

# 24 *Transformative social innovation leadership, an ubuntu-infused approach for future African public sector leaders*

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## Overview

A just and equitable society requires leaders who achieve transformative change at individual, institutional, and societal levels. While transformative leadership exists in Africa, its praxis often fades in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments. Transformative leadership can be improved through transformative social innovation and African philosophies such as ubuntu. An interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research, and content analysis of literature concerning transformative social innovation, transformative leadership, and the philosophy of ubuntu was used to conceptualise the transformative social innovation leader for the African public sector. This chapter recommends how African leaders can achieve transformative change that is grounded in values of justice and equity, and identifies the character traits and abilities necessary for transformative social innovation leadership in Africa's public sector. Transformative social innovation leadership, underpinned by the values of ubuntu, is a contemporary phenomenon that is contextually appropriate for preparing African leaders for a transformative change role.

## Introduction

Transformative change at institutional and societal levels should be inherent to the role of public sector leaders in the 21st century. Such transformative change is grounded in challenging dominant formal and informal institutions at societal and institutional levels that result in oppressive, hegemonic, and inequitable social and material disparities. Fundamental to leading transformative change is challenging these dominant institutions by disrupting the norm and through a narrative change about the resource use, practices, beliefs, and routines of dominant institutions (Dias & Partidário, 2019). Transformative change from a narrative change perspective depends on transformative leadership, which also becomes the precursor for such change. The volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments in which public sector leaders operate globally, the institutional challenges confronting public sectors, and the societal challenges that public sectors must address make transformative leadership a necessity of the leadership landscape. This necessity is no different on the African continent.

From Africa's challenges of poverty, growing populations, resource constraints, economic recessions, and global pandemics such as Covid-19, it is apparent that deliberate acts of transformative public sector leadership are needed that can construct and implement transformative change. However, the praxis of transformative leadership often disappears in the milieu of the VUCA environments facing Africa's public sector leaders. Leadership that has become tantamount to moral dilemmas of corruption and unethical leadership, underdevelopment entrenched in structural and social disparities, and injustices as well as inequalities exacerbate this milieu. This chapter does not dispute that it may be challenging to enact transformative leadership in African public sector organisations, but proposes that transformative leadership's praxis can be improved through transformative social innovation (TSI) principles and African philosophies such as ubuntu – a worldview focused on collective action and social harmony (see chapters 2, 8, 22, and 23 in this volume).

Philosophies of ubuntu, which may be more appealing in the African context, and TSI share parallels with the theoretical underpinnings of transformative leadership and transformative processes in which such leaders and followers engage. These parallels, which demonstrate the convergence between transformative leadership, TSI, and ubuntu leadership, are contrary to the traditional top-down and top-heavy forms of leadership that persisted through the 20th and into the 21st century (Pearce & Manz, 2005). It may also be more contextually appropriate to avert the current transformative leadership deficit and prepare future African leaders for their transformative change role. Against this background, this chapter applied a qualitative research approach through a thematic content analysis of documents about relevant research concerning TSI, transformative leadership, and ubuntu. By using a range of electronic search engines, the concepts of TSI, transformative leadership, and ubuntu were applied as search terms and adapted as required to identify research that could be included in a narrative literature review. From this content analysis of documents – such as peer-reviewed journal articles, published research, and government documents – emerging, prevalent, and common themes regarding the phenomenon were explored.

Using the adopted qualitative approach, this chapter elucidates the theory and praxis that are relevant in remedying the current African leadership deficit and preparing future African public sector leaders.

### **Theoretical underpinnings of transformative leadership**

This section explicates the theory and praxis that are relevant in remedying the current African leadership deficit and in preparing future African leaders, through a discussion of transformative social innovation theory and the conceptualising of transformative leadership and ubuntu.

### *Transforming through transformative social innovation*

Unger (2015, p. 233) argues that 'social innovation is important because the established ways in which society provides for its own revision never exhaust the ways in which it can be changed'. Although not considered a traditional leadership theory, transformative social innovation theory is part of the theoretical work and praxis that could underpin leadership from a transformative perspective at individual, institutional, and societal levels. This chapter deems TSI relevant for the praxis of transformative leadership and using ubuntu philosophy.

