unsuitable as an overarching ideal that guides youth leadership development. What is required for the development of youth leadership is a sense of leadership focused on reciprocal recognition between the non-ideal and ideal that allows for creating new forms of organising and coexistence that are not reliant on Eurocentric modernist conceptions of development.

The above characteristics share certain commonalities with what Avant (2011, p. 116) describes as the difference between transformative and traditional leaders, namely that transformative leaders focus on 'democratic participation, commitment to deep and equitable social change, [and] an understanding of institutionalised power and cultural competence'. It is thus clear that transformative leadership and emergent decolonial development share various traits and characteristics.

What is less clear is whether leadership programmes that are transformative in outlook are also decolonial. Both transformative leadership and emergent decolonial development provide a means to equip young people with leadership skills focused on dismantling in order to reconstruct institutions and undo the effects of coloniality within that society, thus breaking the negative feedback loop created by transformational leadership while trying to create the emergence of new forms of leadership meant to create systemic change.

Are Africa's youth leadership offerings transformational or transformative? Empirical results

AFLI was the first to provide a holistic overview of the leadership offerings on the African continent in their 2018 report, *An Abundance of Young African Leaders, but No Seat at the Table*. The report focuses on initiatives that cater to developing young African leaders in the 18–40 age bracket and that offer 'non-formal learning opportunities…therefore [excluding] institutions of higher learning from the scope of the study, but includ[ing] initiatives offered through partnerships with such institutions', thus excluding solely scholarship-focused

programmes (AFLI, 2018, p. 1). The report categorises the initiatives into four groups:

1. **Leadership Development Programmes (Development)** have a systematic focus on individuals and a structured focus on society and community development.
2. **Leadership Mentoring Programmes (Mentoring)** have a systematic focus on individuals but are flexible and less structured in their focus on society and community development.
3. **Leadership Networking Programmes (Networking)** have an ad hoc focus on individuals and a flexible and less structured focus on society and community development.
4. **Leadership Impact Programmes (Impact)** have an ad hoc focus on individuals but a structured focus on society and community development.

Based on these definitions, the report estimates that 'approximately 700 000 young Africans' are exposed to some form of leadership initiative on an annual basis (AFLI, 2018, p. 1). The 2018 AFLI report identifies 105 leadership initiatives across the continent. At the time of writing, that figure had been updated to 93 programmes, eliminating those that were no longer in place and adding new and relevant programmes. Of these, two have since been discontinued, while others have been mainstreamed from multiple programmes into one or fewer.

The dataset's major distribution highlights include the majority of leadership offerings falling within the Development category, at 42 per cent, while the majority in terms of participants or fellows per annum, at 448 240 (63 per cent), fell within the Impact category (AFLI, 2018, p. 2).

From here, these leadership programmes were assessed to ascertain if they were transformational or transformative according to their objectives and methodological approach. One of the clearest differentiators between a transformative and transformational leadership programme is leadership development as a social rather than an individual investment. Transformative programmes are primarily community-focused and collectively owned, with a community feedback loop. The transformative leadership programmes define leadership by its commitment and contributions to the needs of leaders' specific social context and an individual's social responsibility to their context.

It is important to clarify that while both transformational and transformative leadership programmes recognise and develop young Africans as political agents of change, the task of distinguishing between these approaches is not a moral or hierarchical one. Instead, this distinction aids in identifying those programmes that are determined to be emergent decolonial. Emergent decolonial programmes, in a similar fashion to transformative leadership, place a premium on societal change, but with a particular focus on dismantling societal structures that perpetuate coloniality.

This study has certain methodological constraints and limitations. First, it did not use primary data from the programmes identified by AFLI, nor did it seek to find a comprehensive overview of all leadership programmes across the continent. The analysis was limited by the prior research undertaken by AFLI. Second, while care was taken to ensure that the programmes analysed were both operational and functional, this may not be true for many of the programmes that still provide secondary data. Lastly, the study excluded leadership development programmes that utilise academic scholarship as the core tenet of the programmes' activities. Such programmes would not be comparable to non-scholarship programmes because of the impetus for academic achievement being a primary driver of these programmes, whereas the programmes examined here had a more exclusive focus on leadership development.

In order to identify these programmes, criteria were set up based on the emergent decolonial framework. The first criterion was that the programmes must focus on two areas of the colonial matrix of power to confront the areas in which coloniality often expresses itself directly. Second, all emergent decolonial programmes use justice as a guiding principle. This principle of justice, as stated earlier, draws from philosophical conceptions of procedural justice by John Rawls (1971). For the purpose of this study, this second criterion was adjusted to focus on the role of historical and contemporary injustices that can be linked to coloniality, and whether the programme equips participants with the skills to recognise these injustices.

The third criterion required the programmes to focus on creating reciprocal recognition among their participants – that is to say, recognition that seeks to view the understanding of oneself vis-à-vis the world in which one exists as inextricably linked to coloniality but without the intent of viewing oneself as inferior. Therefore, the intent of these programmes is to create locally informed and globally influential forms of leadership, rather than African leaders who mimic particular ideals and structures associated with Western centres of knowledge.

