TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

EDITED BY
SHARLENE SWARTZ, TARRYN DE KOCK
AND CATHERINE A. ODORA HOPPERS

HSRC PRESS

Published by HSRC Press
Private Bag X9182, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa
www.hsrcpress.ac.za

First published 2024

ISBN (soft cover) 978-0-7969-2661-6

© 2024 Human Sciences Research Council

This book has undergone a double-blind independent peer-review process overseen by the HSRC Press Editorial Board.

In partnership with

This book was produced in the context of *The Imprint of Education* study that is conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. *The Imprint of Education* is a five-year longitudinal cohort study that runs between 2019 and 2024 to investigate the post-graduation trajectories of Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Alumni. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation, its staff, or its Board of Directors.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Human Sciences Research Council (the Council) or indicate that the Council endorses the views of the authors. In quoting from this publication, readers are advised to attribute the source of the information to the individual author concerned and not to the Council.

The publishers have no responsibility for the continued existence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this book and do not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Copy edited by Alison Paulin
Typeset by Richard Jones
Cover design by Nic Jooste
Index by Jacoba Ferreira
Printed and bound by […]

Distributed in Africa by Blue Weaver
Tel: +27 (021) 701 4477; Fax Local: (021) 701 7302
www.blueweaver.co.za

Distributed worldwide (except central and southern Africa)
by Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
Tel: +1 303-444-6684; Fax: +1 303-444-0824; Email: cservice@rienner.com
www.rienner.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from the copyright owner.

To copy any part of this publication, you may contact DALRO for information and copyright clearance.
Tel: 010 822 7469 (from within South Africa); +27 (0)10 822 7469
Fax: +27 (86) 648 1136
Email: dalro@dalro.co.za
Postal Address: PostNet Suite #018, PO Box 9951, Sandton, 2146, South Africa
www.dalro.co.za

Any unauthorised copying could lead to civil liability and/or criminal sanctions.

Suggested citation: Sharlene Swartz, Tarryn De Kock and Catherine A. Odora Hoppers (Eds.) (2024) *Transformative Leadership in African Contexts: Strategies for Social Change*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Contents

Tables vi
Figures vii
Acronyms viii

Prologue: Leadership on the African continent ix
Sharlene Swartz, Tarryn De Kock, and Catherine A. Odora Hoppers

PART 1 INTRODUCING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AND ITS PRECURSORS 1

1. From beating the odds to changing the odds: Developing a shared understanding of what is meant by transformative leadership 3
   Sharlene Swartz
2. Academic understandings of transformative leadership 19
   Tarryn De Kock and Sharlene Swartz
3. Leadership and identity in precolonial African contexts: A retrospective account 41
   Matthews Makgamatha

PART 2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS 57

4. *The Spirit of Kanju*: Young Africans amplifying leadership through documentary film work 59
   Alude Mahali and Eugene Paramoer
5. Blockchain applications: A pathway to decentralised, autonomous, and transformative leadership 74
   Krish Chetty
6. Transformative leadership from abroad: Marguerite Barankitse and the Burundian refugee community 91
   Gérard Birantamije
7. What amaXhosa leadership practices can offer to the discourse on transformative leadership 107
   Olwam Mnqwazi
8. Ubuntu as a resource for transformative leadership in southern Africa 121
   Norman Chivasa

PART 3 LEADERSHIP AND GENDER/FEMINISM **135**

9. Women and leadership in African contexts: A review 137
Relebohile Moletsane

10. We should all be African feminists: Feminism as an integral part of transformative leadership 155
Lauryn Mwale

PART 4 LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS **171**

11. Iterations of transformative leadership for higher education in Africa 173
Ibrahim Oanda

12. Transformative leadership in resource-constrained schools in South Africa 193
Andrea Juan and Sylvia Hannan

13. Learning transformative leadership through student activism in Kenya 207
Nathan Oyori Ogechi

14. Using transformative leadership to 'nibble at resilient colonialism': An autoethnographic account of student–faculty experiences 223
One Pusumane and Jess Auerbach Jahajeeah

PART 5 LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT **243**

15. Walking the talk: Shaping a transformative approach to evaluation of leadership fellowship programmes 245
Barbara Klugman

16. Climbing the hill: The burden of development placed on scholarship recipients 262
Sepiso Dean Mwamelo

17. Leadership for whom? Interrogating the effectiveness of leadership programmes in Africa 278
Ajibola Adigun

18. Emergent decolonial development and youth-focused leadership development programmes 290
Rekgotsofetse Chikane and Monique Atouguia

PART 6 POLITICAL LEADERSHIP **307**

19. Transforming the political: Towards a transformative concept of political leadership in Africa 309
Tarryn De Kock and Anye-Nkwenti Nyamnjoh

20. Transformative leadership in Africa: Lessons from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership stints in Liberia 330
Kazeem Ajasa Badaru and Emmanuel Olusola Adu

21. Transformative leadership in unconventional terrain: Examining the personality, values, and vision of Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana 345
Emmanuel Ampomah

PART 7 APPLYING UBUNTU TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP 365

22. Transformative disability leadership in the Global South: Insights from ubuntu philosophy 367
Precious Muzite

23. Ubuntu leadership in a technological age 380
Katleho Mokoena

24. Transformative social innovation leadership, an ubuntu-infused approach for future African public sector leaders 395
Maréve Biljohn

PART 8 A CALL TO ACTION 411

25. A forward-looking ethics of transformative leadership: Rebuilding societies in the 21st century 413
Catherine A. Odora Hoppers and Crain Soudien

26. Tame, erode, rupture, or exit: Strategies for transformative change 429
Sharlene Swartz

Contributors 447
Index 452

Tables

Table 1.1 Contrasting understandings of transacting, transforming, and transformative leadership (Source: Author) *7*

Table 1.2 Graduate evaluation of leadership skills (n = 403) (Source: Mahali, Swartz, Juan, & *The Imprint of Education* Research Team, 2021) *13*

Table 2.1 Criteria for review content (Source: Author) *20*

Table 12.1 TIMSS items that measure transformative leadership characteristics where transformative schools differed significantly from low-performing schools (Source: Authors) *197*

Figures

Figure 1.1 Branches of leadership theory (Source: Author) *6*

Figure 1.2 The four components of transformative leadership (Source: Author) *15*

Figure 2.1 The Four Ps Framework (Source: Batliwala, 2008, p. 15) *29*

Figure 4.1 The trifecta of African leadership according to the filmmakers (Source: Authors) *63*

Figure 5.1 The block within the blockchain (Source: Author) *75*

Figure 5.2 Representation of a single blockchain (Source: Author) *76*

Figure 5.3 The distributed blockchain (Source: Author) *76*

Figure 5.4 Decentraland map as of December 2020 (Source: NFTPlazas, n.d.) *83*

Figure 12.1 Principal, teacher, and student reports of transformative leadership and outcomes (Authors' calculations based on Human Sciences Research Council, 2020) *198*

Figure 16.1 Excerpt from author's application essay, 2012, aged 17 *267*

Figure 18.1 Classification of African leadership programmes according to whether they are transformational or transformative (Source: Authors) *301*

Figure 18.2 Classification of transformative leadership programmes (Source: Authors) *301*

Figure 18.3 Classification of emergent decolonial leadership programmes (Source: Authors) *302*

Figure 26.1 Four strategies for how change can happen (Source: Author, based on Wright, 2010) *435*

Acronyms

4IR	fourth industrial revolution
AEC	Anti-Eviction Campaign
AFLI	African Leadership Institute
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AWLI	African Women's Leadership Institute
AYLS	African Youth Leadership Study
DAO	decentralised autonomous organisation
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex
MUSO	Moi University Student Organisation
NFT	non-fungible token
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PRISMA	preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses
SCR	spheres of complementary responsibility
SONU	Student Organisation of Nairobi University
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLT	transformative leadership theory
TLWR	Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights
TRC-L	Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia
TSI	transformative social innovation
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UoN	University of Nairobi
YLDPs	youth leadership for development programmes

Prologue: Leadership on the African continent

Transformative Leadership in African Contexts: Strategies for Social Change is an original, practice-oriented contribution to the idea of transformative leadership – leadership that attempts to bring about change at systemic and structural levels.

This edited collection emerged from a research partnership between the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Mastercard Foundation. For the past 12 years, the Mastercard Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic institutions in the world, has had as one of its goals creating opportunities for the young people it supports through its scholarship programme to become transformative leaders. It has encouraged these students and graduates of its programmes to serve others, give back to their communities, become entrepreneurs, and provide economic opportunities to others, in so doing contributing to the social and economic transformation of the African continent. In short, the Foundation wanted these young people to become transformative leaders.

Over the past five years, as part of the ensuing research study entitled *The Imprint of Education*, the HSRC research team (of which the editors are a part) have deepened their thinking on what it means to be a transformative leader on the African continent. Specifically, we have sought to ask what it means for *young graduates*, especially because they have extensive responsibilities and expectations upon their shoulders and are mainly still in their twenties and thus relatively inexperienced. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the HSRC team was able to convene two extensive online webinars to explore ideas about transformative leadership, interrogate who writes about it globally, and debate how it might apply in African contexts. In 2022, the HSRC convened a face-to-face symposium in Zanzibar, Tanzania, and 40 scholars – some novice, some senior – addressed the following questions: how does transformative leadership apply to the past, present, and future?; how might it be used in technological, cultural, political, social, schooling, and university contexts?; and how is it different from or similar to conventional understandings of leadership? This book is a result of these collaborations.

As the number of African graduates increases, their contributions as leaders able to take their place in leading the social, ethical, and economic transformation on our continent cannot be underestimated. What has not been available, until now, is a resource that can be put into their hands, and into the hands of the many institutions globally who are concerned with nurturing a new generation of African leaders. We are well aware of the many crisis narratives about our continent, but we have not wanted to provide individual commentary on each

crisis. Instead, this book allows for more expansive thinking, beyond mere correctives. More importantly, it is intended to provoke discussion, and to be applied to the particular context in which emerging leaders find themselves.

Transformative Leadership in African Contexts breaks new ground by taking as its unit of influence wider social, political, and material issues. Key in each of the essays in this book has been the argument made in the closing chapter, namely that transformative change, drawing on the influence of Paulo Freire (1970) and Carolyn Shields (2010), is change that must always, and ultimately be concerned with changing the systems that result in human suffering so that human beings may flourish. The book has taken seriously Desmond Tutu's imperative that those who are serious about change must 'stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in' (also cited in the closing chapter). But *Transformative Leadership in African Contexts* goes even further to ask what can be learned (and unlearned) from African cultural practices and settings to deepen understandings and demonstrate the relevance of this kind of leadership.

Furthermore, while seemingly a small addition, at the end of each chapter there is a brief tweet/X/thread that sums up the key message, followed by three or four well-crafted discussion questions that expand this from an academic book, which it is, into one deeply concerned with praxis and application. This book will be indispensable to young people, scholars, researchers, and practitioners who are interested in bringing about transformative change and consciously deepening how this can be done through mindfully engaging the frame of transformative leadership.

Sharlene Swartz, Tarryn De Kock, and Catherine A. Odora Hoppers

The editors

PART 1

INTRODUCING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AND ITS PRECURSORS

1 *From beating the odds to changing the odds: Developing a shared understanding of what is meant by transformative leadership*

Sharlene Swartz

Overview

Scholarship on the styles and traits of leaders, and engagement between leaders and followers, has led to the broad distinction between transactional leadership: leadership that directs people; and transformational leadership: leadership that directs change. This chapter argues that transformative leadership might be distinguished from other thinking about leadership by its intention to attain systemic and social justice outcomes by employing ethical and people-centred processes. The focus of transformative leadership is on changing power structures and dynamics in society such that access to livelihoods, dignity, rights, and well-being are systemically ensured, rather than on institutional or organisational change (transformational leadership) or on individual engagements between leaders and followers (transactional leadership). This framework offers a helpful map to guide thinking about what might be needed to empower young graduates to become leaders across all three spheres of influence.

Introduction

> *There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in. (Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, cited in Ledwith, 2015, p. 134)*

In business schools, firms, development agencies, and public service institutions, instruction and proficiency in leadership is eagerly sought and debated at length. While the practice of leadership has been well theorised, frequently documented, and endlessly taught, it has not been systematically analysed, nor widely considered from African perspectives, except by African scholars. As with much contemporary scholarly and nonfiction writing, discourses of leadership that enjoy mainstream purchase have largely been written, lived, and experienced in Western and Northern contexts. They cannot speak for cultural change and the complexities of historical and political experience on the African continent.

What characterises a good leader, what styles of leadership should be practised, what approaches to leadership are best, and what pitfalls of leadership are to be

avoided in the contexts of African cultural practices, values, and contexts, are critical elements to be considered. But where do these ideas come from? What values and historical contexts inform them, and how might it be better to think about the goals of leadership? Furthermore, what kinds of leadership are critical in African contexts: is it the kind of leadership that is based on human rights, cultural values, and changing individuals' lived realities while being inclusive of the voices of those who are led; or does style, process, and outcome matter most? This collected volume is an attempt to enrich the conversation around leadership, and to do so from various African contexts across a range of topics including education, gender parity, the workplace, politics, and technological change. It also invites reflections from multiple vantage points: past practices of leadership, current practices, and practices that are emerging as we build the future.

Some chapters ask what can be learned from past practices of leadership across the African continent to better inform current and future practices. This notion – looking back in order to look forward better informed – is encapsulated in a concept from the Twi language of the Akan of Ghana, *sankofa,* idiomatically described as the practice of 'obtaining the wisdom of the past [to] enable… planning for a strong future' (Slater, 2019, p. 2). In many of the chapters in this book, the authors integrate past practices, considering the cultural heritages that animate action, the political heroes (and villains), and historical thinkers who have encouraged current leadership practices and warned against others. Equally important is the current context on the African continent, where a frequent dearth of resources has led to 'make do', 'hustle', and 'get by' practices that Dayo Olopade (2014, p. 20), in her book *The Bright Continent*, describes as the spirit of *kanju*: 'the specific creativity born from African difficulty'. Here the focus is on the struggles and strengths of leaders: those who are prominent and those who are invisible, as well as those who are everyday and those who are extraordinary.

Through a series of nuanced case studies, the authors set out how contemporary leaders on the African continent navigate complexity, chaos, struggle, temptation, controversy, and roadblocks, in a context that is both emerging from colonial exploitation and domination, and suffering from a myriad of postcolonial ills and aspirations. Equally important, however, is to shine a spotlight on the many ways in which leadership challenges for the future are anticipated. These include the rapid social, technological, and cultural shifts, and struggles around gender, mobility, and commercial practices already sweeping the continent. Multiple essays offer markers for the way ahead, based primarily on the notion of ubuntu, for a new generation who must lead and find their own path to the future. This notion of ubuntu (from the Nguni languages of South Africa) has been popularised by, among others, the late Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu. Tutu (1999, pp. 127, 35) describes ubuntu as being 'interconnected in this network of interdependence and togetherness',

understanding that our 'humanity is caught up, inextricably bound up' with those with whom we share the continent and the planet, and that the only legitimate response is to embody this belonging together in sharing.

This introductory chapter sets out an argument for how transformative leadership might best be understood and distinguished from other thinking about leadership. Drawing on Paulo Freire's (1970) historical and Carolyn Shields' (2010) contemporary scholarship, it argues for transformative leadership as leadership intent on attaining systemic and social justice outcomes for societies and employing ethical and people-centred processes (participatory, empowering, and collaborative) in order to achieve these ends. Related to ideas of transformational leadership, the focus of transformative leadership is on changing power structures and dynamics in society such that people's access to livelihoods, dignity, rights, and well-being are systemically ensured, rather than on institutional or organisational change, or individual engagements between leaders and followers. Before heading into the enticing contributions of this book, this chapter uses two sources of data to situate our understanding of transformative leadership. The first is an analysis of the extensive literature review provided in Chapter 2 by De Kock and Swartz, and the second is empirical data obtained from the first year of a research study, *The Imprint of Education*, that follows 520[1] African university graduates and recipients of Mastercard Foundation scholarships over five years.

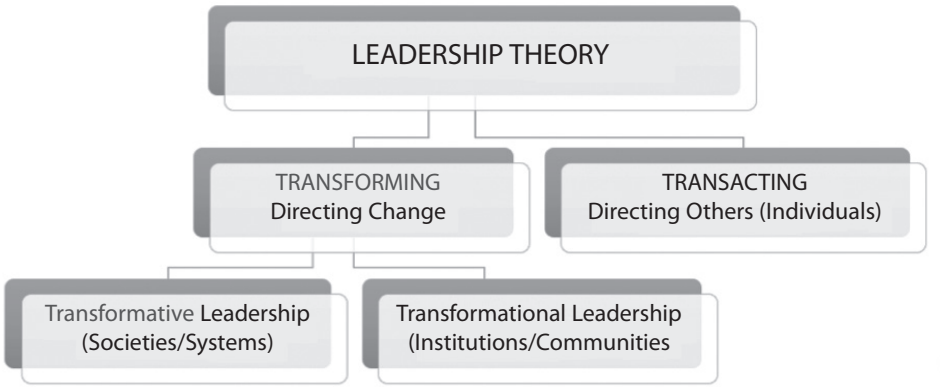
The approach taken in the discussion to follow offers a helpful map to guide thinking about what might be needed to empower young graduates to become leaders across all three spheres of influence – changing systems and structures, changing institutions and communities, and changing individuals – while ensuring that they engage deeply with transformative leadership. This understanding of transformative leadership is one with which all contributors to this volume have attempted to engage.

Distinguishing ideas about leadership

There is a wide array of literature that addresses the notion of leadership. Broadly speaking, leadership theory can be divided into two branches: transactional leadership (concerned with directing people), which is focused on the interactions and relationships between individual leaders and followers; and transforming leadership, which focuses on directing change at multiple levels: institutional, organisational, and societal (see Figure 1.1).

[1] Of these, 403 completed an annual survey and 117 participated in an in-depth interview.

Figure 1.1 *Branches of leadership theory*



Source: Author

Transacting leadership is thus concerned with the dispositions, traits, styles, and values of leaders and with the transactional interactions between leaders and followers (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015; Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014). It can be thought of as a largely individual undertaking, with the outcome being the achievement of a designated end through influencing individuals (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). These transactions of influence – directing others, charting a course, identifying a vision, and motivating people towards a shared goal – can be for benevolent or for selfish ends.

Transforming leadership, on the other hand, is focused on directing change among groups of people, communities, institutions, and organisations, and also on directing the kind of leadership processes and outcomes necessary to bring about such change. Leadership has increasingly come to be seen as a mechanism for long-term change within organisations, resulting in transformational theories of leadership that highlight the processes by which this change is enacted.

Not surprisingly, while the concept of 'transformative leadership' has circulated within leadership discourses for several decades, it is frequently conflated and used interchangeably with 'transformational leadership'. While the literature does not make clear or hard distinctions between directing change at varying levels, the work of Carolyn Shields and others (Hewitt et al., 2014; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Sun & Leithwood, 2012) have argued that the category 'transformative leadership', while a form of transforming leadership, can be distinguished from it, since transformative leadership transcends the immediate concerns of a single organisation or institution and takes as its unit of influence wider social, political, and material issues. Shields (2010) further argues that transformative leadership should be seen as a standalone theory of leadership because its aim is one of justice and fundamental societal change, rather than

being concerned with improving efficiencies and ways of operating, as has occurred in managerial contexts in business and the public sector (Caldwell et al., 2012; Currie & Lockett, 2007).

According to Shields (2010), while making a valuable intervention in the field of leadership theory and practice, transformational leadership theories do not primarily address the social, economic, ethical, and material dynamics that shape people's lives individually, as well as in organisations and institutions. Moreover, transformational leadership theory is not guided by a moral or social justice imperative, but rather by institutional and organisational effectiveness, efficiencies, and productivity. Transformative leadership responds to this gap. Shields (2010, p. 562) further develops the notion of transformative leadership by providing the following key attributes:

> attempts to effect both deep and equitable changes; deconstruction and reconstruction of the knowledge frameworks that generate inequity; acknowledgment of power and privilege; emphasis on both individual achievement and the public good; a focus on liberation, democracy, equity, and justice; and finally, evidence of moral courage and activism.

Table 1.1 offers a summary of the ways in which transacting, transforming, and transformative leadership differ.

Table 1.1 *Contrasting understandings of transacting, transforming, and transformative leadership*

	Transacting Leadership	Transforming Leadership	Transformative Leadership
Directing	Others	Change	Equitable Change
Concerned with	dispositions traits styles values	effectiveness productivity	justice public good knowledge frameworks power and privilege ethics and moral courage
Processes	vision influence goals	vision influence goals efficiencies	vision influence goals equality people-centred collaborative
Interactions between	leaders and individuals	leaders and groups	leaders and systems
Outcomes	localised and individual	organisational and institutional change	systemic change

Source: Author

Transformative leadership in the African context

The main proponents of transformative leadership come from Brazil and the United States of America. Literature on transformative leadership in Africa is less ubiquitous, indicating that the theory has not taken root in scholarly work on leadership on the continent. However, continental literature has important contributions to make. Frequently, the features of transformative leadership are used but not named. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) describe their understanding of leadership as 'transformational', but include the value of a social consciousness to inform its practice. Bell (2001) shows how organisational and institutional leadership does not always result in just outcomes in his study of vice chancellors at historically Black universities in South Africa. Magoqwana (2019) advocates for the incorporation of African philosophies and idioms to inform leadership in higher education, such as *inimba* (birthing pains) to invoke the importance of giving, sustaining, and enabling in leadership processes; while Brown, Ekoue, and Goodban (2019) discuss the implementation of Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights (TLWR) to address historic imbalances in the role of local women in development programmes, especially considering the implications of women's daily work and responsibilities.

Rylander (2010) shows how transformative political leadership can arrest potential crises and redirect actors towards peace and lasting social cohesion. This view is echoed by Olonisakin (2017), who argues that a focus on leadership as a process provides an opportunity to think about how leadership works, what it is for, and who leaders are intended to serve, synthesising top-down and bottom-up leadership strategies. Finally, Odora Hoppers (2014, p. 32) speaks to the importance of 'interrupting cycles of humiliation' by recognising the roles we play in facilitating domination or displacing blame. The metaphor of the 'wounded healer' is core to Odora Hoppers' discussion of leadership: the notion that the transformative leader works from a position of intimate knowledge of their own experiences of suffering, loss, or deprivation, and commits to a project of converting suffering into praxis.

Developing a common understanding of transformative leadership

In summary then, both transformative and transformational leadership are concerned with change rather than only with transactional exchanges between leaders and followers. Both emphasise the value of collaborative, dialogic, and democratic decision-making, and deliberative processes, but transformational leadership is primarily concerned with transforming and renewing institutions

and organisations in order to enhance efficiency, productivity, and, ultimately, the scope and quality of outputs.[2]

Transformative leadership, on the other hand, focuses on transforming societies (albeit through institutions, organisations, and individuals) in order to ensure structural change in society that benefits all. It is not content to change the lives of individuals without also unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom (Odora Hoppers, 2014; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Weiner, 2003) and that necessitate the need for change or help in the first place. In words attributed to the late Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, as cited in the epigraph to this chapter, 'there comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in' (cited in Ledwith, 2015, p. 134). It is time to enact transformative leadership on the continent – leadership concerned with systemic rather than local or individual change, leadership directed at just rather than self-serving outcomes, and leadership that intentionally seeks to address institutional and systemic challenges.

Insights from African graduates on transformative leadership

As compelling as some of the differences between types of leadership are, empirical work provides further evidence to support these distinctions and to arrive at a common understanding of transformative leadership. In this regard, this section offers insights from 520 young African university graduates enrolled in a longitudinal study that is concerned with the impact of university education on first-generation graduates: on their career trajectories; their contributions to family, community, and society; as well as their understanding and growth in leadership. *The Imprint of Education* study was commissioned by the Mastercard Foundation and conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council. It comprises a quantitative longitudinal tracer study of 403 graduates plus annual in-depth interviews with a further 117. The graduates surveyed or interviewed were recipients of Mastercard Foundation scholarships from various African countries between 2014 and 2020.

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has spent nearly a billion US dollars on ensuring that academically talented but socioeconomically disadvantaged young people on the African continent access high-quality education and are prepared to take their place as 'next-generation leaders

[2] This is perhaps not surprising since leadership is most frequently taught as part of business school courses, rather than in the critical social sciences and humanities. Of the 30 top-ranked universities on the African continent, only half offered any courses on leadership at all at the time of our review (2020–2021). Those that did offered them through their business schools.

supporting social transformation and economic growth…in Africa' (Mastercard Foundation, 2014, p. 3). Towards this goal, the Foundation offers scholarship recipients support 'designed to foster *transformative leadership* by equipping Scholars with knowledge, tools, capacity and motivation to make a difference in their countries and regions of origin in the future' (Mastercard Foundation, 2014, p. 3, emphasis added).

The Foundation understands 'transformative leadership' as an identity, an ethical practice, and as a contribution to society in the following terms:

> The act of engaging others, in an ethical manner, to generate positive and lasting change. Transformative leadership relies on teamwork, relationships, networks and peer support. Transformative leaders are creative visionaries who exhibit courage, empathy, resilience and a desire to give back. (Mastercard Foundation, 2016, p. 26)

The Foundation is not alone in its quest to transform the continent through enabling young people to access education, nor is it alone in attempting to develop young leaders. What *The Imprint of Education* study offers is the opportunity to test understandings, practices, and distinctions between and of various definitions of leadership.

After the first year of data collection (Mahali, Swartz, Juan, & *The Imprint of Education* Research Team, 2021), 80 per cent of graduates surveyed had heard of the Mastercard Foundation definition of transformative leadership – 'engaging others in an ethical manner to generate positive and lasting change' – and 90 per cent said it mostly or completely represented their understanding of transformative leadership. In qualitative interviews, however, only around one quarter of those interviewed spoke specifically of their understanding of *transformative* leadership, with most speaking about leadership in more general terms, and with almost no reference to leadership that aims to bring about socially just change. Young people's understandings focused on the outcomes of leadership (bringing solutions, giving back, bringing about change in people's lives) and processes of leadership (ethical, empowering, consulting, collaborating, putting yourself in the shoes of others).

The outcomes of transformative leadership

According to participants, transformative leadership has concrete outcomes, and these can be summarised as: understanding your community, 'giving back to society' by helping others, 'bringing solutions', and 'saving people's lives' (Kenya, male, age 30).[3] While understanding people's contexts and needs was a starting point, most participants stated that they believed it should never stop there.

[3] The source for all participant quotations is Mahali et al., 2021.

Transformative leaders, they said, solve problems and 'leave things better than [they] found them' (Botswana, female, age 27). The refrain of transformative leadership being an approach that changes individuals' lives was common.

A graduate from the South African cohort eloquently summed up the multiple facets of transformative leadership (in their understanding) by focusing on leadership that is solution-based, takes the needs of people whom one is attempting to serve into account, does so in a way that is not egocentric, and is ethical:

> Looking [at things] from that person's point of view, that's the best trait that you can have in a leader…somebody might actually be having this charismatic persona and maybe even qualified in terms of pragmatic thinking, and having constructive ideas…but if you lack that insight, then your leadership is not really transformative…The other thing that I look at when I look at leadership is not being greedy. (South Africa, female, age 29)

Processes and styles of transformative leadership

Graduates spoke of the processes and styles of transformative leadership, which included 'investing in the personal development of people and improving people's lives apart from just controlling them' (Kenya, female, age 26) and someone who could 'first change himself [sic] and then change others' (Ethiopia, female, age 26). Several participants echoed the idea that transformative leadership empowers others, and that this empowerment persists even when the leader is no longer around. They further elaborated that it needs to be based on shared vision and shared values, and is not authoritarian. A few contrasted empowering leadership with 'dictatorial' leadership, in which 'people have no voice, you've completely silenced people' (Kenya, female, age 28).

The importance of ethics for transformative leaders was also prominent, exemplified by those who lead by example, collaborate, consult, place people at the centre of their endeavours, serve others, and display character traits such as compassion, courage, empathy, integrity, and consistency. One graduate from Kenya summed up this ethical approach as follows:

> A good leader is a person who will walk in front of you…they do things and then tell you, 'do the same'…[Leaders] should be accountable, they should lead by example, they should have the heart of people in their minds…they should defend…the people they are leading…A good leader, they involve people in decision-making… They accept opinions of people…[their own opinions are] not written on stones. (Kenya, male, age 33)

Most graduates consider themselves leaders; leadership is largely transformational at community level

The most common answer to the question about the meaning of transformative leadership was for graduates 'to make a difference' in their sphere of influence. Almost all (97 per cent) of those who completed the survey considered themselves to be leaders; when asked why they called themselves leaders, most centred on the leadership roles they played among friends and family and within their community. Most saw their leadership actions as being those of a role model, a resource provider, or an educator: 'providing care and advice to my siblings' (Ethiopia, female, age 26) and 'tutoring and teaching in schools' (South Africa, male, age 28).

This is not surprising given the nature of programming around leadership and social responsibility. Most graduates spoke at length of the many 'give back' projects they had been challenged to embark upon during their university studies (by the Foundation and its staff). While many of these projects were laudable, most were limited to local community development challenges, working with or starting local NGOs or entrepreneurial ventures to address problems of employment in their hometowns or villages.

> Leadership should be transformative you know…it should [bring about] some change eventually in the community…[The Mastercard Foundation] explicitly told us, you know, 'We need you to go back to Africa. You need to go back to your community and make a difference. Use the skills that you now have, the new skills that you have. Go back to your community and do something and make transformative change.' (Kenya, male, age 31)

Graduates were almost completely silent about efforts to bring about systemic change. A young woman from Kenya was one of the few exceptions. She spoke about 'participating in some advocacies…especially on girl and human rights…not being silent about things that happen in the society' (Kenya, female, age 25). Some, however, spoke of systemic change as a future aspiration. This is understandable given that the median age of those in the study was only 27 years old.

Leadership and systemic change

While few spoke about transformative leaders as those who were engaged in addressing systemic and structural problems, several noted that many leaders were themselves involved in entrenching societal problems through 'corruption' (nepotism, self-enrichment, or embezzlement):

> [People] get themselves elected to positions of leadership with the mind-set of 'it's just me and my family', they just get to these positions,

> and they just acquire wealth for themselves…they'll just be looking at what they can gain for themselves and let's say their immediate families and friends. (Kenya, male, age 32)
>
> A leader is…the head of either a community, a country, [or] an institution. The head will lead you to the right place or the wrong place. So if you have a bad head, you know, then everything will be bad like…when a fish starts to rot, it starts from the head…to the tail. Good leadership will foster development and progress. But bad leadership will destroy you. (South Africa, male, age 34)

Skills needed to become transformative leaders

While these questions of transformative leadership will be explored in greater depth with the graduates in this study, we also included seven questions in the first year of the survey to ascertain which leadership skills these graduates had, which ones they wanted to develop, and which ones they didn't think they needed. Table 1.2 tabulates their responses.

Table 1.2 *Graduate evaluation of leadership skills (n = 403)*

Question	Options	Response
The skill to motivate people to work towards a common goal [Q120]	I have that skill	69.0%
	I want to develop that skill	30.8%
	I don't need that skill	0.2%
The skill to transform good ideas into action [Q121]	I have that skill	62.5%
	I want to develop that skill	37.3%
	I don't need that skill	0.2%
The skill to describe the small steps needed to solve big problems [Q122]	I have that skill	62.5%
	I want to develop that skill	37.5%
	I don't need that skill	0.0%
The skill to recognise people's strengths and put them into an effective team to solve problems [Q123]	I have that skill	49.9%
	I want to develop that skill	48.2%
	I don't need that skill	1.9%
The skill to use disagreements/conflict in a group to find new ways of solving problems [Q124]	I have that skill	43.1%
	I want to develop that skill	54.0%
	I don't need that skill	2.9%
The skill to use government policies to solve problems in my community [Q125]	I have that skill	21.5%
	I want to develop that skill	71.2%
	I don't need that skill	7.3%
The skill to show people how all forms of injustice are related, e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia [Q126]	I have that skill	36.3%
	I want to develop that skill	58.1%
	I don't need that skill	5.6%

Source: Mahali, Swartz, Juan, & The Imprint of Education *Research Team, 2021*

While a majority was able to motivate people (69 per cent), could transform good ideas into action (63 per cent), and was able to 'describe the small steps needed to solve big problems' (63 per cent), fewer had 'the skill to recognise people's strengths and put them into an effective team to solve problems' (50 per cent), and only 43 per cent were able to say they had the 'the skill to use disagreements/ conflict in a group to find new ways of solving problems'.

Skills that were in short supply among graduates included 'the skill to use government policies to solve problems in my community' (only 22 per cent said they had this skill) and 'the skill to show people how all forms of injustice are related, e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia' (36 per cent said they had this skill). Key here was the indication by respondents that these policy change and intersectional social justice skills are skills they would like to develop.

These questions were designed with the understanding that transformative leadership requires these latter two skills especially – that of bringing about systemic and structural change, and doing it via just inclusion of all groups and through policy change. (Other ways of bringing about change is the topic of the final chapter of this book.) The answers to these questions supported our conclusion that these young graduates thought of leadership as transformational and transacting rather than transformative.

The structure of the book

The book is divided into eight parts. The first part deals with developing a common understanding of transformative leadership (this chapter) and how it is viewed in Africa both currently (Chapter 2 De Kock & Swartz) and in precolonial contexts (Chapter 3 Makgamatha). The second part looks at transformative leadership in a variety of contexts from a filmmaking activity undertaken by research participants (Chapter 4 Mahali & Paramoer), to how blockchain can be used in service of transformative leadership (Chapter 5 Chetty), a cross-border initiative in Burundi (Chapter 6 Birantamije), and examples of cultural contributions to leadership from southern Africa (Chapter 7 Mnqwazi; Chapter 8 Chivasa).

Part Three focuses on women and transformative leadership, offering a broad overview (Chapter 9 Moletsane), as well as a more-focused contribution centring the lived experience of a young woman in an institution of higher education (Chapter 10 Mwale). Part Four applies the notion of transformative leadership to educational contexts at multiple levels: in higher education (Chapter 11 Oanda), in resource-constrained schools (Chapter 12 Juan & Hannan), from the perspective of student leaders engaged in bringing about change (Chapter 13 Oyori Ogechi), and in the relationships between students and faculty (Chapter 14 Pusumane & Auerbach Jahajeeah). Still focusing on education, Part Five

evaluates a range of scholarship (Chapter 15 Klugman; Chapter 16 Mwamelo) and leadership programmes (Chapter 17 Adigun; Chapter 18 Chikane & Atouguia) operating on the African continent.

Part Six considers political leadership. It explores how it has evolved on the African continent (Chapter 19 De Kock & Nyamnjoh) and offers examples and critiques of the leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Chapter 20 Badaru & Adu) and that of Jerry John Rawlings (Chapter 21 Ampomah). Part Seven applies the African concept of ubuntu to three novel contexts: transformative leadership in dealing with disability (Chapter 22 Muzite), the role of ubuntu in dealing with technological innovations (Chapter 23 Mokoena), and ubuntu as an approach to innovation for public sector leaders (Chapter 24 Biljohn). The final part, Part Eight, offers a forward-looking ethics of leadership to rebuild societies (Chapter 25 Odora Hoppers & Soudien) and concludes with an application of Eric Olin Wright's typologies of how change happens as strategies to guide action (Chapter 26 Swartz).

Conclusion

Both the literature and the empirical evidence drawn from the case study *The Imprint of Education* show that there is still much work to be done when it comes to understanding and defining transformative leadership. As a more robust framework emerges (see Figure 1.2), it will be important for curricula to be developed that employ the definitions and elements that this essay has recommended.

Figure 1.2 *The four components of transformative leadership*

Source: Author

Transformative leaders are leaders motivated by an ethical purpose and driven by moral courage to bring about equitable social change. The style of leadership practised is people-centred (collaborative, consultative, empowering, agential) and aims for inclusivity in decision-making as well as the implementation of shared goals. These leaders aim to bring about just solutions at a systemic level (economic, governance, educational) to ensure the well-being and inclusion in society of those for and with whom they work. They engage in analysis and action to dismantle knowledge frameworks and systems of power and privilege that keep inequality and precarity in place. Transformative leadership relies on leaders who will be, and who will enable, agents of change who can pursue a vision of a more just and democratic society.

The African continent is awash with transacting leaders – celebrity, charismatic, authoritarian leaders, leading their followers towards good and evil ends. There are also numerous examples of institutional and organisational change through leadership on the continent, including the ways in which countries have expanded gender equality through equal representation of women in parliaments, having women presidents, and ensuring girl children are not prevented from attending school. It is also a continent on which multiple NGOs, aid organisations, and government agencies from outside the continent make heroic efforts to address hunger, gender-based violence, and child marriage, and to end wars and exploitation. The young graduates display much of this understanding of leadership – that it is concerned with bringing about change at individual, local, and community levels. It is important to support their efforts to drive social change by drawing out the impact that this work can have if tied to a systemic understanding of what strong leadership can achieve.

It is time to enact transformative leadership on the continent and, in so doing, find out why people are 'falling in the river', in order to change the systems that allow them to continue doing so. Put more colloquially, it is time to change the odds that allow some to succeed and cause others to fail, rather than merely ensuring that a few lucky ones beat the odds that would have prevented them from thriving. This book, in multiple ways and spheres, offers insights and perspectives into how this might best be done.

#TransformativeLeadershipEqualsSystemicChange

Transformative leadership is a huge ask and is political in nature. It requires courage to take on entrenched injustices, vision to know what can be done, and expertise to bring about change at the systemic level, rather than only individual or community levels.

Questions for discussion

1. What does it mean when we say transformative leadership should aim at changing the odds rather than allowing only a few to beat the odds?
2. What concrete examples can you offer of 'going upstream' to see why people are 'falling in the river' (to quote Desmond Tutu), in your area of leadership?
3. How can actions that aim to help individuals and communities be converted (over time) into actions of transformative leadership – actions that attempt to change the system that results in the hardships with which individuals and communities struggle?

References

Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management*, *5*(1), 6–14.

Bell, D. I. (2001, July). *Leading change: African conceptions of leadership and transformation in higher education in South Africa*. Paper presented at Higher Education Close Up 2, Lancaster University, United Kingdom.

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 21–37.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Currie, G. & Lockett, A. (2007). A critique of transformational leadership: Moral, professional and contingent dimensions of leadership within public services organisations. *Human Relations*, *60*(2), 341–370.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Herder and Herder.

Hewitt, K.K., Davis, A. W., & Lashley, C. (2014). Transformational and transformative leadership in a research-informed leadership preparation program. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *9*(3), 225–253.

Ledwith, M. (2015). *Community development in action: Putting Freire into practice*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Policy Press.

Magoqwana, B. (2019). *Tapping into* inimba *to show deep transformative leadership in Mandela University*. Nelson Mandela University.
Retrieved from https://crishet.mandela.ac.za/getmedia/0741dadc-3048-4f36-bc80-656dd3e8e2af/Babalwa-Magoqwana?disposition=attachment.

Mahali, A., Swartz, S., Juan, A., & *The Imprint of Education* Research Team. (2021). The Imprint of Education *study: A longitudinal cohort study of African alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program – Year 1 research report.* Cape Town, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

Mastercard Foundation. (2016). *Education in support of social transformation: Learning from the first five years of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/MCFreport_EducationInSupportOfSocialTransformation-accessible.pdf.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Olonisakin, F. (2017). Towards re-conceptualising leadership for sustainable peace. *Leadership and Developing Societies*, *2*(1), 1–30.

Olopade, D. (2014). *The bright continent: Breaking rules and making change in modern Africa*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Rylander, S. (2010). *Governance and transformative leadership in Africa: Progress, prospects and challenges*. Harare, Zimbabwe: The African Capacity Building Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.asclibrary.nl/docs/408423056.pdf

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Shields, C. M. & Hesbol, K. A. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity, and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(1), 3–22.

Slater, J. (2019). Sankofa – the need to turn back to move forward: Addressing reconstruction challenges that face Africa and South Africa today. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, *45*(1), 1–24.

Sun, J. & Leithwood, K. (2012). Transformational school leadership effects on student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *11*(4), 418–451.

Tutu, D. (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. New York, NY: Random House.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

2 *Academic understandings of transformative leadership*

Tarryn De Kock and Sharlene Swartz

Overview

There are a number of ways in which transformative leadership as a framework and praxis encompasses and diverges from classical leadership theory, not least in that transformative leadership is concerned not only with how leaders behave, but also with the impact that they have on fostering social change and social justice. This chapter provides an overview of transformative leadership as a working concept, tracing its origins in scholarship and the contributions made by critical scholars in its development. Moving from a global to a regional focus, it then maps some of the key insights from African scholars concerned with leadership for social change and renewal. The review finds resonance between African theories of humanity and global theories and practices of transformative leadership.

Introduction

The notion of transformative leadership sits at the core of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, which aims to ensure that a new generation of graduates takes its place in African and global society in complex and uncertain times. But what is meant by the term 'transformative leadership', especially given the many ways of understanding and operationalising leadership practices, programmes, and interventions? There are numerous ways in which transformative leadership as a framework and praxis encompasses and diverges from classical leadership theory. This review presents an overview of the landscape of academic literature on transformative leadership along with its allied ideas.

The parameters of this review

Using a range of accessible databases (JSTOR, EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Elsevier, SAGE, Taylor & Francis, Sabinet, and African Journals Online), a literature search was conducted between December 2020 and February 2021, initially limited to articles from 1950 to the present and then in a second sift, with further restrictions, for articles published in the past 25 years. The criteria used in the two sifts are described in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 *Criteria for review content*

Criteria	First sift	Second sift
Publication type	Journals, books, grey literature	Journals and books, with grey literature used only in a designated subsection of the review
Publication period	1950 to present	1995 to present
Location	Everywhere	Everywhere, with a special focus on the Global South and Africa
Content focus	Leadership theories Transformational leadership Transformative leadership	Transformative leadership
Search terms	Transformative leadership Leadership theory Forms of leadership Leadership philosophy Transformational leadership Education leadership Freire leadership Shields leadership	(same list as first sift with expanded search terms below) Leadership Africa African higher education leaders Transformative leadership in Africa Social justice leadership in Africa Progressive leaders in Africa

The first sift aimed at establishing a broad picture of the available literature on transformative leadership, as well as historicising it in relation to general leadership theory and key shifts in academic and social discourse. High-quality resources enabled an informal third sift to be done by sampling references from the bibliographies of the initial literature sample, and sourcing them from databases including journal websites, Academia.edu, and Researchgate.

The second sift sharpened the literature focus in at least two ways. First, the literature period was reduced to 25 years (1995 to the present), with a spotlight on literature from 2005 onwards, given the pivotal impact of Shields' 2010 paper (discussed below) articulating transformative leadership as a theory for education. Second, a deeper effort was made to find literature from the Global South, and from Africa in particular. This included expanding the search terms to include 'progressive', 'ethical', and 'social justice' forms of leadership. A paucity of literature on transformative leadership in Africa does not indicate its absence, but that a more nuanced approach to sourcing appropriate literature is required, given the continent's intellectual history of work on leadership and transformation.

In total, 93 articles and books were reviewed. Less than half made it through to the second sift, for reasons including poor conceptual clarity of the leadership theory in use, inaccurate understanding of transformative leadership, and lack of relevance to the main research focus.

It became apparent that 'transformational' and 'transformative' are often used interchangeably, especially in literature from the African continent. Linguistic and theoretical differences may inform how scholars deploy these terms as

conceptual categories. This was one of the factors influencing the decision to expand the search terms for the second sift, and to mine the source bibliographies for additional literature.

Academic scholarship on transformative leadership

It is useful to define leadership before differentiating transformative leadership from other theories. Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015) developed a general definition of leadership as the achievement of designated ends through influencing and directing others, charting a course, identifying a vision, and motivating people towards that shared goal. Bennis and Nanus argue that a leader 'commits people to action…converts followers into leaders, and…may convert leaders into agents of change' (2007, p. 3, cited in Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 176). Leadership, then, is not only about managing operations within an organisation or shared space, but about keeping sight of tomorrow – recognising the value of both individual and collective growth towards a shared goal. In a review of women in leadership, the Mastercard Foundation (2014, p. 3) further defines transformative leadership as '[Making] or influencing positive change and addressing inequity. The concepts of critique and promise are central: transformative leaders see a problem and ask themselves "what can I do?" to solve it'.

A more recent Mastercard Foundation definition is distilled as follows: engaging others in an ethical manner to generate positive and lasting change. If leadership is concerned with executing a vision, transformative leadership is about identifying and operationalising a vision for change that transcends the immediate concerns of a single organisation or group, to considering wider social, political, and material issues. This differentiates it from related theories of leadership, which are discussed briefly below.

Theories of leadership form part of a tradition of attempts to understand the conditions under which structures of human interaction can be effective, successful, and capable of delivering on their core goals. Over time, these theories have shifted from a focus on individuals to interactions, behaviours, and later, strategies, recognising that the nature of human interaction and exchange has become increasingly complex as societies rapidly developed in the last century. For example, the 'Great Man' notion of leadership of earlier political history has given way to more robust, collaborative approaches that recognise the importance of securing participation and cooperation from a more diverse range of stakeholders (McCleskey, 2014; Amanchukwu et al., 2015). These earlier theories hold that leadership is an intrinsic disposition of specific individuals, while later work emphasises the value of relationships, the conduct of leaders and their approach to managing people, and the processes by which they achieve their ends (Burns, 1978; Bass 1985; Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Misra, 2019).

Within this chronology, Burns (1978) introduces a notion of 'transforming leadership' that draws from earlier theories while transcending their focus to incorporate a distinctly moral dimension – one where both leaders and their followers are transformed by their interactions. Bass (1985) extends this work by identifying four mechanisms underlying what he calls 'transformational leadership', distinguishing this from transactional forms of leadership that focused only on narrowly beneficial exchanges between leaders and followers. However, issues of conceptual slippage have continued to impact understandings of leadership with a 'transforming' orientation.

Differentiating between transformational and transformative leadership

Transformative leadership is regularly, but erroneously, conflated with transformational leadership (Shields, 2010; Sun & Leithwood, 2012; Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014). Both form part of a branch of leadership theory associated with directing change and transformation, in contrast to theory concerned with transactional interactions between leaders and followers in the achievement of particular ends (Hewitt et al., 2014; Amanchukwu et al., 2015). This also corresponds to differences in the hierarchical nature of organisations: transactional leadership approaches require a stronger distinction between leaders and followers, and greater (more vertical) lines of authority and accountability (Weiner, 2003). Horner (1997), importantly, notes the turn towards more collaborative and team-based leadership approaches in recognition of the increasing need for understanding leadership as being process- rather than characteristic-based. By this she means that contemporary work on leadership theory should focus on the social dimension within which leadership occurs, and the coordination of common purpose and action by participants towards a particular end (Horner, 1997).

Transformational and transformative leadership approaches thus recognise the mutually reinforcing agency of all members of an organisation or interest group, and engender dynamic ways of facilitating collaborative and dialogic leadership strategies. While this does not preclude the possibility of distinct leaders emerging, these individuals must necessarily be willing to work with others in a process of mutual learning and planning towards the desired outcome (Weiner, 2003; Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Mouton & Wildschut, 2015).

From the literature, it appears that transformational leadership differs from transformative leadership in that it is primarily concerned with organisational transformation and renewal. Transformational leaders focus on revitalising institutional culture, leading others in the achievement of organisational goals, and enhancing efficiency and effective operation in order to be more competitive and relevant (Sun & Leithwood, 2012; Hewitt et al., 2014; Oberfield, 2014). Caldwell et al. (2012, p. 177), following from Bass (1985), identify four

dimensions of transformational leadership: 'idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration'. These leaders cultivate the four dimensions in their practices so as to motivate team members to identify with and pursue the collective vision. In this way, team members develop and grow their capacities and skills while furthering the aims of the organisation.

While a valuable intervention in the field of leadership theory and practice, transformational leadership does not account for the social, economic, ethical, and material dynamics that may influence, shape, and challenge organisations and their members. Moreover, it does not offer a moral imperative for organisations to contribute to social change, or to conduct their affairs in such a way as to impact society directly. Transformative leadership responds to this gap. Its origins in the world of educational leadership enables transformative leadership theorists to critically identify those ways in which it can directly influence and transform whole school communities, include historically marginalised groups in decision-making processes, and cultivate lasting and progressive social change (Shields, 2010). This does not mean the theory is without its critics, however. As Shields (2010, p. 572) points out, the work of the current generation of transformative leadership scholars will be to demonstrate the causal relationship between transformative leaders and enhanced social, educational, and material outcomes, given that its critics view the theory as 'too idealistic and too demanding… [despite] a considerable body of conceptual work…[and] little empirical research related to transformative leadership'.

Transformative leadership as a concept has circulated within discourses of leadership for several decades, but achieved popular purchase in at least two critical moments. The first, as described by Weiner (2003), occurred through the work of educational theorist and popular educator Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux were two critical pedagogy scholars who informed earlier notions of transformative leadership in education (Weiner, 2003). Their understanding of schools as a site of cultural politics has deep resonance with the motivations underpinning transformative leadership theory. Freire's work on education as a site of emancipation and freedom highlighted the need for forms of leadership that would support the renewal and reinvigoration of educational communities. This entails the democratisation of public-school governance to involve all stakeholders, including parents, janitors, and cooks, in the decision-making processes that impact school management (Weiner, 2003). It began from a core understanding that facilitating greater democratic participation and ownership of schools would not occur through existing authoritarian modes of engagement with school communities (Weiner, 2003).

The second critical moment can be found in a ground-breaking article published in 2010, in which Carolyn Shields drew together her research and theory

development from prior works to delineate transformative leadership as a standalone theory of leadership, separate from, for example, 'transformational' or 'servant' leadership. This was an important endeavour, she argued, because of the central role transformative leadership could play in developing education leaders who could create inclusive, progressive, and socially just schools, districts, and systems (Shields, 2010). It was also important for repositioning transformative leadership within the field of education, after some attempts had been made to use it in managerial contexts (Caldwell et al., 2012), as well as to deploy the managerial dimensions of this leadership style back into the public sector (Currie & Lockett, 2007). In this way, Shields echoes Weiner (2003), who holds that transformative leaders must co-create structures that carry and incorporate their vision into something collectively owned and continuously redefined, but always positioned in a way that is critical of unjust structures and values, with a view to dismantling patterns of domination. This goes beyond a 'recipe' of leadership characteristics to encourage us to think carefully about what leaders do.

Shields (2010, p. 562) further develops the notion of transformative leadership by summarising seven attributes emerging from the literature:

> a combination of both critique and promise; attempts to effect both deep and equitable changes; deconstruction and reconstruction of the knowledge frameworks that generate inequity; acknowledgment of power and privilege; emphasis on both individual achievement and the public good; a focus on liberation, democracy, equity, and justice; and finally, evidence of moral courage and activism.

Transformative leadership, then, is leadership committed to unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom (Weiner, 2003; Shields, 2010; Odora Hoppers, 2014). It relies on leaders who will be, and create, agents of change who can pursue a vision of a more just and democratic society. What sets it apart from other theories of leadership is the notion of social responsibility that underpins the interaction between 'leaders' and 'followers'. To their followers, transformative leaders may be ethical leaders, or servant leaders, but always with a view towards a higher purpose, that is, social justice. Furthermore, they are not always firmly embedded within traditional horizontal and vertical lines of accountability and authority, given the importance of democratic participation and the co-construction of strategies, interventions, and goals (McNamara, 2010).

The distinctiveness of transformative leadership

The main proponents of transformative leadership have come from Brazil, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom. At least 20 articles are cited in this section, with a further 25 forming part of the review process, accounting

for just over half of the literature reviewed. Insights from the literature suggest that transformative leadership is set apart from other leadership theories in at least two ways.

First, it is fundamentally *outward-looking* – focused on the impact that leaders can make on society through their work in particular organisations and institutions. Second, it is concerned with *agential development* of not only leaders, but their followers and those they serve, with the intention of facilitating and supporting the emergence of any number of individuals capable of serving as leaders in their own right. This deeply democratic orientation shifts away from a hierarchical and static understanding of the work that leaders do, suggesting that successful transformative leaders are capable of having a 'mushrooming effect' on the growth and spread of change agents in society.

On one level, the imbalance in the geographical origin of theoretical work on transformative leadership can be explained by its scholarly origins, given the impact of scholars such as Shields, Freire, and Giroux on the development of the theory and its applications within educational settings. However, the origins of this body of work also provide valuable justification for its use within an African context: in much of the work produced in, for example, the US, issues of race, citizenship, and economic inequality have been foundational concerns in the promotion of transformative leadership. These are not dissimilar from the challenges faced in any number of African states. Of interest to scholars of transformative leadership in Africa should be the specific conditions and challenges that enable and constrain the concept's applicability in local contexts.

Transformative leadership in African contexts

Literature on transformative leadership in Africa (and especially by African scholars) was limited in the context of the search conducted. This is not to say that this body of work is, itself, paltry. Rather, a focus on the term 'transformative leadership' yielded far fewer results than expanding search terms to incorporate the issues that transformative leadership would seek to address.

Amanchukwu et al.'s (2015) work on leadership theory, for example, ends its chronological account at transformational leadership, but the authors do not discount the value of a social consciousness informing practices of leadership, nor do they stop short of highlighting social justice foci in the theories they present. However, they do not foreground a commitment to social justice as a prerequisite for good leadership, nor do they describe theories, styles, or examples where this might be useful.

Despite preceding the work of Amanchukwu et al. (2015), Bell (2001) shows why it is important to distinguish good leadership as a moral and ethical imperative, rather than only an operational one. His research into conceptions

of leadership among vice chancellors at historically Black universities in South Africa demonstrates that strong understanding of their organisational and institutional role as leaders did not always translate into a discerning notion of transformative leadership. Rather, these leaders continued to work within the institutional frameworks inherited from the country's Apartheid past, favouring collegial and internal development processes over a wider commitment to social reform (Bell, 2001). Furthermore, their deployment of endogenous philosophies of communalism, such as ubuntu, focused more on relationships than on social change or benefit. Bell's (2001) findings are certainly dated, given the increasing impact of socioeconomic inequality on South Africa's higher education landscape – and the need for leaders equipped to deal with these issues substantively – but he offers an important view into what happens when transformative leadership is assumed by virtue of an individual's historic, cultural, and social positionality.

This provided an interesting segue into examples of leadership that have been hailed for their transformative potential within the context of governance and government on the African continent. Endogenous philosophies are regularly deployed to explain or locate good leadership ethics within a contextual frame of reference, but they are also proof of how the political is invested within the personal, and within the ways people behave towards each other. For example, in South Africa, the notion of ubuntu is a regular invocation within the social imaginary; in Kenya, it is *harambee*; and in Zimbabwe, *hunhu*. The review has made the argument that these philosophies have different features but share a common core in their values of mutual interdependence, collaboration, and striving for a sense of shared common good. Another example can be found in East Africa: *gada*, which fuses the political, philosophical, and cosmological dimensions of society within the Oromo ethnic group.

Gada *as an African concept contributing to social reconstruction*

Similar to the way that ubuntu was deployed as a sort of national ethic during the transition from Apartheid in South Africa, *gada* has been hailed for its potential as a tool for peacebuilding and social reconstruction in the ongoing conflict between the Oromo people and the Ethiopian government (Debisa, 2022). A complex history underpins the relationship between the Oromo and Ethiopia, and Jalata (1996) describes this as a colonising relationship wherein indigenous Oromo institutions, knowledge, and practices were deliberately smashed in order to facilitate their oppression and incorporation into the then Ethiopian Empire. Jalata's historicisation of the field of Oromo studies provided an important source of context for the review of resources on *gada*.

On one level, the *gada* system is a form of republican governance supported by the division of Oromo society into age- and generation-based peer groups (Jalata, 1996; Aliye, 2020; Debisa, 2022). Political succession is determined through

ascension to a particular age stage (from 40 onwards) and is automatically terminated after eight years, with former leaders – known as *Abba Gadaa* – then forming part of the advisory council of the incoming *gada* grade. Checks and balances are ensured through three principles: 'periodic succession, balanced opposition and power sharing' (Jalata, 1996, p. 113). This political and legislative system is supported by the holistic worldview that informs *gada*, which emphasises peace, mutual respect between people and between people and the natural world, and the pursuit of social harmony and care (Shewadeg, 2021; Debisa, 2022).

To analyse the *gada* system in terms of whether it aligns to contemporary theory on transformative leadership would miss the point. The way that endogenous political philosophies are conceived is inextricable from the contexts in which they are located, but the tendency within contemporary scholarship is to define them abstracted from these specific features, magnifying their positive attributes in a vacuum from the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that are the condition for their possibility. This turns a contextually rich concept into 'a magical bag without a bottom' (Mboti, 2015, p. 129). The case of ubuntu in South Africa is instructive here. Mboti (2015) argues that its application in media, popular culture, and government agenda-setting demonstrates a tendency to convey African communitarian ethics as 'fated', as a natural feature of African endogenous societies, something that already exists and needs only to be unearthed.

Pursuing collective humanity and mutual well-being

It makes more sense to recognise that the similarities these endogenous philosophies share is an *ongoing pursuit of the expansion of collective humanity and mutual well-being*. Different cultures and communities have historically found diverse ways of resolving the question of a just society within the terms and structures that are particular to their physical, ecological, and political location, and these diverse solutions have much to offer our contemporary understanding of transformative leadership. Inasmuch as theory enables us to collapse this diversity into neat descriptions of 'democracy', 'communalism', and other frames of reference, it also flattens the unique features that enable these philosophies to continue to have purchase centuries after their origination.

Temple (2012) makes a strong case for this position when he argues that beneath the surface of everyday and contemporary conflicts, there are real and deep metaphysical conflicts that remain unaddressed, and which sit at the root of the contradictions and failures of leadership on the African continent. He defines a metaphysical conflict as '[any] incongruity that exists within the layer of deeply held beliefs (about the nature of the world and our relationship with it), which affects our decisions and actions in real life' (Temple, 2012, p. 49). While Temple's argument is pessimistic in its treatment of African leadership, it makes the critical point that an ongoing and unresolved tension exists between endogenous

and precolonial social structures which have been overlaid, shaped, and contested by the colonial and postcolonial state. The denial of this complexity also belies the competing claims to obligation, loyalty, and service that result. In Temple's view, this produces a 'fragmented metaphysics', where the African state is required to meet competing claims to belonging, deserving and accountability, both by necessity and historical design. Where, for example, corruption may be explained in terms of clan, ethnic, or religious loyalties – suggesting that these are contradictory to the values of liberal democracy – this in fact highlights the outcomes of such a fragmented metaphysics wherein notions of loyalty, accountability, and service compete for dominance within the political and social sphere (Temple, 2012).

> Apart from the fact that the creation of the nation state had a bitter history and necessarily diminished the powers of individual ethnic groups, the new nation state did not offer emotional and social security. It lacked real metaphysical significance. (Temple, 2012, p. 55)

Temple's work is a provocation to think differently about politics in the African state and the assumptions that are regularly made about how it should function. While his work follows the critique by Mboti (2015) of reducing African group belonging and identities to essences, it thoroughly articulates the challenge of leadership-in-relation-to, that is, the competing allegiances that leaders in complex societies have to negotiate and counterbalance when the state is the major source of access to resources and power. This is not to suggest that clan, ethnic, or other group belonging represents a threat to a cohesive state and effective leadership, but that the 'national good' and a sense of collective responsibility will generate friction. The more personal and localised forms of group belonging offer security that the state either will not or cannot offer. Reconciling and inclusively fostering this foundation of a universal form of security and belonging, without negating the particular, is the only viable pathway out of such a situation.

Positionality as a robust driver of transformative leadership

Finding more rigorous ways of using cultural resources can significantly inform and localise transformative leadership practices. Magoqwana (2019) advocates for the incorporation of African philosophies and idioms to inform leadership in higher education, in particular referencing an idiom of motherhood called *inimba*, loosely translated from isiXhosa as 'birthing pains', but extended to mean the process of giving, sustaining, and enabling life. As an idiom of institutional leadership, *inimba* foregrounds an ethic of care towards the vulnerable – in particular poor, historically disadvantaged students and vulnerable staff – and works to manage and transcend their precarity. In this sense it is unquestionably embedded in transformative leadership: *inimba* recognises struggle, inequality,

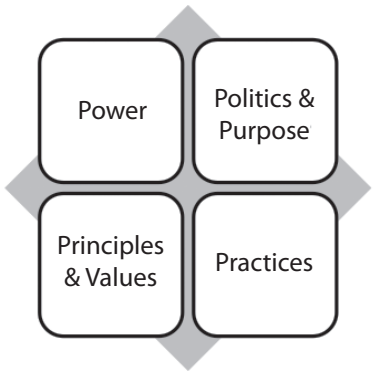
and challenge in the making of student experience, and provides an alternative leadership practice that emphasises student inclusion, success, and dignity.

Women-centred approaches to transformative leadership have also emerged in the work of NGOs such as Oxfam. Brown, Ekoue, and Goodban (2019) discuss the implementation of Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights (TLWR), a framework designed to address historic imbalances in the role of local women in development programmes. This approach recognises the scalar nature of social change, and the relative alienation of local women and their organisations from centres of power. In their study, Brown et al. (2019) argue that this requires both the problematisation and transformation of Oxfam as an organisation, alongside ongoing work at the grassroots level to identify and address contextual challenges. Furthermore, TLWR requires deeper engagement with the very notion and practice of leadership, given the impact that women's daily work and responsibilities may have on their effective participation in decision-making processes.

Encouraging collaboration, using informal spaces and networks, and supporting organic organisational structures are some of the most useful strategies that Brown et al. (2019) identify in the course of their work. The role of stakeholders such as NGOs should also shift from broker or intermediary to a facilitator of greater interaction, dialogue, and participation between the state and ordinary citizens. This would be transformative leadership in action.

In the case of Batliwala's (2008) work, operationalising leadership skills must also be understood within the particular power dynamics and constraints that act upon individuals and groups, impacting their ability to take up space, claim legitimacy, and challenge authority. To this end, Batliwala (2008) developed a framework of feminist leadership which differentiates between *feminine* and *feminist* leadership, noting that not all instances of women in leadership are inherently feminist or transformative, even while it is still important to

Figure 2.1 *The Four Ps Framework*



Source: Batliwala, 2008, p. 15

advocate for greater representation and voice for women's rights and issues. For leadership to be feminist in its orientation, it needs to meet the Four Ps framework (Figure 2.1).

Batliwala developed a rich theoretical understanding of the meaning of these four concepts for transformative feminist leadership which relates to some of the issues raised in this review. Feminist leadership must render *power* visible while articulating new modes of sharing and distributing power that destabilise how leadership is conceptualised, who is considered a leader, whose voice matters, and whose priorities are allowed to shape the transformative agenda (Batliwala, 2008). *Principles and values* underpin the practice of leadership by explicitly articulating the 'non-negotiable' factors that frame how leaders act. Batliwala thus argues for principles and values to be a living instrument of transformative leadership. This is also deeply connected to how leaders understand their *politics and purpose*. For transformative leadership to bring about social change, it needs to be contextually located and responsive, mindful of the political environment in which organisations operate (Batliwala, 2008).

While *practices* is perhaps one of the more essential dimensions of this leadership framework, Batliwala (2008, p. 28) cautions against overemphasising the practical dimension of leadership in ways that strip practice of its ideological and normative foundations: '[We] cannot approach skills-building in an instrumental way, or separate them from our ideological position. Skills are not neutral, portable abilities – they are shaped by values and politics'. This critique is particularly valuable to practitioners in leadership development, given that a focus on spreading transformative leadership through skills-focused programmes may neutralise the contextually embedded features of social change.

A question raised in the grey literature review was whether it is possible for leadership to be transformative when enacted by or in collaboration with the state. This is an important issue that gets to the heart of what transformative leadership is 'for'. Both Batliwala (2008) and Domingo et al. (2015) suggest that there are differences between deploying a leadership framework as praxis compared to invoking it with the aim of 'adding colour' to a specific policy focus or intervention. This is not to assume that states cannot operationalise transformative leadership, but that as the concept becomes a more mainstream feature in international development settings, it runs the risk of being emptied of its meaning.

Proponents of transformative leadership recognise the importance of positionality for informing empathy, understanding, and relevance, but should heed Bell's (2001) suggestion that this must be accompanied by a demonstrable passion for social change as well as openness to learning and critique. Transformative leaders must be able to recognise that while their experience should inform and shape their work, it should not be taken as universal, and

should not speak over the experiences of those they serve and collaborate with. What matters is understanding positionality in relation to structures of power, and strengthening collaboration and participation with the aim of undoing and challenging injustice.

Rylander (2010) shares this view in his reflection on the capacity for transformative leadership to take root on the continent. He argues that effective political leadership has been pivotal in arresting potentially explosive situations and redirecting towards stability, economic well-being, and social cohesion, signalling the importance of strengthening continental, regional, and multilateral organisations (and collaborations between them) as a way of developing a clear vision for a prosperous African future. This view is echoed by Olonisakin (2017), who argues that a focus on leadership as a process provides an opportunity to think about how leadership works, what it is for, and who leaders are meant to serve. This is fundamentally about synthesising top-down and bottom-up leadership strategies, recognising that these can be mutually enforcing and complementary.

Transformative leadership as an ethic of humanism

Tshililo (2014) and Odora Hoppers (2014) both provide alternative perspectives of leadership that dovetail with transformative leadership, and Odora Hoppers does reference transformative leadership by name. Her contribution speaks to the importance of 'interrupting cycles of humiliation' (Odora Hoppers, 2014, p. 32) without collapsing into the trap of creating oppositions between the world that is problematised and the world that is desired. Operationalising transformative leadership begins with self-recognition, including recognition of the roles we play in facilitating domination or displacing blame. The metaphor of the 'wounded healer' is core to Odora Hoppers' discussion: the notion that the transformative leader works from a position of intimate knowledge of their own experiences of suffering, loss, or deprivation, and commits to a project of converting suffering into praxis.

Tshililo (2014) extends this by emphasising the role religion could play in the expansion of transformative leadership on the continent. While his work is rooted within a particular kind of Christian ethic, the argument has broader salience for transformative leaders who are committed to service and to dismantling everyday practices of domination and oppression. Tshililo (2014) argues that the Christian idiom provides a framework for recognising the responsibility of leaders towards those who follow or work with them, grounded within a moral and ethical view of the world that closely aligns with critical humanism. In this way, leaders are able to draw on the universalist principles within their own value systems towards achieving greater social inclusion and equity for everyone they serve, including those whose values

and beliefs diverge from theirs. Unfortunately, Tshililo (2014) does not engage extensively with the legacies of religious and cultural conflict on the continent, which would offer further insight into the kinds of approaches transformative leaders could deploy to sensitively manage the tensions and cleavages that exist within diverse societies with complicated histories.

Expanding the search: Social justice, ubuntu, and ethical leadership

Several of the papers reviewed conflated transformative and transformational leadership. By and large, these focused on transformational leadership, with 'transformative' often being used as a synonym rather than a distinct theoretical position. For this reason, the search was expanded to include 'social justice' and 'ethical leadership', considering the ways in which these theories dovetail with the definition of transformative leadership. Bosu, Dare, Dachi, and Fertig (2009) argue that leadership for social justice is integral to the work of school leaders in low-income and marginalised communities, given that a narrow focus on outcomes and accountability might mask the patterns of inequity and privilege at work within the wider system. A moral and ethical focus on leadership 'for whom' and 'for what' enables school leaders to tailor their practice towards the well-being of the wider school community, recognising the central role schools play in socialisation and community support (Bosu et al., 2009). A notable case was a school in Ghana, which was the only one in its region that served hearing-impaired learners. The approach taken by the school principal was to develop strategies to support effective language and sign language acquisition to enable learners to be full members of their local community, and disrupt the taboo around disability that often resulted in their exclusion and marginalisation (Bosu et al., 2009).

Chedondo (2019) suggests that the use of ubuntu as a leadership philosophy is premised on a notion of shared humanity, interdependence, and interconnectivity, where collaboration is an implicit component of its successful application. He argues that '[t]hrough thorough consultations, decisions are taken jointly, hence it becomes easier to own a common vision or destiny…This type of leadership ensures continuity and [consistency] in times of crises and in turn creates stability' (Chedondo, 2019, p. 23).

This is held up as an example of ethical leadership. Chedondo's work focuses on what ethical leadership looks like in a political context, where ethics is understood to be concerned with standards of appropriate conduct, the pursuit of a notion of shared good, and the reasons for doing so. However, his approach does not completely align with a notion of transformative leadership: while the emphasis on ethics is assumed to produce better, more effective leaders, how this occurs is never fully articulated, nor is it clear whether ethical leaders have transformative intent. This is an important distinction to bear in mind given that while different

approaches to ethical and socially just leadership may fall under the framework of transformative leadership, not all of them do. Moreover, the deployment of endogenous philosophies of leadership – such as ubuntu – provides critical cultural and historical context for the values informing transformative leadership in specific contexts, but does not inherently imply that these philosophies are transformative in their own right.

This view is supported by Mayanja (2013), who argues that it is important to synthesise an understanding of endogenous leadership philosophies within the framework of the democratic state, so as not to use these philosophies to justify unethical conduct. This is not because these endogenous philosophies are shallow. Rather, the tendency to deploy quite specific and contextual value systems in relation to the abstract political community has the effect of weakening, and often erasing, the particular social conditions that contribute to their successful implementation. In this way, endogenous philosophies with *transformative potential* are stripped of their progressive value, and held up as constellations of meaning that support oppressive or conservative regimes (Mayanja, 2013). Mayanja thus advocates for rooting the ethic of ubuntu within a clear understanding of rights, obligations, and the appropriate use of power, arguing that these dimensions have always formed part of the application of ubuntu as a praxis in its originating political contexts. She calls this approach 'ethical political leadership for sustainable peace and social justice' (Mayanja, 2013, p. 120).

Walker (2011) also positions ethical leadership as an essential component of sustainable development, speaking specifically of the role of the public service in African states. He defines four contextual roles of public servants that are consistent with the understanding of transformative leadership in his review: '1) the leader of leaders, 2) the servant of leaders, 3) the professional advocate and 4) the steward of quality public service delivery' (Walker, 2011, p. 41). Leaders of leaders stimulate networking and interconnection, drive creativity, and disrupt the status quo. Servants of leaders mentor and support the growth of their team, stimulate the reproduction of a culture of high ethics and high performance, and emphasise the impact of their work on society. Advocates are expected to promote the interests of those they serve; 'focus politicians, citizens and others on the attainment of the public good' (Walker, 2011, p. 59); and chart a vision for a better future. Lastly, stewards must ensure that they maximise resources in responsible ways, ensuring the best outcome for those they serve and maintaining a high standard of ethical and professional conduct. These roles operationalise ethical leadership and articulate it as an active, involved, and concrete practice where ethical values are expected to translate into transformative leadership.

The literature review enabled a broad sweep of the theoretical and contextual underpinnings of transformative leadership as a concept and praxis. Beginning from key theorists informing the development of transformative leadership

as a standalone concept, we have homed in on the specific characteristics of transformative leaders and the substance of what their work entails. The works of Bass (1985), Shields (2010), and Weiner (2003) were highlighted for their contribution to the development of transformative leadership as a workable theory and praxis to support social change, particularly in educational settings.

Insights from the African continent deepened this discussion, demonstrating how different contexts articulate the meaning of transformative leadership while holding to a common core: progressive, flexible, and responsive leadership, committed to driving social change where leaders are located, while creating a strong collegial culture that engenders critical agency, awareness, and action. Scholars including Walker (2011), Mayanja (2013), and Magoqwana (2019) point to the value of drawing on endogenous cultural resources to support the expansion of sound leadership, rooted in foundations of social justice, ethics, and ubuntu. These leadership philosophies nuance our understanding of what transformative leadership looks like in different societies, highlighting the particular trajectories that inform continental debates on leadership and social justice.

Looking ahead: Transformative leadership resources from Africa

In further refining the review, the aim was to deliver additional perspectives on innovative leadership practices emerging in Africa. While some of this has been covered above, this section draws from the extensive grey literature review conducted as the second component of this review. The grey literature provided insights from professionals working in development, social justice, and civil society; global organisations; and governance. This is valuable for the broader work of this review because it engages with how leadership is enacted on the ground, the multilevel negotiation required for interventions to take hold, and the range of institutions and structures in place to support effective leadership. Perspectives from the grey literature supported the view that a variety of forms of leadership (for example distributed, servant, and ethical leadership) can be operationalised into transformative leadership if there is a definitive commitment to fundamentally 'changing the rules of the game'. Where there is an emphasis on social justice, collective agential development, and catalysing long-term change, it is likely that a framework analogous to transformative leadership is at work.

Much of the grey literature described the specific frameworks of leadership developed or deployed to guide the work of particular organisations. These are useful because they demonstrate particular interpretations of leadership theory, how these are operationalised, and the working models that emerge from their use. Moreover, they offer a refinement of existing theories and concepts through their practical application in diverse contexts. This is particularly important

given that the strong influence of Northern scholarship on leadership theory leaves it open to critique, re-assemblage, and reimagining (Wakefield, 2017).

For Perera, Houston Shearon, Jackson, and De Ver, 'Leadership *requires* leaders to understand that the existing rules of the game are preventing the full realisation of a particular developmental good, and that it is necessary to institute a new set of norms and patterns of behaviour' (2018, p. 3, emphasis added). This supported the development of three criteria used to evaluate whether the case studies in their report could be considered transformational or indeed *transformative*:

1. The changes effected would need to bring about a broader public good through demonstrable improvements in, for example, 'the delivery of public services, better governance or improved security' (Perera et al., 2018, p. 4).
2. Change needed to be 'deliberate', in the sense that it could not be solely an unintended outcome of an intervention (Perera et al., 2018). This is important because it emphasises developing a critical understanding of how leaders have acted specifically to alter the rules for transformative ends.
3. Changes would need to be durable, enduring beyond a single intervention or leader, and on a path to sustainability that would embed a commitment to transformational change within the institution or structure (Perera et al., 2018).

This model emphasises the ability to successfully implement a programme of leadership that can produce transformational change in tangible and widespread ways. Merely possessing 'leadership skills' is insufficient – the viability of these skills is limited by the vision and breadth of contextual and institutional knowledge available to operationalise them effectively (Batliwala, 2008; Perera et al., 2018).

This naturally includes leadership focused on pursuing gender equity, feminism, and disability justice. For example, the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) takes the standpoint that feminism is concerned with power relations and the interlocking forms of inequity and discrimination that specifically impact African women (AMWA, 2019). For this reason, the AWLI programme fuses personal development and emancipation with the broader organisational aim of achieving widespread social transformation. Within such an environment, the indicators of organisational progress dovetail with the agential development of the communities being served, foregrounding the ongoing interplay between the personal and the political.

Social movements are one sphere of society where these issues have regularly shaped political engagement. The proliferation of social movements in the Global South demonstrates the need for an expanded notion of what constitutes, influences, and shapes the political sphere to include the 'the historical and current micropolitics from which new popular political subjectivities and practices emerge' (Motta, 2013, p. 6). The chapter by De Kock and Nyamnjoh in this volume (Chapter 19) will expand on this. Understanding the dynamics of the

relationship between leaders and those they lead is crucial to developing a notion of transformative leadership that can name and address the rules of the game that act against meaningful political participation and transformation.

The experience of social movements provides one way of conceiving of transformative leadership that exists in a generative relationship with the state, because it requires that the 'rules of the game' that potentially exclude the public from political participation be fundamentally altered to allow people to concretely contribute to and design the processes that shape their lives. It also asks that we recognise as legitimate those forms of political engagement that do not follow the expected rhythms and patterns of formal political engagement – including strikes, stayaways, and public disobedience campaigns. The current tendency is to represent these forms as somehow criminal or 'outside' of the democratic sphere, when in truth they indicate a push to expand the space of the political to include those whose voices are regularly marginalised by high-level stakeholder negotiation and deliberation in the governance arena (Harders, 2015).

The globalisation of a particular form of liberal democracy has also heralded a shift towards a politics of representation rather than participation, where voting is viewed as the primary act of engaged citizenship (Robins, 2010). However, social movements have emerged to contest this phenomenon for excluding members of the public from participating in the actual processes that shape their lived experience, whether in terms of housing and transport policy, welfare, or environmental destruction. Social movements in South Africa have also contested xenophobic policy-making that excludes migrants, refugees, and other displaced persons from access to public services, and foments competition and discord among vulnerable groups in society (Neocosmos, 2011). De Kock and Nyamnjoh (Chapter 19, this volume) argue that incorporating the demands, processes, and modes of engagement of this sphere of political society is essential to realising a more substantive form of democracy.

Conclusion

This review has engaged with the breadth of research conducted to date on the issue of transformative leadership and the strands of scholarship that feed into its development as a field of enquiry. While not exhaustive, we have attempted to offer a comprehensive overview of the definitional, contextual, and theoretical issues that shape how transformative leadership can be understood and applied as a progressive framework for social change.

This does leave a number of new possibilities open for future research and advocacy. For one, it is important to start developing a nuanced understanding of how causality operates in the application of transformative leadership, in order to be able to make concrete claims about the impact of transformative leadership principles in producing lasting and broad change. Additionally, it is

necessary to begin to think about how historic and contemporary alternative conceptions of society and social obligation can expand current notions of what transformative leadership could look like, how it might operate, and the outcomes it can produce. It is important that, rather than articulating this concept as something vacuous and capable of being filled with a multitude of ideas and related ethics – a magic bag with no bottom – we instead reframe it as a comprehensive framework that is elastic in its applicability to local contexts with their own conceptualisations of what the universal pursuit of social justice could look like.

#AfricaLeadership

Transformative leadership aims to stimulate systemic change and social justice. Transformative leaders care about disrupting injustice and fostering collective social well-being. Many African concepts support this understanding of leadership.

Questions for discussion

1. Is transformative leadership a universally useful concept? How could such an understanding of transformative leadership become more widely adopted?
2. If systemic change is the desired outcome of transformative leaders, is it fair to expect individuals to become successful transformative leaders? What alternatives are there?
3. What other African concepts could be useful in building our understanding of transformative leadership?

References

Aliye, A. A. (2020). African indigenous leadership philosophy and democratic governance system: Gada's intersectionality with ubuntu. *Journal of Black Studies*, *51*(7), 727–759.

Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management*, *5*(1), 6–14.

AMWA (Akina Mama Wa Afrika) (24-30 March 2019). Strengthening Feminist and Transformational Leadership for a Just and Secure Africa. Report of the 2019 Africa Women's Leadership Institute for Eastern and Southern Africa. Retrieved from https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/AWLI-REPORT.pdf

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Batliwala, S. (2008). *Changing their world: Concepts and practices of women's movements*. Toronto, Canada: Association for Women's Rights in Development.

Bell, D. I. (2001, July). *Leading change: African conceptions of leadership and transformation in higher education in South Africa*. Paper presented at Higher Education Close Up 2, Lancaster University, United Kingdom.

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. (2007). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper-Collins.

Bosu, R., Dare, A., Dachi, H. A., & Fertig, M. (2009). *School leadership and social justice: Evidence from Ghana and Tanzania*. EdQual Working Paper No. 17. Bristol, United Kingdom: EdQual Consortium. Retrieved from https://www.edqual.org/publications/workingpaper/edqualwp17.pdf/at_download/file.pdf

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 21–37.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Chedondo, M. (2019). *Ethics and leadership: A critical analysis of cultural resources for ethical leadership in Southern Africa*. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Retrieved from https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/16818.

Currie, G. & Lockett, A. (2007). A critique of transformational leadership: Moral, professional and contingent dimensions of leadership within public services organizations. *Human Relations*, *60*(2), 341–370.

Debisa, N. G. (2022). Building peace by peaceful approach: The role of Oromo Gadaa system in peace-building. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2023254.

Domingo, P., Holmes, R., O'Neil, T., Jones, N., Bird, K., Larson, A., Presler-Marshall, E., & Valters, C. (2015). *Women's voice and leadership in decision-making: Assessing the evidence* (ODI Report). Gender Climate Tracker. Retrieved from https://genderclimatetracker.org/resource/22405.

Harders, C. (2015). 'State analysis from below' and political dynamics in Egypt after 2011. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *47*(1), 148–151.

Hewitt, K.K., Davis, A. W., & Lashley, C. (2014). Transformational and transformative leadership in a research-informed leadership preparation program. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *9*(3), 225–253.

Horner, M. (1997). Leadership theory: Past, present and future. *Team Performance Management, 3*(4), 270–287.

Jalata, A. (1996). The struggle for knowledge: The case of emergent Oromo studies. *African Studies Review*, *39*(2), 95–123.

Magoqwana, B. (2019). *Tapping into inimba to show deep transformative leadership in Mandela Universit*y. Nelson Mandela University. Retrieved from https://crishet.mandela.ac.za/getmedia/0741dadc-3048-4f36-bc80-656dd3e8e2af/Babalwa-Magoqwana?disposition=attachment.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

Mayanja, E. (2013). Strengthening ethical political leadership for sustainable peace and social justice in Africa: Uganda as a case study. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *13*(2), 113–146.

Mboti, N. (2015). May the real ubuntu please stand up? *Journal of Media Ethics*, *30*(2), 125–147.

McCleskey, J. A. (2014). Situational, transformational, and transactional leadership and leadership development. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, 5*(4), 117–130.

McNamara, K. H. (2010). Fostering sustainability in higher education: A mixed-methods study of transformative leadership and change strategies. *Environmental Practice*, *12*(1), 48–58.

Misra, N. L. (2019). *Crisis leadership at South African universities: An exploration of the effectiveness of the strategies and responses of university leadership teams to the #FeesMustFall (#FMF) protests at South African universities in 2015 and 2016*. PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape , Cape Town, South Africa. Retrieved from http://etd.uwc.ac.za/xmlui/handle/11394/7096.

Motta, S. C. (2013). Reinventing the lefts in Latin America: Critical perspectives from below. *Latin American Perspectives*, *40*(4), 5–18.

Mouton, J. & Wildschut, L. (2015). *Leadership and management case studies in training in higher education in Africa.* Cape Town, South Africa: African Minds.

Neocosmos, M. (2011). Transition, human rights and violence: Rethinking a liberal political relationship in the African neo-colony. *Interface*, *3*(2), 359–399.

Oberfield, Z. W. (2014). Public management in time: A longitudinal examination of the full range of leadership theory. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *24*(2), 407–429.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Olonisakin, F. (2017). Towards re-conceptualising leadership for sustainable peace. *Leadership and Developing Societies*, *2*(1), 1–30.

Perera, S., Houston Shearon, E., Jackson, P., & De Ver, L. (2018). *What enables or disables leadership for transformational change in Africa?* Research Paper 55. Developmental Leadership Programme. Retrieved from https://www.dlprog.org/publications/research-papers/what-enables-or-disables-leadership-for-transformational-change-in-africa.

Robins, S. (2010). How deep is deep democracy? Grassroots globalization from Mumbai to Cape Town. In V. S. P. Coelho & B. von Lieres (Eds). *Mobilizing for democracy: Citizen action and the politics of public participation* (pp. 143–145). London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

Rylander, S. (2010). *Governance and transformative leadership in Africa: Progress, prospects and challenges*. Harare, Zimbabwe: The African Capacity Building Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.asclibrary.nl/docs/408423056.pdf

Shewadeg, B. (2021). Gadaa as an alternative understanding of democracy in Africa. *Conflict Trends*, *2021*(2), 45–53.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Sun, J. & Leithwood, K. (2012). Transformational school leadership effects on student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *11*(4), 418–451.

Temple, O. E. (2012). Metaphysical challenges of ethical leadership in Africa. *Leadership*, *8*(1), 47–65.

Tshililo, L. (2014). The king's justice: An example of leadership. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 75–85). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Wakefield, S. (2017). *Transformative and feminist leadership for women's rights*. Boston, MA: Oxfam America.

Walker, K. (2011, July). *Ethical leadership for sustainable development*. Paper presented at the 8th Annual Forum of Heads of Public Service in Africa, Namibia.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

3 *Leadership and identity in precolonial African contexts: A retrospective account*

Matthews Makgamatha

Overview

This chapter examines the leadership practices of precolonial African societies. Multidisciplinary scholarly accounts of leadership were examined using the social identity markers of precolonial societal and community organisation, ethnicity, gender, and social stratification. The emerging picture is one of traditional African rulerships that vary across social identity markers mediated through traditional polities or forms of social relations. What became evident was the diversity of complex, context-bounded forms of leadership and leadership practices. In precolonial societies, leaders and their followers had the opportunity to engage each other in leadership actions or processes, depending on whether the communal contexts they operated within enabled or constrained either authoritative leadership or democratic co-participation in the leadership processes. The sociopolitical complexities from which leaders and their followers operated created contexts for leadership outcomes ranging from the ethical to the unethical, and from the socially just to the unjust.

Introduction

The discourse on precolonial Africa has at times assumed a monolithic tone, despite the continent having been home to a socially and culturally diverse populace both before and during the colonial eras. In this context, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008, pp. 375–376) argues that leadership and governance of precolonial Africa were driven by a set of superdiverse contexts comprising 'a complex mixture of communalism, clan and family intimacies, and kinship, co-existing uneasily and tendentiously with domination, militarism, patriarchy and aristocratic tendencies'. It would be unrealistic to try to pin down leadership and leadership practices across the diverse sociohistorical precolonial African experience to a common generalised notion of 'precolonial African leadership'. The confluence of sociohistorical complexities and their different and unequal precolonial African contexts yields an uneasy mix of different leadership types and practices.

While the emergence of precolonial African leadership is entangled in continental sociohistorical complexities, historical evidence provides pointers

to some of its causes. Monroe (2013) postulates that some of the drivers of the formation of precolonial African societal divisions or complexities (for example states, kingdoms, or empires) comprised the following two factors: first, the role of indigenous political entrepreneurs in driving state formation; and second, the diverse modes of power that shaped the political contours of precolonial centralisation. The notion of centralisation, or sociopolitical centralisation, refers to processes through which political systems, or specialised political institutions that were rooted in kin-based power, emerged as adaptive responses to socially complex indigenous socioenvironmental stressors. These resulted in the formation of precolonial centralised bureaucratic states (Monroe, 2013). Montuori and Donnelly (2018) refer to these social changes as emerging from process-orientated transformative moments or moments of reinvention. De Maret (2012, p. 316) suggests that centralisation did not follow single one-way paths or trajectories leading to social complexity conditions, but rather an 'array of political creativity on the many pathways to [sociopolitical] complexity… and return from it!' Such assortment of political activity could be credited for the precolonial sociopolitical complexities produced, and the attendant forms of leadership with their array of complex practices. Further, De Maret (2012, p. 315) posits that some individuals assumed leadership by attaining power and becoming 'the "big men" of their community, and eventually the king' (see also Huffman, 2000). At the core of such leadership were ritual power and networks – in other words, having a large following (De Maret, 2012; Heywood, 1998). Mtaka and Matshiqi (2021) suggest that leaders should have a leadership 'calling' to service, which would be a spiritual or ancestral calling. Such leadership types and practices gravitated towards people-centric leadership styles, as aptly captured by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2008, p. 375) use of the Ndebele proverb '*inkosi yinkosi ngabantu* (a king is king because of the people)'.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine retrospectively and grapple with issues of leadership and leadership practices in precolonial Africa. It is an attempt to look back through time to ascertain the leadership types and practices, both ethical and unethical, that existed then and lessons that can be derived from them (Slater, 2019). In this context, 'leadership' functions as a noun denoting the man or woman who assumes or assumed a position of influence over their society or community, whereas 'leadership practices' refers to a process or processes through which leadership is actioned or enacted (Weiner, 2003). Precolonial African societies and communities, through their traditional organisations, facilitated the emergence of the leader, leadership, and the construction of leadership practices, even though some leadership scholars have expressed caution on leadership based on the persona (for example, Montuori & Donnelly, 2018; Shields, 2010). However, human beings are fundamentally

endowed with the capacity to be creative (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018) and, by extension, to create or to be a leader. Nye (cited in Montuori & Donnelly, 2018) posits that leadership can be learned, implying that any person can learn to become a leader and to assume either the leadership or followership position, with the act of leading being exercised at either level. This denotes a dialectical, as opposed to a hierarchical, relationship between the leaders and the led, which conjures a democratic notion of leadership – leaders being led and conversely the led being leaders (Weiner, 2003). Further, Mtaka and Matshiqi (2021) posit that as leaders are called into service to lead their communities or societies, their followers too should be 'called' to lead as supporters. In the precolonial African context, whether such leadership or leadership acts had ethical and social justice intentions in mind depended on precolonial sociopolitical complexities and their inherent contradictions.

Surveying the literature

The literature sourced for this chapter comprised journal articles in the main, with a few book chapters. Articles were obtained using the EBSCOhost and JSTOR databases, and Google Scholar. Literature searches were conducted using the following keyword combinations: precolonial African leadership, precolonial Anglophone African leadership, precolonial francophone African leadership, precolonial Lusophone African leadership, and precolonial (Eastern/Western/Southern) Africa/African leadership. The results of the literature searches comprised multidisciplinary (for example anthropology, archaeology, history, sociology, etc.) reference materials. The following three limitations were encountered. First, only the English literature was consulted, with French and Portuguese being excluded; second, the literature consulted was neither extensive nor broad enough to match the immense and diverse sociopolitical nature of precolonial Africa; and third, many of the scholars whose materials were used wrote from outside the African continent, and their viewpoints portrayed a Global North orientation. Nevertheless, it is the author's contention that the literature referred to and how it was engaged with shed some light on precolonial African leadership and leadership practices, and their current relevance for transformative leadership as described by Swartz (Chapter 1, this volume).

The chapter is organised into subsections that offer an overview of the influences the various social markers had on precolonial African leadership and leadership practices across a plethora of polity complexities. The subsections are as follows: leadership and societal and community organisation, leadership and ethnicity, leadership and gender, and leadership and social stratification.

Leadership and societal and community organisation

Many scholars of precolonial African leadership and the associated societal and community organisation have adopted the Global North (or Metropolitan) conception of statehood in analysing the nature and types of leadership and governance forms at play (Connell, 2007). In rationalising this approach, it could be argued that it gives the best prospect for re-imagining precolonial leadership and leadership practices as they were prior to the colonisation experience meted out to Africa by Europeans. However, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2008) criticism of this statehood thesis – of trying to simplify a diverse and extremely complex precolonial African context – looms large.

The statehood conception of precolonial Africa postulates that African indigenous societies and communities were settled in organisational forms that demonstrated both centralised and decentralised social organisation dominated by ethnic affiliation or society membership (for example, see Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2016; Bradley, 2005; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015; Monroe, 2013). Leadership and governance in these binary societal or community arrangements were mediated through the agency of ethnic leaders (for example kings, queens, chiefs) or any other forms of local social ethnic collectivism that held sway. According to Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) and Bradley (2005), the binary societal organisation ensured that there was a balance between centralised and decentralised power (and leadership practices) to prevent the abuse of authority by any one person. In a central authority, the administrative machinery and judicial institutions characteristically constituted a high level of centralised leadership and governance, where there were correspondences between wealth, privilege, and status on the one hand, and the distribution of power and leadership authority on the other (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015). Examples of centralised leadership and governance systems can be discerned from the precolonial customary rulership of the Zulu, the Ngwato, the Bemba, the Banyankole, and the Kede. Furthermore, in addition to being centralised, such precolonial states were also hierarchical, with concentric levels of leadership and governance (at national, regional, state, and local levels). This is aptly exemplified by Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2008) description of the precolonial Ndebele state in Zimbabwe. Societal control in centralised forms of governance was vested in traditional leadership (for example kings, queens, or chiefs) but this leadership worked with other levels of society in a communitarian system of governance. On the other hand, there was a group of societies or communities that lacked centralised government, which Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) referred to as the stateless societies. Such societies exhibited no sharp divisions of rank, status, or wealth, and their decentralisation was characterised by the diffusion of leadership and power. Examples include the Logoli, the Tallensi, and the Nuer

(Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015). Another example is the precolonial Igbo society of Nigeria, which could be considered to represent a stateless populace led by horizontal ethnic-specific community structures (Amadi, 1991).