Transformative social innovation is derived from transformative social innovation theory, which is grounded in the concepts of social innovation and transformative change. This theory emphasises how social innovations could give effect to transformative change at institutional and societal levels (Strasser, De Kraker, & Kemp 2019). As such, a mutual dependency exists between transformative change, which is necessary for social innovation, and social innovation, which results in transformative change (Dias & Partidário, 2019). Within the framework of transformative social innovation theory, social innovation, which is underpinned by changing social relations, is hinged on forming new social relations that result in 'new ways of organising, framing, doing and knowing' in a particular context (Pel et al., 2020, p. 1). To this end, organising could include modes of governance, decision-making, and rules; framing encompasses vision, attaching meaning, and conversational commitments; doing embraces material commitments, new ways of practice, and applying technologies; while knowing entails appraisal, learning, competence, and cognitive resources (Chilvers & Longhurst, 2015; Haxeltine et al., 2015).

Within transformative social innovation theory, transformative social innovation is defined as a process during which social innovation contributes to transformative change and drives systemic and relational changes by replacing, altering, reforming, or challenging dominant formal and informal institutions in a specific context (Avelino et al., 2019; Cipolla et al., 2017; Dias & Partidário, 2019; Haxeltine et al., 2017; Pel et al., 2020). Some authors also classify this application of social innovation as disruptive when it aims to augment transformative capacity in a context by changing beliefs, resources, and routines (Dias & Partidário, 2019). Transformative capacity refers to how individuals and organisations can transform themselves and society through deliberate actions (Ziervogel, Cowen, & Ziniades, 2016).

Significantly, transformative social innovation theory elucidates how those who participate in social innovation through adaptive strategies challenge dominant formal and informal institutions (Pel et al., 2020). Informal and formal institutions employ their own values, norms, rules, discourses, and conventions, which enable or deter developing social relations, as well as established patterns of organising, doing, framing, and knowing (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Lowndes

& Roberts, 2013; Strasser et al., 2019). Through this process of developing and changing social relations and challenging institutions, TSI is underpinned by connecting people, ideas, and activities for a narrative change in a specific social or material context (Chilvers & Longhurst, 2015; Pel, Wallenborn, & Bauler, 2016).

### *Leading through transformative leadership*

As John Maxwell asserts: 'Why you lead and the way you lead is important. They define you, your leadership, and ultimately your contribution' (Maxwell Leadership Certified Team, n.d., para. 4). While some authors derive the concept of transformative leadership from the work of Burns (1978), Bass (1985), and Conger and Kanungo (1987), for others, this concept originated from transformational leadership (Langlois, 2011). The concept of transformative leadership is, however, considered to be different from other forms of leadership, among which is transformational leadership (Langlois, 2011; Stephenson, 2011). This distinction emanates from its emphasis on equitable change in social conditions and material disparities through democratic processes (Langlois, 2011; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Its emphasis on equitable change, which is also considered transformative, is evident in its two theoretical propositions and supporting tenets (Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020).

Transformative leadership theory's first theoretical proposition accentuates the individual and private good (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). The second theoretical proposition highlights addressing the public good through civic life, citizenship, and democracy to strengthen a democratic society with the participation of caring and knowledgeable citizens (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Stephenson, 2011; Weiner, 2011). These two theoretical propositions highlight that transformative leadership theory intends to benefit the collective and individual good (Shields & Hesbol, 2020).

Supporting tenets of transformative leadership theory comprise moral courage, public and private good, distributive power, emancipation, equity, democracy, new knowledge frameworks and mindsets, equitable change, interconnectedness, interdependence, and global awareness (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Some of these tenets resonate with what some authors regard as key values of transformative leadership, which include democracy, justice, equity, emancipation, and liberation (Cooper, 2009; Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2011). The theoretical propositions and supporting tenets of transformative leadership theory highlight this theory as an ethical leadership form that is rooted in an agenda of activism and moral courage (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields, 2010), but is also aimed at transformation at individual, organisational, and societal levels (Shields, 2010).

## *Ubuntu*

The values and ethics of ubuntu are spread over the African continent and its application is prevalent in the day-to-day life of communities, cultures, and tribes in East, central, southern and West Africa (Chedondo, 2019). These values include solidarity, forgiveness, honesty, generosity, compassion, hospitality, justice, love, respect, responsibility, and kindness (Bongmba, 2014; Chedondo, 2019; Mayanja, 2013; Tutu, 2000, cited in Mayanja, 2013). Ubuntu, a word from the Nguni languages denoting humanness, is rooted in relatedness, promoting the collective good, love, respect for human dignity, and prioritising the rights of others (Bongmba, 2014; Chedondo, 2019; Mayanja, 2013). The concept of ubuntu is captured in the aphorism 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti, 1969, cited in Mayanja, 2013, p. 121). This means that what a person becomes, and their individual and collective worth, forms by living in communion with other people (Bongmba, 2014; Mayanja, 2013). This implies that a person's existence and worth are centred on their interconnected social and individual relations to their community and broader society (Bongmba, 2014; Mayanja, 2013). Although ubuntu highlights the importance of community, it does not diminish an individual's worth (Bongmba, 2014). Communal or collective worth and good are therefore just as important in the praxis of ubuntu as the contribution of each person (Chedondo, 2019).