The final criterion was the understanding that programmes must embrace feedback loops in their activities to create emergent forms of leadership. This means that programmes should demonstrate that localised leadership interventions are aimed at learning from feedback to create new forms of leadership ontologies and epistemologies, which form the phenomenological understanding of leadership at a local and community level. The evolution of leadership within this context creates a feedback loop that this study argues creates forms of emergent leadership more resistant to coloniality than the forms engendered by programmes utilising transformational leadership. Applying this set of criteria to the 93 identified leadership programmes for young Africans, 59 (64 per cent) were identified as transformational, while 33 (36 per cent) were identified as transformative (Figure 18.1).

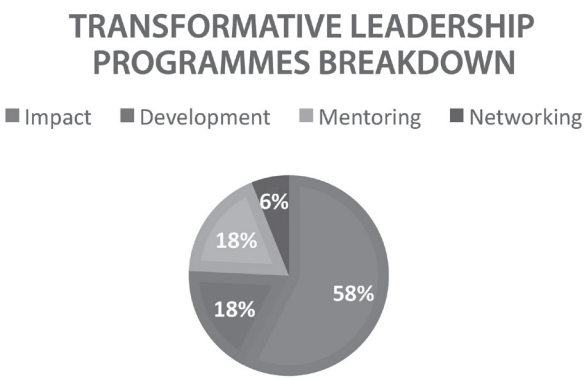
Figure 18.1 *Classification of African leadership programmes according to whether they are transformational or transformative*

Source: Authors

Most transformational programmes, (27 of the 59, or 46 per cent) were classified within the Leadership Development Programme (Development) category. This aligns well with the transformational criteria given that the 2018 AFLI report defines Development as having a primary and 'systematic focus on individuals' and their self-development as leaders, with a methodology of 'high intensity in engaging individual participants' (AFLI, 2018, p. 12), and a secondary focus on society and community development. Of the remaining transformational programmes, 16 (27 per cent) were categorised as Leadership Impact Programmes (Impact), 9 (15 per cent) as Leadership Networking Programmes (Networking), and 7 (11 per cent) as Leadership Mentoring Programmes (Mentoring).

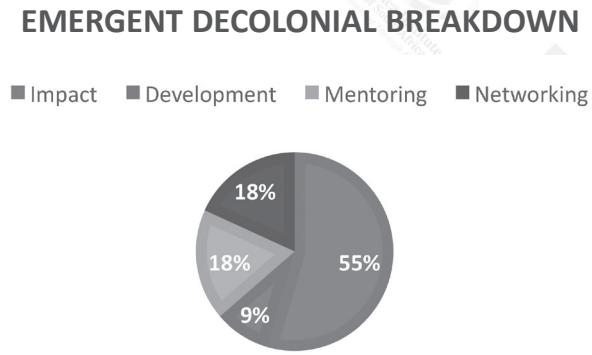
In contrast, Impact accounted for the majority of transformative programmes (Figure 18.2), with 19 of the 33 (58 per cent) categorised as Impact. Development and Mentoring each accounted for 6 out of 33 (18 per cent) of the transformative programmes, while Networking only accounted for 2 out of 33 (6 per cent) of the transformative programmes.

Figure 18.2 *Classification of transformative leadership programmes*



Source: Authors

Figure 18.3 *Classification of emergent decolonial leadership programmes*



Source: Authors

Of all 93 programmes, 11 (12 per cent) were identified as emergent decolonial, with 6 (55 per cent) of these programmes classified as Impact. The Mentoring and Networking programmes accounted for 2 (18 per cent) each, with only one (9 per cent) Development programme identified as emergent decolonial (Figure 18.3). What is of particular interest is that a third of all transformative programmes are emergent decolonial, reaffirming the relationship identified in the qualitative analysis.

Concluding thoughts: Overturning the table

It is clear from the results that most youth leadership programmes are focused on transformational forms of leadership. This is unsurprising, as leadership programmes created during the Africa Rising period appear to have been created with the logic of filling technocratic gaps within society and building up leadership capacities within institutions. Improving institutions through leadership implies that it is not the institutions themselves that are at fault, but rather those who run them. Therefore, transformational leadership development, which places a preponderance of emphasis on individual endeavours to transform organisations, has become the dominant practice on the continent, focusing on remedying the perceived deficit of leadership required to build democratic and technocratic institutions.

The trend towards this kind of leadership development marks an elitist shift. It moves leaders further away from the context and communities they are meant to be serving and leading, and into an isomorphic internal feedback loop between these networks of institutions of learning, donors, and alumni. While it is commendable and understandable for leadership programmes to develop highly qualified and expert leaders, this should not come at the cost of developing leaders who are deeply rooted and embedded in their communities, aware of their own history and needs, and of the need to actively engage therein.

Yet, the role of transformative leadership programmes across the continent remains critical. The recent youth-led movements on the continent indicate a desire to go beyond improving governance and to move towards creating structural social change informed by communities' needs and motives. A third of the transformative programmes were identified as emergent decolonial forms of leadership, indicating a relationship between the desire for structural change and decolonial change. This, of course, is primarily driven by the criteria set by the study. However, it does give rise to the question of whether transformative leadership can be used as a conduit for the pursuit of emergent decolonial development.