Potholm (1979, cited in Bradley, 2005) posits that precolonial Africa had two types of centralised democratic political systems – the pyramidal and the associational monarchy systems. The pyramidal monarchy system was characterised by a central leadership authority in control of a central government or monarchy. While the monarch was at the helm, they did not exert absolute control, but worked with a royal council made up of clans or clan families (Bradley, 2005). The power of the king or queen was balanced by the council. So on the one hand, while a monarch could declare war, a royal council determined such things as the selection of the leader's successor from the royal family. In this way, while decisions were taken together at times and separately at other times, there was a balance of power. The associational monarchy, like the pyramidal version, maintained a federalist system in which non-royal clans and other ethnic groups had a degree of autonomy from the central authority (Potholm, 1979, cited in Bradley, 2005). The associational monarchy performed a mediating or liaising function between the villages and the central authorities. For example, they were responsible for collection of taxes and the promotion of good behaviour (Amadi, 1991).

Unlike Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's (1940, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) and Bradley's (2005) binary characterisation of precolonial African societies, Murdock (1967, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) employs a proxy of political centralisation that describes the number of political jurisdictions above the local (usually village) level for each ethnic group using a continuum perspective. Using as a construct the degree of the distribution of political centralisation of ethnic societies under ethnic leadership and control, he devises a continuum of what might be considered to be precolonial African state and non-state communities. On the one end of the continuum, the dominant ethnic groups of the major precolonial African communities, evincing greater centralisation, could constitute states. The opposite end of the continuum comprises less centralised ethnic community formations which are termed 'stateless' (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015, p. 53). Murdock's (1967, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) examples of centralised precolonial African states include the ethnic societies of different continental regions, such as the East African kingdoms of the Ankale, the Banyoro, and the Buganda; the empires of the Zulus and the Swazis in southern Africa; and in western Africa, the Yoruba in Nigeria and the Songhai in Mali. These forms of governments and polities of the centralised states were under traditional rulership. Societies classified as stateless are those identified as acephalous (without leaders or hierarchies) societies, exhibiting low to non-existent political centralisation, as

explicated by Murdock's (1967, cited in Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015) jurisdictional hierarchy thesis. According to Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2015), the Ashanti of Ghana, the Kuba in Congo, the Bemba in Zambia, and the Egba in Nigeria, all had some intermediate level of political centralisation. However, the Amba, the Konkomba, the Tiv, the Dinka, and the Lugbara were considered to have the lowest (to non-existent) level of political centralisation. Societies evincing the intermediate or lowest forms of political centralisation were each under some form of customary rulership.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008, p. 378), though critical of Metropolitan scholars such as Fortes and Evans-Pritchard for offering 'single-despot model[s]' not confirmed by the realities on the African ground, concedes that their work does offer a glimpse into the hierarchically organised leadership and governance system of the precolonial Ndebele kingdom in Zimbabwe. The king provided a link between himself and the ancestors and then God (Huffman, 2000), which is in accordance with Mtaka and Matshiqi's (2021) assertion of (African) leadership as having a spiritual or ancestral calling component. The Ndebele system of leadership and governance, though hierarchical, is said to have provided for democratic participation at various levels, where matters were discussed and debated before decisions were taken. However, what is instructive is Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2008, p. 378) cautionary note on the diverse, varied, and context-bound nature of leadership and leadership processes in precolonial Africa:

> Each precolonial society had a unique set of rules, laws and traditions suitable for particular contexts…there were also diverse systems of governance [and leadership] suitable for different socio-economic and political exigencies and realities.

From Ndlovu-Gatsheni's argument, it follows that the diverse and varied nature of Africa's precolonial past gave rise to varied and diverse forms of social and community organisation and attendant leadership types and practices.

Leadership and ethnicity

Although ethnicity is considered to be one of the social markers in precolonial African societies and communities, its role in shaping leadership types and practices tended to differ from one sociopolitical grouping to another. Green (2010, p. 3) considers ethnicity to be made up of the attributes of 'common descent, a unique name, a common history, a common territory/homeland, a common culture, and a sense of solidarity [and] language'. Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2012; 2015) regard ethnicity as the most pronounced social and identity marker of precolonial African statehood. It defined social group membership across most precolonial African societies and communities. These authors posit that ethnic identification was spurred by, among other factors,

the highly pronounced cultural and linguistic differences of the continental populace, punctuated with income differentials (or inequalities) between the ethnic groups. However, Lentz (2000) argues that ethnicity, as a social descriptor, is an ideological construct of the northern hemisphere imposed on the African context. This assertion is disputed by Green (2010), who argues that the Baganda of Uganda existed as an ethnic entity even before British annexation in the 19th century. This is supported by various researchers who note the phenomenon of ethnic affiliation and its prevalence across different parts of precolonial Africa (Atkinson, 1989; Ball, 2000; Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2016; Green, 2010).

According to Green (2010) and Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2015), people in centralised states belonged to the same ethnic group, and identified with and swore allegiance to their traditional leadership. Traditional leaders in this context played the crucial role of allocating land rights to their subjects under customary law and resolving disputes within their communities through the traditional court system. These ethnic authorities and leaders are said to have been popular with their communities and peers, and 'exercised considerable de jure and de facto authority in many aspects of local economic, political, and social life' (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2015, p. 63). The Buganda precolonial kingdom of Uganda studied by Green (2010) exemplified a centralised precolonial polity, whereas the precolonial Igbo community of Nigeria that Amadi (1991) reports on displayed a tendency toward decentralised leadership. However, the heterogenous and complex nature of precolonial African states makes generalisation from one polity to the other impossible, as cautioned by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008). In a similar fashion, how individual or group ethnic affiliation played itself out in leadership and leadership processes varied from one precolonial African society to another. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008, p. 392) observes that the precolonial Ndebele rulership was not ethnically rigid, as its citizenry was allowed to associate freely without social barriers:

> The reality is that people continuously moved across these [ethnic] categories as they negotiated new alliances, usually by marriage, merit and loan of cattle. [For example,]…a respectable Hole was able to move closer to the Ndebele chiefs and could become richer than a relative of a chief who had fallen out of favour.

The Ndebele ethnic identity was relaxed to accommodate persons from other social groups, and these individuals could rise to important community leadership positions, such as becoming chiefs. Also, captured slaves were put on probation before they were assimilated into society. But the same could not be said of the precolonial centralised Buganda kingdom of Uganda, which had heightened ethnicity leanings.

Bandyopadhyay and Green (2016) posit that in precolonial Uganda, ethnic group identities were held together through the kingship system, where centralised

polities existed side by side with non-centralised communities. They further assert the variable nature of precolonial ethnic centralisation within the Ugandan borders, where different kingdoms were found, each banded together by ethnic identity (for example, the kingdoms of the Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, and Toro in the south and west of the country). These kingdoms existed together with the non-centralised communities of the Acholi, Itesot, Karamojong, and Langi in the north and east. Ethnic affiliation tended to be stronger at the centre, while displaying a waning identity towards the periphery.

Unlike the reported flexible approaches to ethnic identity, belonging, and leadership shown by the precolonial Ndebele (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008), the clan-powered Buganda kingdom, under a *kabaka* or king, demonstrated a strong attachment to their ethnic identities, displayed through a common culture, common territory or homeland, and a sense of solidarity and language. They are said to have defended ethnicity through violent means (Green, 2010). The rigid adherence to the Bagandan ethnic traits meant that people who did not have traceable Bagandan lineages could not be assimilated into the clans. At worst, captured slaves or their descendants could neither own property nor assume chieftainship, and if they died, their mortal remains were subjected to the undignified treatment of being thrown into the forest (Green, 2010).

Attachment to ethnic affiliation in the precolonial African polity appeared to have followed the diverse contexts within which centralised statehood and fractionalised or acephalous stateless polities were formed. Under these varying conditions of precolonial statehood versus statelessness, ethnicity exerted differentiated effects on leadership forms and practices. The precolonial Ndebele kingdom of Zimbabwe and the precolonial Buganda kingdom of Uganda represent two contrasting cases of the effects of ethnicity on polity membership, leadership, and leadership practices. Precolonial Ndebele centralisation tended to lean towards an expanded and tolerant notion of ethnic affiliation and belonging. This paved the way for a leadership that tolerated ethnic differences and was inclined to accommodate 'outsiders' (for example slaves) through a process of assimilation. On the contrary, the precolonial Bagandan polity was conservative and intolerant of ethnic difference. To this polity, true ethnicity ran in the blood and was to be demonstrated through one's lineage. However, the sociopolitical complexities associated with either rulership could have predisposed their societies and communities to mixed ethical and unethical, as well as mixed socially just and unjust, leadership processes and outcomes.

Leadership and gender

A binary construction of male versus female gender division is prevalent in scholarship on gender relations in precolonial African societies, which were

characterised by unequal gender roles, where men dominated women. This pattern of patriarchal domination is extended to issues of leadership, leadership roles, and leadership practices (see, for example, Allman, Geiger, & Musisi, 2002, cited in Day, 2007; Amadi, 1991; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). However, there exists a scholarly strand that contests the patriarchal domination interpretation of gender relations in precolonial African polities as a conception of issues from the Global North and a misportrayal of African contexts (for example, Amadi, 1991; Day, 2007; Maphalala, 1985, cited in Hanretta, 1998). While the latter scholarship agrees with the binary gender construct, it argues for a portrayal of women as partners to men through the 'separate but complementary male and female spheres of responsibility' (Day, 2007, p. 436). However, Hanretta (1998, p. 390) has construed the spheres of complementary responsibility (SCR) paradigm as a 'benign patriarchy model of pre-colonial gender relations'. Further, the SCR thesis has been used to argue for a gender inclusivity view, among other things, on matters of leadership and leadership practices in precolonial Africa, without disrupting entrenched patriarchal tendencies and the binary conception of gender. The SCR paradigm suggests that male and female genders are equal but different when it comes to the roles and responsibilities expected of them. This paradigm has been used to ideologically rationalise the partitioning of roles and responsibilities for men and women leaders and their followers. Further, it could be construed as one way of blending each gender's uniqueness into collective societal, community, or organisational action (Bennis, 1986). Oluwagbemi-Jacob and Uduma (2015, p. 225) posit that traditional Igbo culture follows the complementary gender rewarding system, which accords esteemed status to both masculine and feminine genders, contrary to the binary and status differentials conception of gender held by Western scholars:

> If a woman gives birth to male children only, she is celebrated for enlarging the population of the community at the village level, but if she gives birth to female children only, she is celebrated for enlarging the community at the family level.

Further, these authors emphasise that the Igbo traditional culture did not discriminate between the sexes in terms of symbols of wealth:

> Male roles were open to certain categories of women through such practices as 'male daughters' and 'female husbands.' These institutions placed women in a more favorable position for the acquisition of wealth and formal political power and authority.
> (Oluwagbemi-Jacob & Uduma, 2015, p. 229)

Given the above, the question then becomes how the SCR thesis accounts for the association of leadership, followership, and their related practices to the femaleness or maleness of members of society or community in some precolonial African contexts. Day (2007), arguing from an SCR paradigm,

describes the leadership of a female ruler (or queen), Nyarroh of the Bandasuma people in the Mende region of what is now known as Sierra Leone. Chief Nyarroh had ascended the throne and assumed the Bandasuma chieftainship following the death of her husband (Day, 2007), and her reign as the principal ruler commenced before and extended to the cusp of British colonial occupation of Sierra Leone. Chief Nyarroh's leadership prowess is evident in reports of her as both a skilful negotiator and an instigator of wars. In fighting wars, she reportedly did not personally carry spears and guns but relied on 'war boys who led raids on her behalf or defended her town against attack, and who could be lent or hired out to fight for her allies' (Day, 2007, p. 427). In addition, Chief Nyarroh's mediation skills were underscored by the fact that 'Bandasuma often served as a centre for negotiations between rival factions in the dispute in the neighbourhood regions' (Day, 2007, p. 429). Her negotiation skills are said to have been best demonstrated in the early years of British colonial occupation, when she acted as a mediator between the colonial occupiers and the local people, even in areas outside of Bandasuma territory. Thus, Chief Nyarroh's display of agency in her leadership practices negates and delegitimises the prescriptive gender role paradigm and simultaneously affirms the SCR thesis. She could be said to have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and roles similar to, if not better than, those demonstrated by her male peers.

Another account of the industriousness of women in a precolonial African context is that of the Yorubaland women, in what is now Nigeria, described by Denzer (1994). According to Denzer (1994), the Yoruba women were not only highly industrious, but their social activism and leadership stretched to the economic, social, and political affairs of their societies. They were considered to have played crucial roles in the precolonial Yoruba economy. Their business acumen saw them being involved in businesses at different levels in their communities and town markets, for instance as hawkers, selling food; as plantation owners, producing a variety of goods (for example making pottery, dyeing cloth, processing palm and nut oils, making soap); as successful merchants, selling or trading in a variety of goods; and as employers of freeborn and slave labour (male and female). They also engaged in business transactions across the length and breadth of Yorubaland and beyond, trading goods (such as foodstuffs, kola nuts, palm oil, cloth, arms and ammunition) from place to place in long-distance caravans. Yoruba women are said to have translated their economic and social roles into political power and influence. As a result, precolonial Yoruba traditions referred to strong women who founded or ruled kingdoms. Every Yoruba kingdom had a hierarchy of female chiefs, with the most common title for the head of the female chief hierarchy throughout Yorubaland being that of *iyalode*. The *iyalode* was described as the 'mother of the town', or the 'queen of the ladies', or the 'most distinguished lady in the town' (Denzer 1994, p. 10). Unlike Chief Nyarroh of Sierra Leone, the precolonial Yoruba women

displayed leadership prowess that was independent of their position in society, but whose positive outcomes affected various areas of society.

The above discussion demonstrates that in the midst of a binary conception of gender in precolonial African polities, becoming a leader and exercising leadership did not always follow the patriarchal norm. The leadership calling is not gender-specific (Mtaka & Matshiqi, 2021). Thus, the existence of women monarchs, albeit not predominant, could be taken to suggest that leadership was not the preserve of men only. Women exercised leadership roles in their families, communities, or societies, even behind the 'patriarchal curtain'. Further, women as leaders or followers, acting alone or with men, had avenues for exercising their agency and thereby participating in leadership processes and the co-creation of either ethical or unethical leadership outcomes.

Leadership and social stratification

Social stratification of the populace may have occurred throughout most, if not all, precolonial African polities across their different complexities, such as in the Ogoni of Nigeria (Kpone-Tonwe, 2001), the Ndebele of Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008), and the Baganda of Uganda (Green, 2010), to name a few. Precolonial African polities portrayed non-egalitarian qualities in their social ranking or ordering. Moreover, the social stratification of polities intersected with their societal and community organisational forms (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2016; Bradley, 2005; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2012, 2015; Monroe, 2013) and their gender compositions (for example, Kpone-Tonwe, 2001; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008).

Further, social stratification also extended to both the leadership and followership divisions of various polities. According to Preston-Whyte (1978, cited in Huffman, 2000), precolonial Zimbabwean society was stratified into two socioeconomic classes: the nobles and the commoners. The differences between these two social classes lies in the fact that the nobles were

> a high-status group, with well-recognised rights, duties and behaviour. Senior families of different lineages across the culture area formed a single bureaucratic upper class, restricting wealth, prestige and political power to themselves…in contrast, [commoners] lacked the same access to wealth, prestige and power.
> (Preston-Whyte, 1978, cited in Huffman, 2000, p. 14)

Consequently, the latter (lower) social class did not have equal leadership status to the former.

Another instance of precolonial African social stratification is the case of the Ovimbundu kingdoms of Angola (Ball, 2000; Heywood, 1998). These kingdoms exemplified unequal political power and differentiated leadership

status, embodied in contrasting rulership styles: 'blacksmith kings' and 'hunter kings' (Heywood, 1998, p. 152). The two rulership types were socially constructed opposites. The blacksmith kings (or spokesman kings) represented the constitutional ruler, and characteristics such as kindness, generosity, and justice were attributed to them, suggesting that they made decisions in consultation with their subjects. This form of rulership tended to define power as a balance between the consultative element and the authoritarian element. However, the hunter kings epitomised the autocratic ruler, representing a rulership which was characteristically the opposite of the blacksmith kingship. It was based on a conception of leadership grounded in the belief of the hunter as a predator (Heywood, 1998, p. 151) – a command-and-control leadership style that encouraged conformity by curtailing freedom and creativity (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). The two types of ideologically contrasting precolonial Ovimbundu leaders demonstrated practices designed to yield socially differential leadership outcomes: the blacksmith kings by emphasising consultative, consensus-building, and communal forms of participative leadership, leaned towards precipitating ethically desired and socially just outcomes; the hunter kings, who employed authoritarian and non-consultative methods of rulership, could not be linked to ethical and socially just leadership dispensations and outcomes. The latter represented a despotic type of leadership where conditions for both accountability and legitimacy were severely curtailed or non-existent.

Some precolonial African polities had leadership practices geared towards the social stratification of their societies or communities, as instantiated by the *Yaa* tradition of the precolonial Ogoni people of Nigeria (Kpone-Tonwe, 2001). According to Kpone-Tonwe, the *Yaa* tradition was practised within an early Ogoni matrilineal line which evolved into a patrilineal kinship with the passage of time. The purpose of the *Yaa* tradition was to take young Ogoni boys and girls through a systematised training on the ways of Ogoni life. In its heyday, this tradition is said to have provided a steady recruitment and training of young people (male and female) for the defence and preservation of the Ogoni lifestyle. While young people who had undergone the *Yaa* training achieved some social status or recognition in their community, their counterparts who were not similarly trained are said to have suffered social, economic, and political isolation later in adult life. Further, the *Yaa* training took the form of trainees being attached to mentors, who initiated their mentees into the Ogoni tradition. Successful young people were inducted into the elite social group in their society. A mentor who succeeded in mentoring their student(s) in the *Yaa* tradition was also rewarded with the social recognition of being called a *kabaari* (or chief) in the community (Kpone-Tonwe, 2001).

Social stratification is inherently a phenomenon inducing social disequilibrium and inequity. It could be argued that in precolonial African complexities, it could have served the purposes of perpetuating the social status quo and

neither advancing nor regressing it. All would depend on the transformation moments each of the polities were faced with, the leadership action(s) taken, and their outcomes.

Conclusion

The picture emerging from the literature examined is of differentiated and diverse forms of leadership and leadership practices across sociopolitical complexities and varying societal contexts in precolonial Africa. The complex nature of the societies or communities had varying influences on being a leader or follower, the forms of leadership, and the resultant leadership practices (processes and actions). Although both leaders and followers had their leadership practices mediated through traditional structures, their leadership acts were context-bound and varied according to the unique context(s) of each society. Different social markers (societal or community organisation, ethnicity, gender, and social stratification) seemed to have had various impacts on the forms of leadership and their associated practices. What is certain is that there is a rich heritage available to students of precolonial leadership styles, structures, and practices. These multifaceted learnings are able to deepen contemporary leadership theory.

#LeadershipPrecolonialAfrica

Every African country has a unique history of 'coming to being', with attendant leadership challenges. Read about how precolonial communities were organised and governed in Africa, and the part that ethnicity, gender, and social stratification played in these communities.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the main things to be aware of when trying to emulate (or dismiss) past practices of leadership?
2. What leadership practices in precolonial African societies could be described as transformative – in other words, ethical and socially just?
3. What practices from precolonial times need to be disrupted in contemporary Africa, and how might we go about doing this in a way that is respectful of cultural heritage?

References

Amadi, I. R. (1991). Human rights in pre-colonial Igbo society of Nigeria: An analysis. *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale di Studi e Documentazione Dell'Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, *46*(3), 403–410.

Atkinson, R. R. (1989). The evolution of ethnicity among the Acholi of Uganda: The precolonial phase. *Ethnohistory and Africa, 36*(1), 19–43.

Ball, J. (2000). A time of clothes: The Angolan rubber boom, 1886–1902. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, *28*(1), 25–42.

Bandyopadhyay, S. & Green, E. (2016). Precolonial political centralization and contemporary development in Uganda. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, *64*(3), 471–508.

Bennis, W. (1986). Transformative power and leadership. In T. J. Sergiovanni & J. E. Corbally (Eds). *Leadership and organizational culture* (pp. 64–71). Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Bradley, M. T. (2005). The other: Precursory African conceptions of democracy. *International Studies Review*, *7*(3), 407–431.

Connell, R. (2007). *Southern theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.

Day, L. R. (2007). Nyarroh of Bandasuma, 1885–1914: A re-interpretation of female chieftaincy in Sierra Leone. *The Journal of African History*, *48*(3), 415–437.

De Maret, P. (2012). From kinship to kingship: An African journey into complexity. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, *47*(3), 314–326.

Denzer, L. (1994). Yoruba women: A historiographical study. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *27*(1), 1–39.

Green, E. (2010). Ethnicity and nationhood in precolonial Africa: The case of Buganda. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, *16*(1), 1–21.

Hanretta, S. (1998). Women, marginality and the Zulu state: Women's institutions and power in the early nineteenth century. *Journal of African History*, *39*(3), 389–415.

Heywood, L. M. (1998). Towards an understanding of modern political ideology in Africa: The case of the Ovimbundu of Angola. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *36*(1), 139–167.

Huffman, T. N. (2000). Mapungubwe and the origins of the Zimbabwe culture. *South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series*, *8*, 14–29.

Kpone-Tonwe, S. (2001). Leadership training in the precolonial Nigeria: The Yaa tradition of Ogoni. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *34*(2), 386–403.

Lentz, C. (2000). Colonial constructions and African initiatives: The history of ethnicity in northwestern Ghana. *Ethnos*, *65*(1), 107–136.

Michalopoulos, S. & Papaioannou, E. (2012). *Pre-colonial ethnic institutions and contemporary African development*. NBER Working Paper No. 18224. The National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/papers/w18224.

Michalopoulos, S. & Papaioannou, E. (2015). On the ethnic origins of African development: Chiefs and precolonial political centralization. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, *29*(1), 32–71.

Monroe, J. C. (2013). Power and agency in precolonial African states. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *42*, 17–35.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Mtaka, N. & Matshiqi, A. (Presenter & Guest). (2021, 14 December). Impendulo isemlotheni: IZihlalo zoBukhosi namuhla, izolo nangunaphakade [Audio podcast]. Igunundu Podcast. Retrieved from https://anchor.fm/igunundu-podcast/episodes/Impendulo-isemlotheni-IZihlalo-zoBukhosi-namuhla--izolo-nangunaphakade-e1bn2jk.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2008). *Inkosi yinkosi ngabantu*: An interrogation of governance in precolonial Africa – The case of the Ndebele of Zimbabwe. *Southern African Humanities*, *20*(2), 375–397.

Oluwagbemi-Jacob, D. & Uduma, C. E. (2015). Gender equality, gender inequality, and gender complementarity: Insights from Igbo traditional culture. *Philosophy Study*, *5*(5), 223–232.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Leadership: Transformative. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds). *International encyclopaedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 26–33). Oxford, United Kingdom: Elsevier.

Slater, J. (2019). Sankofa – the need to turn back to move forward: Addressing reconstruction challenges that face Africa and South Africa today. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, *45*(1), 1–24.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

PART 2

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

4 The Spirit of Kanju: *Young Africans amplifying leadership through documentary film work*

Alude Mahali and Eugene Paramoer

Overview

This chapter explores the transformative impact of a film-creating process on a group of 19 first-time filmmakers, all of them university graduates and alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. Following training, filmmakers embarked on a year-long mission to find out what it means and what it takes to be a leader on the African continent, and selected elders, artists, religious leaders, educators, community leaders, business leaders, politicians, and activists of their choosing to interview. The outcome is revealed in the feature-length, collaborative documentary film *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa.* This chapter uses film analysis to ask whether film-creating processes have the capacity to grow transformative leadership behind and beyond the lens. We describe an inclusive, participatory, and experimental process of 'imperfect' cinema creating, and reflect on these learnings as they relate to broader understandings of transformative and transformational leadership in African contexts.

The power of cinema

Colonialism and slavery unleashed immeasurable violence on the bodies and minds of Africans, distorting, disfiguring, and destroying their past (Fanon, 1961). The legacy of these untold scars etched on the psyches of Black people persist to this day (Gerima, 1993; Gerima & Woolford, 1994). This spiritual violence is perpetuated by the 'plantation school of cinema' (Gerima & Woolford, 1994, p. 92) in which enslaved people are depicted as happy and devoted subjects, without 'human dimensions, desires', and where stories of reality, 'resistance, and rebellion' are excluded. Yet despite its complicity in the colonial project, film has the power to heal, to restore, and to work out this 'curse' in a very 'spiritual and cultural way' (Gerima & Woolford, 1994, p. 102). This restorative capacity of cinema is evident in the film work *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa.*[1] Beyond showcasing and sharing the story of transformative leadership in Africa, this digital media film work also helps to raise larger questions about

[1] *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa* can be watched at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zd_ALzuFvXM.

'the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art' (Benjamin, 2008, p. 20). Because the history of colonialism, dictatorship, poverty, and inequality have left Africa riddled with problems, 'sharing hidden triumphs' can be a productive way 'to respond to depressing top-level narratives that have held the region back' (Olopade, 2015, p. 7). Frequently, chronicles about Africa provided from the perspectives of global institutions like the UN, or by macroeconomists, philanthropists, and others, tend to focus solely on Africa's formal organisations and formal institutions. They also focus on transformational measures that, for example, quantify maternal health outcomes or the number of houses governments build, rather than on the transformative informal arrangements that sometimes achieve more, better, or faster results (Olopade, 2015). This short-sightedness is articulated by Hero, one of the filmmakers of *The Spirit of Kanju,* from Ghana, who quips:

> [W]hen our government wants to measure success in education they will tell you, 'hey, thousands of students had A's, two thousand had B's'…so it's a matter of the grades that people are getting when they are moving from junior school to high school and the next level of education. (Hero, filmmaker, Ghana, 2022)[2]

He goes on to explain that this can be a missed opportunity to ask questions like 'How many of these people are creating jobs?' and 'How many of these people are really changing their own character and their own attitude?' The leader that he chooses to interview, Freda Yawson, is someone whom he describes as embodying transformative leadership because, instead of a narrow focus on measurable outcomes, she uses her resources to train young people 'in useful skills like robotics' and 'to do something meaningful with their lives'. That, for him, is leadership: 'people who serve without any inducement' (Hero, filmmaker, Ghana, 2022).

Demonstrated through Hero's example, *The Spirit of Kanju* bridges this gap between institutional transformation and transformative leadership, which is primarily committed to unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity, justice, and freedom (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume). *The Spirit of Kanju* is a film about 'the bold opportunism' that makes African leadership diverse and exhilarating (Olopade, 2015, p. 7). Rather than focusing solely on transformational leadership, the film spotlights the stories of change-making transformative leaders. Where political freedom, state-driven social welfare, and economic opportunities have failed to materialise, ordinary people – everyday leaders – take ownership of their fate.

[2] All filmmaker quotes from 2022 are taken from a reflection session about *The Spirit of Kanju* filmmakers' experience of the process and the film, recorded in March 2022 in Zanzibar, Tanzania, at a launch of the documentary. The filmmakers' country of origin is placed after their names.

This chapter also explores the transformative impact of the film-creating process on first-time filmmakers, all of them university graduates and alumni[3] of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. Making use of film analysis (Bordwel & Thompson, 1990) and drawing on the work of Haile Gerima (Gerima & Woolford, 1994), Glauber Rocha (1965), and Augusto Boal (1979), we ask whether film-creating processes have the capacity to grow transformative leadership behind and beyond the lens.[4] Rather than the high-quality, expensive, and exclusionary practices that typify traditional filmmaking, we wanted to find out what it would take to foster a process that is more inclusive and participative, and lends itself to more 'imperfect' forms of cinema creation.

Nineteen alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, from six regions, equipped with high-end mobile phones, ring lights, and microphones, were trained and then set out to spend time with elders, peers, religious leaders, academics, community leaders, business leaders, politicians, and activists who reflect various styles and contributions to leadership in their different contexts. The project, called 'Alumni Behind the Lens', invited novice filmmakers to embark on a mission to ask what it means and what it takes to be a leader on the African continent, including thinking about the kinds of leaders Africa needs. The mission they were on is revealed in the feature-length collaborative documentary film *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa*, the culmination of a year of collecting footage. The young filmmakers interviewed 47 leaders (though only 15 are featured in the final film) across Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya. Alongside unearthing the core of African leadership, these young filmmakers were themselves negotiating their own embodiment of leadership as people who were given the opportunity to be educated in universities across the world and chose to plough back into their communities in various ways. Consequently, six of the filmmakers came from behind the lens to feature in the film.

The film is essentially Olopade's *The Bright Continent* (2015) in action. Where Olopade shares anecdotes of *kanju* across Africa, *The Spirit of Kanju* depicts vignettes of *kanju* in action, grounded in transformative leadership. *Kanju* is 'the specific creativity born from African difficulty' (Olopade, 2015, p. 20). In Yoruba, it 'literally means to "rush or make haste"; in English, we might say it is to "hustle", "strive", "know how" or "make do"' (Olopade, 2015, p. 21). Olopade (2015, p. 23) posits that '*kanju* solutions determine: "What do I have? What do

[3] The terms filmmaker and alumni are used interchangeably to describe the trainee filmmakers, who are also university graduates and alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program.

[4] The authors are the director and producer of *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa*, and therefore write from the position of insiders in the process. Both are Africans who are committed to the development of young people.

I need? What can I do? Who can I do it with?" *Kanju* operates differently from resilience, which is 'inherently conservative – focused on bouncing back to a prior status quo[;] *kanju*, by contrast is generative, it is about catapulting ahead' (Olopade, 2015, p. 27). The filmmakers epitomise the spirit of *kanju*, as the whole filmmaking process took place in the context of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

These young graduates became film artists, who used their cellular phone cameras to go in search of examples of Africa's transformative leaders. What better way than through the film frame to introduce the world to the dynamic people leading change on the continent? As Gerima reminds us, 'If we want to tell the trillion untold stories of our people, our film approach has to be as creative as the stories themselves' (Gerima & Woolford, 1994, p. 90). Gerima argued that Black filmmakers needed to grow creative production and distribution environments where they are free to express their visions completely independently of oppressive cultures (Safford & Triplett, 1983). This idea of innovating independent film ecosystems dovetails with the views of transformative leadership as leadership geared toward systemic and not cosmetic or assimilatory change (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume).

This call for culturally independent film systems is also in line with the action-based, hustle-based, 'working with what you have' approach of *kanju* (Olopade, 2015). *The Spirit of Kanju* is saturated with examples of this kind of approach to transformative leadership, not only in the stories happening inside the frame, but also in the processes that created the frame. *The Spirit of Kanju* attempts the impossible: to showcase the work and diverse voices of 19 film creators in a single narrative journey. The film becomes a collage holding multiple lenses to tell a story through a symphony of African leadership enterprises, in front of and behind the camera. We watch as collaborative film making unfolds inside the frame. The section that follows describes the process through which this product came to be realised.

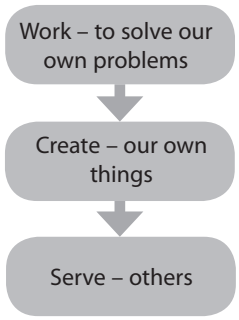
The film making process

A question that arose in the making of *The Spirit of Kanju*, as the young filmmakers planned their shoots, travelled to the leaders they wanted to interview, and filmed these stories, was whether the filmmakers themselves displayed the kind of independent, innovative leadership Gerima speaks of (Safford & Triplett, 1983). Did they perpetuate the leadership style prescribed by 'oppressive cultures', or were they able to lead their projects independently of this kind of film-creating culture? Did they innovate 'other' systems for and methods of film-creating culture? Did they employ the ethical and people-centred processes that exemplify transformative leadership (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume), since creating authentic transformative film work requires the artist to engage in collaborative transformative leadership?

To answer these questions, let us start at the beginning of the process. In selecting which alumni would participate in the exercise, we asked potential filmmakers what they thought characterised African leadership, to draw together their understanding and practice of leadership. Responses varied, but a recurring theme from the more inspired answers was that leaders in Africa should have influence and vision, motivate others, be committed to service, and be concerned with the greater good of their people. They talked about a leadership based on ethics; founded on trust, respect, friendship, responsibility, accountability, and democracy; and fostering belonging, awareness, participation, and collaboration. The alumni we eventually selected felt that African leaders should sacrifice, come up with sustainable solutions to problems, be ethical, change mindsets, redefine expectations, commit to thinking differently, break boundaries, and undertake challenging tasks. When it came to how they would choose leaders to interview, alumni felt that ultimately these should be individuals whom they considered to be transformative agents of change. Charles, one of the filmmakers, reflects that he was purposeful in his selection, and that a motivating factor was the kind of multiplier effect the leader had on their broader community. He wanted to select someone who had a major impact on the lives of others and so, for him, Reverend Canon Gideon Byamugisha, who was the first religious leader in the region to state publicly that he was living with HIV, represented just that, because 'there are very many people who are what they are because of Reverend Canon Gideon' (Charles, filmmaker, Uganda, 2022). Other alumni responses aligned with the understanding that transformative leaders are agents of change who can pursue a vision of a more just and democratic society. They may be ethical leaders or servant leaders, but they always have a view towards a higher purpose (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume).

In the process of creating the film, the filmmakers described a triad (Figure 4.1) that they felt defined the ethos of African leadership. The three connected elements are that African leaders *work* to solve their own problems, that they *create* their own things, and that they *serve* others.

Figure 4.1. *The trifecta of African leadership according to the filmmakers*



Source: Authors

This trifecta resonates throughout the film as the chosen leaders, across a range of disciplines and contexts, embody this spirit. These are everyday people creating organisations, building communities of practice, developing ideas, and holding events that drive significant change that encompasses creativity and innovation in being a leader, and even in thinking about leadership. There is an urgency about dissociating from Western influence and intervention to turn instead towards working for African solutions to African problems – a move away from 'oppressive' and towards 'independent' cultures.

Supplying high-end cellular phones and camera equipment to the 19 alumni (all of them relatively inexperienced first-time filmmakers), and entrusting them with telling a story of transformative leadership on the continent, assumed an inherently participative and collaborative process. The complete training programme and fieldwork with alumni took place over 13 months from February 2021 to March 2022, and occurred in five phases. Phase 1 involved training workshops where the trainee filmmakers began to learn the language of cinema and the art of storytelling. *The Spirit of Kanju*, from its conception, was intended to be a composite and collaborative project. The training pedagogy therefore had to draw on radical and participative cultural praxis. Here we turned to the work of Brazilian writer and cultural practitioner, Augusto Boal (1979). Boal believes that theatre and culture are weapons, and that it is the people who needed to use them. Boal's participative 'Action Theatre' methods mapped out how the means of cultural production should be transferred to the people. He asserts that the first step in this handing-over process is to teach the people the language of culture (Boal, 1979). In the case of *The Spirit of Kanju*, after handing the means of film production to the alumni, our training workshops and seminars sought to deconstruct the language of cinema.

Phase 2 was about choosing the transformative leaders to interview. This part also involved translating the story idea into a script informed by Gerima's call to 'tell the trillion untold stories of our people ... as creative[ly] as the stories themselves' (Gerima and Woolford, 1994, p. 90). How would we go about amplifying the innate and original voice, rather than directing that voice or imposing on it? For Gerima, filmmakers have to draw from and cultivate their unique and indigenous accents or voices, even though it may not make sense to other societies (Safford & Triplett, 1983). The learning phase had emphasised that 'we are all story', and the alumni filmmakers were encouraged to speak in their own tongues as they chose stories or leaders, searched and researched their worlds, and mapped their stories into script structures. In answering the questions 'What is the story?' and 'What is the story not?', alumni were encouraged to draw on their own cultural context, their interests, and their unique relationship with their characters.

In Phase 3, the young filmmakers entered the worlds of their leaders and set out to frame their stories. The filmmakers learned how access was negotiated, how

filming arrangements were made, how to enter and move through the world of their selected leader characters, and how to frame and film them. Alumni were encouraged to see themselves as part of and not spectating in the worlds they were filming (Vertov, 1929; 1984). They were also encouraged to film, create, and problem solve together with their characters and the communities with which they worked (Campbell & Cortés, 1979). This respectful, appreciative, and servant-oriented filming approach, as exemplified by Jorge Sanjinés and the Ukamau film Group of Bolivia, guided much of the field work of the Alumni Behind the Lens process (Campbell & Cortés, 1979). Sanjinés' work on reciprocity with the community was relevant as filmmakers set off to film authentic stories of leadership.

To augment the film work created by the alumni, a more experienced film crew travelled to Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, South Africa, and Rwanda for Phase 4. Even here, great care was taken to defer to the leadership of the alumni in the field, allowing them to collaborate closely with the supporting director and technical crew. Time was taken to continue the film-learning process in the field and the alumni were given the opportunity to direct the slightly higher-end support camera and sound equipment to augment their cellular-phone-created materials. Finally, Phase 5 was about choosing the authentic cinema versus perfect cinema – in other words, the kind of film that accommodates a myriad of new and experimental frames and voices versus a conventional cinema. Drawing on Rocha's aesthetics of hunger, this phase was concerned with the assembly of materials that would eventually form the cohesive product that is *The Spirit of Kanju*. In the next section, we provide a brief synopsis of the documentary, including a description of the range of leaders featured.

Layers of leadership in front of the lens

The opening shot of Fasiledes Castle in the Amhara Region of Gondar, Ethiopia, is captured by an unsteady camera, clearly hand-held, seemingly in search of something as we imagine the world behind the walls of the ancient castle. The frame drifts through a gateway of this more-than-390-year-old castle, while in the next frame, another hand-held camera bobs up and down in a car seat, showing through the windscreen the rural landscape of Nanyuki in Kenya. The car stops and the frame travels out of the car door, across a dirt road, into the bushveld, and finally comes to rest on a rock with the name 'Daraja, School for Girls' painted on it, a beacon of light set in the middle of the wilderness. Yet another moving picture drifts into view, this time searching the crowded streets and back alleys of the Kibera informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. The camera comes to rest in a lush garden surrounded by shacks, crumbling walls, and old clay-brick homes. Interspersed within these brief snapshots, we see a montage of scenes that set the tone for a bright film that celebrates humanity in leadership,

sociality, love, and the dignity of creative labour. The montage takes in a close-up of skilled hands doing artisanal weaving work, a traditional coffee-roasting ceremony, a makeshift carwash, children playing, alumni in action setting up their equipment, a community garden, a barbershop, a cityscape, and snapshots of featured transformative leaders in frame. These prompt the questions 'Who are these people in front of the cameras?' and 'What is it about leadership that they hope to share with us?'

This cinematic journey discovering African transformative leadership unfolds in six chapters that go both behind the scenes and along a journey of what ordinary Africans are doing to help themselves, their families, and communities broadly. In the first chapter, we are introduced to our leaders in a broad array of fields. Joseph Male is a change-maker in agriculture. He is a transformative farmer in Uganda who has set up a model farm making agriculture attractive to the youth. On environmental issues, Ann Tasamba, a lecturer in environmental energy in Uganda, is joined by Kenyan Malassen Hamida, the co-founder of Mazingira Women Initiative and the lead at Kibera Green Movement, organisations that carry out projects on solid waste management, tree planting, and public education on environmental conservation. In education, we meet two leaders at opposite ends of their leadership journeys: Professor Tawana Kupe, vice chancellor of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and Cynthia Ablordey, a 17-year-old high school prefect in Ghana. Both Puleng Tsie, in Johannesburg, and Freda Yawson, in Accra, are leaders championing science and technology education. Francula Odhiambo, Sabella Kedir, and David Boanuh are featured as leaders in the cultural and creative industries.

Francula Odhiambo is the founder of Cheza Cheza, an organisation that uses dance and play to create safe spaces and enable youth in Nairobi slums to learn life skills. Sabella Kedir is a fashion designer and model in Ethiopia who lives with severe physical disability, which she does not allow to get in the way of her ambition. David Boanuh makes documentaries and travel films that 'show off' Ghana and Africa, through Beautiful Stories, a company he co-founded. Engaged in humanitarian work is Emmanuel Niringiyimana, a 25-year-old man who dug a 7 km road single-handedly to connect two villages in rural Rwanda, so that people from his village could get quicker access to medical care. Victoria Gichuhi is the principal at the sought-after Daraja School in Kenya and an advocate for the empowerment and education of girls. Also working in advocacy is Prince Adu-Appiah, CEO of 1Billion Africa, a non-profit organisation geared towards eradicating poverty. Representing religious affairs and activism is Reverend Canon Gideon Byamugisha, a protestant minister and the first religious leader in Africa to publicly declare his HIV status. Our final featured leader is Zumra Nuru, who works as the leader of the Awarambe community, helping to direct and guide all its various community enterprises. These are all individuals who

exemplify the hidden triumphs of African leadership not frequently touted on national or global stages.

Chapter 2 takes us on 'A journey in search of transformative leadership'. Here we meet the filmmakers and their chosen leaders. We learn about the alumni's backgrounds, including how their own perspectives on leadership are influenced by their family upbringing, obstacles they faced growing up, their education, gender roles, and the necessity of adopting a spirit of *kanju* to break through barriers of who and what a leader looks like in the context of these backgrounds. One of the filmmakers, Gadson, describes the impact of his own gendered experience of leadership (informed by his upbringing) as influenced by traditional African notions of leadership wherein the 'male figure' and especially the 'firstborn' is 'supposed to provide a form of leadership to your siblings as a parent, as a father'. Gadson goes on to say that 'it's like being born a king, it's a responsibility you cannot run away from' (Gadson, filmmaker, Uganda, 2022). In this chapter, we also learn how the alumni's own transformative backgrounds had been a catalyst for choosing the leaders they selected.

Chapter 3, 'A journey discovering leadership to be about collaboration', follows the filmmakers' journeys with the chosen leaders, revealing a little more about who the leaders are, what influenced them, and what they do. The critical characteristics of being a good leader are explored and among the qualities listed are confidence, having influence, and a commitment to helping others. The central message is the belief that as Africans, we have a valuable contribution to make, and that people from elsewhere can learn from us. This view is reinforced by Emmanuel, one of the alumni behind the lens, who said, '[T]here are a lot of untold stories on leadership in Africa' (Emmanuel, filmmaker, Ghana, 2022). Collaboration is identified as paramount as we learn about the importance of communities harnessing their power and working together at all levels to bring about change, since the government cannot solve all problems.

Chapter 4, 'The journey discovering leadership to be about action', shifts from reflecting on what it means to 'be' a leader to a greater understanding of what it means to 'do' leadership. Here real insight on leadership in action is gained as the chosen leaders take us through the work they do while also describing their interventions. What is learned is that what they have in common is identifying problems in their community and working (with others) to solve them. They exhibit a transformative leadership that is action-oriented and has at its core social justice and inclusion. The leaders demonstrate how a small action can be transformative, and how everyday small actions can be scalable with the view to solving even national problems.

Chapter 5, 'A journey discovering leadership to be about innovation', focuses on new ideas, creative thinking, new systems, new pedagogical methods, and

education as a catalyst for innovation. Leaders reflect on agential change through storytelling about film, robotics, science, and education beyond the classroom.

The final chapter, 'A journey discovering leadership to be about love/ubuntu', is a call to action. In this section, leaders consider what it means to lead with love, humanity, and ubuntu, in this way 'giving the world a more human face', as Steve Biko described Africa's unique contribution to the world (1987, p. 47). An ubuntu-driven leadership recognises the humanity of people because, as featured leader Puleng Tsie prompts, 'What is leadership without people?' (Tsie, interviewee, South Africa, 45:52, 2021).[5] Here leaders remind the viewer of their own agency and capacity to be leaders with everyday intentions and actions, no matter how big or small. The film ends with Tsie's resounding call: 'The power is in their hands' (Tsie, interviewee, South Africa, 53:27, 2021).

Discoveries about leadership from behind the lens

What can we say about what a year-long experimental documentary-making process did to illuminate ideas about leadership for the alumni behind the lens, and how do these learnings relate to broader understandings of transformative and transformational leadership? Upon reflection, the alumni reported several lessons, a resounding one being the 'multiplier effect' of leadership. This refers to the cumulative effects of transformative leadership or, as filmmaker Charles explains, 'if we are talking about transformative leaders…then we are sure that those we impact will also impact others' (Charles, filmmaker, Uganda, 2022). For Stephanie, the key takeaway from the documentary is that it helped her 'unlearn, to rethink and relearn again the concept of transformative leadership'. This was largely due to the common belief she had that 'a leader had to be someone big somewhere, a big name that we know from a certain place, a head of department or a head of an organisation' (Stephanie, filmmaker, Rwanda, 2022). Hers was a reflection shared by many, but the process of workshopping stories and searching for leaders to interview revealed that transformative change can occur at any level with everyday game changers exemplifying this. For Stephanie, then, searching for leaders became about selecting 'members of the community that were actually working at the grassroots levels…those that are doing work on the ground' (Stephanie, filmmaker, Rwanda, 2022).

Still, the importance of encouraging processes that foster institutional and systemic change, which is admittedly harder to do, cannot be overstated. While working towards individual- and community-level change is critical for development, it is equally important that unjust and oppressive institutions

[5] Quotes from 2021 are taken directly from the documentary *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa*. The filmmaker's or interviewee's country of origin and the time stamp in the documentary are given after the name.

and systems are transformed through ethical leadership. This observation is echoed by Maxwell, who shares an anecdote about which leader he might have interviewed in hindsight:

> I think maybe the first head teacher when I was in primary school… I grew up in the farming community, so we had to take care of cattle and then go to school. And until him, the promotion to different classes or to upper classes was mostly based on height and, you know, age and that kind of stuff. But he introduced, you know, an assessment-based promotion. He introduced other disciplinary measures and he completely transformed the school…And I say I would have liked to talk to him because we heard yesterday that transformative leadership is more about systemic change but also, we need to talk about individuals who set up the policies to build these institutions that promote people. (Maxwell, filmmaker, Ghana, 2022)

Maxwell's anecdote illustrates the capacity individuals have to bring about transformative change.

Of course, the alumni also gained new insights regarding leadership through the documentary-making process itself, in part due to the time they spent with the leaders they chose to interview. The experience was synergistic, because not only did they succeed in sharing the voices, ideas, and stories of the leaders they interviewed, they also learned a great deal through journeying with them. In Sherifa's reflection about interviewing 17-year-old Cynthia, she is inspired because although Cynthia 'is from a poor family', she does not see this as a barrier to leadership, but rather something that anchors her in shared experience with 'other people who have got the same problems that she has got'. In so doing, Cynthia develops a consciousness that recognises the life-saving and life-giving nature of collaboration as 'someone who should try to pull her colleagues with her' and 'work together to make the world a better place' (Sherifa, filmmaker, Ghana, 2022).

In Rahab's case, her chosen leader, road builder Emmanuel, represents 'the small steps that we take each and every day that will make us become those transformative leaders'. A recognition that what eventually creates long-lasting, big change that is 'beyond us', is to do the 'small things that we are doing every day to be able to get there' (Rahab, filmmaker, Rwanda, 2022).

For Miriam, interviewing critically acclaimed photojournalist and activist Boniface Mwangi was edifying, because 'he's been very consistent in speaking for the truth, fighting for justice, fighting corruption and bringing light to young people that politics can be clean and fair' (Miriam, filmmaker, Kenya, 2022). Being in the presence of a leader who is guided by principles of social justice

made her realise the potential political ramifications and risks of trying to change systems – the fallout of transformative leadership that is not often talked about. In her own effort to make sense of this complicated position, she said:

> This is someone who has not been afraid to shake up institutions that are not working, to lead protests in the country and to vouch for better policies in Kenya. So, it was inspiring speaking to him, but at the same time it got me to question…who takes care of transformative leaders? And I want to look at it from a different perspective because my interviewee – we know him as an activist, as someone who is always fighting for us and for the dignity of the nation…and we all saw the sacrifice that he went through. That was his family; that was his friends, in a bid to fight for Kenyans. And it got me thinking, to what point as a leader you get to a tipping point and say 'Look, I've done my part and I need to start looking after my own'. (Miriam, filmmaker, Kenya, 2022)

This point raised a question around what systems of care practices are available for transformative leaders and that one must take very seriously the potential risks of leadership, especially where the leader is using their voice and influence to disrupt oppressive institutions and change unjust systems.

Finally, Joy is a strong proponent of proximity when she reflects on her leader. A leader for her should be someone who had had a direct impact on her own life and trajectory. Her chosen leader, Ann Tasamba, is a university lecturer who is a personal inspiration to her, and who 'goes down to her community teaching them how to save, to get land'. More importantly, Joy chose Ann because she aligns with her personal understanding of leadership: a person who is 'that bridge that will cover the knowledge divide' (Joy, filmmaker, Uganda, 2022). In other words, people who are privileged enough to be exposed to various opportunities have a civic duty to share that knowledge, and in so doing spread the benefit of that knowledge. They also have a duty to create change in resource-scarce communities by taking 'information and shar[ing] it with our communities – teach them skills…this will change everything because farmers or community leaders lack information that can actually improve them' (Joy, filmmaker, Uganda, 2022).

What can we say about how this film-creating experience changed the filmmakers, if at all? There were of course the material benefits accrued from receiving a high-end smartphone and the supplementary equipment. They also went through a year-long training programme where they acquired a range of skills, such as the language of cinema, the art of storytelling, writing a script, directing, framing camera angles, and interviewing skills. They met with inspiring leaders (some they already knew but others were new people to add

to their network). Most impactful has been what this film experience has done to shed light on leadership among both alumni and the leaders in the film, and how we can use storytelling to continue to dialogue about leadership in Africa. Clarity sums it up best:

> My takeaway from the film, it's mostly just seeing how we each – everyone who was in the film, people that were being interviewed – we have different layers and unearthing those layers and just seeing this beautiful tapestry of what transformative leadership is within the mundane life that we think people are living. It just got me to think more about everybody that I get to meet, everyone that I see, how they have some form of transformative leadership traits within them. So, it gave me a different outlook on everyone…I could get to understand their story because buried within our stories are how we become who we are today or in the near future. And that might help us have a roadmap in developing or encouraging and empowering the younger generation to become better leaders and transform our continent. (Clarity, filmmaker, Zimbabwe, 2022)

Conclusion

The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa is a film that celebrates leadership in Africa, today. In the film, we bear witness to leaders making individual change, community change, and even systemic change. What binds all the leaders is using a spirit of *kanju* to solve problems. The film practically and creatively contributes to the view of transformative leadership as ethical, participatory, empowering, and collaborative. Not only do the leaders speak eloquently about these characteristics of leadership practice, but viewers get to experience it through the actions and work being shared on screen. *The Spirit of Kanju* also tackles the issue of how cinema can contribute to the struggles of the underclasses (Benjamin, 2008).

Most importantly, the film sheds light on what transformative leadership behind the lens could look like. By taking up these 19 cameras, seeking out stories of game-changers, framing these exceptional people, with very little time and resources, the alumni filmmakers not only embody *The Spirit of Kanju* at a hustle level, but also begin to show us what would be needed to innovate culturally independent and authentic African film ecosystems as propagated by Haile Gerima (Safford & Triplett, 1983). Ultimately *The Spirit of Kanju* shows that leadership is complex. It is everyday and exceptional, human and extraordinary, innovative and responsive, and requires working together, but also starting alone. On the African continent, there are many rich and creative practices that respond to struggle and challenge. This is *kanju*: making something out of

nothing, doing leadership and not speaking leadership, and leading in such a way as to invite others along for the journey.

#ThisIsKanju

The Spirit of Kanju *film portrays leadership as collaboration, action, innovation, love, and ubuntu. Leadership is complex: everyday, exceptional, human, extraordinary, and responsive. It requires working together but starting alone.*

Questions for discussion

1. What have you learned about leadership strategies in resource-scarce contexts that you can apply to your everyday life?
2. Transformative leadership should be focused on structural and systemic change in a particular direction: towards social justice. To what extent is this definition of transformative leadership portrayed in the film? How could some of the projects depicted become more transformative?
3. What do young people need in order to embark on leadership initiatives that bring about policy, systems, and structural change? How could they go about growing their sphere of influence?

References

Benjamin, W. (2008). *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility, and other writings on media*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Biko, S. (1987). *I write what I like*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theater of the oppressed*. London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press.

Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. (1990). *Film art: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Campbell, L. G. & Cortés, C. E. (1979). Film as a revolutionary weapon: A Jorge Sanjinés retrospective. *The History Teacher*, *12*(3), 383–402.

Fanon, F. (1961). *The wretched of the earth.* New York, NY: Grove Press.

Gerima, H. (Director). (1993). *Sankofa* [Motion picture]. Washington, DC: Mypheduh Films.

Gerima, H. & Woolford P. (1994). Filming slavery: A conversation with Haile Gerima. *Transition, 64*, 90–104.

Olopade, D. (2015). *The bright continent: Breaking rules and making change in modern Africa*. New York, NY: Mariner Books.

Rocha, G. (1965). Aesthetics of hunger. In M. Chanan (Ed.). *Twenty-five years of the new Latin American cinema* (pp. 13–14). London, United Kingdom: Channel Four Television.

Safford, T. & Triplett, W. (1983). Haile Gerima: Radical departures to a new Black cinema. *Journal of the University Film and Video Association, 35*(2), 59–65.

Vertov, D. (Director). (1929). *Man with a movie camera* [Motion picture]. Ukraine: Dovzhenko Film Studios.

Vertov, D. (1984). *Kino-eye: The writings of Dziga Vertov*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

5 *Blockchain applications: A pathway to decentralised, autonomous, and transformative leadership*

Krish Chetty

Overview

Blockchain applications, which are gaining traction, offer ways for people to interact without depending on intermediaries. This is beneficial, as the use of intermediaries contributed significantly to the global systemic failures of the 2008 global financial crisis. Secure blockchain systems, informed by principles of social justice, can prepare organisations and communities for meaningful and transformative change. Blockchains can promote citizen participation, solve development financial challenges, and help implement and systematise leaders' decisions. This chapter uses a systematic review of blockchain leadership literature to show how this technology can help implement fair and socially just policies. Blockchains could theoretically be used to manage the operations of an entire country. The Decentraland case study is an extraordinary experiment in how a blockchain can be used to manage the operations of an entire environment based on citizen consensus. Such ideas could be expanded to the real world in the future, with blockchain becoming a valuable tool for leaders who place the interests of communities above personal ambitions.

Introduction

The blockchain, simply put, is a tool that can be used to replace systems of trust. Traditional governance and information systems are built upon placing trust in an organisation or an individual (De Filippi, Mannan, & Reijers, 2020). One trusts a bank to store money or manage transactions responsibly. One trusts an international rating agency to define a country's credit score fairly. However, placing trust in these intermediaries provides them with considerable power, which could be corrupted. The blockchain negates the need for power-broking intermediaries, and provides an opportunity for direct, people-to-people exchanges (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016).

Blockchain systems are novel, and their developers have identified disruptive business models that could introduce social benefits. Potentially, these systems can revolutionise how organisations are governed, given that they can enable efficient and transparent business models while systematising fair participation

(Bagloee et al., 2021). Blockchain business models, to date, have concentrated on verifying identities, enabling efficient financial services, and monitoring supply chains. However, there is potential to expand these use cases to benefit the developing world, where institutional trust is traditionally low, and institutions and their systems are weak. Fortunately, these limitations make developing countries ideal early adopters of blockchain systems as they are ready to leapfrog their developed-world counterparts who are contending with outdated legacy systems (Niforos, 2017).

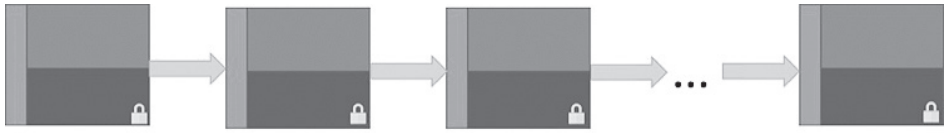
The blockchain is the technology behind digital currencies, and it can be used to redefine how traditional, centralised organisations operate by removing unnecessary intermediaries from work processes (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). The technology is at an early stage of development, and its full potential is still unknown (Niforos, 2017). It is often described as a distributed ledger, meaning that, like a ledger, it only allows transactions to be appended in a timestamped manner. Each block within the blockchain (Figure 5.1) represents a transaction, recording the affected parties, the transaction amount, and other relevant data. The block might also define an action that must be executed when the transaction is successfully completed. The blockchain's ability to execute actions autonomously provides the foundation for 'smart contracts' and decentralised autonomous organisations (discussed further on) (Fenwick, Kaal, & Vermeulen, 2018).

Figure 5.1 *The block within the blockchain*

Source: Author

These transactions are encrypted and appended together in the form of a chain. Appending blocks together in a linked fashion explains how the term blockchain arose (Figure 5.2).

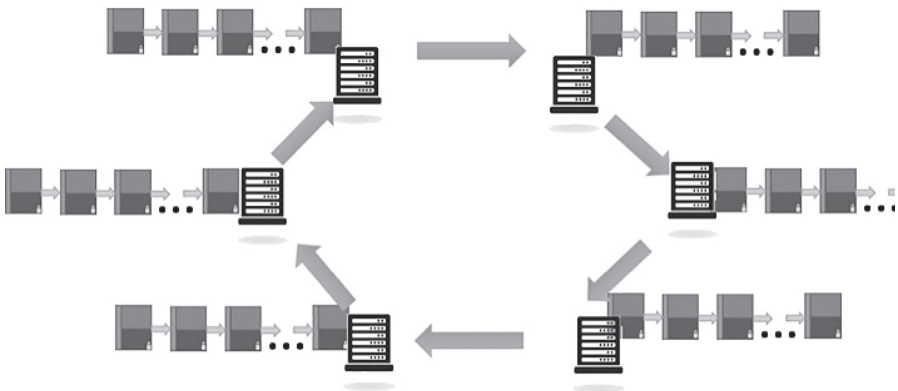
Figure 5.2 *Representation of a single blockchain*



Source: Author

However, a single transaction chain stored on a single computer can easily be corrupted. The power of the blockchain arises from its consensus mechanism. By distributing the chain across a network of computers (Figure 5.3), and constantly verifying the contents of the chain, the system can affirm the validity of each transaction. The term 'distributed ledger' is based on this design (Zachariadis, Hileman, & Scott, 2019). A block can only be appended to the blockchain if it is consistent with all other blocks shared with each computer on the network. Once consensus is determined, the block is appended, and the blockchain grows (Casino, Dasaklis, & Patsakis, 2019).

Figure 5.3 *The distributed blockchain*



Source: Author

These rules are used to detect fraud and are essential in developing trust among blockchain system users. Thus, the system helps individuals and institutions do business confidently, as they can trust the system's processing and reporting (Manita, Elommal, Baudier, & Hikkerova, 2020). Critically, this trust does not arise from a relationship or from the credentials of the institution's leadership.

Gaining and maintaining trust by ensuring data transparency and incorruptibility is crucial for the transformative leader (Hansen, Morrison, Zaman, & Liu, 2020; Tapus & Manolache, 2019). This technology can be the ideal tool for the transformative leader who needs to foster trust in their policies by highlighting

the robustness, fairness, and transparency of proposed systems that enact social, economic, and moral change. It is the leader's responsibility to introduce progressive and socially just systems within the country's political framework. Without such systems, their actions and policies might only be temporary. By adopting a blockchain system, the leader ensures the longevity of their policies and protects them from potentially corrupt power brokers. Such systems can prevent perpetuating inequities and unfair practices (Shields, 2010). These practices can stem systemic injustices and fraudulent behaviours which deplete a country's scarce resources (Bosu, Dare, Dachi, & Fertig, 2011). Therefore, the leader must identify methods that end unsustainable practices and disrupt positions that do not contribute to the leader's vision of a just future (Riedy, 2014).

Ultimately, blockchain technologies can provide a leader with a tool to promote socially just community development. They also offer the user community a mechanism to participate actively in decision-making (Tapus & Manolache, 2019). As blockchain applications evolve, a new form of organisational model has emerged, namely the decentralised autonomous organisation (DAO). These organisations are entirely dependent on the design and protocols of the blockchain system. Decentraland is one such organisation, based on a virtual reality platform and offering all users an opportunity to contribute to decision-making. The system is founded on 'smart-contract' technology that allows the autonomous execution of actions as transactions are completed (Decentraland, n.d.). In this instance, the organisation is not controlled by a single leader, and to be transformative, the system architects must develop it with socially just principles in mind. The question remains whether this evolution of leadership and governance protocols will uphold values of fairness and justice, or be subverted over time.

With these concepts and questions in mind, this chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How might blockchain systems support leaders in enacting transformative policies?
2. How will DAOs change the traditional leadership and governance of institutions?
3. In what ways can developing countries benefit from blockchain technologies?

The chapter first describes the methods used for the literature review, and then explores how the transformative leader can benefit from blockchain systems, considering the transformative potential of the technology. Thereafter, the chapter reviews the Decentraland DAO, discussing how blockchain technology might disrupt the understanding of leadership itself. Lastly, the chapter provides a concluding synopsis, outlining how the blockchain may benefit the developing world.

The parameters of the literature review

In preparing a reproducible and transparent scientific literature review, the following steps were undertaken by emulating Briner and Denyer's (2012) adapted features from the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement described by Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group (2009). Therefore, this chapter follows a structured method of searching, screening, and selecting an appropriate literature set. This information was identified by scanning the ScienceDirect academic database for peer-reviewed literature and following a structured approach when identifying pertinent grey literature.

A broad search was conducted across ScienceDirect to address the primary research question, which links disparate ideas of blockchain systems to transformative leadership principles. The following combinations of keywords were used: 'Blockchain' + 'Leadership', 'Blockchain' + 'Governance', 'Smart Contracts' + 'Governance', and 'Smart Contracts' + 'Leadership'. An additional search was performed for the keyword 'Decentraland' to gather information supporting the specific Decentraland case study. This search identified all available journal articles and book chapters related to this topic. As these are novel concepts, no time filters were introduced. By following the PRISMA screening process, 64 papers were eligible after reviewing their respective abstracts.

Grey literature was gathered to supplement the peer-reviewed literature, using three different Google searches, based on the following keywords: 'blockchain impact on leadership and management' + 'pdf', 'Decentraland Governance' + 'pdf', and 'Decentraland social impact'. The 'pdf' keyword was used to help identify published papers, but was abandoned in the third search, as it hindered the identification of appropriate content. The first 20 results for each keyword were scanned, from which 48 papers were identified, and 38 papers were selected for review. These papers were used to prepare the case study of the Decentraland system.

Important traits of transformative leaders were identified using the transformative leadership literature review by De Kock and Swartz (Chapter 2, this volume). The themes covered relate to transforming organisations; promoting social, moral, and economic impacts; encouraging social justice; and furthering the ideals of equality. This chapter, therefore, identifies how a blockchain system may aid these goals and how it might support the transformative leader interested in pursuing these objectives.

This chapter triangulates these issues of transformative leadership against findings sourced from the systematic scan of transformative blockchain use cases and the Decentraland case study. The convergence of these discussions helps to identify strategies for the transformative leader, and describes potential pathways for implementing a socially just and decentralised organisation.

Blockchain's transformative potential

The blockchain is a foundational technology providing a platform for transformed economic and social systems (Iansiti & Lakhani, 2017; Schmidt & Wagner, 2019). The technology offers multiple institutions and stakeholders a means to do business in a trusted manner, allowing complex networks to benefit from collective knowledge and resources (Omar, Minoufekr, & Plapper, 2019). With greater blockchain adoption, Berger (2019) believes the ability to work together collectively may improve by orders of magnitude, allowing new methods of working together that were never possible before. These are compelling prospects for the transformative leader who understands society's complex nature and its interconnected challenges.

A primary transformative benefit of the blockchain system is that it limits opportunistic behaviour and promotes fair business practices and equal opportunities. Furthermore, such systems can prevent unfair pricing and gatekeeping, which enables monopolies. Providing fair trading opportunities on a blockchain platform allows small businesses to interact with customers on equal terms compared with their corporate counterparts (Schmidt & Wagner, 2019). By systematising trust, the blockchain reduces uncertainties and costs, potentially making such systems more attractive to investors (Schmidt & Wagner, 2019). Several use cases have already been identified in the identity management, security, supply chain logistics, and 'Internet of Things' discourses. More experimental implementations are underway in the health sector, election management, social media, and energy management (Sandner & Bekemeier, 2019).

Moreover, blockchain systems could potentially transition large portions of the informal sector to formality by enabling fair business practices. Informal traders own assets, transact, and possess knowledge about the economy, but usually have no opportunity to contribute to the formal economy. Eighty to ninety per cent of workers in Africa are excluded from the formal economy and financial or trade services (Dube & Katende, 2020) because most corporate services are priced out of their reach. Their businesses can be recognised and contribute to formal economic growth by integrating them into formal platforms.

Solving the funding challenge is another crucial concern for the transformative leader. Given limited funds, leaders are forced to make difficult choices, balancing development priorities. The current development finance discourse appears to be failing the developing world. There is no systematic approach to financing, with a series of disjointed interventions provided by various institutions. According to Sagasti et al. (2004), the allocated funds are often insufficient and have made little improvement to the lives of poor people. At a recent development finance conference, Castell (2020) highlighted a trend in which only 6 per cent of funds from the private sector, through blended finance

initiatives, reach the world's lowest-income countries. Ninety-four per cent of these funds are channelled back to the financing intermediaries, propping up the system. The key message expressed during this conference was that development finance institutions need systems that can better coordinate finance distribution, and inculcate trust where trust is typically deficient. Blockchain-based financing, if configured appropriately, offers a solution for international bodies to coordinate funding arrangements. The system reduces the need for intermediaries in a funding supply chain and helps direct funding to the areas of greatest need (Tapscott & Tapscott, 2016). Such initiatives are transformative game-changers in the development finance arena, ensuring development funds reach their intended beneficiaries.

Another transformative application of blockchain technologies is its ability to redefine governance and citizen participation processes. De Filippi (2018) argues that blockchain systems allow countries to experiment with new governance models and alternative political systems. Blockchain-based e-governance systems can revolutionise the administrative machinery of government. Through decentralised identities captured on the blockchain, voting can be conducted securely and fairly (Dursun & Üstündağ, 2021).

By integrating social networks and open data principles, Bindu, Sankar, and Kumar (2019) believe the idea of participatory governance can be redefined. Through e-voting and e-campaigning processes embedded into the blockchain platform, the system offers a means for candidates to communicate directly with all citizens. However, this assumes that all citizens are connected to the platform, experience equal opportunities for usage, and support the digital governance processes. The counterargument against blockchain systems exists when all citizens do not have equitable access to or use of the system, thereby being disenfranchised from the democratic process (Palumbo, Manesh, Pellegrini, Caputo, & Flamini, 2021).

A transformative leader needs to problematise and overcome structures of power and privilege (Weiner, 2003). The blockchain system can be configured to overcome such structures by adopting socially just governance protocols. As the blockchain system works on consensus, if all system users agree to these protocols, each participant understands that all system features are available equitably (Hardjono, n.d.; Janssen, Brous, Estevez, Barbosa, & Janowski, 2020). For example, in Ethiopia, leaders in the Ministry of Education interested in transforming the country's education system have embraced blockchain-based technologies, believing the technology provides the key to improving the education system's quality, while introducing five million Ethiopian students to a new form of technology. The students will receive a blockchain-based identity, allowing the government to monitor their academic performance, and access to future government e-services. The system also enables teachers, principals, and

department officials to monitor student progress (Paliwal, Chandra, & Sharma, 2020). Through the system's logic, each student is treated equitably, and the information produced is trustworthy, based on an agreed set of protocols.

Future smart cities will rely on the datafication of society. By leveraging data, a smart city can implement appropriate policies that improve society. Blockchain systems provide the means to manage data, allowing the city to leverage the collective insight of its citizens (Palumbo et al., 2021). Project #Blockchain4EU allows policy-makers to link the industry and non-financial sectors together on a blockchain platform in the European Union. The platform supports prototype development that benefits policy-making, the economy, society, the legal system, and the environment (Pólvora & Nascimento, 2021). This highlights how blockchain solutions enable collaborative exchange and are of immense value to society. Proponents of sustainable smart cities supporting these principles of transparent governance and decentralised decision-making are among the early adopters who have implemented several applications. For example, smart city dashboards have become important monitoring and evaluation toolkits for local authorities, providing an opportunity to develop safe and secure people-centric measurement tools (Marsal-Llacuna, 2020; Ullah, Qayyum, Thaheem, Al-Turjman, & Sepasgozar, 2021).

Each of these features is of interest to a transformative leader. Once supported by a well-functioning system, the leader can harness the potential of a trusted platform that equalises opportunities for engagement, citizen participation, and access to development finance. In addition, the system's efficiency reduces costs and promotes the attractiveness of affiliated institutions to prospective investors. Furthermore, the leader can develop processes that last, entrenching their transformative policies.

Decentraland – a decentralised autonomous organisation

Recognising the transformative potential of blockchain systems, the following section examines the Decentraland DAO and discusses how blockchain technology might disrupt the understanding of leadership itself. The Decentraland platform embodies principles of consensus-based governance, which decentralises the leadership function.

Functionality

Blockchain systems can be configured to allow organisations to be governed through consensus algorithms by integrating collaborative decision-making and social governance into their architecture (Cerf, Matz, & Berg, 2020; Sai, Fitzgerald, Buckley, & Le Gear, 2020). The system can be set up to self-enforce the rules, incorporate autonomous automation procedures, and introduce a

mechanism for the community to vote on policy changes (Rozas, Tenorio-Fornés, Díaz-Molina, & Hassan, 2021). Thus, the technology provides a platform for the ownership of projects to be transferred to the system users themselves (Sandner & Bekemeier, 2019).

Decentraland is such a platform. It endeavours to be governed by a consensus algorithm, allowing its users to purchase, build, and monetise virtual reality applications. All interaction among the Decentraland users is coordinated through the blockchain, with each user controlling the environment and managing their 'land' (Decentraland, n.d.). As a virtual reality arena, it is supported by its own currency, called MANA. The arena allows visitors to explore virtual plots of land; each 'parcel' of land is 16 m^2 and can be purchased using MANA. The parcel is represented as a single pixel in Figure 5.4 (dark grey plots are recently purchased parcels[1] from the platform's marketplace, striped plots are communal plazas, large white areas are privately owned[2], themed communities that are not for sale, straight white lines are roads, and darker grey plots are unsold) (NFTPlazas, n.d.).

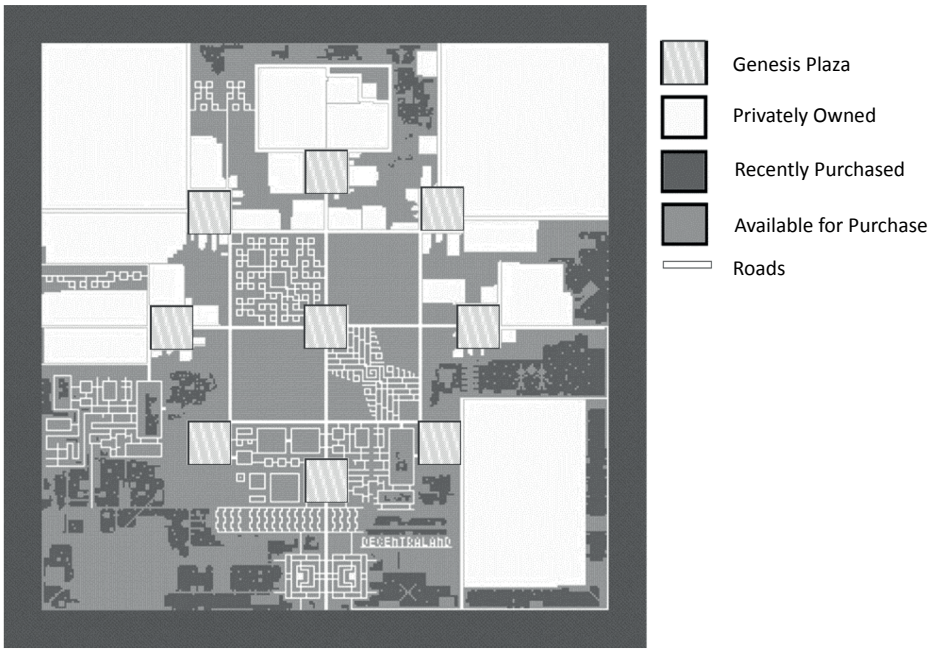
The parcel is a non-fungible token (NFT) as it is a unique space that cannot be replaced or reproduced. There are 90 000 parcels in Decentraland, with the developers owning common spaces such as plazas and roads (Republic Compound, 2021). As a virtual reality arena, Decentraland allows users to meet virtually, play games, collect art, and explore galleries, virtual nightclubs, and conference areas (Digital, 2021). The user enters the environment in a plaza (striped squares in Figure 5.4), which acts as a station platform. Parcels closer to Genesis Plaza (the central striped square) and other common areas have higher real estate value due to the higher traffic frequency (Republic Compound, 2021).

On entry into Decentraland, a user is represented by an avatar, which can be customised with wearables purchased in the Decentraland Marketplace. With users wishing to exhibit their unique identity within the space, the wearables market has grown substantially, increasing the price of such items. Like each parcel, a wearable (and every other item within the Decentraland arena) is an NFT. It is unique and can be purchased with MANA (Republic Compound, 2021).

[1] Privately owned plots: These are parcels of land that are already owned by individuals or entities. They can be used for various purposes, including building experiences, games, applications, or even dynamic 3D scenes. Owners have complete control over their parcel's appearance, and can create content using the Decentraland Builder or SDK. These plots are not available for sale via the platform's marketplace.

[2] Purchased plots: These refer to land parcels that were recently purchased on the marketplace. Once purchased, these plots become privately owned, and the new owners gain the same rights and abilities as those who already own land in Decentraland. The distinction lies mainly in the change of ownership from one party to another.

Figure 5.4 *Decentraland map as of December 2020*



With global travel restrictions in 2020, virtual socialising contributed to the rapid growth of Decentraland. Following MANA's launch on the CoinMarketCap digital currency exchange platform in 2017, it entered at a low price of US$0.026. On 3 March 2021, the MANA token rose to US$1.06, representing a 4,076 per cent increase in value (Maouchi, Charfeddine, & El Montasser, 2022).

Decentraland is used to interact with people worldwide, and is regularly used to host virtual events such as concerts and conferences, providing a new paradigm for collaboration and cooperation (Decentraland Conference Center, n.d.). The gaming industry is among the early adopters that have taken advantage of this platform to engage existing and potential customers, recognising the potential to inhabit virtual spaces and earn from virtual reality assets and services. It is ideal for marketing or for organisations to simulate real-life events on the virtual platform (Roy, 2021). Decentraland hosts several events daily, and in an advert for a charity auction available on their website in October 2021, the platform was used to raise awareness about racism concerns and to raise funds.

Artists and collectors have shown great interest in Decentraland's marketplace. The blockchain's smart contract allows product creators to earn royalties on all future sales of an NFT, resulting in rapid adoption in 2021 (Kay, 2021). The NFT is a tokenised asset that can be traded easily. It inspires innovative economic use cases which revolutionise the rules of ownership. Content creators can sell

directly to a market without the need for intermediaries like agents or lawyers (Bowden & Jones, 2021). The business model used to manage virtual land as an NFT could be adapted and applied in the physical world by mapping the boundaries of plots and integrating property title deeds into an NFT system (Kimani et al., 2020). Such processes could assist with land management and potentially dispense with paper-based operations. An initiative like this one would work well in developing countries that do not contend with existing legacy systems, and generally have poor record-keeping systems (Scher, 2018).

Decentralised good governance

As a DAO, collectively, Decentraland's users will need to determine how to resolve complex policy conflicts. At present, the platform has not ruled on issues of free speech, racism, or abuse, but the platform's designers believe the parcel owners will make such decisions by voting (Wilser, 2020). Currently, the Decentraland Foundation governs Decentraland, but it is expected that the foundation will eventually relinquish control to the users and allow the platform to form its own democratically elected government (Scher, 2018).

Decentraland perhaps represents an extraordinary experiment in microeconomic theory, the management of contracts, and the influence of innovation on an organisation. Blockchain smart contracts provide the basis for managing the administrative functions of entire organisations. A key question is whether token-holders will collectively pay due diligence to the intricacies of the policies they propose, and whether they will vote responsibly. Likewise, will their financial stake in the organisation ensure due diligence, or could their interests be swayed by a crowd mentality (Rennie & Potts, 2016)?

Furthermore, DAOs are potentially at risk of subversion by malicious interests who may collect tokens intending to overwhelm the voting system. While the system is founded on democratic ideals, the system is vulnerable to influence by purchased voting blocks, potentially making the system a plutocracy – in other words, a state governed by the wealthy (Nielsen, 2020; O'Leary, 2018). These are the concerns shared by investors and social scientists alike. There is a need for further research into coercion and vote-buying to mitigate these threats. Clearly, no organisation can be seen to have met its transformative potential until it can be fully democratised, including through decentralising the decision-making process.

Decentralised leadership

The disruptive effects of the blockchain and DAOs require leaders to be aware of these technologies and how they may affect their settings. However, a fully functioning DAO may dispense with a leadership position altogether (Fenwick

et al., 2018; Hsieh, 2018). This role may be replaced by a leadership council that conducts regular electronic referenda to collate the views of system users. This leadership model can be more inclusive, allowing organisations to abandon excessive hierarchies. Fenwick et al. (2018) argue that firms that abandon these hierarchies are more efficient and better positioned to leverage the collective skills of their employees.

In the organisational context, inclusivity may have a broader definition than simply referring to gender, ethnic, or racial diversity. In this context, it means leveraging the talents and perspectives of all employees by providing each with an equal voice when raising views and contributing to the decision-making process (Janakiraman, n.d.). These attributes are defining characteristics of the DAO's decentralised decision-making process. Although the DAO may promote democratic decision-making, future DAO rules may need to be constrained based on socially just principles, guarding against wealthy voting blocks that could redefine the identity and objectives of the DAO.

Offering marginalised communities a say in the decision-making process cultivates lasting and progressive social change and is a goal of the transformative leader (Shields, 2010). The DAO system provides the transformative leader with a mechanism to achieve such change, assuming that the leadership council, elected by the system users, represents the users' views. Ultimately, leaders committed to social change and uninterested in political power will work towards adopting processes that make their position redundant.

Conclusion

Blockchain systems are tools to achieve an expected goal. The system is no more transformative than electricity. Still, providing electricity to the disconnected is exceptionally empowering and transformative. When wielded by a leader with a vision of a socially just future, this technology has transformative potential. Blockchain systems can therefore be considered a catalytic agent of change. With increased adoption, blockchain systems will snowball, encouraging more investments and user confidence. Governments in Ethiopia, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Estonia, Qatar, South Korea, and Singapore, to name a few, have identified use cases and are implementing blockchain-based solutions (Bagloee et al., 2021; Heo & Seo, 2021; Hochstein & Baydakova, 2021; Sandner & Bekemeier, 2019; Tok, Koç, & D'Alessandro, 2020).

Beyond the efficiencies and opportunities to decentralise the decision-making process referred to in this chapter, it is difficult to predict more elaborate use cases in the future. However, with state support, blockchain applications will become more mainstream. As a result, every sector may potentially be disrupted as people see the value of systematising their participation in the industry's business model or protecting their data (Tapscott, 2016).

There is a need for inspired leaders, across all sectors, who recognise the weaknesses of the current systems and the influence of power brokers to work towards developing inclusive and socially just systems. The failed development finance infrastructure calls for disruption, which can be initiated by transformative leaders interested in achieving sustainable social change. However, these leaders should not aspire to retain power, but instead develop mature systems that make the leadership role redundant. Ultimately, a transformative leader's policies are only temporary unless transformative systems support them. The ultimate expression of mature systems exists in the implementation of a DAO. At present, these systems are in their infancy, and the coordination of these systems may be vulnerable to coercion. Still, time and experience may allow the blockchain community to find solutions to these complex problems.

Blockchain systems may be ideal agents of socially just change, allowing complex networks to interact and exchange information. Such change requires vision and leaders capable of managing change. These leaders will need to advance digitisation within the developing world, overcome a hesitancy to tackle failing processes, and inspire their community to act (Bruce, 2020). Beyond simply empowering people, blockchain applications also provide the opportunity to formalise untapped informal sectors, something that is sorely needed in Africa. Blockchain systems dispel the risks of transacting with such communities, and could effectively strengthen global economies. However, such change requires visionary, transformative leadership, with a will to act.

#BlockchainTransformation

To be truly transformative, a leader must systematise transformative and socially just policies. The blockchain can be a transformative tool that systematises today's transformative policy for a secure and ethical tomorrow.

Questions for discussion

1. How could blockchain be used to ensure ethical practice?
2. What possibilities does blockchain have in your areas of involvement?
3. How could you make a start in using (or understanding) blockchain technologies?

References

Bagloee, S. A., Heshmati, M., Dia, H., Ghaderi, H., Pettit, C., & Asadi, M. (2021). Blockchain: The operating system of smart cities. *Cities*, *112*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103104.

Berger, I. W. (2019, 29 July). The transformative power of blockchain [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://blog.irvingwb.com/blog/2019/07/the-transformative-power-of-blockchain.html.

Bindu, N., Sankar, C. P., & Kumar, K. S. (2019). From conventional governance to e-democracy: Tracing the evolution of e-governance research trends using network analysis tools. *Government Information Quarterly*, *36*(3), 385–399.

Bosu, R., Dare, A., Dachi, H., & Fertig, M. (2011). School leadership and social justice: Evidence from Ghana and Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *31*(1), 67–77.

Bowden, J. & Jones, E. T. (2021, 26 April). NFTs are much bigger than an art fad – here's how they could change the world. *The Conversation*.
Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/nfts-are-much-bigger-than-an-art-fad-heres-how-they-could-change-the-world-159563.

Briner, R. B. & Denyer, D. (2012). Systematic review and evidence synthesis as a practice and scholarship tool. In D. M. Rousseau (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of evidence-based management* (pp. 112–129). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Bruce, A. (2020, 8 May). Poor change management is the enemy of blockchain adoption [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.supplychainbrain.com/blogs/1-think-tank/post/31169-poor-change-management-is-the-enemy-of-blockchain-adoption.

Casino, F., Dasaklis, T. K., & Patsakis, C. (2019). A systematic literature review of blockchain-based applications: Current status, classification and open issues. *Telematics and Informatics*, *36*, 55–81.

Castell, H. (2020, 7 November). Key takeaways from the future of development finance. *Devex*. Retrieved from https://www.devex.com/news/key-takeaways-from-the-future-of-development-finance-98500.

Cerf, M., Matz, S., & Berg, A. (2020). Using blockchain to improve decision making that benefits the public good. *Frontiers in Blockchain*, *3*, 1–25.

Decentraland. (n.d.). Decentraland DAO – The virtual world in your hands.
Retrieved from https://decentraland.org/dao/

Decentraland Conference Center. (n.d.). About. Retrieved from https://dclconf.com/about/.

De Filippi, P. (2018). Citizenship in the era of blockchain-based virtual nations. In R. Bauböck (Ed.). *Debating transformations of national citizenship* (pp. 267–277). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

De Filippi, P., Mannan, M., & Reijers, W. (2020). Blockchain as a confidence machine: The problem of trust and challenges of governance. *Technology in Society*, *62*, 1–14.

Digital, C. (2021, 12 March). Decentraland and cryptovoxels: An introduction to digital ownership [Blog post]. https://www.one37pm.com/nft/decentraland-cryptovoxels-nft-virtual-worlds.

Dube, K. & Katende, C. N. (2020, 29 May). An inclusive response to COVID-19 for Africa's informal workers. [Blog post].
Retrieved from https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/inclusive-response-covid-19-africas-informal-workers.

Dursun, T. & Üstündağ, B. B. (2021). A novel framework for policy based on-chain governance of blockchain networks. *Information Processing & Management*, *58*(4).
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2021.102556.

Fenwick, M., Kaal, W. A., & Vermeulen, E. P. M. (2018). *Why 'blockchain' will disrupt corporate organizations*. Law Working Paper No. 419/2018.
Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3227933.

Hansen, P., Morrison, G. M., Zaman, A., & Liu, X. (2020). Smart technology needs smarter management: Disentangling the dynamics of digitalism in the governance of shared solar energy in Australia. *Energy Research & Social Science*, *60*.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2019.101322.

Hardjono, T. (n.d.). T*he impact of blockchain for government: Insights on identity, payments and supply chain*. IBM Center for The Business of Government. Retrieved from https://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/impact-blockchain-government-insights-identity-payments-and-supply-chain.

Heo, K. & Seo, Y. (2021). Applying foresight to policy agenda-setting: A successful case in South Korea. *Futures*, *127*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102701.

Hochstein, M. & Baydakova, A. (2021, 30 April). Ethiopian education minister confirms Cardano blockchain partnership. *CoinDesk*. Retrieved from https://www.coindesk.com/ethiopian-education-minister-confirms-cardano-blockchain-partnership.

Hsieh, Y-Y. (2018). *The rise of decentralized autonomous organizations: Coordination and growth within cryptocurrencies*. PhD thesis, Western University, London, Canada. Retrieved from https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/215383528.pdf.

Iansiti, M. & Lakhani, K. R. (2017). The truth about blockchain. *Harvard Business Review* (January–February). Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-truth-about-blockchain.

Janakiraman, M. (n.d.). Inclusive leadership – Critical for competitive advantage. *Mercer*.
Retrieved from https://mobilityexchange.mercer.com/Insights/article/Inclusive-Leadership-Critical-for-Competitive-Advantage.

Janssen, M., Brous, P., Estevez, E., Barbosa, L. S., & Janowski, T. (2020). Data governance: Organizing data for trustworthy artificial intelligence. *Government Information Quarterly*, *37*(3). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2020.101493.

Kay, G. (2021, 14 March). Crypto collectibles are trading in a huge market – here's where you can browse and bid on them. *Business Insider South Africa*.
Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.co.za/nft-marketplaces-where-to-buy-sell-non-fungible-tokens-online-2021-3?r=US&IR=T.

Kimani, D., Adams, K., Attah-Boakye, R., Ullah, S., Frecknall-Hughes, J., & Kim, J. (2020). Blockchain, business and the fourth industrial revolution: Whence, whither, wherefore and how? *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *161*.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120254.

Manita, R., Elommal, N., Baudier, P., & Hikkerova, L. (2020). The digital transformation of external audit and its impact on corporate governance. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *150*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.119751.

Maouchi, Y., Charfeddine, L., & El Montasser, G. (2022). Understanding digital bubbles amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from DeFi and NFTs. *Finance Research Letters*, *47*(A).
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2021.102584.

Marsal-Llacuna, M. L. (2020). The people's smart city dashboard (PSCD): Delivering on community-led governance with blockchain. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *158*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120150.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D., & The PRISMA Group. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *PLoS Med*, *6*(7). https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b2535.

NFTPlazas. (n.d.). Learning the basics – Decentraland [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://nftplazas.com/decentraland-map/.

Nielsen, T. (2020). Cryptocorporations: A proposal for legitimizing decentralized autonomous organizations. *Utah Law Review*, *2019*(5), 1105–1129.

Niforos, M. (2017, July). Blockchain in development – Part II: How it can impact emerging markets? *International Finance Corporation*.
Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30367.

O'Leary, R-R. (2018, 20 July). The 'Dark DAO' threat: Vote vulnerability could undermine crypto elections. *CoinDesk*. Retrieved from https://www.coindesk.com/the-dark-dao-threat-vote-vulnerability-could-undermine-crypto-elections.

Omar, Y. M., Minoufekr, M., & Plapper, P. (2019). Business analytics in manufacturing: Current trends, challenges and pathway to market leadership. *Operations Research Perspectives*, *6*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orp.2019.100127.

Paliwal, V., Chandra, S., & Sharma, S. (2020). Blockchain technology for sustainable supply chain management: A systematic literature review and a classification framework. *Sustainability*, *12*(18), 1–39.

Palumbo, R., Manesh, M. F., Pellegrini, M. M., Caputo, A., & Flamini, G. (2021). Organizing a sustainable smart urban ecosystem: Perspectives and insights from a bibliometric analysis and literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *297*.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126622.

Pólvora, A. & Nascimento, S. (2021). Foresight and design fictions meet at a policy lab: An experimentation approach in public sector innovation. *Futures*, *128*.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2021.102709.

Rennie, E. & Potts, J. (2016, 10 May). The DAO: A radical experiment that could be the future of decentralised governance. *The Conversation*.
Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/the-dao-a-radical-experiment-that-could-be-the-future-of-decentralised-governance-59082.

Republic Compound. (2021, 13 May). Investing in Decentraland in 2021 [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://republic.co/blog/real-estate/investing-in-decentraland-in-2021.

Riedy, C. (2014, September 12). What does it take to be a transformative leader? [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@chrisjriedy/what-does-it-take-to-be-a-transformative-leader-b345981da119.

Roy, A. (2021, 11 March). Decentraland review: Free market economy in a virtual space. *XRToday*. Retrieved from https://www.xrtoday.com/virtual-reality/decentraland-review/.

Rozas, D., Tenorio-Fornés, A., Díaz-Molina, S., & Hassan, S. (2021). When Ostrom meets blockchain: Exploring the potentials of blockchain for commons governance. *SAGE Open*, *11*(1), 1–14.

Sagasti, F., Bezanson, K., Prada, F., Blockus, K., Lima, A. T., & Salop, J. (2004). *The future of development financing: Challenges, scenarios and strategic choices*. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
Retrieved from http://newrules.nonprofitsoapbox.com/storage/documents/ffd/segasti-bezanson-prada04.pdf.

Sai, A. R., Fitzgerald, B., Buckley, J., & Le Gear, A. (2020). Taxonomy of centralization in public blockchain systems: A systematic literature review. *Information Processing & Management*, *58*(4). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2021.102584.

Sandner, P. & Bekemeier, F. (2019, 29 November). Blockchain: An agent of profound change. *GIS Reports Online*.
Retrieved from https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/blockchain-governments/.

Scher, T. (2018, 25 April). Why we're obsessed with Decentraland [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://insights.dcg.co/why-were-obsessed-with-decentraland-da380e16cd70.

Schmidt, C. G. & Wagner, S. M. (2019). Blockchain and supply chain relations: A transaction cost theory perspective. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, *25*(4). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pursup.2019.100552.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Tapscott, D. (2016, 16 May). How blockchains could change the world. *McKinsey & Company*. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/how-blockchains-could-change-the-world.

Tapscott, D. & Tapscott, A. (2016, 7 December). How blockchain will change organizations. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Retrieved from https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-blockchain-will-change-organizations/.

Tapus, N. & Manolache, M. A. (2019). Integrated decision making using the blockchain. *Procedia Computer Science*, *162*, 587–595.

Tok, E., Koç, M., & D'Alessandro, C. (2020). Entrepreneurship in a transformative and resource-rich state: The case of Qatar. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, *8*(2), 1–14.

Ullah, F., Qayyum, S., Thaheem, M. J., Al-Turjman, F., & Sepasgozar, S. M. E. (2021). Risk management in sustainable smart cities governance: A TOE framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *167*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120743.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Wilser, J. (2020, 25 June). The people of Decentraland will greet you now. *CoinDesk*. Retrieved from https://www.coindesk.com/the-people-of-decentraland-will-greet-you-now.