What can be derived from the philosophy of ubuntu is that a leader represents the welfare and collective will of their people and followers during decision-making and the tasks that they undertake (Bongmba, 2014). This occurs through the ubuntu leader petitioning the conscience of their followers based on a culture of community that forms the basis of sharing common goals, completing tasks, and collective decision-making through dialogue, interaction, and consultation (Chedondo, 2019). In the context of completing tasks, the leader's success is attributed to the collective, with an emphasis on community and mutual interaction. This is distinctly different from traditional leadership contexts, which are predicated on success being solely apportioned to the leader (Chedondo, 2019).

## **Juxtaposing parallel themes**

Through a thematic content analysis, this section juxtaposes six parallels underpinning the praxis of transformative leadership, TSI, and ubuntu evident in the literature. They are (1) facilitating change, (2) democratic decision-making, (3) relations, (4) individual and collective empowerment, (5) the individual and collective good, and (6) the values of equity and justice. These themes are underpinned by ubuntu philosophies, and are considered fundamental in operationalising TSI as an approach to future African public sector leadership.

### *Facilitating change*

The goal of transformative leadership in facilitating change is equitable change in social conditions and material disparities (Langlois, 2011; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). The literature on transformative leadership suggests that such equitable change is driven from an individual as well as a collective level at institutional and societal levels (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Instead of equitable change, the literature on TSI refers to transformative change, which, similarly to transformative leadership, emphasises driving such change at individual and collective levels (Strasser et al., 2019). The goal of both transformative leadership and TSI is to drive equitable and transformative change (Langlois, 2011; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). In the same way, ubuntu leadership facilitates change at both individual and societal levels through the values of equity and justice, of which the latter challenges social structures that result in marginalising individuals (Bongmba, 2014; Chedondo, 2019).

### *Democratic decision-making*

Concerning the theme of democratic decision-making, democracy is an important tenet of transformative leadership and facilitates the latter through democratic structures where the leader is also led by their followers, and, in turn, those who are led also become leaders (Brown, Ekoue, & Goodban, 2019; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Weiner, 2003). Hence, transformative leaders not only drive transformative and equitable change, but also sustain such change through how they lead their followers (Bennis & Nanus, cited in Caldwell et al., 2012). For TSI, democratic decision-making is embedded in alternative forms of decision-making such as negotiation and compromise (Pel et al., 2020). Similarly to transformative leadership and transformative social innovation theory, ubuntu leadership is embedded in principles of democratic decision-making through collective decision-making, dialogue, interaction, and consultation (Chedondo, 2019).

### *Relations*

In transformative leadership, the relations between leaders and followers are premised on dialogue as opposed to hierarchical relations (Weiner, 2003). The literature highlights that TSI includes relations concerning social innovation initiatives, network formation, institutional change, and the sociomaterial context (Pel et al., 2020). The pivot of TSI is forming social relations that can result in these new practices to effect systemic and relational changes where innovation and transformative change are required. Similarly to transformative leaders and TSI, ubuntu is grounded in relations. Ubuntu places a high premium on an individual's existence through their social and individual relations to their community and the broader society (Bongmba, 2014; Mayanja, 2013).

### *Individual and collective empowerment*

The literature on transformative leadership does not refer to empowerment per se as part of its praxis, although transformative leaders are described as playing a key role in nudging followers' participation in challenging the status quo. They do this by reconstructing and deconstructing cultural and or social knowledge frameworks that result in inequity, unequal power distribution, and individual privilege based on social context (Bieneman, 2011; Jones, Harris, & Santana, cited in Caldwell et al., 2012; Langlois, 2011; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). The TSI literature illustrates that the level of participation facilitated by transformative leaders equates to creating an enabling environment for empowerment at an individual and collective level. With reference to empowerment, TSI aims to create an environment that allows individuals and the collective to become empowered by participating in achieving goals through TSI initiatives (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Pel et al., 2020). Fundamental to this is how the needs of individuals and the collective, such as relatedness, competence, and autonomy, are met, which can occur through new ways of knowing and doing in a particular context. The ubuntu literature relates empowerment to how individuals are enabled to be hospitable, generous, loving, and forgiving (Tutu, 2000, cited in Mayanja, 2013). Similarly to transformative leadership, this literature points out that the application of empowerment through ubuntu is also rooted in relatedness (Chedondo, 2019; Mayanja, 2013).