The Leadership Impact Programmes, eponymously driven by social impact, were, unsurprisingly, the category with the highest number of identified transformative programmes (at 19.58 per cent) and the highest number of emergent decolonial programmes (at 6.18 per cent) in the dataset of 93 leadership programmes. The AFLI report describes the Impact methodology as having a 'low intensity in engaging individual participants but high intensity in directing output, outcomes and impact on society' (AFLI, 2018, p. 16). Some keywords associated with Impact by the 2018 AFLI report include 'Advocacy; Community; Impact; Empower' (AFLI, 2018, p. 16). This description mirrors that of transformative leadership and highlights a fundamental truth about leadership: that it is inherently social – there is no leader outside the context of a group of people to lead. Developing leaders without input and engagement from those they are meant to lead, and divorced from the context in which they lead, seems to strip leadership development of its intended outcomes.

As with the theory of emergent decolonial development, these programmes focus on creating leaders who are able to see themselves as change agents who determine their self-consciousness in a primarily socially informed manner. These leaders do not require an eventual folding into the universal concept of the ideal, namely Western modernity. With reciprocal interactions, these programmes are focused on generating small changes in leadership capacity intended to create critical turning points in participants' understanding of society in order to generate new paths of self-sustaining change (Walby, 2003). This seems a far more sustainable approach to developing leadership on the continent with a view to realising the continent's potential, and in terms of social and economic development, so that its people may prosper, as per the Africa Rising narrative that inspired so many of these programmes.

However, what is surprising is that of the 33 Leadership Development Programmes, only one was defined as emergent decolonial. There appear to be two primary reasons for this. The first is that foreign foundations and organisations fund the vast majority of these programmes. This is not to imply that foreign funding will lead to outcomes that are not decolonial. Instead,

funding of this sort implies that the programmes' mandate, if determined by the funding type, may be influenced by an agenda that is not fully cognisant of the structural and systemic injustices that are prevalent across the continent and are underpinned by colonial legacies. Moreover, foreign funding for leadership programmes on the continent tends to prioritise an internal feedback loop between operating institutions, donors, and alumni, and thus tends to be further removed from the immediate leadership context.

Overall, this study reveals that the ideal of ameliorating the leadership crisis on the continent through leadership development programmes has been undertaken primarily through a transformational approach. These programmes maintain the belief that the crisis will be solved by creating several thousand technocratically qualified leaders. However, there is evidence that there are programmes utilising a more transformative lens, with their primary focus being on generating leaders through platforms centred on creating social impact. These programmes pursue their work through a combination of approaches focused on revitalising institutions with collectively held decolonial values and communally shared leadership values and fostering leadership that is community-focused and collectively owned, accountable, and which actively engages with those it claims to lead; is socially and ethically grounded; is led by agents of change; and is focused on delivering on the principles of justice, equity, and democracy. All of which is both transformative and emergent decolonial.

There is an overall value in having both transformative and emergent decoloniality trained leaders on the continent. However, the strength of the Africa Rising narrative and the ways in which that thinking has resulted in the focus on transformational leadership remains a challenge. However, this should not be read as a rejection of transformational leadership on the continent. Instead, we argue that as long as transformational programmes remain the predominant form of leadership training, the continent's youth will be unlikely to use these programmes to create systemic change. It is more likely that young leaders trained in transformative approaches, as self-identified agents of change embedded in their social context, will pursue transformative modes of organising through non-institutional means.

If there is a desire for leadership programmes to equip young people with the skills to find themselves with a seat at the table, then transformational programmes remain a necessity. However, as Samson Itodo, Convener of the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign, importantly argues, if this desire is informed by the need to renew 'the faith of young people in democracy as a system that guarantees the participation of all citizens in shaping how their society is governed', then it is equally essential to ensure that these attempts are aimed at 'reclaiming the State and breaking the vicious cycle of recycling old politicians in public office' (AFLI, 2020, p. 19).

In order to reclaim the state, there is an urgent need to resolve the conflict created by the governance gap caused by a lack of youth representation; remove gerontocratic forms of leadership; and create democratic institutions focused on justice, equity, and democratic rule, while still building technocratic capabilities. Furthermore, if it is the desire of leadership programmes to equip young people with the skills to overturn the table and reassess its value and purpose, it falls on these programmes to equip their participants with transformative and emergent decolonial skill sets.

#EmergentDecolonialSkillsNeeded

Every year, approximately 700 000 young Africans experience leadership initiatives that aim to build better democratic and technocratic institutions, but transformative leadership and emergent decolonial skills training are mostly lacking.

Questions for discussion

1. Do you agree that the leadership crisis on the continent has become associated with the need for technocratic capabilities and qualifications? Why do you think this has happened?
2. Is there a need to develop decolonial approaches in leadership development on the continent? What might these look like?
3. To what extent are feedback loops practised in leadership programmes – between communities, alumni, donors, and institutions? What value might they produce?
4. How does the concept of emergent decolonial development further our understanding of transformative leadership? What are emergent decolonial development skills?

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