Zachariadis, M., Hileman, G., & Scott, S. V. (2019). Governance and control in distributed ledgers: Understanding the challenges facing blockchain technology in financial services. *Information and Organization*, *29*(2), 105–117.

6 *Transformative leadership from abroad: Marguerite Barankitse and the Burundian refugee community*

Gérard Birantamije

Overview

Marguerite (Maggy) Barankitse established Maison Shalom in Burundi in 1993 to shelter children surviving the massacres of the time. Those first saved were Hutu children, not members of her own Tutsi ethnic community. In 2015, another crisis provoked mass refugee movements to neighbouring countries, and Barankitse began humanitarian action again. Using literature on leadership, grey literature on Maison Shalom (mainly unpublished annual reports and speeches) and Barankitse, and interviews with political and civil society and academic actors, this chapter examines transformative leadership theories to analyse Barankitse's approach to crisis management. The analysis uses a sociohistorical approach to demonstrate what constitutes Barankitse's leadership in practice, and what this implies for social change in Burundi and refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The analysis raises three aspects of transformative leadership: an original approach to Burundian conflicts, actions taken to break the structural causes of the conflict, and new dynamics of social and cultural changes in Burundi.

Introduction

Burundi has been affected by political and identity-based conflicts since its independence from Belgium in 1962. The Hutu and Tutsi communities are at the centre of these conflicts, which have led to several genocidal massacres over the past 50 years (Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007; Lemarchand, 1996; Ngayimpenda, 2020). In 1993, the assassination of President Ndadaye was followed by massacres of Tutsis in Burundi, resulting in a civil war between the predominantly Hutu armed movement and political parties, and a Tutsi-dominated governmental army. Faced with the horrors of war and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the international community put pressure on the belligerents to negotiate and implement peace agreements, among them the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, signed in Burundi on 26 August 2000 (Nimubona, 2007).

It was during this war and its aftermath that Marguerite (Maggy) Barankitse emerged as an important humanitarian figure in Burundi and the Great Lakes region. She assisted child survivors and orphans of the civil war by creating Maison Shalom, NGO, as her incubator of hope (Martin, 2005). As the founder

of Maison Shalom, Barankitse has received several distinctions, among them the most emblematic award given by former President Nkurunziza, proclaiming her the 'Nation's Mother' on 1 May 2006 (Debetencourt Hoskins, 2012, p. 138; IWACU, 2013).

In 2015, President Nkurunziza opted to run for a third term in office, in violation of the Arusha Peace Agreement. This was followed by protests from both Burundians and the international community, as well as demonstrations by political and civil society activists who organised the Halt to the Third Mandate movement. The violent repression that followed these demonstrations brought Barankitse back to the forefront. As she publicly protested about young Burundians being killed by Nkurunziza's security forces (Roulette, 2015), she was forced to leave the country. Her property and that of Maison Shalom were confiscated by the Burundian government, and the NGO struck off the list of those licensed to operate in Burundi. In 2020, Barankitse was sentenced to life in prison by the same government that had previously proclaimed her the Nation's Mother.

Despite these problems, Barankitse has not given up. From Kigali, Rwanda, she continues to give hope to hundreds of thousands of Burundians who have fled, providing education for young people and defending the rights of children. This chapter interrogates her potential as an example of transformative leadership. Two questions are used to analyse Barankitse's actions and their relationship to transformative leadership theories: (1) What actions were carried out by Barankitse inside Burundi and beyond the borders as a refugee? and (2) Do Barankitse's actions qualify her as a transformative leader?

Sociohistorical analysis of a leader

A sociohistorical approach is used to understand Barankitse's leadership inside Burundi and abroad within the historical and social context of Burundi. The analysis draws on information from five sources: biographies of Barankitse (Debetencourt Hoskins, 2012; Martin, 2005), reports of Maison Shalom activities, national and international press articles, extracts from Barankitse's speeches and interviews, and eight interviews with political actors, collaborators, civil society activists, and members of the diaspora who know Barankitse. These sources provided diverse opinions about Barankitse's actions and her person as perceived by Burundians.

Maggy Barankitse and transformative leadership theory

Transformative leaders can be everyday citizens and are not necessarily heroic or so-called 'born' leaders. All people who have chosen to mobilise their creativity and to contribute to a better future for the society in which they are

living can be considered leaders (Montuori, 2010). Transformative leadership can be defined as creating the future in the present. The core of the concept is incremental actions and interactions, thoughts, and beliefs that aim at deep and equitable change. Small actions and gestures give direction to change the society in need (Montuori, 2010). The actions of the leader depend on the conditions of the particular society (Brown, Ekoue, & Goodban, 2019; Shields, 2010). Transformative leadership connects with the ethical dimension and with universal values, and it is usually focused on promoting ethical practices in the lives of people and within organisations (Caldwell et al., 2012; Ford & Harding, 2015). Hence, transformative leadership can be interpreted as a paradigm shift in leadership theories. As described by Montuori (2010) and Fletcher (2004), apart from focusing on individual achievement and meritocracy, the emphasis is on what can be achieved not only for oneself, but also for the larger community.

The term 'leadership from abroad' is coined here to help understand transformative leadership by focusing on three aspects: (1) there is a person sometimes unknown and socially unidentified that leads as a change-maker in the beginning, someone (2) who appears to have a broader social vision and objectives (3) that can promote change in a given society and push for the achievement of a better life, despite where they are or the situation they are facing. The term 'abroad', in this context, is used to imply being *outside* of classical notions of leadership in a given community, rather than having a geographical meaning.

The case analysed in this contribution is of an unusual leader. Barankitse, as a transformative leader, is an 'outsider' who provides an example of an alternative to the classic 'big man/woman' leadership, and shows how an ordinary person with transformative leadership qualities can have a major impact. Barankitse was not driven by the power that comes with a leadership position in a given society, but merely by the vulnerability of the Burundian people in the context of (post–) civil war, including exile and banishment. Her own vulnerability can provide lessons to help understand what inspires potential followers.

Barankitse's life as a leader began on 21 October 1993, when one of Burundi's longest and deadliest political crises started. When Barankitse began her humanitarian work, her purpose did not entail building a reputation, setting up an organisation, or cultivating potential leaders within any institutional structure. Nor was there a focus on a social vision for changing Burundian society. She acted solely to save the lives of innocent children whose parents were murdered during the 1993 civil war in Burundi. At that time, she was a secretary in the bishop's office and had no political involvement. Barankitse risked her own life to save children within a chaotic environment of conflict between Hutu and Tutsi (Debetencourt Hoskins, 2012; Maitre, 2008). She established Maison Shalom, a house of hope and peace, now linked to her name.

But, 22 years later, in 2015, Barankitse fled Burundi because the former president Nkurunziza considered her part of an attempted coup. Due to an international arrest warrant issued by the Burundian regime, she lost her citizenship, her organisation, Maison Shalom, as well as all the initiatives (such as hospitals, microfinance organisations, leisure centres, and residences for rescued children) she had put in place to save human lives (Kamikazi, 2020). While in exile in Rwanda, she continued her humanitarian actions to help fellow citizens who had taken refuge in Rwanda and in other neighbouring countries. In Barankitse's activities, one can see a deep conviction to continue everyday actions that lead society towards a better future.

Leadership is usually attributed to actors within an organisation, but Barankitse started to lead without an organisation. During the Burundian crises in the 1990s, she was recognised and supported by her fellow citizens in her own country and by the administration, who finally acknowledged her work (Marshall, 2013; Martin, 2005). In Rwanda after the 2015 Burundian crisis, Barankitse saw the new conditions refugees were facing and decided to lead again, as in the 1990s. At the core of her leadership approach is the belief that revolution requires rethinking and changing practices. Barankitse continues to foster dignity and self-respect in Burundian refugees in Rwanda by supporting various initiatives, including education and training for youths, the promotion of entrepreneurship (training and financing of small trades), and the empowerment of refugee women.

A post-heroic leadership portrait

Barankitse is not what would be considered a conventional leader. Her sphere of operation is not political, but rather personal. She can be seen to embody the 'post-heroic' leader (Fletcher, 2004) in terms of her traits of empathy, community, vulnerability, and collaboration. According to Fletcher (2004), post-heroic leadership has three characteristics that distinguish it from heroic or traditional leadership: leadership in practice, leadership as interactions between self and others, and leadership as learning. Barankitse demonstrates all of these characteristics. She is, as Montuori and Donnelly (2018, p. 321) have stated, an 'everyday citizen' but her actions have 'butterfly effects'. She is not drawn into politics, but wants to push politicians towards an ethical perspective. This orientation of non-directive leadership has been overlooked in leadership research.

After the Rwandan genocide of 1994, Barankitse risked her life to hide Hutu children whose parents had been assassinated by hordes of revenge-seeking Tutsi youth. This action opened a new avenue for her. Barankitse was a young woman with neither a home nor provisions to feed and care for these children, but the number of children under her protection swelled as others were picked up on

the hills above the town of Ruyigi. The environment in which Barankitse was acting was one of ethnic balkanisation throughout the country. She was taking a great risk. On the one hand, her actions were not understood by the inhabitants of Ruyigi, especially her friends from the Tutsi community. Saving the lives of Hutu children, whose parents were alleged perpetrators of the foregoing genocidal massacres against the Tutsi, was a considered to be a serious crime, tantamount to treason or a crime of *lèse-majesté*. On the other hand, Barankitse wanted to raise these Hutu orphans in an environment that was not partisan. These children needed food, water, clothes, and a roof over their heads. In this endeavour, she experienced problems not only with the ecclesiastical community of Ruyigi, but also with the leaders at both the local and national levels. Her reward for her good works was the epithet 'Maggy the Mad'. Often, she had to resort to stealing corn from neighbours' fields and sometimes to begging in downtown Bujumbura (as she described in a meeting of Burundian urban refugees in Kigali, 2018).

Barankitse established Maison Shalom in Rwanda in 1994. Initially intended to serve about 50 children, Maison Shalom received thousands more orphans and children separated from their families. Her name, which had begun to be noticed by the international press, is associated with the fight for the dignity of children. International organisations engaged in children's rights started providing her with support in terms of living expenses, school supplies, and coverage of the cost of administration services at Maison Shalom.

At the end of the Burundian civil war in 2005, Barankitse focused on reconstruction and peace building through building a children's hospital open to all. Such a peace-development nexus is well established in the post-conflict discourse (Uvin, 2002). As Marc Georges, a Belgian doctor and military officer who was at the Rema Hospital during construction, so aptly writes, '[Maggy] has such faith in the future that she is convinced, despite the complexity of the subject, that she can only succeed' (Georges, 2007, unnumbered [author's translation]). Barankitse remained faithful to her initial commitment that children and families are the pillars of all development. Her first project after returning to Burundi was the building of the Rema Hospital, a specialised hospital for children on her family property in Nyamutobo. It is a modern, well-equipped hospital that welcomes renowned doctors from Europe, Canada, and America and trains nurses and health auxiliaries. It has quickly become a regional referral hospital for the care for children from Burundi, Eastern Congo, Tanzania, and Rwanda. In addition to medication, patients are given milk and other foods, something new for Burundian hospitals.

Barankitse's second significant investment in peacebuilding was establishing a microfinance bank called Iteka (meaning dignity or honour) Microfinance (IWACU, 2013). This microfinance institution had two major objectives: to

restore dignity to farmers and small traders and to train them in cooperative entrepreneurship. Practically, the microfinancing system provided the farmers with money for survival during the planting season, and at harvest time, it helped them to sell their crops through their cooperative. The solidarity credit was given to small traders to carry out their activities. The interest rate was only 2 per cent, whereas conventional banks charged up to 20 per cent (Interview with GB, former employee of Iteka Microfinance, Burundi, 2021).[1]

However, in 2015, Burundi faced another political crisis. The outbreak of violence was related to the presidential elections and mostly to the anti-constitutional decision of then president Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term. This caused political violence and ethnic tensions (Hugon, 2017). The Nkurunziza third-term crisis rushed through Burundi like a tsunami and unearthed the traumas from previous conflicts buried in the collective memory. Barankitse saw the recent turmoil as similar to the turmoil of the earlier conflicts, but this time it was caused by a man who had previously awarded her the symbolic title of the 'Nation's Mother' (Debetencourt Hoskins, 2012, p. 138). She decided to act and save lives as security forces were killing young people demonstrating in the streets of Bujumbura (Roulette, 2015).

Leading up to these protests, the population had been struggling through much of Nkurunziza's two terms in office due to his administration's poor political, economic, and social governance. Nkurunziza's injurious governance prompted Barankitse to hand over the medals and titles previously bestowed on her by the head of state (Barankitse's testimony, Refugee leaders meeting, Kigali, 2019). This had affected relations between her and Nkurunziza's regime. When the protests broke out in April 2015, Barankitse was devastated by the murder of a young teenager called Komezamahoro, who, although not participating in the demonstrations, was fatally shot by a policeman. This prompted Barankitse to begin her humanitarian work again. She cared for injured young people, took food to those in prison, and paid the hospital and burial costs of young people injured or killed during demonstrations. As a result, she was put on the list of 'enemies of the nation' by the president's regime and threatened by the intelligence services. This eventually led to her going into exile in Rwanda (La Croix, 2015), where she found thousands of other Burundians who had fled the repression.

Barankitse left behind the devastated Maison Shalom. This organisation was removed from the list of local NGOs, and all its infrastructure (hospital, microfinance, cinema, swimming pool, residences, and so on) was looted and

[1] Initials are used for personal communication interviews to conceal and protect the identity of the interviewees.

closed by the Burundian government. But Barankitse did not accept these setbacks and fought to rise from the ruins of her accomplishments. She was often heard paraphrasing the famous quote from Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos: 'They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds'. Maggy's version (taken from unpublished reports from Maison Shalom) was 'They buried us, but they forgot that we are seeds. We grow back' (Barankitse, Maison Shalom, interview, June 2019). In Rwanda, she was inspired by the memory of Komezamahoro, and in the young refugees in Mahama refugee camp in Kigali, she sees Burundi's salvation. She wants to divert these youths from their involvement in the rebellions, and for them to return with dignity to rebuild their home country.

With support from the Friends of Maggy, a voluntary association in Europe, Barankitse set up an English teaching programme for young people in the Mahama refugee camp and the city of Kigali. The aim is to help them to continue their secondary and university studies in an education system that has English as the primary language, to fit in with the Rwandan education system. This training serves to boost the morale of these young people who have been traumatised by the repression faced during and after the demonstrations. To date, Barankitse's extensive education programme has enabled more than three hundred students to return to school. The first cohort has already completed their studies and is serving the refugees' society as well as the Rwandan nation. Barankitse justifies her programme in these terms: 'We have to show that we refugees are normal human beings in a strange situation. We were useful, we must continue to be. This is what should make our dignity' (Barankitse, Maison Shalom, Kigali, 2018, unpublished speech [author's translation]).

Currently, some political actors want to return to Burundi, some advocating an armed path, but Barankitse seeks lasting peace in Burundi by encouraging young people to make the most of their talents. In a speech to the refugees and friends of Maison Shalom in Kigali, upon receiving the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity (2016), she said: 'We are at school, we are going to return with doctorates, skills and capabilities. When we go home, our contribution to the reconstruction of peace will be in actions, and in all areas' (Barankitse, Maison Shalom, Kigali, 2016, unpublished speech [author's translation]).

A system providing access to Rwandan universities for young Burundian refugees to enter bachelor's and master's degree programmes has been running since 2017. The programme has already benefitted more than six hundred refugees, enabling these young people to become engaged in the Rwandan labour market. For urban Burundian refugees, Maison Shalom established the Oasis of Peace community centre in Kigali, which provides sociocultural events, internet access, and many other forms of support. Maison Shalom also established the Ubuntu Academy to promote the human values of compassion, integrity, openness to others, and solidarity. This academic hub is developing a

large training programme offering a new space for collective therapy after years of exile and violence. In sum, these programmes with their inter-ethnic approach aim at collective and community work involving the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa refugees in the refugee camps, the Rwandan communities living near the camps, and Burundians who have taken refuge in urban centres. These programmes and the many other activities reported (Maison Shalom International, 2020) demonstrate Barankitse's commitment to an authentic transformation of the Burundian society from within and abroad.

Leadership in practice: An original and risky approach to conflict and development

The aim of this section is to understand Barankitse's leadership approach and practices. In general, any leader must have a vision that encourages others to follow them (Northouse, 2016). Analysing Barankitse's approach indicates four different aspects of leadership that help to explain why she is influencing practices beyond Rwanda and Burundi. The first two aspects put the emphasis on upholding dignity in times of crisis; the third aspect is the impact that learning has, especially on young people; and the fourth shows how entrenched social practices of domination can be transformed into everyday practices of compassion when carried out by a committed actor.

The active interethnic approach

When the massacres began in 1993 in Burundi, Barankitse mobilised ordinary citizens, regardless of ethnicity, using a new and different approach. Although the Hutu and Tutsi had been in conflict for decades, she believed that 'we will celebrate the victory of love over hatred' (Kingsley, 2016, para. 17). She believed that it would be better to preserve Burundi by sowing new seeds. She wanted the new focus for Burundi to be interethnic action against hatred and community conflict, rather than interethnic violence. By saving and supporting infants, children, and young people of both ethnic groups, Barankitse strove to create a new sense of living together. Beyond sharing the experience of being disaster victims and survivors of the massacres, they learned to share a new civic mindset: living together in difference, accepting each other, and defying the ethnicising views of the past.

Replacing the concept of an orphanage

From the beginning, Barankitse refused to define Maison Shalom as an orphanage. Perhaps it was her former condition as an orphan that led her to take a different approach (see her founders story, Maison Shalom International,

n.d.). She believes that nothing can replace the family, especially the mother, and that an orphanage setup would in no way reduce the trauma endured by those children who had lost their parents. At Maison Shalom, mothers were brought in to take care of rescued infants in their everyday life and to give them the necessary maternal affection. In a second step, Maison Shalom attempted to locate remaining members of the children's families and to organise reunification. In this way children kept their family identity, whereas orphanages often disengage children from their heritage. Maison Shalom gradually became a house of safety, friendship, and transition before family reunification, where this was possible, and acted like an extended family. For the children who were old enough, Maison Shalom built homes called 'Angel's houses' where two or three young people lived together, sharing daily life as brothers or sisters. Rather than feeling like orphans, their substitutional relationship continued until they were able to return to their nuclear families or start their own homes and families.

Education: Helping young people to dream again and think of giving back

A cornerstone of Barankitse's convictions is the right of youth to a good education. Trauma impedes dreaming about the future. However, education can constitute a detraumatising space as children experience new life. For Barankitse, if the ethnic conflict persists in Burundi, it is partly because education has been perverted by political mobilisation. Education is a process that begins in the family and continues through school into everyday life, through individuals' commitment to observing a certain ethic in a profession. According to Barankitse's approach, education must work to produce independent citizens free from fear, greed, and selfishness who would not think of engaging with a political party that promotes demagogy and hatred of others. Education should be inspired by common values. The end of higher education should lead to various forms of empowerment for young people in the observation of common values. Young people who are trained are called upon to serve the community. If there is no giving back, the training will have failed to produce people who are empowered and committed to the cause of the general Burundian community.

A decolonial approach to relations with donors and external partners

To succeed in building Maison Shalom as an organisation with the intent of promoting peace and reconciliation, Barankitse initiated a new approach to dealing with donors and international funders. This is a unique example of a very particular leadership practice. By focusing her communication on the human values of dignity, compassion, humanity (ubuntu), and integrity, she has been able to engage those who believe, despite the crisis of values, in the remaining minimum of humanity. In practice, this approach assumes that victims and

survivors need not only clothes, food, and schools, but also compassion and contact with supportive people. This orientation changed the approach for aid from different NGOs and foundations in times of crisis. The various organisations that funded Maison Shalom were not content to merely receive reports on how funds were used, but sent agents who went to live in Burundi, stayed in contact with victims, and shared in the everyday lives of the recipients of the aid. Some came to teach, others to heal, and yet others to build houses. Thus, the colonial attitude that the hand that gives is always above the hand that receives has been continuously deconstructed by Barankitse and her organisation. The volunteers have an interest in giving their time, money, and care. The assessment of the funded programmes offered by Maison Shalom show positive results due to volunteer participation in the life of the organisation. This was the case with the construction of the Rema Hospital by the Belgian military in 2011, and the Elite Center in Mahama refugee camp, where Western universities are involved in giving programmes and delivering online teaching to young refugees.

Is Marguerite Barankitse a transformative leader?

This section reflects on interviews with different Burundians, conducted by the author in 2021, who have worked, shared ideas with, or met Barankitse. These interviews help to answer questions around whether Barankitse can be considered a transformative leader. As has been shown by some authors (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018; Shields, 2010), transformative leadership focuses on a broader social vision and critiques inequitable practices and injustice. As stressed by Shields (2010), the promise is not only greater individual achievement, but also a better life lived in community with others. While the approaches mobilised relate to leadership in practice and reflect on the interactions between Barankitse and the Burundian community inside and outside the country, this section challenges the definitions of leadership in practice through the interviewee's perceptions of Barankitse as a humanitarian leader in Burundi.

The interviews have elicited three main learnings: (1) Barankitse challenges the *ethnic* dimension at the heart of the Burundian conflicts; (2) she is a woman who challenges the *misogynistic* (or chauvinistic) view of the Burundian wife; and, finally, (3) she challenges the *elitist* approach to conflict resolution in Burundi and other countries.

Challenging the ethnic dimension at the core of the conflicts

The first specificity of Barankitse which reinforces her position as a leader is that she takes a rather difficult approach to reconciliation – she urges reconciling in times of crisis, when people do not want to reconcile. Her interethnic approach to reconciliation and compassion is a challenge to Burundians of all ages, but even

more so to political actors in times of crisis and after. Of course, the 2015 political crisis showed that there is a long path to reconciliation, but Barankitse has shown that there is a good alternative. This challenge is emphasised by an interviewee:

> I found a woman who made a name for herself in Burundi. I appreciated her approach toward reconciliation on the ethnic issue. In Burundi, there is this binary reading of the conflict. If you are a Hutu, you are in conflict with a Tutsi. I see a woman who has suffered on both sides and who manages to endure it and does not let herself be carried away by the ethnic and patronage winds. This continuity in social work without looking at ethnic and social origins, I find that very important and especially courageous.
> (Interview with AM, international cooperation, DRC, 2021)

And another interviewee pointed out:

> I appreciate what she does. She is driven by an ideal that is based on values. She wants young people to identify themselves as Burundians, not that of ethnic groups. She is convinced that Burundians must live together like Burundians, not like Hutu or Tutsi.
> (Interview with JGN, academic, Canada, 2021)

Barankitse wants a country in which living together challenges institutionally entrenched paradigms. Despite the fact that ethnicity is a social and scientific construction, it is an important factor in domestic politics, both in times of peace and conflict. The Arusha Peace Agreement itself refers to it to offer a model of living together. So far, Barankitse's approach to interethnic peace has shown itself to be successful. As another interviewee put it:

> [T]he active interethnic makes her a unique character in the Burundian political and social landscape. We do not know of other people who have been able to indiscriminately save people and give them human dignity regardless of ethnic, regional or other origins.
> (Interview with VN, civil society activist, Belgium, 2021)

Barankitse develops her leadership practice by mobilising positive energies and by being an instrument of change. As she built a 'garden of Eden' in a country in ruins in 1993, she also built an oasis of peace in a desert of underprivileged refugees in 2015 in Rwanda. Her example calls all Burundians to transcend ethnic stereotypes and ethnic-based conflicts. The value of her leadership has brought her the recognition of many international organisations; awards she has received include the Chirac Foundation's Prize for Conflict Prevention in 2011 and the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity in 2016.

Defying the chauvinist view of women

For most members of Burundian society, the social place of women is in the home. A woman is considered the 'home boss' (*Inarugo*). Women should take care of the children and family goods. In Burundian culture, a woman is deprived of certain basic rights; for example, she cannot make a speech when her husband is present. An unmarried woman is treated as a child. Constitutionally, a female quota of 30 per cent is required in political institutions, but, in reality, this proportion varies according to the moods of male leaders.

Barankitse, however, is an unmarried woman who has been recognised as being exceptional and who is seen as a role model, contrary to the child status that Burundian culture dictates. She became a mother, and was further elevated to the status of the 'Nation's Mother', who raised over 20 000 orphans (Martin, 2005). The considerable admiration Barankitse has received for her humanity and work and the recognition of her involvement in Burundian society have deeply challenged the stereotypes surrounding her femininity.

Stressing this admiration, one civil society activist said: 'She is a determined woman, fighter, rigorous, sometimes too rigorous. It is open. She cannot be silent in the face of acts of injustice. Bold actions have made her more of a human rights activist than a mere humanitarian' (Interview with VN, human rights defender, Belgium, 2021). A certain unanimity seems to have emerged over her leadership, even within political organisations. A Burundian politician working in exile goes further: 'We must recognise the extraordinary work that she has done in Burundi and that she is doing in Rwanda. If the Burundian regimes were serious, [her] development model would have been generalised in Burundi' (Interview with LN, political actor and scholar, Belgium, 2021). Finally, this admiration for Barankitse as a Burundian woman extends beyond borders and generates hope for a better tomorrow. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan summarised this by saying: 'When you see what a woman is capable of doing for so many children, you think Africa is not lost' (Fondation Chirac, 2011).

Challenging the elitist dimension of conflict management

In Burundi, as elsewhere in the world, diplomas and other qualifications constitute significant status. Those who have these qualifications tend to have a certain disregard for those who do not. Barankitse, while having a rudimentary teaching qualification, does not have a university degree, and therefore does not consider herself a member of the educated 'elite'. In addition, many of the political leaders in Burundi and Rwanda, considered to be 'elites', are frequently blamed for the countries past turmoil (Uvin, 1999). From a grassroots perspective, these

elites created ideologies of ethnic hatred and implemented policies of exclusion and discrimination that resulted in the genocide and violence of 1993 and 2015. Some see the elites as the root of state failure and institutional bad governance. Barankitse embodies someone outside the elite, from whom little is expected. As one interviewee underlined:

> I do not know [what] the King of the Belgians studied, [or] President Ndayishimiye or President Kagame, he did what studies? I don't think it's the degree that makes you successful…What is important is to have the courage to go all the way. Seeing her strength for continuity, her capacity for continuation that I find by looking at her activities in exile abroad, I find that she is an inspiring personality.
> (Interview with AM, international cooperation, DRC, 2021)

This inspiration was also recognised by an interviewee from a civil society organisation, who said:

> If we had about 50 Maggy [Barankitses], Burundian society would have changed. She talks about things or ideas that today no longer have a place within the ruling elites and in Burundian society: dignity, love of neighbour, reconciliation, mobilization for the lives of children. She says what she does, and she does what she says. She does not just talk, she takes actions. She is unique.
> (Interview with VN, human rights defender, Belgium, 2021)

In short, Barankitse has made considerable progress in the areas in which those in power have been less successful. This is because she recognises that to achieve real success in a society or nation, the important issues are people's values, how people live with each other, and developing that society's youth. Barankitse, despite her lack of a diploma, knows how to link theory to practice and gives people what they really need, as one interviewee pointed out:

> Leadership or values do not depend on diplomas. The values that were transmitted by parents are fundamental…[Maggy] does reflect some leadership. She insists on the case of education, which is an object of transformation of each society. She has a lot of impact on young people to whom she has offered new perspectives. She is a figure of peace like Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, and others. I consider her to be a super transformative leader.
> (Interview with JGN, academic, Canada, 2021)

What Barankitse's actions have shown is that by promoting fundamental values in society, the impossible becomes possible.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated, through the character and the actions of Maggy Barankitse, the exercise of transformative leadership in an exceptional situation involving ethnic violence, exile, legal proceedings, and a government implicated in destroying her humanitarian work. Her vulnerability strengthened her leadership. Ultimately, as shown, her actions intersect with the intrinsic characteristics of transformative leadership. The actions, sacrifices, and commitments of Barankitse are not far from the revolution advocated by Burns (1978) to explain the purpose of transformative leadership.

Transformative leadership requires the conviction of ethics and responsibility in the management of an organisation and in the pursuit of its objectives. At this level, 2015 was a test. Barankitse showed that her morale and courage were high, and she did not give up on the beliefs and ideals she had held since 1993. Finally, transformative leaders always seek to understand universal truths and incorporate them into people's and organisations' everyday lives. The interview passages give evidence of Barankitse's post-heroic leadership. She is seen as someone who embodies and defends true and worthy social values and has deeply challenged male, ethnic, and elitist domination.

#TransformativeSocialAction

Marguerite (Maggy) Barankitse is a social activist whose actions contrast with authoritarian, 'big man', and elitist leadership, and who shows how an ordinary person with transformative leadership qualities can have an impact on many people's lives.

Questions for discussion

1. Who in your own context is a post-heroic leader like Maggy Barankitse, and what can be learned from their leadership actions?
2. In what ways are people like Maggy Barankitse an alternative to the 'big man' leadership that remains prevalent in African contexts?
3. Would you agree that Maggy Barankitse is a transformative leader? What makes her so? What actions might be missing?

References

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda, 33*(1), 21–37.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Chrétien, J. P. & Dupaquier, J. F. (2007). *Burundi 1972: Au bord des génocides.* Paris, France: Karthala.

Debetencourt Hoskins, J. (2012). *Hummingbird, why am I here? Maggy's children.* Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace.

Fletcher, J. K. (2004). The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power and transformational change. *The Leadership Quarterly, 15*(5), 647–661.

Fondation Chirac. (Producer). (2011, 24 November). *Marguerite Barankitse 2011 laureate of the Fondation Chirac Prize* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLIoLOyafJI.

Ford, J. & Harding, N. (2015). Followers in leadership: Fiction, fantasy and illusion. *Leadership, 14*(1), 3–24.

Georges, M. (2007, March–April). *Qui est Maggy Barankitse? Lettres du Burundi.* Mémoires du Congo, du Rwanda et du Burundi. Retrieved from https://www.memoiresducongo.be/revues/.

Hugon, P. (2017, 6 April). Le Burundi bascule-t-il dans le chaos? *Revue Sens-dessous: Urgence.* Retrieved from https://sensdessous.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/le-burundi-bascule-t-il-dans-le-chaos/.

IWACU. (2013, 5 May). *La maison Shalom ouvre une microfinance à Ruyigi*. Retrieved from https://www.iwacu-burundi.org/la-maison-shalom-ouvre-une-microfinance-ruyigi/.

Kamikazi, J. (2020, 11 January). Saisie des biens de la Maison Shalom à Ruyigi. *SOS Médias Burundi*. Retrieved from https://www.sosmediasburundi.org/2020/01/11/saisie-des-biens-de-la-maison-shalom-a-ruyigi/.

Kingsley, P. (2016, 11 June). 'Why does no one mention Burundi?' asks winner of new humanitarian award. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/11/marguerite-barankitse-why-does-no-one-mention-burundi-winner-humanitarian-award.

La Croix. (2015, 26 May). *Au Burundi, Maggy Barankitse menacée de mort*. Retrieved from https://www.la-croix.com/Urbi-et-Orbi/Actualite/Monde/Au-Burundi-Maggy-Barankitse-menacee-de-mort-2015-05-26-1316163.

Lemarchand, R. (1996). *Burundi: Ethnic conflict and genocide.* Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Maison Shalom International. (n.d.). *La Fondatrice*. Retrieved from https://maisonshalom.org/la-fondatrice-2/.

Maison Shalom International. (2020). *Rapport Annuel 2020*. Retrieved from https://maisonshalom.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Rapport-Annuel-MS-2020-R-1.pdf.

Maitre, P. (2008). *Une sainte dans l'enfer des Grands Lacs*. Visa pour l'image. Retrieved from https://www.visapourlimage.com/festival/expositions/une-sainte-dans-l-enfer-des-grands-lacs.

Marshall, K. (2013, 27 August). Burundi's great mother: Maggie Barankitse [Blog post]. *HuffPost*. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/burundis-great-mother-mag_b_3813440.

Martin, C. (2005). *La haine n'aura pas le dernier mot: Maggy, la femme aux 10 000 enfants*. Paris, France: Albin Michel.

Montuori, A. (2010). Transformative leadership for the 21st century: Reflections on the design of a graduate leadership curriculum. *ReVision: A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, *30*(3–4), 4–14.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Ngayimpenda, E. (2020). *Histoire du conflit politico-ethnique burundais.* Bujumbura, Burundi: Bandima Editions.

Nimubona, J. (2007). De l'accord d'Arusha aux élections de 2005: Le processus de paix au Burundi – entre espoirs et inquiétudes. In E. Remacle, V. Rosoux, & L. Saur (Eds). *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Des conflits paix* (pp. 63–93). Brussels, Belgium: Peter Lang.

Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and practice (*7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Roulette, D. (2015, 25 June). Maggy Barankitse: 'Il faut se focaliser sur l'après-crise, être visionnaire' [Blog post].
Retrieved from https://damienroulette.wordpress.com/2015/06/25/maggy-barankitse-il-faut-se-focaliser-sur-lapres-crise-etre-visionnaire/.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Uvin, P. (1999). Ethnicity and power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different paths to mass violence. *Comparative Politics*, *31*(3), 253–271.

Uvin, P. (2002). The development/peacebuilding nexus: A typology and history of changing paradigms. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, *1*(1), 5–24.

Interview

Barankitse, M., Maison Shalom, Kigali, June 2019.

7 *What amaXhosa leadership practices can offer to the discourse on transformative leadership*

Olwam Mnqwazi

Overview

Since Africa comprises 54 countries with numerous cultural groups, clans, and tribes, it is unsurprising that African leadership discourse is just as diverse and eclectic. This chapter explores leadership principles of the amaXhosa, a South African cultural group, through a desktop study, and compares these with transformative leadership theory. The author seeks to establish the leadership principles of the amaXhosa by referencing lessons from the oral traditions, literature, and folktales of the amaXhosa – thereby gleaning from 'yesterday'. amaXhosa leadership practices are relational and inculcated from a young age and in a community. The amaXhosa exercise their power and authority to achieve harmony within their community. These practices align well with Eric Weiner's transformative leadership practices of justice and democracy. In addition, the dialectic between individual democratic accountability and social responsibility compares well with Archie Mafeje's interpretation of amaXhosa leadership practice.

Introduction

Dominant leadership concepts have been studied and applied as 'universal', even though they have been studied in selective cultural contexts such as the individualistic traditions of the United States. So-called 'third-world' thinking is usually regarded as 'local' or not global enough – perhaps even backward (Nkomo, 2011; Wa Thiong'o, 1993). According to Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2005), formal leadership studies started in the 1930s. The 1970s introduced leadership as relating to 'management' practice, while the 1980s brought what came to be known as 'New Paradigm' models, which largely related to 'charismatic leadership', 'visionary leadership', and 'transformational leadership'. However, leadership in the 21st century needs to be less transactional and more transformative by beginning with 'questions of justice and democracy, critiqu[ing] inequitable practices and address[ing] both individual and public good' (Shields, 2010, p. 559).

This chapter argues that the amaXhosa from the Eastern Cape province of South Africa exercise their power and authority to achieve harmony within their communities, and that they demonstrate the transformative

leadership attributes of justice and democracy outlined by Weiner (2003). The dialectic between individual democracy, accountability, and social responsibility is similar to the leadership practices of the amaXhosa described by Mafeje (1963). Furthermore, the chapter deepens transformative leadership discourse by arguing that arbitration and the nexus between the leaders and their communities are the hallmarks of amaXhosa leadership. These, if understood contextually, can contribute to the growing transformative leadership scholarship. Weiner's (2003) argument shares commonalities with concepts of amaXhosa leadership practice, which also relies on the strength of responsibilities being shared between leaders and followers, and incorporates social harmony through arbitration, mediation, verbal engagement, and dialogue across the Xhosa polity (Mafeje, 1963; Peires, 1976; Soga, 1932). Nyamende (2010) also contends that the Xhosa view of justice is universal. Perhaps this is why there is a need for the inclusion of the Xhosa people's perspective in the wider interpretations of African leadership.

Conceptual framework and methodology

The ideological basis of amaXhosa leadership practices arises from Xhosa oral traditions of *iminombo* (genealogies), *izibongo* (praises), and *amabali* (tales) (Peires, 1976). The amaXhosa use metaphors and stereotypes to educate their youth, weaving together a tapestry of leadership influences. Notwithstanding some major challenges, including its focus on men as leaders, its writing system, oral traditions, and differing anthropological accounts, it is still worthwhile investigating historical leadership principles to build on, validate, and acknowledge their usefulness in the past and today.

This study employs multiple research methods including a literature review; analysis of indigenous artefacts such as storytelling, proverbs, and language; and autoethnographic research and writing methods. The latter, autoethnography, according to Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011, p. 273), 'challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing other…[and]…seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)'. By including historical and indigenous artefacts, valuable insights are able to be incorporated into mainstream research methods (Chilisa & Tsheko, 2014).

A conceptual challenge for such a study, as pointed out by Mafeje (1971, p. 245), is that '[i]n South Africa, the indigenous population has no word for "tribe"; only for "nation", "clan", and "lineage" and, traditionally, people were identified by territory, i.e., "Whose [which chief's] land do you come from?"' However, the term tribe has been used frequently in the historical texts, so it has not been possible to remove it completely from this chapter. Therefore, the amaXhosa are referred to as a 'tribe' to avoid distorting historical material and

the context of their time, while recognising the need to be politically correct in the current intellectual epoch. A further conceptual challenge concerns the overwhelming reference to men as leaders in amaXhosa history. While this is not overtly addressed in this chapter, it remains an outstanding and important point of discussion.

Autoethnography assists in recognising cultural principles and values that would otherwise be elusive to an outsider, and it also helps to make sense of the subtle cultural influences that breed valuable leadership attributes in the local people. In this regard, the literature search was based on a subjective understanding of these influences and how they can be put in conversation with transformative leadership principles.

The Kingdom of the Youngest

Drawing on his identity as a Xhosa man, the author appreciates Xhosa literature's cultural and linguistic nuances. The etymological root of the Xhosa word *inkosi* (a chief of royal descent), generally understood as a leader, is derived from the word *umkhosi*, meaning an army, an expedition, or an entourage (Nyamende, 1990). The word 'Xhosa' is derived from a Khoi word meaning 'angry men' (Peires, 1976). The youngest son of Ntombela was also named Xosa, and he became the progenitor of the Xhosa nation – hence the Kingdom of the Youngest, rather than the firstborn heir tradition (Soga, 1917). The current Xhosa-speaking tribes and polity of the Eastern Cape of South Africa include amaXhosa, abaThembu, amaMpondo, amaMpondomise, amaBomvana, and amaXesibe.

Xhosa praise poetry shows a strong link between the leader of the people and their religion, ascribing divine rights to the leader (Nyamende, 1990; Tisani, 1999). Some commonly identified leaders in the Xhosa culture are diviners, the older members of the family, and the medicine man during circumcision (Nyamende, 1990). This establishes that leadership concepts are considered to be part of the roles of various characters within the Xhosa kingdom. The idea of a leader is not of one who theorises, or is a mere titular head in a position of power, but of practice, service, and responsibility. There are a number of accounts in amaXhosa history and folklore that show how someone born a 'commoner' rises to leadership or chieftainship, 'picking it up' or usurping leadership (*ayichole*). For example, Xosa left home, established his chieftainship, and left the older brother, Tshaka, to inherit rulership from Ntombela, their father (Peires, 1976; Soga, 1917; Soga, 1932). Xosa then had two sons, Cirha and his younger brother, Tshawe. Varying accounts show Tshawe defeating Cirha, the rightful heir, and taking over the chieftainship (Peires, 1976; Soga, 1932). The position of authority, although hereditary, is still a contested terrain that might allow unlikely incumbents to rise to leadership.

J. H. Soga (1932) traces the earliest reigning chief, Chief Xosa, from 1535. For this chapter, it is sufficient to understand that there are various groupings within the Xhosa-speaking tribes, including those who were assimilated and engrafted through various processes. Hence Peires (1976, p. 49) claims: 'The limits of Xhosadom were not geographical or ethnical, but political'. The deliberate incorporation of other groups into the Xhosa tribe built a nation of diverse people who were then politically referred to as amaXhosa, not necessarily because they were born into the tribe, but possibly also through assimilation and adopting the language. Some accounts state that the chief gave instructions not to ask anyone where they come from, so they never had to miss home, but were easily incorporated into the Xhosa nation. Therefore, the tribe is national in character with deliberate accommodation and pursuit of diversity and nationhood among people of different origins. This unity is built by encouraging individual accountability and social responsibility among both community members and leaders.

Individual accountability and social responsibility as a leader

In the Xhosa context, a leader is primarily regarded as such based on lineage and societal roles. Nyamende (1990, p. 1) argues: 'The concept of a true leader among the Xhosa is someone who has proven his worth on the battlefield or by some other distinguishing features'. Nelson Mandela also stated, 'Heroes like the Khoi leader, Autshumayo, Maqoma of the Rharhabe, Bambatha, Cetywayo of the Zulu, Mampuru of the Pedis, Tshivase of the Vendas and a host of others, were in the forefront of the wars of resistance and we speak of them with respect and admiration' (cited in Mzileni, 2019, p. 85). Nyamende (1990, p. 1) further affirms that the 'evidence of this view abounds in Xhosa oral literature, such as folktales and praise poetry'. Where chiefs do not act in a praiseworthy manner or reflect much divinity, scathing criticism could be directed towards them. In that regard, Melikaya Mbutuma's hyperbole and criticism of the Paramount Chief Dalindyebo – that the 'chief does not drink European liquor, he swims in it' – depicts a chief who was less than superior and 'demonstrated stunted personality and lack of purpose' (Mbutuma, cited in Nyamende, 1990, p. 3). The chiefs are open to criticism with impunity by the *imbongi* (a praise singer) even though they can also enjoy favourable commentary or prophecy from these literary virtuosos (Opland, 1983, cited in Nyamende, 1990, p. 4). This makes two types of *iimbongi*: flatterers and agitators, the latter being those who drive the individual accountability and social responsibility of a leader through verbal chastisement. Thus, leaders receive praise only when they deserve it.

Tisani (1999), in her study of the amaXhosa, notes that royalty can be referred to as *umntwana* (a child), which is a reminder of the limits and boundaries

that are placed on their highnesses. The inference is that, despite their position, chiefs or leaders remain part of a family that needs to be guided and protected, and '[t]he [Xhosa] ruler cannot exercise his/her rule except in conjunction with his/her people' (Tisani, 1999, p. 8). The Xhosa kingdom is confederal, enabling 'sharing of power between members of the royal house. Further sharing occurred between the royal house – *abantwana* – and the rest of the population' (Tisani, 1999, p. 9).

Mtimka (2021, paras 3, 5) brings the Xhosa adage *isizwe sifa ngomnt'onye* to life, stating that it means that 'a nation may perish on account of one person', because 'a person who values sacrifice for the greater good knows not to make any choice that may plunge an entire family, village, town, or nation into a crisis, even if it maximises their private gain'. Individual appetites like greed are always cautioned against and youth are warned against it in bedtime stories (Mnqwazi, 2019). When one person rises into leadership through chieftainship, the exercise of power and authority needs to be under the constant check of the people, so that the clan, tribe, or polity are always steered in a desirable direction.

Power and authority

Soga (1932) and Peires (1976) agree that the political leadership of chiefs and councillors is renewed in each generation. A prince could have up to forty companions during his initiation rite to manhood, *ulwaluko*. The first companion to be circumcised became *isandla senkosi* (hand of the chief), the chief administrator. Others would be his administrative bureaucracy, as well as advisers. One or two of the chief's father's councillors would be included in the son's council for continuity (Peires, 1976). According to Soga (1932), a young heir to a chieftainship would be protected by his father's councillors should the father die or be incapacitated. Community leaders would be people who have walked with their peers and been observed by their community, so the people whom they subsequently lead will know them. This develops mutual accountability between the chief and council members. It also protects a new chief from family members who may seek to ingratiate themselves to obtain access to power or benefits.

The training and mentorship of a chief start from the age of 10 to 12, and is carried out by the grandparents or their generation (Peires, 1976). Leadership awareness, therefore, is taught. Everyone from councillors, mentors, and administrators has a role to play in making the chieftaincy a success, which then makes leadership a multi-generational community affair that requires harmony across the community. amaXhosa leadership practice is relational, and is inculcated from a young age and in a community. This relationality is an important part of the transformative leadership discourse.

The key developments in the lives of young Xhosa boys, and, by extension, leaders, are as follows:

- Since Xhosa chiefs rule with their age-mates, it is easy for them to be called to order or addressed on their predilections, biases, and blind spots.
- The leadership–council relationship is peer to peer, which encourages the spirit of criticism, openness, and individual judgement, as opposed to the alternative of neophyte to elder, which can lead to complete obedience and the domination of the youth (Peires, 1976).
- The leadership discourse is multi-generational, and there is continuity through support and counsel from the older generation.

The disadvantage of age-mate councils is that they do not readily dissolve after the death of the chief and before the heir takes over. This can cause succession conflicts to fester (Peires, 1976). Other forms of leadership conflict may also include sons who are not next in line having to move away from the homestead to give space to the reigning father. In this regard, Peires (1976, p. 54) recounts:

> The tension of the intra-generational conflict was relieved to a considerable measure by the dispersion of young chiefs and their followers to territories of their own. This enabled each chief to build up a chiefdom commensurate with his abilities without treading on another's toes.

A leader's reputation and authority are acquired through a lifetime of being around the council that eventually rules with him. The council discusses and rules on a matter, and the spokesperson announces the decision as if it is from the chief's own thinking and mouth. The preface of the decision or announcement is always *Ithi inkosi*…(The chief says…). The court is not legislative in that the laws remain engraved in the life and experiences of the people, who then pass them from generation to generation.

Arbitration and justice are a fundamental function of amaXhosa leadership, and the issues may include personal, domestic, or tribal conflicts (Soga, 1932). Councillors come from the most influential families in the tribe. Therefore, when councillors die they are replaced by their sons. Wise men with particular aptitudes may also be appointed to the council. Little change occurs in the council during the lifetime of a chief unless death or incapacity occurs (Soga, 1932). Leadership, therefore, is viewed as a lifelong function that is relatively stable and predictable, so much so that most leadership challenges can be relayed from generation to generation, and are dealt with and not forgotten. A Xhosa chief is a protector of his subjects. He does not usually call for anyone's death, but if he did, the order would be carried out without much opposition, because the chief is sacred to councillors, and his popularity is paramount. Even though that is the case, '[t]he power to rule, and sometimes, the power to put to death vested in one individual, and that a chief, is abhorrent to the Xhosa tribe'

(Soga, 1932, p. 30). Therefore, no man should be so all-powerful that he can give judgement and pronounce death on his own, unless he seeks to lose his social standing and credibility across the polity. Odora Hoppers (2014, p. 28) argues that the kind of leadership that Africa requires is 'non-authoritarian authority', which is characterised by its ability to perform social functions in the same way that pilots fly passengers to another airport or doctors bring people back to good health. Perhaps the reason that leaders are not estranged from their followers is that there are family-like bonds between the leaders and the people as opposed to them being cold or emotionless figures.

Soga (1932) described King Ngqika (1778–1829) as the father of the nation, and the Great Place as the home of all Xhosa people. Nyamende (2010, p. 22) alludes to this by drawing from *Ityala Lamawele*, a foundational Xhosa novel by Mqhayi, (1914) about a court case of twins contesting seniority, and how the counsellors told the complainants, '*Akukho sifuna ukumona kwaba bantwana; ngabethu, siyabazala*' (We do not wish to sin against any of these children; they are ours, we have given birth to them). Therefore, according to Mqhayi, Xhosa courts are not just sites of punishment, but also 'a place of love and protection like a home'. He goes on to say, 'African thought goes further than that and sees law and justice as the Creator's tool for maintaining peace. The chief is seen as the user of this tool; and when it is used wrongly it turns against him' (Mqhayi, 1938, cited in Nyamende, 2010, p. 23).

The chief is above the law by virtue of his being its custodian, but he dares not break it for fear of bringing chaos to the land. Therefore, the chief's judgement is the product of extensive engagement with and clarification from the councillors. The solution then becomes 'the word of the chief' and a display of 'non-authoritarian authority'. If a leader does not understand that decision-making process, they risk being regarded as autocratic. They might lose general respect from their council, which could negatively affect social justice and harmony within the polity.

Social justice and harmony

Social justice and democracy are hallmarks of transformative leadership, whose origins lie in Western management and education theory. The amaXhosa can advance and deepen the scope of these intellectual traditions by offering another perspective drawn from an African social context. Odora Hoppers (2014) contends that the goal of leaders is not to be cleverer but to be more human, a sentiment that Steve Biko (2004, p. 51) also argued in relation to all Africans:

> We reject the power-based society of the Westerner that seems ever concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run,

> the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationships. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

Biko, who died at the hands of Apartheid South African police in 1977, a year before these words were first published, was a Black Consciousness leader born into the Xhosa nation. Biko, an Africana existentialist philosopher (More, 2008), was forward-thinking in his outlook on Africa's contribution to the world, even while living under the oppressive regime of the White minority government. Biko's argument was for a non-racial and egalitarian society where there is no minority or majority, just people (Biko, 2017). This is a good description of what ubuntu as a philosophy seeks to achieve, but for Biko, social change, as also prescribed in transformative leadership literature, was necessary before this harmony could thrive. De Kock and Swartz (Chapter 2, this volume) also argue that social change and agential development are an essential part of transformative leadership, something that Biko exemplified so well. A leader must have ubuntu, which is about the nature of the individual in a leadership role and a concern for the other person. Ubuntu allows for a communal enterprise that favours outcomes for the group above the individual; involves decision-making that is inclusive and circular; enables a wide vision, which allows for the multiplicity of views; and accommodates a diversity of perspectives (Ncube, 2010).

One example of how ubuntu and social harmony worked is in relation to the payment of fines and taxation. The chief frequently benefitted from unpaid services and material goods, especially from goats and cattle for blood fines (*isizi)*, and other forms of taxes in the later years when the population began to be educated in Western ways. In former times, a portion of the harvest would be given to the chief, but this fell into abeyance (Soga, 1932). However, it was important for the chief both to solve problems and to institute punitive measures to deter wrongdoing, or he would not acquire the material resources expected from his followers. While subjects were theoretically served without expecting anything in return, in practice social harmony was enacted when the chief acted to improve social conditions for citizens. This arrangement was particularly useful in preventing lazy leaders, since the material wellbeing of a Xhosa leader was dependent on his maintaining harmony and cooperation with his subjects.

Archie Mafeje on leadership imperatives

The Xhosas have a system of rulership that follows male inheritance. Women can rule as regent when the rightful heir to the throne is still a minor, or when other males in line might not be trusted with the temptations of usurpation.

This regency arrangement is regarded as one of the ways of ensuring that the tribe does not disintegrate into chaos (Soga, 1932). In this sense, women are trusted with leadership positions as safer custodians of chieftainship. It could be said that patriarchy runs to matriarchy for safety and reassurance, even though the relationship is still exploitative. The amaXhosa leadership experience, like many national and tribal histories around the world, remains patriarchal; however, this is partly the case because of how Xhosa histories were written or understood. Magoqwana and Tisani have unearthed some narratives from overlooked female accounts, which makes it possible for concepts like *inimba* (maternal feeling towards children) and the role of *dabawo* (paternal aunt) to be elucidated, albeit in retrospect (Magoqwana, 2018; Tisani, 2021). Thus, it might not be that female leadership roles and contributions are non-existent, but that maternal legacies have been epistemologically excluded. Mndende (2021) has recently provided accounts of the role of women in, for example, *ulwaluko* (initiation school). Moving away from an assumed logic of biology and the restricted narrative, *umakhulu* (a grandmother) should be regarded as a productive member of society – an 'institution of knowledge' that is more than just a conduit of history through folktales (Magoqwana, 2018, p. 76); she is one of the bearers of leadership pedagogy for the next generation of Xhosa leaders. In this regard, the amaXhosa offer a new lens for looking at the contribution of women to the transformative leadership discourse, which could start by reappropriating the maternal legacies and reducing the importance of paternalistic views and attributes in leadership practices.

In Mafeje's (1963) master's thesis, focusing on leadership and change in the rural peasant communities of All-Saints and Gubenxa, a few lessons emerge that advance the understanding of Xhosa people's approaches to leadership. Mafeje (1963, p. 3) defines leadership as 'the capacity to direct other people's activities and receive cooperation, [which] though it involves inequality of statuses, does not necessarily involve compulsion'. He argues that leadership is a process of superordination and subordination where no leader effectively advances his followers' objectives without maintaining internal order and harmony. Initiating activities, arbitration, internal order, and harmony are essential in understanding leadership according to Mafeje (1963), and this view is mirrored by transformative leadership scholar Bukusi (2020). These criteria used to identify leaders emanate from people's aspiration to see themselves advance in life. The communities must see themselves and their future wellbeing in the conduct of the leaders they choose before they elevate them into leadership positions. In this regard, Mafeje (1963, p. 3) argues, 'Men and women, in entrusting their affairs to certain persons, usually look for particular qualities which coincide with their image of a "good leader"'. Leaders must identify with their followers – in other words, they must share interests with them, observe and maintain group norms and values, concern themselves with the solidarity of the group, and rule with consent; responsibility to the group must increase as the power increases (Mafeje, 1963).

Folktales and pedagogy in Xhosa culture teach that some of the fundamental attributes of a good leader include 'will-power, wisdom, cleverness, bravery, ambition, physical strength, and endurance' (Nyamende, 1990, p. 6). These traits are usually expressed through various animals and stories told to children by the older generation, grandmothers in particular. A character who possesses 'these qualities in the correct proportion occupies a position of leadership in many folktales', and an imbalance causes a rather flat character: the hares, the tortoises, and the baboons are always subordinated, whereas a lion is usually viewed as a good, agile, and powerful leader (Nyamende, 1990, p. 6). Therefore, the characteristics of lions in Xhosa folktales teach neophytes how to be leaders, act in a kingly manner, and judge fairly or equitably among subordinates. Nyamende (1990, p. 6) also reflects these attributes by arguing that 'will-power, wisdom, cleverness, bravery, ambition, strength and endurance' are characteristics that will effectively convey early leadership impressions into the heart and minds of young Xhosa people.

Arbitration is an essential element of leadership; therefore, arbitration and initiation of activities should be seen as functions of all leaders. The establishment and maintenance of amicable relationships are a prerequisite for the continuance of social groups and, ultimately, for achieving goals of existing in harmonious communities and environments (Mafeje, 1963). Therefore, leadership is not acquired by studying textbooks. No one sat Nelson Mandela down to read training manuals on the subject. Both the history of the cooperation of Thembu royalty with the colonial government and the rebellion of the Thembu people imbued Mandela's leadership outlook and remained practical examples of what it means to be with or against your subordinates (Mangcu, 2019). Acceptable power is exercised with the approval of followers and is based on their norms and values; whereas unacceptable power or coercion disregards these norms and values, and leads to the loss of reciprocity and cooperation between the leader and their followers. Followers appreciate notable improvements in the quality of life rather than well-meaning leaders who fail to bring about change (Mafeje, 1963), and this is consistent with the notions of the individual and public good of transformative leadership as described by Shields (2010).

No leader symbolises change and transformation in the South African context as clearly as Nelson Mandela, who comes from the abaThembu, one of the Xhosa-speaking tribes. Leadership awareness, like all education, 'cannot and should not be separated from what it means to live as powerful, disciplined, and free individuals, ethical because of our "capacity to spiritualise" the world, to make it either beautiful or ugly' (Freire, 1998, cited in Weiner, 2003, p. 90). Mandela undoubtedly enriched the world by adding a 'spiritual dimension' and a 'more human face' to leadership (Biko, 2004; Odora Hoppers, 2014). Mafeje (1963) also noted that leaders must share group values and aspirations and seek to encourage

the unity of subordinates at all times, sometimes to the detriment of whatever the leader desires.

Gadla Mandela, Nelson Mandela's father, in his articulation of the leadership role, argued that

> The people might wish to have something done for them which was going to be a danger to them and land them in difficulties, but a person who was placed over others as a ruler was given a superior power to be able to guide the people and keep them from going into difficulties. (cited in Mangcu, 2019, p. 1048)

This is probably the most direct teaching on leadership that Mandela had from his father, and one missing from his numerous biographies until Mangcu (2019) highlighted it. Mangcu describes Mandela explaining why he unilaterally decided to initiate negotiations with the repressive Apartheid regime, without the consent of his comrades and the African National Congress. Mandela's explanation reflected his father's outlook on leadership, when he said, 'There are times when a leader must move out ahead of the flock, confident that he is leading his people the right way' (Mandela, cited in Mangcu, 2019, p. 1048). Public disapproval of such a decision can be severe, and there is no better contemporary example of this than Joel Netshitenzhe, Head of Policy and Coordination Services in the South African Presidency until 2009, speaking about the recall and resignation of the then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki:

> Is it not a requirement of leadership that at times a leader may be obliged to take unpopular decisions, sometimes with dire consequences for himself? In the 'Divine Comedy', Dante posed a stark question graphically: What should leaders do when the masses shout: 'Death to our life and life to our death!' Related to this is whether being and remaining a leader should be the be-all and end-all of a leader's objective. Can the very tragedy of loss of personal power and acceptance of such a consequence be in themselves an act of leadership in a non-personal and historical sense (to take a long-term view)? I suppose dealing with current 'history' – a phase in a story that is still in dynamic motion – may result in us drawing conclusions that may prove premature in later phases of the unfolding story. (cited in Khoza, 2011, p. 8)

Moreover, Khoza argues that followers must be compassionate, have empathy, and understand when leaders are navigating through change. This is what Netshitenzhe was referring to in the excerpt: that sometimes the reasons for decisions taken by leaders might elude some of their followers in the 'unfolding story' or 'current history', and that the leader does not have to maintain the position as if it were the ultimate objective of leading. Gadla Mandela, Nelson

Mandela, and Thabo Mbeki viewed the act of deviating from popular or majority opinions as part of the leadership imperative, and offer a demonstration of a 'transformative moment', in the view of Montuori and Donnelly (cited in Bukusi, 2020). Gadla Mandela raises this notion as the 'people's wishes that end in danger'; Nelson Mandela interprets it as 'moving ahead of the flock' but for the right reasons; and Netshitenzhe poetically argues, through Dante, that self-sacrifice becomes a non-personal approach to leadership. In each case, the leader's intention is vindicated, and they are absolved by future success of their unpopular unilateral decisions. Weiner (2003, p. 89) sums this up as the need for oppositional leadership work that 'can provide a productive force for breaking into dominant formations of common-sense or counter-hegemonic ideas, and perhaps, dominant mass views of subordinates'.

Conclusion

A few lessons can be drawn from this chapter and used to construct a more inclusive leadership discourse. Disharmony is caused by leaving people without solutions, a lack of arbitration, and a sense of social injustice. Undeserved power and its questionable use breeds despotic leaders who lack morals, ethics, and societal responsibility towards their followers. The lack of understanding of subordinate values and aspirations is the first level of disqualification for effective leadership. The leader sometimes earns sufficient trust from followers that they can take calculated unilateral decisions about where the group needs to venture next, believing in the correctness of such a decision; otherwise, leadership as a function of leading is pointless. A judge who attends to people's issues might not necessarily conform to their wishes. Likewise, a leader, as a judge, is not preoccupied with conforming to the wishes of their followers, but with resolving issues and leading through change to better conditions. This is leading change and it, therefore, brings the transformative moment. Leaders have a moral responsibility to tell the truth and apportion credit or blame without favour or bias. According to the amaXhosa, leadership is transformative in that it introduces new and better conditions for the subordinates through negotiated use of power, democratically or non-democratically, as long as the objective is to uphold the values and aspirations of the people.

Culture and traditions do not generally support change, and this remains true with the amaXhosa. While some maintain that all leadership should facilitate social change, in some cultures, consistency and harmony are valued more than evolving into something new. On the other hand, the amaXhosa can learn from the transformative leadership discourse and be more critical about knowledge, culture, and traditions, especially those that have normalised the suppression of views and freedoms based on gender and class.

#AmaXhosaLeadershipPractices

The leadership practices of the amaXhosa, a cultural group in South Africa, align well with the principles of transformative leadership. See how here, including an analysis of these leadership practices by Archie Mafeje.

Questions for discussion

1. What words/terms are used to denote leadership in your local language, and what are their literal meanings?
2. The amaXhosa account of leadership in this chapter is primarily patriarchal. The author says this could be due to an absence of accounts about women-led leadership. What are your thoughts on this – is traditional leadership inherently male-led, or is female leadership just not visible in texts and oral traditions? How can this be addressed?
3. In his conclusion, the author argues that not all leadership should be about social change, but that preserving harmony and cultural norms is also an important aspect of leadership. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What are the dangers of preserving tradition?

References

Alimo-Metcalfe, B. & Alban-Metcalfe, J. (2005). Leadership: Time for a new direction? *Leadership*, *1*(1), 51–71.

Biko, S. (2004). *I write what I like.* Johannesburg, South Africa: Picador Africa.

Biko, S. (2017, 12 September). *Steve Biko speaks on the Black Consciousness Movement* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5tMA3bkXmA&t=49s.

Bukusi, A. D. M. (2020). What transformative leaders do: Emerging perspectives in the 21st century. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 12*(4), 85–93.

Chilisa, B. & Tsheko, G. N. (2014). Mixed methods in indigenous research: Building relationships for sustainable intervention outcomes. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 8*(3), 222–233.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research, 36*(4), 273–290.

Khoza, R. J. (2011). *Attuned leadership: African humanity as compass.* Johannesburg, South Africa: Penguin Books.

Mafeje, A. (1963). *Leadership and change: A study of two South African peasant communities*. Master's thesis, University of Cape Town, South Africa. Retrieved from https://open.uct.ac.za/items/b673d1e6-cf42-44ad-b059-7d89b8d3c48e/full

Mafeje, A. (1971). The ideology of tribalism. *The Journal of Modern African Studies, 9*(2), 253–261.

Magoqwana, B. (2018). Repositioning uMakhulu as an institution of knowledge: Beyond 'biologism' towards uMakhulu as the body of indigenous knowledge. In J. Bam, L. Ntsebeza, & A. Zinn (Eds). *Whose history counts: Decolonising African pre-colonial historiography* (pp. 75–89). Stellenbosch, South Africa: African Sun Media.

Mangcu, X. (2019). Mandela: The untold heritage. *Journal of South African Studies, 45*(6), 1033–1050.

Mndende, N. (2021, June 25). *NIHSS catalytic project* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bisRaKyY5ao&t=22482s.

Mnqwazi, O. (2019). A bed-time story. In O. Mnqwazi (Ed.). *Writing the way: Lessons and conversations I wish to have with you* (pp. 57–58). Gqeberha, South Africa: Black Hat.

More, M. P. (2008). Biko: Africana existentialist philosopher. In A. Mnqxitama, A. Alexander, & N. C. Gibson (Eds). *Biko lives! Contesting the legacies of Steve Biko* (pp. 45–68). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mtimka, O. (2021, 26 July). Legacy of sacrifice and courage vital in remembering Mandela. *News24*. Retrieved from https://www.news24.com/news24/opinions/columnists/guestcolumn/ongama-mtimka-legacy-of-sacrifice-and-courage-vital-in-remembering-mandela-20210726.

Mzileni, P. (2019). (Re)imagining Mandela's leadership esiXhoseni. *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies, 2*(2), 72–88.

Ncube, L. B. (2010). Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 4*(3), 77–82.

Nkomo, S. M. (2011). A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of 'African' leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities. *Organization*, *18*(3), 365–386.

Nyamende, A. (1990). The portrayal of chiefs and other leaders in Xhosa praise poetry and folktales. *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies, 1*(1), 1–9.

Nyamende, A. (2010). The concept and application of justice in SEK Mqhayi's 'Ityala Lamawele'. *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde, 47*(2), 19–30.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Peires, J. B. (1976). *A history of the Xhosa c1700–1835*. Master's thesis, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa.
Retrieved from https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/corylibrary/documents/A_history_of_the_Xhosa_c1700-1835.pdf.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(4), 558–589.

Soga, J. H. (1932). *The Ama-Xosa: Life and customs.* Alice, South Africa: Lovedale Press.

Soga, T. B. (1917). *The origin of Xosa*. Butterworth, South Africa: Gazette Office.

Tisani, N. (1999). *Royal by birth, ruler by the will of the people: AmaXhosa royalty revised*. Wits history workshop: Democracy, popular precedents, practice and culture.
Retrieved from https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/a3c57ecf-6c8d-44de-99b0-0efb47384c2a.

Tisani, N. (2021, 25 June). *NIHSS catalytic project* [Video file].
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bisRaKyY5ao&t=22482s

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1993). *Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms*. Woodbridge, United Kingdom: James Currey.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 35*(1), 89–106.

8 *Ubuntu as a resource for transformative leadership in southern Africa*

Norman Chivasa

Overview

Transformative leadership rejects elite dominance in decision-making and politics. It supports people becoming agents regardless of location, socioeconomic or political status, or aptitude; taking responsibility for their wellbeing; and becoming transformative leaders themselves. Ubuntu shares common traits with transformative leadership by embracing social justice, and encouraging leaders who are interconnected with others and avoid negative impacts on other people. Furthermore, consultation and negotiation between individuals and groups at all levels acting in the best interests of others, participatory decision-making, and acting against autocratic censors are some of the elements of ubuntu that resemble transformative leadership. Western-oriented models have influenced approaches to transformative leadership in Africa. A transformative leadership framework, informed by ubuntu, is required to rehumanise all, as it fosters respect for fellow humans, promoting justice and positive relationships; avoiding selfishness, greed, and violence against others; and promoting participatory decision-making.

Introduction

Ubuntu is a broad term for an ethic that stretches across multiple countries, regions, and social/ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa. It is a Bantu cultural value system that emphasises humanness and helps people become better people (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Nzimakwe, 2014). While ubuntu has been applied in education, social work, business, political science, and leadership, among other areas (Nzimakwe, 2014), there is renewed interest in the influence of ubuntu on African political leadership. A leader who is inclusive, participative, and non-violent and embraces the more humanistic principles of solidarity, social justice, and *batho pele* (people first) is said to have ubuntu (Breed & Semenya, 2015). This chapter seeks to understand the extent to which ubuntu leadership resembles transformative leadership in the southern African region. Accordingly, the chapter works from the hypothesis that leaders who embed in their outlook attributes such as respect for social justice, human rights, and democracy, among others, can be said to be transformative as well as having ubuntu in the African context.

Southern Africa was chosen as a case study for two major reasons. First, countries in the region share colonial and post-independence experiences, and second, words similar to ubuntu are used in many regional languages to refer to the same concept, namely that 'a person is a person because of others' (Breed & Semenya, 2015, p. 5). This maxim connotes that the only way to become human is to rehumanise and, in doing so, do away with selfishness, violence, and social injustice. In order to rehumanise, an individual must form a community with other people. By extension, if a person is deceptive, manipulative, and violent, they lack ubuntu and have strayed from becoming a person like other people (Metz & Gaie, 2010).

Ubuntu emerges from specific historic and cultural experience; that is to say, ubuntu is not *a priori* a universal concept of humanism. In the southern African region, ubuntu emerged from cultural experiences that include, but are not limited to, the protracted colonial conflict, failure by political leadership to build on past successes and avoid repeating past mistakes, failure to manage diversity, and electoral violence (Mohiddin, 2007). There are inherent limitations because of these specific historic and cultural experiences. For example, describing transformative leadership in terms of ubuntu might support linguistic or ethnic chauvinism. This is partly due to the labelling and dismissal of anyone who holds views contrary to those of Africa's ruling elite as a 'racist, reactionary sell-out, agent of imperialism, political prostitute, cockroach, traitor, or prophet of doom' (Akindele, Olaopa, & Salaam, 2009, p. 6). Another challenge for ubuntu is that political leaders in Africa who claim to champion ubuntu values often inflict violence and other forms of abuse on the people they lead (Van Wyk, 2007).

Since 2008, xenoracist and afrophobic attacks on foreign nationals have occurred on a regular basis in South Africa (Tirivangasi & Rapanyane, 2021). Xenoracism and afrophobia are the polar opposite of ubuntu. They are motivated by a fear of the other, a fear that turns into hatred, and a desire to destroy the other. These prejudices extinguish the spirit of ubuntu in the southern African community (Breed & Semenya, 2015).

Other evidence of ubuntu's failure is the apparent inability to transfer political power without violence or widespread electoral controversy, which only serves to highlight the continent's poor, and often corrupt, leadership. Elections are rigged, and potential successors are persecuted, forced into exile, or killed. Political dissent is frowned upon in some circles. This is evident in Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Terrorist insurgence in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, which has persisted since 2017, is another example of a challenge to ubuntu (Zvomuya, 2020). As a philosophy of existence, ubuntu (Breed & Semenya, 2015; Valk, 2010) continues to struggle to meet the needs of the diverse population of southern Africa that it intends to serve. Evidence of this comes in the form of unprecedented levels of crime, violence,

unemployment, poverty, xenoracism/afrophobia, and terrorist insurgence (Isilow, 2019; Zvomuya, 2020).

Despite the foregoing problematic aspects associated with ubuntu, academics have invoked ubuntu in an attempt to address Africa's leadership challenges (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Ncube, 2010; Nzimakwe, 2014). This is partly because ubuntu seeks to promote the wellbeing of the collective society and supports societal reform rather than pursuing sectoral interests. It embraces participation, collaboration, and collective efforts, and promotes teamwork (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Ncube, 2010; Nzimakwe, 2014). In similar way, the African Union's adoption of Agenda 2063 (a strategic framework for the socioeconomic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years), as well as its policy application of ubuntu, demonstrates a desire to address Africa's socioeconomic and leadership challenges (Zvomuya, 2020) in this way. The African Union policy framework expresses the point of view that all human beings desire to live in a society where human rights are respected, where social justice is upheld, and equity and human dignity are prioritised (Adjibolosoo, 1999). As such, since ubuntu embodies common humanity and responsibility towards each other, a leader with ubuntu, it is assumed, will exhibit transformative leadership values such as social justice, respect for human rights, and a participatory approach. Against this backdrop, this chapter seeks to understand how ubuntu leadership is closely linked to transformative leadership.

To achieve its aim, this chapter took a qualitative research approach to the descriptive, exploratory, and normative tasks (Osmer, 2008). Through the descriptive task, the researcher was able to explore the extent to which ubuntu leadership bears a family resemblance to transformative leadership. The researcher's normative task determined how ubuntu leadership is closely linked to transformative leadership.

Documentary analysis was used to investigate how ubuntu leadership resembles transformative leadership. A literature search was conducted using databases including EBSCOHost, ProQuest, Elsevier, SAGE, Taylor & Francis, Sabinet, and African Journals Online to identify articles on the concepts of transformative leadership and ubuntu leadership. Four key attributes were used to identify ubuntu leadership and transformative leadership. The first of these was social justice; the second was efforts to demolish structures of inequality and oppression; the third, a people-centred approach that embodies collaboration, consultation, and empowerment; and fourth, ethical leadership. The search yielded 20 articles that could help frame how ubuntu leadership resembles transformative leadership.

The chapter is organised as follows: the second section reviews transformative leadership theory. The third section delves into a conceptual analysis of ubuntu and ubuntu leadership. The fourth section goes into detail about the essential

features of ubuntu leadership, and how they are similar to transformative leadership. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of ubuntu and transformative leadership to present an ubuntu-infused framework for transformative leadership.

Transformative leadership theory

According to Shields and Hesbol (2020, p. 5), transformative leadership theory is a 'broad, diverse, and heterogeneous set of perspectives that share a desire to critique the power relations and identity constructions through which leadership dynamics are frequently reproduced, frequently rationalised, sometimes resisted, and occasionally transformed'. Transformative leadership emphasises inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice. It begins with questions of justice and democracy by critiquing the inequitable status quo and offers the promise of a better life lived in common with others, not just greater individual achievement (Watson & Rivera-McCutchen, 2016). Transformative leadership is characterised by leadership traits such as empowerment and participatory decision-making (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). It assumes that everyone, regardless of their location, socioeconomic or political standing, or ability, has a responsibility to contribute to the creation of a better society (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018).

The origins of transformative leadership and how it evolved are still debatable. One school of thought states that transformative leadership is based on Burns and Bass's transformational leadership theory (Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014; Kuada, 2010). This view defines transformative leadership as a process with a liberative and social justice agenda attempting to address structures that perpetuate inequality in society (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). Another school credits transformative leadership to William Foster, an educator whose beliefs on transformative leadership were closely linked to Paulo Freire's conscientisation theory. This school has defined transformative leadership as a process that aims to conscientise individuals, urging them to produce the change, creativity, and empowerment they wish to see (Bukusi, 2020; Shields, 2010).

Given the above, it is essential to highlight that transformative leadership and transformational leadership form part of a branch of leadership theory associated with directing change and transformation. One of the major identifiable distinctions between transformative leadership and transformational leadership is that the latter is primarily concerned with organisational transformation and renewal. Accordingly, transformational leaders are primarily focused on revitalising institutional culture, leading others in the achievement of organisational goals, and motivating team members to identify with and pursue the collective vision (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). Transformational leaders can be directive, participative, authoritarian, or democratic, but they primarily sell their idea or vision to their subordinates by presenting it in the most passionate and appealing way possible (Hewitt et al., 2014; Montuori & Donnelly,

2018). Ironically, transformational leadership cannot account for unjust social, economic, and political structures, and tends to turn a blind eye to dismantling patterns of domination at institutional level. Transformative leadership, on the other hand, responds to inequality, social injustice, and oppressive structures by devising strategies to dismantle those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom in society (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018).

Following from the reasoning above, it can be argued that transformative leadership is a rejection of elite domination in decision-making and politics. It supports people becoming agents, regardless of their location, socioeconomic or political status, or aptitude, taking responsibility for their own wellbeing and, subsequently, becoming transformative leaders themselves.

Ubuntu defined

Ubuntu is a vision as well as a way of life (Valk, 2010). As a vision of life, ubuntu represents a preferred future characterised by the values of social justice, participatory decision-making, creative collaboration, ethical leadership, collectivism, and reciprocity. As a way of life, ubuntu connects people from past traditions such as collectivism, solidarity, and oneness, and it can be a useful framework for addressing immediate pressing issues such as corruption and sectarianism (Ncube, 2010; Valk, 2010).

In principle, ubuntu rests on the affirmation 'I am because we are', which suggests the idea that one's humanity is affirmed through the affirmation of the humanity of other people. The affirmation resonates well with the Christian biblical saying 'Do to others what you would have them do to you' (Matthew 7:12). By extension, what other people say or do about a specific person matters because a person being a person through other people also means that the perceptions of others are central to one's humanity in ubuntu discourses. The emphasis here is on how a person interacts with other people. As a result, ubuntu is a manifestation of community, fellowship, and pre-existing networks between and among people. The central theme in ubuntu is that one's humanity is determined by how one interacts with other people in society. One way to lose one's humanity is to trick another and treat them like trash. As a result, one can be said to be failing to demonstrate humanity when engaging in anti-social behaviours such as violence or engineering another person's plight.

Ubuntu leadership

Several researchers have identified ubuntu as an African leadership style that contradicts Eurocentric leadership ideologies (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Mangaliso, Mangaliso, Knipes, Jean-Denis, & Ndanga, 2018; Nzimakwe, 2014). According to Ncube (2010), ubuntu can help African people realise

transformative leadership qualities through interdependence, collectivism, and participation. Nell (2017) claims that instead of individualistic and Western-oriented leadership styles, leaders in Africa could use ubuntu to embrace consensus building and collaborative problem-solving leadership approaches. Ubuntu leadership places people at the centre of everything (Nzimakwe, 2014). Rather than pursuing sectoral interests, ubuntu leadership works to enhance the welfare of the collective society and supports societal change (Mangaliso et al., 2018). From this, it is clear that ubuntu leadership is a leadership framework that helps people overcome challenges such as inequality, poverty, and structural violence, regardless of their location, gender, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, or racism.

The primary goal of ubuntu leadership is to guard against the abuse of power by those in leadership positions. It also guards against authoritarian tendencies where some political leaders think they have the prerogative to impose their own individualist agendas on their subjects. It censors the absolutism prevalent in contemporary African leadership in which some leaders personalise political power. Behaviours that are considered to be detrimental to societal development are discouraged through ubuntu leadership (Ncube, 2010).

Further to that, ubuntu leadership reminds us that the decision-making process should be a joint action between leader and followers, and not a one-person race. In other words, actions taken by political leaders should be taken with the consent of their subjects. While ubuntu leadership acknowledges that human beings are susceptible to making errors, it recognises that 'a leader is a leader through their people' and that leadership is only legitimate when it embraces collectivity, solidarity, humanness, and reciprocity between the ruler and the ruled (Breed & Semenya, 2015). Accordingly, consultation and negotiation between the ruler and the subjects is key to achieving true leadership in Africa.

Does ubuntu leadership bear a family resemblance to transformative leadership?

Ubuntu has been applied in education, politics (the African Renaissance), and business (through collective learning, teamwork, sustainability, a local community focus, and an alternative to extractive capitalism). It has also been applied in corporate governance (via fairness, collectiveness, and humility) and restorative justice (using dialogue, collective restitution, and healing). Through the ubuntu ethos of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing, it has also been applied in conflict resolution and reconciliation (Nzimakwe, 2014).

Transformative leadership is concerned with social justice

Social justice involves issues of marginalisation, power, and privilege (Bukusi, 2020). The four interconnected principles of social justice are equity, access, participation, and rights. Justice is a universal concept found in all cultures and traditions (Valk, 2010) and transformative leadership is concerned with issues of justice, democracy, and inequity, as well as rebuilding communities (Bukusi, 2020). These attributes of justice are similar to ubuntu. In southern Africa, justice is viewed as doing what is right and moral in society (Letseka, 2014) and the concept connotes the idea that people must consider themselves to be joined or connected to others. This is accomplished through sharing, networking, and developing relationships with others. In general, actions are only judged to be right if they do not intentionally cause difficulties for other people in a communal relationship. What is unjust is perpetuating another person's suffering (Metz & Gaie, 2010). Accordingly, transformative leadership is linked to the southern African justice framework in that transformative leadership seeks to recreate new structures and reciprocal and trusting relationships, interactions, and systems (Mills, Simmons, & Helms Mills, 2005). For that reason, transformative leaders are needed in 21st-century Africa to help overcome socioeconomic and political upheavals by promoting equity, access to resources, and participation in decision-making processes.

Transformative leadership addresses unequal and oppressive structures

An oppressive structure consists of an organisation that imposes hierarchical relationships on its employees, uses bureaucratic communication channels, and follows draconian procedures for achieving the organisation's collective and individual goals. Transformative leadership believes that unequal power relations within the system cause conflict. It aims to confront and transform oppressive power structures in order to advance participatory principles (Mills, et al., 2005).

Furthermore, by challenging leaders' inappropriate use of power, transformative leadership seeks to address fundamental structural inequities that cause pain and disenfranchisement in society. It aspires to build a socially just, egalitarian, and democratic society (Hewitt et al., 2014). According to Ncube (2010), transformative leadership is a leadership style that has the potential to address Africa's leadership crisis, which is characterised by corruption, a failure to confront poverty and inequality, and the erosion of ethical norms. She believes that ubuntu leadership can feed into transformative leadership and help to defuse tensions and hostilities on the African continent (Ncube, 2010).

Apart from that, transformative leadership promotes equitable and inclusive societies and challenges dominant organisational structures by critically examining policies, programmes, and practices in order to completely reconfigure systems in society, allowing for equal access and inclusion, ultimately leading to a more just society. To achieve social justice, leaders must rehumanise through an ubuntu framework which embraces compassion, reciprocity, dignity, collectivism, love, and inclusivity (Mayaka & Truell, 2021).

Transformative leadership is ethical

One of transformative leadership's characteristics is that it promotes ethical values. Ethics is concerned with values such as reciprocity, peaceful relations, human dignity, tolerance, and mutual respect, among others (Ujomudike, 2016). Respect for the dignity of human life is one way to achieve a morally virtuous society. Human life, according to African culture, is a sacred gift that should be protected, nurtured, and cared for. Ubuntu embraces respect for human life. It treats human life as sacred regardless of status or ethnicity. Respect for human life promotes unity, solidarity, and stewardship of life. On this basis, African culture forbids murder, greed, and selfishness (Nzimakwe, 2014).

From an ethical point of view, ubuntu leadership is closely linked to transformative leadership in that ubuntu embraces a sense of duty to one's fellow humans, which emphasises humanity's oneness and interdependence, as well as the importance of preserving social solidarity at all times. Murithi (2006, p. 14) defines social solidarity as 'recognizing and treating each other as human beings, as well as a shared concern for each other's common welfare and well-being'. As a result, a reverence for human life is an appropriate starting point for a morally virtuous society. Ethical leadership assists in the development of positive relationships that ensure the security, safety, and wellbeing of others (Ncube, 2010).

Transformative leadership is democratic

The goal of transformative leadership is to make the world a more democratic place. Individuals and groups contribute to a democratic society by reaching agreements in their daily activities in homes, villages, and communities. Transformative leadership embraces teamwork. It allows members of the group to share information freely and openly discuss issues affecting their wellbeing. Everyone is given a seat at the table, and the discussion can be relatively unstructured (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). Transformative leadership facilitates conversations, encourages people to share their ideas, and then synthesises all available and relevant information in order to change situations that need to change. The benefits of democratic leadership are that decision-making processes are more likely to be owned by all stakeholders, it aids implementation, and it encourages others to accept decisions and changes (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018).

To build a democratic society, ubuntu reminds us that decision-making should be a collaborative effort rather than a one-person show. The Shona adage *'Kukanya hurangana'* (consensus is essential when sharing a meal) emphasises the importance of acting in the best interests of others. In terms of participation, actions taken at any level of society, including the family, village, and government, should be carried out with the consent of others in order to develop a truly democratic society. This chapter contends that consultation and negotiation between individuals and groups at all levels of society are critical for achieving a democratic society. As a result, participation is essential, because some people believe they have the right to impose their individualist agendas on others. To prevent this situation, ubuntu limits the absolute monarchy that exists in some households, villages, and communities, while also encouraging individual and communal engagement (Kanu, 2014).

A synthesis of the family resemblance between ubuntu and transformative leadership

Ubuntu is timeless in the sense that it has been used by previous generations and will be used by future generations (Mayaka & Truell, 2021). It is a value system based on democratic values, transformation, and liberation, all of which are critical components of transformative leadership. As a result, transformative leadership is intertwined with ubuntu, as African leaders are expected to rehumanise by respecting fellow humans; promoting justice and positive relationships; avoiding selfishness, greed, and violence against others; and promoting participatory decision-making. These leadership ideals stem from African traditions that, long before colonialism, embraced participatory approaches to governance and decision-making. Traditional chiefs in Zimbabwe and South Africa, for example, used to collaborate with a council of elders who represented people at the grassroots to promote participatory decision-making, inclusivity, and social justice in society (Ujomudike, 2016).

Another key aspect is that ubuntu is a people-centred philosophy in the sense that it follows an indaba style of open discussion among a group of people working toward a common goal (Letseka, 2014). It emphasises responsible and ethical leadership that puts people first. The ubuntu adage 'A person is a person because of others' suggests that society has a responsibility to help people realise their potential. The adage further conveys the idea that a leader is connected to others and that these connections should be treasured. The ubuntu value system instils in leaders the need to recognise their common humanity, which is to say that we are all (leader and subjects) one family. Within the transformative leadership framework, ubuntu can be used as a tool to combat intolerance, dehumanisation, exploitation, and authoritarianism by southern African political leaders (Ujomudike, 2016).

In addition, African social justice is concerned with the repairing of broken relationships and the attainment of equilibrium. It contributes to the restoration of law and order as well as addressing unequal oppressive structures, which is a critical component of transformative leadership. Ubuntu seeks to meet the needs of the community through an African justice that is victim-centred. After conflict, crime, or violence, the African justice system embraces restorative justice in which the restoration of victim, offender, and community relationships is central. In an African justice system, offenders must answer to both the victim and the community. Such a scenario helps to restore balance through reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing, which are central to ubuntu (Elechi, Morris, & Schauer, 2010).

One of the central ideas of transformative leadership is to guide people toward a better world, one that is greater than their current difficulties. Leadership that thinks ahead is transformative. It immerses people in the future, taking them on a journey beyond their current existential problems. Planning for the future entails concentrating on what is feasible, probable, and preferred for tomorrow. As we consider how to get to our ideal future, the issue of individuals and groups taking responsibility for their own wellbeing arises. The process of constructing a desired future requires everyone, regardless of socioeconomic, political, or gender position, to participate in planning and devising solutions in order to work creatively together toward a future world of social justice, democracy, collectivism, humanity, and solidarity. Transformative leadership's strength is that it is action-oriented, with a focus on creating a better future, rather than forecasting it.

Because transformative leadership begins with a critical examination of the status quo in order to eliminate structural injustice, it aids us in comprehending the society we do not want to live in by plunging us into the future world we desire. Regardless of obstacles, being future-oriented forces us to question and identify our existing limitations, as well as imagine how these limitations may be transcended. Both ubuntu and transformative leadership help us to think outside the box by opening our minds to new possibilities. What is even more invigorating about transformative leadership and ubuntu is that both engage people from all walks of life and from all corners of the globe (Nzimakwe, 2014). Both are participatory in the sense that they resist top-down approaches and strive to engage everyone.

Transformative leadership emphasises the importance of a worldview. Ubuntu, as a worldview and moral system, propels Africans into a more humanitarian future, one that accepts collectivism as its foundation, and a future free of xenophobia, regionalism, and all forms of violence. People's perceptions of the

world have an impact on their future. Worldviews are important because they provide a picture of how things should be, regardless of the current state of affairs. It is important to note, as with ubuntu, that some worldviews are life-enhancing, while others are life-threatening (while it could be disputed, this proposition is a subject for another discussion). Ubuntu is life-enhancing in that it affirms that no single person is more sacred than others, regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation – everyone is equal in terms of dignity and worth (Ncube, 2010).

Conclusion: The way forward

This chapter has shown that ubuntu leadership bears a family resemblance to transformative leadership. The chapter argues that in order to act to transform structures that sustain autocracy, sectarianism, and regionalism in some parts of southern Africa, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, there is a need to embrace the values of social justice and democracy, dismantle oppressive structures, and follow ethical and people-centred approaches. Citizens in these southern African societies should work as a collective to make a break with structures that dehumanise people through divisions and sectarianism, and begin to re-imagine an African society with ubuntu.

The following elements may serve as building blocks for a transformed society. First, we should accept the reality that transformation is an unfinished task that requires continual efforts from all levels of society so as to inculcate the values of social justice and participation at all levels. Second, approaches to transformative leadership in Africa have been predominantly informed by Western-oriented models. There is a need for a shift from these Western-oriented frameworks to those informed by ubuntu – an African philosophy of existence. Finally, in the course of re-imagining ubuntu, we should reconstruct an ethos that focuses on the dignity of humanity by embracing a people-first principle, rather than focusing on material things. Throughout human history, people in some African societies have suffered due to sectarianism through inhuman policies such as colonialism and Apartheid. Therefore, there is a need to embrace a transformative leadership approach that fosters collective efforts, non-violence, and a shared vision, as contemporary African societies are crying out for a better future that is free from xenoracist and afrophobic attacks on foreign nationals.

#UbuntuAsLeadershipResource

The philosophy of ubuntu emphasises the collective over the individual, social justice, and interconnectedness. Unfortunately, people often pay lip service to ubuntu while oppressing and dominating others.

Questions for discussion

1. Which terms and phrases in your language and culture are closely associated with ubuntu and transformative leadership?
2. Is ubuntu still relevant in a globalised African society?
3. How best can leadership practices be decolonised in African societies?

References

Adjibolosoo, S. (1999). *Rethinking developing theory and policy: A human factor critique*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Akindele, S. T., Olaopa, O. R., & Salaam, N. F. (2009). Political intolerance as a clog in the wheel of democratic governance: The way forward. *African Journal of Political Science*, *4*(7), 1–13.

Asamoah, K. & Yeboah-Assiamah, E. (2019). 'Ubuntu philosophy' for public leadership and governance praxis: Revisiting the ethos of Africa's collectivism. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, *10*(4), 307–321.

Breed, G. & Semenya, K. (2015). *Ubuntu*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*, a way to reconciliation in South Africa? *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *71*(2). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i2.2979.

Bukusi, A. D. M. (2020). What transformative leaders do: Emerging perspective in the 21st century. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *12*(4), 85–93.

Elechi, O. O., Morris, S. V. C., & Schauer, E. J. (2010). Restoring justice (ubuntu): An African perspective. *International Criminal Justice Review*, *20*(1), 73–85.

Hewitt, K. K., Davis, A. W., & Lashley, C. (2014). Transformational and transformative leadership in a research-informed leadership preparation program. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 9*(3), 225–253.

Isilow, H. (2019, 30 December). Africa faces major challenges in 2020. *Anadolu Agency*. Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/africa-faces-major-challenges-in-2020/1687364

Kanu, I. A. (2014). Kenneth Kaunda and the quest for an African humanist philosophy. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, *3*(8), 375–377.

Kuada, J. (2010). Culture and leadership in Africa: A conceptual model and research agenda. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, *1*(1), 9–24.

Letseka, M. (2014). Ubuntu and justice as fairness. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(9), 544–551.

Mangaliso, M. P., Mangaliso, N. A., Knipes, B. J., Jean-Denis, H., & Ndanga, L. Z. B. (2018). Invoking ubuntu philosophy as a source of harmonious organizational management. *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings, 2018*(1), 1–25.

Mayaka, B. & Truell, R. (2021). Ubuntu and its potential impact on the international social work profession. *International Social Work*, *64*(5), 649–662.

Metz, T. & Gaie, J. B. R. (2010). The African ethic of *ubuntu*/*botho*: Implications for research on morality. *Journal of Moral Education*, *39*(3), 273–290.

Mills, A. J., Simmons, T., & Helms Mills, J. (2005). *Reading organization theory: Critical approaches to the study of behavior and structure in organizations* (3rd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Garamond Press.

Mohiddin, A. (2007). African leadership: The succeeding generation's challenges and opportunities. *Conflict Trends*, *2007*(2), 27–33.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Murithi, T. (2006). African approaches to building peace and social solidarity. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *6*(2), 9–34.

Ncube, L. B. (2010). Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 4*(3), 77–82.

Nell, I. A. (2017). Ubuntu and leadership? Some practical theological perspectives. *Scriptura, 116*(1), 1–9.

Nzimakwe, T. I. (2014). Practising ubuntu and leadership for good governance: The South African and continental dialogue. *African Journal of Public Affairs, 7*(4), 30–41.

Osmer, R. (2008). *Practical theology: An introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(4), 558–598.

Shields, C. M. & Hesbol, K. A. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity, and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(1), 3–22.

Tirivangasi, H. M. & Rapanyane, M. B. (2021). Reflections on renewed xenophobic attacks in South Africa: A continued violation of the Bill of Rights enshrined in the 1996 Constitution. *African Renaissance*, *18*(2), 57–79.

Ujomudike, P. O. (2016). Ubuntu ethics. In H. ten Have (Ed.). *Encyclopaedia of global bioethics* (pp. 2869–2881). Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Valk, J. (2010). Leadership for transformation: The impact of a Christian worldview. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 4*(3), 83–86.

Van Wyk, J. (2007). Political leaders in Africa: Presidents, patrons or profiteers? *The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes*, *2*(1), 1–38.