### *Individual and collective good*

The transformative leader's focus on individual and public (referred to as collective) good is evident in the theoretical propositions and supporting tenets of public and private good (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Transformative leadership's focus on the individual good translates into how leaders facilitate equitable opportunities for individuals at an institutional level by challenging dominant formal and informal institutions. In turn, transformative leaders also play a role in nudging their followers at an institutional level to contribute to the collective good, which occurs through transformative and equitable change (Brown et al., 2019; Shields, 2010; Williams, 2019). The collective good is located in a transformative leader's concern for achieving equitable change in a wider societal context by driving such change from individual, institutional, and societal levels (Brown et al., 2019; Cooper, 2009; Shields, 2010; Stephenson, 2011; Williams, 2019). Compared to transformative leadership, TSI's focus on the individual and collective good is found in how individuals and organisations, through their deliberate actions, can transform themselves and society (Ziervogel et al., 2016). Comparably to transformative leadership and TSI, ubuntu is also rooted in promoting the individual and collective good (Chedondo, 2019; Mayanja, 2013). Although the literature on ubuntu does not articulate it as a 'good', the worth of the individual and community is considered equally important as part of its

praxis (Bongmba, 2014). For ubuntu, the relationship between the individual and community or society forms the crux of achieving individual and communal worth. That worth or good can be translated into the individual and collective good that the ubuntu leader represents (Bongmba, 2014).

### *Values of equity and justice*

Key values of transformative leadership include democracy, equity, and justice (Cooper, 2009; Hewitt et al., 2014; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2011). These values are inherent to the praxis of transformative leadership where leaders and followers drive equitable and transformative change at individual, collective, and societal levels. They are also attributed to the leader's role in promoting justice and democracy, as well as questioning the inequitable use of power (Brown et al., 2019; Shields, 2010; Williams, 2019). Although the literature on TSI does not explicitly allude to these as values, they can be considered to be part of its praxis. Democracy is inherent in the alternative forms of decision-making that are entrenched in negotiation, compromise, and sociocracy (Pel et al., 2020). Justice and equity are facilitated through challenging dominant formal institutions that encroach on or prevent achieving transformative change (Strasser et al., 2019; Pel et al., 2020). Justice and equity are also achieved through changes in the broader sociomaterial context that occurs through transformative change that underpins TSI (Pel et al., 2020). The literature highlights that justice and equity are also present in the praxis of ubuntu through prioritising the rights of others, which could be at individual, institutional, or organisational levels (Bongmba, 2014). Such justice occurs through challenging social structures that result in the marginalising of individuals. Other values of ubuntu include solidarity, generosity, hospitality, forgiveness, honesty, compassion, kindness, love, and forgiveness (Mayanja, 2013).

### **A renaissance of transformative social innovation leadership**

Africa's development challenges merit a renaissance of public sector leadership that devises solutions through transformative change in collaboration with African people, institutions, and societies. For this renaissance, these leaders need not only to lead through transformative change, but to serve through the change that they bring about at individual, institutional, and societal levels. This type of leadership places the collective and communal welfare at the centre of transformative change, and embraces self and others through such change. Against the backdrop of the parallel themes that emerged from juxtaposing TSI, transformative leadership, and ubuntu, this section provides recommendations that underscore the praxis for a renaissance of TSI leadership in a 21st-century African public sector. This praxis is captured in the character traits and abilities that the TSI leader needs to lead for transformative change.

### *Character traits of TSI leaders*

The character traits of the TSI leader distinguish them from other leaders. These traits are needed to sustain transformative change in an African public sector that contributes to creating an equitably just society through services, programmes, policies, and strategic priorities. Traits that reflect the character of this leader include their values, services, and relations, as discussed in the remainder of this section.