Watson, T. N. & Rivera-McCutchen, R. L. (2016). #BlackLivesMatter: A call for transformative leadership. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *19*(2), 3–11.

Zvomuya, W. (2020). Ubuntuism as an international turning point for social work profession: New lenses from the African pot of knowledge. *African Journal of Social Work*, *10*(1), 20–28.

PART 3

LEADERSHIP AND GENDER / FEMINISM

9 *Women and leadership in African contexts: A review*

Relebohile Moletsane

Overview

This chapter aims to deepen the understanding of women's leadership from the perspectives of African women scholars and activists. Barriers to women's leadership are examined and transformative leadership and its links to women's leadership values and practices are considered. Traditionally, leadership tends to be associated with masculine traits, and it is often linked to strong beliefs about the role and position of women in society. There is a schism between the roles and traits associated with women and those associated with leadership, which inhibits women's enactment of leadership. The literature calls for a critical approach to understanding leadership as a concept and practice that considers women's leadership in African contexts. Researchers also identify the design and implementation of context-relevant interventions that target gender inequality in institutional culture and society, build women's skills and confidence, and support and empower them to enact leadership that responds to local challenges.

Introduction

In their 2019 paper 'Problematising women's leadership in the African context', Poltera and Schreiner (p. 10) argue that the 'term "women's leadership" is ambiguous and contested'. To illustrate their point, they raise several questions:

> Does [women's leadership] refer to particular women or groups of women?…Leadership by women (formal or informal) that advances women's rights?…Exercise of power by women organised as a collective? Leadership as individual achievement?…leadership at the behest of a political party or part of a collective? Leadership styles and/or traits shaped by values and qualities that we tend to associate more with women than men? If so, what are those values and qualities and are they really more attributable to women than to men? Are women more likely to lead in a certain way than men? Is women's leadership synonymous with 'feminist leadership'?
> (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019, p. 10)

Poltera and Schreiner (2019) go on to suggest that the lack of conceptual clarity extends to 'African contexts'. Taking this as a departure point, this chapter begins by examining what the understandings of women and leadership in African

contexts are. This is followed by an exploration of transformative leadership and its place in African women's leadership practices. Informed by the understanding that transformative leadership is key to addressing the unequal norms that often prevent women from accessing and enacting leadership, the chapter seeks to examine best practices in relation to interventions that address sociocultural and other barriers to women's leadership in organisations and diverse African communities. To do this, the chapter uses three organising questions:

1. What is transformative leadership? How is it influenced (or not) by gender?
2. What are the barriers to transformative leadership for women in various African contexts?
3. What interventions might enhance women's transformative leadership in diverse African contexts?

Women and leadership in Africa: Engaging with the concept(s)

In a 2009 article, Nkomo and Ngambi (p. 49) write, 'While the empirical literature on leadership and management in Africa is sparse, the literature on African women in leadership is even sparser'. Not much has changed since then. Much of the research on leadership is done in Western contexts (Amayah & Haque, 2017), and as Poltera (2019, p. 3) argues, mainstream leadership theory is 'overwhelmingly informed by the experiences of relatively privileged, white men in western countries'. In addition to, and perhaps as a symptom of, these gaps in and limitations of leadership research and mainstream leadership theory, Poltera (2019) and Poltera and Schreiner (2019) suggest that the lack of conceptual clarity about women's leadership and African contexts hinders efforts to understand and nurture women's access to decision-making positions in various spheres. To advance scholarship, activism, and praxis in this area, they argue, these concepts, the relationships between them, and how they can be used need to be more clearly defined. These gaps and limitations in research and theory offer a unique research opportunity that would contribute to scholarship, activism, and the development and support of women leaders in African contexts.

Women and leadership

Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011, p. 476) observe that '[h]ow people become leaders and how they take up the leader role are fundamentally questions about identity'. According to them, people claim and are granted leader identities in social interactions that are shaped by 'culturally available ideologies about what it means to be a leader' (Ely et al., 2011, p. 476), and what it means to be male or female. Because gender is a significant social identity, it is often at the centre of the relational and social process of leader identity construction (Moorosi, 2020). 'In most cultures, the meaning [of leader or leadership] is masculine,

making the prototypical leader a quintessentially masculine man: decisive, assertive, and independent' (Ely et al., 2011, pp. 476–477). From this perspective, women embody more communal traits (friendly, helpful, nurturing, selfless) not traditionally associated with leadership (see also Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). This 'perceived mismatch' (Amayah & Haque, 2017, p. 103) between the female gender role and the leader role, a result of pervasive gender stereotyping, disadvantages women, who are less likely to be perceived as leaders or associated with leadership, and can lead to backlash against women leaders. For these reasons, 'as a group that is not traditionally associated with leadership, it is even more important to understand the ways in which women construct their leadership identities' (Moorosi, 2020, p. 2).

Importantly, in addition to the individual and social aspects of leadership identities, experiences, and behaviours, reflecting as they do the gendered power relations of the society of which they form part, 'organisational environments are themselves gendered' (Hopkins, O'Neil, Passarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008, p. 350). Designed by and for men, organisations and systems tend to offer more barriers to leadership opportunities and success for women, and few facilitators. In addition to revealing the perceived dissonance between what and who a leader is and what a woman is (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019), studying women's experiences and enactments of leadership draws attention to the problematic gendered norms and power dynamics that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities and undermine women's leadership at the individual, sociocultural, and structural level. Understanding these dynamics can facilitate the development and implementation of strategies for developing and nurturing women's leadership.

In an interesting critique of mainstream understandings of women's leadership, Poltera (2019, p. 4) takes exception to what she refers to as 'a normative assumption' that women's leadership 'should advance women's rights and seek to redress inequalities, empower women and improve equity'. This assumption, she contends, places undue responsibility on the shoulders of women leaders to effect transformational change to advance women's rights and address gender inequity, this in contexts where they are already buckling under the burden of society's personal, social, and professional expectations and biases. To be successful, programmes that target women for leadership must balance these expectations against the necessity of putting them in leadership positions and challenge or reduce their impact on individuals and groups.

In some African contexts (South Africa as a fairly new postcolonial country is one such context), race plays a significant role in whether and how women might aspire to or take up leadership positions and how they might enact such leadership. While they only briefly mention race as a factor in women's leadership identities, experiences, and behaviours, Hopkins et al. (2008, p. 350) acknowledge that '[f]or women of colour, opportunities to advance in the ranks of organisational leadership are even more difficult than for White women'.

Indeed, as discussed above, much of the existing research on women's leadership has focused on the leadership identities, experiences, and behaviours of White women and, more often than not, White women in the Global North. Linked to this, the dearth of research on women's leadership in the Global South, particularly in African contexts, limits the usefulness of mainstream leadership theory in these settings. Studies on how women experience or enact leadership in the Global South are critical to developing a better understanding of the structural and cultural barriers women leaders or aspiring women leaders face in their efforts to develop and better support women's leadership in these settings (Amayah & Haque, 2017).

Women in leadership in African contexts

Given the problematics of the notion of 'women's leadership in African contexts' discussed above, it is necessary to look towards a useable and useful definition that will allow for the continued study of this area of scholarship, activism, and praxis. As guest editor of a themed issue of *Agenda* (a South African feminist journal) spotlighting women's leadership in African contexts, Poltera (2019, pp. 3–4) offers a descriptive definition as a starting point: 'At its most basic, "women's leadership in African contexts" is an umbrella concept that denotes individual and collective leadership typically enacted by African women in African countries'. Importantly, this definition must be used not only to respond to the complex contexts and power dynamics in which women lead (formally or otherwise), but also to distinguish this definition from normative assumptions about ethical, useful, and transformative leadership. By implication, work on women's leadership in the African context cannot treat women or Africa as homogenous, and ideally needs to distinguish effective, ethical leadership from 'women's leadership' (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019, p. 15). Such leadership is contextually bound, and its enactment is influenced by several intersecting factors and norms, including 'racial, socio-cultural, ethnic, political, and historical norms' (Poltera, 2019, p. 4). These factors and norms inform power relations that govern whether and how women become leaders and how they enact their leadership. Thus, understanding women's leadership in African contexts requires a critical, intersectional approach. According to Poltera (2019, p. 4), while intersectionality is itself subject to critique, this framework offers a lens for analysing 'how race, gender, class, culture, sexuality and other social identities can enable or constrain leadership practice' in particular contexts on the African continent.

Among the leadership challenges affecting many African countries are those associated with the legacy of colonialism, poverty, political unrest and violence, relative socioeconomic instability, cultural diversity, HIV and AIDS, and inequality. Significantly, however, beyond the widespread essentialist and

homogenising views of Africa, African countries are in many ways vastly different from the Western countries in which much of mainstream leadership theory is developed and used (Poltera, 2019). Linked to this, despite studies that tend to view African women as a monolithic group, leadership practice is (arguably) shaped by the contexts in which women enact leadership. Women in different contexts will experience different barriers to and opportunities for leadership (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019). Understanding African women as monolithic leads to 'gender essentialism in characterising how women lead vis-à-vis their gender. [This places] undue primacy on quotas which can amount to tokenism, and overlooking the role that men play in promoting women's rights and women's leadership (whether directly or indirectly)' (Poltera, 2019, p. 4). These findings have implications for understanding women's leadership and the interventions that might work to support those who are or aspire to be leaders. Such work must seek to rigorously 'analyse how systems, structures and social relations of class exploitation, patriarchy, national and racial oppression, influence the leadership practice of women' (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019, p. 10).

So what progress has been made in women's leadership in various African contexts? Pikremenou and Mahajan (2019) profile findings from a 2018 Make Every Woman Count report on progress made in meeting the goals of the African Women's Decade in 55 countries in relation to political representation, the judiciary, and the business sector. The report highlights progress in terms of gender quotas in various parliaments and the challenges women face in political participation. Pikremenou and Mahajan (2019) identify implications for women's activism and for policy-makers and academic institutions to understand the challenges women face in accessing and participating in decision-making and leadership in various political and social spaces. Pointing to the need for women's understandings of and participation in transformational leadership in African contexts (discussed below), Pikremenou and Mahajan (2019, p. 85) assert that 'an objective of our research is to highlight positive consequences of women's greater participation and inclusion around negotiating tables and its positive impact on gender equality, peace-building and socio-economic development'.

Notwithstanding the progress made in increasing women's numbers in political positions in various countries, several articles focused on the continuing negative influence of patriarchy on women's progress both in parliamentary positions and in other spheres of society. For example, when examining women's roles in decision-making positions in predominantly male-dominated industries, Mwagiru (2019) identifies challenges and facilitators of meaningful participation in corporate and higher educational institutions in Kenya and South Africa. She concludes that while there are increasing numbers of women in leadership positions in these spaces, 'this trend does not translate into women's increased influence or power in organisations…[or] meaningful inclusivity and

participation in decision-making processes' (Mwagiru, 2019, p. 126). Nefdt's (2019) findings from a study with women in the petroleum industry underline the significance of race and gender equality as barriers to women's ascension to leadership positions in the industry and the coping strategies they use in this male-dominated space, including networking with and drawing support from other women in the workplace. These findings have implications for policies and programmes that address unequal norms and provide a policy framework for instituting and monitoring gender-equal practices in various institutions in both the public and private sector. Without these interventions, women's leadership in various spheres and their ability to significantly change the lives of other women and girls in their institutions and communities will remain constrained. In other words, women's transformational leadership capacities will remain marginal.

Understanding transformative leadership

To understand women's transformative leadership and what works to develop and nurture it in various institutions and communities, a conceptual understanding is necessary (see Swartz, Chapter 1, and De Kock & Swartz, Chapter 2, this volume, for a detailed conceptual analysis). What is transformative leadership? How does gender and context influence it? The transforming leadership framework developed by Burns (1978) is helpful for addressing these questions. For Burns, it is essential to differentiate between transactional and transforming leadership. His research suggests that transactional leaders function within rigid organisational structures such as the military, give directives, and focus on results. In contrast, transforming leaders need to form relationships with those they lead and work with them to motivate and empower them to perform at higher levels, and also to value intrinsic rewards more than extrinsic acknowledgement.

Inspired by Burns' (1978) work, Bass (1985) investigated the underlying psychological mechanisms of transforming leadership and examined how such leadership could be measured. According to Bass (1985), transforming leadership is represented in four dimensions, referred to as 'the four I's': idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Informed by this understanding, scholars have identified some of the characteristics of transforming leadership as '[c]ommon vision, cooperation, communication, ethical and moral values [and] integration in which he/she works towards developing an institutional culture that nurtures these among those they lead' (Unal & Kilinc, 2016, p. 136). In this vein, Tichy and Ulrich (1984, p. 59) refer to a transformational leader as one who can 'help the organisation develop a vision of what it can be, to mobilise the organisation to accept and work toward achieving the new vision, and to institutionalise the changes that must last over time'.

Some decades later, Bass and Riggio (2006) developed a model in which they argue that transformational leaders focus on developing relationships with their followers and aim to inspire positive development by behaving as role models, through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and mentorship. For Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders respond to the specific needs of their followers and motivate them to develop their leadership skills. Furthermore, for Northouse (2013, p. 185), a transformational leader not only seeks to change and transform people but is also 'concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals…[and] includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings'.

More recently, Montuori and Donnelly (2018, p. 2) have posited that 'the world is in the throes of an epochal change, a transformation' and that this 'transformative moment' is calling for everybody to lead and work towards the changes they want to see in their worlds. They argue that this is 'the basic premise of transformative leadership' (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018, p. 1). Montuori and Donnelly (2018) differentiate between transforming, transformational, and transformative leadership. For them, transformative leadership differs from the other two forms in that it is not dependent on a leader–follower relationship. Instead, transformative leadership is a collaborative endeavour to bring about change for all concerned, allowing individuals to capitalise on a transformative moment and 'lead by creating the future in the present' (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018, p. 3).

Women and transformative leadership

While a plethora of writing is available on how transformative leadership is enacted by men, particularly in the Global North, there is very little rigorous research focusing on women and transformative leadership in African contexts. In addition, women's experiences and enactments of transformative leadership have hardly been documented. Some exceptions include Bass and Riggio (2006) and the Mastercard Foundation's (2014) report *Women's Transformative Leadership in Africa*. The report defines transformative leadership as essentially 'making or influencing positive change and addressing inequity. The concepts of critique and promise are central: transformative leaders see a problem and ask themselves "what can I do?" to solve it' (Mastercard Foundation, 2014, p. 3). In other words, transformative leadership seeks to effect social change to benefit women and others in communities and institutions. To be truly transformative, such leadership is inclusive and participatory and uses participatory methods to draw on the skills, knowledge, and values of all members of the community or institution (Batliwala, 2010).

This understanding aligns with Montuori and Donnelly's (2018, p. 9) assertion that transformative leadership calls for new 'ways of being, relating, knowing,

and doing'. In this vein, the Mastercard Foundation (2014) report identifies characteristics of transformative leaders as including, among others, ethical decision-making, integrity, creativity, altruism, personal authenticity, and resilience.

Barriers to women's transformative leadership

Considering that men have historically held more leadership positions than women, it is unsurprising that the traits traditionally associated with good leadership are customarily ascribed to men. Interestingly, conceptualisations of transformative leadership tend to shift this perception (Stempel, Rigotti, & Mohr, 2015). Research suggests that women often perceive themselves, and are perceived, as adopting transformative leadership styles more than men. For example, Bass and Riggio (2006) conclude that women make better transformative leaders than men because they are more likely to be trusted and respected by their followers and display more significant concern for individual needs. As Bass and Riggio (2006) observe, this is a controversial topic and one which is based on traditional gender norms and gendered stereotypes. This binary understanding of gender and leadership leaves little room for exploring the leadership styles among gender-neutral or gender-non conforming people.

What are the barriers to such leadership for women in Africa, and how might they be addressed? Amayah and Haque (2017) identify societal culture, occupational culture, gender stereotypes, and lack of access to education as significant barriers to African women's access to positions of leadership. Where do these barriers originate? In her critical account of the history of colonialism and gender on the African continent, Agbaje (2019) observes that colonialism profoundly impacted intergroup structures in Africa. According to Agbaje, by giving men more recognition than women, colonial institutions significantly impacted gender identification, gender roles, and gender stratification in Africa. In the South African context, in his 2016 book *Teaching the Native: Behind the Architecture of an Unequal Education System*, Reilly argues that it was the British Empire that bestowed upon us the current gender regimes in families, communities, institutions, and society. In her piece 'From Gender Apartheid to Non-Sexism: The Pursuit of Women's Rights in South Africa', Andrews (2001) argues that the Apartheid regime built on the history of colonialism in its policies geared towards the subjugation of women, particularly Black women. Andrews (2001, pp. 694–695) writes that '[t]he system of Apartheid existing in South Africa since 1948 and the previous periods of colonialism left all South African women in a subordinated position'. This left a racialised hierarchy of oppression that pitted groups of women against each other. At the bottom of this hierarchy were African women, followed by the so-called Indian and Coloured women, and at the top of this pyramid were White women. The legacy of this social experiment is still felt in every sphere of society in present-day South Africa.

Linked to the above, turning to unequal gender norms in communities and institutions, Bawa (2020, p. 2487) adopts a postcolonial African feminist theoretical lens to explore how 'reference to culture irredeemably reduces women's rights issues to a realm of colonial discursive framing that makes it difficult to imagine a transformative approach to women's issues'. Highlighting the problematic nature of 'culture' as a concept, particularly in postcolonial contexts, Bawa (2020, p. 2489) suggests that we need to take a broader perspective and 'connect rights issues to political, religious, environmental, global neoliberal, and technological changes, among others'. As argued in this chapter, the traditional notions of femininity, according to which women are viewed and often view themselves as inferior to men and, therefore, unable to be effective leaders, negatively impact their desire and ability to lead. According to traditional gender roles, traits associated with women and femininity are incompatible with leadership, which requires traits associated with men and masculinity (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019). In addition to explicit gender bias, women more often experience implicit gender bias than men and they are less likely than men to see themselves as potential leaders. Given the barriers faced by women in accessing leadership, it is hardly surprising that one of the challenges to leadership development among women in African contexts and elsewhere is the scarcity of women leaders to serve as role models to peers and younger aspiring leaders (Ely et al., 2011; Moorosi, 2020).

Despite literature suggesting that women face numerous barriers to leadership, emerging scholarship posits that they are better transformative leaders than men, with some scholars concluding that women tend to find their voices and agency through this form of leadership. While most of this literature uses the concept of transformational leadership rather than transformative leadership (the distinction is discussed above), it helps to enhance our understanding of the barriers women face in their access to and enactment of leadership generally and of transformative leadership specifically.

For example, in a review of the literature, Dahlvig and Longman (2010, p. 241) cite findings from a 2003 study by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen that compare 'men's and women's scores on a survey that measured transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership'. The study concludes that women tend to exhibit traits that enhance leadership and that, in contrast, 'men, more than women, manifest styles that relate only weakly to effectiveness or that hinder effectiveness' (Carli & Eagly, 2007, p. 138, cited in Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, p. 241). According to Dahlvig and Longman (2010, p. 241), 'the characteristics of transformational leadership tend to be more stereotypically feminine (i.e., congruent with expected gender roles), resulting in greater acceptance of women in leadership'. Citing the work of Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) and Yoder (2001), Dahlvig and Longman (2010, p. 241) conclude that '[t]hrough transformational leadership,

therefore, women's contributions to leadership may be tapped in ways that do not provoke prejudice related to overt or subtle beliefs about gender role norms'. However, adding a cautionary note about the role of religion (and cultural values and norms), they conclude that 'although women have been shown to be effective transformational leaders, prejudicial views about leadership may harm the ability of Christian women to envision themselves as leaders' (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, pp. 240–241). From this perspective, they cite an article in the *Harvard Business Review* titled 'Do Women Lack Ambition?' (Fels, 2004) that analyses interviews with women about their views regarding ambition and achievement. In this article, Fels concludes that due to their internalised notions of leadership, most women reject ambition in favour of their caretaking role, a more feminine function aligned to societal expectations of women (Fels, 2004, cited in Dahlvig & Longman, 2010).

However, a survey involving 184 respondents conducted by Begum, Jan, and Khan (2013, p. 307) sought to 'examine transformational leadership, gender role orientation and leadership effectiveness of male and female leaders within the context of education and health departments in Pakistan and Turkey'. The study finds no differences in leadership styles between men and women. While the study finds contextual differences in leadership styles between Pakistan and Turkey, the findings indicated minor differences in the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) of males and females, with both men and women scoring high on the transformational leadership style.

Beyond the gendered and stereotypical notions of leadership, the literature highlights the positive role of transformative leadership among and for women. For example, Kouzes and Posner's work attributes to women the characteristics of 'modelling the way (or leading by example), inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart' and they conclude that this kind of leadership, which promotes 'collaboration, empowerment, and shared vision, resonates with many women' (Kouzes & Pozner, 2005, cited in Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, p. 254). A more nuanced explanation is offered by Eagly's (2007) conclusion that

> women search for a style that is not, particularly, masculine or feminine. As the transformational style is more androgynous [than other forms], it can be adopted by women in search of a neutral style avoiding the prejudice of being incompatible with the traditional idea of a kind woman and of an agentic leader.
> (cited in Hryniewicz, Gonçalves, & Vianna, 2018, p. 333)

The preceding discussion suggests that while women face numerous barriers to leadership based on the values it promotes, transformational leadership seems to favour them more than men. Thus, despite the conceptual distinctions between

transformational and transformative leadership (and the confusion many display by using these terms interchangeably), research on the conditions under which women can become successful transformative leaders, and the factors that facilitate such leadership, is needed.

Nurturing transformative leadership among African women

Mwagiru (2019, p. 126) argues that while there is an

> increasing (yet insufficient) number of women in leadership positions, this trend does not translate into women's increased influence or power in organisations. Increasing [the number of women appointed] to organisational leadership roles does not [necessarily] correlate with meaningful inclusivity and participation in decision-making processes.

According to Mwagiru, interventions must aim to reduce or eliminate the barriers that inhibit women's participation in decision-making. Such programmes must focus on 'growing available data on women leaders, boosting leadership policy support, and promoting mentorship, peer networking and flexible working environments' (2019, p. 126). This will essentially transform the cultures of institutions and organisations in which women work.

Investigating this same issue, Mukoni (2018) conducted a study examining women's participation in community environmental education in Zimbabwe. Drawing from participant observations, documentary analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions in one community environmental organisation in Zimbabwe, Mukoni's findings suggest that

> [o]n the one hand, there was a high number of women attending CEE [Community Environmental Education] activities [in the organisation]. On the other, their active and meaningful participation in these activities and decision-making in the organisation remained limited. While they had access to the organisation, they lacked the voice and agency necessary for meaningful participation in the various CEE activities offered. Reasons for this included unequal gender norms, a male-centred curriculum and pedagogy, and a shortage of female facilitators. (Mukoni, 2018, p. i)

These findings have implications for gender-responsive interventions at organisational, policy, and community levels.

Leadership development

What interventions can be implemented to develop or nurture transformative leadership among women? The literature available identifies some broad

approaches to interventions. The first among these is leadership development, which, used in organisational development studies, is defined as 'expanding the collective capacity of organisational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes' (Day, 2001, p. 582, cited in Hopkins et al., 2008, p. 351). For Hopkins et al. (2008, p. 360), 'leadership development increases women's portfolios of human, social, and political capital…[resulting] in benefits at both the individual and organisational levels'. For these scholars, access to education, mentoring and coaching, and career planning for women are vital to developing women's capacity for transformative leadership. These strategies further ensure that women are linked to networks with other women, allies, and mentors. Networking builds the social capital necessary for women to cope with, challenge, and transform the marginalisation they face in the workplace vis-à-vis their leadership and career advancement.

To address the unequal power relations that make participation and decision-making meaningless or tokenistic for women in organisations, we need a shift in our understanding of leadership and its role in organisations and communities. For example, as Batliwala (2010, p. 5) warns, efforts to shape and assess leadership building interventions must be informed by the understanding that

> leadership is a means, not an end. We build leadership capacity and skills for something, to do something, or change something, and not because leadership is a product or service for consumption. This is especially true in social justice contexts.

Batliwala (2010) further argues that while we should celebrate women's participation and decision-making in institutions or organisations, these in and of themselves do not signal the elimination of unequal power between men and women. According to her, organisations need to do more than just capacitate more women to occupy leadership positions (Batliwala, 2010). In their efforts to effect social change, organisations also need to implement policies and programmes that enable them to lead differently (Batliwala, 2010). In other words, to lead in a socially just manner, men and women need to be guided by values and norms that enhance equity and social transformation.

Empowering women for leadership

The literature links the second set of strategies for nurturing women's leadership to the empowerment discourse and to notions of developing and enhancing women's agency for activism. For example, Bawa (2016, p. 120) draws from an ethnographic study in which she 'examined women's rights and empowerment discourses within Ghana's postcolonial environment'. From an analysis of data from 9 focus group interviews and 16 in-depth individual interviews using social capital as an analytical lens, she concludes that

> because women's relationships with capital are structured by local socio-cultural and global economic structures and relations, the theorisation and application of the concept of empowerment needs to recognise the complicated relationships (with capital) that women negotiate on a daily basis. (Bawa, 2016, p. 119)

Arguably informed by the same understanding, Cornwall (2016, p. 342) draws on a 'multi-disciplinary and multi-perspectival' research programme called Pathways of Women's Empowerment, conducted in the United Kingdom and several African, Asian, and South American countries. The project examined the conditions under which 'the "motorways" of mainstream development policies for women and girls might work in favour of greater justice and equality and the broader democratisation of power relations in society' (Cornwall, 2016, p. 343). The project focused specifically on 'women's lived experiences of empowerment and the effects and effectiveness of interventions that sought to enhance women's rights, power and agency' (Cornwall, 2016, p. 343).

Cornwall used a framework developed by Gender at Work to analyse the findings. This international feminist network supports organisations to develop institutional cultures geared towards gender equality (see Kelleher & Rao, n.d.). The framework posits that to be effective, programmes that target women for empowerment must prioritise several building blocks, including building women's critical consciousness, building collective power, establishing positive relationships with and in organisations, and shifting perspectives about the identity and positions of women in communities. To facilitate such programming, organisations must engage grassroots role players (those who understand the context) as implementers.

Cornwall (2016) identifies the often 'hidden pathways' to what facilitates women's empowerment, with implications for transformative development practice in women's organisations and among the donor community. One pathway is providing external donor funding that enables organisations' long-term engagements (rather than short-term grants), enabling organisations and their constituencies to set their own agendas and to be able to respond to local issues and opportunities without pre-imposed expectations. Other routes include providing institutional support, engaging organisations that have a firm grounding in and knowledge of communities and women's issues therein, and building positive relationships with them. According to Cornwall (2016), such programming requires policy-makers and development practitioners to heed Sen's (1997) caution that empowerment programming must shift its purpose from providing resources and services to women and must, instead, create conducive spaces for building women's confidence and self-esteem to solve local community and institutional issues.

Women's agency and activism

Similarly, other scholars and development practitioners have argued for developing women's agency and activism to enhance their leadership capacity. For example, with the African Union seemingly prioritising gender equality (more than its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity), Adams' (2019) study critically examines the role of women's movements and their agency in ensuring this policy shift. However, while there is a policy shift, gender equity remains unattainable, and actions on the ground and women's material lives remain primarily unchanged (Adams, 2019).

Writing in the context of North Africa, Ennaji (2019) explores women's movements and political activism. She concludes that women's activism is key to addressing gender inequality in leadership in African (and other) contexts. Women's organisations play a significant role in facilitating their agency in challenging the unequal gender norms that keep them subjugated. For Ennaji (2019), women's activism not only addresses gender discrimination but also significantly contributes to and enhances the democratic participation of all members of institutions and communities.

In the context of South Africa, Mkhize and Mgcotyelwa-Ntoni (2019) report on a qualitative study that examined women leaders' experiences in the national government. The findings from the study suggest a link between women's activism and gender-transformative policies in government. Specifically, Mkhize and Mgcotyelwa-Ntoni (2019 , p. 9) note that women's activism plays an enabling role in women's leadership, 'helping them to push the gender transformation agenda in policy formulation policies…gradually engendering the recognition of women and promoting their participation in these institutions'. However, they caution that this does not mean that gender inequality in these spaces is eliminated or that women's leadership is guaranteed. According to them, women's activism has enabled them to be active agents of transformation, particularly in gender transformation in the political space in South Africa.

At a skills level, acknowledging education as a critical driver of sustainability and gender equity, Segovia-Perez, Laguna-Sanchez, and De la Fuente-Cabrero (2019) conducted a study to assess the impact of a women's leadership programme on women university students in Spain. The study involved 'three focus groups to evaluate changes in [the students'] perceptions of themselves and their self-confidence' (Segovia-Perez et al., 2019, p. 1). The authors conclude that the programme 'inspired [the women] and confirmed changes in their self-confidence and view of their personal capacities, including reflection on facing challenges in the work environment' (Segovia-Perez et al., 2019, p. 1). These findings suggest that empowerment programming that builds women's skills through training and improves their self-confidence enables them to access and succeed in leadership positions.

Conclusion

A plethora of literature bemoans the various barriers to women's access to leadership positions in institutions and communities, including gender inequality, unequal educational opportunities, and low self-esteem. First, the literature reviewed in this chapter indicates varied understandings of women and leadership in African contexts. This lack of conceptual clarity is linked to the traditional gender norms that associate leadership with masculine traits and, therefore, view men as the only legitimate leaders in all spheres of society.

In the workplace and society generally, this inhibits women's access to decision-making and positions of leadership that could influence social change. Linked to this is the tendency of the available scholarship to conceptualise African women as a homogenous group and to decontextualise their leadership experiences. Homogenising the African continent and women's leadership experiences not only makes the diversity of women on the continent invisible, but also hides the unique factors that inhibit their leadership and renders the development and implementation of effective ameliorative interventions impossible.

Second, informed by an understanding that transformative leadership is key to addressing the unequal norms that often prevent women from accessing and enacting leadership, the chapter explores the concept of transformative leadership and its links to women's leadership practices in African contexts. Scholarship is emerging that suggests that interventions that target the unequal gender norms inhibiting access to decision-making positions have been successfully implemented in different contexts on the continent. A review of these interventions suggests that transformative leadership tends to be more effective in enabling women to use their voices and agency to influence equity and social change in organisations and society.

If transformative leadership is considered to be intentional, 'inclusive, participatory and horizontal' (Afkhami, Eisenberg, & Vaziri, 2001, cited in Batliwala, 2010, p. 12), then what skills and values must people in an organisation have to be effective? What values must inform the organisation's policies and the programmes developed and implemented? The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that while answers to these questions may refer to universal principles of transformative leadership and its influence on social change in communities and institutions, the effectiveness of such leadership is mainly dependent on contextual factors.

As research suggests, engaging local women's organisations that understand the context and women's issues therein and resourcing and supporting them to implement their programming may go a long way towards addressing the factors that inhibit women's participation in decision-making and social change. In addition, interventions that include developing and implementing

transformative feminist leadership skills through education and facilitating women's empowerment and activism enable the enactment of contextual and transformative leadership practices. Such interventions must target various levels – the individual, the institutional, and sociocultural contexts – for transformation; otherwise, any efforts to involve women in leadership are bound to fail.

#WomenNaturalTransformativeLeaders

Good leadership traits are customarily ascribed to men, but women embody transformative leadership in ways that men do not. Research on how women construct leadership and their leadership identities is critical.

Questions for discussion

1. Can you give examples from your context of the ways in which women embody transformative leadership more readily than men?
2. How might we increase conceptual understandings of African women and leadership? What kinds of questions do we need to ask?
3. What role does the 'African women-in-crisis' discourse play in advancing or preventing women from leading?

References

Adams, M. (2019). African women's movements and the African Union. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 1509–1522). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Agbaje, F. I. (2019). Colonialism and gender in Africa: A critical history. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 1275–1294). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Amayah, A. T. & Haque, M. D. (2017). Experiences and challenges of women leaders in sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Journal of Management*, *3*(1), 99–127.

Andrews, P. (2001). From gender Apartheid to non-sexism: The pursuit of women's rights in South Africa. *North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation*, *26*, 693–722.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Bass, B. M. & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, MI: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Batliwala, S. (2010). *Feminist leadership for social transformation: Clearing the conceptual cloud*. University of Cincinnati.
Retrieved from https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ucwc/docs/CREA.pdf.

Bawa, S. (2016). Paradoxes of (dis)empowerment in the postcolony: Women, culture and social capital in Ghana. *Third World Quarterly*, *37*(1), 119–135.

Bawa, S. (2020). Culture, rights, and African women's futures. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 2487–2502). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Begum, N., Jan, F. A., & Khan, S. U. D. (2013). Women in leadership: An examination of transformational leadership, gender role orientation and leadership effectiveness (A case study of Pakistan and Turkey). *Sarhad Journal of Agriculture*, *29*(2), 307–316.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Cornwall, A. (2016). Women's empowerment: What works? *Journal of International Development*, *28*(3), 342–359.

Dahlvig, J. E. & Longman, K. A. (2010). Women's leadership development: A study of defining moments. *Christian Higher Education*, *9*(3), 238–258.

Ely, R. I., Ibarra, H., & Kolb, D. (2011). Taking gender into account: Theory and design for women's leadership development programs. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *10*(3), 474–493.

Ennaji, M. (2019). Women, social movements and political activism in North Africa. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studie*s (pp. 1347–1364). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fels, A. (2004, April). Do women lack ambition? *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2004/04/do-women-lack-ambition.

Hopkins, M., O'Neil, D., Passarelli, A., & Bilimoria, D. (2008). Women's leadership development: Strategic practices for women and organisations. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *60*(4), 348–365.

Hryniewicz, L. G. C., Gonçalves, C., & Vianna, M. A. (2018). Women and leadership: Obstacles and gender expectations in managerial positions. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, *16*(3), 331–344.

Kelleher, D. & Rao, A. (n.d.) *What is Gender at Work's approach to gender equality and institutional change?* Retrieved from http://gender.careinternationalwikis.org/_media/resource_3_rao_2006_gender_at_work_integrated_framework.pdf.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

Mkhize, G. & Mgcotyelwa-Ntoni, N. (2019). The impact of women's movements' activism experiences on gender transformation policies in democratic South Africa. *Agenda*, *33*(2), 9–21.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Moorosi, P. (2020). Constructions of leadership identities via narratives of African women school leaders. *Frontiers in Education*, *5*(86). https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00086.

Mukoni, M. (2018). Women's participation in community environmental education: A qualitative study of one community organisation in Zimbabwe. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Mwagiru, N. (2019). Women's leadership in business and higher education: A focus on organisational experiences in South Africa and Kenya. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 117–128.

Nefdt, A. (2019). A persisting minority: Narratives of women in corporate leadership. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 129–141.

Nkomo, S. M. & Ngambi, H. (2009). African women in leadership: Current knowledge and a framework for future studies. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, *4*(1), 49–68.

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Pikremenou, N. & Mahajan, S. (2019). Make every African woman leader count. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 82–96.

Poltera, J. (2019). Exploring examples of women's leadership in African contexts. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 3–8.

Poltera, J. & Schreiner, J. (2019). Problematising women's leadership in the African context. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 9–20.

Reilly, J. D. (2016). *Teaching the native: Behind the architecture of an unequal education system*. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Segovia-Perez, M., Laguna-Sanchez, P., & De la Fuente-Cabrero, C. (2019). Education for sustainable leadership: Fostering women's empowerment at the university level. *Sustainability*, *11*(20), 1–14.

Sen, G. (1997). *Empowerment as an approach to poverty*. Working Paper Series 97.07. New York, NY: United Nations Development Programme.

Stempel, C. R., Rigotti, T., & Mohr, G. (2015). Think transformational leadership: Think female? *Leadership, 11*(3), 259–280.

Tichy, N. M. & Ulrich, D. O. (1984). SMR Forum: The leadership challenge: A call for the transformational leader. *Sloan Management Review, 26*(1), 59–68.

Unal, A. & Kilinc, I. (2016). Transformational leadership versus glass ceiling effect: A theoretical model from Turkish IT sector. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, *10*(2), 135–150.

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

Lauryn Mwale

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?

References

Adichie, C. N. (2013, 12 April). *We should all be feminists* [Video]. TED Conferences. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc.

Adichie, C. N. (2017). *Dear Ijeawele, or a feminist manifesto in fifteen suggestions*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Al-Krenawi, A. & Graham, J. R. (Eds). (2002). *Multicultural social work in Canada: Working with diverse ethno-racial communities.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, *1989*(1), 139–167.

Diamond, C. (2022, 15 August). Period poverty: Scotland first in world to make period products free. *BBC Scotland News.* Retrieved from https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-51629880.

Eakins, B. & Ekins, G. (1976). Verbal turn-taking and exchanges in faculty dialogue. In B-L. Dubois & I. Crouch (Eds). *The sociology of the languages of American women* (pp. 53–62). San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press.

Edelsky, C. (1981). Who's got the floor? *Language in Society*, *10*(3), 383–421.

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589.

Eltahawy, M. (2020). *The seven necessary sins for women and girls*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Graham, M. J. (1999). The African-centered worldview: Toward a paradigm for social work. *Journal of Black Studies*, *30*(1), 103–122.

Guy-Sheftall, B. (1995). *Words of fire: An anthology of African-American feminist thought*. New York, NY: The New Press.

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Koskinen Sandberg, P., Törnroos, M., & Kohvakka, R. (2017). The institutionalised undervaluation of women's work: The case of local government sector collective agreements. *Work, Employment and Society*, *32*(4), 707–725.

Maathai, W. (2007). *Unbowed: A memoir*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Mastercard Foundation. (2019, 17 December). *Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program commitment to education for refugees*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/mastercard-foundation-scholars-program-commitment-to-education-for-refugees/.

Morrison, T. (1975, 30 May). *Black studies center public dialogue, part 2*. Portland State University. Retrieved from https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/orspeakers/90/.

Ransome-Kuti, F. (2011). We had equality till Britain came. In T. K. Wayne (Ed.). *Feminist writings from ancient times to the modern world: A global sourcebook and history* (pp. 544–547). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio.

Rodríguez Pulgarín, A. M. & Woodhouse, T. (2021). *The costs of exclusion report: Economic consequences of the digital gender gap*. World Wide Web Foundation. Retrieved from https://webfoundation.org/research/costs-of-exclusion-report/.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Shields, C. M. (2011). Transformative leadership: An introduction. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 1–17.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*(6), 706–732.

University of Edinburgh. (2017, 8 December). *About the award*. The University of Edinburgh. Retrieved from https://www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-award/about.

WomenWatch. (2009). *Women, gender equality and climate change*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/.

PART 4

LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

11 *Iterations of transformative leadership for higher education in Africa*

Ibrahim Oanda

Overview

Over the last three decades, a number of higher education leaders have made claims of being transformative leaders. At the same time, emerging literature on higher education in Africa continues to cite the lack of transformative leadership as part of what is ailing higher education institutions. Based on a review of published literature and theoretical reflections, this chapter discusses the different iterations of what has constituted claims to transformative leadership in African universities, and how disconnected the claims have been from reality. The chapter is organised in three parts. The first part is a historical reflection on the evolution of transformative institutions and leadership in Africa. The second part delves into the emergence of various descriptors of transformative leaders for higher education institutions in Africa from the 1990s. The third part discusses what real transformative leadership and transformative institutions for higher education in Africa would entail.

Introduction

Leadership has been defined variously in the literature. Some definitions focus on individual personality traits, perceiving leadership as a set of characteristics that some individuals possess, while other literature focuses on group processes, where the leader who has power and vision is at the centre of inspiring action for a common goal (Bass, 1990). The emphasis on a person's capacity and skill in creating a vision of what might be and fostering a culture that supports the achievement of a vision within organisations is more prevalent in the literature, irrespective of the taxonomies of leadership (Fairholm, 2002; Kets de Vries, Sexton, & Ellen, 2016). Personal influence, group processes, and attention to common organisational goals are core to a broad conceptualisation of good and desirable leadership (Rost, 1991).

In higher education, studies have analysed leadership from two fronts. The first is how institutions are or would be organised to facilitate the production of different types of leaders (intellectual, thought, educational, academic leaders) (Žydžiūnaitė, 2018). The institutional context is seen as a key determinant in the emergence of desired leadership qualities in individuals, aside from the professional skills that are the direct focus of formal higher education. At the

other front, there is literature that focuses on the impact that the leadership of higher education institutions – whether from the perspective of the individual leader or of a broad management team – has on students' lives, beyond individual outcomes such as learning capabilities, employment, and earnings, to include collective outcomes such as citizenship, tolerance, cross-cultural values, and global citizenship competencies (Bennett, Richardson, & MacKinnon, 2016; Hill, Walkington, & France, 2016; Marginson & Yang, 2021). The recent adoption of neoliberal values in justifying the role of higher education across the world has focused leadership research on the skills, qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of individuals to create visions and manage institutions, as opposed to seeing leadership as an institution-wide process requiring input from diverse groups (Bolden, Jones, Davis, & Gentle, 2015). Within the African context, the focus on individual traits as the nexus to drive institutional leadership has resulted in the setting up of leadership training interventions that are intended to socialise institutional leaders' skills in pursuing defined strategic ends for higher education.

The view of leadership as a process, as opposed to individual characteristics, provides a broad framework from which to analyse the imprint of leadership beyond the individual to include collective outcomes from the higher education system. This broad view also enables researchers to discern the range of levels within an institution through which leadership is exercised. In the African context, much focus has been on institutional leaders – vice chancellors or management boards – as pivots for the kind of leadership that is meant to trigger transformation of the institutions. However, transformative intellectuals and academic leadership at the lower levels could potentially contribute to individual and collective higher education outcomes even when institutional leadership is exercised in ways that limit these possibilities (Macfarlane & Chan, 2012). Academic leadership is exercised at lower levels of the institution by deans and heads of departments and by professors in terms of their teaching and research roles, while intellectual leadership goes beyond the teaching and research responsibilities to encompass forms of public engagement, as happens with public intellectuals. Academics offer intellectual leadership that contributes to building social and intellectual capital for the institution and society (Žydžiūnaitė, 2018). The literature identifies four characteristics expected of academics as intellectual leaders in higher education. These are a passion for transformation, possessing a balance of personal virtues, a commitment to service, and overcoming adversity (Macfarlane & Chan, 2012). Academic and intellectual leadership, when exercised optimally, therefore offers institutions possibilities for creating transformative institutions in instances where the top tier of institutional leadership falls short of these traits.

In the African context, the post–1990 higher education landscape has been dominated by discussions of transformative leadership as the missing link between higher education institutions and their roles in society. What

transformative leadership for higher education in Africa would entail, however, is not clear from existing literature. Leadership practices that have worked elsewhere have been adopted by a number of higher education leaders and applied to institutions in Africa with little regard to context. The drivers for this borrowing have been the desire by higher education leaders in Africa to address the crisis of funding that institutions on the continent have faced post–1990. A reading of the theoretical literature suggests that transformative leadership look beyond short-term palliative measures to a leadership that is fixated with the idea of social justice and democracy in the broader sense, thus creating conditions for the realisation of physical and epistemic inclusion and connecting education processes with the wider social context within which it is embedded (Shields, 2010). Certainly, this is not what has happened in Africa in the last two decades. The persistence of voices such as 'fees must fall', curriculum decolonisation, and graduate unemployment, among other shortcomings within higher education institutions, indicates a worsening of the disconnect between higher education and society. Beyond transformative leadership building the institutional capacity for physical and epistemic inclusion, such a leadership should create spaces for re-skilling, re-tooling, and continuous learning, adjusting the output of graduates and research to better match the demands of society. This responsibility for change goes beyond the state, the capacity of an individual institutional leader, or the private sector. The responsibility for real transformation requires continuous dialogue *between* governments, university leadership, core constituencies, and the private sector. It is not something that can miraculously be achieved by a single entity.

The following section discusses how expectations of transformative leadership and institutions have evolved with the institutional dynamism of higher education in Africa.

The developmental state and the transformative role of higher education

The contribution of higher education to realising positive individual and collective outcomes for society features prominently in the founding instruments and political rhetoric that occurred with the establishment of national universities in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s (Block, 1984; Kaunda, 1968; Nkrumah, 1973; Nyerere, 1968). Whether seen in Nkrumah's expectations of the African university as the leader for conscientisation philosophy and intellectual decolonisation; or in Nyerere's call for the university as a conveyor belt for self-reliance (development through mobilisation of domestic human and capital resources), social equity (disbursing benefits to the entire society to inhibit disparities), and cooperative effort (encouraging economic activities undertaken through collectivism); or in Kaunda's humanism in Zambia, the nationalist political leadership were

committed to using public higher education as a means to national development. The nationalist political leadership tasked the new institutions with the attainment of national goals of development and nation-building, the ideological emancipation of Africans in what was conceived as a process of decolonisation of the curriculum, the role of instruments of innovation to spur growth and prosperity through human resource development, and the creation of African identities.

The political leadership took a steering role in most aspects of public higher education as a mechanism to ensure accountability of public resources invested in its development. Between 1970 and 1990, during the era of the 'developmental university in Africa' (Ajayi, Goma, & Johnson, 1996; Coleman, 1986), the political leadership determined how higher education leadership was constituted to drive the vision of transformation as articulated by politicians. In some countries, such as Tanzania, immediately after the inauguration of the university, those appointed to senior administrative positions in 1970 also served as officials of the only political party at that time (Douglas, 2007), because it was thought that they would better drive the development vision of the country through the university. Political steering of higher education was accompanied by the indigenisation of academic and institutional leadership as a strategy to better integrate universities with the needs of society under the tutelage of a developmental state (Mkandawire, 2001). The political elite determined the direction of institutional leadership, and those appointed implemented the transformative vision of higher education for society as articulated by the political class. This situation did cause tension from time to time when the politicians and academics could not agree on what constituted transformation, or how higher education institutions needed to relate to the state in pursuance of this transformation. Nevertheless, the largely publicly funded institutions considered themselves critical pillars for the radical transformation of the continent in the social, political, and economic sense (Lebeau, 2008). The search for democracy, equity, and development by the leadership of the independent countries, coupled with their belief that education was a key to unlocking these potentials, influenced perceptions of the kinds of leadership that were required of the institutions and of their relationship with the state and society (Mkandawire, 2001). The steering role of the state for higher education institutions was, however, unpopular with some stakeholders. A situation where the political leadership determined the leadership of the institutions and the content of academic programmes became a source of tension between the state and the higher education leadership on the one hand, and academics and students who didn't subscribe to this notion on the other hand (Mkandawire, 2001).

The literature examining the imprint that the higher education institutions in Africa had on society during this period does suggest they made a positive

contribution to forging national identities and economic development across the continent (Oketch, McCowan, & Schendel, 2014). The literature does document evidence of greater political socialisation and development of approaches to research and training that linked the higher education institutions to communities, and high rates of return by graduates. The institutions also transformed the curriculum, especially in the humanities and social sciences; established intellectual communities that contributed to intellectual decolonisation; and championed the inclusion of marginal groups and voices in development policy, as attested by the prevalence of research and debates on the African peasantry that took place in universities across the continent in the 1970s (Aina, 2010; Ake, 1981).

Doubts arose about the transformative role of higher education in Africa from the 1990s. Studies, mostly funded by external constituencies, emerged, arguing against continued publicly funded higher education, as this was seen as catering for a small elite. This was a contradiction. The small number of students who accessed the institutions was because of the low capacity of the institutions, themselves a colonial construction, and not as a result of any policy design by the postcolonial governments. Besides, no evidence was generated to suggest that the skills that were gained by the small number of those who accessed higher education institutions did not have a multiplier effect downstream. The arguments, however, were used as a basis for implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes in the higher education sector in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Structural Adjustment Programmes led to a reconceptualised notion of transformative leadership, both at the institutional and individual levels, and a redefinition of relations between higher education and society. This redefinition was manifested by a continued crisis narrative of the state of higher education in Africa post–1980, and doubts about its transformative potential for society (Atteh, 1996). When the doubts were not focused on the perceived irrelevance of the curricula of the institutions, they were trained on the leadership capacities of individuals that managed the institutions. In both cases, multiple reforms were suggested and implemented in ways that occasioned financial crisis, leading to a disruption of the contract that had been sustained up to that point (Assié-Lumumba, 2006). The situation affected the quality of graduates and the capacity of the economies to create jobs for all the graduates. While the problem was funding, popular policy discourse defined it as lack of leadership, especially the kind of leadership that would reorganise higher education institutions as business entities. Innovative leadership within higher education, especially from the 1990s (see, for example, Ng'ethe, Assié-Lumumba, Subotzky, & Sutherland-Addy, 2003), limited the conceptualisation of innovation to leaders who designed alternative funding sources for the institutions outside public provision. Such university leaders would also, henceforth, claim the tag 'transformative leaders'.

Hughes' (1987) *Revisiting the Fortunate Few* study cast doubt on the efficacy of the workforce development model as the basis for the transformative potential of higher education in Africa (Abagi, 1999; Saint, 1992).The study argued that across Africa, the increasing supply of a highly educated workforce had exceeded the demand for university-level jobs, making graduates face a highly competitive labour market (Al-Samarrai & Bennell, 2003), and that the public investment in higher education was not benefitting society. What was needed, some studies argued, was a leadership that would limit higher education dependence on public resources, while at the same time reorganising academic programmes in ways that graduates would look less at the public service as the source of jobs, and more to the private sector or individual entrepreneurial skills (Association of African Universities, 2017). The conception of transformative leaders that emerged from the study was of individuals that would steer the institutions to achieve the transition to forms of academic entrepreneurship, especially regarding increasing the capacity of higher education institutions to generate resources and produce students less dependent on public service jobs. The problem, though, was that while this transition envisaged a declining public sector and an expanding private sector, the private sector has remained relatively small and has not grown to replace the public sector, either in terms of funding higher education or generating relevant jobs for higher education graduates.

The overall conclusion from this literature is that the approach to higher education–society linkages that was based on a strong developmental state determining leadership had produced an inefficient mix. Higher education leadership was not innovating to prepare graduates for changing social circumstances, while the graduates developed a sense of entitlement from society instead of developing attitudes and skills of service to society. Because of this, higher education institutions on the continent entered into a crisis phase, especially at the levels of institutional and academic leadership (Lindow, 2009; Mamdani, 1993). Dependency on state patronage and public funding had resulted in internal institutional deficits in innovating and generating private resources, and in preparing graduates for the kind of society that was evolving (Court, 1999; Kinyanjui, 1994).

Overall, the transformative potential of 'developmental' higher education in Africa had to contend with two contradictions. First was the extent to which higher education, through its leadership, was to be the basis for deconstructing the logics of the colonial state in the organisation of society. The literature does point out that higher education contributed to skills development, thereby allowing replacement of the colonial workforce with Africans, and that it contributed to the constitution of African intellectual leadership that championed curricular reform in the institutions. Access, though, has remained limited, and concerns that higher education remains accessible only to a privileged elite, as it was during the colonial period, persist. Interventions designed by higher education

leaders who claimed the tag 'transformative leaders' between 2000 and 2020 have accentuated physical and epistemological exclusion (Lebeau & Oanda, 2020).

The second contradiction is the opposite of the first, and concerns the extent to which higher education continues to reproduce the logics of the colonial state in terms of the relationships between higher education and society. As has been discussed, policy and rhetoric in the 1970s across Africa did focus on indigenisation of the curriculum, but not on the foundational logic of higher education. The calls for alternative leadership for the institutions from the 1990s were couched in the language of relevance and efficiency. It was argued that, for higher education to fully decolonise, the sector needed a transformative leadership, expressed variously as entrepreneurial, corporate, and thought leadership (engagement) with the public, especially with the private sector. Transformation has, however, been conceptualised in a limited manner to refer to leadership that would reorganise the institutions, including academic life, to generate money by making higher education a commodity, sell what could be sold, privatise what could be privatised, increase access of students, and engage more with the private sector (Mamdani, 2007, 2018). The embracing of this limited conception by university leaders of what it entails to be transformative has contributed to breaking the pact between higher education and society, as if society was not supposed to be the main beneficiary from a transformative higher education leadership.

Training interventions for higher education transformative leadership in Africa

Policy discourses on higher education in Africa post–1990 have been dominated by discussions on how best transformative leaders would be produced for higher education institutions within a neoliberal context and conception of higher education (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2018; Watson, Motala, & Koetcha, 2009). Notably, governance reforms were undertaken across Africa, beginning in the 1990s, that replaced government involvement in the governance of higher education with independent higher education councils and created more operational autonomy for individual university leaders.

Four leadership models that capture the kind of individual characteristics that were being sought in leaders for the institutions within the context of the changed governance structures have dominated the literature. These are the innovative, entrepreneurship, servant, and transformative leadership models (Bell, 2001; Clay, 2016; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2018; MacGregor, 2015; Ng'ethe et al., 2003; Okalany & Adipala, 2016; Shattock, 2018). The policy focus has been on how best these kinds of leaders could be produced for institutions. There is literature suggesting that innovative or transformative leadership is a trait that individuals are born with and that they only need an opportunity for these traits to manifest.

It has been argued that one of the throwbacks of the period of greater political steering of higher education in Africa was that since greater consideration was given to political affiliation in appointing higher education leaders, academics who did not agree with the political establishment, but who may have had better leadership qualities, were never given an opportunity.

Literature that conceptualises transformative leadership as an inborn individual trait has argued that there are institutional and academic leaders across the continent who, notwithstanding the crisis of the 1990s, and despite not having any formal training in leadership, engineered reforms that kept their institutions running (Ng'ethe et al., 2003). The literature has focused on individual institutional leaders, their capacity, and their skills to innovate and manage the institutions in ways that made a positive imprint on the quality of academic programmes, the quality of graduates, and the contribution of the institutions to society (Cloete, Bailey, & Maassen, 2011; Ng'ethe et al., 2003). An edited volume of interviews from 11 higher education leaders in Africa, who served between 2000 and 2015, reports that each of the leaders interviewed laid claim to having transformed their institutions, despite lacking formal training in leadership (MacGregor, 2015). The indicators of transformation the leaders pointed out include expanding student enrolments and physical space, increasing the percentage of private funding to the institutions, privatising student services like accommodation, introducing 'marketable' academic programmes, and enhancing graduate employability. However, these claims to transformation exist alongside studies documenting increased graduate unemployment and declining quality of graduate skills from the continent's universities (Inter-University Council of East Africa/East African Business Council, 2014; Oanda & Sifuna, 2016).

Central to these claims to innovative or transformative leadership has been assertions that despite decreased funding, the leaders engaged in reforms that led to the institutions obtaining a higher percentage of private resources, making investments in expanding institutional capacities and academic programmes, developing organic linkages with industry to boost graduate employability, and enhancing institutional reputations which boosted the employability of graduates compared to when the institutions were under greater government influence (Ng'ethe et al., 2003). The literature does also suggest that understanding how some leadership prevailed during a time of crisis creates the possibility of replicating the interventions across the continent, or at least establishing interventions through which new leaders with such skills could be nurtured. The literature also suggests that institutional governance mechanisms, such as staff/student unions, elected vice chancellors and university presidents, non-statutory committees or normal ad hoc university committees, contribute to guiding the direction of institutional innovations and transformation.

The literature is, however, silent on why some of the innovations were not sustained, or why the interventions by leaders only realised gains in one aspect of higher education while creating adverse outcomes for others. While, for example, the business acumen of the leaders contributed to institutional revenues that contributed to institutional expansion and enrolments, the quality of academic programmes declined, inequalities in student access and completion worsened, and graduate unemployment is increasing across the continent (Lebeau & Oanda, 2020). The rising influence of the business enterprise model in managing universities thus became the single yardstick for claiming 'transformative traits' by most university leaders post–1990 (Bleiklie & Byrkjeflot, 2002; Mamdani, 2007). The idea that universities ought to be organised and managed as businesses and become entrepreneurial universities (Clark, 1998) continues to influence debates on transformative leadership for higher education in Africa. The roles of new governance councils that were set up for higher education institutions across Africa was largely articulated in terms of the councils helping the institutions transition to embrace entrepreneurship in all aspects of their operations.

The surge for entrepreneurial practices in higher education institutions across Africa has resulted in a preference for business strategic planning as a driver of academic programmes and the missions of the institutions (Mamdani, 2007). Entrepreneurship in its different facets has been the singular benchmark that higher education leaders have used to make claims of transformative leadership. Despite the claims, literature evaluating outcomes of entrepreneurial leaders and universities as a basis for transformative leadership suggests that entrepreneurship in African universities has generally led to a decline in academic standards and the quality of graduates, and may have contributed to increasing trends in graduate unemployment (Association of African Universities, 2013; IUCEA/EABC, 2014).

The second strand of the literature argues that transformative leadership skills are not inborn traits. Rather, individuals can be trained to master transformative leadership skills. The literature has contributed to the design of formal leadership training programmes for higher education leaders, especially in Africa. The focus is to identify and train leaders who can promote educational entrepreneurship, defined as a strategic focus on creating short- and long-term opportunities for learning that will make a significant difference for individuals and their societies (Clark, 1998). Such leadership has the capacity to design academic programmes geared towards society's grand challenges, such as poverty, climate change, social inequalities, and political instability.

In Africa, a number of training interventions have been conducted to help higher education leaders master skills in strategic planning. Among the oldest interventions are those that have been undertaken by the Association

of African Universities. The Senior University Management Association organised a programme from 1991 to 2002 focused on leadership development and management training. This, together with the Leadership Development Workshops, organised from 2003 to 2010, remains among the oldest pan-African attempts at higher education leadership training under the auspices of 10 members of the Association of African Universities (Mouton, Effah, & Sibuga, 2015). The impact of these interventions on improving higher education leadership in Africa remains inconclusive, and the subsequent mushrooming of regional and national interventions does suggest that these pan-African programmes have not achieved the intended impact.

In terms of regional training interventions, in francophone African countries recent emphasis in developing educational leaders has focused on designing tripartite educational administration and leadership development schemes (Toulassi, 2017). In eastern and central Africa, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture provides support for middle university managers and administrators to build the skills and competencies required to transform universities to operate in the new era of development relevance and quality outputs (Okalany & Adipala, 2016). In southern Africa, training is provided under the auspices of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (Watson et al., 2009), and in West Africa, there was the Senior Academic Leadership Training programme, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 2010 to 2017, which focused on best leadership practices for African universities (Effah, 2018). The training interventions have also focused on sharpening leadership skills in strategic planning, the capacity to make responsible but timely decisions, business acumen, faculty development, and strategic alliances. The increasing establishment of university-based incubators that offer mentorship, technical assistance, or help to refine students' business ideas is part of this innovative drive in universities (Kelly & Firestone, 2016). This strategy is aimed at preparing students for careers as entrepreneurs and at incubating startups.

Although they are diverse and their effectiveness has not been documented, the various interventions do underscore the fact that clear pipelines to produce transformative leaders for higher education remain underdeveloped. This gap partly explains the failure of higher education institutions to contribute towards societal transformation.

Individual identities and transformative leadership

Despite the growing interest in leadership training, and evidence of leaders who have exhibited transformative leadership traits irrespective of formal training, some literature does suggest that within African higher education,

the transformative capacity of leaders and institutions is often attenuated by intersectional identities and interests. Individual identities and affinities also continue to determine who gets appointed to higher education leadership positions, irrespective of their potential for transformative leadership (Mabokela & Mawila, 2004; Mama, 2006; Moodly & Toni, 2015; Morley, 2015; Odhiambo, 2011). Gender, ethnicity, region, religion, race, and individual socioeconomic profiles appear in the literature as frequently influencing the choice of leaders, and such considerations often outweigh academic or leadership skills merit. In terms of gender, the literature does suggest that despite efforts to increase access to universities as students and academics, fewer females make it to senior academic and administrative ranks of most institutions (Mama, 2003; Mastercard Foundation, 2014; Phakeng, 2015). Data from studies undertaken by the Forum for Women Vice-Chancellors in Africa indicate that out of about 1 500 universities across the continent, only 40 (2.6 per cent) were headed by women in 2019 (Lirri, 2019). The literature does suggest that higher education leadership remains gendered across the continent; there are more women as part of the teaching force, but few are critically engaged in senior leadership positions. The literature does also indicate that while women have to overcome multiple hurdles to get to leadership positions at all levels, the leadership performance of the few who get to these positions is undermined by deeply rooted gendered institutional cultures, both within the institutions and in society (Mama, 2003; Mastercard Foundation, 2014). Women's success in leadership is often not attributed to their intellectual skills, but to their other identities and social networks in ways that demean their intellectual contribution. Mentoring interventions and role modelling are needed as interventions to career paths that lead towards leadership positions (Morley, 2015).

Ethnic and regional identities also undermine the integrity of higher education leadership in Africa. Across the continent, access to higher education often manifests deep ethnic inequalities in the composition of the students, academics, and administrators. This goes back to the ways in which colonial capital and education developed during the colonial period, and how it has been maintained (Franck & Rainer, 2012). Ethnic identities and political affiliation also determine who gets appointed to leadership positions, meaning that merit is sacrificed. Higher education leadership is captured by ties of kinship, locality, ethnicity, and clientele, which exert pressure to serve ends other than those that promote the academic and research mission of the universities (Munene, 2016; Sifuna, 1998).

The interface between ethnicity and politics in determining university leadership in Africa continues to be sustained by political interests in using higher education institutions as avenues for distributing political and economic largesse and patronage (Mazrui, 2004; Oanda, 2016). Politicians in Africa see

universities as critical outposts for building political clients, and therefore become interested in who is appointed to university leadership, who ascends the academic ranks, who serves in student leadership, and which academics can be conscripted to offer positive political commentary in popular media about certain political leaders (Sadiq, Barnes, Price, Gumedze, & Morrell, 2019). Where there is concurrence between the political leadership and higher education leaders, claims of transformative leadership are made even when this is not manifest in the work of higher education institutions and their connections to society. Emergent entrepreneurial cultures over the last two decades have attracted new interests bent on conceptualising transformation away from the core academic mandates of the universities. Conversely, politicians have encouraged university leaders to employ service providers from their own networks, thus turning some vice chancellor's offices into bureaucracies that are more interested in business than academic advancement (Mazrui, 2004). The affinity of higher education leaders with external political entities has been documented in the literature as contributing to the failure of universities to meet their commitments to society (Bell, 2001; Kirya, 2019; Oanda, 2016). The concern with these trends is that where consideration of other interests besides merit is used to appoint academic and institutional leaders, the capacity for the exercise of transformative leadership is compromised, even for leaders with the best transformation credentials.

Overall, the extent to which higher education leadership can be characterised as transformative before and after 1990 provides mixed results. While studies document strides in institutional and enrolment growth, equity, diversity, and inclusion across all the basic indicators have remained elusive (Darvas, Gao, Shen, & Bawany, 2017; Zeleza, 2021). Certainly, the conditions that obtained in the 1970s and 1980s that triggered policy changes from a state-controlled higher education model to autonomous leadership structures in search of transformative potentials still prevail, and in some cases, have deteriorated. Access to the institutions continues to favour students from better socioeconomic backgrounds; leadership and governance systems remain captured, either by private interests or politicians; and perceptions that graduates have poor skills, thus compromising their capacity for innovation and transformation, abound (Zeleza, 2021). What has been claimed in the literature as transformative leadership in the post–1990 period has, therefore, largely hollowed out the capacity for transformation at the universities as initially conceived, and instead forced the leadership to engage in inappropriate business practices. This has reduced students to consumers instead of learners, vocationalised academic programmes, devalued academic effort, and commodified knowledge in ways inimical to transformation (Zeleza, 2021) – hardly indicators of transformative leadership.

Reconceptualising transformative higher education leadership in Africa

What should the shape of transformative leadership be for and in African higher education? And can such leadership be realised in isolation of the state and more through private interests? This section does not delve into a detailed conceptual discussion of what transformative leadership should entail; Chapter 1 (Swartz) and Chapter 2 (De Kock & Swartz) in this volume have dealt with that extensively. Suffice it to note that what the literature documents as transformative leadership in African universities in the pre–1990 and post–1990 periods aligns more with transactional and transformational leadership, as variously discussed in the literature. In the absence of public funding and government control of management, institutional leaders emerged who used carrots and sticks and focused on single issues to keep the institutions running, but without fundamentally changing the ideological foundations of the institutions that occasioned dysfunctions in the first place (Farnsworth et al., 2020). The persistence of challenges in the higher education sector point to how unsuitable transactional and transformational interventions have been.

The other question to pose is whether higher education institutions in Africa, as presently constituted, have the capacity to trigger transformation irrespective of the nature of leadership. The call for decolonisation points to some kind of ideological capture that university leadership has to contend with, despite their transformative credentials. Some literature on leadership has also tended to focus on the idea of transformation broadly as the capacity of universities to have positive impacts on their communities through various forms of engagement. But first, this transformation needs to take place at the level of the institution through a leadership that contributes to reimagining what it means to be a university in Africa; how this should shape institutional culture(s), curricula, and scholarship more broadly; and how universities and students should be funded.

Often, transformation has been used to push for the broad idea of decolonisation, including both leadership and curriculum transformation (Chimakonam, 2019). This is part of the complex terrain within which university leaders are expected to lead and manage (Mamdani, 2018; Nabudere, 2003). Transformative leadership in this sense means the potential for higher education institutions to serve as levers of social transformation (Ngcamu, 2017). However, while higher education leaders confront similar challenges across the continent, their conception of transformation, leadership, and social change differ in ways that make it difficult to frame an African notion of transformative leadership in higher education (Bell, 2001). The idea of transformative leadership relevant to the African context therefore remains fragmented. Studies do suggest that true transformation for universities and university leaders in Africa needs to

entail practical and epistemological ruptures with previous ways of doing things and a reconstruction of structures, relations, cultures, and institutions (Aina, 2010; Bell, 2001; Clay, 2016). Besides, because of the reluctance or inability of higher education leadership to embrace transformation in the manner desired by governments, strong sentiments supporting the return of the state and the notion of a 'developmental' university to provide accountability on the operations of higher education institutions abound (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2018; Mzangwa, 2019). The focus of this sentiment is on reimagining creatively the role of higher education and its relationship to society within the African context (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2018).

In South Africa, the perceived resistance by some higher education leaders to implementing 'transformation' as understood by government has led to calls for more government regulation and stewardship of higher education institutions (Hornsby, 2015; Ngcamu, 2017). In Kenya, the 2013 Universities Act, that provided for more autonomy of higher education governance bodies, was repealed in 2018 and, powers for appointing university leaders were moved to the public service commission, and, indirectly, the president of the country was given more power to decide who was appointed to the top leadership of the universities (Republic of Kenya, 2019). It is instructive that in Kenya, the new regulations for hiring top public university leaders were developed without evident input from university councils. In Ghana, the National Assembly sought to grant the country's president the power to appoint the chancellors and chairs of university councils (Appiagyei-Atua, 2020). This literature questions the possibility of realising transformative leadership in Africa within a higher education context that has minimally changed from its colonial mission and orientation. Alongside the literature on transformative leadership is that of academic leadership, signalling the importance of quality and progressive academic leadership as a basis for the emergence of transformative leadership (Appiagyei-Atua, 2020).

Conclusion

Transformative leadership for higher education in Africa, whether conceptualised at the level of individual traits of institutional leaders or the impact of institutions on society, remains problematic. A broad conceptualisation of transformative leadership to encompass equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice is a tall order and beyond what most individuals can achieve, irrespective of their skills and commitment to transformative leadership. The enormity of the task of achieving equity and inclusion in the context of higher education that has minimally transformed from its colonial origins remains contested. The continued demands for decolonising various aspects of higher education in Africa point to the reality that despite claims of transformative leadership, more

is required to make higher education institutions on the continent spaces for the ethical transformation of institutions and individuals. How does one resource mass higher education in ways that address diversity while committing to differentiation? Who gets what, and how is this to be determined in a context where the scramble for physical access remains largely unaddressed? Should achieving equity, diversity, and inclusion to higher education be gradual and incremental, and who should get in first? These are the issues that higher education transformative leadership will need to encompass.

#TransformativeLeadershipFromBelow

Transformation in higher education should not just be a top-down process. A transformative institutional vision can be driven from below even if management remains uninvolved.

Questions for discussion

1. What needs to be transformed in higher education, and in which directions?
2. What happens when leadership is exercised in ways that address one challenge, but hollow out institutional capacity to regenerate in other areas?
3. How can we create contexts and cultures in higher education institutions that encourage transformative leaders to emerge?
4. What are the challenges of 'transformative leadership from below'?

References

Abagi, O. (1999). *Resource utilization in public universities in Kenya: Enhancing efficiency and cost-recovery measures*. Research Paper No. OP/05/99. Nairobi, Kenya: Institute of Policy Analysis & Research.

Aina, T. A. (2010). Beyond reforms: The politics of higher education transformation in Africa. *African Studies Review, 53*(1), 21–40.

Ajayi, J. F. A., Goma, L. K. H., & Johnson, G. A. (1996). *The African experience with higher education*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Ake, C. (1981). *The political economy of Africa*. Harlow, United Kingdom: Longman.

Al-Samarrai, S. & Bennell, P. (2003). *Where has all the education gone in Africa? Employment outcomes among secondary school and university leavers*. Brighton, United Kingdom: Institute of Development Studies.

Appiagyei-Atua, K. (2020, 8 June). Ghana is considering a new law to govern universities. Why it's a bad idea. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/ghana-is-considering-a-new-law-to-govern-universities-why-its-a-bad-idea-139583.

Assié-Lumumba, N. T. (2006). *Higher education in Africa: Crises, reforms and transformation*. Working paper series. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Association of African Universities. (2013, May). *Transforming African higher education for graduate employability and socio-economic development*. Proceedings of the 13th General Conference of the Association of African Universities, Libreville, Gabon.

Association of African Universities. (2017). *AAU leadership development workshop (LEDEV) series*. LEDEV X Workshop Report. Retrieved from Association of African Universities website https://blog.aau.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LEDEV-X-Report.pdf.

Atteh, S. O. (1996). The crisis in higher education in Africa. *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, *24*(1), 36–42.

Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research and managerial applications.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Bell, D. I. (2001, July). *Leading change: African conceptions of leadership and transformation in higher education in South Africa*. Paper presented at Higher Education Close Up 2, Lancaster University, UK.

Bennett, D., Richardson, S., & MacKinnon, P. (2016). *Enacting strategies for graduate employability: How universities can best support students to develop generic skills – Appendices (Part B)* (SP13-3258). Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education. Retrieved from https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1874777/SP13-3258-Curtin_Bennett-_Graduate-Employability_Part-B-Appendices1.pdf.

Bleiklie, I. & Byrkjeflot, H. (2002). Changing knowledge regimes: Universities in a new research environment. *Higher Education*, *44*(3–4), 519–532.

Block, L. S. (1984). National development policy and outcomes at the University of Dar es Salaam. *African Studies Review*, *27*(1), 97–115.

Bolden, R., Jones, S., Davis, H., & Gentle, P. (2015). *Developing and sustaining shared leadership in higher education: Stimulus paper series*. London, United Kingdom: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Chimakonam, J. O. (2019). Decolonisation, Africanisation and transformation: Why we need 'that' African contribution to world history and civilisation. In J. O. Chimakonam (Ed.). *Ezumezu: A system of logic for African philosophy and studies* (pp. 181–205). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Clark, B. R. (1998). *Creating entrepreneurial universities: Organizational pathways of transformation*. Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing.

Clay, P. I. (2016, 16 December). Model for the transformation of higher education in Africa. *University World News*.
Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20161216123836698.

Cloete, N., Bailey, T., & Maassen, P. (2011). *Universities and economic development in Africa: Pact, academic core and coordination – Synthesis report*. Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Higher Education Transformation.

Coleman, J. S. (1986). The idea of the developmental university. *Minerva, 24*(4), 476–494.

Court, D. (1999). *Financing higher education in Africa: Makerere, the quiet revolution* (No. 143). World Bank. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9856.

Darvas, P., Gao, S., Shen, Y., & Bawany, B. (2017). *Sharing higher education's promise beyond the few in sub-Saharan Africa.* Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Douglas, T. (2007). *The history of University of Dar es Salaam: Chronicling the importance of the student voice*. Master's thesis. Georgetown University Program on Justice and Peace, Washington, DC.

Effah, P. (2018). *Rethinking higher education governance in Ghana: Reflections of a professional administrator*. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Fairholm, M. R. (2002). *Defining leadership: A review of past, present, and future ideas*. Monograph Series MS02-02. George Washington University Center for Excellence in Municipal Management.
Retrieved from https://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/support-files/definingleadershipreview.pdf.

Farnsworth, D., Clark, J. L., Hall, J., Johnson, S., Wysocki, A., & Kepner, K. (2020). *Transformational leadership: The transformation of managers and associates*. UF/IFAS Extension. Retrieved from https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HR020.

Franck, R. & Rainer, I. (2012). Does the leader's ethnicity matter? Ethnic favouritism, education, and health in sub-Saharan Africa. *American Political Science Review*, *106*(2), 294–325.

Fredua-Kwarteng, E. (2018, 16 November). Developmental universities need strong leadership. *University World News*.
Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20181107124958321.

Hill, J., Walkington, H., & France, D. (2016). Graduate attributes: Implications for higher education practice and policy. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 40*(2), 155–163.

Hornsby, D. J. (2015, 8 September). How South African universities are governed is the biggest challenge. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/how-south-african-universities-are-governed-is-the-biggest-challenge-47075.

Hughes, R. (1987). Revisiting the fortunate few: University graduates in the Kenyan labor market. *Comparative Education Review*, *31*(4), 583–601.

IUCEA/EABC (Inter-University Council of East Africa/East African Business Council). (2014). *Regional higher education qualification gaps: Vol. II. Situation composite EAC report*. Kampala, Uganda: IUCEA.

Kaunda, K. D. (1968). *The imperative of human dignity*. Lusaka, Zambia: Zambia Information Service.

Kelly, T. & Firestone, R. (2016). *How tech hubs are helping to drive economic growth in Africa*. World Bank. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23645.

Kets de Vries, M. F. R., Sexton, J. C., & Ellen, B. P. (2016). Destructive and transformational leadership in Africa. *Africa Journal of Management*, *2*(2), 166–187.

Kinyanjui, K. (1994). African education: Dilemmas, challenges and opportunities. In U. Himmelstrand, K. Kinyanjui, & E. Mburugu (Eds). *African perspectives on development* (pp. 280–294). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Kirya, M. (2019, 2 September). *Corruption in universities: Paths to integrity in the higher education sub-sector (Issue 10)*. U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. Retrieved from https://www.u4.no/publications/corruption-in-universities-paths-to-integrity-in-the-higher-education-subsector.pdf.

Lebeau, Y. (2008). Universities and social transformation in sub-Saharan Africa: Global rhetoric and local contradictions. *Compare*, *38*(2), 139–153.

Lebeau, Y. & Oanda, I. O. (2020). *Higher education expansion and social inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa: Conceptual and empirical perspectives*. Working Paper 2020-10. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Lindow, M. (2009, 20 February). Africa's new crisis: A dearth of professors. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/africas-new-crisis-a-dearth-of-professors/.

Lirri, E. (2019, 31 October). Women supporting women. *University World News*. Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20191029090031380.

Mabokela, R. O. & Mawila, F. N. K. (2004). The impact of race, gender, and culture in South African higher education. *Comparative Education Review*, *48*(4), 396–416.

Macfarlane, B. & Chan, R. Y. (2012). The last judgement: Exploring intellectual leadership in higher education through academic obituaries. *Studies in Higher Education*, *39*(2), 294–306.

MacGregor, K. (Ed.). (2015). Thoughts and experiences of African university leaders. *University World News*.
Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/charts/UWN_2015_AfricanUniLeaders.pdf.

Mama, A. (2003). Restore, reform but do not transform: The gender politics of higher education in Africa. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 1*(1), 101–125.

Mama, A. (2006). Pursuing gender equality in the African university. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies, 1*(1), 53–79.

Mamdani, M. (1993). University crisis and reform: A reflection on the African experience. *Review of African Political Economy*, *20*(58), 7–19.

Mamdani, M. (2007). *Scholars in the marketplace: The dilemmas of neo-liberal reform at Makerere University, 1989–2005*. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Mamdani, M. (2018, 19 July). The African university. *London Review of Books*. Retrieved from https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n14/mahmood-mamdani/the-african-university.

Marginson, S. & Yang, L. (2021). Individual and collective outcomes of higher education: A comparison of Anglo-American and Chinese approaches. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *20*(1), 1–31.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

Mazrui, A. A. (2004). *Power, politics and the African condition*: *Collected essays of Ali A. Mazrui, Vol. 3*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Mkandawire, T. (2001). Thinking about developmental states in Africa. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *25*(3), 289–313.

Moodly, A. L. & Toni, N. (2015). Women's access to higher education leadership: Where are the role models? *Journal of Social Sciences*, *45*(1), 45–52.

Morley, L. (2015). Widening participation in Ghana and Tanzania. *International Higher Education*, *67*. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2012.67.8599.

Mouton, J., Effah, P., & Sibuga, K. P. (2015). The context of HELM training in Africa. In J. Mouton & L. Wildschut (Eds). *Leadership and management: Case studies in training in higher education in Africa* (pp. 17–36). Cape Town, South Africa: African Minds.

Munene, I. (2016, 11 January). How the rise in ethnic tensions at Kenya's universities is hurting the academy. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/how-the-rise-in-ethnic-tensions-at-kenyas-universities-is-hurting-the-academy-50730.

Mzangwa, S. T. (2019). The effects of higher education policy on transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. *Cogent Education*, *6*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1592737.

Nabudere, D. W. (2003). Towards the establishment of a pan-African university: A strategic concept paper. *African Journal of Political Science*, *8*(1), 1–30.

Ngcamu, B. S. (2017). The effects of leadership traits on transformation: A case study of a South African university. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa, 13*(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v13i1.403.

Ng'ethe, N., Assié-Lumumba, N. A., Subotzky, G., & Sutherland-Addy, E. (2003). *Higher education innovations in sub-Saharan Africa: With specific reference to universities.* Nairobi, Kenya: University of Nairobi.

Nkrumah, K. (1973). *I speak of freedom*. Bedford, United Kingdom: Panaf Books.

Nyerere, J. K. (1968). The role of universities. In J. K. Nyerere (Ed.). *Freedom and socialism: Uhuru na ujamaa – A selection from writings and speeches, 1965–1967* (pp. 179–186). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Oanda, I. O. (2016, 12 May). How political interference keeps hurting Africa's universities. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/how-political-interference-keeps-hurting-africas-universities-58387.

Oanda, I. O. & Sifuna, D. N. (2016). Divergent narratives on graduate employability in Kenya: Dysfunctional institutions or dysfunctional labour markets? In British Council (Ed.). *Universities, employability and inclusive development: Revitalizing higher education in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa* (pp. 39–56). London, United Kingdom: British Council.

Odhiambo, G. (2011). Women and higher education leadership in Kenya: A critical analysis. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *33*(6), 667–678.

Okalany, E. & Adipala, E. (2016). *Catalyzing change in African universities: Developing transformational leadership and management capacity in African universities*. African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Fifth Biennial Conference*, 14*(2), 203–213. Retrieved from https://repository.ruforum.org/documents/catalyzing-change-african-universities-developing-transformational-leadership-and-0.

Oketch, M., McCowan, T., & Schendel, R. (2014). *The impact of tertiary education on development: A rigorous literature review*. EPPI-Centre Reference 2205. Retrieved from https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/Tertiary%20education%202014%20Oketch%20report.pdf.

Phakeng, M. L. (2015). The invisibility of African women and the masculinity of power. *South African Journal of Science*, *111*(11–12). https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2015/a0126.

Republic of Kenya. (2019). *Guidelines for the nomination of chancellors and the recruitment of vice-chancellors.* Nairobi, Kenya: Public Service Commission.

Rost, J. C. (1991). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Sadiq, H., Barnes, K. I., Price, M., Gumedze, F., & Morrell, R. G. (2019). Academic promotions at a South African university: Questions of bias, politics and transformation. *Higher Education*, *78*, 423–442.

Saint, W. S. (1992). *Universities in Africa: Strategies for stabilization and revitalization*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Shattock, M. (2018). Entrepreneurial leadership in higher education. In P. N. Teixeira & J. C. Shin (Eds). *The international encyclopedia of higher education systems and institutions* (pp. 382–386). Heidelberg, Germany: Springer Dordrecht.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Sifuna, D. N. (1998). The governance of Kenyan public universities. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 3*(2), 175–212.

Toulassi, B. (2017). Educational administration and leadership in francophone Africa: 5 dynamics to change education. In S. Mukerji & P. Tripathi (Eds). *Handbook of research on administration, policy, and leadership in higher education* (pp. 20–45). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Watson, P., Motala, E., & Koetcha, P. (2009). *Leadership challenges for higher education in southern Africa: SARUA leadership dialogue series, volume 1.* Johannesburg, South Africa: South African Regional Universities Association.

Zeleza, P. (2021). Quality higher education 'indispensable' for Africa's future. *University World News*. Retrieved from https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=202107051145016.

Žydžiūnaitė, V. (2018). Considerations on intellectual and academic leadership of a scholar in higher education: The descriptive literature review. *Acta Educationis Generalis*, *8*(1), 33–49.

12 *Transformative leadership in resource-constrained schools in South Africa*

Andrea Juan and Sylvia Hannan

Overview

Many students attending resource-scarce schools follow an almost predetermined pathway in which their lower socioeconomic status becomes intergenerationally entrenched due to poor achievement outcomes. This chapter argues that transformative leadership in disadvantaged schools can create transformative schools. School principals are the facilitators of learning, and must articulate a transformative vision to the school, and inspire teachers, parents, and students to achieve shared goals. In producing higher student outcomes than expected, these schools and their leadership are playing a transformative role in South African society. Using information from transformative resource-scarce schools that are performing above the national average, responses of primary school principals, teachers, and students are used to identify transformative leadership practices and outcomes. Transformative leadership in educational contexts is not abstract, nor is it a system of practice that requires a Herculean effort, but it can be attained by specific transformative leadership practices with achievable outcomes.

Introduction

The most prominent characteristic of the South African basic education system is the generally low quality of education that is delivered (Reddy et al., 2020). This is driven, in part, by the performance of poorer students in fee-free schools (called 'no-fee schools') that have consistently performed significantly worse than their fee-paying counterparts (Reddy et al., 2020). There are, however, some schools that, despite their resource-scarce contexts, produce good academic outcomes for students. In this chapter, the authors examine whether transformative leadership practices by principals are related to these better achievement outcomes.

The context for school leadership in South Africa has been strongly shaped by the promulgation of innovative legislation and policy, as well as by the shifting responsibilities required of school principals and school management, and the changing demography of students and teachers since 1994 (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Two major development needs that were identified were, first, the dismantling of Apartheid structures and widening of school governance and, second, the development of school leaders to enhance the quality of school management and improve educational outcomes (Bush & Heystek, 2006).

The traditional leadership approach of the principal has had to shift amidst the significant changes associated with education reforms, which require new and creative ways of thinking about the approaches used in educational leadership (Botha, 2018).

Despite policy reforms, South Africa continues to be characterised by a bifurcated education system where two distinct schooling systems exist. South African schools are categorised into socioeconomic groups based on schools' resources and the socioeconomic status of the area surrounding the schools. Schools in disadvantaged communities that are more resource constrained, and therefore allocated a higher state subsidy, are categorised as no-fee schools. Fee-paying schools are those that are situated in more affluent areas with greater access to resources, and therefore do not require the same level of state subsidisation. Generally, students from poorer backgrounds attend no-fee schools, while fee-paying schools are attended by students from more affluent backgrounds. Thus, there remain two distinct education systems with poor-quality, poor-performing schools on the one hand and high-quality, high-performing schools on the other (Soudien, Juan, Harvey, Zulu, & Hannan, 2017). Many of the disadvantaged no-fee schools are operating in contexts of multiple deprivation where they lack adequate resources and infrastructure, and face teacher shortages or have unqualified and under-qualified staff. In addition, they often operate in contexts with inadequate resources, poor service delivery, and limited access to social services – these compounded adverse conditions negatively impact on such schools' effectiveness. How can conditions in these schools be addressed so that their students' well-being and achievements improve despite the context?

Although a focus on achievement is important, there is also a need to promote changes in no-fee schools for the benefit of student well-being. If there is a focus on promoting characteristics of transformative leadership in disadvantaged schools, transformative schools can be created. Many students attending no-fee schools are set to follow an almost predetermined pathway through life in which their lower socioeconomic status becomes intergenerationally entrenched, but by promoting transformative leadership, through which schools and students are transformed, their well-being and opportunities for the future can be improved. Shields (2010, p. 558) argues that 'transformative leadership takes seriously Freire's contention that education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it, transformation cannot occur'. In Freire's (1998) now-famous article, conscientisation, developed through education, becomes the starting point for change.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to argue for the development of transformative leaders in no-fee schools in South Africa – schools which function in oppressive historical, social, and resource-constrained contexts. Transformative leadership is crucial if schools are to be successful in providing

good learning opportunities for students. The first part of this chapter presents a theory of transformative leadership and focuses on how the articulation of a common vision is operationalised. In the second part of the chapter, quantitative and qualitative data are used to identify specific transformative leadership practices and outcomes that are unique to transformative schools in South Africa.

Transformation through the articulation of a common vision

In Chapter 1, Swartz set up the key attributes of transformative leadership based on the work of Shields (2010). The processes of transformative leadership are concerned with a vision, influence, goals, being people-centred, and collaboration (Table 1.1 of Chapter 1). Drawing from this, the authors of this chapter argue that one core characteristic of transformative leadership in education is the ability to motivate others to work towards a particular vision and goal. The literature on leadership highlights that the development of a transformative vision is an important aspect of transformative leadership. This characteristic is further unpacked throughout this chapter. According to Van Oord (2013, p. 419), transformative leadership is a critical and collaborative process 'in which school-based action research and situational knowledge creation contribute significantly to organizational decision-making'.

Within the school context, one can examine the practices employed by principals in developing a vision (Kose, 2011). The potential exists for principals to promote a transformative vision that can be leveraged for transformative hiring, curriculum development, professional learning, and school improvement (Kose, 2011). This future vision, which shows what is possible within the school and community, solidifies personal connections, forges an identity between an organisation and its members, and inspires personal commitment. It is this ability to inspire and create connections with others, and to articulate a compelling future vision, that allows effective leaders to aim for the betterment of society (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). A vision or mission that is collectively developed and shared by all school stakeholders is characteristic of effective schools (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007), directs positive school change, helps foster inclusive and equitable schools (Kose, 2011; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003), and ideally guides quality professional development (Tallerico, 2005). The shared vision should therefore inform and guide the nature and trajectory of transformative school improvements (Mafora, 2013).

Transformative leadership 'emphasises the need for educational organizations to articulate and attain purposes related to equity and *excellence*, public and private good, and *individual and collective advancement*' (Shields, 2011, p. 6, emphasis added). From Shields's description, two core characteristics of this vision emerge: the transformative vision must focus on excellence and must

be collaborative. The simplest way to measure transformation is through higher-than-expected student performance, which this chapter does measure. Apart from these academic outcomes, other non-cognitive and transformative leadership outcomes are also explored.

Methodology

To explore this form of leadership empirically, the authors used Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data collected from 297 South African nationally representative primary schools in 2019. The full sample consisted of 297 school principals, 294 mathematics educators, 11 903 Grade 5 students, and 11 720 parents/caregivers.[1] The study was approved by the Human Sciences Research Council's Research Ethics Committee and authorised and funded by the national Department of Basic Education. Informed consent was obtained from principals, teachers, and parents. Principals consented *in loco parentis* for student participation.

TIMSS collects achievement data, as well as contextual information from students, teachers, and school principals.[2] The authors extracted data for no-fee schools (a proxy indicator for resource scarcity) and then grouped the schools that scored above and below an average mathematics achievement score of 374 points (the national average). The better-performing schools have sometimes been referred to as resilient, but here it is argued that in producing higher student outcomes than expected, these schools, and their leadership, are playing a transformative role in South African society. Students from these schools will have greater access to further education and labour market opportunities. The authors then looked at the transformative leadership characteristics in each of the school groups.

Nineteen TIMSS items which were thematically linked to three themes – a focus on excellence, collaboration, and transformative outcomes – were extracted from the data. Frequency analysis was used to determine whether there were differences favouring the transformative schools. Next, t-tests were run to determine whether differences were significant at the 90 per cent confidence level. The nine remaining items appear in Table 12.1.

The limitation of using cross-sectional quantitative data to explore such complex phenomena is acknowledged. However, using data from such a large-scale study offers a window through which readers can glimpse the leadership styles of principals, management teams, and teachers in South African no-fee primary schools. Using this data, this chapter then builds conceptually by

[1] Unlike the Grade 9 TIMSS dataset, the inclusion of parent/caregiver data is unique to the Grade 5 dataset.

[2] For a comprehensive description of the TIMSS methodology, see Reddy et al., 2022.

drawing from smaller studies and theoretical literature on transformative leadership in South African schools.

Table 12.1 *TIMSS items that measure transformative leadership characteristics where transformative schools differed significantly from low-performing schools*

Transformative leadership characteristic	TIMSS item used to measure characteristic
Focus on excellence	• Principals' emphasis on academic success • Students' desire to perform well • Students' positive attitude to learning
Collaborative	• Parental involvement in school • Collaboration between school management and teachers • Student sense of belonging
Transformative outcomes	• Respect for classmates • Students never bullied • Parent satisfaction with schools

(Source: Authors)

Findings

Seventeen per cent of the no-fee schools fell into the 'transformative school' group (scoring above the national average), indicating that there are schools that, despite their oppressive and resource-scarce contexts, are providing students with an above average education. Figure 12.1 sets out the differences in student exposure to transformative leadership practices, characteristics, and outcomes, between low-performing schools and transformative schools.

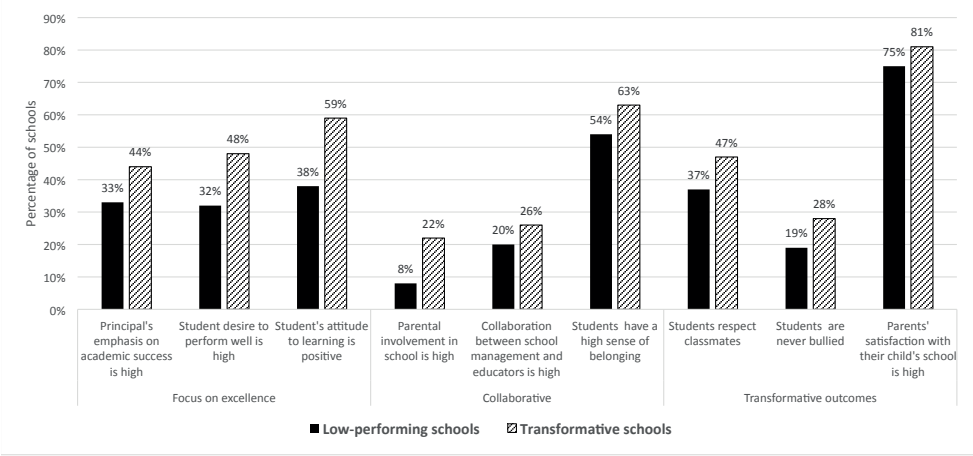
Each of the aspects identified in Figure 12.1 is not resource dependent, and therefore can be developed in any context. This is critical as they can be encouraged in no-fee schools which exist in resource-constrained environments. In the following sections, we discuss the three themes identified in relation to transformation through the articulation of a common vision: a focus on excellence and academic success, collaboration, and transformative outcomes.