Values are proposed as part of the praxis to operationalise the theme of justice and equity. The literature highlights that a TSI leader is a person who should fight for justice as well as equity. It can therefore be deduced that the TSI leader's character should include these values. The praxis of these values is twofold and distinguishes this leader from other leaders. In the first place, these values should be visible in the actions and motives that drive the TSI leader and followers. These actions and motives can be regarded as the character of the TSI leader. At an individual level, the values of a TSI leader should be driven by a conscience that convinces them of the extent to which their actions, motives, and drive for transformative change promote justice and equity. In essence, it can be argued that a TSI leader should lead themselves through these values. It is incumbent upon TSI leaders, in exercising these values, to lead themselves and others from a place of asking whether their actions, motives, and anticipated transformative change will result in justice and equity at institutional and societal levels. These values are therefore the starting point of leading and serving for TSI leadership. If TSI leaders cannot lead themselves through these values, it will be difficult to lead others and achieve transformative change at institutional and societal levels.

Significantly, these values should also be present in how TSI leaders serve their followers and implement transformative change. Therefore, these values should be tangible in the transformative change that TSI leaders drive. These TSI leaders look after the interests and needs of others through their leadership and how they serve through valuing justice and equity. Through these values, TSI leaders become benefactors and protectors of the needs and interests of others. Thus, tangible outcomes of the transformative change brought about by these leaders should result in justice and equity. It can therefore be deduced that there is a direct relationship between the values of the TSI leader and their service.

Service is proposed as part of the praxis to operationalise the theme of the individual and collective good that occurs in parallel in transformative leadership, TSI, and ubuntu. The service (transformative change) of these leaders lies in the authority with which they exercise these values and challenge dominant formal and informal institutions. The service of these leaders is therefore value-driven, and they become custodians of driving transformative change through these values. In this role, this service should be situated in the actions and efforts

undertaken to meet the needs of others. These could include providing aid, guidance, and assistance in attaining justice and equity.

TSI leaders, therefore, are designated as the drivers of transformative change for the benefit of the collective good, and not for their own gain. They should operate as servant leaders and approach their service by being proactive in identifying the needs of their followers and others at institutional and societal levels. They should also consider approaches and strategies that could be employed by them, their followers, and others to address these needs.

Fostering affirming and constructive relationships is proposed as part of the praxis to operationalise the parallel theme of relations. The character of the TSI leader will include the capacity to embed the values of justice and equity in all their relations. The integrity of the TSI leader's relations should therefore not only be grounded in transformative change, but also in embarking on relations that result in justice and equity at individual, institutional, and societal levels. In upholding these values and principles, how this leader interacts with followers and others should encourage them to uphold these values.

By way of example, they should be cognisant and considerate of the views of others. In this way, the TSI leader applies democratic principles in how they lead their relations through dialogue and negotiation, and in creating an enabling environment where followers and others are part of decision-making on transformative change. This will allow them to be instrumental in contributing to empowering individuals and the collective to construct and deconstruct transformative change based on values of justice and equity.

Significantly, in their relations with their followers and others, a TSI leader is not only a leader but a co-labourer and servant. The latter underscores the aspect of servant leadership in achieving transformative change. Intrinsically, through their relations, these leaders are cognisant that their achievements and the transformative change that is required are dependent on their relations with others. An interdependent relationship with followers and others supports actions towards challenging dominant formal and informal institutions and facilitating transformative change, and is fundamental in empowering individuals and the collective to participate in transformative change.

### *Abilities of TSI leaders*

The abilities of TSI leaders are the skills required by them to accomplish transformative change through justice and equity. These abilities, as expounded on in this section, include being a provocateur of transformative change; acting as a resource mobiliser and distributor; establishing transformative networks; and igniting narrative changes, which involves shifting values and perceptions by focusing on accurate and empowering stories about culture and society.

Being a provocateur of transformative change is proposed as part of the praxis to operationalise the parallel theme of facilitating change. The TSI leader should become a TSI provocateur and, as such, provoke and foster transformative change for a just, inclusive, and equitable society. In this context, 'provocateur' has a positive connotation. It refers to challenging the status quo in dominant formal and informal institutions and promoting justice and equity. This role as provocateur is consistent with the disruptive role that social innovators assume in disrupting the norm in relation to resource use, practices, beliefs, and routines concerning dominant institutions. However, such provocation is only possible by being aware of and identifying practices that contradict justice and equity at institutional and societal levels. Thus, where the need for transformative change is identified, the TSI leader should be able to entice others to participate in the processes that will be undertaken to implement such changes. Enticing others requires creating an enabling environment for decision-making that allows others to influence solutions and decisions regarding transformative change. TSI leaders are not limited to merely provoking others to participate in transformative change; inherent in being a provocateur is to also be an agent of transformative change. Through this, the provocateur inspires others to be part of such transformative change and to uphold values of justice and equity. The provocateur also highlights to individuals, institutions, and stakeholders how their individual goals and efforts can become shared goals that support the cause for a just and equitable society driven by transformative change.