A focus on excellence and academic success

From the reports of mathematics teachers and school principals regarding the emphasis placed on academic success, it is evident that, generally, the better-performing, transformative schools focused more on academic excellence. Significantly more emphasis was placed on academic success by principals, there was greater desire among students to perform well, and there were more positive student attitudes to learning.

Earlier studies found that effective South African principals are involved in the quality assurance of assessments and monitoring the progress of students

Figure 12.1 *Principal, teacher, and student reports of transformative leadership and outcomes*



Source: Authors' calculations based on Human Sciences Research Council, 2020

(Kanjee & Prinsloo, 2005; Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005). Principals therefore play a role in monitoring and addressing identified problems timeously, and in ensuring that teachers are adequately equipped for their roles and responsibilities by providing feedback and guidance so that they can instruct students effectively. Kamper (2008) found that leadership efforts of effective principals in South African schools in poor areas were focused on excellence in the classroom.

In terms of the school and classroom contexts, school leadership requires the principal not only to lead, but to be a supportive role-player and a facilitator of learning (Kamper, 2008; Kanjee & Prinsloo, 2005; Van der Berg & Gustafsson, 2019). In a qualitative study by Botha (2018), one principal from a well-functioning no-fee school stated:

> I try to get them to pick a focal point. In the beginning of the year we establish goals and plan how we will reach them. We form committees, sharing and discussing ideas. I let them experiment with their ideas. They need to realize that this is a joint effort, a total quality effort to become a total quality school. Teachers are responsible for all learners. (Principal 'Hilda' in Botha, 2018, p. 10816)

This quote highlights how a clearly expressed and shared vision can provide clear direction to all stakeholders in the school community: educators, students, and parents. However, developing a clear and common focus requires a leader to serve as the medium through which a group's collective aspirations can be shaped and subsequently to provide direction to the relevant groups and individuals (Botha, 2018). Furthermore, the group needs to have shared goals and be clear about how to achieve these goals, in order to pursue a shared vision. The principal must

therefore be able to communicate realistic goals to the school's stakeholders. Finally, a principal must set high and consistent performance standards in order to improve achievement (Botha, 2018).

Students' attitudes towards learning a specific subject convey their emotional evaluation of that subject. Attitudes have a strong impact on behaviour through either facilitating or hindering the learning process. The commitment and motivation to learn a subject can be influenced by whether students enjoy the subject, attach value to it in terms of considering it useful to themselves and society, and by their self-efficacy or self-confidence in their ability to perform well in that subject (Juan, Hannan, and Namome, 2018). In and of itself, promoting positive attitudes towards learning is a desirable outcome; however, positive attitudes are also associated with better student performance. Research has shown that students who enjoy learning mathematics and science, and have higher self-efficacy or confidence in their ability to perform well in these subjects, achieve higher scores (Juan, Hannan, and Namome, 2018; Reddy et al., 2022). The relationship between attitude and achievement is bidirectional, with each mutually reinforcing the other. A transformative leader should encourage positive attitudes towards learning among students, and cultivate their desire to perform well, through working with teachers to implement strategies to achieve this.

Collaboration

The TIMSS results showed that the transformative no-fee schools had greater parental involvement, more collaboration between school management and educators to plan instruction, and a greater sense of belonging to their school among students.

In schools that are able to collaboratively define the core purpose of teaching and learning, and ensure that the entire school community is empowered to become involved, teaching and learning becomes transformative (Botha, 2018). This is a complex undertaking in South Africa, where schools operate in varying socioeconomic conditions, and principals and management teams in these resource-constrained contexts are faced with challenges and tasks that may require different leadership and management approaches. These challenges must be overcome while striving for quality educational outcomes – and this requires transformative leadership. In this transformative role, school leaders are the facilitators of learning. This encompasses how well school leaders can articulate a common transformative vision to everyone involved in the life of the school and inspire teachers, parents, and students to work towards shared goals.

The ability of leaders to inspire a shared vision for the future, create personal relationships, and distribute leadership to build capacity to stimulate positive change is key in transformative leadership. This future vision, that shows what

is possible within the school, within communities, and within stakeholders themselves, solidifies personal connections, forges an identity between an organisation and its members, and inspires personal commitment. It is this ability to inspire and create connections with others, and to articulate a compelling future vision, that allows effective leaders to aim for the betterment of society (Caldwell et al., 2012; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Transformative leaders must infuse consultation and participation into organisational routines to achieve this (Mafora, 2013), cultivating an environment conducive to collaboration.

A prerequisite is the establishment of mutually respectful relationships with staff, students, and their families, and with the wider community. This should enable school leaders to focus on working with their staff to implement equitable and socially just instructional strategies. Collaboration is crucial in supporting and leading the entire school community to be responsive to the needs of students and provide them with high levels of support (Shields & Hesbol, 2020).

Shields (2010) argues that transformative leaders reject an individualist stance in which the challenges faced by schools are attributed to students and their families in South Africa. Collaboration between school stakeholders is required. Mafora (2013) highlights that transformative leadership with social justice at its core, and its potential to address inequalities, marginalisation, and inadequate material conditions that hinder effective learning and teaching, is highly applicable to both suburban and township schools. This transformative leadership is essential for improving the education system within the South African context.

School effectiveness and improvement depend on more than just who is responsible for decision-making; they depend rather on defining the core purpose of teaching and learning collaboratively and then ensuring that the entire school community is empowered to become involved (Botha, 2018). How well a school principal can articulate a common vision and inspire teachers, parents, students, and community members to work towards shared goals is critical (Hoadley, Christie, & Ward, 2009). A qualitative study by Botha (2018) found that in schools that had achieved this focus, teaching and learning became transformative. Leadership can therefore influence the culture of a school such that it has a transformative impact on all school stakeholders (Botha, 2018). One of the teachers in the study states:

> The principal is bringing in new staff; high energy people who are willing to spend time, even their own money, on the schools. People want to do a good job for her. She is always around and available to us; on the school grounds or in the classrooms. She is positive about our teachers and the work we put in. ('Teacher' in Botha, 2018, p. 10817)

The responses from this teacher and other teachers in the study indicate that collaboration was a key factor in the success of these schools (Botha, 2018). They

spoke of how their principal endeavoured to make her school the best it could be and had a clear and unified focus. She developed a common cultural aim for her staff and constantly pushed them to do their best to improve the school. She found a way to collaboratively define the essential purpose of teaching and learning in the school and empowered the entire school community to become involved – she knew what was needed for the school to become successful and the staff embraced her ideas. 'As a result, teaching and learning became transformative' (Botha, 2018, p. 10817). The principal of this school showed that leadership has the potential to influence school culture so that it has a transformative impact on the whole school. The motivation and talent to achieve this is required from the principal, as well as from the teachers under the guidance of the principal (Botha, 2018).

Although a strong leader is important, transformative leadership also relies on support from multiple role-players both within the school (educators and students) and beyond (parents). Building relationships and working closely with teachers, students, parents, and communities is critical. Principals can encourage and foster these relationships by facilitating open communication between themselves and their stakeholders. They should also articulate a common vision of success for the school and inspire educators, students, and parents to work towards shared goals. Creating spaces and strategies that allow for the sharing of ideas, and cultivating a culture of collaboration where all stakeholders feel comfortable to provide input and feel heard, is essential. Collaboration may be enhanced through promoting a sense of belonging for all stakeholders.

Transformative outcomes: Creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning

Transformative principals implement equitable, socially just leadership as a means of creating inclusive schools in which all students feel welcomed, respected, and academically challenged (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Schools should be places where students and teachers feel safe, which enables effective teaching and learning (Winnaar, Arends, & Beku, 2018). It is therefore critical that school leaders create such an environment (or 'climate'), especially within no-fee schools.

A school's climate is determined by a multidimensional range of intangible factors, such as the challenges teachers face, disciplinary problems, and the emphasis on academic success, that reflect the overall social atmosphere of the school (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Arora, 2012; Winnaar et al., 2018). A positive or healthy school climate is associated with fewer challenges facing teachers, lower incidences of bullying and disciplinary issues, positive interactions between peers and teachers, and a higher emphasis on academic success. In addition, students feel that they belong to the school, are confident in their abilities, and are more

engaged in the classroom (Juan, Zuze, Hannan, Govender, & Reddy, 2018). Research has shown that students in schools that have a healthy school climate tend to perform better (Zuze, Reddy, Visser, Winnaar, & Govender, 2018).

The TIMSS reports from students, principals, and mathematics teachers present a clear pattern of difference between transformative and non-transformative schools. In comparison to other no-fee schools, in the transformative schools, students seem to attend class in more conducive learning environments and have greater respect for their classmates, while there is less bullying and higher levels of parent satisfaction with the schools.

Earlier research showed that the way principals encourage change and improvement, and promote a shared culture, has an impact on the success of schools (Botha, 2018). The leadership behaviours of 'innovative, equity-focused, transformative school leaders' (Shields & Hesbol, 2020, p. 16), who develop systemic school-wide strategies, focus on making learning more meaningful for their demographically changing student populations. Transformative leaders thus implement equitable, socially just leadership as a means of creating welcoming, inclusive schools (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). These principals endeavour to find ways to offer all students inclusive, excellent, and equitable education.

In the qualitative study by Botha (2018), Principal 'Laura' is praised for her interaction with and encouragement of staff, and she is adamant about the importance of their professional development, thus promoting an environment conducive to teaching and learning. One teacher notes:

> She puts things on the board in the staff room such as: 'Mrs A has a great idea, go and see it'. She praises us just the way we praise our learners. She always notices if you spend a lot of time on something and will tell you that you have done a good job; and when I am praised, just like my learners, I want to do an even better job. ('Teacher', in Botha, 2018, p. 10817)

Principal 'Laura' states, 'I like to let people try out ideas and am willing to allow for failure' (Botha, 2018, p. 10819). This is corroborated by the school's teachers, one of whom comments, 'We open our big mouths all the time; there is no fear here about saying what's on your mind' (Botha, 2018, p. 10820), while another states that the principal is 'receptive to teachers' attitudes and philosophies, we are empowered. She communicates confidence in me; she repeatedly tells me "I want you to be the best teacher in the district"' (Botha, 2018, p. 10820).

School leaders play a key role in promoting inclusive and respectful learning environments (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Principals must support teachers: encouraging them to share their opinions and implement innovative ideas, providing mentorship for new teachers, and maintaining communication to

ensure that issues are addressed timeously. Teacher training is crucial in terms of engaging with students positively, encouraging students, and instilling confidence in them. Providing extra support for struggling students is important, and implementing strategies to address poor discipline and bullying is vital. These elements can contribute to creating healthy school environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.

Conclusion

A student's access to particular school leadership and management environments largely depends on the type of school (no-fee versus fee-paying) that the student attends (Zuze & Juan, 2020). The quality of leadership matters for student outcomes, especially in failing schools (Bloom & Abel, 2015). In these circumstances, both transformational (changing schools) and transformative (changing students) leadership are required. These types of leadership styles are intertwined within the South African schooling context. Effective leadership is crucial in resource-constrained schools, perhaps even more so than in affluent schools.

Although various scholars have argued that principals should build a common lived and written vision to guide equitable school improvement efforts (for example, Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Lindstrom & Speck, 2004; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Tallerico, 2005), there has been little empirical examination of principal practices that shape the development of a transformative collective vision. This chapter presents a first step in providing this evidence. The descriptive-analytical findings show that transformative leaders are associated with transformative schools, and through the disaggregation of findings the transformative leadership attributes present in better-performing, no-fee schools have been identified.

Transformative leadership does not in itself guarantee effective implementation of envisaged reforms. The implementation of reforms depends on the motivation and capacities of leadership for its success. There are also factors that operate independently of transformative leaders that may inhibit the implementation of reforms. It is important for principals as school leaders in South Africa to be informed about the context that might have an impact on the effectiveness of their schools, but which could also ensure that their schools remain relevant and able to contribute to the growth, change, and development of their communities. South African principals not only have to keep up with developments in the world, just as their counterparts in more developed parts of the world do, but they also have the additional task of taking into account both intra- and extra-institutional contextual developments that may be unique to their particular communities and situations (Botha, 2018).

Using empirical data and drawing from extant literature, this chapter has set out very specific practices and outcomes of transformative leadership that are not resource dependent and can be employed in all schooling contexts.

#TransformativeLeadershipInSchools

Transformative leadership in resource-poor schools is not an abstract notion, nor does it require Herculean effort. It can be attained by using specific practices, with system-changing outcomes.

Questions for discussion

1. Is it possible to speak about an institution (such as a school) as being transformative? What might be gained or lost by doing so?
2. What impact does the absence of resources have on transformative leadership?
3. Does this chapter go far enough in talking about how a transformative leader might engage with the policy context to bring about greater systemic change? What else could be done?

References

Bloom, P. J. & Abel, M. B. (2015). Expanding the lens: Leadership as an organizational asset. *Young Children*, 70(2), 10–17.

Botha, R. J. (2018). Making a difference in South African schools: The cases of two female principals. *Gender & Behaviour*, *16*(1), 10812–10823.

Bush, T. & Heystek, J. (2006). School leadership and management in South Africa: Principals' perceptions. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 34*(3), 63–76.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Capper, C. A., Theoharis, G., & Sebastian, J. (2006). Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(3), 209–224.

Freire, P. (1998). Cultural action and conscientization. *Harvard Educational Review*, *68*(4), 499–521.

Glickman, C. D., Gordon, E. W., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2007). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Hoadley, U., Christie, P., & Ward, C. L. (2009). Managing to learn: Instructional leadership in South African secondary schools. *School Leadership & Management*, *29*(4), 373–389.

Human Sciences Research Council. (2020). *2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Grade 5 learner and school context dataset*. Retrieved from https://www.timss-sa.org/dataset/timss-2015-grade-5-learner-and-school-context-data.

Juan, A., Hannan, S., & Namome, C. (2018). I believe I can do science: Self-efficacy and science achievement of Grade 9 students in South Africa. *South African Journal of Science, 114*(7–8), 48–54.

Juan, A., Zuze, L., Hannan, S., Govender, A., & Reddy, V. (2018). Bullies, victims and bully-victims in South African schools: Examining the risk factors. *South African Journal of Education*, *38*(1). https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38ns1a1585.

Kamper, G. (2008). A profile of effective leadership in some South African high-poverty schools. *South African Journal of Education*, *28*(1), 1–18.

Kanjee, A. & Prinsloo, C. (2005). Improving learning in South African schools: The quality and learning project (QLP) summative evaluation (2000 to 2004). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Kose, B. W. (2011). Developing a transformative school vision: Lessons from peer-nominated principals. *Education and Urban Society*, *43*(2), 119–136.

Lindstrom, P. H. & Speck, M. (2004). *The principal as professional development leader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Mafora, P. (2013). Why leading for transformation in South African township secondary schools fails: Views from deputy principals. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(3), 687–694.

Mullis, I. V. S., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Arora, A. (2012). *TIMSS 2011 international results in mathematics*. Newton, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, Newton, MA.

Reddy, V., Winnaar, L., Harvey, J., Hannan, S., Isdale, K., Arends, F., & Juan, A. (2022). *The South African TIMSS 2019 Grade 5 results: Building achievement and bridging achievement gaps*. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Reddy, V., Winnaar, L., Juan, A., Arends, F., Harvey, J., Hannan, S., Namome, C., & Zulu, N. (2020). *TIMSS 2019 highlights of South African Grade 5 results in mathematics and science*. Pretoria, South Africa: Department of Basic Education.

Scheurich, J. J. & Skrla, L. (2003). *Leadership for equity and excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(4), 558–589.

Shields, C. M. (2011). Transformative leadership: An introduction. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 1–17.

Shields, C. M. & Hesbol, K. A. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity, and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(1), 3–22.

Soudien, C., Juan, A., Harvey, J., Zulu, N., & Hannan, S. (2017). *Furthering the developmental imperative? An assessment of the past 20 years of education legislation and policy in South Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Tallerico, M. (2005). *Supporting and sustaining teachers' professional development: A principal's guide*. Thousand Oaks, MA: Corwin Press.

Taylor, N. & Prinsloo, C. (2005). *The quality learning project: Lessons for high school improvement in South Africa*. HSRC Research Outputs.
Retrieved from https://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/6655.

Van der Berg, S. & Gustafsson, M. (2019). Educational outcomes in post-apartheid South Africa: Signs of progress despite great inequality. In N. Spaull & J. D. Jansen (Eds). *South African schooling: The enigma of inequality* (pp. 25–45). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Van Oord, L. (2013). Towards transformative leadership in education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, *16*(4), 419–434.

Winnaar, L., Arends, F., & Beku, U. (2018). Reducing bullying in schools by focusing on school climate and school socio-economic status. *South African Journal of Education*, *38*(1). https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38ns1a1596.

Zuze, T. L. & Juan, A. (2020). School leadership and local learning contexts in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *48*(3), 459–477.

Zuze, L., Reddy, V., Visser, M., Winnaar, L., & Govender, A. (2018). *TIMSS 2015 Grade 9 national report: Understanding mathematics and achievement amongst Grade 9 learners in South Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

13 *Learning transformative leadership through student activism in Kenya*

Nathan Oyori Ogechi

Overview

Student protests against learning institutions and the state have been in vogue for a long time. Student union leaders not only participate in such protests, but also mobilise and lead them. This chapter analyses transformative leadership traits of former university student union officials who embraced student activism before and after graduating. Between 1963 and 2013, Kenya experienced multipartyism and single-partyism, resulting in social and political injustices that the former student union leaders fought against. Secondary data about radical former student leaders were collected from newspapers, parliamentary documents, and the internet, while interviews with colleagues provided primary data. Data were analysed for the student leaders' contribution to constitutional changes, observance of the law, ending discrimination, pressing for plural democracy and social justice, and fighting corruption. A majority of former left-wing student leaders demonstrated transformative leadership, and their efforts contributed to realising social and political reforms in Kenya.

Introduction

Student activism occurs when students stage collective actions to 'defend their interests in order to bring change in systems, policies, attitude, knowledge, and behaviour regarding issues affecting not only university life but also society at large' (Garwe, 2017, p. 191). Their collective action often results in change for the public good, especially in a context that is wanting in social justice. This chapter examines the extent to which some former student leaders in public-sponsored Kenyan universities who engaged in student activism demonstrated (and continue to demonstrate) transformative leadership. The studied student activists were leaders of various universities' student unions between 1970 and 2013, during the presidencies of Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap Moi, and Mwai Kibaki, when instances of authoritarian leadership, institutional decay, and management crises were experienced (Byakika, 2021). Consequently, student leaders-cum-activists organised student protests and resistance to bring about government and institutional policy changes. On graduation, some of these student leaders took their knowledge and leadership skills to the legislature, judiciary, and to civil society, with varying transformative leadership impacts.

The questions this chapter sets out to ask are: 'Is there a history of university student activism in Kenya?', 'Have student leaders-cum-activists ever stood for social justice?', 'How have their actions demonstrated transformative leadership and at what cost?', and 'To what extent have they influenced change?'

The chapter discusses how former student activists who eventually assumed public leadership roles remained committed to their conviction of social justice (Bosu, Dare, Dachi, & Fenig, 2009) and unpacks their transformative leadership traits. While acknowledging student activism as an avenue for developing leadership skills, civic engagement, and community involvement (Farago, Swadener, Richter, Eversman, & Roca-Servat, 2018), the chapter takes cognisance of the distinction between left-leaning and right-leaning student activists. That is, left-leaning student activists tend to address, reduce, and eventually eliminate social inequalities based on race, gender, ethnicity, and other social identity markers. In contrast, right-wing student movements support the perpetuation of social inequalities.

The chapter first explores the scholarship on student activism before sketching the transformative leadership theoretical framework on which it is based. According to Shields (2010), transformative leadership goes beyond a leader's intention to bring about transformation; rather, in transformative leadership, one courageously confronts the unthinkable to bring about social justice. In this way, one becomes a pragmatic and non-idealistic leader. The chapter's methodology is described in detail before moving on to analyse and discuss transformative leadership traits identified in the stories of former university student activists. The chapter concludes by arguing that a large number of left-wing student activists made immense contributions to the attainment of social justice in Kenya, even though there were a few right-wing elements and compromised leaders.

The historical context of university student activism

Kenya had no autonomous university until 1970 when University College, Nairobi (a constituent college of the University of East Africa, Makerere, Uganda), became the University of Nairobi (UoN) (Magoha, 2017). At the time of writing, Kenya has 71 chartered public and private universities, constituent university colleges, and universities with letters of interim authority, and over 500 000 registered students (Cowling, 2023).

After 68 years of British imperialism, it was hoped that with independence in 1963, oppression and repression would be over. Unfortunately, only the masters changed, especially during the Kenyatta (1963–1978) and Moi (1978–2002) presidencies. These regimes implemented draconian laws that muzzled and subjugated people (Mutunga & Kiai, 1996). Kenya became a *de facto* one-party

state in 1969, and a *de jure* single-party state in 1982 by enacting Section 2(a) of the constitution, which prohibited multipartyism.

Freedom of expression, assembly, and association were controlled; secret state security agencies collected intelligence; the press was monitored; publications deemed unsympathetic to the state were banned; meetings of over nine persons could only take place if they were sanctioned; and detention without trial was enforced. Although, ideally, universities enjoy absolute freedom, university student leaders and faculty who were deemed too radical were detained (Mutunga & Kiai, 1996), while those who sympathised with the Academic Staff Union were deprived of their passports. There was police harassment of activists, and political assassinations, including those of Tom Mboya (1969), J. M. Kariuki (1975), and Robert Ouko (1990).

Multipartyism was re-introduced in 1991 following pressure from opposition leaders, university students, clergy, the Law Society of Kenya, and civil society, but repression continued throughout Moi's presidency, which ended in 2002. Furthermore, Kibaki's presidency demonstrated its intolerance in 2003 when, during negotiations for a new constitution, Dr Odhiambo Mbai, who chaired the devolution committee of the Constituent Assembly, was assassinated (Ngotho, n.d.).

The post-independence 'big-man rule' (Dulani & Tengatenga, 2020) style of leadership described above required university student union leaders' activism in collaboration with other stakeholders to counter it. Some radical student leaders completed their studies locally or abroad after expulsion or going into self-exile. After graduation, some remained activists as leaders in either academia, civil society, or politics. These include Kisumu city governor Anyang Nyong'o (Makerere University Student Guild); senators James Orengo (Student Organisation of Nairobi University – SONU) and Hassan Omar-Hassan (Moi University Student Organisation – MUSO); parliamentarians Mukhisa Kituyi, Philomena Chelagat Mutai, Tito Adungosi, Mwandawiro Mghanga, Wafula Buke, and Otieno Kajwang (all former SONU leaders); and lawyer-cum-politician Rumba Kinuthia (SONU leader). (See Amutabi, 2002; Byakika, 2021; Imanyara & Maina, 1991; Mutunga & Kiai, 1996; Oanda, 2016 for this information and other details mentioned throughout this chapter.) This chapter unravels these former university student leaders' politics and activism with a view to examining whether or not they demonstrated transformative leadership.

Scholarship on student activism

While there are differing definitions of student activism (Altbach, 1989; Garwe, 2017; Kiboiy, 2013; Martin, Hanson, & Fontaine, 2007; Zeilig, 2008), the framework and definition of activism that this chapter draws on perceives

activism as a process of active civic participation in order to address issues of public concern and bring about political or social change. The chapter distinguishes between soft and radical student activism. Soft student activism is associated with active students who enjoy their time as students, meet many people, gain many experiences, and develop competencies that are not learned from books, namely leadership, self-management, showing initiative, and making decisions (Farago et al., 2018). On the other hand, radical student activism is revolutionary and takes direct action to confront social injustice, unethical practices, corruption, and exploitation, infringement on freedoms, and repression and political oppression of the masses, through undertaking civil disobedience, protests, campaigns, boycotts, and demonstrations (Macharia, 2015; Oanda, 2016).

While student activism has taken place across the continent, most of the literature deals with activist periods or events, as well as their repression, from the 1970s to the present day (Byaruhanga, 2006; Melchiorre, 2020; Ntshoe, 2002; Smirnova, 2019; Zeilig, 2008). In Kenya, student activism has metamorphosed over the years (Klopp & Orina, 2002, Macharia, 2015). In the early years of independence, there were minimal student protests, since students enjoyed free tuition and subsistence, and the assurance of employment after graduation. The first protest occurred in 1969 when opposition leader Oginga Odinga was barred from delivering a public lecture. However, following the replacement of free tuition with student loans, and the murder of J. M. Kariuki, Member of Parliament for Nyandarua North in 1975, student activism became violent, leading to the closure of the only university at that time, the University of Nairobi (Amutabi, 2002; Klopp & Orina, 2002).

The violation of academic and other freedoms (Mutunga & Kiai, 1996) and the clamour for multipartyism triggered protests, to which the responses were police brutality and extended closures of universities (Amutabi, 2002). In attempts to reverse the foregoing ills, student activists collaborated with the clergy, the Law Society of Kenya, former student leaders, and civil society to push for political change and social justice. As Oanda (2016, p. 70) observed:

> While during the 1960s, the nascent universities witnessed student organisations crystallising around greater pan-African issues, shaping the direction of academic and public services, championing decolonisation courses and student welfare issues, the period of 1970 to 1980 saw the growth of radical student movements to resist internal descent into the authoritarianism of the new state.

This chapter analyses the extent to which radical student activists provided transformative leadership to resist the big-man rule, with a focus on instances of student leaders organising in government-sponsored universities between 1970

and 2013. Student activism in private-sponsored universities is not covered, as it was not prevalent (Mulinge, Arasa, & Wawire, 2017).

Frameworks for exploring transformative leadership

While Western leadership studies theory is not always suitable for the study of African leadership (Jallow, 2014), the nuanced theory of transformative leadership described by Carolyn Shields and based on Paulo Freire's perspectives from Brazil on change is helpful. Therefore, student activism in Kenya is examined using the lens of transformative leadership theory (TLT) described by Shields (2010; 2011). TLT is not the same as transformational leadership theory, as Shields carefully argues. According to Bell (2001), transformation is synonymous with processes of democratic change; it is a mantra for almost all social change. Thus, a transformational leader has only an intention and commitment to bring change. In contrast, a transformative leader calls for a revolution (Shields & Hesbol, 2020) and takes action geared towards bringing the desired change. Transformative leadership interrogates and disrupts that which is taken for granted (Hewitt, Davis, & Lashley, 2014).

Consequently, it requires strong leaders who take risks and assume a personal responsibility for bringing about the intended change (Bell, 2001). As Shields (2011) avers, transformative leaders experience pushback and thus considerable courage is necessary. One must ask and answer difficult questions so as to create deep and meaningful change that will benefit all of society (Bieneman, 2011). TLT is 'enriched by theories of democracy, identity, advocacy and social justice' (Shields, 2011, p. 383) and takes into account diversity, power, and culturally responsive leadership (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). It begins with questions of justice and democracy, critiques inequitable practices, and offers the promise of not just greater individual involvement, but a better life lived in common with others. Accordingly, transformative leaders should strive for social justice (Shields, 2011) and 'work to translate [their] vision into transformative action – always engaged in, and often as advocates for, the communal life of [their] neighborhood, school, community, nation, and world' (Shields, 2011, p. 385).

Transformative leadership is premised on two propositions – that is, private and public (individual and collective) good. A balance of the private and public good requires societies and institutions to address issues of democracy, civic life, and citizenship so that civic participation and democracy are strengthened. Transformative leadership is normative, grounded in the values of equity, excellence, and social justice. It is beneficial to the individual and collective good of society (especially the downtrodden), regardless of language, ethnicity, religion, social orientation, gender, identity, academic achievement, or immigration status. It should neutralise all forms of discrimination that drive poverty and inequality (Brown, Ekoue, & Goodban, 2019).

In sum, transformative leadership must work and advocate for goals that are equitable, inclusive, socially just, and deeply democratic (Shields, 2011) and, to achieve these, it must confront political establishments and local traditions (Simons, 2010). Transformative leadership embraces humility, faith, hope, love, critical thinking, solidarity, and reflective praxis (Sorkin, 2016). Effective communication is a central aspect in TLT (Stephenson, 2011). Transformative leadership must be firmly grounded in moral purpose.

The foregoing sketch of transformative leadership theory guides the analysis of student activism and transformative leadership in Kenya.

Data and methodology

The chapter employs a qualitative approach and draws on both primary and secondary data sources such as newspaper reports, the internet, parliamentary records, and personal interviews. Through newspapers, as an important source of primary data (Meyer, 2018), historical records of events involving student leaders are described. Two daily newspapers, *Daily Nation* and *The Standard*, were selected, alongside the now defunct *Weekly Review* and the *Nairobi Law Monthly*. From the two daily newspapers, stories about former university student leaders' activism were collected, while the latter two provided weekly and monthly in-depth analysis of the happenings. Through online searches, Kenya's bicameral parliamentary records and content about some legislators who were former student activists were accessed. Further, through a snowball technique, suitable former university student colleagues of the leaders were identified and interviewed. Both online interviews and phone calls were used to obtain interviewees' views about their former colleagues' transformative leadership. These interviews gave more detailed insights into the motivations and aims of the former student leaders' activism.

Transformative leadership traits

Using data from the newspaper stories, emerging leadership patterns and themes were identified and treated as transformative leadership traits. The traits include: fighters against discrimination, protectors of sanctity of life and justice, political change agents, sticklers for the law, and fighters for genuine constitutionalism. The interviewees were asked open-ended questions in relation to these traits, and their responses were analysed through the tenets of TLT characteristics.

Fighters against discrimination

TLT considers all forms of discrimination and inequity to be social injustice (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). It is important to note that the student leaders on which this chapter reports are by necessity progressive as far as issues of ethnic

and sociopolitical diversity and equality are concerned. Those they lead demand this of them, and require them to be knowledgeable and eloquent, taking a stance to reduce discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, race, or economic status. This is not always the case for senior university leadership, for example at senate or faculty committee level. As one former student leader states:

> The reality of political mobilisation inculcates in a conscious student leader an inclusive and tolerant approach to the concerns of all students. Thus, whether in a university senate disciplinary committee or a national platform, the student leader is by instinct prepared to detect and fight any form of discrimination. The protests which the likes of Hassan Omar-Hassan, James Orengo and Mwandawiro Mghanga led against the government of their time were against the disenfranchisement of their political and economic choices.
> (M. Mwambeo, personal communication, 27 August 2021)

This quotation indicates that while it is possible to perpetuate injustice against students through university structures and committees, in such cases, the student leaders who were studied courageously defended their constituents. Soft activism is an invaluable approach to use in such circumstances, and the student leaders included in this study employed critical thinking and effective communication in line with TLT (Stephenson, 2011). These student leaders also employed radical activism, as is evident in Hassan Omar-Hassan (MUSO), James Orengo (SONU), and Mwandawiro Mghanga (SONU) leading street protests to confront state-perpetrated injustices (Amutabi, 2002).

Furthermore, espousing TLT's public good, inclusivity, equity, and non-discrimination values (Bukusi, 2017), James Orengo fought racial discrimination in UoN's architecture department in 1973, where a Danish departmental chair used to 'fail' all African students, claiming that Africans had no intellectual capacity for architecture. Orengo organised a strike because he could not tolerate baseless racism. Orengo's fellow student leader observed:

> He has remained consistent as a fighter for justice and equity. His act of fighting racism at the School of Architecture is a testimony. The white lecturer was fired and things changed. Even as late as yesterday he was addressing judges in a court case telling judges to remain truthful to the constitution.
> (K. Ongeti, personal communication, 26 June 2021)

At that time, Philomena Mutai, who edited the UoN student journal, *The Anvil,* also wrote a scathing editorial on this racism, and this led to her suspension. Courage such as Orengo's and Mutai's is crucial if a transformative leader is to achieve the intended transformation (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). The price paid by Orengo was self-exile in Tanzania after the abortive 1982 coup d'état, and also,

after he was repatriated in 1983, he was detained and tortured, and only released after a protracted trial.

Tito Adungosi, Mwandawiro Mghanga, and Wafula Buke (all SONU) also showed bravery by fighting for increased democratic space against the Moi regime. For their actions, Mghanga and Buke were detained, while Adungosi paid the ultimate price of dying in prison.

Protectors of sanctity of life and justice

Life is sacred and TLT calls for justice to be served on perpetrators of violence regardless of ethnic background, creed, or social status. Many student activists followed that call. For example, when member of parliament J. M. Kariuki (a Kikuyu) was murdered, Orengo (a Luo) was practising law in Kericho town. He travelled to Nairobi and mobilised university students to demand justice for Kariuki. In this, Orengo demonstrated a recognition of the sanctity of life, and the need for peaceful coexistence while embracing the values of interdependence, compassion, human dignity, reciprocity, and collective unity (Ngunjiri, 2014). In 1983, Rumba Kinuthia (SONU leader) risked his life as a defence lawyer in a court-martial for the 1982 abortive coup d'état air force soldiers who were accused of high treason.

However, the TLT claims about justice, at times, prove idealistic. In some instances, student leaders redefined the concept of justice depending on context:

> With their participation in bodies that advocate the rights and opportunities of students, the student leader has to delicately balance between keeping order and discipline versus the need to give comrades a chance to finish their studies and enjoy life in college. Hence, this fluid understanding of justice by many student leaders makes only a few of us sticklers for the law. This calls for a continuous bargaining and lobbying to ensure that comrades are always right. I think many student leaders defended justice depending on their interpretation of situations.
> (M. Mwambeo, personal communication, 27 August 2021)

According to the principles of transformative leadership, with its emphasis on both individual and public good, student leaders operating according to TLT ought to act according to existing institutional laws since these have been made in a democratic fashion – in other words, with the participation of the student fraternity. However, it seems that when students appear before university disciplinary committees, student leaders who sit on these committees tend to side with the student being disciplined and, in so doing, potentially defeat justice. Two possible reasons for not serving the ends of justice are that the leaders are trying to curry favour with their constituents and safeguard their votes

in subsequent student union elections, or that they consider the policy being followed to be contextually obsolete or requiring amendment at the time of the committee's sitting.

Political change agents

Student activists contributed as change agents in the fight against political repression in Kenya, participating in many events that put pressure on government. In 1979, SONU leaders Rumba Kinuthia, Mukhisa Kituyi, and Otieno Kajwang were expelled for leading demonstrations against government excesses. In 1982, SONU chairman Adungosi led students to celebrate the abortive coup: he was jailed for treason, and died mysteriously in prison in 1988. In 1991, Orengo not only joined those advocating for a multiparty government, but also represented Oginga Odinga's National Development Party in the High Court, where he courageously demanded that Justice Dugdale disqualify himself from hearing the case, as he was known to be against fundamental human rights. He was not cowed by the judge's threat of 'one more word and you have it' (Maina, 1991, p. 31), and he soldiered on in the case.

MUSO's Omar-Hassan was expelled from Moi University in 1994 for advocating for the change of the university name, arguing that the university was named after an illiterate despot. Omar-Hassan was readmitted in 2003 when Kibaki pardoned all university students who were expelled during Moi's presidency for fighting repression.

Despite the examples provided, there are instances of former student activists who compromised their convictions. Since Kenyans have been seen to mobilise politically along ethnic lines (Biegon, 2018), some of those former student leaders who ventured into politics have been forced to renege on their convictions in order to survive:

> One is, therefore, pushed to choose subscription or malleability, hence survival, or insist on a new brand of leadership and face the brutal wave of this political mainstream. Proof is what those who were firebrand student leaders eventually become on the national political platform. We are agents of political change, but for a while or in changing ways. James Orengo, Hassan Omar [-Hassan] and Anyang Nyong'o have at some point stared at political despair for daring to oppose the political hegemony of their regions. Ideology should be couched within the political expectations of a people and those they follow at a time. Out here, one is not the boss of political waves because there are established paths that will take long to alter. However, I note that time has set apart some student leaders as

> genuine fighters for justice and political change while others have come out as apologists of ethnic hegemony and parochial governance. (M. Mwambeo, personal communication, 27 August 2021)

This excerpt shows that although many former student leaders have demonstrated courage as transformative leadership change agents, they have had to compromise their convictions in order to survive and retain leadership positions, because Kenyan politics mobilise around ethnicity. Nyong'o and Orengo (Luos) lost their parliamentary seats in 1997 and 2002, respectively, for contesting on behalf of the Social Democratic Party against the dominant political parties in Luoland (the National Development Party in 1997 and the Liberal Democratic Party in 2002). On both occasions, these dominant parties fought against the Kenya African National Union dictatorship. However, since Orengo and Nyong'o were not sponsored by these locally popular parties, they lost elections. What this hints at is that ethnicity is the major hindrance to achieving transformative leadership through student activism in Kenya.

Sticklers for the law

This trait relates to those university student leaders who practised law, especially during the darkest days of Kenya's political history. Many underground groups were formed to press for democracy, including the Mwakenya movement and those who produced the *Pambana* (Struggle) newspaper. Whenever members of these groups were arrested, few lawyers were courageous enough to represent them in court for fear of the consequences. However, SONU's Kinuthia represented 15 members of Mwakenya at a trial characterised by 'terror and intimidation' (Mburu, 2000). The charge was sedition (Mburu, 2000) and the members faced a possible jail term of 10 years.

In 1997, Orengo exhibited moral courage (Shields & Hesbol, 2020) when he attempted to change the status quo for the public good by initiating the private prosecution of George Saitoti, a vice president and minister of finance, for his alleged responsibility in the Goldenberg scandal. Through the scandal, approximately US$157.48 million was lost in fake gold export compensation paid to businessman Kamlesh Patni. In the 1990s, nobody could have imagined prosecuting a vice president, but this is what Orengo did. Furthermore, Orengo broke ranks with his political party chairman, Kijana Wamalwa, because he had cleared businessman Ketan Somaia, whose company had been involved in a financial scandal that was unearthed by the auditor general. Orengo argued:

> If we want good governance, we must protect our institutions and public offices without fear or favour. Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee, the opposition and Ford Kenya have been compromised on this matter and we must have the courage and integrity to say so. (*Weekly Review*, 1997, p. 4).

Although Orengo's actions did not achieve a great deal of success, in line with TLT (Shields & Hesbol, 2020), he demonstrated moral courage by questioning the justice system that protected those in authority in a society where power was inequitably distributed. They had abused their fiduciary responsibility and acted not for the public good, but for self-aggrandisement.

Fighters for genuine constitutionalism

A constitution that is responsive to the aspirations, wishes, and needs of the governed facilitates ethical leadership and good governance. If the constitution is not serving the people as desired, transformative leaders need to press for either a review or a total overhaul of the constitution. Kenyan student activists contributed to bringing about constitutional change by working with civil society, religious groups, lawyers, and NGOs. The re-introduction of plural, multiparty democracy in 1991 came about through the repeal of Section 2(a) of the Kenyan Constitution, which only allowed for a one-party state. This constitutional change was a result of concerted efforts by many players, including student activists working with other stakeholders (Imanyara & Maina, 1991, p. 21).

The doyen of opposition politics, Oginga Odinga, collaborated with the 'Young Turks', who included former student leaders Orengo and Kituyi, in 1990 and 1991 to deliver multipartyism. Kabando wa Kabando, as chair of SONU in 1992, was also actively engaged in reform politics. Some pro-reform activities were repulsed with force, as happened when Rev. Timothy Njoya and other demonstrators who were demanding constitutional reforms were flogged by police outside the National Assembly Building (Mwaura, 2007). Student activists' contribution was also crucial in the enactment of the 2010 constitution of Kenya, which expanded democratic space through the devolution of government from the centre to the newly introduced county governments. The new constitution also enhanced local participation in decision-making.

Learning leadership through activism

Based on the transformative leadership traits identified, it appears that the university student leaders of the period studied learned many things beyond what was taught in class or recorded in the literature by engaging in leadership and activism. Similar to Nigerian student activism, the ground for leadership training in Kenya is activism (Chiamogu, 2018). Through their leadership at university, student leaders bring tenets of transformative leadership theory into practice in line with Shields and Hesbol's (2020) claim that transformative leaders ought to be pragmatic. The leaders referred to in the foregoing analysis relentlessly fought for a multiparty system; freedom of the press, association, and assembly; and the prevention of violation of the law, and against racial discrimination.

While the focus of this chapter has been on university student leadership in the past, the traits identified and discussed here have a strong bearing on current and future leadership. Leaders must understand the ills facing their societies and strive to bring inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice. The status quo must be disrupted to achieve the desired free society, and this can only be done if the leader is committed and courageous. The student leaders described achieved this through radical student activism.

Mastery of oratorical and public speaking skills, as espoused in TLT (Stephenson, 2011), served the former student leaders well. This is because mobilising students to demonstrate against a government requires convincing messaging through language and diction that appeal to the target audience. The fact that Orengo managed to convince and mobilise students to demonstrate in the city streets against the government following the murder of J. M. Kariuki implies that his messaging was well crafted.

Many of the former student leaders engendered transformative leadership results not only in their institutions, but also nationally and internationally. The scale of influence varies from individual to individual, but some continued with their activism to the extent of graduating to national, regional, and global leadership, as did Mukhisa Kituyi, who served as the UN Conference on Trade and Development Secretary (2013–2021).

However, some student activists did not persevere in their leadership roles after graduating. Some abdicated activism either after failing to realise their ambitions, especially in politics, on first attempt, or after realising that the society in which they were contesting for leadership was still conservative, ethnically inclined, and not receptive to their ideas. As noted, transformative leadership is a process of learning from the past, but this requires humility and the ability to respectfully challenge past practices, while simultaneously displaying the courage to advocate for new practices and a new future, despite a turbulent context (Bukusi, 2017). Thus, student activists who sulk and surrender need to learn that transformative leadership requires emotional intelligence (Simons, 2010). They should learn to navigate the conservative environments they work in, as Nyong'o and Orengo did after losing their parliamentary seats when they contested on unpopular political party tickets in their home areas. They re-engineered themselves and went on to make serious transformative leadership contributions when they later served in the executive as cabinet ministers, during the time when the transformative 2010 constitution was promulgated.

There is no gainsaying that student activists paid a price for their actions, including suspension and loss of study completion time, expulsion, self-exile, detention, torture, and death. Regardless of these, in this period of Kenyan history, university student activists constituted a powerful group, and most governments feared them (Akintola, 2010).

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how radical former university student leaders contributed to transformative leadership in Kenyan society. It emerged that many of the former student activists' leadership traits were in line with the characterisation in TLT of a transformative leader who works towards political change and social justice for both the private (individual) and the public (collective) good. The chapter demonstrates that the former student leaders, by being political change agents, contributed to Kenya's sociopolitical transformation in alleviating racial discrimination, especially in education, the resumption of plural democracy, calling out corrupt practices, and the promulgation of the 2010 constitution of Kenya.

The data analysis indicates instances where the former student leaders' interpretation of the law and policies was contextually determined, and thus contradicted what could be expected of sticklers for the law. Further, the discussion has shown that not all former student leaders remained in overt radical leadership roles after graduation, while others compromised their positions, albeit briefly, for survival. Notwithstanding, the role of university student activists in realising a transformed society in Kenya remains crucial.

#TransformativeStudentActivism

Students learn leadership through activism – a complicated but informative case study from Kenya.

Questions for discussion

1. Identify and discuss five transformative leadership traits one can learn from former university student leaders in your country.
2. On the basis of transformational leadership theory, critically analyse the significance of student activism for the realisation of social justice in an African country.
3. 'Commitment without courageous and disruptive action against the status quo is impotent'. Discuss the statement with close reference to transformative leadership theory and university student leadership.

References

Akintola, B. (2010). The perils of protest: State repression and student mobilization in Nigeria. In W. Adebanwi & E. Obadare (Eds). *Encountering the Nigerian state* (pp. 99–121). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Altbach, P. G. (1989). Perspectives on student political activism comparative education. *Comparative Education, 25*(1), 97–110.

Amutabi, M. N. (2002). Crisis and student protest in universities in Kenya: Examining the role of students in national leadership and the democratization process. *African Studies Review, 45*(2), 157–177.

Bell, D. I. (2001, July). *Leading change: African conceptions of leadership and transformation in higher education in South Africa*. Paper presented at Higher Education Close Up 2, Lancaster University, United Kingdom.

Biegon, J. (2018). Politicization of ethnic identity in Kenya: Historical evolution, major manifestations and the enduring implications. In G. Kegoro (Ed.). *Kenya Human Rights Commission* (pp. 8–52). Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Human Rights Commission.

Bieneman, P. D. (2011). Transformative leadership: The exercise of agency in educational leadership. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 221–237.

Bosu, R., Dare, A., Dachi, H., & Fenig, M. (2009). School leadership and social justice: Evidence from Ghana and Tanzania. *EdQual Working Paper, 17,* 1–20. Retrieved from https://www.edqual.org/publications/workingpaper/edqualwp17.pdf/at_download/file.pdf.

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda, 33*(1), 21–37.

Bukusi, A. (2017). *Transforming Africa.* Nairobi, Kenya: Management Decision Information.

Byakika, K. (2021, 1 December). Students in the struggle for Kenyan democracy: A brief history of university student activism in Kenya. *The Republic.* Retrieved from https://republic.com.ng/december-21-january-22/student-activism-kenya/.

Byaruhanga, F. K. (2006). *Student power in Africa's higher education: A case of Makerere University*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chiamogu, A. P. (2018). Student activism and social change in Nigerian tertiary institutions: A call to public service. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Management and Technology, 1*(1), 66–76.

Cowling, N. (2023, 22 September). *University enrolment in Kenya*. Statista.com. Retrieved from https://Statista.com/statistics/1135785/university-enrollment-in-kenya.

Dulani, B. & Tengatenga, J. (2020). Big man rule in Africa: Are Africans getting the leadership they want? *The Africans Review, 46*(2), 275–291.

Farago, F., Swadener, B. B., Richter, J., Eversman, K. A., & Roca-Servat, D. (2018). Local to global justice: Roles of student activism in higher education, leadership development and community engagement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 64*(2), 154–172.

Garwe, E. C. (2017). Student voice: Embracing student activism as a quality improvement tool in higher education. In S. L. Renes (Ed.). *Global voices in higher education* (pp. 189–208). London, United Kingdom: Intech Open.

Hewitt, K. K., Davis, A. W., & Lashley, C. (2014). Transformational and transformative leadership in a research-informed leadership preparation program. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 9*(3), 225–253.

Imanyara, G. & Maina, W. (1991). What future Kenya. *Nairobi Law Monthly*, *37*, 19–23.

Jallow, B. G. (2014). Leadership in postcolonial Africa: An introduction. In B. G. Jallow (Ed.). *Leadership in postcolonial Africa: Trends transformed by independence* (pp. 1–26). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kiboiy, K. L. (2013). *The dynamics of student unrests in Kenya's higher education: The case of Moi University*. PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa. Retrieved from https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/32399.

Klopp, J. M. & Orina, J. R. (2002). Universities crisis, student activism, and the contemporary struggle for democracy in Kenya. *African Studies Review, 45*(1), 43–76.

Macharia, M. J. (2015). Comrades power: Student representation and activism in universities in Kenya. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 3*(1), 19–34.

Magoha, G. (2017). *The tower of transformational leadership.* Nairobi, Kenya: Kenway.

Maina, W. (1991). Justice Dugdale and the Bill of Rights. *Nairobi Law Monthly*, *34*, 27–36.

Martin, D. G., Hanson, S., & Fontaine, D. (2007). What counts as activism? The role of individuals in creating change. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 35*(3–4), 78–94.

Mburu, S. (2000, 12 March). Kenya: The fate that befell the Mwakenya Lot. *Daily Nation*. Retrieved from https://allafrica.com/stories/200003120021.html.

Melchiorre, L. (2020). 'A new animal': Student activism and the Kenyan state in the new era of multiparty politics, 1991–2000. *Journal of Eastern African Studies, 14*(4), 780–801.

Meyer, E. T. (2018). The importance of newspapers in scholarly research. *ProQuest*. Retrieved from https://about.proquest.com/globalassets/proquest/files/pdf-files/casestudy-hnp-meyer.pdf.

Mulinge, M. M., Arasa, J. N., & Wawire, V. (2017). *The status of student involvement in university governance in Kenya: The case of public and private universities*. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Mutunga, W. & Kiai, M. (1996). The state of academic freedom in Kenya, 1992–1994. In A. K. Bangura, *The state of academic freedom in Africa* (pp. 81–102). Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Mwaura, P. N. (2007). Religion and leadership: The creation of a just society. In K. Njogu (Ed.). *Governance and development: Towards quality leadership in Kenya* (pp. 176–194). Nairobi, Kenya: Twaweza Communications.

Ngotho, K. (n.d.) Dr Chrispin Odhiambo Mbai: Unresolved murder of university don who pushed for devolved power. *The Standard*. Retrieved from https://Standardmedia.co.ke/health/national/article/2001482115/dr-chrispin-odhiambo-mbai-unresolved-murder-of-university-don-who-pushed-fordevolved-power.

Ngunjiri, F. W. (2014). 'I will be a humming bird': Lessons in radical transformative leadership from Professor Wangari Maathai. In B. G. Jallow (Ed.). *Leadership in postcolonial Africa: Trends transformed by independence* (pp. 123–141). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ntshoe, I. M. (2002). The impact of political violence on education in South Africa: Past, present and future. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 2*(1), 62–69.

Oanda, I. (2016). The evolving nature of student participation in university governance in Africa: An overview of policies, trends and emerging issues. In T. M. Luescher, M. Klemencic, & J. O. Jowi (Eds). *Student politics in Africa: Representation and activism* (pp. 61–84). Cape Town, South Africa: African Minds.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Shields, C. M. (2011). Afterword: Towards an appreciation of critical transformative leadership. *Counterpoints, 409*, 383–386.

Shields, C. M. & Hesbol, A. K. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership, 30*(1), 3–22.

Simons, S. (2010). The heart of hearing: A story of transformative leadership and sustainable development. *ReVision, 30*(3–4), 63–68.

Smirnova, T. (2019). Student activism in Niger: Subverting the 'limited pluralism', 1960–1983. *Africa, 89*, 167–188.

Sorkin, D. (2016). *Understanding transformative leadership among high school students: Creating conditions to lead*. PhD thesis, Arizona State University.
Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/docview/1793411483?pqorigsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.

Stephenson, L. (2011). Developing a leadership education framework: A transformative leadership perspective. *Counterpoints, 409*, 321–341.

Weekly Review. (1997, February 14). Collision: Orengo and Wamalwa clash over the Somaia saga.

Zeilig, L. (2008). Student activism and politics in Zimbabwe: The frustrated transition. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 43*(2), 215–237.

14 *Using transformative leadership to 'nibble at resilient colonialism': An autoethnographic account of student–faculty experiences*

One Pusumane and Jess Auerbach Jahajeeah

Overview

This chapter puts the reflections and experiences of student and faculty into dialogue with theoretical literature around transformative leadership. Improvisation, conviviality, and collaboration between students and faculty is useful for 'nibbling' at the 'resilient colonialism' present in higher education in Africa. Exploring transformative leadership begins by examining what is being transformed, by whom and why. The question is how does one 'nibble' and who bears the burdens of nibbling? This chapter interrogates how actors can access or become alienated from the work of transformative leadership. The authors utilise autoethnography as an entry point for dialogue. This highlights the changes in the multiple axes upon which individual identity – and transformation – rests, given varying levels of privilege, power, and positionality, as individuals navigate leadership. Convivial politics, underpinned by improvisation, might mediate power and positionality in a way that enhances transformative leadership in higher education.

Introduction

This chapter is based on a dialogue that began in Mauritius in 2017, and is a cumulation of complex and reflective conversations of what it means to be a leader, an African leader, and a social scientist working from or within Africa in the context of higher education. The authors met under unusual circumstances, as student and faculty member, in an institution previously referred to as Institution Q (Auerbach, Dlamini, & Anonymous, 2019). Institution Q was self-consciously saturated in the discourses of entrepreneurial leadership emerging from Silicon Valley, and students and faculty in its founding years – including both authors – had been inspired by its promise of education geared towards transformation through leadership.

Over time, after difficult experiences within the institution, we reflected on the role of power, positionality, and the 'burdens' we aimed to address by acquiring and supporting African education. We suggest that while 'leadership' itself proved far too blunt a tool for systemic change, opening spaces to consciously debate a hegemonic narrative did prove powerful. As we examine the notion

of nibbling at resilient colonialism in higher education, in our positions that inform our dialogues, discoveries, and collaboration, we posit that improvisation plays a central role in higher education leadership. In his analysis of the South African #RhodesMustFall movement, Nyamnjoh (2016) argues that rather than attempting to overthrow or upend existing systems of power and control, actors in higher education have much to gain by 'nibbling' at resilient structures, transforming them through thousands of small actions that change their shape and form. We have found this notion personally helpful, and of ongoing value to leadership discussions in higher education more generally.

One of the central questions that sparked the authors' varied conversations was how students and faculty imagined the reinvention of Africa in a moment when the narrative of 'Africa Rising' was shaping the conceptualisation of leadership. Although the Africa Rising narrative (Bhorat & Tarp, 2016; Young, 2014) has been critically interrogated from different perspectives (Mkandawire, 2014; Taylor, 2014, 2015; Wengraf, 2018), it is still central to how different institutions conceptualise leadership. There is a necessity to question what the focus of leadership is in any specific instance, what makes it work, and who it works for (Olonisakin, 2017). In their work, Krystalli and Enloe (2020, p. 294) rightly ask, 'What is the work that we expect labels to do?' With this in mind, what is expected of the 'African leader' label and – in naming people leaders – what burdens, responsibilities, and legacies are being offered and received? When these discourses explicitly enter an undergraduate classroom, the epistemological histories (meaning how ideas have been internalised and were taught) of leadership discourses are important to consider for their potential impact on individual futures and pathways through higher education.

To tackle the question of 'reinventing' Africa in a neoliberal university, Auerbach et al., (2019) demonstrate how the interactions of private capital, the imaginations of what Africa is and ought to be, and homogenising narratives of Africa pave the way for potentially problematic 'solutions'. Such solutions are based on external imaginings of 'Africa' (Nuttall, 2008) that are not grounded in proper understandings of local realities or global systems of power. Subtlety, specificity, and nuance do not fit well in the one-dimensional representations of Africa that have soothed Western imaginations of the continent from *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad, 2008) through to *The Lion King* (Auerbach et al., 2019).

Recent discourses pertaining to leadership have overwhelmingly emerged from corporate leadership spaces driven in part by the massification of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) qualification and the corporate 'self-help' industry. In the process, entrepreneurial leadership has come to permeate leadership narratives in subtle but significant ways whereby 'influence' has been closely linked with the ability to sell things (Carnegie, 2006). In the process of centring entrepreneurial leadership within institutions, individuals who do

not subscribe to this manifestation of leadership may be alienated from the process of contributing to the production and practice of internal leadership discourses pertaining to education. In a university environment explicitly framed by discourses of corporate leadership, there can be a lack of direct engagement with the very structures that have perpetuated and continue to perpetuate unequal world systems. Implicitly, at Institution Q, this reinforced and reinscribed the idea that challenges stemming from unequal world systems could be 'consulted away' through discourse and training in managerial 'habits' without addressing the underlying structures of global inequality (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016).

In this chapter, we draw on the improvisational approach to theory and research practice described by Cerwonka and Malkki (2007). While ours was not a journey of research per se, the experience of our work and learning together initiated an ongoing dialogue on leadership and its discontents that has followed One Pusumane (OP) through her MA and PhD experiences at Cambridge and Edinburgh universities, and Jess Auerbach Jahajeeah (JAJ) in her subsequent teaching at other universities in both Mauritius and in South Africa.

In their book, Cerwonka and Malkki (2007, p. 25) write:

> An interpretive approach to knowledge production pushes critical discourse in the social sciences beyond the simple denial of the positivist ideal of objectivity and beyond suggestions for self-reflexive strategies. It articulates an alternative epistemology for research and offers a more accurate account of knowledge production.

We ask, what exactly is transformative leadership, and how does it manifest within and across education spaces? These are questions we have grappled with over the past five years. Considering our different trajectories, and acknowledging experiences of belonging, positionality, race, age, and class, we have continued what might be considered an intergenerational conversation that explores transformational leadership as an experience occurring in dialogue between those who would be transformed and those responsible, in some way, for student transformation. From this position, we suggest the need for a nuanced understanding of how we think about African leadership and the implications of the foundations that uphold that understanding.

Throughout this chapter, we engage in a conversation reflecting on the questions that we have grappled with through our different engagements, both in the classroom and beyond, and how they relate to transformative leadership in higher education and the idea of nuance. We suggest that there is a possibility for nuance if transformative leadership is used as a site of refiguration for how we construct new ways of thinking about leadership. Our conversations are recorded here in three parts.

The first section explores the role of co-creation and control in educational leadership by interrogating what co-creation looks, sounds, and feels like when there are varied central actors with distinctive interests, missions, and objectives. If the focus of transformative leadership is about identifying and executing a vision that brings about social and political change for various communities, it is important to interrogate the politics of collective interests and account for the power dynamics of the collective. In the second section, we discuss the nature and place of 'consulting culture', which is often tethered to the problem-solving approaches of issues on the African continent and influences how different experiences of resistance are incubated and negotiated. Finally, we examine the role of 'improvising' leadership as a means to nibble at resilient colonialism in a manner that is attentive to the complexities of everyday individuals.

Co-creation and control in educational leadership

OP: Co-creation is very messy. There are so many power dynamics to consider. There are costs, some personal, to individuals who want to actively contribute to the direction of the much-needed transformation. At times, it can feel like institutions turn to co-creating with a check-box approach so that in future there is some 'evidence' of including the others, in this case the student voice, in the decision-making processes. We need to actively seek out and cultivate a culture of co-creation that is meaningful, effective, and inclusive enough to centre student voices and leave room for critical engagement.

In his work, Weiner (2003, p. 89) argues that 'transformative leadership is an exercise of power and authority that begins with questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility'. While these ideas are core to transformative leadership, I think there is a need to be critical of whose ideas are key in influencing the materiality of social justice and democracy within higher education, and this is why co-creation is an important aspect of transformative leadership. Co-creation is central to educational leadership because the learning process is not just about disseminating information to students and equipping them with the right skills. It requires attention to where those skills are learned and the kind of dialogue involved in conceptualising what leadership is or is not. There is this obsession of trying to 'fix' African leadership, as if that will solve all the continent's issues.

Jallow (2014, p. 2) states that from an external perspective, 'leadership in postcolonial Africa generally seems negative and failed', and because of the realities of state failure and political instability in some contexts

(Bah, 2012; Herbst, 1996), there is often a major focus on leadership development, and trying not to repeat the 'mistakes' of past leaders. Adjacent to this narrative is the aspiration to adopt the best leadership models, and learning and leading from the 'best institutions'; however, the critical questions are what is adopted, by whom, and for what purposes? These were the kind of questions I was asking myself as I realised the need to be critically curious about leadership as a concept and a practice before rushing to judge individuals who are deemed to either fail or succeed. Where do the models of leadership that are being experienced and presented come from? On what grounds does the evaluation take place? I would argue that collaboration is not only about collective interests, but differences as well. However, if everyone is a leader, who follows and how does 'control' materialise in these different collaborations? The idea of 'training' everyone to be a leader always leaves me with more questions than answers. When we say we are training African leaders, whose Africa is at the core of the discussion, and who is to be led? By 'we', I mean the scholars, activists, donors, students, management, etc. Who leads whom and how do we move and work together in a transformative and disruptive way that can dismantle injustices and inequality? For me, the term 'African leaders' has a sweeping effect that I find very problematic. The fixes it suggests are far too easy.

JAJ: What does it mean to 'lead leaders' when the 'leaders' are 19 years old and usually late for class? At Institution Q, I experienced a great tension in myself between wanting to empower students, support their emerging leadership capabilities, and incorporate their often insightful suggestions, while also feeling frustrated because sometimes they did not know what they did not know. Both institutionally and from students themselves, co-creation was frequently approached through the repetition of tropes not grounded in reality. The most common manifestation of this was the use of the epithet for Institution Q, 'The Harvard of Africa'. First used by a susceptible journalist who bought into the marketing, the label stuck, and my students would regularly inform me that they were attending a Harvard-equivalent institution. Institution Q was many things, but Harvard was not one of them, primarily because there was no existing culture of research and scholarship, never mind the infrastructure to accompany it.

When I walked into the classroom for the first time, I saw a group of late teens from around Africa who had opted into social science because they had questions that the entrepreneurial training underpinning their degree at Institution Q wasn't answering. These

> were mostly about the underlying systems at play on the continent and in the world. As a then 32-year-old staff member whose PhD had not even dried on the proverbial press, I had no doubt I could work with the spark in each of these individuals, but I was dubious about the framing in leadership. At what point in a biography does leadership become apparent? Might there be risks in naming it too soon? If everyone in my class was a leader already, how would teamwork happen? Could I assume the basic life skills, which undergraduate training is supposed to teach, had already been mastered, and we could plunge straight into the content? What about maturity, emotional development, intellectual exploration, learning from being wrong? What might be the potential consequences of losing the opportunity to spend one's formative years 'not knowing'? Having been exposed to similar discourses in the international community of Rhodes Scholars, I was particularly aware of the weight that some individuals carried from the constant invocation to lead (for others, of course, it was a joy). 'A Rhodes Scholar is someone with a great future behind them' was a frequently made quip within the community around Oxford – was it wise to frame futures in leadership so explicitly?

Consider first that negative tropes of failed African leadership foreground the 'heroes' that are hyper-politicised as the poster figures of leadership. As such, these prominent figures, or heroes' ideologies influence the conceptualisation of African leadership. Weiner (2011) argues that an alternative version of leadership imagination is desirable, and gives the example of the Brazilian educator and social theorist Paulo Freire 'as a transformative leader'. Weiner (2003, p. 92) writes, 'Freire had to make sure he was not simply imposing his ideological agenda on the community, but rather was instigating an alternative democratic project that was rooted in the ideals of liberty and freedom'. Moreover, Freire ensured that he worked with different people such as teachers, students, administrators, businesses, and political leaders (Weiner, 2011) and was flexible and adaptable in his thinking. He never suggested a one-size-fits-all approach to problem solving.

Working with Freire, Weiner (2011) suggests that the lynchpin of transformative leadership is democratic thought. From this perspective of decentring ideological agendas of the poster figures of leadership, how then do the processes of co-creation around the ideas of liberty, freedom, and social experience take place? In the context of emerging higher education institutions across the African continent, what are the insights of all stakeholders, from the kitchen staff, through first-year undergraduate students, to those who are about to graduate? From an administrative perspective, the challenge is, like Freire, to explore opportunities

for co-creation that are inclusive in a context where there are different objectives and interests, in addition to brand-management concerns.

In an education landscape where the networks and charisma of new-university founders are often central to the financial viability of the institution, how does higher education avoid 'leader-as-hero' models that are then embodied by the students themselves (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006)? Building on this idea, Montuori and Donnelly (2018, p. 321) argue that at its core, transformative leadership is a creative, collaborative process that ensures mutual benefit and is not delineated to 'heroic individuals making large dramatic actions and gestures'. How does one both collaborate and teach – constantly iterate the curriculum, but also enable students to flourish in exams?

OP: In mapping out what alternative models of leadership exist or could exist, we can work with different aspects of co-creation and control that need to be highlighted here, all of which were highly contested in our experiences at Institution Q. On the first level, if the underpinnings and conceptualisations of leadership, particularly where the African continent is concerned, are primarily informed by often unconscious expectations of 'bad' leadership, there is a risk of analysis not fit for purpose (O'Niel, 2018). Here, there is a likelihood that models will be adopted from established institutions based largely in the Global North without conscious engagement with what is working locally and why (Jansen, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2016). Essentially this paves the way to (re)produce essentialising and homogenising narratives (Auerbach et al., 2019).

As a student, one example of co-creation came out of critical and hard conversations about how we were learning and the kind of scholarship we were being exposed to as a cohort. Although there were opportunities to add to the reading list to make it more diverse and inclusive, because of higher education accreditation requirements in Mauritius, much of this had to take place outside the formal curriculum at the urging of staff – who themselves had little control of the actual syllabus. This process created a double burden for both students and staff: students had to learn both the mainstream and the critique in a way that was consciously saturated with the discourse of entrepreneurialism. Staff – who were all deeply committed to preparing students for success across Africa itself – had to teach exams out of one side of the mouth, and also to the heart, with completely different materials, from the other. In order to receive a 'balanced' education, everyone had to work double time, which was not sustainable at the level of mental and physical health.

In response to co-creating knowledge and being intentional about how we think about the African continent, one of the core modules of the institution that was trialled and quickly scrapped was an African Studies course that all first-year students were supposed to take, alongside the United Kingdom-designed curriculum. This course was designed to help all students grapple with and interrogate the kind of Africa they understood and envisioned as 'future leaders'. The course created space to acknowledge African history and probe beneath the stereotypes. It required and rewarded reflexivity and nuance. However, that proved short-lived because these dialogues took place in an institutional context where the course was seen as optional by both management and students, and student success was celebrated only when it was specifically in the domain of entrepreneurialism. A small group of committed staff worked hard to support African Studies, but ultimately, its significance faded in the face of students facing exams set by an external partner, and staff facing key performance indicators that did not require awareness of context and specificity.

JAJ: Yes, the African Studies course is one example that can highlight the tension of collaboration and control, which is central in interrogating the conceptualisation of leadership. As Weiner (2005, p. 93) rightly notes, 'transformative leadership must always make problematic the institutional power it wields'. From this perspective, it is important to question what the driving forces of expectations and demand are for different types of leadership(s) within educational institutions. As a student, there is usually limited room for critical engagement, because one is bound into the institution for resources and social mobility. To a certain extent, the same applies to faculty. How do students critique without 'biting the hand that feeds them'? How might students be supported as they identify the thin line or perhaps balance of (de)constructing how they/we think about leadership and challenging what they/we think they/we know?

This is where issues of control and agenda-setting arise, highlighting the challenges of co-creation. Where should student voices be located in the determination of what leadership is and ought to be? How do we reconcile the time it takes for students to graduate and be trained with the urgency of systematic reform (Albertus, 2019; Davids, 2021; Gillespie & Naidoo, 2019; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2016; Mpondwana, 2016; White, 2019)? This is particularly acute when donor funding relies on perceptions of students – often the case in emerging universities, where 'protest' does not easily sit alongside emerging 'brands'. If we follow the money, where does it lead us and why?

> Beyond the money, there is room to think about the social and futures capital that is afforded to those who comply with expectations and the narrative of leadership being advanced, as well as the potential consequences of not complying. One of my students was told the institutional network would ensure she could 'never get a job in Africa' if she did not 'get in line' with 'supporting the branding', and students and staff alike were often threatened in similar ways. While staff could rely on their own qualifications and networks, students felt much more vulnerable.

At Institution Q, public events aimed at the community and would-be donors took place on a regular basis. These were imagined as spaces for students to showcase the projects that they were working on, to inspire, and to consolidate the brand. At one of these events, Pusumane decided to share an incident that she had experienced in the form of an impromptu poem. She chose to reflect on this experience – an attack on the way home from the gym – because she felt it was important to share the sense of not being safe on and around the campus. At the time, there were no existing reporting mechanisms at Institution Q for negative experiences. She hoped to spark dialogue and 'engage…others in an ethical manner to generate positive and lasting change' (Mastercard Foundation, 2014), with the goal being the implementation of new policies and reporting mechanisms. As Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015) posit, leadership primarily focuses on the ability to charter a course, influence, and direct others towards that collective mission. However, this result did not occur. Instead, after Pusumane's presentation, two students approached her separately to express their concern that she was damaging both the institutional and her personal brand – concerns over the brand had apparently surpassed concerns over student well-being.

These reactions and remarks were typical of a brand awareness that saturated Institution Q. They also highlighted a significant aspect of institutional control that was operationalised via students. In this instance, 'we' referred to students of multiple nationalities, who were imagined to be African and concerned about 'Africa', but whose immediate focus was usually on their own success and career trajectories. It is our privilege and immediate concerns that usually shape how we engage with what aspects we think require transformation. Caldwell et al., (2012, p. 177), building on the work of Bass (1985), suggest that the four dimensions of transformative leadership include 'idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration'. They argue that the interaction of these four aspects shapes the different experiences of students and how, at Institution Q in particular, and arguably beyond it, they might 'drink' the leadership 'Kool-Aid' (Moore, 2003).

Consulting the issue away

OP: For me the consulting and audit culture became a problem. Numbers of this and that, while the change we seek sometimes materialises differently. As we unpack the dynamics and politics of co-creation and control, there should be space to examine how the culture and challenges of consulting in higher education (Institution Q) reinforced a narrative of 'consulting' solutions to complex challenges. At Institution Q, 'entrepreneurialism' was valued far more than a more widespread university culture that placed emphasis on publications and scholarly outputs (Grimes, Bauch, & Ioannidis, 2018). In fact, these were actively discouraged and disparaged. As elsewhere, at Institution Q there was social capital and currency assigned to particular institutional and academic backgrounds (González-Calvo & Arias-Carballal, 2017), but, interestingly, where staff training at elite institutions such as Stanford and Harvard were exalted because of the credibility it supposedly brought, the work of those institutions in terms of research culture was never emulated. In this instance, the ability of Institution Q to attract and retain experts in co-creation was curtailed by branding centred on entrepreneurialism.

As Rinehart (2016, p. 31) argues, 'what an audit culture actually does is to produce human beings in the system who are more malleable and efficient', and the level of efficiency and malleability will be linked to how these individuals are able to solve the issues that arise. If, as Herzfeld (2010; 2017) argues, theory making is both a political and cultural practice, transformative leadership must attend to its potential blind spots in proactive and inclusive ways. At Institution Q, the focus on entrepreneurialism meant almost all voices that were not amplifying the brand narrative were muted. Of course, in other institutions, transformative leadership might need to consider completely different silences: the point is to attend to those on the margins and work with the insights that their silencing paradoxically provides.

Given the constantly shifting field of inclusion and exclusion, what would it take to imagine transformative leadership discourses that are inclusive of marginalised bodies and voices? How might these manifest in emergent institutional contexts such as that of Institution Q, where there was limited space and time invested in critical engagement? With the expansion of the higher education landscape to institutions beyond the traditional brick-and-mortar institutions of the late industrial era (Davidson, 2017), what are the 'transformations' that higher

education 'leadership' will need to enable? Can – or should – this process attend to those at both established and emerging margins (Shields, 2010)?

JAJ: The conversation of what happens to those left at the margins really needs to be encouraged in university environments. What happens to the individuals who refuse to engage in leadership discourses because they lose faith in institutional systems? Here, the notion of 'transformative leadership' is much more helpful than 'leadership' itself. The former can play a role in disrupting, dismantling, and problematising power structures that mediate hierarchies of privilege that are detrimental to social justice, reform, and systemic change (Odora Hoppers, 2014; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2003), whereas the latter is so vague as to usually mean nothing at all. When presented with a broad notion of leadership pertaining to Africa, both authors of this chapter were drawn to the idea of ensuring that those who would experience leadership in Africa – particularly the youth – were capacitated to participate in it. Yet, as James Ferguson observes in *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution* (2015), participation usually requires a host of reforms at policy, civil, and social levels. It is a historical inevitability that 'the youth of today' will be 'the leaders of tomorrow', but existing structures of power, domination, and opportunity should be carefully analysed before too much leadership optimism takes place.

Improvising leadership in higher education: Nibbling at domination

OP: There is space for improvisation in leadership in the sense that there is a possibility to weave in different approaches of leading and account for everyday lived experiences. The idea of 'nibbling' at the resilient colonialism (Nyamnjoh, 2016) is a reminder that 'transformative leadership [can be or] is exhausting and complex' (Bieneman, 2011, p. 226). We then have to improvise with a level of care, openness, and a willingness to listen to each other. Improvisation becomes difficult if there is a particular leadership style or leader(s) we heroise or put on a pedestal.

The type of leadership given visibility in higher education will play a role in nibbling at the 'resilient colonial and colonising epistemology' of education in Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2016, p. 50). In social sciences at Institution Q, we as students often had to actively highlight the work of students and staff in social sciences, because senior management often did not want to see it – they saw institutional 'leaders' as those

> who could bring in clicks by highlighting the institutional brand, not critically examining them. We turned our classroom into a lab, and one wall (the Wall of African Languages) had idioms from across the continent. Another wall had a powerful art-piece the students co-created. Both got painted over and no longer exist.
>
> There is a need to explore the role and potential of transformative leadership in either helping maintain or disrupt the resilient colonialism that is prevalent in the conceptualisation of leadership. In attending the intersections of transformative leadership, diversity, and education, Jun (2011, p. 238), following on from Sergiovanni (2006) and Shields (2004), suggests that transformative leadership aberrates from traditional leadership notions as it is 'a philosophy of leadership that can be filtered through and with other forms of leadership theory'. This process of 'filtering through' becomes central to how we can frame resilient colonialism. The reason why I argue for nuance and improvisation in leadership in higher education is that I think that nuance can open up alternative leadership styles. In that way, there is no one grand style of leadership; as such, there is a process of filtering through that is flexible and leaves room for improvisation. If we are intentional about recognising these different leadership styles and experiences, there is room to nibble in various ways and students and staff have much more freedom to learn authentically.

We need to ask, what are the idealised influences that might shape the viewpoint of students when leadership discourses permeate higher education? For example, in our experience, when branding is made central not only to managerial, but also to pedagogical discourse, students are likely to focus more on their 'personal brand' than a systematic understanding of the world, which has serious consequences for long-term impact on others. Moreover, if social responsibility is central to transformative leadership (Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2003), it is essential to interrogate how institutions reconcile and conceptualise collective social responsibility where there are divergent needs and priorities. At universities, numerous objectives and needs are at play at any one moment. Students attend to 'learn', but also to be socialised, build networks, gain life experience, and beyond. Staff – teaching, non-teaching, and management – are likely to be motivated by far more than just pedagogy, for example by salary or career scaffolding. What is the space for reflexive co-creation in these environments, and how do higher education institutions enable that in an authentic way?

In the case of 'Africa', we observe the paradox that, on the one hand, Africa as a geographical space may evoke a sense of belonging to the continent (Anderson, 1991), or one where 'being' or being perceived to be African can be deployed for social capital. As such, as a territorial space, it is a site for collective identity.

Who are the 'leaders' of this imagined Africa, though, and who is left out of the discussion? In an era of so much leadership, what is the fate of the unled or of educated 'not-leaders'? In this sense, what are the relationships between leadership accounting and social, political, economic, and educational praxis? The exploration of these questions suggests that those who get invited to the table of leadership discussions tend to be people trained in the art of that narrative. They emerge more from business schools and international non-government entities than the grassroots, everyday practitioners who remain largely outside the referential frameworks of 'leadership'. Such entities often have epistemic roots and financial relationships with the Global North. Yet, the truism that Africa is not a country must be remembered. There is risk in homogenising experiences and perceptions, which curtails the visibility of nuanced styles and processes deployed in different spaces to address the very real challenges that individuals and collectives face. Even if a management consultant does not know about it, surely this is leadership?

When putting into dialogue the above framings of transformative leadership, the notion of filtering through begs the question of where transformation is happening within education institutions and what, then, the processes involved in the filtering are. Here, the idea of filtering through points to the idea of assigning importance to a specific type of leadership style, which in turn shapes the areas where individuals and institutions think transformation is needed. In this regard, the filtering process is then underpinned by certain parameters and the conceptualisation of leadership. Since transformative leadership is outward-looking, inclusive, and intentional about social justice (Shields, 2010), we suggest that a level of improvisation and flexibility that resists the tendency to heroise certain individuals or leadership styles within leadership discourse(s) opens up the possibility of 'nibbling' that can have a greater reach and impact in higher education. The idea of resilient colonialism is central to this work because it highlights the resilience of the deeply entrenched systemic issues of inequality that must be addressed in order to pave the way for long-lasting social change – should that be desired.

JAJ: The higher education sector is one that provides ample space for improvisation in leadership, and it is perhaps this which makes it so exciting. Most institutions have some structural framework in which various players operate, but beyond that, latitude for experimentation is often very broad. Teaching is arguably one of the most fundamental forms of leadership that most people experience, and in the everyday improvisations required by pedagogy, good teachers demonstrate flexibility, responsiveness, and care (Jansen & Blank, 2014). What has struck me about Institution Q, in the years since leaving it, has been the impact of the many 'improvisations' that my colleagues and I

> undertook together in responding to a somewhat chaotic and rapidly changing environment. Some of these are long forgotten, but many others have remained in students' consciousness, and I now routinely hear from them about the after-effects of teaching interventions we developed. For example, *Awake Engage* was a daily newspaper of media reportage on Africa, which instilled in many students a long-standing commitment to reading about the rest of the continent and has been replicated by students in their professional and personal domains. Other examples include ensuring students knew how to edit Wikipedia as an important part of their writing training that counters dominance from authorial voices in the Global North, non-traditional assessments such as YouTube videos, and allocating marks for the learning of new African languages.

It must be remembered that in the 'everyday' context of business schools – and spaces such as Institution Q – leadership usually seeks to continue, not disrupt, processes of profit that rely on not having systemic change. By contrast, transformative leadership offers a powerful opening for interrogating existing barriers of inequality that often overlap in complicated ways (Crenshaw, 2015). Transformative leadership is defined by an outward-looking approach that can, or at least might be able to, account for the voices, experiences, and contributions of those whom 'leadership' might fail to see or hear. In ongoing conversations of leaders and leadership, we suggest that the 'where to' of transformative leadership should embed a level of improvisation in higher education. What are the explicit objectives at play, and what (or who) is being 'transformed'? Importantly, why is this happening and whose agenda is driving the change?

In their book, which draws from the insights of ongoing research experience, Cerwonka and Malkki (2007, p. 4) suggest that 'theory is challenged and reshaped by the complexities and richness of everyday experiences'. It is within that premise of reshaping complexities that we can find room for improvising leadership. Through improvisation, there are opportunities to consider multiple ways of thinking about transformative leadership, who it is for, and what heuristic entry points exist to think about discourse while being attentive to modes of power, technological tools, and implementation. How do these facilitate re-inscribing mechanisms that might unwittingly contribute to oppressive structures? In our work together, one of the core questions the authors have explored is what the impact is of imagining oneself as powerful, or not. What are the risks of failure for people who are trained in the discursive frameworks of 'leadership', but then fail to assume roles of externally defined 'leadership' in the course of careers and personal life? The intersections of class, gender, race, sexuality, nationality, neurodiversity, and more make it imperative to contextualise experiences, solutions, and recognition. It is important then to

examine how the meanings inscribed by identities, biographies, networks, and opportunities influence the ethics of transformative leadership and the issues that individuals aim – or are trained – to transform. It is within this premise that we argue for the necessity of improvisation and, to return to Nyamnjoh (2016), the potential value of 'nibbling' instead of the ego-infused Silicon Valley-inspired rhetoric of disruption that accompanies so many contemporary educational interventions, and was rife at Institution Q.

Conclusion

The reflections of this chapter demonstrate that there is a need to be critical of the conceptualisation of leadership that is often devoid of subtlety and nuance. Despite the many contributions of the 'decolonial turn' (Grosfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Morreira, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020, 2021; Vorster & Quinn, 2017), a colonial epistemology is still prevalent in much of higher education in Africa. In continuing to discuss the need for leaders and training leaders, we underscore the need to interrogate the 'Africa' at the centre of global and local imaginations, and the sweeping or homogenising effects of labels such as 'African leaders'. Although such categories have the potential to evoke a collective sense of belonging and perhaps commitment, there is a risk of curtailing the specificities of individual experiences, trajectories, and contexts. After all, Africa is a continent, not a village or country or terrain in a virtual computer game.

While the chapter acknowledges that there are varied leadership styles that can be woven into the process of improvising leadership in higher education, the process of improvising should make space for learning from being wrong – for the 'leaders' to question what they know and do not know (yet). Although coherence in leadership discussions can be important, how it is deployed or evoked is often accepted uncritically within leadership debates, both within and outside the continent. From this perspective, the space for co-creation and control should become flexible enough to allow experimentation and provide infrastructures that allow for questioning cultures of leadership. These need to critically question the ideologies that underpin the type(s) of leadership styles being advanced and make room for nuance in a manner that allows no single narrative of leadership, entrepreneurial or otherwise, to dominate. Finally, the politics of co-creation and control must be acknowledged, and attention must be given to the diverse needs and objectives of central actors in higher education. These include students, staff, parents, and donors, and a diversity of national contexts and knowledge histories. These are the conversations we believe are needed going forward.

#ColonialismDissolvingDialogues

'Leading' before learning? Exploring the impact of leadership dialogue at an experimental pan-African university.

Questions for discussion

1. How have recipients of leadership scholarships and bursaries experienced the pressures, contradictions, and opportunities that have come with them?
2. How do we change the systems that shape the contemporary world?
3. Is it realistic to brand people in their early 20s as leaders? When and how should leaders be trained and prepared for diverse career trajectories?

References

Albertus, R. (2019). Decolonisation of institutional structures in South African universities: A critical perspective. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1620403.

Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management*, *5*(1), 6–14.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, United Kingdom: Verso.

Auerbach, J., Dlamini, M., & Anonymous. (2019). Scaling decolonial consciousness? The re-invention of 'Africa' in a neoliberal university. In J. Jansen (Ed.). *Decolonisation in universities: The politics of knowledge* (pp. 116–135). Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.

Bah, A. B. (2012). State decay: A conceptual frame of failing and failed states in West Africa. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, *25*(1–3), 71–89.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Bhorat, H. & Tarp, F. (2016). *Africa's lions: Growth traps and opportunities for six African economies*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Bieneman, P. D. (2011). Transformative leadership: The exercise of agency in educational leadership. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 221–237.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Carnegie, D. (2006). *How to win friends and influence people*. London, United Kingdom: Vermilion.

Cerwonka, A. & Malkki, L. H. (2007*). Improvising theory: Process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Conrad, J. (2008). *Heart of darkness* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Pearson Education.

Crenshaw, K. (2015, 24 September). Why intersectionality can't wait. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/.

Davids, N. (2021). Democratising South African universities: From activism to advocacy. *Policy Futures in Education*, *19*(5), 568–581.

Davidson, C. N. (2017). *The new education: How to revolutionize the university to prepare students for a world in flux*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Eddy, P. & VanDerLinden, K. (2006). Emerging definitions of leadership in higher education. *Community College Review*, *34*(1), 5–26.

Ferguson, J. (2015). *Give a man a fish: Reflections on the new politics of distribution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gillespie, K. & Naidoo, L. (2019). Introduction. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *118*(1), 190–194.

Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2016). Interrupting cycles of repetition: Creating spaces for dialogue, facing and mourning the past. In P. Gobodo-Madikizela (Ed.). *Breaking intergenerational cycles of repetition: A global dialogue on historical trauma and memory* (pp. 113–134). Leverkusen, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

González-Calvo, G. & Arias-Carballal, M. (2017). Effects from audit culture and neoliberalism on university teaching: An autoethnographic perspective. *Ethnography and Education*, *13*(4), 413–427.

Grimes, D. R., Bauch C. T., & Ioannidis, J. P. A. (2018). Modelling science trustworthiness under publish or perish pressure. *Royal Society Open Science 5*, 171511. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.171511.

Grosfoguel, R. (2007). The epistemic decolonial turn. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2–3), 211–223.

Herbst, J. (1996). Responding to state failure in Africa. *International Security*, *21*(3), 120–144.

Herzfeld, M. (2010). Anthropology: A practice of theory. *International Social Science Journal*, *49*(153), 301–318.

Herzfeld, M. (2017). Anthropological realism in a scientistic age. *Anthropological Theory*, *18*(1), 129–150.

Jallow, B. (2014). *Leadership in postcolonial Africa: Trends transformed by independence*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jansen, J. (2009). *Knowledge in the blood: Confronting race and the Apartheid past*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Jansen, J. & Blank, M. (2014). *How to fix South Africa's schools*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Bookstorm.

Jun, I. H. (2011). Transformative leadership in a diverse setting. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 238–253.

Krystalli, R. & Enloe, C. (2020). Doing feminism: A conversation between Cynthia Enloe and Roxani Krystalli. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 22*(2), 289–298.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2011). Thinking through the decolonial turn: Post-continental interventions in theory, philosophy, and critique – An introduction. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, *1*(2), 1–15.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa.* Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

McKinsey Global Institute. (2016). *Lions on the move II: Realizing the potential of Africa's economies*. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/lions-on-the-move-realizing-the-potential-of-africas-economies.

Mkandawire, T. (2014). Can Africa turn from recovery to development? *Current History*, *113*(763), 171–177.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Moore, R. (2003). Drinking the kool-aid: The cultural transformation of a tragedy. *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, *7*(2), 92–100.

Morreira, S. (2015). Steps towards decolonial higher education in southern Africa? Epistemic disobedience in the humanities. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *52*(3), 287–301.

Mpondwana, L. (2016, 4 October). 'It was an unholy situation at Wits today' – senior lecturer. *702.* Retrieved from http://www.702.co.za/articles/165570/it-was-an-unholy-situation-at-wits-senior-lecturer.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2020). *Decolonization, development and knowledge in Africa: Turning over a new leaf*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2021). Le long tournant décolonial dans les études africaines. Défis de la réécriture de l'Afrique. *Politique Africaine*, *2021/1–2* (161–162), 449–472.

Nuttall, S. (2008). *Beautiful/ugly: African and diaspora aesthetics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Nyamnjoh, F. (2016). *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at resilient colonialism in South Africa*. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Olonisakin, F. (2017). Towards re-conceptualising leadership for sustainable peace. *Leadership and Developing Societies*, *2*(1), 1–30.

O'Neil, C. (2018). *Weapons of math destruction*. London, United Kingdom: Penguin.

Rinehart, R. E. (2016). Neoliberalism, audit culture, and teachers: Empowering goal setting in an audit culture. *Teachers and Curriculum*, *16*(1), 29–35.

Sergiovanni, T. (2006). *Rethinking leadership: A collection of articles*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Shields, C. M. (2004). Dialogic leadership for social justice: Overcoming pathologies of silence. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*(1), 109–132.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Taylor, I. (2014). Is Africa rising? *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, *21*(1), 143–161.

Taylor, I. (2015). Dependency redux: Why Africa is not rising. *Review of African Political Economy*, *1743*(147), 8–25.

Vorster, J-A. & Quinn, L. (2017). The 'decolonial turn': What does it mean for academic staff development? *Education as Change*, *21*(1), 31–49.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Weiner, E. J. (2005). *Private learning, public needs: The neoliberal assault on democratic education*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Weiner, E. J. (2011). Critical thought/creative action: Developing a curriculum and pedagogy of transformative leadership. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 177–206.

Wengraf, L. (2018). *Extracting profit: Imperialism, neoliberalism and the new scramble for Africa*. London, United Kingdom: Haymarket Books.

White, H. (2019). What is anthropology that decolonising scholarship should be mindful of it? *Anthropology Southern Africa*, *42*(2), 149–160.

Young, E. (2014). *Africa 2030: Realizing the possibilities*. Trade Law Centre. Retrieved from https://www.tralac.org/images/docs/6417/ey-africa-2030-realizing-the-possibilities.pdf.

PART 5

LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

15 *Walking the talk: Shaping a transformative approach to evaluation of leadership fellowship programmes*

Barbara Klugman

Overview

Drawing on 16 leadership fellowship programmes based in South Africa, which undertook a peer learning initiative, this chapter explores how transformative leadership programmes can measure their influence on leadership capabilities and social change. It explores whether evaluation approaches are consistent in their values and assumptions with those associated with leadership development programmes aimed at system transformation. Evaluation approaches must take into account that leadership development is a process with unpredictable outcomes. Hence, evaluation cannot focus on the set, predictable indicators of a traditional results-based management approach, focused on upward accountability to management and funders, but requires social learning capabilities to understand what is changing and why, and to adapt on that basis. Evaluation approaches must also consider if and how fellowship programmes model transformative leadership, or whether they manifest 'power over' rather than 'power with' fellows. The chapter describes ways that programmes are trying to address these challenges.

Introduction: Challenges in evaluating leadership fellowship programmes

De Kock and Swartz (Chapter 2, this volume, p. 24) argue that transformative leadership is leadership committed to 'unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom'. The concept has 'a common core: progressive, flexible, and responsive leadership committed to driving social change where leaders are located, while creating a strong collegial culture that engenders critical agency, awareness, and action' (De Kock and Swartz, Chapter 2, this volume, p. 34).

There is growing recognition that influencing social change requires operating in systems which are characterised by multiple players and relationships, multiple perspectives, and unclear boundaries (Caffrey & Munro, 2017; Williams & Van 't Hof, 2016). There are no recipes for catalysing, strengthening, or sustaining individuals as transformative leaders in this context; indeed, the concept itself is still in development. Richardson and Patton (2021, p. 142) argue that '[b]ecause complex adaptive systems operate in a frequently unpredictable

context – not merely unknown but unknowable – governance and leadership involve navigation skills, not command-and-control authority'. This has significant implications for what it means to be a transformative leader and for a programme for transformative leadership. 'When complexity of the environment reduces certainty because of turbulence and lack of definitive knowledge about how to achieve desired results, strategic approaches must be more emergent and flexible' (Patton & Patrizi, 2010). In addition, according to Atkinson, Lasbennes, and Nabarro (2021, p. 133):

> In a world where they are held accountable for their actions and outcomes, and constantly evaluated against these, the realisation that control is illusory and that contexts matter a great deal is deeply disturbing. It raises profound questions about what leaders should be doing and how to determine what can be or has been effective.

Moreover, leadership for social change is increasingly understood as a collective and dialogical process (Kliewer & Priest, 2019; Orians, Chew, & Rowland, 2018).

Programmes are similarly caught between the results-based paradigm that has shaped the management of development initiatives for the last 30 years (Lomofsky & Grout-Smith, 2020) and a transformative evaluation approach (Ligero Lasa, Espinosa Fajardo, Mormeneo Cortes, & Bustelo Ruesta, 2014), characterised by 'inclusion, addressing of power, and adaptive learning approaches that better mirror contemporary understandings of social change as a process rather than a final, pre-determined result' (Rayner & Bonnici, 2021, p. 21). The former has come to be associated with inflexibility and upward accountability, and the latter with trust, enabled by more equitable power relations between funders and those funded, and an accountability to the mission of the organisation and its beneficiaries (Guijt, 2010). This approach enables trust-based accountability (Bovens, Goodin, Schillemans, & Mansbridge, 2014) in which leaders 'navigate by judgment' rather than by pre-set targets (Honig, 2020).

The evaluation challenge is exacerbated where a leadership fellowship programme aims to enable individuals to lead wherever they are, as opposed to leadership training being directed towards people who already have a social change goal focused on a particular place or issue. In the latter context, training effectiveness can be judged in relation to the goals of that initiative (Meehan & Reinelt, 2012a). But by what criteria and process does one assess the effectiveness of leadership development of people working on different issues in different contexts?

A related tension is that just as leadership programmes are increasingly needing to take on board the questions of 'if' and 'how well' they demonstrate the types of leadership they aim to build, so the evaluation process has to consider what values and principles it demonstrates.

A note on research questions and methodology

The first set of questions this chapter explores are what a transformative leadership programme might need to know in order to assess if, and how well, it is contributing to influencing both individual fellows and social change; why this is the case; and how programmes can improve their offerings and processes. The second question is what kind of evaluation approaches themselves demonstrate a transformative approach.

The issues and findings presented in the chapter are the product of a peer learning initiative among 16 leadership fellowship programmes based in South Africa, facilitated by the author. Fellowship programmes with an interest in evaluation were identified and contacted. Interviews were conducted with each of the 14 programmes that responded, and these interviews identified the programme's core monitoring, evaluation, learning values and processes, what was working well, and where challenges were experienced. A survey captured descriptive information from 11 of the programmes.[1]

Findings from this engagement were shared with the programmes, and in this process topics were identified for a peer learning agenda that covered six topics in three online sessions during October and November 2020. Some organisations with nascent fellowship programmes joined the conversations, and one fellowship programme that heard about the process joined mid-way. For this reason, these programmes were not included in the descriptive data of the programmes.

A report was produced (Klugman, 2021) covering the themes that emerged from the deliberations as well as illustrative examples of how programmes were addressing the issues. Programmes added to the report and indicated what information they were happy to share in the public realm.

The chapter also draws on the author's learning from involvement as a practising developmental evaluator during the 'incubation' of Tekano: Atlantic Fellows for Health Equity (South Africa 2016–2019) and on a 2021 review of the perspectives and experiences of alumni of the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership's Youth Advocacy Institutes. The process was not a research initiative shaped by the literature, but rather a grounded exploration of the experiences of evaluators and programme staff with a utilisation focus – a peer learning initiative that aimed to strengthen participants' own thinking and confidence about and actual evaluation practices.

[1] One of these, the Kellogg Fellows Alumni Network, has long since stopped running fellowships, but is running a very active alumni programme.

The individual capabilities and social connections which leadership programmes aim to catalyse

One cannot consider what to evaluate and learn about without articulating what a programme aims to achieve. Almost all programmes under consideration aimed to influence three dimensions: the head, heart, and hands. The 'head' refers to fellows' knowledge and conceptual capabilities, including their understanding of context, of diversity of structural drivers of inequities, and of interests supporting and opposing their objectives. Within this, a few aimed to inculcate fellows' ability to recognise and make sense of multiple ways of knowing around an issue, and to form their own perspective based on this analysis. The 'heart' implies fellows' sense of self or emotional intelligence, resilience, reflexivity, and what Klugman (2021) describes as their 'relational competence'. Feminists would call this building 'power within' (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007) and psychotherapists might call it 'internal authority' or agency (Parsons, 2021). The 'hands' denote fellows' ability to apply a multiplicity of skills, from working in teams, to organising others, to influencing public and political opinion, to bringing a complexity and innovation lens to whatever they take on. The programmes hypothesise that all three dimensions are key to developing or strengthening the transformative leadership capabilities of fellows.

Each one of these areas of leadership requires a journey. It is not a matter of a fellowship programme pouring something into a person so that they walk out a leader. It is about programmes offering tools and information along with processes that engage fellows' experience and expertise, which each person will synthesise in their own way and apply in their own time. Another underlying assumption that came to light is that relationships are important. Most fellowship programmes in this initiative recruited individuals rather than groups. Both the literature and these programmes recognise that leadership is relational and that for programmes to achieve their social change goals, they need to 'foster a network mindset' among participants (Meehan & Reinelt, 2012a, p. 7). As a consequence, transformational leadership has to operationalise the features of complex systems by navigating networked relationships and eliciting and valuing multiple perspectives (Meehan & Reinelt, 2012b; Richardson & Patton, 2021). The wider one's networks of influence, or social capital, the greater one's chances of being able to influence the diversity of stakeholders that can make change happen.

Some take this further, arguing that 'leadership is collective, emergent, and co-constructed through dialogue' (Kliewer & Priest, 2019, p. 2), thereby reinforcing the shift from individual leadership development towards leadership learning as a collective systems level endeavour. Morse (2002, p. 10) notes that '[t]he collaborative style of leadership has become increasingly more important [in order] to look at issues from the myriad of perspectives now represented'. The theories of change of the fellowship programmes envisage the fellows in each

cohort and across cohorts as potential social capital (Hodgson, 2020) for each other. Some shape their recruitment to facilitate this. The assumption, supported by evidence in some programmes, is that fellows will build relationships during the fellowship programme that they then leverage in support of system change. In practice, the programmes had learned that they have to deliberately incorporate relationship building into their pedagogy and processes if they are to enable the building of such social capital. Thus, the process orientation and relationship-building facets of leadership programmes need to be foregrounded as part of the explicit aims of a programme, and this will assist in developing monitoring methods to track their success.

What do leadership fellowship programmes need to learn, and how to do this?

When deciding on evaluation strategies, leadership fellowship programmes must be clear about what needs to be learned, and only then decide how this can be measured.

Evaluating shifts in individual capabilities

Programmes have to recognise that not all fellows will come in with the same capabilities, and that each fellow will process the information and experiences in different ways and apply them differently at different times. Much of the application will manifest well after the programme is over.

In the short term, evaluation will be looking to see how fellows react to the experience, and what new ideas, ways of seeing, and ways of being resonate with them and motivate them to participate actively in the programme. The Kirkpatrick model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006), developed for evaluating corporate training programmes, but now more widely used (Paull, Whitsed, & Girardi, 2016), describes this as level 1 of an evaluation: reaction. In the evaluation literature, it is generally recognised that in the short term, training programmes need to assess whether the training experience itself excites and motivates participants (Garred & Refai, 2020). They also need to assess whether fellows internalise the new thinking, information, values, or tools – learning: Kirkpatrick level 2. This is an essential step if a programme is going to influence participants' actions (Kirkpatrick level 3), and if those actions are in turn going to make change happen (level 4). That said, success in the first two levels does not guarantee shifts in fellows' behaviour.

Most programmes in this peer learning initiative, as with training programmes generally, focus on the first two levels, because they can be captured during and at the immediate end of the training, whereas shifts in fellows' behaviour and influence are much harder to identify (Meehan & Reinelt, 2012a; Reinelt, Foster, & Sullivan, 2006; TCC Group, 2018).

This is where the tension emerges between traditional evaluation approaches and those needed for evaluating fellowships building transformative leadership capabilities. The Kirkpatrick model was built for evaluating corporate training programmes. For these, behaviour change – Kirkpatrick's level 3 – means behaviours on the job, which can be relatively easily identified in routine workplace management processes. The Kirkpatrick model's level 4 (results) measures 'the impact that the training has on broader organizational or institutional outcomes' (Steele et al., 2016, p. 324), or in Kirkpatrick Partners' (n.d.) terms, 'the degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package'. This too can be relatively easily assessed within a workplace. The methodologies for data gathering and the evaluation framework can be pre-planned, with clear indicators related to whatever changes the company intended the training to deliver, as per the results-based management approach.

However, where a programme's theory of change is that fellows will draw on their increased self-insights, expertise, and relationships to do things differently and thereby influence unspecified actors to make changes that are unspecified (over which they have no control) but that contribute towards challenging or undercutting the drivers of inequity or oppression, there are no specifiable indicators. Actual outcomes cannot be predicted. 'The inherent characteristics of advocacy make it resistant to control, predictability, and certainty' (Coe & Schlangen, 2019, p. 111). This requires the fellowship programme, and its funders or host institution, to live uncomfortably in the terrain of the unknown. It requires an evaluation approach that focuses on what fellows actually do differently (level 3), what changes fellows actually 'influence' others to make (a reframing of Kirkpatrick's level 4 'results' as 'influence'), and a retrospective reflection on if and how the fellowship programme played any role in this. Systems theorists characterise this as an emergent learning approach (Darling, Guber, Smith, & Stiles, 2016; Darling & Parry, n.d.). While fellows may make some changes during the leadership fellowship – something that is more likely the longer the programme runs – they are most likely to synthesise their learning, start doing things differently, and influence others after the programme is over. Evaluation at these levels requires resources, management support, and expertise that many institutions lack (Kennedy, Chyung, Winiecki, & Brinkerhoff, 2013).

While Ebrahim (2019) argues that an organisation may well deploy multiple evaluation strategies depending on the nature of different strategies for change, the evaluation approaches of programmes in this initiative demonstrated different understandings of systems change and accountability. This was often a source of stress for staff. Rayner and Bonnici (2021, p. xxxiv) distinguish between the dominant approach of 'technical systems change' and the emergent approach of 'transformational systems change'. The former approach brings a set framework with advance prediction of outputs and outcomes, and upward accountability for

delivery of these. The latter brings questions, curiosity, and engagement in order to understand, from the ground up, how change is happening. This adaptive learning approach explores whether the training plausibly contributed in any way, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, and asks what the programme can learn from this in order to adjust its theory of change or improve its programme delivery.

In a cogent critique of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria – the standard evaluation criteria used by the development community globally to evaluate delivery using set indicators – a leading figure in global evaluation, Patton (2021, p. 53), posits the need for a change in evaluation criteria: '[T]he greatest danger for evaluators in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday's criteria'. He proposes that interventions that aim for transformation need to ensure that their engagement itself is transformative, and that programmes that are focusing on systems change apply systems concepts in their evaluations – in this case taking on questions of complexity and unpredictability. He puts forward criteria that resonate strongly with the understanding of transformative leadership, as discussed above, such as evaluating the extent of deepening of interconnectedness and the energy this catalyses, and the degree and influence of increased diversity/equity/inclusion.

A number of fellowship programmes in this initiative monitored reaction and learning (levels 1 and 2) and had set indicators for longer-term outcomes such as changes in fellows' position in their workplaces or organisations, changes in career direction or jobs, as well as fellows' publications, presentations, or receiving awards. Beyond this, they let go of evaluating levels 3 and 4 – that is, changes in fellows' behaviour and their influence on others, and thereby on social change in communities, fields, and systems. Other programmes modelled a systems approach by using the Outcomes Harvesting methodology which, rather than asking 'Did the fellows do what we predicted they would do?', explores what fellows actually did differently and what changes actually took place, and then asks whether the fellowship programme plausibly contributed to each change (Wilson-Grau, 2019). This approach is well suited to the uncertainty and unpredictability of systems change.

To harvest the (unknown) outcomes and the role of their programmes in influencing these, these programmes engaged their fellows outside of and after the fellowships ended. For example, one does site visits to experience fellows training community members or their organisations on a topic from the fellowship, or working with them on campaigns or other actions. One programme commits fellows' organisations to partner with fellows in assessing progress in addressing the organisational change issue identified by the fellow, both during and after the programme.

All the programmes recognise the need to support alumni programmes to continue in catalysing their and the group's capacity to influence social change. In addition to this fulfilling the fellowship programmes' commitment to influencing social change, the programmes' experience is that through this participation, fellows will be more inclined to share what they are doing and what changes they are influencing over time. This enables programmes to learn in what ways the programme experience had had its intended longer-term influence.

Evaluating the building and leveraging of connections

One of the issues most programmes in this initiative found hard to gauge was whether fellows built and strengthened their bonds with each other – personal bonds as well as collaborative bonds – and then, over time, whether, and in what ways, fellows used each other as resources to take forward their social change agendas, including using each other to access decision-makers or institutions they wanted to draw into their social change efforts. Two programmes used social network analysis, providing data on the degree and depth of connectedness before, during, and after the fellowship programme (Klugman, 2021; Plastrik & Taylor, 2006; Taylor, Whatley, & Coffman, 2015). One programme attempted an analysis of the nature of engagement among fellows on the organisation's WhatsApp list (Klugman, 2021).

Does the programme walk its talk? The politics of decolonial evaluation

A number of issues seem key when looking for synergy between evaluation practice and the goal of transformative leadership. These include issues of process, power, and mutual learning. Each one will be considered in turn.

The evaluation process as the focus of learning

The first issue is that evaluation has to be built into the programming process rather than seen as a technical and separate role. Most programmes in this initiative invested substantial time in the technical side – that is, shaping their recruitment criteria and processes – and the content and pedagogy of programmes. In addition, where they had separate evaluators, programme staff perceived evaluation and the evaluators as having separate roles, not embedded within programming, something also documented in the literature (Taylor & Liadsky, 2018; TCC Group, 2018). The evaluator in one of the leadership programmes in this peer learning initiative notes, 'To programme staff their main concern is about implementation, implementation, implementation. As an evaluator you're looking at the why of this programme – what kind of impact are we trying to have?' (Klugman, 2021, p. 11).

Yet evaluators of social change interventions note that programme development and implementation should not be separated from evaluation (Symonette, 2007). An organisational learning culture should be built, in other words, 'when an organization uses reflection, feedback, and sharing of knowledge as part of its day-to-day operations…and applying that learning to improve' (Center for Nonprofit Excellence, 2016, para. 1).

What was striking among programmes that did not have a highly elaborated data-collection system in line with results-based monitoring was that programme staff often articulated a sense of disempowerment in relation to the idea of what 'M&E' should be, given their understanding of monitoring and evaluation as the quantitative measurement of set indicators. They had the impression that they were not good enough. Yet when actually describing their processes, they were indeed engaged in emergent learning without the separation between programming and evaluation described above. For example, Naledi Maite of the Zanele Mbeki Development Trust Fellowship stated:

> The thing is that we haven't yet developed an approach to monitoring and evaluation because we're new and after the first year we put our energy into improving the programme based on what we learnt in the first year. (Klugman, 2021, p. 9)

This approach of ongoing reflection and improvement is entirely appropriate when outcomes are unpredictable, and it is aligned with a transformative leadership approach.

Dealing with power

The second challenge regarding evaluating a pre-planned programme with set indicators is that both the programme and the evaluation processes constitute forms of 'power over' (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007), where the programme knows best in relation to programme content and pedagogy, and the evaluator and funder, in turn, judge the programme staff's and fellows' performance. This creates a culture of fear rather than one that enables learning through exploration and risk-taking, both of which are essential for systems change (Williams, Dickman, & Smurthwaite, 2021). One of the defining dimensions of an emergent learning approach is the need to recognise and learn from failure, something that the results-based management approach disincentivises. 'Devoting organizational resources to creating an environment where it is okay to admit failures, express fears, ask questions, and engage in constructive debate, is critical to achieving tangible results during and after the program' (Spasser, n.d., p. 7).

In some cases, the challenge is not the staff, but the institutions who run the programmes or their funders, who assume a top-down form of accountability based on reporting on agreed-upon metrics. In this way of operating,

institutional and programme processes do not align with the very principles of transformative leadership practice that they aim to inculcate among fellows. Such principles include commitment to social justice and ethical behaviour; recognising and reconfiguring divergent levels of power; working collaboratively to foster connection, social inclusion, and equity (Rayner & Bonnici, 2021; De Kock & Swartz, Chapter 2, this volume); and building trust across diversity (Odora Hoppers, 2014). Programming itself would require staff '[giving] up some control in favour of encouraging the self-organisation and initiative of participants as co-designers' (Meehan & Reinelt, 2012b, p. 12). In relation to both programming and evaluation:

> Accountability would be about understanding, cultivating, supporting, and sharpening judgment while earnestly and honestly addressing successes and failures. It would be aimed towards accompanying and supporting staff, not monitoring and controlling them. It would also attempt where practicable to draw on the judgment of recipients. (Honig, 2020, p. 22)

Ligero Lasa et al. (2014, p. 72) describe this orientation as a 'critical change-driven or transformative paradigm' of evaluation which centres on identifying power dynamics and addressing these not only in relation to the programme being evaluated, but also in relation to the participation of those with less power in the evaluation process.

To live by these principles, programme staff would need to invite fellows into the processes of conceptualisation, running, and evaluation of the programme. In extremis, this would mean starting from scratch each year, but even within a broad institutional framework, processes of real participation that draw on fellows' expertise are likely to strengthen programme content and the fellows' experience. To really operationalise systems thinking would mean practising the principles associated with transformative leadership. Programme staff and evaluators, *with* fellows, would have to invest in the process of building social learning capability. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2021) describe this as a process of building legitimacy, bringing in people with multiple perspectives, and building everyone's identification with the goal of improving the programme. They note that 'without a bottom-up component in which participants experience agency, there is no social learning capability' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2021, p. 103). They argue that attention to power dynamics, particularly to who is at the table, and whose voices are listened to or are silenced, is critical for success. This thinking resonates with the notion of 'ubuntu leadership' or decision-making through consultation and dialogue (Chedondo, 2019). Ultimately, everyone has to want to be part of a collective learning journey. Staff, facilitators, and fellows all have to experience it as being valuable for themselves and for the overall purpose of the process. This emergent learning approach asks: 'What did we

hope to achieve?', 'What actually happened?', and 'Why – was it because of what we did, or because of actions of others or the broader context?' Interrogating change, or lack of change, in this way, allows an institution to then look at what it should continue to do, and which parts of its programming it should adapt and reassess (Darling et al., 2016).

Some programmes that participated in the peer learning initiative identified that without building in this kind of collective reflection process, fellows experienced evaluation as extractive and were less inclined to respond to surveys or other data-collection efforts. Their experience indicates that evaluation has to focus on what is of interest to fellows and what they consider meaningful. As Kellogg Fellows Southern Africa Liaison Mary Hlalele said:

> If they are not experiencing value from the programme, then they are less likely to put in the time to respond. Unless people are committed to the programme, they won't respond truthfully or will respond to get you out of the way. So we've been very mindful of that – how to keep alumni actively interested – activities keep people totally connected and interested so when you send out an evaluation question they respond from the core of their being. They will only respond if you're relevant to how their lives are shaping. (Klugman, 2021, p. 30)

Programmes in this initiative found that to the extent that they had recruited people who had demonstrated some leadership potential, these fellows were likely to be people who saw their role as challenging the status quo, to 'dismantle structures of power and privilege' (De Kock & Swartz, Chapter 2, this volume), and the first thing they challenged, on entering the fellowship programme, was the power and privilege undergirding the institution running the fellowship programme, its staff, facilitators, and evaluators. It took highly adaptive staff, facilitators, and evaluators to balance having clear objectives and ways of engaging fellows to buy into these as part of the recruitment and orientation process, with enabling fellows to contribute their expertise in shaping and evaluating the programme and outcomes in a continual cycle of learning and improvement. This exemplifies 'adaptive management' in that it is not about changing the overall goals of an initiative, but about making changes in programming to achieve these goals, based on learning (Vähämäki & Verger, 2019, p. 30). Indeed, staff and facilitators need to exemplify transformative leadership and emergent learning and foster a learning community by breaking down power differentials and building the trust needed to learn from the diversity and expertise of all participants. They need to be extremely self-reflexive and able to recognise and amplify diverse ways of knowing and doing among the fellows – one of the cornerstones of a decolonising approach. They need to be able to build a culture of 'power with' rather than exercising 'power over' (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007). Haugen and Chouinard (2019, p. 389) note,

'If power is not a central focus in all aspects of the evaluation design, process, and outcome, results may be invalid.'

None of this precludes documentation – that is, the monitoring of the basic metrics of the programme to inform learning and accountability. As Ebrahim (2019) notes, an organisation may well deploy multiple evaluation strategies depending on the nature of the programme's different strategies for change. Hence, the programme can and should keep a record of outputs (what it has done) and of participant outputs, and use these for learning. For example, programmes likely need to monitor the level of participation or drop-out, and whether these differ by gender, age, education level, or another descriptor, as this will provide information that could feed into programming decisions and recruitment decisions. This kind of data would not require a complex process of social learning. They are also easy to obtain, and are therefore not where the evaluation conundrums for transformative programmes lie.

Evaluation for learning

A last rationale for an emergent learning approach is that it is an essential capability for transformative leadership. For this reason, evaluation for learning needs to be built into leadership programming, not only for the programme staff to learn and improve programme pedagogy and content, but for fellows to strengthen their own skills in methods and processes that enable learning based on evidence and collective, inclusive deliberation. The better this is done, the more fellows will embed reflective practice and collective learning into their ways of operating, and bring this into both their alumni activities and their social change efforts in the world. In this way, they will also see value in the fellowship and alumni programmes, and want to continually assess if and how well these programmes are working, including if and in what ways they personally are contributing towards making them work. They will also want to know if and in what ways their fellow alumni are influencing social change. The programme will not need to battle to gather information; fellows will not experience it as extractive. Rather they will consider the programme and the learning theirs, in a form of distributed 'power with'.

Rather than requiring fellows to fill in endless surveys looking for shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and practice, many programmes used forms of evaluation that also contributed to achieving programming objectives, for example storytelling, which helped other participants learn from each fellow's development and the initiatives they had taken during or after the programme. It also strengthened a sense of connection and solidarity among fellows, while providing evidence of the degree to which each fellow had internalised or strengthened certain ways of being, seeing, and doing from their programme experience. Programmes found this kind of evaluation approach extremely

valuable in enabling their learning and adaptation, even while it did not provide the metrics expected in their logical frameworks. The Outcome Harvesting approach helped somewhat in that by categorising whatever changes fellows described in their behaviour or their influence over others, the programme could identify patterns of change to which it had contributed, whether directly or indirectly, such as strengthening of community organisations, alliances, or movements; influence on media or decision-makers' discourses; and influence on policy and practice. They could also use the stories of change as case studies to strengthen their understanding of the different processes of leadership development and influence, and the ways in which the fellowship had programme contributed towards these.

Conclusion

In answering questions around what a transformative leadership programme might need to know in order to assess if, and how well, it is contributing to influencing both individual fellows and social change; why this is the case; and how programmes can improve their offerings and processes, this chapter showed that it is more conventional and easier to monitor fellowship outputs, fellows' reaction, and any immediate shifts in knowledge or attitudes, which can be measured in relation to pre-planned indicators. However, the need and the challenge is to learn about the ways in which fellows have changed their own behaviour and influenced the behaviour of others towards social change over time – outcomes that cannot be predicted, yet are key to assessing whether a programme is contributing towards building transformative leadership.

In terms of what kind of evaluation approaches are appropriate for a transformative leadership development programme, the chapter argues that the approach needs to engage with the main dimensions of complex systems – that is, recognising and inviting multiple perspectives and ways of knowing, challenging power relations to create space for building relationships of trust across diversity, setting boundaries beyond the immediate moment of the fellowship, and being not only open to but inviting the unexpected and unknown. It argues that the more that evaluation is merged into programming, fostering a seamless culture of collective and emergent learning, the more likely it is to be able to respond to the needs of the moment, to a diversity of fellows, and to social change efforts both during the programme and with alumni over time.

#TransformativeEvaluation

It is time to evaluate programmes aiming to foster transformative leadership with processes and methods that themselves strengthen participation, critical thinking, and collective action.

Questions for discussion

1. What criteria would you suggest for evaluating whether a leadership fellowship programme is successful?
2. Do you think it is fair to expect people who go through fellowship programmes to stay in touch and keep sharing their achievements and challenges? Why? What might make it more fair?
3. How can we make the process of evaluation more transformative in nature?

References

Atkinson, J., Lasbennes, F., & Nabarro, D. (2021). Reflecting on our times: Valuing transformative leadership in real-world 'living systems'. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *42*(1), 130–138.

Bovens, M., Goodin, R. E., Schillemans, T., & Mansbridge, J. (2014). A contingency theory of accountability. In M. Bovens, R. Goodin, & T. Schillemans (Eds). *The Oxford handbook of public accountability* (pp. 55–68). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Caffrey, L. & Munro, E. (2017). A systems approach to policy evaluation. *Evaluation*, *23*(4), 463–478.

Center for Nonprofit Excellence. (2016, 11 May). *What's a learning culture and why does it matter to your nonprofit?* Groundworks New Mexico.
Retrieved from https://www.groundworksnm.org/news/whats-learning-culture-why-does-it-matter-your-nonprofit/2016-5-11.

Chedondo, M. (2019). *Ethics and leadership: A critical analysis of cultural resources for ethical leadership in Southern Africa*. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Retrieved from https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/16818.

Coe, J. & Schlangen, R. (2019). *No Royal Road: Findings and following the natural pathways in advocacy evaluation*. Center for Evaluation Innovation.
Retrieved from https://evaluationinnovation.org/publication/no-royal-road-finding-and-following-the-natural-pathways-in-advocacy-evaluation/

Darling, M., Guber, H., Smith, J., & Stiles, J. (2016). Emergent learning: A framework for whole-system strategy, learning, and adaptation. *The Foundation Review*, *8*(1), 59–73.

Darling, M. & Parry, C. (n.d.). *Emergent learning: Taking learning from experience to a new level*. The Systems Thinker. Retrieved from https://thesystemsthinker.com/emergent-learning-taking-learning-from-experience-to-a-new-level/.

Ebrahim, A. (2019). *Measuring social change: Performance and accountability in a complex world*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Garred, M. & Refai, M. (2020). *Change inside and out: An outcome harvesting plus attitude change toolkit for peacebuilders and other changemakers – Trial version*. Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities.
Retrieved from https://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ohac_toolkit.pdf.

Guijt, I. (2010). Accountability and learning: Exploding the myth of incompatibility between accountability and learning. In A. Fowler & C. Malunga (Eds). *NGO management: The Earthscan companion* (pp. 339–352). Abingdon-on-Thames, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Haugen, J. S. & Chouinard, J. A. (2019). Transparent, translucent, opaque: Exploring the dimensions of power in culturally responsive evaluation contexts. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *40*(3), 376–394.

Hodgson, J. (2020). Disrupting and democratising development: Community philanthropy as theory and practice. *Gender & Development*, *28*(1), 99–116.

Honig, D. (2020, 5 February). *Actually navigating by judgment: Towards a new paradigm of donor accountability where the current system doesn't work*. CGD Policy Paper 169. Centre for Global Development. Retrieved from https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/actually-navigating-by-judgement-paper.pdf.

Kennedy, P. E., Chyung, Y. S. Y., Winiecki, D., & Brinkerhoff, R. (2013). Training professionals' usage and understanding of Kirkpatrick's level 3 and level 4 evaluations. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *18*(1), 1–21.

Kirkpatrick, D. L. & Kirkpatrick, J. D. (2006). *Evaluating training programmes: The four levels* (3rd ed.). Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Kirkpatrick Partners (n.d.). *The Kirkpatrick Model*. Retrieved from https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model/.

Kliewer, B. W. & Priest, K. L. (2019). Building collective leadership capacity: Lessons learned from a university–community partnership. *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research*, *2*(1), 1–10.

Klugman, B. (2021). *Evaluating leadership fellowship programmes: Report on challenges and lessons shared among South Africa-based initiatives*. Tekano. Retrieved from https://tekano.org.za/2021/09/06/evaluating-leadership-fellowship-programmes-by-barbara-klugman/.

Ligero Lasa, J. A., Espinosa Fajardo, J., Mormeneo Cortes, C., & Bustelo Ruesta, M. (2014). *Making evaluation sensitive to gender and human rights: Different approaches*. Madrid, Spain: Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

Lomofsky, D. & Grout-Smith, J. (2020). Learning to learn: The experience of learning facilitation for grantees of Comic-Relief-funded projects. *African Evaluation Journal*, *8*(1), 1–10.

Meehan, D. & Reinelt, C. (2012a). *Leadership and collective impact: A guide for strengthening the impact of your leadership development work*. Leadership Learning Community. Retrieved from https://leadershiplearning.org/publications/leadership-collective-impact/

Meehan, D. & Reinelt, C. (2012b). *Leadership and networks: New ways of developing leadership in a highly connected world*. Leadership Learning Community. Retrieved from https://leadershiplearning.org/publications/leadership-networks-new-ways-of-developing-leadership-in-a-highly-connected-world/

Morse, S. W. (2002). *Crafting a new design for civil leadership: A Pew Civic entrepreneur initiative report*. Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Retrieved from http://www.civicchange.org/pdf/crafting_new_design.pdf.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Orians, C., Chew, A., & Rowland, P. (2018). *Evaluating leadership for social change*. ORS Impact. Retrieved from https://www.orsimpact.com/directory/evaluating-leadership-for-social-change.htm

Parsons, M. (2021). Authority and freedom. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, *69*(1), 1163–1190.

Patton, M. Q. (2021). Evaluation criteria for evaluating transformation: Implications for the coronavirus pandemic and the global climate emergency. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *42*(1), 53–89.

Patton, M. Q. & Patrizi, P. A. (2010). Strategy as the focus for evaluation. In P. A. Patrizi & M. Q. Patton (Eds). *Evaluating strategy: New directions for evaluation* (Number 128), (pp. 5–28). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Paull, M., Whitsed, C., & Girardi, A. (2016). Applying the Kirkpatrick model: Evaluating an 'interaction for learning framework' curriculum intervention. *Issues in Educational Research*, *26*(3), 490–507.

Plastrik, P. & Taylor, M. (2006). *Net Gains: A handbook for network builders seeking social change*. Network Impact.
Retrieved from https://www.networkimpact.org/resources/net-gains-a-handbook-for-network-builders-seeking-social-change.

Rayner, C. & Bonnici, F. (2021). *The systems work of social change*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Reinelt, C., Foster, P., & Sullivan, S. (2006). *Evaluating outcomes and impacts: A scan of 55 leadership development programs*. Leadership Learning Community.
https://ctserc.org/documents/misc/ptfg-2017-06-16-wk-kellogg-evaluating-outcome.pdf.

Richardson, R. & Patton, M. Q. (2021). Leadership-evaluation partnership: Infusing systems principles complexity concepts for a transformational alliance. *New Directions for Evaluation*, *2021*(170), 139–147.

Spasser, A. (n.d.). *Empower, change, transform: A guide to building a successful leadership development programme*. Schusterman Family Foundation. Retrieved from https://schusterman.widen.net/s/skvbhlmx5n/leadershipdevelopmentguide.

Steele, L. M., Mulhearn, T. J., Medeiros, K. E., Watts, L. L., Connelly, S., & Mumford, M. D. (2016). How do we know what works? A review and critique of current practices in ethics training evaluation. *Accountability in Research*, *23*(6), 319–350.

Symonette, H. (2007). Making evaluation work for the greater good: Supporting provocative possibility and responsive praxis in leadership development. In K. Hannum, J. Martineau, & C. Reinelt (Eds). *The handbook of leadership development evaluation* (pp. 111–136). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Taylor, A. & Liadsky, B. (2018). *Achieving greater impact by starting with learning*. Ontario Nonprofit Network.
Retrieved from https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Achieving-Greater-Impact-by-Starting-with-Learning-September-2018.pdf.

Taylor, M., Whatley, A., & Coffman, J. (2015). Network evaluation in practice: Approaches and applications. *The Foundation Review*, *7*(2), 22–37.

TCC Group. (2018). *Summary report of the leadership development evaluation learning lab*. New York, NY: TCC Group.

Vähämäki, J. & Verger, C. (2019). *Learning from results-based management evaluations and reviews*. OECD Development Co-operation Working Paper 53. OECD. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/learning-from-results-based-management-evaluations-and-reviews_3fda0081-en.

VeneKlasen, L. & Miller, V. (2007). *A new weave of power, people and politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation*. Warwickshire, United Kingdom: Practical Action Publishing.

Wenger-Trayner, E. & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2021). *Systems convening: A crucial form of leadership for the 21st century*. Wenger-Trayner.com.
Retrieved from https://www.wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Systems-Convening.pdf.

Williams, A., Dickman, J., & Smurthwaite, R. (2021). Advancing evaluation and learning on transformational change: Lessons from the climate investment funds' transformational change learning partnership. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *42*(1), 90–109.

Williams, B. & Van 't Hof, S. (2016). *Wicked solutions: A systems approach to complex problems* (2nd ed.). Research Triangle, NC: Lulu Press.

Wilson-Grau, R. (2019). *Outcome harvesting: Principles, steps and evaluation applications*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to recognise that the insights shared in this chapter were generated through the engagement of the following programmes in the peer learning initiative: Activate: Leadership and Public Innovation, African Leadership Academy, Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity, Canon Collins Educational and Legal Assistance Trust Scholarship, Centre for Environmental Rights: Rights and Remedies School, DGMT Fellowship for Organisational Innovation, enke: Make Your Mark: Trailblazer Programme, groundWork: Environmental Justice School, Kellogg Fellows Alumni Network, Nelson Mandela Foundation (fellowship under development), Oliver Tambo Fellowship Programme, Soul City Institute's Feminist Learning and Action Centre (fellowship under development), Tekano Atlantic Fellows for Health Equity, Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education, Young African Leaders Initiative Regional Leadership Center – Southern Africa, Zanele Mbeki Development Trust Fellowship. She would also like to recognise the lessons learnt through engagement with Tekano fellows, staff, and board over the three years of her developmental evaluation role, and with the alumni and staff of the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership during her 2021 review.

16 *Climbing the hill: The burden of development placed on scholarship recipients*

Sepiso Dean Mwamelo

Overview

International scholarships facilitate the mobility of African students. Funders of scholarships have differing geopolitical, strategic, or business interests. Despite this, the inclusion of scholarships in the Sustainable Development Goals has construed these opportunities as social and economic development tools. The narrative is that African scholarship recipients must become transformative leaders – they must use their training to foster development in their countries of origin. This chapter is an autoethnographic account telling the author's story along with the stories of 25 other Africans who received scholarships to pursue studies outside the African continent. The data comprise personal reflection and semi-structured interviews supplemented by a review of scholarship databases. The research found that framing scholarships as a tool for development can be overburdening to students; some students accept this burden, while others reject it. If the burden of development is placed on scholarship recipients, scholarship programmes should invest in support structures to ameliorate the negative effects.

Introduction

International mobility in pursuit of higher education is constantly rising (Owusu-Kwarteng, 2020; Ye & Edwards, 2017). For most African students, this mobility is possible through scholarships that reduce or eliminate the costs of pursuing education outside their country of origin (Campbell, 2016). Currently, there are several types of scholarship providers, including, but not limited to, 'international organisations, private foundations, home and host universities, foreign and national governments, businesses and individual philanthropy' (Campbell, 2016, p. 76). Regardless of the type of provider, scholarships are construed as a tool to facilitate social and economic development. Students who win such opportunities are expected to utilise the high-quality training to empower themselves with skills that can be used to foster development in their countries of origin (Campbell & Neff, 2020). Because of this view, scholarships have been added as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN member states were invited to increase investment towards providing scholarships (Unesco, 2020).

While some agree that scholarships are indeed instruments of development, others argue that scholarships (usually given to students from the Global South to study in the Global North) are a way to propagate worldviews favourable to Western hegemonic interests (Perna et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the impact of these scholarships on the recipients should not be underestimated. When interviewing students from Liberia, Covington-Ward (2017) found that most students desired to study abroad. Studying abroad came with the potential to access wealth, higher living standards, and a more comfortable life for them, their families, and their communities. Such scholarships were referred to as 'heaven' or a 'golden opportunity' due to their ability to transform the trajectory of individuals and, potentially, their communities. (Covington-Ward, 2017, p. 1021; Hyams-Ssekasi, Mushibwe, & Caldwell, 2014).

The current situation is that there is a growing availability of scholarships for students in African countries. A key issue with this growth is that the motivation for providing these scholarships is complex. This research's contribution is to examine the personal aspect of scholarships from the recipients' point of view. It will highlight the need to create a greater understanding in future developments of scholarship programmes of the unique pressures on the individual scholar. To manage the scope of the research, this chapter will subscribe to the definition of international scholarships provided by Campbell and Neff (2020), which states that an international scholarship programme must have the following characteristics: first, the recipients should study at an accredited higher education institution outside their country of citizenship or domicile; second, the award must cover more than 50 per cent of the cost of international study; third, the scholarship should be part of an openly advertised programme with centralised administration.

This chapter follows the chronological journey of a scholarship recipient studying abroad. I begin by outlining the research methodology and then discuss the exodus and return of the scholarship recipient, outlining the theoretical underpinning of the chapter, which is Nyerere's (1979) allegory of 'the hill'. Throughout the journey, links to aspects of transformative leadership will be made, though the concepts are not explored in detail. The chapter describes the decisions and considerations scholarship recipients must factor in as they begin their journey. Moreover, the chapter shows what the decision to return or not return means to different students in different circumstances.

Research methodology

The point of departure of this research is unique in that as I am researching scholarship recipients, I am also a three-time scholarship recipient. I received a Google Foundation scholarship to attend the African Leadership Academy,

a Colgate-Palmolive corporate sponsorship to attend the African Leadership University, and a Mastercard Foundation scholarship to attend the University of Edinburgh. This means that I have an insider's view of the interlocutors' lifeworld. As Behar (1997, p. 21) states, '[i]n anthropology, everything depends on the emotional and intellectual baggage the anthropologist takes on the voyage'. Instead of enshrouding this baggage that will inevitably affect my research, I explore it, study it, and weave it into conversations with interviewees. The consequences of this insider view are that the line between self and field will, in many instances, blur or even cease to exist, which calls for an autoethnographic approach (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Moors, 2017). The term autoethnography is comprised of three parts: 'auto', the researcher's personal experiences and reflections; 'ethno', which seeks to uncover the cultural identities within which the self is embedded; and 'graphy', which in this case is the writing of this research piece (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015; Manning & Adams, 2015). While autoethnography is advantageous in that it gives the reader access to learners' private worlds, it bears a limitation in that personal narratives could limit the research conclusions (Méndez, 2013). In order to mitigate this limitation, this research undertook in-depth engagement with the data collected during interviews to enrich the discussion.

Three primary ways of collecting data were used in the research. The first was semi-structured interviews done via WhatsApp audio calls due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Twenty-five interviews, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes, were conducted for four main interviewee categories: 12 African students, either postgraduate or undergraduate, on scholarships (Scholarship Student); 10 African alumni of scholarships (Scholarship Alumni); two staff members in scholarship programmes (Scholarship Staff); and one expert researcher (Scholarship Researcher) on scholarship programmes. The number that follows each category is simply the number assigned to each participant.

To access these interviewees, I employed snowball sampling and purposive sampling, and I gained ethical approval for this study from the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science Research Ethics Board. Before all interviews, I sent out an information sheet and consent form and asked all participants to agree to participate in the research. It should be noted that the sample size is relatively small and may not be fully representative of all experiences of international students on scholarships.

The exodus and the climb

In 1970, Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere, delivered a speech that invited all Tanganyikan African National Union members to pledge, 'I shall educate myself to the best of my ability and use my education to the benefit of all' (Mhaiki & Hall, 1972, p. 10). This pledge provided the theme of the year, and

effectively the national strategy to ensure that the educated transformed their communities. Later, this pledge became the creed of the political party and a sentiment that reverberated throughout Tanzanian communities. By inviting all those who could educate themselves to serve as change agents, Nyerere began to blur the line between traditional 'leaders' and 'followers' – anyone could become a leader and drive change in their communities.

Fifty years later, the evidence of this narrative was still present within the Tanzanian communities where I spent my formative years. It was clear that education was paramount, and that any education attained should be used to fashion equitable change. Unbeknown to me, this was my first encounter with transformative leadership, which has been defined as leadership committed to unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom (Odora Hoppers, 2014; Shields, 2010; Weiner, 2003).

The emphasis of this narrative was apparent even in the rituals of my family. Every time I left Tanzania in pursuit of education, my uncle asked me to kneel in front of the entire family, and they all laid their hands on my head and said a prayer thanking God for my big opportunity, which in many ways was their big opportunity, our big opportunity. My family, as well as those of many African scholars who have been lucky enough to receive an education, believes that this education is critical to individual and societal liberation from the shackles of poverty (Mulenga, 2001; Okoth, cited in Irungu, 2013).

Nyerere's allegory of the hill

Years after his famous 1970 speech, Nyerere introduced the allegory of 'the hill' to describe how education has the power to bring liberation. An excerpt from the allegory follows:

> Education is like a big hill which climbs to the skies and gives a view over the surrounding countryside. And all of us can climb at least some of the way up so that all of us can gradually extend our vision and learn more of the things which affect our lives, or which can be made to help our lives. In fact, we are like the people of olden times who used to climb the nearby hill – or a tree if there was no hill – to see what was passing, or what was approaching them, so as to be ready to welcome the guests, or to protect themselves against invaders. We who live in the 20th century world, in which the activities of all the countries affect all the others, need to go on climbing this hill so as to get away from the danger of floods, to get away from the disease and misery we used to live in, and to take advantage of all mankind's knowledge for our own welfare. (Nyerere, 1979, p. 36)

Sanga (2018) further expounds on this allegory by describing the differences between being 'on the hill' versus being 'in the valley'. He explains that the valley is plagued with floods, shadows, disease, and cold. Moreover, the line of vision is limited in the valley, and the valley-dwellers cannot see any enemies approaching. Although climbing the hill is hard, the height provides a broad view of things approaching (Mushi, 2009; Sanga, 2018). As such, Nyerere tasks 'those who can' climb out of the valley with the role of helping the community in the valley. He asks them to use their ability to see further and broader to advise the valley-dwellers of the dangers approaching (Sanga, 2018). In this allegory, Nyerere emphasises themes such as liberation and emancipation, which are values of transformative leadership as discussed by Shields (2010). The type of leader he calls for is outward-looking, primarily aiming to impact their society through their work, a distinctive feature of transformative leadership.

Scholarships particularly are perceived as key facilitators that enable young scholars to climb the hill. They are perceived with pride not only by the recipients, but also by 'immediate and extended families, entire villages, communities, and governments' (Irungu, 2013, p. 166). This perception is based on the expected impact that the scholarship recipients will bring to their communities. Considering the weight of the opportunity and its impact on the student and their community, if one receives a scholarship to finance one's studies, studying abroad is an obvious path to take. A former studentship recipient from South Africa, Scholarship Alumni #21, also remarked that any option that could potentially lead to being in the United Kingdom, having access to work and an income, is a straightforward decision.

> Going to the UK and being at work and earning an income and building a life; *if you can do that, you must*.
> (Scholarship Alumni #21, South Africa, emphasis added)

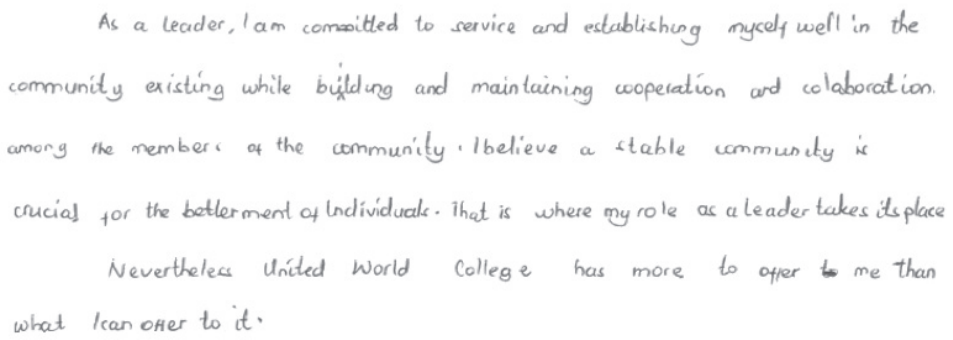
The overall sentiment both of society at large and the individual student is that if one can climb higher for the benefit of all, they should.

Those who can, must!

The statement that concluded the quote mentioned above, 'if you can do that, you must' (Scholarship Alumni #21, South Africa), speaks to Nyerere's (1979) comment that not everyone can climb high onto the hill and that some – a particular group of people – can rise higher than the rest. In the case of scholarships, this group of people is often identified by a set of eligibility criteria such as academic merit or having a list of accomplishments and awards. But beyond that, they should have a proven passion for driving change in local communities. A crucial part of most scholarship application processes is a

piece of writing, usually a personal statement. Students use these essays to communicate their passions and interests, and to express how they fit in with the mandate of the scholarship programme. In 2012, at age 17, I wrote my first scholarship application essays. Figure 16.1 is an excerpt from one of the very first essays I wrote as part of my application for a scholarship to United World Colleges, a network of high schools across the world.

Figure 16.1 *Excerpt from author's application essay, 2012, aged 17*


As a leader, I am committed to service and establishing myself well in the community existing while building and maintaining cooperation and collaboration among the members of the community. I believe a stable community is crucial for the betterment of individuals. That is where my role as a leader takes its place. Nevertheless United World College has more to offer to me than what I can offer to it.

It reads:

> As a leader, I am committed to service and establishing myself well in the community while building and maintaining cooperation and collaboration among the members of the community. I believe a stable community is crucial for the betterment of individuals. That is where my role as a leader takes its place. Nevertheless, United World College has more to offer to me than what I can offer to it.

I wrote this essay with the knowledge that if I studied outside Tanzania, I would want to come back and be a leader in my community. Beyond my personal story, the narrative is that those who can obtain such opportunities should take them so that they can be part of the development process. This narrative is propagated by members of local communities and by scholarship programmes themselves. Students are often encouraged to use their education as a means to develop their countries. The excerpt below is from the University of Cape Town's description[1]

[1] This page no longer exists on the UCT website but the idea of 'Go back, Give back' is found on other university websites advertising the Scholars Program, for example https://www.internationalscholarships.dhet.gov.za/index.php/scholarships/undergraduate-scholarships/56-south-africa-university-of-pretoria-mastercard-scholarship-2023-in-africa.

of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program (2020), which reminds students that their skills must be invested in their country's development:

> Go back, Give back: The vision of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program is to create positive social and economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa through education. Scholars are encouraged to return to their home countries and invest their skills in their country's social and economic growth after study.

Because scholarships are highly regarded as a tool for development, most students have found themselves accepting scholarship offers, even those that have contracts with which they do not fully agree, because the students have limited agency. When asked why they accepted their scholarships, participants responded:

> We accept these [scholarship contracts] because we do not have the privilege to say no or to pay. (Scholarship Student #2, Tunisia)

> [The scholarship providers] tell you the motivation for providing these scholarships, what they are seeking to achieve. They ask: Are you comfortable with it? If you're comfortable, take it. If you're not comfortable, leave it. So, nobody's putting a gun on somebody's head to accept the scholarship. But in the absence of other opportunities that do not have any strings attached to them, if you're out of options, what do you do? (Scholarship Student #13, Ghana)

These quotes express how students acknowledge their level of agency, but recognise that they exist in situations where they might not feel able to reject the scholarship offers or the terms and conditions of these offers. And because these opportunities are highly regarded, most students accept the scholarship offers they receive. In many instances, 'those who can' usually do – for themselves and out of consideration for their communities (sometimes through care and sometimes through fear).

Climbing the hill

After accepting these scholarships, 'those who can' embark on the journey of climbing the hill. Sanga (2018, p. 85) remarks:

> There are many challenges, and some people are tempted to give up along the way. Climbing the hill depicts the challenges a person is facing on the way to acquiring education. A journey towards education is full of obstacles; one can easily fail to persevere. It needs a personal determination to climb to the peak.

There are many distinct advantages of having a scholarship that make climbing the hill easier for 'those who can'. By virtue of having financial matters taken

care of by the scholarship provider, 'those who can' have fewer finance-related concerns. Moreover, some scholarship programmes, such as the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program and the Moshal Scholarship Program, offer support beyond finance through support meetings and academic monitoring to ensure that the student's experience is seamless. Moreover, beyond access to quality education free from financial worries, by climbing up the hill, 'those who can' get further from the valley, and move further away from their communities. This figurative and literal distance allows students space to reflect. Hyams-Ssekasi et al., (2014) find that this space and separation from one's community is vital in the self-discovery journey as students temporarily unplug from their community and explore other identities and other opportunities to experience change. On this theme, a student remarked:

> Studying away from home gives you the opportunity to be by yourself. That has come with a lot of time to introspect and learn the things that I feel are important. So, I think, all in all, I've just become a more distilled version of myself and something that I think I appreciate very much. (Scholarship Student #20, Zimbabwe)

Overall, the hill's height allows students to have a broader view and learn new things about themselves outside their community and its social constructions. Being in a new space and having an opportunity to create a new identity is essential in freeing people and allowing them to try new experiences.

However, as much as scholarships have significant benefits for scholarship recipients, some of the recipients under consideration expressed that they felt pressure to excel for themselves and their communities. Giacobello (2000) explains that the pressures to overachieve come from internal and external sources, and can cause people to push themselves beyond what is normally possible. On a similar note, one participant shared the following sentiment:

> We have these expectations that we are supposed to do so much, and we are supposed to do it well. You have to get good grades, be involved in the community, be outspoken, be loud, make a change. *We give ourselves little room to be ourselves, just be human, just be normal people.* It feels like there is a lot of pressure. But the Mastercard Foundation advisors tell us to take some time off, but we feel like we have to put in the work and be extra. (Scholarship Student #8, Tanzania, emphasis added)

Students feel this pressure to perform consistently, even when the donor does not expect it. One funder from the Mastercard Foundation, the programme that funded Scholarship Student #8 from Tanzania, remarks:

> I hope that scholars feel like they can bring their whole selves to this; if that means failing at some point, or if it means a program change or

> just the rollercoaster of life, I hope that people can do that, and we can be there for them. (Scholarship Staff #1, USA)

There is a dissonance between the intended reception of a scholarship and the lived experience of having received it; even though some scholarship providers do not put this pressure on the students, the value of the scholarship is central to imposing an unintended burden on students (Campbell & Neff, 2020). The donor–recipient relationship has, through the years, facilitated vertical distance between the party offering the assistance and the party receiving it, particularly when the scholarship provided by the donor is not reciprocated or paid back (Mawdsley, 2012). This burden towards maximising the scholarship is just the first part; the students face another burden, that of becoming transformative leaders in their communities.

The return: Going back and giving back

The topic of reintegration has attracted much interest in migration studies. Significant efforts have gone into designing strategies that can be used to facilitate a smooth reintegration into a migrant's country of origin (Long, 2013; Nordstrom, 1997). These efforts acknowledge that when a person leaves their country, they change, and in addition, their country of origin also changes and evolves (Ghanem, 2003). Due to these changes, reintegration is not merely a physical return to the country of origin; it must be a holistic process that facilitates the re-establishment of a sense of 'belonging on both an individual and a collective level' (Long, 2013, p. 1; Nordstrom, 1997). In the interview process, I found that students and alumni who have studied outside their country of origin struggled to weave themselves back into the fabric of their society. Consider the quotes below.

> Coming home was the hardest thing that I had to go through in my whole life. It was even worse than going abroad for the first time… It was like going to a different country and starting all over again. (Scholarship Alumni #17, Somalia)

> I had changed so much within two years, that when I went home, I felt like a foreigner in my own home. I am more open-minded now. (Scholarship Student #6, Kenya)

> I got another culture shock going back home even though it was my own home, though I grew up there…I do not think it will be accepted 100% so I need to tailor myself back to how I was, so that I can fit in. (Scholarship Student #15, Kenya)

From the quotes above, it is evident that the students and their communities both notice the changes that students undergo when studying abroad. However, not

all students face challenges in reintegrating. Some, particularly those who got a chance to travel back to their countries of origin during study breaks, found it easier to integrate.

> I think the integration for me was easy because I've always come back home every summer. For someone who spent four years in the US, and all of a sudden integrated into the system, it could be a bit difficult. But for me, every single summer I spent in an African country, I spent solving local problems. It was not difficult for me to integrate once I graduated. (Scholarship Alumni #10, Kenya)

Nonetheless, reintegration into the country of origin comes with a set of challenges and critical decisions for students. Only a few, mainly those who have the funding to return to their country of origin during their studies, and those who have been able to adapt their definition of home, find the reintegration process easy.

After going back, students are expected to begin their journey as transformative leaders, and to give back. Giving back involves the process of using their education, skills, and knowledge to do meaningful work that can positively impact their communities. What this means is that the students are expected to become transformative leaders in action.

Those who can, and who do give back

Page and Mercer (2012) outline how remitting and other ways of giving back, particularly through financial support, is a matter of habit and that it is intrinsic to a diaspora lifestyle. Giving back is motivated by a myriad of factors, including 'states of emotion such as homesickness, guilt and exasperation or motivational knowledge such as understanding the pressures on those in the diaspora to remit and understanding the need of those at home for remittances' (Page & Mercer, 2012, p. 8).

With these factors in mind, it is not surprising that one scholarship student remarked:

> Saving Africa is the natural progression from saving yourself. Because I feel like once you have saved yourself, you feel like there are other people that I need to save too. And I think it also boils down to a sense of identity…And I feel like it's my responsibility to ensure that I do as much as I possibly can to develop that ethnicity in that nationality. (Scholarship Student #20, Zimbabwe)

Page and Mercer (2012) argue that such acts of giving back may not be so much a choice as a natural habit, a natural part of one's lifestyle, and that the empathy

and the related emotions are deeply engraved into people in the diaspora, so that giving back becomes part of life and not an active decision. However, the next subgroup of 'those who can' proves that it could be a choice.

Those who can, but choose not to

The second subgroup of 'those who can' is those who choose not to give back. For these students, the decision not to give back was premised on the fact that the scholarships were already earned through the hard work that they put into winning the scholarship, and so they do not have to do more to pay back.

> I do not think it's mandatory for everyone because not everyone can do that [give back]. And it's kind of weird how that is expected of African students, but I do not hear anyone telling Scottish students to go back and give back. It seems like when you make it to a certain level you're expected to start pulling others up, which is okay, but which can also be very difficult because already as African students, most people are coming from big families. They already have to pull up their siblings and stuff. Black children really have a lot of black tax, they're already giving back too much, so I would understand if someone is overwhelmed. (Scholarship Alumni #19, Zimbabwe)

In the book *Black Tax: Burden or Ubuntu*?, Mhlongo (2019) interviews Black South Africans to determine whether black tax is a burden or is an act of ubuntu – humanity towards others. Mhlongo (2019) defines black tax as a portion of income and support that Black and African people have to offer their families, which often lands people in financial distress. Through his interviews, he found that many people feel that by paying this black tax, they are taking over what is essentially the responsibility of the government – to improve the welfare of communities. On a similar note, a scholarship student from Morocco commented:

> This is the money of our grandparents. While Morocco does not have a history with England per se, a lot of these universities were hubs for extending colonial power onto the African continent. A lot of the resources that England has been built with have come from the colonies and so for me it's only obvious that a little bit of redistribution is done through scholarships. (Scholarship Student #3, Morocco)

In her opinion, she doesn't feel like it's fair for African students to carry the burden of giving back, since the economic disparities that exist in the world root back to colonialism, and so to accept these scholarships without feeling the pressure to give back is a form of reparation.

Those who cannot

The final sub-group is composed of people who want to give back but cannot, because they either do not have the financial means to give back or pick higher-paying jobs instead of socially impactful jobs (Campbell, 2018). As expressed by Scholarship Student #20 from Zimbabwe, 'Saving Africa is the natural progression from saving yourself'. And so, saving Africa or impacting one's community can only happen after providing for oneself first. The interviews indicate that students find it difficult to give back to their communities while struggling to support themselves.

> I was required to go back home after completing my degree. The programme just expects you to make a change without really knowing the struggles and obstacles you have to face when you return home… If I was not forced to go back home or was at least provided with some sort of assistance, I would have thought about creating connections and hopefully finding a job abroad. That would have put me in a better situation to help myself and my country. Now, I cannot even help myself…Only a successful student who accomplished all of his/her goals with a decent job can give back and be useful to his/her community. (Scholarship Alumni #17, Somalia)

My interview with an alumna from Kenya provoked a great deal of reflection. As the alumna shared her experience of returning to Kenya, she very emotionally explained:

> You really need to know what you want out of this life; if it is building African economies, please do know that you pay quite a hefty price towards it. If you're willing to part with that hefty price, move back to Africa as soon as you graduate. But if not, I will say, please build your pocket, build the experience to the knowledge, build your network before coming back. (Scholarship Alumni #10, Kenya)

This alumna earned seven times less than she would have if she had stayed in the United States and would have been in a better financial position to support her family. That hefty price she refers to includes many things such as financial stability, giving up new-found homes, or changing career paths (Campbell, 2018). In as much as Scholarship Alumni #10 has a demonstrable passion for social change and has the willingness to transform the community, she outlines that there are clear trade-offs to be faced.

These subgroups show that, ultimately, students decide whether they want to give back, but in some cases, although students want to give back, they might not have the resources and the support systems to facilitate the giving-back

process. For most interviewees, returning to their country of origin after studying abroad was difficult. The return came with a lot of decisions, trade-offs, and burdens. It is important to note that students undergo considerable amounts of change during their time abroad. Their identity, perspectives, and aspirations change, and the expectation of scholarship programmes should factor in these potential changes. Giving back and paying it forward are burdensome for most students, and some students argue that improving social welfare should be the responsibility of governments and not of 'those who can'. Is it fair to expect 'those who can' to dedicate their lives to changing their communities by virtue of receiving a scholarship? A key criticism of transformative leadership is that 'it is sometimes believed to be too idealistic and too demanding and to place too much responsibility on the shoulders of educators and educational leaders for redressing global ills' (Shields, 2010, p. 572). While some of these leaders might have the commitment needed to foster change in their communities, it is unrealistic to expect all scholarship recipients to change their societies without extra support.

Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter, I see the statement 'I shall educate myself to the best of my ability and use my education to the benefit of all' very differently, as it signifies the burden that I will forever bear. This statement reminds me of my responsibilities towards my scholarship providers and my duties towards my community – the responsibility of being a transformative leader in my community. Although I have heard this statement for years, only now, after months of interviews and research, do I see that this pledge does not mention *my* personal benefit. Although, in some ways, my personal benefit is interwoven with the benefits of all.

Nyerere's (1979) allegory of the hill has been crucial in showing how education can facilitate economic mobility and, ultimately, community development. Moreover, the inclusion of scholarships as a UN Sustainable Development Goals target means more commitment to increasing the number of scholarships offered to students from the African continent. Indeed, education has the ability to empower young people to change their lives and become transformative leaders in their communities. However, although there is logical interconnectedness between education and development, there is a need to separate the discussion of scholarships as a means of providing access to education and scholarships as a tool to facilitate overall community development.

In addition to encouraging students to return to their countries of origin, scholarship programmes should consider investing in non-financial support structures, such as solid networks that students can call on post graduation, to facilitate smooth transitions upon their return home. Moreover, strategic programming, such as allowing students to return to their countries of origin

during their studies, will create links that help enable them to become integrated transformative leaders in their communities.

The current direction of most scholarship programmes is to design more inclusive recruitment methods to access the most marginalised groups, such as students from rural communities. There is room for research on the experiences of the most marginalised groups to determine how investments of the future can be used effectively to make the experiences of such students seamless.

Undoubtedly, geopolitical, strategic, or business interests are beneath the surface of most international scholarships; nonetheless, there is a need for a more humanistic approach and narrative framing within the scholarship space.

#LessenTheBurden #ScholarshipsAsDevelopmentTool

Scholarships as a tool for development can be overburdening to recipients. Scholarship providers need to offer additional support to assist in dealing with this burden.

Questions for discussion

1. Why should 25-year-olds bear the burdens of development? What does that do to state accountability?
2. If a 25-year-old accepts the challenge/burden of becoming a transformative leader, what support should be available to them? From whom?
3. What advice would you give a young graduate who feels burdened, overwhelmed, or pressurised by the need to be a transformative leader?

References

Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., & Delamont, S. (2003). *Key themes in qualitative research: Continuities and changes*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Behar, R. (1997). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Campbell, A. C. (2016). International scholarship graduates influencing social and economic development at home: The role of alumni networks in Georgia and Moldova. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *19*(1), 76–91.

Campbell, A. C. (2018). Influencing pathways to social change: Scholarship program conditionality and individual agency. In J. R. Dassin, R. R. Marsh, & M. Mawer (Eds). *International scholarships in higher education: Pathways to social change* (pp. 165–186). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Campbell, A. C. & Neff, E. (2020). A systematic review of international higher education scholarships for students from the Global South. *Review of Educational Research*, *90*(6), 824–861.

Covington-Ward, Y. (2017). 'Back home, people say America is heaven': Pre-migration expectations and post-migration adjustment for Liberians in Pittsburgh. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *18*(4), 1013–1032.

Ghanem, T. (2003). *When forced migrants return 'home': The psychosocial difficulties returnees encounter in the reintegration process*. RSC Working Paper No. 16. Refugee Studies Centre. Retrieved from https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/wp16-when-forced-migrants-return-home-2003.pdf.

Giacobello, J. (2000). *Everything you need to know about the dangers of overachieving*. New York, NY: Rosen Publishing.

Hyams-Ssekasi, D., Mushibwe, C. P., & Caldwell, E. F. (2014). International education in the United Kingdom: The challenges of the golden opportunity for Black-African students. *SAGE Open*, *4*(4), 1–13.

Irungu, J. (2013). African students in the US higher-education system. In H. C. Alberts & H. D. Hazen (Eds). *International students and scholars in the United States: Coming from abroad* (pp. 163–180). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Long, K. (2013). *The point of no return: Refugees, rights, and repatriation*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Manning, J. & Adams, T. E. (2015). Popular culture studies and autoethnography: An essay on method. *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, *3*(1–2), 187–222.

Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program (2020). *Go back, Give back*. Retrieved from http://www.mcfsp.uct.ac.za/go-back-give-back.

Mawdsley, E. (2012). The changing geographies of foreign aid and development cooperation: Contributions from gift theory. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *37*(2), 256–272.

Méndez, M. (2013). Autoethnography as a research method: Advantages, limitations and criticisms. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, *15*(2), 279–287.

Mhaiki, P. J. & Hall, B. L. (1972). *The integration of adult education in Tanzania*. Unesco Institute for the Advancement of Adult Education.
Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED068781.pdf.

Mhlongo, N. (2019). *Black tax: Burden or ubuntu?* Johannesburg, South Africa: Jonathan Ball.

Moors, A. (2017). On autoethnography. *Ethnography*, *18*(3), 387–389.

Mulenga, D. (2001). 'Mwalimu': Julius Nyerere's contributions to education. *Convergence*, *34*(1), 17–41.

Mushi, P. A. K. (2009). *History and development of education in Tanzania* (2nd ed.). Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Dar es Salaam University Press.

Nordstrom, C. (1997). *A different kind of war story*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nyerere, J. K. (1979). Education never ends. In H. Hinzen & V. H. Hundsdorfer (Eds). *Education for liberation and development: The Tanzanian experience* (pp. 33–37). Hamburg, Germany: Unesco Institute for Education.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Owusu-Kwarteng, L. (2020). 'Studying in this England is wahala (trouble)': Analysing the experiences of West African students in a UK higher education institution. *Studies in Higher Education*, *46*(11), 2405–2416.

Page, B. & Mercer, C. (2012). Why do people do stuff? Reconceptualizing remittance behaviour in diaspora-development research and policy. *Progress in Development Studies*, *12*(1), 1–18.

Perna, L. W., Orosz, K., Gopaul, B., Jumakulov, Z., Ashirbekov, A., & Kishkentayeva, M. (2014). Promoting human capital development: A typology of international scholarship programs in higher education. *Educational Researcher*, *43*(2), 63–73.

Sanga, I. S. (2018). Education as a tool of liberation from corrupt leadership in Africa: A comparative study between Plato's allegory of the cave and Julius Nyerere's allegory of the mountain. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, *2*(10), 82–95.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Ye, W. & Edwards, V. (2017). Confucius Institute teachers in the United Kingdom: Motivation, challenges, and transformative learning. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(6), 843–857.

17 *Leadership for whom? Interrogating the effectiveness of leadership programmes in Africa*

Ajibola Adigun

Overview

Since Chinua Achebe's pronouncement that Africa's problem is one of leadership, several interventions have been proposed. More than four hundred leadership programmes in Africa claim to develop leaders. Leadership for whom? This chapter examines different leadership programmes and how their goals may be at odds with real development and may fall short of the requirements for real transformation. The chapter interrogates the efficacy of these leadership-for-development programmes, drawing on the African Youth Leadership Study and participant observation in several leadership programmes. Combining both ethnographic primary sources and secondary evaluation of leadership programmes, the chapter finds that although most leadership-for-development programmes say they are transformational, they lack the critical elements of transformative leadership. While they are good for the participants, few programmes yield a transformative element for their communities. This is a result of resource constraints and conflict about goals among funders and participants.

Introduction

Chinua Achebe (1984, p. 1) claimed 'Africa is what she is because her leaders are not what they should be'. Historically, the widening gap between the rulers and the ruled in Africa – an epochal structural change exacerbated by colonialism (Ekeh, 1980) that still exists in the present – made leadership as management the focus of most educational programmes in the heady years of initial independence in African countries. It was taken for granted that with education, a crop of leaders capable of managing the affairs of the people would emerge. This 'talented tenth' were to replace the White colonial officers in running the affairs of the independent African states (Altbach & Kelly, 1978).

First-generation African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Julius Nyerere, and Jomo Kenyatta were awarded scholarships to study in Western institutions and were trained in this mould. The distance made little difference: other incipient elites were trained in colonial universities at home (Hargreaves, 1973). The Edwardian model of universities in Britain, with hall wardens and

hall masters in halls of residence, standing *in loco parentis*, were transported in large numbers to the colonies. The syllabi were imported wholesale, and the first degrees awarded were often degrees in classics, philosophy, and European languages, along with core science subjects. Professional studies would come later, with the nationalisation of universities after the first wave of independence in African countries.

The training of these incipient elites had begun much earlier in mission schools. As Bassey (2009) describes it, Western education in higher institutions was the pathway to political elite status in Africa. The military interregnums notwithstanding, most of those who led the countries during the early independence era were also trained in foreign institutions. In African countries where the military took over the running of the affairs of the state, centralisation of power and command-and-control further undermined the democratic political processes taught in Western institutions.

When incumbent rulers proved too radical, like Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, they became unpopular with the West, especially under the cloud of the Cold War. Subsequently, the use of grants and scholarships to tame radicalisation became popular in willing countries, and pliable citizens took advantage of them. These forms of planned dependence (Samoff, 2001; Samoff & Carol, 2004), or neocolonialism (Nkrumah, 1965) continued the tradition of training managers in the colonies for the benefits of governments and citizens in the metropoles.

Over time, this orthodoxy has merely changed names. It remains popular today as it follows the Western path in development discourse, from Robert Solow's stages of growth, which placed a premium on factor accumulation in developing countries (Solow, 1956, 2001), to modernisation and, more recently, the hype for market-based economies and the consequent championing of entrepreneurship.

It was taken for granted that with education came development, premised on the theory of human capital development. But the results of the educational focus on management have made non-starters of all attempts at development because the structural deficiencies in African polities have not been addressed (Ake, 1989).

These types of management as leadership programmes and education for management programmes have delivered sub-par results as they have not been able to entrench African polities in African societies, which often results in failures in the public service. Often, they ignore the building of sustainable democratic institutions, which require home-grown, organic practices as well as time for a process of social interaction and relationship building. Persons- and position-based styles of leadership have delivered mixed results in development, as in sustainable peace (Olonisakin, 2007).

They have enshrined different forms of authoritarianism, first in the schooling system and, as a result, in the violence perpetuated in the larger society (Harber, 2004; Harber & Mncube, 2012). For instance, as Ibhawoh (1999) shows, the authoritarian imposition of the structural adjustment programmes in Africa – a group of economic reforms to which governments had to adhere in order to obtain loans from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund – had social costs that still persist, especially in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya, where campuses were shut down and student leaders arrested for protesting the costs attendant on the removal of government subsidies in education. It is no wonder that despite all the developmental goals set, Africa has missed most of them. Africa is the poorest continent. The least connected. The least educated. The fastest to die.

Africa, which is the continent with the youngest population, has the oldest leaders. The average age in Africa is 19, while the average age of African leaders is 65. The potential for development is dampened by the realities of poverty and the widening gap between the rulers and the ruled. The Globe Project of the Wharton Business School (Wanasika, Howell, Littrell, & Dorfman, 2011) found that middle-level managers in sub-Saharan Africa scored high in the power distance between those they managed and themselves, and that they were a class unto themselves, as they scored high in in-group collectivism. They scored low in performance orientation, which is the most important task of a manager. It is no wonder then that the manager-as-leader model in Africa has yielded dismal results. The project concluded that Africa needs institutions and systems that train the kind of leaders that Africa needs.

As the African Youth Leadership Study (AYLS) shows, there has been a proliferation of leadership-for-development programmes to address this leadership challenge (Strong & AYLS Research Team, 2019). Most leadership curricula miss out some very important aspects. Untransformed systems and institutions only lend themselves to extractive purposes, as we have seen in the past decades of leadership programmes in Africa. Some of these programmes are undemocratic in their practices and may not take into account cultural fit or the priorities of the societies and students in the programmes.

This chapter traces the previous iterations of African leadership programmes from the postcolonial era to the present, exploring how they have changed, how they have not had an impact on the kinds of leaders Africa had and currently has, and how present-day leadership programmes are not fully engendering transformative leadership, despite their claims. The chapter uses the evidence presented to argue that the dearth of transformative leadership, despite all the schools and efforts to train good leaders, is because these programmes do not fully commit to the critical elements in transformative leadership as conceived by Shields (2010).

A review of leadership programmes in Africa

The consensus that there is a leadership challenge in Africa is not undisputed. The Africa Leadership Study shows that in 2019 there were 444 youth leadership for development programmes (YLDPs) in 105 locations across the globe that had as their mission the offering of training, support, or development to African youths with the aim of cultivating leaders for Africa's development (Strong & AYLS Research Team, 2019). The Mo Ibrahim Foundation Prize for African Leadership is worth more than the Nobel Prize. The Ibrahim Prize awards US$5 million, paid out over 10 years, while Nobel Prize laureates receive less than US$2 million. The Mastercard Foundation has spent more than US$700 million in scholarships for students in the Middle East and Africa, and there is a Mastercard Foundation scholarship for Africans studying at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. There is also a university dedicated solely to leadership education, namely the African Leadership University in Rwanda.

From the African Leadership Academy, designed for high school students, to the Tutu fellowship, designed for youths who are already leaders in their sectors, the formats of the schemes are varied, as are the targets. From universities dedicated to building leaders for Africa, like the African Leadership University, funded academic immersion programmes like the Schwartzman scholarship in China, to short-term online schemes like the Young Africans Leadership Initiative Network, the length, medium, and target of these leadership-for-development schemes are varied.

The AYLS has identified six types of YLDPs around the world: brick-and-mortar institutions, short-term programmes, scholarships and grants, conferences and meetings, networks, and online learning (Strong & AYLS Research Team, 2019).

Brick-and-mortar institutions are educational institutions where students receive face-to-face instruction from faculty and staff, as well as peer-to-peer interaction. In some instances, brick-and-mortar institutions may have an online or digital component in addition to in-person instruction. They grant a certificate, diploma, or qualification after successful completion of a course of study. These institutions offer various levels of education, from primary to tertiary. Examples of this type of youth leadership initiative include the Noble Hall Leadership Academy for Girls in Nigeria, the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa, the Nova Pioneer Education school network in Kenya and South Africa, and the African Leadership University in Rwanda.

Short-term programmes provide participants with training or experience related to leadership, academics, their professional career, or another area of skill or capacity building. They are often shorter than 12 months, but may be longer than 12 months if they are internships. They take various forms, such as the year-long Obama Foundation Leaders' programme, where 200 participants are selected

to grow a global network of innovative and social change-makers who convene over five days at an inaugural summit, and then participate in several activities over the year. The Chatham House Academy Africa Fellowship offers fellows a stipend and media training, career mentorship, and weekly discussions over a 10-month fellowship period.

Scholarships or grants provide full or partial financial support for an educational programme or project or for a non-profit or business initiative that the scholarship/grant organisation identifies as part of its mission to support young African leaders. An example is the Äänit Prize, launched recently by the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, which supports initiatives that can deliver positive social impact for Africa's most marginalised populations. The prize is open to alumni of the Mandela Rhodes Scholarship and African recipients of the Rhodes Scholarship since 2015. The grant is awarded to businesses or non-profit projects that will deliver social impact, that are considered feasible and sustainable, and that are run by people with the capacity to succeed.

Conferences or meetings are thematic gatherings that bring together individuals with shared interests for the purpose of sharing knowledge, networking, or making decisions based on their shared interests. Events are convened by an organisation or sponsoring body with youth leadership for development as an aim, and participants may be required to be members of the body or pay attendance fees. They are convened on a regular basis and usually last for less than a week. The African Leadership Network Annual Gathering, which is hosted in different African cities by the umbrella organisation of the African Leadership Academy and the African Leadership University, bring together over four hundred participants who are desirous of effecting positive change in Africa.

The networks being promoted connect individuals and organisations who share similar interests, activities, and missions related to education, leadership, youth, or development in Africa. Membership is often required, and a vetting process is made through an application process. The most popular of this type of programme is America's Young African Leaders Initiative, with four regional leadership centres in Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; and Pretoria, South Africa, hosted by the United States Agency for International Development.

Online learning facilitates knowledge sharing, training, and support for the development of leadership skills using online or digital technologies. It may offer certification, virtual conversations on social media, or mentorships. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the other types of YLDP have had to assimilate online learning models as an integral part of their offering due to restrictions in movement and social gatherings.

These six formats of YLDPs are not cast in stone. Brick-and-mortar institutions and scholarships have alumni associations that meet regularly in summits and

virtually to strengthen their networks. Grants, such as the ones from the Tony Elumelu Foundation, combine a grant with online learning, a mentorship platform, and a summit.

The leadership challenge in Africa

The Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership has remained unclaimed for more years than it has been awarded. When the prize was instituted by the South Sudanese billionaire Mo Ibrahim and his foundation in 2007, the aim was to wean African leaders off external motivation from outside of the continent, which often resulted in them doing what is required by external funders rather than what works for the people. Since 2007, the award has only been made six times. The need for the prize in the first place, and the lack of deserving laureates, illustrates the challenge of leadership in Africa.

Chinua Achebe writes that the problem of Nigeria (and Africa) is simply and squarely the problem of leadership. In his words: 'The inability to rise to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of leadership, is the problem of Africa. Africa is what she is because her leaders are not what they should be' (Achebe, 1984, p. 1). The dearth of leadership that is transformational enough to translate into peace and sustainable development, and visible and enduring enough for a better existence for the majority of citizens, has been the cause of the state of underdevelopment in which Africa finds itself. The consequences are dire. Africa remains the problem child of the world, with more poverty and sickness than any other place.

Cilliers (2021) points out that since 1960, the gap between the GDP per capita in Africa and the rest of the world has been growing. African GDP per capita was 50 per cent of that of the rest of the world in 1960, and it fell to below 40 per cent in 1986, and below 30 per cent in 2011. According to Cilliers (2021), average GDP per capita actually declined by more than US$600 from 1980 to 1995. Then, from 1995 to the global financial crisis in 2008–2009, Africa experienced its most sustained period of growth since 1960. However, it is projected that by 2040, GDP per capita in Africa will amount to less than one-quarter of the average for the rest of the world (Cilliers, Bello-Schünemann, Donnenfeld, Aucoin, & Porter, 2017).

Africa Rising and leadership programmes

Why has the leadership problem in Africa remained intractable despite all the efforts of the past and those taking place in the present? It is the argument of this chapter that the leadership challenge and the development challenge in Africa are one and the same. Using data gathered from participant observation in two YLDPs, an evaluation report of the Mandela Washington Fellowship,

and the AYLS longitudinal study, the chapter concludes that most YLDPs are transformational, lacking the ethical and critical dimensions of transformative leadership required for Africa's development.

If Africa is not what it should be because its leaders are who they are, it is imperative to consider the kinds of leadership programmes to which they have been exposed. By doing so, we may come to the conclusion, as Ake (2001) does, that it is not so much that leadership or leadership-for-development programmes have failed as that they never began. It is therefore necessary to find out why transformative leadership programmes were not implemented.

To be clear, transformational leadership and transformative leadership are not the same. Shields (2010), in a review of the literature, submits that transformational leadership, with its four components of setting directions, developing people, redesigning organisations, and managing instructional programmes (Leithwood, 2017), lacks the ethical and social justice dimension of transformative leadership. The distinction between transformational leadership and transformative leadership may be compared to the distinction between growth and development. There may be incremental growth in GDP without corresponding improvement in the lives of citizens. Growth counts numbers, while development counts impact.

Transformative leadership depends on ethical behaviour, democratic processes, and sustainable change. According to Weiner (2003, p. 89), '[t]ransformative leadership is an exercise of power and authority that begins with questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility').

To what extent then do the YLDPs deliver on the seven major elements of transformative leadership, as outlined by Shields (2010)? Do they combine both critique and promise? Do they contest existing power structures and acknowledge the existence of power and privilege with the goals of making them more equitable? Do they emphasise the importance of the use of private capacities for the benefit of the public good? Do they have as their ends a focus on equity and justice and, in so doing, do they show moral courage and personal conviction in their pursuits?

Ake (2001) argues that the idea that a combination of the colonial legacy, social pluralism, corruption, poor planning, incompetent management, and low levels of saving and investment caused Africa's underdevelopment is misguided. These factors are impediments to development, but they are not the core of the problem, which is that development was never at the heart of these missions. William Easterly (2001), a development economist who worked with the World Bank, confirms Ake's contention. Instead, leadership for development needs to acknowledge the need for moral courage, ethical clarity, and the use of private capacities for the public good as critical elements of leadership.

Transformative leadership as development

Previous attempts at training elites and leaders for the continent have focused on replicating the colonial masters – 'Black skins, White masks' as Fanon (1986) describes them – those who merely replace the colonial officers as managers of resources meant to be shared. Instead, they become hoarders of goods, and their positions of privilege are seldom critiqued, which is a requirement for transformative leadership (Shields, 2010). Most YLDPs fare little better. In an evaluation report of the 2014–2018 cohort of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, the flagship programme of the United States Young African Leaders Initiative, embassies' staff noticed a disturbing trend of a feeling of primacy among participants in the programme, which they found disconcerting (Philbin et al, 2020).

Consent matters for transformative leadership. Consent matters for real development. As Easterly (2001) makes clear, development cannot be coerced. Four decades of several interventions to bring development to Africa, ranging from foreign aid to investment in technology transfer and the buying of machines, to controlling population growth, conditional debt forgiveness, and the structural adjustment programmes, have delivered little.

Two decades after Ake (2001) averred that it is not so much that development had failed as that it never began in the first place, conditions are even worse. Real incomes are lower than they were four decades ago. The average African per capita income (excluding South Africa), inflation adjusted, is US$315, lower than it was in 1960 (Hanke, 2001). Health prospects are even poorer. While life expectancy has risen overall globally, it has risen the least in Africa (Unesco, 2020). Africa has become the epicentre of poverty and disease in the world, and conflicts have ravaged the little infrastructure that remains. There is an education crisis from elementary to higher education. The continent missed the 2015 deadline for universal basic primary education set as one of the Millennium Development Goals, and is already missing milestones set for the new Sustainable Development Goals. There has been neither development nor sustainable development, because no positive transformation has taken place overall on the continent. On the contrary, things have deteriorated.

Furthermore, and adding insult to injury, the continent is portrayed as having 'potential', particularly in the area of youth development and democratisation. However, new waves of democratisation celebrated on the continent have hit a governance bottleneck. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2020) reports that governance – the provision of political, social, economic, and environmental public goods and services that every citizen has the right to expect from their government, and that a government has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens – has declined over the past decade. Similarly, while Africa has been lauded for emerging almost unscathed from the Covid-19 pandemic that

ravaged continents with older populations, precisely because of the youthfulness of its population, African youths remain impatient for transformation. The rise of youth-based movements in Africa like #FeesMustFall in South Africa and #EndSARS in Nigeria are not unique: there are many examples across Africa.

YLDPs may yet fail in their target for the future leadership of the African continent if they fall into the same traps as previous efforts. Education matters, but education for what and for whom? If the evaluation report of the Young African Leaders Initiative is anything to go by, some of the programmes are only personal development exercises for the individual students (Philbin et al., 2020). While some of the participants may have intrinsic motivations to return to contribute to the continent's development, these traits and skills have usually been honed in their home country before their participation in these YLDPs. As Strong (2017) notes, when institutional support is given to African youths to obtain practical experiences in their schools, they latch on to it. Most participants in YLDPs report personal and professional gains. What is in doubt is if these personal gains are deployed for societal good.

In her testimony to the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Strong (2020) asserts that the proliferation of youth protests in Africa are a demonstration of the call for transformational social change. In her three recommendations on how the American government should engage with African youths, two were about how to promote youth-inclusive leadership opportunities and give support to youth leadership development initiatives in their home countries.

Participants in YLDPs who are appointed as leaders and receive personal benefits without concern for the collective will only join the network of the old guild. As it is, there is a new trend of using YLDPs as a recruitment tool in Nigeria. Several programmes in Nigeria have been run by presidential hopefuls. These include the Kashim Ibrahim Fellowship of Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State, which offers participants a chance to shadow public servants at work while building professional competencies (Shibayan, 2020); former World Bank Vice President Oby Ezekwisili's School of Politics, Policy, and Governance, which aims to build a pipeline of transformational leaders (School of Politics, Policy, and Governance, n.d.); and London School of Economics and Political Science Professor Kingsley Moghalu's Elevate New Voices Summit, which mobilises youths for transformative leadership (*Vanguard*, 2021).

Conclusion

Development in Africa demands transformation. Youth-led movements like #EndSARS and #FeesMustFall are protestations against police brutality and the colonial legacies of statist control of policing, and against colonial pedagogical continuities in higher education in South Africa. YLDPs that fail to engage with

how the dire conditions in Africa came about will only be making leaders in their own image, inwardly focused on leadership styles and forms rather than on transformation. Development demands proper diagnosis, and the Socratic invocation to know oneself must be at the heart of the continent's transformation. Colonial legacies that drew arbitrary lines on the continent have left communities perpetually in conflict and individuals in conflict with themselves. They not only hamper intra-African trade, but also continue the colonial legacy of Africa as a supplier of primary products to the metropole. Resolving the issues of the flight of human capital, trained using meagre resources, to the West, and the continual dependence of the continent on aid, must start with the widening of the social base of state power. Like the racial integration of Africa's political leaders during independence (Ake, 2001), YLDPs that do not seek to transform the institutional designs that allow the inequities in Africa to persist are merely recruiting incipient elites.

Most of the funders of YLDPs are neither concerned with nor committed to issues of radical social change, although most claim to have progress and development as their goal. In a review of selected YLDP course content, most defined development primarily in consonance with their principal donors. Where donors were primarily private companies, development was defined as ethical entrepreneurial endeavours. Where programmes were government-funded, they defined development in terms of capacity building. Most focused on the individuals delivering change, especially for themselves. How this will translate into radical transformation of societies will be a requirement for YLDPs if they are indeed to succeed in bettering the continent.

#LeadershipDemandsSacrifice

Despite many leadership-for-development programmes in Africa, challenges remain. Participants report personal gains, but many resist the personal sacrifices transformative leadership demands. Most programmes gloss over this.

Questions for discussion

1. What personal sacrifices are required of those who aim to be transformative leaders?
2. How do we challenge aspiring leaders to make these sacrifices? What is in it for them?
3. How could the so-called elite-disconnect (that is, the entitlement that those who participate in leadership programmes display, and the way that while personal gains are recorded, this seldom has an impact on society) be prevented?

References

Achebe, C. (1984). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ake, C. (1989). *The political economy of crisis and underdevelopment in Africa: Selected works of Claude Ake*. Lagos, Nigeria: Jad Publishers.

Ake, C. (2001). *Democracy and development in Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Altbach, P. G. & Kelly, G. P. (1978). *Education and colonialism*. New York, NY: Longman.

Bassey, M. O. (2009). Higher education and the rise of early political elites in Africa. *Review of Higher Education in Africa, 1*(1), 30–38.

Cilliers, J. (2021). *The future of Africa: Challenges and opportunities*. New York, NY: Springer Nature.

Cilliers, J., Bello-Schünemann, J., Donnenfeld, Z., Aucoin, C., & Porter, A. (2017). *Africa futures: Key trends*. Institute for Security Studies.
Retrieved from https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/german-report-2.pdf.

Easterly, W. (2001). *The elusive quest for growth: Economists' misadventures in the tropics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ekeh, P. P. (1980). *Colonialism and social structure. An inaugural lecture*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press.

Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin, white masks*. London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press.

Hanke, S. (2001, 28 May). Africa and economics. *Forbes.*
Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/global/2001/0528/046.html?sh=767150677cd2.

Harber, C. (2004). *Schooling as violence: How schools harm pupils and societies*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Harber, C. & Mncube, V. (2012). *Education, democracy and development: Does education contribute to democratisation in developing countries?* Oxford, United Kingdom: Symposium Books.

Hargreaves, J. D. (1973). The idea of a colonial university. *African Affairs, 72*(286), 26–36.

Ibhawoh, B. (1999). Structural adjustment, authoritarianism and human rights in Africa. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, *19*(1), 158–167.

Leithwood, K. (2017). The Ontario leadership framework: Successful school leadership practices and personal leadership resources. In K. Leithwood, J. Sun, & K. Pollock (Eds). *How school leaders contribute to student success: The four paths framework* (pp. 31–43). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Mo Ibrahim Foundation. (2020). *2020 Ibrahim index of African governance: Key findings.* Retrieved from https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-index-report.pdf.

Nkrumah, K. (1965). *Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. Nashville, TS: Thomas Nelson.

Olonisakin, F. (2017). Reconceptualizing peace for sustainable development. *Leadership and Developing Societies, 2*(1), 1–30.

Philbin, M., Rathinasamy, C., Morris, F. M., Gupta, M., Teas, M., & Kubick, A. (2020). *Mandela Washington fellowship for young African leaders: A program evaluation of program outcomes and impacts on fellows and their communities*. Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Evaluation. Retrieved from https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/01_final_report_mandela_washington_fellowship_for_young_african_leaders_evaluation_09.10.2020.pdf

Samoff, J. (2001). 'Education for All' in Africa but education systems that serve few well. *Perspectives in Education*, *19*(1), 5–28.

Samoff, J. & Carrol, B. (2004). The promise of partnership and continuities of dependence: External support to higher education in Africa. *African Studies Review*, *47*(1), 67–199.

School of Politics, Policy & Governance. (n.d.) Our story. Retrieved from https://thesppg.org/our-story/.

Shibayan, D. (2020, 2 September). El-Rufai: We initiated Kashim Ibrahim fellowship to nurture future leaders. *The Cable*. Retrieved from https://www.thecable.ng/el-rufai-we-initiated-kashim-ibrahim-fellowship-to-nurture-future-leaders.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Solow, R. M. (1956). A contribution to the theory of economic growth. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *70*(1), 65–94.

Solow, R. M. (2001). Applying growth theory across countries. *The World Bank Economic Review, 15*(2), 283–288.

Strong, K. (2017). Practice for the future: The aspirational politics of Nigerian students. In A. Stambach & K. D. Hall (Eds). *Anthropological perspectives on student futures: Youth and the politics of possibility* (pp. 119–131). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Strong, K. (2020). *Congressional testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*. United States Congress. Retrieved from https://www.congress.gov/116/meeting/house/110503/witnesses/HHRG-116-FA16-Wstate-StrongK-20200213.pdf.

Strong, K. & AYLS Research Team. (2019). African Youth Leadership Study. Retrieved from http://www.AfricanYouthLeadershipStudy.com.

Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion.

Vanguard. (2021). Moghalu convenes summit to mobilize influential youth voices for good governance. Retrieved from https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/03/moghalu-convenes-summit-to-mobilize-influential-youth-voices-for-good-governance/.

Wanasika, I., Howell, J. P., Littrell, R., & Dorfman, P. (2011). Managerial leadership and culture in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of World Business*, *46*(2), 234–241.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

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

Rekgotsofetse Chikane and Monique Atouguia

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.

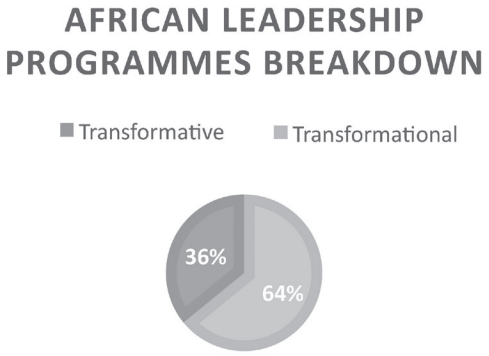
This study has certain methodological constraints and limitations. First, it did not use primary data from the programmes identified by AFLI, nor did it seek to find a comprehensive overview of all leadership programmes across the continent. The analysis was limited by the prior research undertaken by 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*

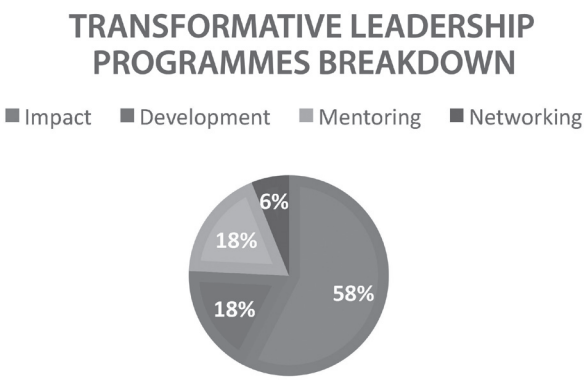


Source: Authors

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).

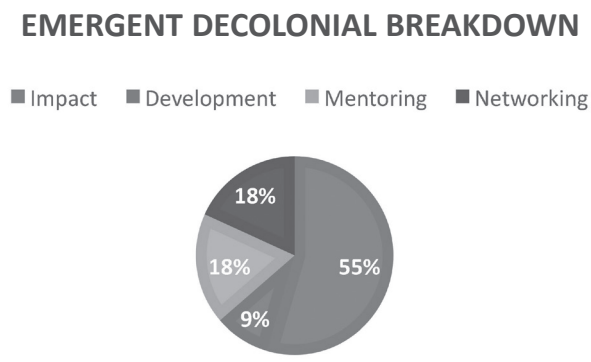
In contrast, Impact accounted for the majority of transformative programmes (Figure 18.2), with 19 of the 33 (58 per cent) categorised as Impact. Development and Mentoring each accounted for 6 out of 33 (18 per cent) of the transformative programmes, while Networking only accounted for 2 out of 33 (6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

References

AFLI (African Leadership Institute). (2018). *An abundance of young African leaders, but no seat at the table*.
Retrieved from https://alinstitute.org/images/downloads/AFLILeadershipReport2018.pdf.

AFLI. (2020). *Greater inclusion of African youth in public service and governance*.
Retrieved from https://alinstitute.org/images/downloads/GreaterInclusionOfAfricanYouthReportAugust2020.pdf.

African Union Commission. (2006). *African youth charter*.
Retrieved from https://au.int/en/treaties/african-youth-charter.

Amupanda, J. S. (2018). The African Union (AU), the African Youth Commission (AYC) and the Pan-African Youth Union (PYU): Sabotaging or bureaucratizing the youth? *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*, *18*(35), 73–82.

Avant, D. W. (2011). Unwrapping tradition: Shifting from traditional leadership to transformative action. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 114–127.

Beinhocker, E. D. (2006). *The origin of wealth: Evolution, complexity, and the radical remaking of economics*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, *1*(1), 1–38.

Honwana, A. (2014). Youth, waithood, and protest movements in Africa. In Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Ed.). *African dynamics in a multipolar world: 5th European Conference on African Studies – Conference Proceedings* (pp. 2428–2447). Lisbon, Portugal: Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

Karagianni, D. & Montgomery, A. J. (2018). Developing leadership skills among adolescents and young adults: A review of leadership programmes. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *23*(1), 86–98.

MacNeil, C. A. (2006). Bridging generations: Applying 'adult' leadership theories to youth leadership development. *New Directions for Youth Development*, *2006*(109), 27–43.

Mills, G., Obasanjo, O., Biti, T., & Herbst, J. (2019). *Democracy works: Re-wiring politics to Africa's advantage*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

OECD netFWD. (2014). *Philanthropy and youth empowerment: Foundations' innovative approaches to support youth*. OECD Development Centre, Paris. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/development/networks/Youth_Empowerment_web.pdf.

Paalo, S. A. (2017). Political party youth wings and political violence in sub-Sahara Africa: A case of Ghana. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, *8*(1), 1–14.

Pillay, D. (2015). The global economic crisis and the Africa rising narrative. *Africa Development*, *40*(3), 59–75.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

The Economist. (2000, 11 May). Hopeless Africa.
Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/leaders/2000/05/11/hopeless-africa.

United Nations. (2015). *Youth population trends and sustainable development*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/youth-population-trends-and-sustainable-development.

United Nations. (2019). *World population prospects 2019, Volume II: Demographic profiles*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/world-population-prospects-2019-volume-ii-demographic-profiles.

Walby, S. (2003). *Complexity theory, globalisation and diversity*. Paper presented to conference of the British Sociological Association, 1–22.
Retrieved from https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/walby-complexityglobalisationdiversity.pdf.