The proposed aspect of the praxis to operationalise the parallel theme of relations is establishing transformative networks. In this regard, TSI leaders should identify and leverage networks that can contribute to achieving transformative change at all levels of society. These networks could include researchers, communities, community-based organisations, NGOs, policy-makers, and advocacy groups. TSI leaders should therefore be strategic in identifying networks that can contribute the required skills, expertise, and resources to build towards transformative change. While these networks may not necessarily share the values of justice and equity, of importance is what they bring to the transformative change process and challenging the status quo. Further, TSI leaders also build relationships by bringing others with a common interest in justice and equity into connection with each other to challenge dominant forces. Of significance about these networks is that TSI leaders can tap into a broad pool of expertise that can be utilised to address transformative change. Networks can provide versatility and a variety of innovative approaches and perspectives on solutions to societal problems. Moreover, the networks can share best practices concerning how to succeed in driving transformative change and to lead through values of justice and equity.

In relation to the praxis to operationalise the parallel themes of facilitating change at the individual and collective levels, the proposal is to mobilise and

distribute resources. Public sector resource constraints make it difficult to drive transformative change from an institutional level. In light of this, a TSI leader should be able to find and mobilise the required resources for driving and implementing transformative change beyond their own and institutional resource frameworks. This leader should lead a strategy for resource mobilisation with clear goals as to how these resources will be linked to transformative change. Finding and mobilising resources can take place through researching, pursuing, and engaging external relationships, networks, and stakeholders who have resources and are willing to contribute them for the purposes of transformation. This could require bargaining and negotiating for the resources and about how they would be utilised. The TSI leader also plays an instrumental role in how resources are distributed for transformative change. Hence, this leader should facilitate resource distribution through the inputs of the collective and for the collective good, which will indirectly contribute to empowerment.

As described earlier, igniting narrative change involves modifying or replacing the socially constructed ideas and beliefs of a society that maintain inequity and injustice. Nurturing the development of narrative change is proposed as a significant element of the praxis to operationalise the parallel themes of facilitating change as well as individual and collective empowerment. The TSI leader ignites a pathway that supports a narrative change, which should ultimately result in transformative change. This pathway would include considering what types of actions are required for disrupting the norm, and questioning dominant formal and informal institutions about resource use, practices, beliefs, and routines. Although the leader plays a prominent role in leading this narrative change, this should allow for individual and collective empowerment by being an inclusive process embedded in democracy. It should allow followers and others equal opportunities to influence the narrative, provide direction, and determine the discourse about constructing the preferred narrative for transformative changes. As such, the pathway and discourse for a narrative change would involve inclusive co-planning, co-designing, co-delivery, and co-evaluation. Central to igniting this pathway is to connect the right people, ideas, resources, and activities. In the end, the pathway should lead to processes of renewal that would support and sustain transformative change, and that can be embedded in new policies, regulations, and procedures that serve to reverse normative, hegemonic formal and informal dominant institutions.

## Conclusion

Transformative social innovation leadership is an ubuntu-infused approach that holds great potential for future African public sector leaders. Six key interrelated themes in TSI are facilitating change, democratic decision-making, relations, individual and collective empowerment, individual and the public or collective

good, and the values of equity and justice. These themes are fundamental in operationalising TSI as an approach to future African public sector leadership that is underpinned by ubuntu philosophies. Against the backdrop of themes that emerged from the juxtaposing of TSI, transformative leadership, and ubuntu, the chapter recommends a praxis for a renaissance of TSI leadership in a 21st-century African public sector. This praxis was captured in the character traits and abilities that the TSI leader needs in order to lead for transformative change. The character of the TSI leader is embedded in their values, service, and relations. The abilities of this leader include being a provocateur of transformative change and a resource mobiliser and distributor, establishing transformative networks, and igniting narrative changes.

### *#SocialInnovationLeadership*

*Transformative social innovation is a way of leading in the public sector that intentionally challenges, constructs, deconstructs, and co-creates a future that is embedded in values of social justice and equity.*

## Questions for discussion

1. How might practising transformative leadership in a social innovation project transform the project?
2. What recommendations do you have to strengthen the practice of what the author calls transformative social innovation?
3. What are some of the obstacles to implementing transformative social innovation in the sector in which you are involved? How might these be overcome?

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