Walsh, C. (2010). Development as *buen vivir*: Institutional arrangements and (de)colonial entanglements. *Development*, *53*(1), 15–21.

PART 6

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

19 *Transforming the political: Towards a transformative concept of political leadership in Africa*

Tarryn De Kock and Anye-Nkwenti Nyamnjoh

Overview

Acknowledging but rejecting the ways in which we make political leaders in Africa either 'saints' or 'crisis managers', this chapter develops an account of transformative political leadership that shifts thinking by privileging opportunities and possibilities as opposed to crisis. By calling for a break with good governance as the dominant parameter of effective leadership, and privileging the thinking of politics from below through the distinction between civil and political society, this chapter develops this concept within democratic praxis. In this regard, transformative political leadership is popular democratic practice that transforms the political. The grassroots movement Abahlali baseMjondolo is used as an example to describe transformation of the political as the insistence on a mode of politics that foregrounds active inclusivity, solidarity, and collaboration; a living politics; and emancipation – as opposed to concessions – as an overarching aim.

Introduction

The scholarship on political leadership in Africa typically foregrounds a crisis narrative, which is used to explain democratic, development, and governance deficits. To this end, much research, scholarship, and development resourcing has been invested in resolving the 'leadership challenge' in Africa, though without a critical conceptualisation of what really characterises this challenge.

Leadership challenges in Africa are, in one sense, no different from the challenges faced by leaders in other parts of the world. However, in another sense, these challenges are unique because of the contexts in which they are experienced and the particular dynamics that underpin their proliferation and intensification (Lenneiye, 2000; Maathai, 2009; Mkandawire, 2015). Centring crisis in the African political and social experience produces a limited understanding of the situational dimensions of leadership, civic engagement, and governance at work every day across the continent. Besides 'leadership' and 'crisis leadership' being two separate practices and fields of enquiry, not every problem that leaders seek to resolve can or should be defined as a crisis – an acute, unexpected, disruptive, and potentially catastrophic event (Gigliotti, 2017). A focus on the continent as a

site of perpetual crises undermines the structural, social, economic, political, and symbolic forces that are constantly at work and that secure peace and contain war, produce livelihoods, and ground our relationships to time, space, and place.

This chapter will also discuss the particular assumptions that inform writing about African leaders and leadership, while unpacking the value of transformative leadership theory for a new concept of African political leadership that is situated, negotiated, and substantially co-created. It seeks to decentre the notion of 'good governance' and other instrumental indicators from our understanding of what transformative political leadership should look like. The broad aim is to shift from this notion of leadership through crisis towards centring leadership on opportunities and possibilities.

Constructing the 'leadership challenge' in Africa

Leadership describes a relationship between two entities: leaders and followers. The relationship is one of an influencing process (with attendant outcomes) between these two entities. To study political leadership as the primary essence of leadership is to study this influencing process in the exercise of power, and the ways in which power is legitimated (if at all) into authority. The point being stressed here is the *political* dimension of political leadership as a concept (that is, recognising that politics is about power). This is noteworthy because others might insist on a more *ethical* conceptualisation of political leadership.

Political leadership is often seen in relation to diverse political phenomena such as democracy, governance, development, or conflict. As such, one can study political leadership as an influencing process in and of itself, in addition to examining its impact on and relationship to some of the aforementioned political processes. More broadly, studies on political leadership in Africa are part of a broader enterprise to describe the nature of the African state, an institution that is seen to be characterised by informality more than formality. This informality can be understood by the broader range of social, economic, and cultural formations that engage with political institutions more usually associated with the 'Weberian legal-rational state' (Beresford, 2014, p. 1).

One common mode of characterising the nature of African states is in terms of their 'neopatrimonial' character (Mkandawire, 2015). It is analytically useful to think of neopatrimonialism as having three constituent components. First, such regimes are characterised by presidentialism, in which both formal and informal rules place one person – usually the president, and almost always a man – largely above the law and not subject to the checks and balances that executives face in mature democracies. Second, such regimes rely on systematic clientelism by the president and his immediate followers to maintain the status quo and ensure political stability. In this way, as Beresford (2015) argues, the president

is positioned as a patron who disburses largesse and opportunity to his political family of clients occupying different claims to the overall 'pie' – whether as siblings/peers, or 'children' (political minors). Third, and unlike more traditional patrimonial regimes, neopatrimonial systems rely on the fiscal resources of a modern state to provide the resources that are distributed following a clientelist logic (Van de Walle, 2001). It is important to note Van der Walle's observation that neopatrimonialism is a ubiquitous form of modern politics, thus moving away from accounts that exceptionalise or pathologise Africa.

There are at least two explanations offered for why this particular mode of governance is problematic for the continent's social and economic development. First, neopatrimonialism is considered to be inherently anti-democratic. Second, it is often invoked to explain economic underperformance on the continent (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Van de Walle, 2001).

Mkandawire's (2015) famous critique of neopatrimonialism is a caution against taking this characterisation as emblematic of an indigenous political condition in Africa, rather than a result of particular political, economic, and historical factors at work wherein public power is exercised towards private and strategic political benefit. For one, he demonstrates that 'neopatrimonial' states are not inherently anti-democratic, sometimes adhering to key indicators of good democratic governance, such as freedom of speech (Mkandawire, 2015). Moreover, some states, such as Botswana, have seen marked economic growth alongside complex ties of reciprocity and benefit between state and groups of citizens (Mkandawire, 2015). And recently, Anciano (2018) suggested that clientelism can sometimes fulfil important democratic tasks like enhancing accountability and participation at the level of local governance. The point here is that whatever the 'leadership challenge' in Africa, it cannot be simply explained by analytical categories that collapse complex issues of governance and government.

Implicit in these characterisations of leadership and the challenges facing African leaders is a general theme of African political leadership as deficient and crisis ridden. This idea of leadership in crisis permeates analyses of democracy, development, and governance in Africa. Much of this scholarship observes the role of leaders (in addition to broader internal and external institutional arrangements) in creating governance deficits and negatively impacting democracy and development (Ayittey, 1992; Bond, 2006; Mbah, 2013; Mills, 2011; Rotberg, 2004; Tettey, 2012). A litany of descriptors, like kleptocratic (see, for example, Acemoglu, Verdier, & Robinson, 2004); predatory (Fatton, 1992; Lewis, 1996); and prebendal (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2013; Joseph, 1987), have functioned as conceptual tools to unpack this crisis of leadership and its entanglement with intersecting issues of governance, citizenship, democracy, and development. For example, Rotberg (2004, p. 14) describes the crisis of leadership in Africa as 'poor, even malevolent leadership: predatory kleptocrats,

military-installed autocrats, economic illiterates, and puffed-up posturers… indifferent to the progress of their citizens…unswayed by reason…hypocrites, always shifting blame for their countries' distress'.

This perceived crisis naturally encourages an investigation into how leadership can be strengthened. That is, what leadership styles and traits ought to be cultivated? In differentiating between 'good' and 'bad' African leaders, there is a tendency to venerate good leaders in ways that flatten and often silence their complexities, failures, and, indeed, ethical or moral ambiguities. This is what defines hagiography, or the narrativising of sainthood. In the context of political leaders, the elevation of complicated human to moral force renders these individuals unique, and their heroism uncommon, stripping away the social and relational nature of their struggles. We argue that hagiography has limited usefulness in understanding African political leadership in its full complexity, because it exceptionalises leadership traits rather than situating them.

To return to Rotberg (2004), it is also flawed to assume that good governance and effective leadership are co-implicated. This bears consideration given the pervasiveness of this association in research and international development communities, where good governance is seen as the solution to neopatrimonialism, among other political deficits (Mkandawire, 2007; Nanda, 2006). Proving 'good governance' has become an essential requirement of international development agencies and financial institutions (Nanda, 2006). Contemporary states – especially in the Global South – are required to demonstrate good governance to support their eligibility for donor finance, loans, and international investments. This is defined as 'combating corruption, nepotism, bureaucracy and mismanagement – and [promoting] transparency, accountability and proper procedures' (Nanda, 2006, p. 272). Meeting these political conditionalities also increases the number of non-state actors involved in the management, administration, and execution of the work of government, including civil society, NGOs, the business community, and donor agencies (Nanda, 2006).

This increase results in the dispersal of roles, relationships, processes, and institutions among a wider network of stakeholders (Demmers, Fernández Jilberto, & Hogenboom, 2004; Robertson, Mundy, & Verger, 2012). On one level, strong governance matters precisely because states are no longer solely or even centrally responsible for the administration or execution of authority (in other words, 'government'), and often work in tandem with legitimate and illegitimate stakeholders. On another level, this also matters because, increasingly, states exist at the interface of complex battles for meaning, resourcing, and legitimacy, whether globally, regionally, or locally, where they are subject to measures of improvement and success that are defined, weighted, and rewarded or sanctioned by external actors.

Mkandawire (2007) argues that the contemporary definition of good governance in fact emerged and then broke away from the inputs of critical African scholars in the World Bank's *Long-Term Perspective Study* in 1989. This definition had three prongs: (1) a developmental, competitive, and inclusive economy; (2) human rights and democratic participation; and (3) social inclusion (Mkandawire, 2007). The focus on inclusion, equity, and 'larger issues of state-society relations' (Mkandawire, 2007, p. 681) is distinct from what Mkandawire considers to be the technocratic focus on transparency and accountability that came to dominate in international financial and developmental institutions see also Demmers et al., 2004; Nanda, 2006). This is important because it demonstrates the contextual nature of 'good governance', and the development of the ideologically bound nature of the term that we know today, rooted as it is in free-market ideology and international development discourse. It also suggests that there is potential for good governance to focus on more than demonstrating administrative competence, drilling down to the substantive improvement of lives and livelihoods in an inclusive and democratic society. Leadership, in this sense, cannot be reduced to 'good governance' in the absence of a substantive notion of what this means in practice.

Setting out the argument

This chapter seeks to produce an understanding of transformative political leadership that re-centres social justice, inclusion, and substantive participation. This is a necessary excursion into the question of political leadership due to the primacy of globally powerful discourses that prioritise technical and administrative performance as hallmarks of effective leadership and governance (Demmers et al., 2004). Not only are these insufficient indicators of effective leadership, they also do not accommodate the messy, complicated, and multiple ways in which people engage in politics on an everyday basis. By not accommodating this diversity of political engagement and interaction, we run the risk of rendering it invisible, superfluous, or even criminal in official discourse.

Two questions underpin this excursion: (1) 'What does transformative leadership look like in an African context, beyond indicators of governance?' and (2) 'How do we think critically about political leadership on the continent as a situated, negotiated, and historical practice?'

The first question draws from the work of De Kock and Swartz (Chapter 2, this volume), considering the definition of transformative leadership provided and applying this in an African context. We consider how transformative leadership could be used to make sense of political leadership in Africa, not only in terms of heads of government and industry, but in the broad array of activities, interactions, and struggles that characterise a 'politics from below', or 'the historical and current micropolitics from which new popular political

subjectivities and practices emerge' (Motta, 2013, p. 6). These are important sites through which contemporary political struggles are expressed and articulated, yet they are rarely recognised or legitimated within the formal political sphere. Noting this, we contend that such spheres are generative regarding a substantive account of transformative political leadership. Scholars such as Chatterjee (2004), Neocosmos (2011), and Motta (2013) point out that a focus on governance belies a relationship between the governed and those who govern, with little space in between for genuine democratic deliberation to unfold except within the space of representation (for example, through voting). Transformative leadership, as argued in Chapter 2 of this volume by De Kock and Swartz, is therefore not only about focusing on socially just outcomes. It is equally about transforming relationships between 'the leaders' and 'the led' beyond existing configurations of representation deemed axiomatic to modern political life.

The second question takes the point above further by asking how we begin to think about political leadership as a situated, negotiated, and historical practice – that is, shifting from a focus on values, behaviours, and 'types' towards leadership for context, time, and space. In this way, the emphasis also shifts from whether political leaders conform to static categories and barometers of their present 'success', to how their actions plant seeds for as-yet unknown futures. This is the critical turn from crisis to possibility that we argue for – and a notion of political leadership that recognises that the road to future crises is paved with missed contemporary opportunities.

This chapter emerged from an iterative process based on an initial review of political leadership conducted by Nyamnjoh. The review included 50 scholarly resources on the topic, with a deep focus on major theoretical and philosophical debates. This was synthesised with the extensive review conducted for this book (De Kock & Swartz, Chapter 2, this volume).

From this grounding in the literature on leadership, the authors identified an important contextual gap in how African leadership has been described – largely from the perspective of formal or legitimate politics. Review of an additional 40 resources (including scholarship, journalistic work, and grey literature) was used to investigate this gap. This chapter should be viewed as a provocation towards a new theory and praxis for political leadership in Africa.

Thinking politics from below

An important point of departure when thinking about the concept of transformative leadership is its origins in highly unequal educational contexts in the United States. Shields (2010), in producing her canonical work on the topic, not only makes a case for the importance of leadership that challenges the status quo and furthers the aims of social justice, but also emphasises the need to

change the rules of the game that rendered inequality as a structural and not only an individual feature of a given system.

This is relevant to the political sphere, where democratic participation has progressively been eroded in favour of a politics of representation (Robins, 2010). Voting is one site through which representation is actualised and legitimised. Another is 'civil society', which tends to be a domain of participation erroneously conflated with the public sphere in states around the world (Ekeh, 1975; Robins, 2010). Obadare (2004) argues that in its initial development, the notion of something akin to civil society emerged during the post–Cold War period through moves by anti-authoritarian, pro-democracy groups in former colonial and Soviet Bloc states to carve out a space for public engagement by a vast array of interest groups, including youth and sports organisations, social associations, neighbourhood and cultural groups, and so on. He suggests the importance of differentiating between civil society as an *idea*, as captured in the above and represented through a variety of historic struggles for meaningful democratic engagement, and as an *empirical reality* – that is, what it has come to be associated with over time (Obadare, 2004).

This can be explained in terms of the way that civil society is formed and continues to be shaped by its interactions with the state. Rather than representing the organic or everyday space of public deliberation, 'civil society' is in fact synonymous with a highly organised space of engagement with organs of the state, often through NGOs and advocacy bodies 'concerned with supporting political liberalisation… promoting economic liberalisation, and…furthering the rights and political participation of particular socially excluded groups, such as rural women or the urban poor' (Hearn, 2010, p. 4). These organisations take on a particular form that facilitates their recognition by the state, through formal political participation conducted through recognised interest groups or political parties.

This chapter draws on this understanding of civil society for two reasons. First, it allows one to employ productively the concepts of 'political' (Chatterjee, 2004) or 'uncivil' (Neocosmos, 2011) society, distinguishing the formalised spaces of civil society from those grassroots, everyday spaces through which politics emerges from below. While 'uncivil' is not intended in a normative or moral sense, but as an alternative to the space described as 'civil society', we prefer 'political society' as a more effective descriptor of this space. Second, understanding civil society as formal political participation conducted through recognised interest groups or political parties allows us to critique the predominance of this form of civil society for its exclusion or neutralisation of attempts to substantively transform the political space to incorporate the 'uncivil' (Wamba dia Wamba, 2007). We do not suggest that civil society and grassroots political spaces are mutually exclusive, but that they are positioned differently in relation to the work of the state.

Writing on the 2011 uprisings in Egypt, Harders (2015, p. 148) argues for the value of studying social movements and looser political formations to understand the 'widening gap between dynamic societies and ossified regimes that gave rise to a crisis of legitimacy and ultimately revolutionary mobilisation'. While civil society and the NGO/development sector is intended to bridge that gap, it also has the potential to flatten or collapse the systemic nature of people's concerns, grievances, or causes into specific, discrete procedural challenges, such as access to education, access to health, housing, microlending, voter education, or sexual and reproductive rights (Bénit-Gbaffou & Oldfield, 2014; Hearn, 2010; Kowalczyk, 2013). This is not to suggest that the civil society space does not provide essential resourcing and support, nor that spaces of everyday politics are inherently benevolent, inclusive, or progressive. Important compacts and bonds of solidarity have been built between grassroots movements and progressive NGOs. Rather, we argue that something is missing in the way state–society relations have been structured in postcolonial contexts, with implications for democratic engagement and political leadership.

A meaningful reflection on this issue is offered by Neocosmos (2011). Beginning with a series of observations about the 'Arab Spring' in 2011, Neocosmos suggests that people assert themselves as political subjects and agents when standing against forms of oppression. This agency is generative, in the sense that it affords people the space to actively conceive, imagine, and mobilise towards their own emancipation from oppressive political, economic, and social regimes. It is also, he argues, in excess of state politics, meaning that it exists outside of the political terrain governed, administered, and limited to the confines of the geopolitical domain of the state (Neocosmos, 2011). To exist 'outside' is to be marginalised, silenced, excluded, or simply left uncounted in the spaces of formal politics, resulting in forms of subalternity that encourage the turn towards reviving or creating new sites and grammars of political action. This matters because it is the enactment of democracy as a *popular practice*, not as a state or space of formal politicking. It rejects the tendency for these expressions of popular politics to be framed as illegitimate and outside the space of organised politics.

We can further understand this by unpacking Neocosmos's (2011) case study of the South African transition to democracy, which is illustrative. As he argues, grassroots political organising was responsible for much of the groundswell against Apartheid, as subjects of the regime organised themselves in mass education, resistance, and political violence campaigns to topple the Apartheid state. Mamdani (1997) further suggests that this political campaign was 'captured' or neutralised by the parachuting in of exiled political elites, specifically the African National Congress (ANC), which played a heavily influential role at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) negotiations that began in December 1991. In this process, the ANC had been positioned as a proto-state, 'waiting in the wings' to govern (Mamdani, 1997, p. 232). Padayachee and

Van Niekerk (2019) also attest to this in their analysis of the ongoing policy development that characterised the work of ANC comrades while in prison on Robben Island and in exile, focused on courting international support, finance, and legitimacy for a future ascendancy to power.

This is an important context for what happened next. Neocosmos (2011) suggests that the process of transition demands that people vacate the space of politics and leave it to the trustees of the excluded – for example, official political parties (in the space of political representation) or NGOs (in the space of civil society). Government becomes the technical process of governance, the management of diverse stakeholders and interest groups, and the conversion of democracy from a popular practice to an ideal end-state for the state itself (Neocosmos, 2011). This process, or what Neocosmos considers to be 'depoliticisation', transfers the popular organising capacity of the people to the formal structures of state governance, with the result that politics begins and ends with the state, and the law becomes the site of recourse, closing down the popular and 'informal' power structures once central to the political sphere (Chatterjee, 2004; Guha & Chatterjee, 2009; Neocosmos, 2011).

When popular politics is 'captured' or neutralised in this way, we can expect at least three outcomes. First, the transition to democracy spells the end of political violence, in the sense that all politics is now assumed to be represented within the legitimate domains of the state, civil society, and the rule of law. In this way, popular movements are framed as agents of criminal violence, and their tactics, once hallmarks of the anti-Apartheid struggle (for example burning, barricades, marches), are recast as the work of destructive forces intent on resisting the now-legitimate rule of law (Dugard, Madlingozi, Tissington, Klare, & Williams, 2014; Losier, 2015). Their political agendas are rendered invisible in this process. Second, the 'rules of the game' are consolidated: the legitimate democratic state is the only game in town. To go against the democratically constituted state, and its democratically elected government, is seen as going against democracy itself, and this discursive shift supports the reframing of popular movements in terms of their criminality and illegitimacy – particularly where 'alternative' and more institutionally legitimate trustees of their grievances exist in the space of civil society and NGOs. Lastly, and because of this uneasy binary created between the formal and popular spaces of politics, to act in a space of leadership recognised by the new political regime is often to act at a distance from the ground, and vice versa (Zikode, 2009). That is, grassroots political movements increasingly find themselves in an antagonistic relationship to the space of formal governance and have to find creative ways of negotiating the space in order to secure concessions and reforms (Dugard et al., 2014).

These antagonisms are not a given in the relationship between the state and 'uncivil' or 'political' society, but result from processes that invest the state with the sense of trusteeship. Rather than opening up spaces to include the excluded,

the state and civil society act ostensibly in the interests of the marginalised, while constraining the availability of meaningful opportunities for popular participation in governance. As this enclosure occurs, a distinction emerges between clients (of the political regime), consumers (of public goods and services), and wards (beneficiaries of state largesse). Clients and consumers have regimes of accountability available to them; wards have their claim to victimhood underwritten by the law, which offers the only other legitimate space through which to challenge those who govern.

The philosopher Jacques Rancière (2003, p. 202) claims: 'Politics begins exactly when those who "cannot" do something to show that in fact they can'. We extend this claim to suggest that transformative political leadership begins when its proponents shift from transforming through politics to *transforming the political*. In the context sketched above, this requires thinking critically about how the space of organic, popular, and subaltern politics has been eroded in the transition to democracy and encounters with neoliberalism, not only in South Africa but in other African states, and how these spaces can be reinvigorated with the kind of public deliberation that supports substantive democracy.

Democracy as popular practice

The discussion is guided by the distinction between democracy-as-state and democracy-as-popular-practice. In our view, transformative political leadership supports democracy as a popular practice, which offers us one way of thinking about what it means to 'transform the political'. In our originating discussion, we argued for a need to shift from crisis to possibility, breaking with the enduring trope of Africa as a site of ongoing devastation, corruption, and state failure. This powerful 'cognitive lock' (Verger, 2012) continues to produce the diagnoses and solutions to 'African problems' that minimise individual and collective agency, obscure the deliberate underdevelopment and plunder of the continent's resources, and constrain meaningful political, economic, and social transformation.

This shift also requires a break with the notion of good governance as a core feature of effective leadership – not because this is unimportant, but because it reduces the work of leaders to their ability to deliver on measurable, quantitative indicators of success. It is imperative that we begin to ask questions, such as 'Governance of and for whom?', 'Governance of what?', 'Success for whom?', and 'Accountability to whom?' Is good governance emblematic of effective leadership if it delivers on its indicators but fails to address the needs of people on the ground? For example, can we consider a housing programme successful if it delivers sub-par housing at a distance from where future inhabitants currently live, work, go to school, and socialise, if the indicator was that 'sufficient housing opportunities' are provided (Dugard et al., 2014; Gibson, 2009)?

The assumption that recipients are beneficiaries of largesse informs the concomitant assumption that it is the prerogative of the giver – in this case the state – to determine what it deems appropriate and sufficient. When we pivot to a political imperative that positions people as active agents in the ongoing process of democracy, it demands that they not only be involved in processes that affect them, but that they also have a hand in shaping those processes and their outcomes (Dugard et al., 2014). This is aptly captured by S'bu Zikode (2009, para. 5), co-founder of the South African shack-dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo:

> It is one thing if we are beneficiaries who need delivery. It is another thing if we are citizens who want to shape the future of our cities, even our country. It is another thing if we are human beings who have decided that it is our duty to humanize the world.

Abahlali is one example of a grassroots organisation that has located itself within a framework of democracy as popular practice. It emerged in resistance to 'slum clearance' efforts in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, which ostensibly aimed to eradicate informal settlements, but did this through evicting residents and destroying their homes, often leaving them homeless or resettled far from work, school, and social networks (Dugard et al., 2014; Gibson, 2009; Zikode, 2009). Over time, the movement grew to include residents of other settlements in and around KwaZulu-Natal, as well as parallel organisations in other cities and provinces, such as the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC). Abahlali, the AEC, Gauteng's Landless People's Movement (LPM), and other organisations form part of a network called the Poor People's Alliance. These movements, part of the new post–Apartheid landscape of social movements, are based within the communities they serve, and focus broadly on issues of land, housing, and access to services for displaced peoples, backyard-dwellers, and residents of informal settlements and 'transit camps' for evictees (Robins, 2010).

In what follows, we discuss some of the work of Abahlali as a way of giving meaning to the notion of democracy as popular practice, which we offer as one approach to defining what it means to transform the political. Issues of governance, leadership, and social justice emerge strongly in the work of contemporary social movements that challenge taken-for-granted understandings of how democracy should function in practice.

Pursuing active inclusivity

A fundamental characteristic of Abahlali baseMjondolo and its partner organisations is a commitment to active inclusivity and resistance against the forms of discrimination that sow divisions within the movement and its members. This has been evident most powerfully in its rejection of xenophobic, and particularly Afrophobic, rhetoric and violence (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020).

Xenophobia has been regularly mobilised in the South African political imaginary, not only in popular spaces but in government policy and the operations of specific departments and divisions (Neocosmos, 2011; Tella, 2016). In part this can be attributed to the prevalence of redistributive policies that emphasise indigeneity as grounds for making claims against the state, accompanied by tropes of foreigners as 'stealing' jobs and housing opportunities, and contributing to crime (Tella, 2016). There is a tendency, especially by government officials, to either subtly endorse xenophobia or deny its existence entirely, conflating expressions of xenophobic violence with wanton criminality (Tella, 2016). To reduce xenophobia to criminality fails to address the political dimension of its origins in South Africa – underpinned by a legacy of structural exclusion, exclusivity, and exceptionalism.

It is important to recognise that the 'divide and rule' tactics that have enabled Apartheid-era divisions to persist into the present are also responsible for the continued violence, disregard, and prejudice meted out against foreign nationals and local 'economic migrants'. For example, displaced residents of a Cape Town 'transit camp', Blikkiesdorp ('Tin-can Town', so named for the corrugated iron structures erected by the city government), claimed that the city's government was using eviction as a strategy to displace Black residents in the area to reduce their voting power, replacing them with so-called Coloured residents who were more likely to vote for the party in power (Symphony Way Pavement Dwellers, 2011). In Johannesburg, regular forced removals of people from 'hijacked' land and buildings in the city centre take on an Afrophobic bent as city officials claim to be cleansing the space of illegality, crime, and illegitimate land claimants (Bénit-Gbaffou & Oldfield, 2014). In this way, long-running historical tensions have been mobilised to sow division and preclude the prospects of collective organising in contemporary South Africa.

Grassroots movements have to grapple with racism, tribalism, and xenophobia, given that their members are not from any one single group and often represent a range of ethno-linguistic groups and nationalities (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020). Abahlali has strongly condemned xenophobia and acted to resist xenophobic attacks in the communities it serves, arguing for the humanity of all persons and the rejection of state and popular discourses that construct foreigners as outsiders (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020). During the July 2021 unrest in parts of South Africa, the organisation released a statement condemning attempts by members of the ruling ANC to pin criminal acts on foreigners, position Indian South Africans as scapegoats for acts of violence against Black people, and sanction the harassment of township residents through unlawful searches and destruction of their property. Embedded in Abahlali's statement is a refusal to engage in the narrow chauvinism that has become endemic in South African party politics (Neocosmos, 2011; Robins, 2010; Tella, 2016). Active inclusivity,

then, is concerned with 'walking the talk' through an ongoing process of resistance against exclusion and divisive politics that undermine meaningful social transformation.

Solidarity and collaboration, not co-option by elites

Gibson (2009, p. 7) writes that a 'decentralisation of politics' is essential to the expansion of an emancipatory politic that includes the formerly excluded in shaping their world. This not only signifies political leaders 'coming down' to listen to the people, but the capacity of ordinary people to have voice and agency in the spaces of formal politics and policy-making.

This decentralisation is not synonymous with the decentralisation of governance that characterises the South African state, where power is devolved from national to provincial and municipal levels based on the rationale that this allows for more relevant and effective administration. Rather, it is about constructing an active and heterogenous democratic polity able to participate, shape, and challenge the work of government, and contribute to building a more just society (Gibson, 2009). In this space, people are able to bring the diverse aspects of their personhood into dialogue with each other, creating opportunities for solidarity to form across their concerns and contestations, and strengthening the quality and relevance of government's solutions to them. In the absence of such opportunities, mobilising outside or against the state becomes more attractive and necessary as the 'widening gap' (Harders, 2015) between the people and their government grows. Public statements by movements such as Abahlali and the LPM speak to this distrust of government as a result of harsh police responses to protests, attacks on movement members, and interference, sometimes of a violent nature, by local elected officials (Sacks, 2010).

One obstacle encountered by grassroots movements in the course of their struggles is the co-option or capture of their concerns by organisations in civil society, or government itself. Civil society organisations vary, and there are many that work in collaboration with grassroots movements. Co-option is not necessarily always a forceful or top-down strategy, as it may be a tactical or improvisational approach to more successfully navigate the spaces between civil society and realities on the ground (Robins, 2010). Of larger concern is the reduction of first-order questions of humanity, belonging, and justice raised by these movements to measurable indicators of welfare disbursement, transformation, or service delivery as their concerns are mobilised by actors working for reform *within* the formal political terrain – not by seeking to expand it (Losier, 2015; Neocosmos, 2011; Robins, 2010; Symphony Way Pavement Dwellers, 2011). In this way, as Gibson (2009) and Dugard et al. (2014) argue, while different social movements may tactically work through the legal system

and rights-based organisations when necessary, the struggles being waged on the ground are fundamentally about reimagining the space of the political, who is included within it, and who sets its terms of engagement.

Abahlali, the AEC, the LPM, and other movements have resisted co-option while welcoming solidarity and collaboration, arguing for the need for people to represent and have the authority to speak for themselves: 'Only those that feel it can lead it' (Cassiem, n.d., cited in Elliot-Cooper & Agyepong, 2011). The following discussion of 'living politics' will further elaborate on what this means in terms of concrete political action.

A living politics

In our foregoing discussion of democracy as popular practice, we have identified some of the principles that support the transformation of the political, in order to deepen our understanding of the possibilities of transformative political leadership. These principles in fact hinge on the notion of a living politics, or the politics of 'the ordinary men, women and children fighting for dignity as human beings, every day, until they count' (Figlan et al., 2009).

Living politics offers us one means of understanding how to think about transforming the political. It relies on people owning their experiences, struggles, and stories; being active and capable of learning, sharing, and creating knowledge; and reconstituting the spaces of political engagement and education to reflect the needs of their participants (Figlan et al., 2009). The term was coined by Abahlali to describe its approach to knowledge creation, movement-building, and collaboration, and is associated with its political education programme, known as the University of Abahlali, or 'Universal University' (Gibson, 2009). Living politics argues that poor people can think, and that their thought should be taken seriously, including by some corners of the political left that consider the oppressed incapable of thinking through their own struggles (Farred, 2003; Figlan et al., 2009; Gibson, 2009). Moreover, it draws people into conversation with each other, requiring community members to engage in critique both of society and of their own location within it. This emphasis on reflexivity is what enables organisations like Abahlali to challenge racism, xenophobia, and tribalism in its own ranks. At the same time, it challenges would-be collaborators and supporters, such as academics and middle-class activists, to enter the space as peers (rather than superiors, saviours, or vanguardists), to listen, and to contribute as requested by the movement, which ultimately drives the process (Figlan et al., 2009). Living politics calls for the synthesis of theoretical knowledge with practical experience and understanding, supporting people in thinking from and about their experiences, and breaking with the neat conceptual categories

(such as 'Marxism' and 'class struggle') that may not effectively represent and encapsulate realities on the ground.

From concessions to emancipation

Thus far we have developed an understanding of democracy as a popular practice that is rooted in active inclusivity, commitment to a living politics, and a focus on solidarity and collaboration with rather than co-option of grassroots political struggles. We argue that these factors are essential to thinking through transformative political leadership in ways that present, rather than represent, the fullness of experiences, realities, and contexts that comprise the political terrain.

It is also important to recognise that, taken together, these factors argue for a shift from concessions towards emancipation. By this we mean that a focus on the procedural realisation of rights (for example, through allocation of houses, water points, or electricity) may not sufficiently address the underlying structural and social forces that act against substantive democracy and democratic participation. The notion of 'concessions' is woven through critical work on human rights and social movements (Dugard et al., 2014; Figlan et al., 2009; Gibson, 2009; Losier, 2015; Neocosmos, 2011). Robins (2010, p. 82), who considers a variety of positions on the nature of NGOs and civil society in his work, offers an important analysis on this point:

> While to outside observers [patron–client] relationships may appear to reproduce dependency and disempowerment – the antithesis of liberal individualist conceptions of citizenship – they can also create the conditions for access to resources…Furthermore, should patrons fail to deliver, clients can exercise agency by shifting allegiance to another patron or acting to harm or undermine the legitimacy of the patron.

Robins (2010) also calls attention to the broad array of potential patrons that exist within the postcolonial political establishment, including NGOs, political leaders, traditional and religious authorities, charities, and community leaders. This offers a complex space through which people are able to move as 'clients' of different patrons and intricately and simultaneously leverage a host of relationships, positions, and strategies towards extracting concessions from the state (Losier, 2015; Robins, 2010). The question of whether these relationships are inherently instrumental and/or anti-democratic misses the point because it assumes: (1) that democracy is only located within the state, and (2) that complex relations of belonging and obligation cannot coexist alongside transactional exchanges. Instead, we should recognise that the competing relations of patronage that emerge within such a political space can only be resolved through the dissolution of relations of brokerage – in other words, a turn towards a more robust, accountable, and participatory practice of democracy. Arguably, as Losier

(2015) suggests, when citizens boycott elections, leverage client relationships, and engage in strikes and stayaways, they are enacting a conception of democracy that is consistent with the popular nature of their struggles, and that seeks its solutions through a broader assemblage of possibilities than those located only within the state and the space of representative politics. This is captured by Tormey (2015, p. 2), who observes that '[i]ncreasingly, politically engaged citizens don't speak, they act'. This is not a contingent or exotic phenomenon, either – the last two decades have seen a global paradigm shift from the primacy of representative politics towards the enactment of popular politics of all shades, ideologies, and concerns (Tormey, 2015).

It is important that the South African state gives substance to the socioeconomic and civil rights enshrined in the Constitution, but it is equally important to challenge the retreat of politics from the street committees, student, and women's organisations that in no small part brought about the end of Apartheid. Abahlali and other social movements have resisted attempts to reduce their struggles to the extraction of concessions. Rather, they have drawn attention to the fundamental link between representation and accountability that underpins the legitimacy of the democratic order (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020; Losier, 2015; Tormey, 2015). If people cannot hold elected officials accountable, then they have legitimate reason to challenge the ability of elected officials to act on their behalf.

A consistent refrain of Abahlali, the AEC, and the Poor People's Alliance has been that even when the people participate in elections, the elected officials do not act in the public interest, whether by tying largesse to political loyalty, mismanaging funds, or excluding communities from decision-making that affects them directly (Abahlali baseMjondolo, 2020; Figlan et al., 2009; Robins, 2010). Taking up these concerns through election boycotts, land and building occupations, and reconnecting electricity and water cut off due to non-payment are all acts of resistance against the legitimacy of a state that can claim legal force while lacking its moral foundation (Losier, 2015). Thus, saying that democracy as popular politics is concerned with emancipation, not concession, is to suggest that people struggle not only to improve their social conditions or location, but to challenge the foundation of that which excludes them.

All of this matters because when we think about transformative leadership, it is attractive to think about transformative leaders as representatives, even if we acknowledge that in their leadership they facilitate the agency of others (Shields, 2010). Facilitating agency is not synonymous with supporting, enabling, and foregrounding it, especially when this requires leaders to give way to their followers (Tormey, 2015). When we argue for political leadership as a situated, negotiated, and historical practice, it is because we acknowledge that democracy, governance, and participation are not static buzzwords – they are categories of meaning and action that can be thought, rethought, questioned, and challenged.

Conclusion: A world where many worlds fit

In this chapter we have taken an excursion into the question of political leadership in Africa, which has inevitably led to a discussion of grassroots political movements. While the discussion has been limited to the South African experience, and the contours of grassroots politics are so contextually diverse, it has distilled several pillars of what could constitute a new understanding of political leadership – specifically, transformative political leadership.

The chapter does not argue that representative politics is inherently anti-democratic or antithetical to the incorporation of popular politics. Rather, it suggests that representative politics as currently understood in terms of good governance, voting, and an active civil society can close off the space of popular politics or reduce it to the terms by which it is expressed (for example, through acts of political violence that subsequently become criminalised). We also do not view all popular politics or grassroots movements as naturally inclusive, progressive, or benevolent, but feel that to focus on their adverse manifestations is unhelpful, given that some of the resolution of such intolerance or chauvinism can be found in a more rigorous and heterogenous space of public deliberation.

Transformative political leadership should therefore be concerned with *enlarging the space of the political*: allowing people to speak for themselves, challenge political authorities, and engage in robust deliberation about the issues affecting them, both concrete and abstract. It also requires understanding that people are agents capable of imagining new worlds with vastly different approaches to the division of labour, the expression of gender, the space of political engagement, and even the relationship of society to the economy (Gahman, 2017). If political parties are no longer the sole or primary conduit through which people engage in their struggles for meaning, belonging, and survival, then transformative leaders need to be cognisant of that, and defend the creation of new spaces through which struggle can be expressed and overcome.

This also means thinking about transformative leadership as leadership that facilitates its own redundancy. By this we mean that transformative leaders should ideally work to displace themselves from the communities, movements, and causes that they serve, leaving the ground fallow for others to take things forward, and preventing the crisis of legitimacy that often results from the departure of charismatic and powerful figures (Tormey, 2015). Social movements around the world have experimented with a diversity of leadership structures, from leaderless to horizontal and caucus-led approaches, which indicates the space that exists for transformative leadership to unfold in new ways in the future.

At the outset of this chapter, we argued for a need to shift from crisis to opportunity and possibility in the way we frame the work of leaders on the African continent. This can be exemplified in quite simple terms. If political

leaders conceive of grassroots struggles as a question of crisis, there may be a tendency for them to seek solutions that return to the very status quo that these movements are challenging. When we recognise that ordinary people are able to articulate themselves within the political space, we are able to see the symbolic and structural roots of their material claims – meaning that solutions need to go beyond delivering services towards changing societies. If political leaders see these moments of rupture and disruption as opportunities to think about the world differently, in conversation with those they serve, we may yet see a form of transformative leadership that can radically break with the rules of the game.

#TransformingThePolitical

Transformative political leadership enlarges the space of the political, allowing people to speak for themselves, challenge political authorities, and deliberate robustly about both the concrete and abstract issues affecting them.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you understand by the phrase 'transforming the political'? Following from the discussion on Abahlali baseMjondolo, are there other principles you would add or develop further as part of transforming the political?
2. Is the distinction between democracy-as-state and democracy-as-popular-practice helpful? Are you able to apply it to other political events in your society?
3. To what extent do you believe transformative leaders should work to make themselves redundant?

References

Abahlali baseMjondolo. (2020, 8 May). *Serious concern at escalating state xenophobia*. Retrieved from https://abahlali.org/node/17112/.

Acemoglu, D., Verdier, T., & Robinson, J. A. (2004). Kleptocracy and divide-and-rule: A model of personal rule. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *2*(2–3), 162–192.

Adebanwi, W. & Obadare, E. (2013). *Democracy and prebendalism in Nigeria: Critical interpretations*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Anciano, F. (2018). Clientelism as civil society? Unpacking the relationship between clientelism and democracy at the local level in South Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *53*(4), 593–611.

Ayittey, G. B. (1992). *Africa betrayed*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Bénit-Gbaffou, C. & Oldfield, S. (2014). Claiming 'rights' in the African city: Popular mobilization and the politics of informality. In S. Parnell & S. Oldfield (Eds). *The Routledge handbook on cities of the Global South* (pp. 281–295). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Beresford, A. (2014). Editorial: Understanding how 'Africa works'? *Critical African Studies*, *6*(1), 1–5.

Beresford, A. (2015). Power, patronage, and gatekeeper politics in South Africa. *African Affairs*, *114*(455), 226–248.

Bond, P. (2006). *Looting Africa: The economics of exploitation*. London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

Chabal, P. & Daloz, J. P. (1999). *Africa works*: *Disorder as political instrument*. London, United Kingdom: James Currey.

Chatterjee, P. (2004). *The politics of the governed: Reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Demmers, J., Fernández Jilberto, A. E., & Hogenboom, B. (Eds). (2004). *Good governance in the era of global neoliberalism: Conflict and depolitization in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Dugard, J., Madlingozi, T., Tissington, K., Klare, K., & Williams, L. (2014). Rights-compromised or rights-savvy? The use of rights-based strategies to advance socio-economic struggles by Abahlali baseMjondolo, the South African shack-dwellers' movement. In H. A. García, K. Klare, & L. A. Williams (Eds). *Social and economic rights in theory and practice: Critical inquiries* (pp. 23–41). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ekeh, P. P. (1975). Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: A theoretical statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *17*(1), 91–112.

Elliot-Cooper, A. & Agyepong, A. (2011, 9 January). The anti-imperialist South Africa: A revolution in progress. *Ceasefire Magazine*.
Retrieved from https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/the-anti-imperialist-south-africa-a-revolution-in-progress/.

Farred, G. (2003). 'Theatre of dreams': Mimicry and difference in Cape Flats township football. In J. Bale & M. Cronin (Eds). *Sport and postcolonialism* (pp. 123–145). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Fatton, R. (1992). *Predatory rule: State and civil society in Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Figlan, L., Mavuso, R., Ngema, B., Nsibande, Z., Sibisi, S., & Zikode, S. (2009). *Living learning*. Abahlali baseMjondolo Rural Network.
Retrieved from https://abahlali.org//////files/Living_Learning.pdf

Gahman, L. (2017). Building 'a world where many worlds fit': Indigenous autonomy, mutual aid, and an (anti-capitalist) moral economy of the (rebel) peasant. In J. Duncan & M. Bailey (Eds). *Sustainable food futures: Multidisciplinary solutions* (pp. 103–116). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Gibson, N. C. (2009). *Fanonian practices and the politics of space in post-apartheid South Africa: The challenge of the shack dwellers movement (Abahlali baseMjondolo)*. Abahlali baseMjondolo. Retrieved from http://abahlali.org/node/5540/.

Gigliotti, R. A. (2017). *The social construction of crisis in higher education: Implications for crisis leadership theory and practice*. PhD thesis, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, USA. Retrieved from https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/53624/.

Guha, R. & Chatterjee, P. (2009). *The small voice of history: Collected essays*. Ranikhet, India: Permanent Black.

Harders, C. (2015). 'State analysis from below' and political dynamics in Egypt after 2011. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *47*(1), 148–151.

Hearn, J. (2010). *Foreign aid, democratisation and civil society in Africa: A study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda*. Discussion Paper 368. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/4980.

Joseph, R. (1987). *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the second republic*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Kowalczyk, A. M. (2013). Indigenous peoples and modernity: Mapuche mobilizations in Chile. *Latin American Perspectives*, *40*(4), 121–135.

Lenneiye, N. M. (2000). *Quest for a corporate African leadership: Public sector case studies from southern Africa*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Nehanda Publishers.

Lewis, P. (1996). From prebendalism to predation: The political economy of decline in Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *34*(1), 79–103.

Losier, T. (2015). *'We oppose the authorities because we never gave them the authority …': Aspects of non-collaboration in the political resonance of Western Cape anti-eviction campaign*. Unequal Cities.
Retrieved from https://unequalcities.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2019/01/Losier-Toussaint-We-oppose-the-authorities.pdf.

Maathai, W. (2009). *The challenge for Africa*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Mamdani, M. (1997). *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mbah, C. E. (2013). Leadership question and development crises: The 21st century challenges in Africa and quest for change. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, *15*(2), 142–153.

Mills, G. (2011). *Why Africa is poor and what Africans can do about it*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Penguin.

Mkandawire, T. (2007). 'Good governance': The itinerary of an idea. *Development in practice*, *17*(4–5), 679–681.

Mkandawire, T. (2015). Neopatrimonialism and the political economy of economic performance in Africa: Critical reflections. *World Politics*, *67*(3), 563–612.

Motta, S. C. (2013). Reinventing the lefts in Latin America: Critical perspectives from below. *Latin American Perspectives*, *40*(4), 5–18.

Nanda, V. P. (2006). The 'good governance' concept revisited. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *603*(1), 269–283.

Neocosmos, M. (2011). Transition, human rights and violence: Rethinking a liberal political relationship in the African neo-colony. *Interface*, *3*(2), 359–399.

Obadare, E. (2004). The alternative genealogy of civil society and its implications for Africa: Notes for further research. *Africa Development*, *29*(4), 1–18.

Padayachee, V. & Van Niekerk, R. (2019). *Shadow of liberation: Contestation and compromise in the economic and social policy of the African National Congress, 1943–1996*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.

Rancière, J. (2003). Politics and aesthetics: An interview. *Angelaki*: *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, *8*(2), 191–211.

Robertson, S., Mundy, K., & Verger, A. (Eds). (2012). *Public private partnerships in education: New actors and modes of governance in a globalizing world*. Cheltenham, United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Robins, S. (2010). How deep is deep democracy? Grassroots globalization from Mumbai to Cape Town. In V. S. P. Coelho & B. von Lieres (Eds). *Mobilizing for democracy: Citizen action and the politics of public participation* (pp. 143–145). London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

Rotberg, R. I. (2004). Strengthening African leadership: There is another way. *Foreign Affairs, 83*(4), 14–18.

Sacks, J. (2010, 5 July). *Two deaths, dozens of injuries and counting … An investigation into politically motivated violence against the LPM in Gauteng*. Landless People's Movement. Retrieved from https://abahlali.org/node/7148/.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Symphony Way Pavement Dwellers. (2011). *No land! No house! No vote! Voices from Symphony Way.* Cape Town, South Africa: Pambazuka Press.

Tella, O. (2016). Understanding xenophobia in South Africa: The individual, the state and the international system. *Insight on Africa*, *8*(2), 142–158.

Tettey, W. J. (2012). Africa's leadership deficit: Exploring pathways to good governance and transformative politics. In K. T. Hanson, G. Kararach, & T. M. Shaw (Eds). *Rethinking development challenges for public policy* (pp. 18–53). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tormey, S. (2015). *The end of representative politics*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Van de Walle, N. (2001). *African economies and the politics of permanent crisis*, *1979–1999*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Verger, A. (2012). Framing and selling global education policy: The promotion of public–private partnerships for education in low-income contexts. *Journal of Education Policy*, *27*(1), 109–130.

Wamba dia Wamba, E. (2007, 15 March). Democracy today: The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Pambazuka News*.
Retrieved from https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/democracy-today-case-democratic-republic-congo.

Zikode, S. (2009, 24 July). *Meaningful engagement*. Abahlali baseMjondolo. Retrieved from http://abahlali.org/node/5538.

20 *Transformative leadership in Africa: Lessons from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership stints in Liberia*

Kazeem Ajasa Badaru and Emmanuel Olusola Adu

Overview

Africa is in dire need of transformative leadership to overcome the leadership deficits militating against sustainable development. Using a narrative literature review approach, this chapter engages perspectives on transformative leadership theory and analyses lessons from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's leadership in postconflict Liberia. Findings reveal that Sirleaf contributed to the transformation of her country through activism, reconciliation, peacebuilding, and reconstruction of democratic institutions, which ultimately redirected the country to a path of sustainable peace and democracy. This chapter also highlights lessons for prospective and serving leaders in Africa. Without writing an account that smacks of hagiography, the chapter concludes that as president, Sirleaf demonstrated leadership that was not only exemplary, but also transformative, even though her approach was not flawless, and accusations of nepotism and human rights failings were levelled against her.

Introduction

The need for peace and security for Africa's development calls for leadership that turns the fortunes of the continent (Rylander, 2010). While there are African countries such as Angola, South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Ghana, and Mauritius, among others, whose leaders have shown visionary and transformative capacities (Rylander, 2010), several others are still grappling with enormous leadership challenges. In light of these challenges, African states launched a 50-year transformative vision in May 2013, *Agenda 2063*, subtitled *The Africa We Want* (Bukusi, 2020, p. 85). It is a 'blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future' (African Union, 2020, para. 1). As Sholle, Papa, and Kipkorir (2019) note, leadership is a crucial means to accomplishing this lofty agenda and, more importantly, transformative leadership is required for Africa to solve the continent's myriad challenges. This corroborates Rylander's (2010) critical view that the transformation of the continent is possible only if the question of bad or poor leadership is addressed across Africa. In addition, the majority of the so-called 'bad' leaders, both in Africa and across the world, have been men (Annan, 2020) and some may argue

that one potential solution is to have more women leaders. For example, Tripp (2003) demonstrates how women have organised for peace in war-torn countries such as Rwanda, Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Liberia.

In the case of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf emerged as the first female president in Africa and served for two terms. Mikell (2009) claims that Liberians believed that only a woman could put things in order and transition the country from a conflict-ridden nation to a peacefully governed and democratic one. Mikell goes on to argue how Sirleaf's legitimacy manifested in always separating herself from discredited political elites who had previously ruled Liberia, and by being a newcomer in the polity. Moreover, there is also a belief held by people of Africa that women are generally more responsive to the needs and aspirations of people (Mikell, 2009). Sirleaf became president when citizens' expectations were enormously high (Cook, 2007). She wielded presidential power for 12 years in a country that had suffered decades of socioeconomic deprivation, civil conflict, and tyranny. There is no doubt that she left a legacy of rebuilding infrastructure, improving healthcare services and education, and bringing Charles Taylor, a notorious warlord, to justice. She also led Liberia through the precarious times of the Ebola epidemic of 2014–2015 (Lane, 2016).

Conversely, Afrobarometer researchers Isbell and Jacobs (2017) assert that Sirleaf's leadership was regarded by Liberians as unsatisfactory and negative from the end of her first term until midway through her second term in office. More specifically, citizens expressed dissatisfaction concerning 'unemployment, infrastructure, economic management, education, and agriculture' (Isbell & Jacobs, 2017, p. 1). In fairness to Sirleaf, she also admitted that her first term as president was spent laying a solid foundation for postwar recovery and reconstruction (Adebajo, 2014). Following a youth protest against her re-election in November 2011, she reassured Liberians in her January 2012 inauguration speech that her second term was for delivery of governance in four key challenging areas: youth joblessness, the inadequacy of education for youth, insecurity, and national reconciliation (Adebajo, 2014). Scully (cited in Smith, 2016) notes that Sirleaf is respected internationally, but remains a contentious and divisive personality in her own country. Despite these mixed assessments, she was internationally recognised as the 'Iron lady' of Africa for playing a leading role in the promotion of freedom, peace, justice, democracy, rule of law, and the empowerment of women.

The broader question is how far did her leadership role, as evident in the struggles for freedom, peace, social justice, and democratic rule, as well as women's empowerment, advance the transformation of Liberia? Another salient question for this study is what lessons about leadership can be learned for prospective and serving leaders in Africa? This chapter specifically seeks to address questions that touch on elements of transformative leadership theory, on which basis

Sirleaf's leadership performance in Liberia is interrogated with a view to drawing out relevant lessons for the benefit of leaders in Africa, especially young Africans aspiring to become not just leaders, but transformative ones. These are the concerns addressed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Finding out about Sirleaf

This chapter used a narrative literature review approach consisting of critical analyses of scientific articles in print or electronic journals and books, following Rother (2007). Information was gathered mainly through databases, which included Google Scholar, ResearchGate, EBSCOHost, and AJOL. The search was conducted using a combination of search terms, such as transformative leadership, Africa, political transformation, Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, leadership, success, challenges, and criticisms, within the timeframe 2003 to 2021. The reviewed documents included journal articles, memoirs, speeches, and other online reports on Sirleaf 's political career. An initial 189 articles were sifted to 44 relevant documents. The criteria for inclusion were those articles that primarily addressed leadership actions – both those acclaimed and criticised – and were based on the extraction of ideas that coherently fit into the narratives of this study. These were then analysed by considering their alignment with the theory of transformative leadership. While the narrative literature review is a viable approach to research synthesis (Ferrari, 2015), its limitations include, among others, the fact that the assumptions and the planning process are not often known, selection and evaluation biases are not known, and studies based on this methodology are not reproducible (Rumrill & Fitzgerald, 2001).

The lens of transformative leadership

The term 'transformative leadership' has been used by several scholars based on the theory of transformational leadership (Kuğuoğlu & Küçük, 2012; Regier, 2017), while others use transformational leadership and transformative leadership interchangeably and synonymously (Grin, Hassink, Karadzic, & Moors, 2018; Tatlah & Aslam, 2012). Transformative leadership is believed to have roots in the work of Burns (cited in Stephenson, 2011) and has largely drawn on the theoretical works of other authors (Stephenson, 2011). Tatlah and Aslam (2012, p. 557) contend that 'transformative leadership is leadership that is willing to realign structures and relationships to achieve genuine and sustainable change'. The main focus of transformative leadership is to bring about transformation through realignment of political structures and social relationships for the attainment of justice, equity, and democratic development. Shields (cited in Bukusi, 2020, p. 86) opines that '[t]ransformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy, critiques inequitable practices, and addresses both individual and public good'.

Shields's perspective resonates with that of Weiner (2003, p. 89), who posits that transformative leadership is concerned with the exercise of power and authority, beginning with 'questions of justice, democracy, and the dialectic between individual accountability and social responsibility'. Shields (2010, p. 562) identifies seven major elements of transformative leadership in the literature as follows:

> a combination of both critique and promise; attempts to effect both deep and equitable changes; deconstruction and reconstruction of the knowledge frameworks that generate inequity; acknowledgment of power and privilege; emphasis on both individual achievement and the public good; a focus on liberation, democracy, equity, and justice; and finally, evidence of moral courage and activism.

These transformative leadership elements provide the theoretical basis and framework upon which the leadership traits and performances of Sirleaf are investigated, interrogated, extracted, analysed, and synthesised to set standards of leadership that could inspire and motivate other leaders, especially young ones, in Africa. More importantly, these elements encapsulate all the dimensions of transformative leadership perspectives espoused by scholars such as Tatlah and Aslam (2012), Shields (cited in Bukusi, 2020), and Weiner (2003).

Weiner's (2003) transformative leadership idea emphasises the basic tenets of democratic practice, such as the fundamental rights of individuals to justice, fairness, equity, accountability, transparency, and social responsibilities. Reflecting on the question of justice, Odora Hoppers (2014, p. 25) believes that justice has two underlying and competing impulses: 'one a cry for revenge; the other for a rejection of the evil committed by others on our very own [African] people'. According to Stephenson (2011), transformative leadership identifies with the process and content of democracy as well as approaches that are very critical to leadership practices. Simply put, it is leadership 'built on a foundation of integrity…driven by self-awareness and a deep sense of purpose' aiming to address problems of inequity and improve the lives of other people, as well as make or influence positive change (Mastercard Foundation, 2014, p. 3). Jun (cited in Bukusi, 2020, p. 87) identifies 'critique, empathy, democracy, dialogue, courage, justice, commitment and equity' as the characteristics of transformative leadership.

Liberia in context: An overview of its political trajectories

Liberia was established first by the American Colonisation Society as an outpost for Black slaves in 1821. The Republic of Liberia, whose motto is 'The love of liberty brought us here', unlike several other African nations which struggled

through nationalist movements against their colonial masters, became the first Black African country to declare its independence on 26 July 1847, almost a century before independence struggles earnestly commenced on the continent. The history of this West African country predates Black migrant settlement, but has been characterised by migrations, wars, exiles, and diasporic returns (Pailey, 2021). William V. S. Tubman, the longest serving president, was president from 1944 until his death in 1971. His successor, William Tolbert, was killed in a military coup led by a 25-year-old master sergeant, Samuel Kanyon Doe, in 1980. The military rule of Samuel Doe came to an end in 1985 following a democratic election that was marred by large-scale fraud and irregularities in an attempt to keep Doe in power. The emergence of the politically ambitious counter-revolutionary Charles Taylor, who had been trained in Libya, led to the launch of an armed rebellion from Côte d'Ivoire against Doe's regime in 1989. No fewer than 200 000 Liberians lost their lives, while an estimated 500 000 to 750 000 became internally displaced (Pailey, 2021). Charles Taylor was elected president in the 1997 election and soon became a despotic ruler. He was ousted in 2003 and went into exile in Nigeria, but was later convicted (26 April 2012) for crimes against humanity during Sierra Leone's civil war. An interim government was set up in Liberia in 2003 which conducted the 2005 election that produced the first female president for the continent of Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, officially sworn in as the 24th Liberian head of state in 2006.

Dissecting the leadership performance of Sirleaf

This section reviews Sirleaf's performance as a transformative leader who worked hard to pull her country out of a political logjam, or what Williams (2006) describes as the 'heart of darkness', and the economic woes that were the result of a 14-year civil war. Ellen Eugenia Johnson was born on 29 October 1938 in Monrovia to a Gola father, Jahmale Johnson, and a Kru-German mother, Martha Dunbar. Her marriage to James Sirleaf in 1956, at the age of 17, produced four sons. She obtained a scholarship in 1961 to travel with her husband, who had also secured a scholarship, for graduate studies in the United States (Emejulu & Kalu, 2020; Sirleaf, E.J., 2009). Sirleaf studied accounting and public administration at Madison Business College and Harvard University in the United States. She started her public service career in Liberia at the Treasury Department, now the Ministry of Finance, and served as the assistant minister of finance (1972–1973) during the presidency of William Tolbert, and again as minister of finance (1980–1985) during the military dictatorship headed by Samuel K. Doe. She was given the moniker 'Iron Lady' for her insistence on fiscal discipline and prudence (due process) at the ministry (Pailey, 2014, p. 171). During the 2005 national election, she presented herself as a 'triple threat: educated, experienced, and female' as a strategy for winning the presidential race (Pailey, 2014, p. 170).

Performance in government

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf inaugurated a government run predominantly by policy experts, professionals, technocrats, and erstwhile opposition activists (Cook, 2007). Her government commenced work by addressing the issues of justice and reconciliation for a peaceful Liberia; this action was indicative of transformative leadership which, in the view of Shields (cited in Bukusi, 2020), begins with and addresses questions of justice and inequitable practices. Sirleaf acknowledged the significant role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia (TRC-L) in the process of healing the nation and pledged her support for the process (Sirleaf, M., 2009). Efforts to seek reconciliation and build peace are important facets of rebuilding societies (Gorpudolo, 2019; Lederach, cited in Singh & Connolly, 2014).

The Truth and Reconciliation Act brought the TRC-L into existence in 2005, to address the nation's legacy of abuses of human rights during the civil wars and turbulent history from 1979 to 2003 (De Ycaza, 2013), ensure accountability, and promote reconciliation (Sirleaf, M., 2009). President Sirleaf appeared before the commission in February 2009, ostensibly for providing financial support to former warring factions. By the time the TRC-L's report was finalised in 2009, she was among the high-profile politicians and public servants recommended for a 30-year ban from public office for financing former president Charles Taylor's war crimes (Harris & Lappin, 2010). Unfortunately, this was an indictment on her leadership status, and led to opposition to the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to her in 2011. She apologised to the people of Liberia and went on to seek re-election for a second term as president. Her argument for staying in office was that implementing the ban would be an unconstitutional violation of her right to procedural due process, as she broke no law by supporting Taylor financially (Cheng, 2011).

President Sirleaf's response was tactical and diplomatic. She received the report with appreciation to the commissioners for their time and investigative work. She gave assurances that she was committed to responding to those recommendations that lived up to the commission's mission and mandate (Harris & Lappin, 2010). She restated her commitment to making a restorative rather than a vindictive response to people named as war criminals. Her commitment and moral courage was demonstrative of transformative leadership elements, namely the exercise of power for the attainment of peace, justice, and democratic development (Bukusi, 2020; Weiner, 2003). According to Emejulu & Kalu (2020), Sirleaf left behind enduring legacies in Liberia. Her peacebuilding efforts culminated in freedom of speech, equal rights for women, and rights to free, universal, and elementary education, all of which had suffered neglect and gross abuse during the period of civil conflict (Kieh, cited in Emejulu & Kalu, 2020). Her peace efforts also facilitated the inclusion of women in the decision-

making process and representation in governance, which was consistent with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security of 2000, and the UN 2030 Agenda (Otieno, 2020). As the chairperson of the international association Mano River Union, Sirleaf's leadership similarly saw to the promotion of peace in neighbouring countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone (Cook, 2007).

Positive aspects of Sirleaf 's leadership legacy

Research shows that Liberia undoubtedly went through transformation, especially during the first six years of Sirleaf 's tenure, that created an enabling and safer environment for Liberians in the diaspora to return and re-engage in the socioeconomic and political reconstruction of their home country (Pailey, 2011). By the end of her first term in office, Liberia had significantly transformed, from a war-torn state to a nascent democracy with prospects for further growth in the economy (Sharpe, 2012). Her administration diligently executed the Poverty Reduction Strategy that provided jobs through training and vocational education programmes for the reduction of unemployment and the risks of returning to insurgencies (Sirleaf, 2011). She built a new national military of well-trained and professionalised men and women, effectively under the control of the country's Ministry of National Defence; carried out extensive police and judicial reforms to address small crimes and breakdown of order; and restored the citizens' sense of safety and security. In addition, the Sirleaf administration was able to secure debt relief for Liberia through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative of the International Monetary Fund (Sirleaf, 2011).

The rule of law and institutions for governance were strengthened through certain mechanisms for the promotion of freedoms of speech, individual rights to equality, women's rights to education, and protection against gender-based violence. Schools were rehabilitated and young Liberians, particularly child soldiers, were encouraged to return to school. Roads, hospitals, and clinics were rebuilt, while electricity and water supplies were restored and other infrastructural services were expanded (Sirleaf, 2011). Her administration also provided funds for market women and the building of new market structures with all the required modern facilities (Mikell, 2009). The administration was able to mobilise more than US$16 billion in foreign direct investment. It also attracted over US$5 million in private resources for funding of scholarships and capacity building, and the rehabilitation of schools, markets, and clinics. Sirleaf succeeded in negotiating external debt relief to the tune of US$4.6 billion and lifting the embargo on trade transactions imposed on her country by the UN. She was also able to raise the country's annual budget from US$80 million in 2006 to US$672 million in 2012, with more than 7 per cent average yearly GDP growth (Mastercard Foundation, 2014). GDP per capita, as noted by

Otieno (2020), rose from US$294.89 in 2005 to US$698.70 in 2017. Research by Margaret Kruk and others, as well as official records of Liberia, indicate that the country witnessed a lot of improvements in sectors such as health, education, and security during Sirleaf 's administration (Otieno, 2020). These observations on her leadership performance are consistent with Tatlah and Aslam's (2012) argument that transformative leadership is the willingness of a leader to support the realignment of political structures and social relationships for a genuine and sustainable change.

Corruption was one of her government's challenges. Sirleaf came into power with a visionary agenda for the transformation of the Liberian economy and sociopolitical space. The country's value system had been eroded by the institutionalised system of bad governance and a culture of rent-seeking behaviour that pervaded successive governments prior to the 2005 national elections (Sirleaf, 2011). The Sirleaf administration took on corruption by firing all appointees of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and announcing an audit of this government (Cook, 2007). It also sacked the workforce in the country's Ministry of Finance while awaiting outcomes of the screening exercise on workers' qualifications and state of propriety. When corruption thrives, no meaningful development will take place, and it remains doubtful, therefore, whether Sirleaf would have achieved anything tangible without first tackling the monster of corruption in the public sector. Although her administration cannot be exonerated from corrupt practices, she put in place a legal framework that sent the right signals to public servants: corruption was not going to be tolerated by the new government. It is important to note that although Sirleaf 's administration drove hard to fight corruption, it was unable to stamp it out completely. Transformative leadership can be idealistic and set out to achieve reforms, but it does not have to achieve all its aims to be called transformative.

Negative aspects of Sirleaf 's leadership legacy

Despite the achievements of the Sirleaf presidency, her administration was not without challenges and shortcomings. Sirleaf was confronted with a myriad of challenges in meeting high citizen expectations (Cook, 2007). Among these challenges were the urgent need for the restoration of peace and security, the revitalisation of the battered economy, and the rebuilding of governance and the rule of law (Sirleaf, 2011). Moreover, there were deficiencies in terms of financial, administrative, and technical capacities, as her administration was lacking in both human and material resources at the time of taking over the reins of government in 2006. For instance, there were 800 medical doctors available in the country at the start of the war in 1989, but this declined to 50 by 2003 (Sirleaf, 2011, p. 3). Sirleaf lamented the difficulties associated with post-war

reconstruction in Liberia, involving all sectors of the economy, security, basic services, infrastructure, governance, as well as the urgent need for national healing and reconciliation. She further emphasised the fact that most of Liberia's infrastructure had been destroyed and was in dire need of complete overhaul and reconstruction at the national and county levels. The economy was in a sharp decline. The nation's peace and security were threatened by the absence of functional security forces (military and police) as thousands of ex-combatants, who were not yet demobilised, resulted in a deluge of armed non-state actors (insurgents). The presence of UN peacekeeping troops provided essential security in the country.

Another major critique of the Sirleaf administration was that it overemphasised state-building to the detriment of nation-building. Pailey (2011, p. 16) succinctly explains how state-building differs from nation-building as follows:

> While nation-building is 'people centric' and domestically driven, requiring national agency, ownership, and resources, state-building is 'institution centric' and externally driven, often soliciting international resources and involving some form of social engineering through a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

This was one of several administrative weaknesses. There were also allegations of deep-seated corruption inhibiting sustainable development in Liberia (Pailey, 2011). For instance, Sirleaf failed to ensure that private companies dealing in logwood were held accountable for payments to government. The judicial system had also collapsed, paving the way for endemic and systemic corruption. Sirleaf was particularly criticised for interfering with a criminal investigation that involved her son, Fombah Sirleaf, and the National Security Agency, in the case of Korean nationals whose money (US$247 500) was illegally seized during a hotel raid without following due process (Bartuah, 2014). Another son, Charles Sirleaf, was also charged in 2019 with economic sabotage and corruption for unlawfully printing Liberian bank notes which amounted to US$75 million (*BBC News*, 2019). All these acts were in contradiction of the ideals of transformative leadership, the foundation of which is built on integrity, individual accountability, and transparency.

Sirleaf was also accused of nepotism for appointing three of her sons in influential and strategic political offices: Fombah Sirleaf as the National Security Agency's director, Charles Sirleaf as the Central Bank of Liberia's deputy governor, and Robert Sirleaf as senior advisor to the president and later as the National Oil Company of Liberia's board chair (Pailey, 2014). Thus, Sirleaf too became guilty of practices similar to those of previous regimes that ran the Liberian government with the involvement of family members as private estates.

Other critics note that she had also failed to adopt 'a feminist political economy' as promoted by some organisations, including the Women's International Leagues for Peace and Freedom (Otieno, 2020). This resulted in her failure to bridge the widened gaps between the ruling elite and the poor masses. Sirleaf was also criticised for her draconian and brutal response in handling the 2014 Ebola outbreak. One instance of this brutality was the shooting to death of a slum dweller who attempted to cross the government-imposed cordon (Otieno, 2020).

Her government equally faced a public backlash over the criminalisation of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in Liberia. Due to her government's discriminatory legislation against the rights of LGBTI persons in Liberia, there was even a call for the revocation of Sirleaf's Nobel Peace Prize (Broch, 2012). In February 2012, the country's legislative houses considered two bills for anti-LGBTI laws: one was seeking to extend the criminal penalty for same-sex practices to a felony punishable by up to five years in jail, while the second was to prohibit same-sex marriages. The executive government headed by Sirleaf appeared to be walking a tightrope concerning the rights of LGBTI Liberians (Sillah, 2017). On the one hand, she claimed to be defending her country's traditional value system by supporting existing anti-homosexuality laws. On the other hand, she declined to sign new bills into law either for or against the LGBTI population. Her (in)action resulted in gay people suffering open intimidation, arbitrary detention, stigmatisation, social exclusion, physical violence, and the violation and/or denial of their rights. LGBTI activists therefore criticised the Sirleaf government for not taking any action to protect people perceived to be homosexuals against threat of arrest and prosecution, discrimination, vilification, harassment, and even physical violence by anti-LGBTI advocates. Sirleaf 's administration was said to have done little to outlaw the poor political treatment of LGBTI people; her critics alleged that she treated LGBTI people's rights as if they were not human rights at all.

In the final analysis, Sirleaf 's transformative administration restored hope for an entirely new democratic experience and left positive changes for democratisation in the country's political history. Despite her shortcomings, Sirleaf may be regarded as a transformative leader, as she is in Scully's critical view (cited in Otieno, 2020).

Gender, integrity, vision and power: Lessons for leaders in Africa

This section highlights lessons that can be learned by current and prospective leaders in Africa. First and foremost, Sirleaf was well prepared for a leadership role. One major attribute of a transformative leader is personal growth. She was well educated and highly experienced. She also had very good international

exposure and connections. Despite having married and given birth to four children at a very young age, she still had the determination to return to school. Education played a key role in her personal and leadership success. She has set a good example of female leadership for young Africans through her national and international records. Transformative leadership emphasises on both personal achievement and the public good, as exemplified by Sirleaf (Shields, 2010).

Second, she projected her personal and professional integrity through her unchanging leadership practices. She was quick to resign or quit her official positions in regimes whose policies and practices clashed with her moral principles of justice, transparency, and accountability. As the president, for instance, she once handed suspensions to her son, Charles Sirleaf, and 45 other government officials, for failing to declare their assets as required by the country's anti-corruption law. The suspension of her son from public office would have sent a strong signal to the rest of the political elite and the public at large that she meant to fight corruption and enthrone accountability and transparency in public service delivery. The bottom line is that African leaders need to exemplify integrity and present themselves as role models for good governance. Transformative leadership is premised upon the foundation of integrity, moral courage, transparency, and accountability.

Third, she remained perfectly poised as a visionary leader. Sirleaf was not just a woman president but a visionary one, whose transformative leadership stints were characterised by authenticity, vision, and inspiration that could motivate other women and girls, particularly in West Africa and Africa as a whole. Well armed with her vision, she was committed to liberating Liberia from war and establishing a new democratic country for all. She implemented multiple transformative ideas for effective governance and political renewal for long-suffering Liberians. It is therefore crucial for young Africans not just to aspire to become leaders, but to plan leadership actions that result in transformative outcomes. Transformative leadership is about commitment to liberation, democratic tenets, social responsibilities, and improving people's lives, as demonstrated by Sirleaf.

Fourth, Sirleaf transformed the Liberian presidency by bridging the power divide that had existed between the president and citizens. She made her office accessible to citizens in ways unheard of under the regimes of her predecessors. Sirleaf made a big difference by having consultations with her citizens and encouraging other political office holders at the county level to do the same. Her administration's consultations and decentralisation processes birthed the National Vision from 2010 to 2011, which was the template used for developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy and incorporating women into government. The important lesson here is that leaders should be more accessible to their people. This helps to promote mutual understanding and trust between the

government and citizens. Transformative leadership has to identify with the processes, contents and critical approaches found in democratic practices (Stephenson, 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter was written to reflect on transformative leadership theory and to bring the application of the theory into analysis from the African perspective by exploring the political activism and leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female president on the continent of Africa. Of note are the rare qualities that qualify her as a transformative leader; the contributions she made towards the transformation of Liberia through the processes of reconciliation, peacebuilding, and institutional and economic reconstruction; how her leadership styles impacted on postwar recovery efforts in Liberia; and lessons from her transformative leadership performance.

The leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is undoubtedly a source of motivation and inspiration to young Africans, especially women, because they are still grossly underrepresented in the scheme of political leadership and governance across the continent of Africa. Sirleaf leveraged her educational background, professional expertise, and political activism first in the liberation struggles and later in the democratic movements, leading to her emergence as the first woman president in Africa. Her leadership provided some new insights and possibilities for women and girls in Liberia and other parts of Africa. She piloted the affairs of Liberia, a failed state, by focusing on the reconciliation and recovery processes necessitated by the country's long civil war and the public health crisis resulting from the Ebola outbreak. All these efforts won her international recognition and accolades. Rewarding her with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 and the 2017 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership was indeed not out of place. On the one hand, she might deserve those awards as a transformative leader not only in West Africa, but also in Africa as a whole. On the other hand, it can be argued that Sirleaf was not a transformative leader without contestations, controversies, and shortcomings. Her tenure as president, however, exemplifies a transformative role of leadership that women's participation in politics should represent in the processes of nation-building, postconflict reconstruction, peacebuilding, democratisation, and gender mainstreaming in Africa.

#EllenJohnsonSirleafLeadership

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is acclaimed for peacebuilding and the reconstruction of democracy, but is also accused of nepotism and LGBTI rights abuse. Is it possible to be a transformative leader in some areas, but not others?

Questions for discussion

1. To what extent does Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of postwar Liberia qualify as a transformative leader?
2. What impact do personal failings have on transformative leadership successes?
3. Is it possible to be transformative in some areas but not in others, or to seek social justice in some areas but not others?

References

Adebajo, A. (2014). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: The iron lady. In A. Adebajo (Ed.). *Africa's peacemakers: Nobel Peace laureates of African descent* (pp. 281–299). London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

African Union. (2020). *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want*. Retrieved from https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview.

Annan, N. (2020). Women and political leadership in Africa. In D. Rosser-Mims, J. R. McNellis, J. Johnson-Bailey, & C. Egan (Eds). *Pathways into the political arena: The perspectives of global women leaders* (pp. 87–113). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Bartuah, J. (2014, 8 November). Liberia: Committee setup to investigate President Sirleaf's son on seizure of Korean US$247,000.00 releases report with recommendations; ordering refund of the money. *GNN Liberia.* Retrieved from https://web.archive.org/web/20191111143254/http://gnnliberia.com/2014/11/08/liberia-committee-setup-to-investigate-president-sirleafs-son-on-seizure-of-korean-us247000-00-releases-report-with-recommendations-ordering-refund-of-the-money/.

BBC News. (2019, 5 March). Liberia's 'missing millions': Charles Sirleaf charged. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47450217.

Broch, E. (2012, 11 April). Liberian President backtracks on anti-gay comments. *Pink News*. Retrieved from https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2012/04/11/liberian-president-backtracks-on-anti-gay-comments/.

Bukusi, A. D. (2020). What transformative leaders do: Emerging perspectives in the 21st century. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *12*(4), 85–93.

Cheng, C. (2011). Sirleaf: A controversial laureate? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/10/12/sirleaf-a-controversial-laureate.

Cook, N. (2007, 30 August). *Liberia's post-war recovery: Key issues and developments*. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. Retrieved from https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA471935.pdf.

De Ycaza, C. (2013). A search for truth: A critical analysis of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Human Rights Review*, *14*(3), 189–212.

Emejulu, I. & Kalu, B. U. (2020). Contributions of selected African women to peace building in Africa, 1995–2015. *International Journal of Development and Management Review*, *15*(1), 127–146.

Ferrari, R. (2015). Writing narrative style literature reviews. *Medical Writing*, *24*(4), 230–235.

Gorpudolo, C. Z. (2019). *Community-based restorative justice in peacebuilding: A case study of Liberia's Palava Hut pilot project*. Master's thesis, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands. Retrieved from https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/51330.

Grin, J., Hassink, J., Karadzic, M., & Moors, E. H. (2018). Transformative leadership and contextual change. *Sustainability*, *10*(7), 21–59.

Harris, D. & Lappin, R. (2010). The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Reconciling or re-dividing Liberia? *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, *9*(1), 181–191.

Isbell, T. & Jacobs, D. (2017, 9 June). *As Liberia's election approaches, what will citizens be looking for in their next government?* Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 151. Retrieved from https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad151-liberias-election-approaches-what-will-citizens-be-looking-their-next-government/

Kuğuoğlu, I. & Küçük, M. (2012). Turkish primary school principals' transformative leadership styles perceived by teachers. *Turkish Journal of Teacher Education, 1*(2), 90–101.

Lane, R. (2016, 13 July). The inside story of how Ellen Johnson Sirleaf rescued Liberia. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/randalllane/2016/07/31/the-inside-story-of-how-ellen-johnson-sirleaf-rescued-liberia/?sh=6a5f28b49a3d.

Mastercard Foundation. (2014). *Women's transformative leadership in Africa*. Retrieved from https://mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014-accessible.pdf.

Mikell, G. (2009). A woman you can trust: Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and political leadership in sub-Saharan Africa. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, *10*(1), 17–25.

Odora Hoppers, C. (2014). Wounded healers and transformative leadership: Towards revolutionary ethics. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 23–36). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Otieno, A. (2020). Peace profile: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. *Peace Review*, *32*(4), 554–563.

Pailey, R. N. (2011). Evaluating the dual citizenship/state-building/nation-building nexus in Liberia. *Liberian Studies Journal*, *36*(1), 1–24.

Pailey, R. N. (2014). Patriarchy, power distance, and female presidency in Liberia. In B. G. Jallow (Ed.). *Leadership in postcolonial Africa: Trends transformed by independence* (pp. 169–187). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pailey, R. N. (2021). *Development, (dual) citizenship and its discontents in Africa: The political economy of belonging to Liberia*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Regier, G. P. (2017). *Transformative leadership and its development in public service reform in Kenya*. PhD thesis, Walden University, Minneapolis, USA. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/3366/.

Rother, E. T. (2007). Revisão sistemática X revisão narrativa [Systematic literature review X narrative review]. *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem, 20*(2). https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-21002007000200001.

Rumrill, P. D. & Fitzgerald, S. M. (2001). Using narrative literature reviews to build a scientific knowledge base. *Work, 16*(2), 165–170.

Rylander, S. (2010). *Governance and transformative leadership in Africa: Progress, prospects and challenges* (ACBF DMS/005/2010). Library of the African Studies Centre Leiden. Retrieved from https://www.asclibrary.nl/docs/408423056.pdf.

Sharpe, T. (2012). Original sin, social justice, and citizenship: Lessons from peacebuilding in Liberia. *International Journal*, *67*(2), 351–364.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Sholle, J. K., Papa, A. P., & Kipkorir, B. (2019). Transformative leadership for the 21st century: Africa at glance. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, *9*(11), 494–500.

Sillah, B. (2017, 24 January). Why gay rights not human rights in Liberia? 'Tacit tolerance' undermined. *FrontPage Africa*.
Retrieved from https://frontpageafricaonline.com/opinion/why-gay-rights-not-human-rights-in-liberia-tacit-tolerance-undermined/.

Singh, P. & Connolly, L. (2014). *The road to reconciliation: A case study of Liberia's reconciliation roadmap* (PPB #030). Africa Portal. Retrieved from https://www.africaportal.org/publications/the-road-to-reconciliation-a-case-study-of-liberias-reconciliation-roadmap/.

Sirleaf, E. J. (2009b). *This child will be great: Memoir of a remarkable life by Africa's first woman president*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Sirleaf, E. J. (2011). *The challenges of post-war reconstruction: The Liberian experience* [Transcript]. Chatham House.
Retrieved from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/130611sirleaf.pdf.

Sirleaf, M. (2009). Regional approach to transitional justice? Examining the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia. *Florida Journal of International Law*, *21*(2), 209–284.

Smith, D. V. (2016). Ohio short histories of Africa: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf by Pamela Scully [Review]. *Africa Today*, *63*(2), 151–152.

Stephenson, L. (2011). Developing a leadership education framework: A transformative leadership perspective. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 321–341.

Tatlah, I. A. & Aslam, T. M. (2012). Emotional intelligence and transformative leadership style of principals in high schools. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, *2*(4), 556–566.

Tripp, A. M. (2003). Women in movement transformations in African political landscapes. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *5*(2), 233–255.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Williams, G. I. H. (2006). *Liberia: The heart of darkness.* Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing.

21 *Transformative leadership in unconventional terrain: Examining the personality, values, and vision of Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana*

Emmanuel Ampomah

Overview

Ghana's post-independence political history includes both successful and failed civilian and military leaders. Jerry Rawlings served as head of state in both a democratic and a military regime. He entered politics in a gap created by previous leaders who had prioritised corruption over the national interest. Rawlings presented a new leadership dimension, focusing on the poor and exploited. Although Rawlings' personality, values, and vision represented a unique approach to Ghana's development agenda and, generally, to the conception of transformative political leadership in West Africa, the subject has barely received scholarly attention. This chapter is concerned with responding to the questions 'What are the core leadership values and qualities exhibited by Rawlings? and 'To what extent have these contributed to Ghana's transformation?' Leveraging document analysis, the chapter argues that transformative leadership is characterised by ideal values, precepts, visions, choices, beliefs, and actions that leaders often fail to achieve in practice.

Introduction

Ghana's political history and governance structure have undergone several changes since independence. These have revolved around political turbulence in some instances and a relatively stable political climate at other times. The multifarious political experiences of Ghana have been shaped by the leadership style of the country's past and present political leaders. Three leadership styles can be identified among political leaders in Ghana. The first is the military leaders, who have often destabilised the country's democracy in a bid to purge Ghana of its socioeconomic woes. The second is a group of quasi-democratic leaders who profess to be democratic, but often adopt anti-democratic practices such as stifling political opposition. Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, can be characterised as such. The third category of political leaders is the democrats. The first two leadership styles were predominant in Ghana's first, second, and third republics between 1957 and 1992. The political history of the fourth republic (1992 to date) has, however, been different. Leaders during the fourth republic have been mostly democratic and have advanced the common

good, albeit in varying degrees. This new phenomenon of political stability is often traced to Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings.

Rawlings emerged on Ghana's political scene first as a military leader and later as a legitimately elected president. This makes him the only head of state to have served in both a democratic and an authoritarian regime in Ghana. At the time of his emergence in politics, a gap had been created by past leaders who had prioritised corruption and embezzlement of state funds to the detriment of the collective national interest. Rawlings represented a new dimension to leadership in Ghana, with his focus on the poor and exploited in society.

Although Rawlings' personality, values, and vision represented a new approach to Ghana's development agenda, the subject has barely received scholarly attention. This chapter sets out to illuminate Rawlings' leadership, and is primarily concerned with the questions of what the core leadership values and qualities exhibited by Rawlings are, and the extent to which these have contributed to Ghana's transformation. In addition, the chapter will shed light on Rawlings' legacy. Using a qualitative approach, the chapter argues that transformative leadership is characterised by ideal values, precepts, visions, choices, beliefs, and actions that leaders often fail to achieve in practice.

Data collected for the chapter were sourced from books, journal articles, online sources, documentaries, and speeches delivered by Rawlings. The literature review was limited to scholarship on transformative leadership, Rawlings, political leadership, Ghana's political history, and human rights. The information collected was evaluated to ascertain its authenticity and relevance to the chapter using document analysis (Bowen, 2009). This methodology is limited in that it relies on secondary data only.

Conceptualising transformative leadership in politics

Political leaders are often the architects of national development, security, vision, and interests. Regardless of the system of government adopted by a country – democracy, monarchy, or theocracy – the agency of political leaders cannot be underestimated. Rotberg (2014, p. 242) conceives of political leadership as a 'multidimensional activation that is a peculiar mixture of contingent situation and personal intervention, and the impact of individual style and creativity on political challenges and opportunities'. Political leaders therefore set the rules of the political game – including economic, social, and international – and determine how the game is played (Rotberg, 2014). Their actions and inactions shape the realities and future of a nation while determining which external influences are acceptable and which are not.

Transformative political leadership involves systemic change that culminates in the modification of existing political and/or economic systems (Brown, 2014). To

this end, transformative leaders are primarily guided by the quest to reconstruct the sociopolitical system of a country (Burns, 1978). The process of political and economic reconstruction is geared towards a qualitative improvement in the living conditions of the populace. In realising this, transformative leaders embrace notions of liberation, empowerment, risk, courage, and revolution (Shields, 2010). Systemic change in this regard commences with efforts by transformative leaders to contend with the ill-suited exertion of power and privilege that sustains an unjust and inequitable social system (Weiner, 2003). The changes introduced by transformative leaders sometimes survive the test of time, whereas in other cases, the gains from political and economic restructuring may be eroded over time. Also, the degree of transformation may vary, depending on the context and limitations of national and international politics.

At the heart of political transformation is the leader's ability to foster the common good of society, implement futuristic policies (even if these have temporary repercussions), adopt a bottom-up approach to transformation, and present a vision of the future that is compelling. Transformative political leaders are not always conventional. Their unconventionality sets them apart in their leadership journey. Conformity and tradition often undermine the capacity of political leaders to conceptualise and implement context-specific and people-oriented policies, especially in the developing world. Transformative political leaders therefore need to understand the societal context within which they operate as well as the historical trajectories of their countries. By so doing, transformative leaders can shun 'one-size-fits-all' strategies and rather embrace contextually relevant policies. Furthermore, transformative leadership is underpinned by the pursuit of socially just policies, emanating from a moral obligation to correct past leadership failures while presenting an enthralling vision of a shared future (Caldwell et al., 2012). It is also undergirded by creativity in leadership, premised on a deliberate attempt by leaders to amalgamate their leadership drive with the aspirations, interests, beliefs and vision of the citizenry (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). This style of leadership is not, however, synonymous with flawless governance. Transformative political leaders do not always realise all their aspirations, given the ever-changing dynamics of national and global politics.

A brief political history of Ghana

Rawlings' advancement in political leadership and governance was a microcosm of a broader phenomenon of military takeovers across the African continent. Africa's political honeymoon in the 1960s was short-lived, as most countries on the continent experienced some form of political instability soon after independence. Overall, 84 per cent of countries in the region experienced military intervention between 1960 and 1980 (Jackman, O'Kane, Johnson, McGowan, & Slater, 1984). Ghana was no exception.

A few years after Ghana's independence, the country's political architecture was overhauled by the military (Biney, 2009). The incident set a sour precedent that led to Ghana's post-independence history being replete with episodes of unconstitutional changes of government (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Ghana had four military leaders between 1966 and 1978, but its fortunes did not improve with the military takeovers. By the mid–1970s, the country had been confronted with socioeconomic challenges emanating from the oil crisis of 1973, a shortage of goods, and a drop in cocoa prices, as well as corruption and patronage among members of the governing regime (Osam, 2008). As noted by Shillington (1992, p. 22):

> It was soon clear that the government had lost control of the economy. As the economy fell apart, those military officers in positions of power began to help themselves to the country's dwindling coffers. Senior military officers, now in charge of ministries and state corporations, used their positions to look after their own interests.

The internal dynamics within the military culminated in a palace coup in 1978. However, this did not substantially contribute towards resolving the corruption canker that the military regime faced.

It is against this background that Rawlings led an unsuccessful mutiny on 15 May 1979. Prior to the coup, the erstwhile regime had scheduled elections for 18 June 1979. Although Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) agreed with holding elections as scheduled, they opined that the handing over of power should be delayed for three months, to allow the junta to complete its task of 'house cleaning' (Kraus, 1987). Under Rawlings' leadership, these elections were conducted as planned, leading to a swift handing over of power to Dr Hilla Limann's government in September 1979. The handing over was, however, contingent on Rawlings' conviction that there would be continuity in the house-cleaning exercise by the new civilian administration. This culminated in the shortest political transition from military to civilian rule in Ghana's history.

The Limann administration did not last: Rawlings staged another coup d'état, overthrowing the government on 31 December 1981. Rawlings' new government, under the auspices of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), governed the country from December 1981 until 1992. In 1992, a new constitution was adopted and the PNDC metamorphosed into the National Democratic Congress. Rawlings contested and won the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. The 1996 election marked a milestone in Ghana's political history, since it was the first time an elected government had completed its tenure of office and secured a second mandate to govern through elections (Adedeji, 2001). With the 1992 constitution limiting the tenure of presidents to two terms, Rawlings handed over political power to his rival, John Agyekum

Kuffour of the opposition New Patriotic Party, in 2000. Ghana's democracy has since been stable with no military interventions.

The leadership of Rawlings

Understanding Rawlings' leadership requires a consideration of multiple aspects of his life. This section considers his personality and key influences, how or to what extent he was held accountable for his actions, and the vision and values that characterised his leadership style and actions.

Personality

Leadership style almost always depends on the personality of the individual leader. This assertion is supported by Phipps and Prieto (2011), who contend that differences in individual personalities influence transformational leadership. The individuality of leaders can therefore not be ignored in the study of transformative leadership. Systemic change is normally instituted and sustained by individuals who embrace and commit themselves to advancing change. To ignore personality in the quest for transformation is to sideline the drivers of change.

Rawlings' childhood experiences contributed to his determination to root out social injustice. Born to a Scottish father and a Ghanaian mother, Rawlings grew up in Accra. As a boy, he learned the values of honesty, integrity, dignity, discipline, and hard work (Engmann, 2020). He also developed the mindset that leaders ought to exhibit the highest standards of integrity (Brenya et al., 2015). Even at a young age, Rawlings emerged as a source of defence for the defenceless and those he regarded as vulnerable and mistreated (Engmann, 2020). Rawlings' childhood traits and experiences are essential in understanding the factors that might have predisposed him towards pursuing political and economic transformation.

Although political and social change is driven by both international and national factors, a key determinant of whether or not these drivers will culminate in tangible change is the personality, beliefs, motivation, and leadership style of the leader. Thus, systemic transformation in every society is almost always driven by individuals. It is seemingly impossible then to divorce the transformation of a society from the architects and orchestrators of the change. As such, the agency, creativity, and interventions of leaders cannot be underrated in the conceptualisation of political transformation. For instance, although Paul Biya (president of Cameroon) and Rawlings assumed political power at around the same time (1982 for the former and 1981 for the latter), Ghana's democracy appears to be far more advanced, entrenched, and consolidated compared with that of Cameroon. The difference between the two countries, however, is that, whereas Rawlings relinquished power after his tenure ended in 2001, Biya

(90 years old at the time of writing) continues to consolidate his power 40 years after becoming Cameroon's president. The evidence suggests that a leader's personality and motivation make a big difference in the pursuit of transformation.

Rawlings' charisma influenced his leadership style and policy choices. His charismatic nature created a strong relationship between him and his followers, who were predominantly ordinary Ghanaians. Charisma is 'a distinct social relationship between the leader and follower, in which the leader presents a revolutionary idea…which goes beyond the immediate' (Lussier & Achua, 2009, p. 335). Charismatic leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future that inspires a high level of commitment from followers. For many Ghanaians, Rawlings' revolution signified hope for a better future. This hope ignited patriotism in the masses, especially students, who forfeited their studies to support the government's efforts to transport cocoa from the hinterland to the ports. Transformative leaders possess the charismatic leader's ability to 'touch hearts, inspire great sacrifice, and demonstrate courage' (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 178).

Interestingly, whereas Rawlings' political intervention was geared towards redressing the economic challenges confronting Ghanaians, his oratory was primarily moral rather than economic. Rawlings believed that 'rediscovering and reasserting national morality was the only productive way forward' (Hart, 2019, para. 4). As a transformative leader, moreover, Rawlings was driven by his quest for moral justice, emanating from his strong emotions and convictions, most of which can be traced to his childhood. Rawlings' accomplishments as a leader can be attributed to his 'tenacity, honesty, clear objectives and sense of direction' (Adedeji, 2001, p. 16). He demonstrated that he possessed not only the charisma, but also the will to redress societal ills.

Accountability: The spirit of the June 4th Revolution

A repercussion of the May 1979 mutiny was the arrest and prosecution of Rawlings and six of his colleagues before a general court-martial. Rawlings' motivation for embarking on the coup was captured in the following statement:

> I am not an expert in Economics and I am not an expert in Law but I am an expert in working on an empty stomach while wondering when and where the next meal will come from. I am going to prove to you today that it is no longer a question of the Akan against the Ewe, the Ga against the Northerner, but a question of THOSE WHO HAVE against those who HAVE NOT – a question of the vast majority of hungry people against a very tiny minority of greedy, inhuman, selfish senior officers, politicians, businessmen. (Rawlings, quoted in Yankah, 1992, cited in Nugent, 2010, p. 49, original emphasis)

Rawlings' rhetoric highlighted the discontentment of the masses and the emergence of a new style of leadership that was bottom-up rather than top-down. It was this new leadership characteristic that birthed the June 4th revolution. On 4 June 1979, some junior members of the armed forces toppled General Akuffo's regime, released Rawlings from custody, and established the AFRC. The AFRC's short tenure was preoccupied with redressing corruption and graft in the armed forces and Ghanaian society at large. The regime also sought to reinforce the principles of probity and accountability in public life.

During this period, the regime carried out extrajudicial executions of three former heads of state and senior government officials. These actions sent out a clear message that the AFRC was unlike previous military governments. Another distinction between the AFRC and previous military regimes was that, whereas the past military administrations conceived a cardinal role for the army in Ghana's body politic, Rawlings' AFRC emphasised the need for the devolution of power to the governed (Colton, 2020).

In fact, the AFRC had no political programme. With the sole preoccupation of being the guarantor of public morality and standing up for the oppressed, the junta was not very concerned with economic niceties (Nugent, 2010). The AFRC's obsession with morality inadvertently resulted in a period of hyper-politics, where everything was interpreted through a crude zero-sum lens.

The use of force by the regime in redressing the economic and political decadence of the time raises questions about the approaches of transformative leaders when advancing social justice. Unfortunately, the quest for social justice comes at a cost. It often demands an alteration of existing, and sometimes accepted, community norms and practices, some of which profit privileged sections of society. For instance, during the Rawlings era, street vendors and market women who profiteered from the status quo were publicly beaten as a deterrent to others who might have intended to breach the regime's price control policies.

Although the policies potentially made bread-and-butter items more accessible, their implementation had dire implications for some sections of society. This evinces the complexity, tension, and sometimes contradictions in the practice of transformative leadership. Whereas Rawlings' vision was noble, the means through which it was pursued was sometimes questionable. Transformative leaders ought to find the right balance between upholding ethical principles and advancing social justice. The cost of social justice ought not to outweigh or undermine fundamental human rights in the pursuit of social and economic transformation.

By toppling the military regime, Rawlings and the junior officers sought to ensure that senior military officials were held accountable for their corruption,

bribery, nepotism, and maladministration (Engmann, 2020). Rawlings' quest for leadership was therefore underpinned by his efforts to uphold the principles of accountability within societal institutions, including government, the judiciary, and security agencies.

A lack of accountability has been a major challenge in Ghanaian politics. This phenomenon is, however, not peculiar to the post-independence state, because governance during the colonial era was equally predicated on a culture of impunity, unaccountability, and corruption (Cooper, 2002). This notwithstanding, the occurrence of the phenomenon in the post-independence epoch can be ascribed to the nonexistence of formal institutional mechanisms to ensure that political actors adhere to their part of the social contract. The tradition of non-accountability is exacerbated during military regimes by the absence of a constitution.

Contrary to the preponderance of non-accountability during military regimes, democratic states leverage elections as an accountability mechanism to either impose sanctions on poor governance or reward good governance. In view of this, Rawlings resorted to the logic of removal as a punitive measure for General Akuffo's regime and as a deterrent to future civilian administrations (Paller, 2019). Through the putsch, Rawlings conveyed the need for accountability and a sense of responsibility among the political class. The concept of political accountability in Ghana has been described as 'an active behavioural relationship between leaders and followers, a relationship of stewardship by which leaders "owe an account" of their actions' (Paller, 2019, p. 91). This drive for accountability in Ghanaian society has often culminated in support for military coups, for example in the instances of Rawlings (1979 and 1981 coups) and Lieutenant-General Joseph Arthur Ankrah (1966 coup).

Vision and values

Rawlings' motivation for the 1979 coup was no different from his stance during the 31 December 1981 military takeover. His second coming to power was premised on his condemnation of the democratically elected government as 'a pack of criminals who bled Ghana to the bone' (Hart, 2019). Thus, his new mandate was to 'organize this country in such a way that nothing will be done, whether by God or the devil, without the consent and the authority of the people' (Gupte, 1982, cited in Hart, 2019, para. 2).

Rawlings' 1981 coup was not merely aimed at overthrowing Limann's government, but also directed at overhauling Ghana's decadent political, economic, and social order. Rawlings' accusations of corruption, misappropriation, social injustice, ill-gotten wealth, and mismanagement resonated well with many Ghanaians (Osam, 2008). His revolution thus sought to establish a new social order that reflected

the collective interests and aspirations of the Ghanaian people. He stated his vision for Ghana as follows:

> We are asking for nothing more than the power to organize this country in such a way that nothing will be done from the Castle without the consent and authority of the people. In other words, the people, the farmers, the police, the soldiers, the workers you – the guardians – rich or poor, should be part of the decision-making process of this country. (Rawlings, 1981, cited in Adedeji, 2001, p. 3).

The excerpt above reflects Rawlings' conceptualisation of the ideal state and how governance ought to be carried out, as well as the responsibility of political leaders. The governance process he sought to establish was a participatory system of governance where citizens were actively involved in the day-to-day administration of the state. This system of governance makes it imperative for leaders to be responsive to the needs of citizens and deliberately involve them in the governance process.

In the quest to advance this vision, Rawlings established the People's Defence Committees and Workers' Defence Committees. The prerogative of these organisations was to advance inclusivity in the governance process. However, shortly after their creation, the People's Defence Committees and Workers' Defence Committees emerged as an exclusive instrument through unprovoked attacks on individuals considered 'enemies of the revolution' (Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild, 1982). Recognising the threat to democracy posed by the People's Defence Committees and Workers' Defence Committees, Rawlings replaced these institutions in 1984 with the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, with membership opened to all Ghanaians (Owusu, 1996). Importantly, the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution were regulated by guidelines that clearly set out the parameters within which they were expected to operate, in a bid to curtail abuse of power. Rawlings' willingness to overhaul the People's Defence Committees and Workers' Defence Committees exemplifies the ability of transformative leaders to recognise when they err in the governance process and make efforts toward redressing policy failures.

The implementation of transformative policies does not always yield the intended outcome. Oftentimes, unanticipated hurdles undermine the effective execution of policies that have been implemented. For instance, although Mikhail Gorbachev's policies were targeted at transforming the Soviet Union (the system) through political liberalisation, his policies inadvertently resulted in the dissolution of the Soviet state (Brown, 2014). Transformative political leadership is therefore not linear, and neither is it without impediments. Despite the many controversies surrounding their establishment and operation, the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution formed the basis for

Ghana's current local governance system, aimed at bringing governance to the 'doorsteps' of the populace and ensuring an equitable distribution of national wealth and development.

Rawlings demonstrated not only his need for power, but his potential to provide the much-needed political direction required to redress Ghana's socioeconomic problems (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). His often heavy-handed approach to redressing corruption and abuse of power received widespread appreciation from the populace, and his approach to dealing with injustice contributed to alleviating the plight of many Ghanaians. Consumer goods that had been hoarded became available in the stores, while price controls and compulsory sales implemented by the military reduced prices in 1982 (Owusu, 1996).

Interestingly, although Rawlings favoured the participation of citizens in the democratic process, he was opposed to Western democracy. He believed the limitations of formal democracy merely 'created an optical illusion' (Nugent, 2010, p. 52). This illusion was premised on the grounds that democracy only afforded the wealthy the opportunity to contest elections, after which these elites used their election to recuperate their expenditure. The belief was that like the electoral system, democracy exacerbated a corrupt judiciary, where justice was dispensed to the highest bidder (Nugent, 2010). Rawlings therefore favoured the adoption of a direct democratic system, where popular committees at the grassroots would choose leaders at the next level of governance and upwards. This concept of democracy was reminiscent of a neotraditional system of governance, rooted in Ghanaian culture. He also envisioned a judicial system where ordinary citizens would operate the public tribunals. Rawlings was not very concerned about who controlled the means of production; he believed that if Ghanaians worked hard, the economy would thrive. It was therefore not surprising that he was praised for demanding rectitude, accountability, and hard work, in both private and public life.

Paradoxically, although Rawlings abhorred Western democracy, he presided, albeit grudgingly, over Ghana's adoption of the system of governance he had problematised. Rawlings' scepticism about the efficacy of liberal democracy in Ghana was premised on the failures of previous democratic regimes. He believed that Ghana needed a system of governance that was tailor-made for the realities of the Ghanaian society. This notwithstanding, he recognised the symbiosis between his leadership and the citizenry. The symbiosis between leaders and followers always brings to the fore the critical question of on whose behalf power is to be exercised. Rawlings' understanding of power belonging to the people compelled him to agree to the adoption of the 1992 constitution, the establishment of political parties, and the 'building of a rural political base in Ghana' (Adedeji, 2001, p. 1). Thus, he did not allow his beliefs and conceptions of governance to stand in the way of change. Rawlings' approach to Ghana's political transition fits into the conception of power by transformative leaders.

Transformative leadership is considered a special form of power: 'not power over but power to the people' (Burns, 1978, cited in Quantz, Rogers, & Dantley, 1991, p. 97). Importantly, Rawlings committed to adopting a constitution that imposed term limits on the tenure of presidents, contrary to the 'president for life' policy adopted by most of his contemporaries.

Rawlings also took the opportunity to refine the democracy Ghana would adopt in order to minimise the risk of repeating the governance failures of the past. Nonetheless, Ghana's current fourth republic is confronted with the same challenges Rawlings sought to prevent. Ghana's democracy, and particularly its electoral system, has been excessively monetised. The cost of politics in Ghana has risen to unaffordable levels for most, making the country's politics the domain of the wealthy. A study by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2020, p. 5) concludes that the 'ability to spend the most money is, by and large, a critical factor in successfully winning a seat in elected office in Ghana'. The excessive monetisation of Ghana's elections is the creation of the 1992 constitution, which makes no provision for state funding of political parties. With Rawlings' concern about elections being the preserve of elites, it would have been logical for him to make efforts to reduce this phenomenon in the fourth republic. One of the major failures in reintroducing multiparty politics was that no effort was made by the PNDC or the National Democratic Congress governments to reduce corruption among elected public officials.

Leadership in crisis

Rawlings' associates were convinced that Ghana's economic challenges and mass impoverishment were the consequence of the dependent nature of the country's economy. The broader implication of this was that, whereas Western imperialists were the ultimate beneficiaries of the neocolonial order, the system was sustained by a local comprador class. It was on this basis that Rawlings indicted the civilian regime he toppled in 1981 for being collusive in sustaining a subservient and exploitative relationship (Nugent, 2010, p. 51). As such, Rawlings' leadership began with a strong inclination toward economic and social justice. Refocusing politics on social justice, equity, and democracy was not only essential in redressing Ghana's myriad structural challenges, but also crucial in securing a desirable future for the country.

Rawlings inherited an economy that was on the verge of collapse. The country's already dire circumstances were exacerbated by a severe drought between 1981 and 1983 and the expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria. By 1983, there was little food in the stores and the transport industry was severely affected by fuel shortages and a lack of spare parts (Nugent, 2010). The civilian left resented approaches made to the Bretton Woods institutions (mainly the International Monetary Fund and World Bank) for a bailout (Rimmer, 1992, cited in Dartey-

Baah, 2015). Faced with reality, the government had to take a pragmatic approach to salvaging the economy. By all indications, the PNDC was a prosocialist government that shunned Western capitalism. Resorting to Western institutions for assistance was perceived as a compromise. This notwithstanding, Rawlings adopted a Western-styled economic stabilisation programme by 1983, despite the tendency for such policies to weaken support for the government (Kraus, 1991). Thus, Rawlings compromised his ideological position in a bid to revive the ailing Ghanaian economy. He did not hesitate to realign the revolution to fit the changing realities of domestic and international politics.

In transforming Ghana's economy, Rawlings adopted a multidimensional approach to leadership that embodied power, legitimacy, and discretion (Adedeji, 2001). Rawlings' leadership during Ghana's rebirth was characterised by his influence on as well as his sense of accountability to the people. The regime achieved modest success with its economic policies, earning Rawlings and Ghana praise from the international community. The PNDC government's policies contributed to Ghana's economic recovery from 'years of deep recession, hyperinflation, and disinvestment', culminating in the country's longest period of sustained economic growth since independence (Kraus, 1991, p. 19). Chazan (1983) argues that it would have been impossible for Ghana to survive the economic recovery programmes without the strength of character and steady determination of Rawlings.

Moreover, the pursuit of social justice and socioeconomic rights during Rawlings' leadership resulted in rural development (water, electrification, and roads) and 'higher producer prices paid to cocoa farmers, a primary health care programme, and reforms in the educational sector' (Oquaye, 1995, p. 562). These policies primarily benefitted poor and marginalised communities. Furthermore, the PNDC government adopted the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111) in 1985. This law was geared towards 'providing adequate protection and security for the surviving spouse and children' of a deceased person (Gedzi, 2014, p. 18). Similarly, the Head of Family Law (PNDC Law 114) sought to ensure that family heads were accountable and could not deprive members of their family property rights. Such laws sought to correct the grave injustices experienced by the vulnerable in society.

Despite the gains, these policies had dire consequences for urban dwellers and other sections of society (Kraus, 1991) and resulted in retrenchments in the public sector. Privatisation of state enterprises between 1982 and 1991 resulted in the loss of over 150 000 jobs (Thomson, Kentikelenis, & Stubbs, 2017). This resulted in opposition from students, intellectuals, and workers, among others (Krause, 1991). However, in compliance with International Monetary Fund conditions, the government had to keep up with its commitments (Jonah, 1989). This was not surprising, considering that political and economic transformation

is shaped by both domestic and external factors, making the outcomes of a country's leadership mixed and contestable in most instances.

Moreover, many associates of the regime benefitted tremendously from the privatisation of state assets and the awarding of government contracts. Some of these politicians 'behaved just as Rawlings had predicted Ghanaian politicians would' (Nugent, 2010, p. 55). Despite this, Rawlings never accepted that officials in his government had been involved in money-making at a level that previous military leaders could only have dreamed of. Although public opinion generally asserts that Rawlings was not corrupt, he was surrounded by associates who epitomised everything the revolution sought to correct (Kraus, 1987). Rawlings' inability to tolerate divergent views or opposition is perhaps his greatest weakness as a leader. Whereas these criticisms shed light on Rawlings' shortcomings, they do not necessarily imply that his leadership was not transformative. What these criticisms suggest, though, is that the processes and outcomes of Rawlings' leadership were varied. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the economic policies implemented during his regime were future-oriented and formed the basis for Ghana's economic growth and political transformation.

Human rights and the Rawlings era

Although Rawlings exhibited the ethos and traits of transformative leadership during various periods of his regime, he fell short in some attributes. Critics of his regime have often taken an extremely negative stance on the outcomes of his leadership without recognising his strengths as a leader or the context within which he governed. Such an approach is misleading, as it sidelines the multifaceted nature of his regime. These critics have often focused on the human rights abuses during his military regime without recognising his contribution to democracy, social justice, and development. His supporters have equally glorified his accomplishments and justified the more disagreeable aspects of his leadership. This approach is equally deleterious, as it does not recognise the excesses of his administration, especially after his second term.

Rawlings' human rights record during his first and second terms was particularly controversial (Colton, 2020). His resorting to retributive justice in the quest to realise a just society can be explained in three ways. First, the PNDC's 'persecution' of supposed enemies of the state was driven by Rawlings' desire to rapidly transform the political, social, and economic architecture of Ghana, in his efforts to appease the masses for previous years of maladministration. Ultimately, this was geared towards igniting a sense of trust between the political class and the citizenry on the one hand, and consolidating Rawlings' authority on the other. The ruthlessness with which this was realised in some instances was, however, excessive, considering the generosity of the Ghanaian people in rewarding good governance with favourable electoral outcomes.

Second, prior to Rawlings' emergence into power, Ghana's human rights record was not outstanding. Kwame Nkrumah (prime minister of Ghana, 1957–1966) silenced political opposition and dissent through arbitrary arrest and detention, and successive governments, both military and civilian, adopted authoritarian tactics, aimed at muzzling political opposition. The National Liberation Council, the successor to Nkrumah's Convention People's Party, and Dr Kofi Abrefa Busia's Progress Party were equally criticised for the same reasons. As such, Rawlings' lack of political will to ensure accountability among military personnel and members of the PNDC was the culmination of a culture of impunity in Ghana. Interestingly, the extent to which some military officials continue to operate with carte blanche in the fourth republic casts doubt on the ability of Rawlings' successors to hold military officials accountable. The killing of two civilians by members of the armed forces at a collation centre in Techiman South during Ghana's 2020 elections evinces the extent to which military personnel continue to perpetrate criminal acts with impunity and the backing of the political class.

Rawlings' poor human rights record may have also been influenced by his disinterest in Western democracy, which is underpinned by respect for human rights and the rule of law. Advocates for the respect of human rights during Rawlings' regime did so by resorting to Western beliefs and conceptions of human rights. The PNDC's conceptualisation of human rights, however, differed in many ways from the understanding of these rights among the regime's critics. PNDC Law 42 (Section 1) sheds light on the thinking of Rawlings and his comrades on the basis for realising human rights. Inter alia, the section postulates that 'respect for fundamental human rights and the dignity of the human person [are to be cultivated] among all sections of the community as part of *the basis of social justice*' (Oquaye, 1995, p. 562, emphasis added). This approach to human rights, unfortunately, establishes a hierarchy of rights, with collective rights and socioeconomic rights taking precedence over civil and political liberties. Such an understanding of human rights is problematic, given that human rights are inherently individual rights. Also, political and civil rights cannot be separated from socioeconomic rights, as the adoption and implementation of rights must be holistic. The PNDC's hierarchical conception of rights provided a basis for the harsh treatment meted out to individuals and groups perceived to be opposing the regime. Rawlings' contradictory claim of representing the interests of the citizenry, while undermining dialogue with political dissidents, rendered aspects of his regime capricious and authoritarian.

The question Rawlings was confronted with – whether or not political and civil rights should trump economic development – continues to linger in the corridors of other transformative political leaders in Africa. Paul Kagame of Rwanda has been condemned for undermining basic human rights, despite his tremendous contribution to economic development in post-genocide Rwanda.

Furthermore, the PNDC's human rights record is indefensible, even within the framework of the neotraditional political system Rawlings envisioned. In general, Ghanaian culture upholds the need for a fair trial in all disputes. These disputes, whether interpersonal, intracommunal, or intercommunal are resolved using placatory means at the behest of the council of elders. Per traditional norms, accused persons are subjected to public trial in the presence of witnesses, prior to the meting out of punishment – in the interest of justice (Oquaye, 1995). Similarly, within the traditional system of governance, freedom of expression is guaranteed, with the chief perpetually consulting with representatives of his constituents – the council of elders. Rawlings' actions cannot withstand this litmus test, even when applied against non-Western norms of human rights. Similarly, these abuses cannot be rationalised, even if they were perpetrated in the interests of social justice. At the barest minimum, perpetrators of political violence during his regime ought not to have been shielded from prosecution by the 1992 constitution.

The foregoing does not imply that Rawlings made no efforts at redressing arbitrary punishment by military personnel. The regime exerted heavy punishments on members of the armed forces who were convicted of crimes. Upon the recommendation of the Special Investigations Board – a committee established to probe the 1982 murder of three judges and a retired military officer – 10 individuals, three of whom were affiliated to the PNDC, were slated for prosecution. Although two PNDC members were executed after a guilty verdict, a third PNDC member, the head of national security at the time and the mastermind of the atrocious crimes, escaped trial. By mid-1983, the arrest and punishment of civilians by members of the armed forces had largely been contained by the government (Haynes, 1991).

Does this make Rawlings any less of a transformative leader? Individual leaders may not always embody all the tenets of transformative leadership, as explained above. Transformative leaders pursue these values, albeit in varying degrees and at various junctures of their leadership. For instance, although Rawlings' human rights record was controversial during his military regime, he performed much better as a civilian leader. During the latter period, basic human rights were enshrined in the constitution and guaranteed through the establishment of institutions such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice. Press freedom also improved, paving the way for the establishment of independent private media outlets. Thus, the tenets of transformative leadership ought to be conceptualised as being mutually inclusive and not exclusive. To this end, transformative leaders ought to exhibit all or most of the core attributes of the term, even if in varying degrees. A shortfall in any of these attributes ought to be made up for by a preponderance of the others. African leaders who have been idolised nationally and internationally, like Nelson Mandela, have often

been confronted with fierce criticism from their opponents. Mandela has been chastised by some critics for prioritising tranquillity and reconciliation over advancing economic equality. To date, South Africa remains the most unequal society in the world, with the majority of the Black population living in poverty. Despite this, Mandela's contribution to the transformation of post–Apartheid South Africa cannot be over-emphasised. The story of Mandela, like that of Rawlings and many other transformative political leaders, is characterised by seemingly ineludible twists and turns. Thus, although transformative leaders may have flaws that might undermine aspects of their leadership, these shortfalls should not obscure their contribution to the socioeconomic transformation of the countries they lead.

Conclusion

Transformative leaders embody key tenets and attributes, all of which have immense implications for human and societal well-being. In practice, however, the pursuit of transformation can be saddled with many complexities and challenges. As such, transformative leadership is aspirational. It will be almost impossible to find any particular leader who embodies all the tenets, character traits, values, and principles of transformative leadership in the most holistic sense. Various personal, domestic, and external factors account for this. Regardless of the limitations and constraints inherent in the practice of transformative leadership, what is unambiguous about these leaders is the systemic and sustainable policies and programmes they implement. In this regard, Rawlings' leadership transformed the Ghanaian economy while institutionalising democracy.

Despite the gloom that characterised some aspects of his leadership, Rawlings is generally regarded as one of the most transformative leaders to have governed Ghana. Rawlings' transformative leadership is encompassed in his charisma, vision, and social justice pursuits. His leadership has had an overarching impact on Ghana's democracy and development. While some of his policies contradicted his short-term promises of a revolution, he nonetheless contributed immensely to Ghana's economic recovery, democracy, and infrastructural development. Although the institutions his regime established to promote the direct participation of the masses in political processes did not last, his initiatives provided a viable basis for active engagement of the citizenry in Ghana's political and development discourse while igniting a sense of accountability among politicians. A survey of popular opinion concluded that despite disagreements with his policies, many Ghanaians believed Rawlings was not acting out of parochial interest but in the national interest. The study further revealed that a larger proportion of the 1992 electorate admired Rawlings' 'integrity, truthfulness, common touch and hard work in the service of the nation' (Jeffries & Thomas, 1993, p. 361).

Rawlings' legacy as a transformative leader is and will continue to be contentious and complicated. To some sections of Ghanaian society, he was the spearhead of the country's economic and political transformation. To others, he was the founder of Ghana's fourth republic and the reason behind Ghana's stable and coveted democracy and political institutions. Yet, for his critics, the authoritarianism and human rights abuses that accompanied aspects of his regime cannot be forgotten. Notwithstanding these views, 'Rawlings represented, and still represents, a paragon of probity, honesty, and principled commitment to the well-being of the Ghanaian people' (Colton, 2020 , para. 1).

#RawlingsJudgedByHistory

Jerry Rawlings, former president of Ghana, was driven by a quest for moral and social justice, but fell short in retributive justice and contravening human rights in his attempts to transform Ghana. How should history judge him?

Questions for discussion

1. What, in your opinion, are the indicators of transformative leadership, and how should they be measured?
2. Would a hierarchical classification of transformative leaders be useful? What are the critical elements, and which are less important?
3. How should history judge political leaders who start well but end poorly, or who have a mixed record in terms of leadership?

References

Adedeji, J. L. (2001). The legacy of J. J. Rawlings in Ghanaian politics, 1979–2000. *African Studies Quarterly*, *5*(2), 1–27.

Biney, A. (2009). The development of Kwame Nkrumah's political thought in exile, 1966–1972. *The Journal of African History*, *50*(1), 81–100.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27–40.

Brenya E., Adu-Gyamfi, S., Afful, I., Darkwa, B., Richmond, M. B., Korkor, S. O., … & Turkson, G. K. (2015). The Rawlings' factor in Ghana's politics: An appraisal of some secondary and primary data. *Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, 1–14. doi: 10.4172/2332-0761.S1-004.

Brown, A. (2014). *The myth of the strong leader: Political leadership in the modern age*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Chazan, N. (1983). *An anatomy of Ghanaian politics: Managing political recession, 1969–1982.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Colton, R. (2020, 7 December). *J. J. Rawlings: A man for all seasons?* Democracy in Africa. Retrieved from http://democracyinafrica.org/j-j-rawlings-a-man-for-all-seasons.

Cooper, F. (2002). *Africa since 1940: The past of the present*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Dartey-Baah, K. (2015). Political leadership in Ghana: 1957–2010. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *9*(2), 49–61.

Engmann, R. A. (2020). Coups, castles, and cultural heritage: Conversations with Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, former president of Ghana. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *16*(6), 722–737.

Gedzi, V. S. (2014). PNDC Law 111 in Ghana and international human rights laws. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, *2*(2), 15–26.

Gyimah-Boadi, E. & Rothchild, D. (1982). Rawlings, populism, and the civil liberties tradition in Ghana. *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, *12*(3–4), 64–69.

Hart, J. (2019, 30 May). *The complicated political legacy of Jerry Rawlings*. Africa is a Country. Retrieved from https://africasacountry.com/2019/05/the-complicated-political-legacy-of-jerry-rawlings.

Haynes, J. (1991). Human rights and democracy in Ghana: The record of the Rawlings' regime. *African Affairs*, *90*(360), 407–425.

Jackman, R. W., O'Kane, R. H. T., Johnson, H. T., McGowan, P., & Slater, O. R. (1984). Explaining African military coups d'etat, 1960-1982. *The American Political Science Review*, *80*(1), 225–249.

Jeffries, R. & Thomas., C. (1993). The Ghanaian elections of 1992. *African Affairs*, *92*(368), 331–366.

Jonah, K. (1989). The social impact of Ghana's adjustment program, 1983–1986. In B. Onimole (Ed.). *The IMF, the World Bank, and the African debt: The social and political impact* (pp. 140–152). London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

Kraus, J. (1987). Ghana's shift from radical populism. *Current History*, *86*(520), 205–208.

Kraus, J. (1991). The struggle over structural adjustment in Ghana. *Africa Today*, *38*(4), 19–37.

Kumah-Abiwu, F. (2016). Leadership traits and Ghana's foreign policy: The case of Jerry Rawlings' foreign economic policy of the 1980s. *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, *105*(3), 297–310.

Lussier, R. & Achua, C. (2009). *Leadership: Theory, application, and skill development*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Montuori, A. & Donnelly, G. (2018). Transformative leadership. In J. Neal (Ed.). *Handbook of personal and organizational transformation* (pp. 319–350). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Nugent, P. (2010). Nkrumah and Rawlings: Political lives in parallel? *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, *12*(2), 35–56.

Oquaye, M. (1995). Human rights and the transition to democracy under the PNDC in Ghana. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *17*(3), 556–573.

Osam, K. (2008). Imaging a president: Rawlings in the Ghanaian chronicle. *Legon Journal of the Humanities*, *19*(3), 109–134.

Owusu, M. (1996). Tradition and transformation: Democracy and the politics of popular power in Ghana. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *34*(2), 307–343.

Paller, J. W. (2019). Dignified public expression: A new logic of political accountability. *Comparative Politics*, *52*(1), 85–116.

Phipps, T. A. S. & Prieto, C. L. (2011). The influence of personality factors on transformational leadership: Exploring the moderating role of political skill. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, *6*(3), 430–447.

Quantz, A. R., Rogers, J., & Dantley, M. (1991). Rethinking transformative leadership: Toward democratic reform of schools. *The Journal of Education*, *173*(3), 96–118.

Rotberg, R. I. (2014). The need for strengthened political leadership. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *652*(1), 238–256.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Shillington, K. (1992). *Ghana and the Rawlings factor*. London, United Kingdom: Macmillan Education.

Thomson, M., Kentikelenis, A., & Stubbs, T. (2017). Structural adjustment programmes adversely affect vulnerable populations: A systematic-narrative review of their effect on child and maternal health. *Public Health Review*, *38*(13), 1–18.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy. (2020). *The cost of politics in Ghana*. Retrieved from https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Cost_Of_Politics_Ghana.pdf.

PART 7

APPLYING UBUNTU TO TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

22 *Transformative disability leadership in the Global South: Insights from ubuntu philosophy*

Precious Muzite

Overview

This chapter argues that considering able-bodiedness as 'normal' is a problematic social construct that has made it impossible to advance a transformative vision of disability leadership from the Global South. The African philosophy of ubuntu offers an indigenous epistemology that challenges dominant discourses of disability. John Mbiti's (1969, p. 215) phrase, 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' is used to summarise the African traditional philosophy of ubuntu and what it is to be human. An implication of such an ideology is that personhood and humanity are interconnected. Using two case studies of transformative disability leadership, this chapter offers a new approach to bringing about social justice for those living with disabilities in the Global South.

Introduction

There is an excess of literature that focuses on the multifaceted nature of neoliberal leadership and the threat of a crisis in leadership in the Global South (Gill, 2011; Longo & McMillan, 2015). Less has been said, however, about the complexities and nuances of an authentic transformative disability leadership that is firmly embedded in indigenous epistemologies. People living with disabilities are constructed along the margins of the 'other' by the ubiquitous compulsory able-bodied discourse and narrative. Societies have for centuries been entertained by the idea of a body centred on compulsory able-bodiedness (McRuer, 2006), which involves the essentialist assumption that an able body is the one that is 'normal', and what Thomson (1997) refers to as the 'normative body'. Inahara (2009, p. 47) unpacks this further and states that '[i]t implies that all human beings are represented by only one body which is able'. The macrocosm of compulsory able-bodiedness is far-reaching and intersects with other constructs such as race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and indeed, leadership. This chapter explains how the African philosophy of ubuntu offers a way of understanding disability and the actions needed to ensure social justice outcomes for those living with disabilities.

Background and methodology

This chapter emerged from a PhD thesis, which focused on the narratives of inclusion, exclusion, and 'disclusion' of learners with physical and learning impairments studying at four Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in Johannesburg. To get a critical view of the present state of disability inclusion in TVET colleges in South Africa, an integrative literature review (Torraco, 2005) of courses on disability studies in education was carried out. This critical approach to literature reviewing goes beyond conventional approaches that only organise, synthesise, and integrate literature, and analyse methods and theoretical frameworks. The integrated review further synthesised new knowledge on the topic of disability studies in higher education using critical realism and the radical person-centred methodology as alternative frameworks. The researcher's main objective was the advancement of the collective understanding of important educational issues in the field of inclusion of students with disabilities.

The exclusion of people living with disabilities is so complex that no single study could unpack all the important themes surrounding disability inclusion and exclusion. The integrative literature review revealed several unresolved themes in disability scholarship from the Global South. Such cognitive dissonance is common among scholars involved in critical disability research, as there is pressure to strike a balance between the impetus to speak for the 'other', and speaking with the 'other' in an alliance where all actors have the same levels of urgency and power.

Definitions of terms

The reviewing process illuminated the deliberate silencing of disability leadership from the Global South. Just as the South is portrayed as fragmented, without law and without purpose, a veritable 'heart of darkness' (Conrad, 2012), there is also an attempt from the West to bring into disrepute and overlook indigenous styles of disability leadership. The intentions are to establish the West as the protagonist and a place of inception for disability rights. Yet, the lives of millions of indigenous people with disabilities are constructed around imperialism, colonisation, and conquest. There is therefore a need to see colonisation for what it is: not just a metaphor for the subjugation of indigenous civilisations, but as the force that created debility in the first place.

The politics of nomenclature (the process of naming things) is a vital component in critical disability studies, as it establishes the epistemological standpoint. There is therefore a need to define what it is to be a transformative disability leader – a seemingly elementary yet difficult task. This is because the terms disability, transformative, and leadership are often thought to be contradictory or working

against each other by an ableist society that stubbornly refuses to entertain the idea of persons living with disabilities assuming positive leadership roles.

Disability and handicap

The World Health Organization's (WHO) tool for classification, the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps, currently offers a biopsychosocial definition of disability that uses a threefold typology of impairment, disability, and handicap. Thus, impairment, according to Oliver and Barnes (2012, p. 13), refers to 'any loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function'.

Disability denotes 'any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of the ability to perform an activity in a manner or within the range considered normal for a human being'. Handicap is defined as 'a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for those individuals' (WHO, 1980, cited in Oliver & Barnes, 2012, p.13).

From these definitions of disability, it is clear that some attempt has been made to place disability within a social context by incorporating the range considered normal for a human being. This socialisation of disabilities and impairments is imperative because, according to Oliver and Barnes (2012, p. 14):

> The social world differs from the natural world in (at least) one fundamental respect: that is, human beings give meanings to objects in the social world and subsequently orientate their behaviour towards these objects in terms of the meanings given to them.

However, critical philosophers of disability studies make a point that disability should not only be socialised but also be pushed into the politics of minorities (Swain & French, 2000; Thomson, 1997; Wendell, 1996). People with disabilities have maintained a unique identity and belonging that qualifies disability rights to be human rights, on a par with race, gender, and sexuality politics. Understanding disability rights as political is crucial in this chapter, as it immediately establishes the connection between leadership and disability.

Transformative disability leadership

Disability leadership is defined as the involvement and influence of persons living with disabilities in person-directed services and in organisations and systems that shape disability services and policies (Powers et al., 2002). Person-directed services in these instances are synonymous with independence, urgency, authority, capabilities, self-advocacy, and transformation. Transformative leadership, on the other hand, is defined as an all-encompassing leadership

style that surpasses organisational contexts to address broader societal, political, socioeconomic, material, and ethical dynamics (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume). From these loose definitions, transformative disability leadership can therefore be interpreted as the involvement of people living with disability in holistic social justice emancipation of people living with disabilities. Wendell (1996) uses the term 'disabled heroes' to describe transformative disability leadership that is ingrained in the total heroic control of all the odds stacked against people living with disabilities through reaffirming the possibilities of overcoming the body. Stephen Hawking and Oscar Pistorius come to mind as good examples of this. The disabled heroes are often imagined in a Westernised lens, receiving media attention for accomplishing things that are exceptional and unusual even for the able-bodied. This chapter, however, seeks to deconstruct the image of the privileged disabled hero who has access to extraordinary social, economic, and physical resources that are not available to most people living with disabilities in the Global South. It seeks to exonerate the Global South disability hero who rises despite limitations of the body and resources.

Transformative disability leadership from the Global South has been said to be elusive, fragmented, and underfunded (Kandasamy & Soldatic, 2019). Matshedisho (2007) attributes this fragmentation to the dilemma of competing rights in new democracies and the construction of disability rights as benevolence and not actual human rights. This chapter argues that rather than being fragmented, transformative disability leadership from the Global South is well and awake. The problem arises when researchers attempt to frame and universalise all disability leadership from a Westernised paradigm. Time and time again, transformative disability leadership rises from the Global South, claiming its epistemic urgency of being rooted in indigenous pathways that revere charisma and a genuine connectedness with the lived experiences of people living with disabilities. Two examples are used as case studies in this chapter: Kate Jagoe-Davies from South Africa and Jairos Jiri from Zimbabwe.

Towards an ubuntu philosophy of disability leadership

Menkiti (1984, p. 171) borrows from John Mbiti's phrase 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am' to sum up the African traditional philosophy of ubuntu or what it is to be human. The implications of such an ideology are that personhood and, subsequently, what it means to be human and disabled, are interconnected and follow a linear progression. Menkiti (1984, p. 172) terms this 'the processual nature of personhood'. Menkiti satirically refers to the Western world calling babies 'it' to illustrate the ontological progression of what it means to be human. The inhabitants of the ancestral underworld have more depth of personhood, and he chooses to call them 'the living dead', or *vadzimu* in Shona and *madhlozi* in isiZulu/isiNdebele (Menkiti, 1984).

There is a growing body of literature that focuses on African traditional thoughts on disability and what it means to be human. Ubuntu philosophy provides a contextualised, uniquely African understanding of social phenomena, social consciousness, and disability inclusion (Berghs, 2017; Gwaravanda, 2021; Menkiti, 1984; Mosalagae & Lukusa, 2016; Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2018). Ubuntu philosophy has also been explored as a possibility for an African feminist disability theology (Chisale, 2020). Very few articles have, however, explored the implications of ubuntu philosophy for global disability leadership. The assumptions have been that ubuntu philosophy is highly contextualised and speaks exclusively from the subaltern African context (Mosalagae & Lukusa, 2016). The flow of knowledge has always been denoted as originating in the north, flowing southwards, and never vice versa. However, as proven by the exceptional and charismatic leadership styles of disability activists such as Jairos Jiri and Kate Jagoe-Davies, the Global South can offer some credible insights into what transformative disability leadership should look like to the rest of the world.

Closely linked to the decolonial project's concept of coloniality of knowledge is the African traditional thought of disability. Decolonial scholar Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) realised the value of alternative forms of knowledge in decolonised emic (insider's perspective) approaches to understanding the Global South. He does not, however, specify what these forms of alternative knowledge might look like when it comes to disability inclusion. Menkiti (1984), Berghs (2017), Mji, Gcaza, Swartz, MacLachlan, and Hutton (2011), Chataika, Mckenzie, Swart, and Lyner-Cleophas (2012), Opini (2016), and Ngubane-Mokiwa (2018) provide a glimpse of what this indigenous knowledge system might look like through a disability lens. Menkiti (1984) insists that questions on ontology should emanate from the 'communal world' rather than individual life, thus deviating from neoliberal Eurocentric idealism.

What is noteworthy about ubuntu philosophy is that it is present in many African cultures and almost every African language, with the principle of shared humanness always the same.

Zimbabwe: Unhu/ubuntu

In Zimbabwe, the concept *of unhu* in Shona and *ubuntu* in isiNdebele is used on a broad level to recognise a person's dignity, value, and respect (Mapaure, 2011). People with disabilities are also accepted as part of this shared humanness, which is illustrated in Shona proverbs such as *munhu, chirema chinotungamira nzira* (a human being is a human being; even a disabled person can lead the way on a journey) (Gwaravanda, 2021).

South Africa

In South Africa, the term *ubuntu* is loosely shared mostly among the Nguni-speaking tribes including Zulu, Swati, and Ndebele. It is translated as *botho* among the Sotho and Tshwana tribes, as, *vhuthu* in Venda, *bunhu* in Tsonga, and *umntu* in Xhosa. Although ubuntu is interpreted differently due to ethical differences and the impact of Apartheid, there is a central concept of sharing one another's well-being and reciprocating kindness (Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2018). This reciprocity of humaneness is summed up by the isiZulu saying *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other people).

People living with disabilities in Zulu culture have often been referred to as having a spiritual nature, and they often become *sangomas* (traditional healers). Ubuntu philosophy, therefore, does not only reside on the ontological and epistemological levels; it is also an ethical code of conduct, a way of being deeply entrenched in African culture.

Zambia

Zambia's cultural perception of people with disabilities is mixed and varies from region to region. What is notable, however, is that the culture of *umuchinshi*, Zambia's interpretation of ubuntu, has been lauded for informing the mindset of leaders who show a high regard for the law and ethics (Pertersson & Kachabe, 2021). In a comparative case study of Swedish and Zambian leadership styles, the findings highlight that ethical leadership in Zambia is synonymous with ethical practices expected from everyone. Examples are when kinship groups care for the well-being of their members, and elders are given the important task of advising on village affairs (Pertersson & Kachabe, 2021).

Accountability for human life, suffering, and productivity is also a highly regarded virtue in Zambia's leadership culture. This is demonstrated by the fact that 'Zambia is one of the stable countries in Africa with successful multiparty democratic elections held every five years' (Pertersson & Kachabe, 2021, p. 41).

Implications of ubuntu philosophy on disability leadership: Two case studies

Ubuntu philosophy is a wide-ranging concept capable of being interpreted differently across many cultures and ethnicities. It makes sense therefore to expect its implications and contributions to global disability leadership to be intrinsically multifaceted and layered. Two very different disability leaders from the southern African region, but both bound by the ethos of ubuntu, are described in the next section.

Kate Jagoe-Davies (South Africa)

One of the best known charismatic disability activists to come out of South Africa was Kate Jagoe-Davies. Davies was a person with an adult-onset disability, being paralysed from the shoulders downwards, and living with chronic renal failure. She became one of the notable faces of disability leadership and resistance towards an ableist and racist Apartheid South African government in the 1980s. What is noteworthy about Davies is that she was a woman living with disabilities who defied an unjust system by advocating for disability inclusion in higher tertiary settings, pioneering a Disability Rights Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1986. Davies transcended all disability scholarship of her time by connecting the dots of intersectionality and acknowledging that disability rights are human rights. Davies understood that disability rights were intertwined with racial, gender, and sexuality rights, long before critical theories of intersectionality began to trend in South African social justice discourses. She became an avid supporter of the anti-Apartheid movement led by the then-banned African National Congress (ANC). Among many other acts of resistance and social justice solidarity, her most notable were when she snubbed the then South African President P. W. Botha for racial oppression in a paper that was meant to address disability inclusion issues exclusively, and at another time, being arrested for owning soundtracks from two films made by the then-banned ANC as well as an outlawed book (Beresford, 2009). Davies was surely ahead of her time in terms of the transformative and ethical disability leadership she enacted and personified.

Jairos Jiri (Zimbabwe)

In what was then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), another charismatic disability leader who exuded transformative leadership premised on indigenous knowledge was Jairos Jiri. Jiri was commonly referred to as the 'father of education for people living with disabilities' in Zimbabwe, because he founded the Jairos Jiri Association in 1950 that provided education and training for over 13 000 people with disabilities each year (Farquahar, 1987, cited in Chataika, 2007). This established the association as the largest of its kind in Africa. Jiri recognised early in his life that people like him, who were living with a disability, Black, and living in rural Zimbabwe, had little chance of receiving any formal education under the colonial regime. Jiri's opening of a leather shop for training people living with disabilities marked the birth of a Black-owned TVET training centre for people living with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Jiri would go on to open more than 20 sites of education and training exclusively for Black people living with disabilities across Zimbabwe. Trades taught in these colleges included leather processing, arts, and crafts. Since its inception, the Jairos Jiri Association has been celebrated as exceptional among scholars of the philosophy of inclusion.

Ubuntu as a philosophy of leadership and inclusion

There have been numerous disability leaders from the Global South who have worked on transforming their society, often with limited financial and social resources. For example, Dr Victor Pineda from Caracas, Venezuela, launched World Enabled in 2003 to support companies and governments with the implementation of legal mandates for inclusion and diversity. Eddie Ndopu was one of the new generation of transformative disability leaders to come out of South Africa, and is one of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals Advocates. When interviewed by a journalist from *Global Citizen*, a leading online news outlet that celebrates young influential people from Africa, Ndopu attributed his stature to his humble beginnings and the spirit of ubuntu. This is highlighted by his remarks:

> We need to be able to say that we need one another…Ubuntu isn't just this buzzword that we use. It's a philosophy and it is a public policy practice that needs to be integrated into everything that we do because we need interdependence in the world.
> (cited in Mlaba, 2020, para. 15)

Transformative leadership from the Global South, therefore, is not as fragmented as one might think. What then is so exceptional about disability leaders coming from the Global South? What critical notions of leadership do they embody that is worthy of analysis?

In 17th-century Europe, the surge of the industrial revolution and capitalism served to demarcate between 'productive' and 'unproductive' human resources. Cheap labour was in demand and having a 'healthy' normative body was revered for serving the productive purpose of working in the factories. Having a flawed body – in other words, any form of disability – was instantly construed as being a personal tragedy. This eventually ushered in a rise of political disability movements such as the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation in the 1970s in the United Kingdom, and the civil rights movement in the 1980s in the United States of America.

In the Global South, on the other hand, the colonial system provided the landscape for understanding the lived experiences of people living with disabilities, who make up 80 per cent of people living with disabilities in the world (UN DESA: Disability, n.d.). Through the violence and aggressive nature of colonialism in the Global South, disability was constructed (Grech, 2015), and disability resistance and leadership arose.

Attributing the rise of disability consciousness and leadership to the turmoil of capitalism and colonialism can, however, pose some serious challenges. First, if economic power acts as a catalyst for social consciousness in society, how then

do we explain social responsibility and the charismatic leadership portrayed by Kate Jagoe-Davies and Jairos Jiri? These leaders, living with disabilities, lived in a time and place that has been depicted as the 'heart of darkness' and the 'third world'. Some of these leaders, such as Jairos Jiri, never had any formal education. Perhaps a credible starting point for interrogating the different styles of disability leadership stemming from the Global South would therefore be in the vast indigenous knowledge systems that had always informed leadership in the past.

There is an old proverb among the Shona people which states '*Wanzwa musoro kutema handiro dambudziko. Chapa musoro kutema ndiro dambudzo*'. (An aching head is not the actual problem. Rather focus on what caused the headache in the first place.) In applying this outlook, rather than focusing on the so-called lack of transformative disability leadership in the Global South, colonialism and capitalism should be seen for what they truly are: not just metaphors of conquest, but brutal acts that brought disability and disfigurement in the first place (Grech, 2015). This challenges the Global South disability scholar to engage with critical scholarship that deconstructs and unlearns the way we have come to think about disability and leadership.

Ubuntu as a philosophy of transformative inclusion

Much has been said by disability leaders, scholars, and activists about the dynamics of the exclusion of people living with disabilities from mainstream society. On the other hand, the ubuntu philosophy of disability enables us to view disability activism and scholarship in terms of the dynamics of inclusion. The shared humanness intrinsic to the ethos of ubuntu is holistic and encompasses the spiritual, biophysical, and ecological worlds (Berghs, 2017). Therefore, difference and all its axes (disability, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, religion, and so forth) are celebrated under ubuntu. A celebration of 'being different together' is also the cornerstone of critical diversity literacy (Steyn, 2014). The implications are that people living on the margins of the 'other', such as those with disabilities, are included in the centre of what it means to be human, for example, in politics, education, access to better health plans, sports, and leadership.

Ubuntu as a theology should be reviewed entirely in its uniqueness. Its implications for the ethos and values of leaders should be viewed in terms of restoration, identity affirmation, mediation, reconciliation, and nation-building as opposed to conquest, assimilation, and shame.

Challenges and criticism

Critics have been quick to highlight that an ubuntu philosophy of disability does not magically guarantee a non-ableist view of disability, nor does it neatly develop into transformative and ethical leadership. This has been used to

discredit African leadership styles and justify the leadership crisis emanating from the Global South.

Ngubane-Mokiwa's (2018) research on 'the archaeology of ubuntu' in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa unearths negative perceptions by people in traditional communities towards people with disabilities. Examples include the birth of a disabled child being regarded as a curse, and the stigma associated with marrying a disabled person. The research findings expose the intricacies of thinking within an ubuntu philosophy of disability, which does not always guarantee positive perceptions of people with disabilities among community members.

Ubuntu philosophy is also said to be dying (Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013). Arguments put forth are that there has been a failed narrative of a return to an authentic African renaissance that focuses on social and political transformation. The narrative of 'return' is therefore seen as counterproductive, as it has given birth to a 'tyrannical dictatorship developed in the pursuit of one-party states' (Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013, p. 198) to suppress certain political and marginalised voices. Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013) cite the rise of social unrest such as xenophobic attacks, and the increasing polarisation of nationalism and nativism in southern Africa, to highlight the death of humanity and social consciousness. Although they do not mention the implications of the narrative of return to disability inclusion, this critique can be useful in guiding transformative disability leadership on the dangers of essentialising disability experience to certain disabilities at the expense of others. For example, physical disabilities have had the limelight in claiming disability identity, while disabilities such as intellectual and learning impairments remain invisible.

Proponents of ubuntu philosophy, however, are quick to point out that, contrary to mainstream thought, the philosophy is very much alive; we should not rush to conflate philosophy and methodological procedure, or ethics with practice (Chimakonam, 2016; Koenane & Olatunji, 2017; Metz, 2014).

Critics have also implied that ubuntu philosophy consolidates group dynamics at the expense of individual needs and criticism. According to these critics, ubuntu is similar to social models of disability that operate in favour of the community but at the expense of the individual, leaving little room for restorative justice and a clear demarcation of 'victim' and 'perpetrator'. This claim is, however, not accurate; as Berghs (2017) reiterates, to conflate the two theoretical frameworks is to perpetuate the primary epistemic fallacy – that is, of generalising ontological knowledge of 'being' in a Westernised mindset. The ubuntu philosophy of disability is a uniquely African perspective of being and it should remain as such.

Conclusion

Ubuntu philosophy in the Global South is not dead. It is not only flourishing, but has also branched out into other disciplines to influence a culture of transformative disability leadership that is based on social justice, humanity, and a code of ethics, rather than a materialistic leadership balanced on economic and social privilege. More empirical research needs to be carried out to explore the implications of indigenous epistemologies on questions of ontology, such as what it is to be human, which lives are dispensable, and what the rejected bodies are. The literature review process used in this study was useful in exposing some of these issues. However, a more thorough unpacking of these critical issues can only be achieved through empirical methodologies that highlight the lives of the millions of people living with disabilities in the Global South.

#UbuntuTransformativeDisabilityLeadership

Ubuntu can contribute to dismantling an ableist view of disability and leadership. The Global South can take the lead in transformative leadership to provide social justice for those living with disabilities.

Questions for discussion

1. What challenges do people in the Global South experience when trying to lead on the issue of disability?
2. In what ways does an ubuntu philosophy of disability contribute to dismantling ableist views of disability and leadership in disability?
3. What do you understand by the concept of transformative disability leadership? How is it helpful for the just inclusion of people living with disabilities?

References

Beresford, D. (2009, 24 September). Kate Jagoe-Davies obituary: Doughty campaigner for disabled people and against apartheid. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/society/2009/sep/24/kate-jagoe-davies-obituary.

Berghs, M. (2017). Practises and discourses of ubuntu: Implications for an African model of disability. *African Journal of Disability*, *6*(292). https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v6.292.

Chataika, T. (2007*). Inclusion of disabled students in higher education in Zimbabwe: From idealism to reality – A social ecosystem perspective*. PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England. Retrieved from https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3606/

Chataika, T., Mckenzie, J. A., Swart, E., & Lyner-Cleophas, M. (2012). Access to education in Africa: Responding to the United Nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. *Disability & Society, 27*(3), 385–398.

Chimakonam, J. O. (2016). The end of ubuntu or its beginning in Matolino-Kwindingwi-Metz debate: An exercise in conversational philosophy. *South African Journal of Philosophy, 35*(2), 224–234.

Chisale, S. S. (2020). Politics of the body, fear and ubuntu: Proposing an African women's theology of disability. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *76*(3). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i3.5871.

Conrad, J. (2012). *Heart of darkness*. New York, NY: Dover Publications.

Gill, R. (2011). *Theory and practice of leadership*. London, United Kingdom: SAGE Publications.

Grech, S. (2015). Decolonising Eurocentric disability studies: Why colonialism matters in the disability and Global South debate. *Social Identities*, *21*(1), 6–21.

Gwaravanda, E. T. (2021). *Ubuntu and African disability education: An ethical perspective from the Global South*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global Publishers.

Inahara, M. (2009). This body which is not one: The body, femininity and disability. *Body & Society*, *15*(1), 47–62.

Kandasamy, N. & Soldatic, K. (2019). Kamalawathie: Gender, disability and leadership in Sri Lanka. In K. Soldatic & K. Johnson (Eds). *Global perspectives on disability activism and advocacy: Our way* (pp. 97–113). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Koenane, M. L. J. & Olatunji, C-M. P. (2017). Is it the end or just the beginning of ubuntu? Response to Matolino and Kwindingwi in view of Metz's rebuttal. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *36*(2), 263–277.

Longo, N. V. & McMillan, J. (2015). Educating for global leadership: A north-south collaboration. *New Directions in Student Leadership*, *2015*(148), 73–86.

Mapaure, C. (2011). Reinvigorating African values for SADC: The relevance of traditional African philosophy of law in a globalizing world of competing perspectives. *SADC Law Journal, 1*, 149–173.

Matolino, B. & Kwindingwi, W. (2013). The end of ubuntu. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *32*(2), 197–205.

Matshedisho, K. J. (2007). Access to higher education for disabled students in South Africa: A contradictory conjuncture of benevolence, rights and the social model of disability. *Disability & Society*, *22*(7), 685–699.

Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African religions and philosophy*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers.

McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip theory: Cultural signs of queerness and disability*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Menkiti, I. A. (1984). Person and community in African traditional thought. In R. A. Wright (Ed.). *African philosophy: An introduction* (3rd ed., pp. 171–181). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Metz, T. (2014). Just the beginning for ubuntu: Reply to Matolino and Kwindingwi. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *33*(1), 65–72.

Mji, G., Gcaza, S., Swartz, L., MacLachlan, M., & Hutton, B. (2011). An African way of networking around disability. *Disability and Society*, *26*(3), 365–368.

Mlaba, K. (2020, 3 December). South African activist Eddie Ndopu: Using the power of imagination to reinvent activism. *Global Citizen*.
Retrieved from https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/eddie-ndopu-activist-south-africa-prize/

Mosalagae, M. K. & Lukusa, J-P. K. (2016). Contextualized inclusive education: A retrospective look at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Botswana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *7*(14), 79–87.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). Why decoloniality in the 21st century? *The Thinker*, *48*, 10–15.

Ngubane-Mokiwa, S. A. (2018). Ubuntu is considered in light of the exclusion of people with disabilities. *African Journal of Disability*, *7*(1), 1–7.

Oliver, M. & Barnes, C. (2012). *The new politics of disablement* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Opini, B. (2016). Walking the talk: Towards a more inclusive field of disability studies. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *20*(1), 67–90.

Pertersson, S. K. & Kachabe, V. (2021). *Ethical leadership:* Ubuntu *and* jantelagen*: The influence of culture in the interpretation of ethical leadership in Zambia and Sweden*. Master's thesis, Linnaeus University, Småland, Sweden.
Retrieved from http://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1441074/FULLTEXT01.pdf.

Powers, L. E., Ward, N., Ferris, L., Nelis, T., Ward, M., Wieck, C., & Heller, T. (2002). Leadership by people with disabilities in self-determination systems change. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, *13*(2), 126–134.

Steyn, M. (2014). Critical diversity literacy: Essentials for the twenty-first century. In S. Vertovec (Ed.). *Routledge international handbook of diversity studies* (pp. 397–407). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Swain, J. & French, S. (2000). Towards an affirmation model of disability. *Disability & Society*, *15*(4), 569–582.

Thomson, G. R. (1997). *Extraordinary bodies: Figuring physical disability in American.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, *4*(3), 356–367.

UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs): Disability. (n.d.). *Factsheet on persons with disabilities*.
Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html.

Wendell, S. (1996). *The rejected body: Feminist philosophical reflections on disability*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

23 *Ubuntu leadership in a technological age*

Katleho Mokoena

Overview

This chapter seeks to establish an ubuntu leadership theory in an African context in disruptive times such as the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Instead of formulating leadership theories that are influenced by Western philosophies, this chapter investigates African indigenous knowledge. The 4IR is a paradox in Africa: it is technological progress, but it perpetuates inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Africa requires leadership that is not individualistic or focused on the growth of an institution, but rooted in the well-being and development of communities. The main argument here is for an ubuntu leadership model, for a technological age, in an African context, through the methodology of critical literature review. Two examples of ubuntu leadership in sustainable community development initiatives in rural communities are presented. These initiatives make use of technology to address socioeconomic challenges in Gwakwani in Limpopo and Mankosi in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Introduction

Leadership is a human characteristic, and different cultures or communities have their own way of defining leadership (Horner, 1997; Ndlovu, 2016). Leadership is essential to organisations, companies, churches, government, and various groups in society for groups of people to function well to attain certain goals or objectives. There are diverse types of leadership, serving different purposes in various contexts; hence there is no universal mode of leadership (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). There is no agreement in leadership scholarship on a comprehensive leadership model, but globalisation has influenced types of leadership across the world (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). This chapter argues that globalised leadership types tend to follow Western epistemologies (Jallow, 2014; Punnet, 2017) and adopts an African epistemology because it is contextualised for Africa in general and South Africa specifically.

The notion of leadership has changed throughout history, and different epochs require a rethinking of leadership for their time. The 4IR represents a fundamental change in the way we live, work, and relate to one another, driven by technology, and its fullest potential is yet to be known. There is thus uncertainty as humans are experiencing advanced technology that has never been witnessed before. This process requires rethinking of leadership for the 4IR (Marwala, 2021; Mdluli & Makhupe, 2017). In the context of South Africa, where

a large proportion of the population is poor, unemployed, and marginalised, one of the major questions is whether the disadvantaged will continue to be so during the 4IR (Moll, 2021). Jobs have already been lost as companies use digital solutions for their services, and there is fear of more job losses due to robotics and automation (Le Roux, 2018). There are, however, new jobs that will be created, but capacity is a challenge, as there are already skills shortages in the information, communications, and technology (ICT) sector in South Africa (Schofield & Dwolatzky, 2021). The cities are more likely to benefit from the 4IR because the infrastructure is better than in township and rural areas (Sutherland, 2020). Another major factor is that the three previous industrial revolutions did not benefit Africa much, but instead dehumanised, exploited, dispossessed, and marginalised Africans and Africa (Benyera, 2021; Moll, 2020). How will it benefit the poor to live in the 4IR if they are struggling to feed themselves, do not have basic services, and cannot afford internet access? Preparedness for the 4IR in South Africa is minimal, and the basic needs of many communities are ill met due to inequality gaps (Nkala, 2019; Zollner, 2019).

This chapter thus seeks to problematise global ideologies of leadership for their applicability in an African context, particularly in South Africa. The chapter argues that the philosophy of ubuntu can be of use in thinking about the 4IR and its potential impact. Ubuntu has a variety of definitions (Gade, 2012; Hailey, 2008) that need to be critically evaluated for it to be relevant as a leadership theory (Ncube, 2010; Ndlovu, 2016), especially in the technological age (Schwab, 2016). Although ubuntu developed in precolonial southern African cultures, it can be applied in new ways in the very changed times of the 21st century (Okoro, 2015). Technological developments have an impact in an already unequal society such as South Africa, and technological advances are thus a paradox: they represent progress on the one hand and perpetuate inequality on the other (Mahlatsi, 2020; Sutherland, 2020). This chapter argues that ubuntu-infused leadership has a role to play in focusing on the well-being of the community and bridging the gap for social justice in the technological age. Two examples of ubuntu leadership in sustainable community development initiatives that make use of technology to address socioeconomic challenges will be discussed.

Literature review

The research methodology employed for this chapter was a critical literature review. A wide-ranging search was conducted across Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, EBSCOHost, Sabinet, ProQuest, and African Journals Online, among others, for relevant literature on ubuntu leadership in a technological age. The following keywords were used: ubuntu, ubuntu leadership, ubuntu philosophy, ubuntu ethics, African leadership, ubuntu and technology, ubuntu and transformative leadership, 4IR and Africa/South Africa, ubuntu and the 4IR,

and 4IR implications in Africa/South Africa. A limitation of the 4IR as a search term is that it is a recent and ongoing phenomenon, and its implications are not yet fully known.

The determining factor for selecting literature for this study was based on the 'conceptual contribution of each…literature…[and] not on formal quality assessment' (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 97). The limitation of the critical review approach may be the omission of certain literature that could be relevant because it is does not follow a systematic search approach, and interpretation may be subjective (Grant & Booth, 2009; Stratton, 2019).

The premise of this study is a decoloniality perspective (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Rather than assimilating ubuntu leadership into transformative leadership, this study seeks to make ubuntu leadership its focus, and dialogue equally with transformative leadership. The primary reason for this is that African cultures have rich epistemologies with which to explore leadership for the African context. Transformative leadership is, however, useful for rethinking African epistemologies for a leadership framework.

Ubuntu as a philosophy is applied in many fields, but this chapter draws on definitions from African philosophy and African theology. Naude (2017) identifies three models in localising African leadership, namely the transfer model (a direct transfer of Western ethics to Africa), the translation model (different attempts to translate Western ethics into the context of Africa), and a substantive model (the development of a uniquely African position through ubuntu). The first two models follow on from Eurocentric ethical leadership models suggested in the context of South Africa or Africa in general, namely transactional leadership (Crews, Brouwers, & Visagie, 2019; Shokane, Stanz, & Slabbert, 2004), transformational leadership (Hamstra, Van Yerpen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2011; Harms & Credé, 2010; Sethibe & Steyn, 2017), and transformative leadership (Brown, Ekoue, & Goodban, 2019; Mafora, 2013; Magoqwana, 2019; Ncube, 2010).

This chapter uses the substantive model, which suggests an alternative model grounded in African epistemology – in this case, an African leadership model based on ubuntu. There are alternative approaches with a focus on African leadership drawing from African epistemologies (Bosu, Dare, Dachi, & Fertig, 2011; Chedondo, 2019; Mayanja, 2013), but they do not have a focus on technology or the 4IR. First, ubuntu will be defined in general and according to three main aspects, which are philosophy, spirituality, and ethics. Second, leadership in the 4IR will be discussed. Lastly, an ubuntu leadership model will be presented for the technological age in the African context with a discussion of two examples of ubuntu leadership.

Ubuntu: Looking back

In order to move forward, you need to look back. These words are inspired by the Sankofa bird, which is a mythical bird in Ghana among the Akan people. The symbol is of a bird that looks back while holding an egg, symbolising the future, in her beak (Kwarteng, 2016). In this section, ubuntu will be defined in general, and the three main aspects of ubuntu will be discussed: ubuntu as philosophy, ubuntu as spirituality, and ubuntu as ethics. This section will serve as background in theorising an ubuntu leadership for the future.

Defining ubuntu

Ubuntu became a term of interest in the transition to democracy in South Africa and Zimbabwe, even though there were prior usages of the term in the second half of the 1900s (Gade, 2011). Ubuntu has always been a part of African life as a worldview and way of life (Ramose, 1999). Ubuntu has been described using various terms such as kindness, human nature, goodness, humanity, and hospitality. According to Gade (2011), the earliest written record of ubuntu dates from 1846 in the isiXhosa Bible *I-Testamente Entsha* by H. H. Hare. Jordan Kush Ngubane wrote about ubuntu as a worldview in the African *Drum* magazine in the 1950s and defined it as African humanism inspired by postcolonial African political thinkers (Gade, 2011). Gade (2011) further argues that the use of African concepts in political thinking was rooted in the 1950s and 1960s, when some African countries gained independence from colonial rule. There was a need to regain African dignity through Africanisation and decolonisation.

In the transition to democracy in South Africa, ubuntu was used for national reconciliation and forgiveness by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to encourage social cohesion. However, the usage of ubuntu in the TRC can be seen to have lacked the justice aspect of ubuntu, considering the human rights violations and systemic violence of Apartheid against Black people. Mboti (2015) argues that although there are many variations of ubuntu, the definitions always lead to the aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (in Nguni languages) or *motho ke motho ka batho* (in Sotho languages), which translates in English to 'a person is a person through other persons'. This definition suggests an interdependence among human beings and that they are human beings because of other human beings. Linguistically, the term 'ubuntu' emerges from the Bantu languages of southern Africa (Nguni, Sotho, and Shona, among others) as suggested in the suffixes *-ntu* (in *ubu-ntu* – Nguni), *-tho* (in *bo-tho* – Sotho) and *nhu* (in *hu-nhu* – Shona) (Mangena, 2016).

Ubuntu as a philosophy

The colonial history of Africa was about reducing Africans to being sub-human, and Africans were not thought of as rational beings. This was a justification used by the West for colonisation and slavery. Western historians wrote about Africa and Africans and defined them from their own perspectives. The legendary South African musician and pan-African and human rights activist Miriam Makeba once said, 'The conqueror writes history, they came, they conquered, and they wrote. You do not expect the people who came to invade us to tell the truth about us' (sahistoryonline1, 2014). African philosophy is thus a decolonial project. It is about drinking from the well of indigenous knowledge and reasoning from an African perspective. It is about acknowledging that Africans have a history before colonisation. It is Africans articulating their existence and experience of life. In southern Africa, ubuntu is a worldview that is philosophical.

According to Ramose (1999, p. 35), ubuntu is the root of African philosophy:

> The be-ing of an African in the universe is inseparably anchored upon ubuntu. Similarly, the African tree of knowledge stems from ubuntu with which it is connected indivisibly. Ubuntu then is the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology… African philosophy has long been established in and through buntu [personhood].

Ramose (1999) explains that ubuntu as a philosophy becomes clear when the word ubuntu is hyphenated as *ubu-ntu*. That is to say that ubuntu is two words in one. *Ubu-* is a prefix that suggests be-ing, which signifies motion. *Ntu* is a stem that *ubu-* orients towards. Ontologically, there is no radical separation of *ubu-* and *ntu*, but they signify two aspects of be-ing as a one-ness and indivisible wholeness. Accordingly, *ubu-ntu* is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu-speaking people (Ramose, 1999). Philosophically, *ubu-ntu* is an unfolding process of humanness, being and becoming. *Umuntu* more specifically indicates the human being. Therefore, there is no *ubu-ntu* without *umu-ntu.* The aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other persons) is thus essential in conveying that *umuntu* (a person) cannot embody ubuntu without another *umuntu* (person). A human being cannot exist in isolation. Desmond Tutu (2013, unnumbered) attested that

> the profound truth is that you cannot be human on your own, you are human through relationship…we would not be able to speak as human beings, we speak by imitating other human beings. We walk as human beings by imitating other human beings.

Dladla (2017) points out that in the aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu, umuntu* precedes *ubuntu* ontologically. This implies that *umuntu* [a person] is a

potential doer of ubuntu. However, the phrase *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* does not translate into English with the same richness, depth, and meaning inherent in the original idiom (Dladla, 2017).

Ubuntu as spirituality

In African culture, spirituality is holistic. African spirituality implies the relationship between the supreme being (*uNkulunkulu*, *Modimo*), the living, and the living dead (ancestors, *badimo*, *amadlozi*). African theology contends that Africans knew and had a concept of God before Christianity was introduced by Western missionaries during colonialism. African spirituality is found in all aspects of the lives of Africans. It can be found in art and symbols, music and dance, proverbs and riddles, names of people and places, myths and legends, beliefs, and customs (Mbiti, 1991). Ramose (1999, p. 78) states that 'African spirituality is concrete expression; it is the lived experience of the reality of the feeling of immanence and transcendence in the life of an African people'. There are misconceptions when it comes to African spirituality, such as reducing it to ancestor worship, superstition, animism or paganism, and magic or fetishism (Mbiti, 1991). These misconceptions reflect a colonial history of invalidating African spirituality. Ubuntu spirituality is the interconnectedness of *umuntu*, God, and the living dead. It is thus spirituality that energises *umuntu* to embody ubuntu.

Ubuntu as ethics

Ubuntu ethics is communal rather than individualistic, because it includes God, the living, and the living dead (Mangena, 2016). Ubuntu ethics is consensual and spiritual because there has to be an agreement between the spirit world and the world of the living regarding the establishment and operationalisation of ubuntu in the world of the living (Mangena, 2016). Unlike Western ethics, that are only horizontal – that is, they have to do with relations between living beings – ubuntu ethics are both horizontal and vertical: that is, the relations go beyond human relations to include the human beings' relations with the spirit world (Mangena, 2016). Ubuntu ethics puts human dignity centre stage and is informed by life-giving ethics. It also includes the understanding that God is the source and origin of morality (Dolamo, 2013). Ubuntu ethics is about equality and justice. Within a community, ubuntu ethics espouses harmony and the eradication of oppression, inequality, marginalisation, discrimination, poverty, and injustice.

African philosophy and African theology are integral in ubuntu. Ubuntu is constituted by the community, which includes God, the living, and the living dead. Dolamo (2013) states that there is no ubuntu outside the community. Within a community an individual is nurtured into becoming a mature and responsible human being who embraces the values, norms, and principles of

ubuntu (Dolamo, 2013). The well-being of individuals in a community is the well-being of the community. Our humanness can only be enhanced in the context of a community with other humans and, by extension, with the whole of creation (Dolamo, 2013).

Ubuntu is a process of humanness; it is the goal that human beings are to strive for, even though it is not completely attainable. Times may change, but the essence of ubuntu as a philosophy, spirituality, and ethical system will and should remain the same.

Leadership in the 4IR

Sattar Bawany's book *Leadership in Disruptive Times* (2020) mentions that there are many disruptions in the world that have an effect on the way we live, learn, and work. Major recent disruptions include the Covid-19 pandemic and the 4IR. These disruptions impact businesses, governments, and aspects of our social lives. The Covid-19 pandemic, for instance, re-exposed the deep inequalities in the South African education system. The majority of poor students faced challenges with online learning due to a lack of technology and devices, and poor internet access caused by the scarcity of infrastructure in rural areas.

The rise of technology and its current rapid development are reshaping society, which struggles to keep up with it. Schwab (2016) points out that the word 'revolution' in the phrase 'fourth industrial revolution' means an abrupt and radical change. In the context of technology, this has an impact on social and economic structures. There have been four industrial revolutions, and each of these has fundamental features, although they may overlap with one another. Schwab (2016, pp. 11–12) explains:

> The first industrial revolution spanned from about 1760 to around 1840. Triggered by the construction of railroads and the invention of the steam engine, it ushered in mechanical production. The second industrial revolution, which started in the late 19th century and into the early 20th century, made mass production possible, fostered by the advent of electricity and the assembly line. The third industrial revolution began in the 1960s. It is usually called the computer or digital revolution because it was catalysed by the development of semiconductors, mainframe computing (1960s), personal computing (1970s and 80s) and the internet (1990s). [The 4IR] began at the turn of this century and builds on the digital revolution. It is characterized by a much more ubiquitous and mobile internet, by smaller and more powerful sensors that have become cheaper, and by artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Bawany (2020) expands the 4IR to include robotics, the Internet of Things, blockchain technology, and cloud computing, among others. One of the major questions has been whether South Africa is ready for the 4IR. This readiness depends on multiple factors. Sutherland (2020) argues that South Africa is not a country for the 4IR, as its economy is reliant on farming, mining, and the informal sector. The country is also facing major challenges of high rates of unemployment, a lack of digital skills, and even a lack of basic skills. On top of historic inequalities, mismanagement in the public sector and corruption hinder progress. Marwala (2021) acknowledges that South Africa grapples with a legacy of lagging behind in adapting or responding to industrial revolutions, yet emphasises that it cannot afford to be left behind in the 4IR. Marwala (2021) is also of the view that technology should be used creatively to tackle the problems in the public sector and society. There are, however, fears that the 4IR will lead to job losses and new skills requirements in an already underemployed population, and that it will not contribute to economic growth (Ayentimi & Burgess, 2019). Leadership therefore needs to rethink how to mitigate these effects for the well-being of the people.

In addition to the technical challenges of the 4IR, the nature and uniqueness of humanity is also on the line. Fourie (2020) argues that genetic engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, and nanotechnologies have the power to alter human nature and society. Technological enhancement has the potential to alter our view of what it means to be human and our perceptions of human dignity, because emerging technologies may cause individuals to be more self-centred (Stahl, Timmermans, & Flick, 2017). Spiritually, humanity may have faith and trust in emerging technologies for their salvation and future (Fourie, 2020). When humanity has placed its full confidence in technology, the effects of technology may not be critically appraised, and spirituality could evaporate from the consciousness of humans. The 'digital divide' in society between those who have access to the internet and technology, and the ability to use it, and those who do not, has an impact on how we relate to one another as human beings. Those on the margins, the poor and disadvantaged, may be reduced to being seen as non-humans (dehumanisation) because of having no access to ICT resources. Thus, the already existing inequality gap could be widened and linked to one's humanity. Virtual augmented reality, which is popular in games and education, allows users to be in touch simultaneously with the virtual world and the physical world (Fourie, 2020) and can have an impact on the notion of reality (what is real or not).

The leadership required for the 4IR must consider many aspects of emerging technologies in relation to humanity and society. Although many companies, driven by profit-making, are restructuring for the 4IR, it is important to have a government leadership that envisions a society where human dignity is at the

centre of technological innovation. Marwala (2021) states that the 21st-century leader must have 4IR thinking, which, according to the World Economic Forum, entails skills such as complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement, decision-making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility. These skills are necessary, but if they are not grounded in ubuntu, our sense of humanity could be lost.

Ubuntu leadership for the future

Ubuntu is essential in leadership where technology is concerned, as it keeps reminding a leader about human dignity. Technological innovation is necessary, but it should not be at the expense of humanity or ecology. It has been mentioned that ubuntu encompasses the supreme being (*Modimo, uNkulunkulu*), the living, and ancestors (*badimo, amadlozi*) in community. This implies that this interconnectedness shapes us (the living) to become more humane or to embody ubuntu. Ubuntu leadership is alluded to in the words of Steve Biko (1987, pp. 46–47):

> We reject the power-based society of the Westerner that seems to be ever concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

Humanity should not become so immersed in technology that we lose our sense of spirituality and humanity. Therefore, an ubuntu leader recognises that to move forward, we must also look back and not forget who we are, nor where we came from. When the majority are poor and unemployed in the technological age, ubuntu leadership regards that as failure, even if there is the most advanced technology in the country. Human life is more precious than technological advancements. Ubuntu leadership thus envisions bridging the inequality gap and working towards alleviating poverty and marginalisation in the technological age. There should be a commitment to basic needs being fully met in marginalised communities. Ubuntu leadership means to affirm one's humanity and that of others, which inevitably translates into an ethics that is centred on humanness. Ncube (2010) attests that when a leader embodies ubuntu and accepts our interconnectedness, they are more likely to empower others. Information is crucial in the technological age, and sharing information that would empower and give opportunities to others to better their lives can unlock doors that they would not have known were there. Ubuntu leadership

can be applied in government, business, churches, or communities, because it is people centred. It includes values and norms such as dignity, fairness, justice, harmony, moral integrity, transparency, care, respect, and humility, rather than individualism, self-centeredness, greed, and dehumanisation (Chedondo, 2019).

South Africa has many rural communities that lack development, infrastructure, and access to basic services. Rural communities are often marginalised and isolated from cities, and do not have much economic activity. The advancement of technology is more likely to disadvantage such communities, as it will expand in areas that already have infrastructure. Rural communities would thus be left out of the 4IR, as they have in most cases been left out of the second and third industrial revolutions. There is thus a need for ubuntu leadership that aims for inclusive technological advancements.

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Mankosi rural community in the Eastern Cape developed Zenzeleni Networks, which is the first community-owned internet service provider in South Africa offering affordable rural internet access (Rey-Moreno & Pather, 2020). Community networks are defined as community-centred internet, developed for the people, by the people (Belli, 2017). Zenzeleni (which means 'do it yourself' in isiXhosa) Networks is owned and operated by community members to provide affordable internet connection through a solar-powered Wi-Fi for as little as R25 a month for unlimited high-speed internet access (Carelse, 2019). This initiative has allowed the community to be digitally connected, and UWC has also trained community members on how to maintain the network. Rey-Moreno and Pather (2020) argue that although Zenzeleni Networks was possible in the Mankosi community, there is still a lack of clear policy and regulations for community networks in South Africa. Community networks could be a game changer in addressing the digital divide affecting the poor. Their main advantage is that they do not require existing infrastructure, so can be installed even in the remotest areas of the country.

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) positions itself as an institutional leader in the 4IR, and the vice chancellor at the time of writing, Tshilidzi Marwala, is a leading 4IR scholar. The university has several initiatives for community development through technology education and development. One is a partnership with Schneider Electric Southern Africa to provide sustainable development solutions to the rural community of Gwakwani in the Limpopo province. Gwakwani did not have access to potable tap water, electricity, early childhood development programmes, or economic activity. The initiative provided solar-powered electricity, a water pump, a crèche, and a bakery. The crèche provides early childhood development education, and the bakery provides employment. Professor Suné von Solms, associate professor at the School of Electrical Engineering at UJ, states: 'I think what's interesting is that we're using basic 4IR in an area that has never had access to any form of technology before'

(*Beyond Imagining*, 2020, para. 6). The initiative makes use of Internet of Things infrastructure to monitor the technology remotely at UJ. Ubuntu leadership has thus found creative technological ways to alleviate socioeconomic challenges even in the remotest areas.

These are just some of the examples of institutions that provide sustainable community development initiatives using various technologies to address socioeconomic challenges. The possibilities of using latest technologies to make rural communities smart are there. What is also commendable about these initiatives is that they are community centred, and community members are involved in learning how these technologies work and how to maintain them. The focus of these initiatives is the well-being of communities and how to transform them for the digital age.

Conclusion

The 4IR is inevitable and its fullest potential is yet to be known. This chapter argues that globalised leadership types tend to follow Western epistemologies. The technological unfolding of the 4IR requires a rethinking of leadership from an African perspective in an African context. Ubuntu provides an African ontology and epistemology. The aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other persons) is essential in conveying that *umuntu* (a person) cannot embody ubuntu without another *umuntu* (person). In African culture, spirituality is holistic, and implies relations between the Supreme Being (*uNkulunkulu*, *Modimo*), the living, and the living dead (ancestors, *badimo*, *amadlozi*). Africans knew and had a concept of God before Christianity was introduced through colonialism. Unlike Western ethics, that are horizontal – that is, they have to do with relations between living beings – ubuntu ethics are both horizontal and vertical, as they have a spiritual component as well. Within a community, ubuntu ethics espouses harmony and the eradication of oppression, inequality, marginalisation, discrimination, poverty, and injustice. Ubuntu leadership is holistic and should be visible in the various sectors of society. Technology may advance, but humanity should be safeguarded. Our humanity should not be reshaped by technology to such an extent that we forget our sense of ubuntu or human dignity. Humanity should not be so immersed in technology that it loses its sense of humanness. Our faith and trust should not be reliant on technology that would make us self-centred and unable to critique it, but should remain steadfast in community with one another. Ubuntu leadership holds that technology should be used to solve complex socioeconomic challenges, rather than perpetuate poverty and marginalisation.

#HumanityBeforeProfit #UbuntuTech

Ubuntu, with its focus on dignity and shared humanity, has a lot to teach us as we face disruptive technological innovation.

Questions for discussion

1. This chapter makes strong statements regarding how the digital divide affects society – who has access to the internet and technology, and the ability to use it, versus those who do not – and the impact it will have on how we relate to one another as human beings. It states: 'Those on the margins, the poor and disadvantaged, may be reduced to being seen as non-humans'. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Is this currently happening in your context and, if so, how?
2. In the context of technological advances, how do we ensure, in the words of Steve Biko, that Africa gives 'the world a more human face'?
3. How do we ensure that human dignity, rather than profit or power, is at the centre of technological innovation?

References

Ayentimi, D. T. & Burgess, J. (2019). Is the fourth industrial revolution relevant to sub-Sahara Africa? *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, *31*(6), 641–652.

Bawany, S. (2020). *Leadership in disruptive times*. Hampton, VA: Business Expert Press.

Belli, L. (2017). Network self-determination and the positive externalities of community networks. In L. Belli (Ed.). *Community networks: The internet by the people, for the people* (pp. 35–64). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: FGV Direito Rio.

Benmira, S. & Agboola, M. (2021). Evolution of leadership theory. *BMJ Leader*, *5*(1), 3–5.

Benyera, E. (2021). *The fourth industrial revolution and the recolonisation of Africa: The coloniality of data*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Beyond Imagining. (2020). Gwakwani: South Africa's first smart rural village. *Beyond Imagining 3*. University of Johannesburg. Retrieved from https://universityofjohannesburg.us/4ir/beyond-imagining-issue-3/gwakwani-south-africas-first-smart-rural-village/.

Biko, S. (1987). *I write what I like*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann.

Bosu, R., Dare, A., Dachi, H., & Fertig, M. (2011). School leadership and social justice: Evidence from Ghana and Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *31*(1), 67–77.

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 21–37.

Carelse, V. (2019, 28 March). Internet access in Africa: Are mesh networks the future? *BBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-47723967.

Chedondo, M. (2019). *Ethics and leadership: A critical analysis of cultural resources for ethical leadership in Southern Africa*. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Retrieved from https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/16818.

Crews, E., Brouwers, M., & Visagie, J. (2019). Transformational and transactional leadership effects on communication styles. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *29*(5), 421–428.

Dladla, N. (2017). Towards an African critical philosophy of race: Ubuntu as a philopraxis. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, *6*(1), 39–68.

Dolamo, R. (2013). Botho/ubuntu: The heart of African ethics. *Scriptura*: *International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa, 112*(1), 1–10.

Fourie, L. (2020). Technology and theology: Finding the real God. In J. A. van den Berg (Ed.). *Engaging the fourth industrial revolution: Perspectives from theology, philosophy and education* (pp. 11–37). Bloemfontein, South Africa: Sun Media.

Gade, C. B. N. (2011). The historical development of the written discourses on ubuntu. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *30*(3), 303–329.

Gade, C. B. N. (2012). What is ubuntu? Different interpretations among South Africans of African descent. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *31*(3), 484–503.

Grant, M. & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, *26*(2), 91–108.

Hailey, J. (2008). *Ubuntu: A literature review*. London, United Kingdom: Tutu Foundation.

Hamstra, M. R. W., Van Yerpen, N. W., Wisse, B., & Sassenberg, K. (2011). Transformational-transactional leadership styles and followers' regulatory focus: Fit reduces followers' turnover intentions. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *10*(4), 182–186.

Harms, P. & Credé, M. (2010). Emotional intelligence and transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *17*(1), 5–17.

Horner, M. (1997). Leadership theory: Past, present and future. *Team Performance Management*, *3*(4), 270–287.

Jallow, B. G. (2014). The case for African leadership studies and leadership in colonial Africa: An introduction. In B. G. Jallow (Ed.). *Leadership in colonial Africa: Disruption of traditional frameworks and patterns* (pp. 1–22). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kwarteng, A. K. (2016, 1 March). The Sankofa bird and reflection. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*.
Retrieved from https://jacl.andrews.edu/the-sankofa-bird-and-reflection/.

Le Roux, D. B. (2018, 17 July). Many South African jobs could soon be automated, and the country isn't prepared. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/many-south-african-jobs-could-soon-be-automated-and-the-country-isnt-prepared-99689.

Mafora, P. (2013). Transformative leadership for social justice: Perceptions and experiences of South African township secondary school principals. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *34*(1), 37–45.

Magoqwana, B. (2019). *Tapping into inimba to show deep transformative leadership in Mandela University*. Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation. Retrieved from https://crishet.mandela.ac.za/getmedia/0741dadc-3048-4f36-bc80-656dd3e8e2af/Babalwa-Magoqwana?disposition=attachment.

Mahlatsi, M. (2020). The fourth industrial revolution: Another industrial revolution leaving Black women behind? *The Thinker*, *83*, 24–28.

Mangena, F. (2016). African ethics through ubuntu: A postmodern exposition. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *9*(2), 66–80.

Marwala, T. (2021). *Leading in the 21st century: The call for a new type of African leader*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Tracy McDonald Publishers.

Mayanja, E. (2013). Strengthening ethical political leadership for sustainable peace and social justice in Africa: Uganda as a case study. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *13*(2), 113–146.

Mbiti, J. S. (1991). *Introduction to African religion*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Heinemann Publishers.

Mboti, N. (2015). May the real ubuntu please stand up? *Journal of Media Ethics*, *30*(2), 125–147.

Mdluli, S. & Makhupe, O. (2017). *Defining leadership competencies needed for the fourth industrial revolution: Leadership competencies 4.0*. Bank Seta.
Retrieved from https://bankseta.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Bankseta_Defining-Leadership_Siboniso-Mdluli-Olebile-Makhupe.pdf

Moll, I. (2020, 20 August). The first three industrial revolutions stripped Africa bare – it's hard to see why the fourth would be any different. *Daily Maverick*.
Retrieved from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-08-20-the-first-three-industrial-revolutions-stripped-africa-bare-its-hard-to-see-why-the-fourth-would-be-any-different/

Moll, I. (2021). The myth of the fourth industrial revolution. *Theoria*, *68*(167), 1–38.

Nanjundeswaraswamy, T. & Swamy, D. (2014). Leadership styles. *Advances in Management*, *7*(2), 57–62.

Naude, P. (2017). Decolonising knowledge: Can ubuntu ethics save us from coloniality? *Journal of Business Ethics*, *159*, 23–37.

Ncube, L. B. (2010). Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, *4*(3), 77–82.

Ndlovu, P. (2016). *Discovering the spirit of ubuntu leadership: Compassion, community, and respect*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2015). Decoloniality as the future of Africa. *History Compass*, *13*(10), 485–496.

Nkala, T. (2019, 4 July). 4IR: The good, the bad and the inequality gap. *Daily Maverick*. Retrieved from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-07-04-4ir-the-good-the-bad-and-the-inequality-gap/.

Okoro, N. K. (2015). Ubuntu ideality: The foundation of African compassionate and humane living. *Journal of Scientific Research & Reports*, *8*(1), 1–9.

Punnet, B. (2017). Africa: Open for business. In T. R. Lituchy, B. L. Galperin, & B. J. Punnett (Eds). *LEAD: Leadership effectiveness in Africa and the African diaspora* (pp. 1–18). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ramose, M. (1999). *African philosophy through ubuntu*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Mond Books Publishers.

Rey-Moreno, C. & Pather, S. (2020). Advancing rural connectivity in South Africa through policy and regulation: A case for community networks. *2020 IST-Africa Conference (IST-Africa)*, 1–10.

sahistoryonline1. (2014, 28 August). Miriam Makeba interview 1969 [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsZ96zaSpvg.

Schofield, A. & Dwolatzky, B. (2021). *2021 JCSE-IITPSA ICT skills survey* (11th ed.). Johannesburg, South Africa: JCSE and IITPSA.

Schwab, K. (2016). *The fourth industrial revolution*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum.

Sethibe, T. & Steyn, R. (2017). The impact of leadership styles and the components of leadership styles on innovative behaviour. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, *21*(2), 1–19.

Shokane, M., Stanz, K., & Slabbert, J. (2004). Description of leadership in South Africa: Organisational context perspective. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *2*(3), 1–6.

Stahl, B. C., Timmermans, J., & Flick, C. (2017). Ethics of emerging information and communication technologies: On the implementation of responsible research and innovation. *Science and Public Policy*, *44*(3), 369–381.

Stratton, S. (2019). Literature reviews: Methods and applications. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, *34*(4), 347–349.

Sutherland, E. (2020). The fourth industrial revolution: The case of South Africa. *Politikon*, *47*(2), 233–252.

Tutu, D. (2013). Who we are: Human uniqueness and the African spirit of ubuntu. Desmond Tutu, Templeton Prize 2013 [Video file].
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wZtfqZ271w.

Zollner, E. (2019, 20 August). What 4IR means in the context of South Africa. *Bizcommunity*. Retrieved from https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/379/194443.html.

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

Maréve Biljohn

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 themself 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?

References

Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J. M., Pel, B., Weaver, P., Dumitru, A., Haxeltine, A., … & O'Riordan, T. (2019). Transformative social innovation and (dis)empowerment. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, *145*, 195–206.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Bieneman, P. D. (2011). Transformative leadership: The exercise of agency in educational leadership. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 221–237.

Bongmba, E. K. (2014). Responsibility and governance. In K. Kondlo (Ed.). *Perspectives on thought leadership for Africa's renewal* (pp. 37–55). Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Brown, E., Ekoue, E., & Goodban, V. (2019). Transformative leadership for women's rights in Africa: Learning from Oxfam's work. *Agenda*, *33*(1), 21–37.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Cajaiba-Santana, G. (2014). Social innovation: Moving the field forward – A conceptual framework. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 82*, 42–51.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 175–187.

Chedondo, M. (2019). *Ethics and leadership: A critical analysis of cultural resources for ethical leadership in southern Africa*. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Retrieved from https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/16818.

Chilvers, J. & Longhurst, N. (2015). *A relational co-productionist approach to sociotechnical transitions*. 3S Working Paper 2015-27. Science, Society and Sustainability Research Group. Retrieved from https://uea3s.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/chilvers-and-longhurst-3swp-2015-27.pdf.

Cipolla, C., Afonso, R., Pel, B., Bartholo, R., Silva, E. R., & Proença Júnior, D. (2017). Coproduced game-changing in transformative social innovation: Reconnecting the 'broken city' of Rio de Janeiro. *Ecology and Society*, *22*(3), 1–9.

Conger, J. A. & Kanungo, R. N. (1987). Towards a behavioral theory of charismatic leadership in organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review*, *12*(4), 637–647.

Cooper, W. C. (2009). Performing cultural work in demographically changing schools: Implications for expanding transformative leadership frameworks. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *45*(5), 694–724.

Dias, P. & Partidário, M. (2019). Mind the gap: The potential transformative capacity of social innovation. *Sustainability*, *11*, 1–17.

Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Cozan, S., Ruijsink, S., Backhaus, J., Avelino, F., & Dumitru, A. (2017). *TRANSIT Brief 3*: *How social innovation leads to transformative change*. Transformative Social Innovation Theory. Retrieved from http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/transit-brief-3-how-social-innovation-leads-to-stransformative-change-towards-a-theory-of-transformative-social-innovation.

Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Dumitru, A., Avelino, F., Pel, B., & Wittmayer, J. (2015). *TRANSIT WP3 deliverable D3.2: A first prototype of TSI theory*. Transformative Social Innovation Theory. Retrieved from http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/transit-wp3-delverable-d32-a-first-prototype-of-tsi-theory.

Hewitt, K.K., Davis, A., & Lashley, C. (2014). Transformational and transformative leadership in a research-informed leadership preparation program. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *9*(3), 225–253.

Langlois, L. (2011). Looking at transformative leadership through the concept of ethics. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 87–99.

Lowndes, V. & Roberts, M. (2013). *Why institutions matter: The new institutionalism in political science*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maxwell Leadership Certified Team. (n.d.). *The heart of leadership: Becoming a servant leader*. Retrieved from https://johnmaxwellteam.com/the-heart-of-leadership/.

Mayanja, E. (2013). Strengthening ethical political leadership for sustainable peace and social justice in Africa: Uganda as a case study. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *13*(2), 113–146.

Pearce, C. L. & Manz, C. C. (2005). The new silver bullets of leadership: The importance of self- and shared leadership in knowledge. *Organizational Dynamics, 34*(2), 130–140.

Pel, B., Haxeltine, A., Avelino, F., Dumitru, A., Kemp, R., Bauler, T., … & Søgaard Jørgensen, M. (2020). Towards a theory of transformative social innovation: A relational framework and 12 propositions. *Research Policy*, *49*(8). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104080.

Pel, B., Wallenborn, G., & Bauler, T. (2016). Emergent transformation games: Exploring social innovation agency and activation through the case of the Belgian electricity blackout threat. *Ecology and Society*, *21*(2). https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08346-210217.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Shields, C. M. & Hesbol, K. A. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity, and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(1), 3–22.

Stephenson, L. (2011). Developing a leadership education framework: A transformative leadership perspective. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 321–341.

Strasser, T., De Kraker, J., & Kemp, R. (2019). Developing the transformative capacity of social innovation through learning: A conceptual framework and research agenda for the roles of network leadership. *Sustainability*, *11*(5). https://doi.org/10.3390/su11051304.

Unger, R. M. (2015). Conclusion: The task of the social innovation movement. In A. Nicholls, J. Simon, & M. Gabriel (Eds). *New frontiers in social innovation research* (pp. 233–251). London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *35*(1), 89–106.

Weiner, E. J. (2011). Critical thought/creative action: Developing a curriculum and pedagogy of transformative leadership. *Counterpoints*, *409*, 177–206.

Williams, E. D. (2019). *Addressing the school-to-prison pipeline through critical self reflection: A self-study of courageous and transformative leadership*. PhD thesis, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, USA. Retrieved from https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3376/.

Ziervogel, G., Cowen, A., & Ziniades, J. (2016). Moving from adaptive to transformative capacity: Building foundations for inclusive, thriving, and regenerative urban settlements. *Sustainability*, *8*(9). https://doi.org/10.3390/su8090955.

PART 8

A CALL TO ACTION

25 *A forward-looking ethics of transformative leadership: Rebuilding societies in the 21st century*

Catherine A. Odora Hoppers and Crain Soudien

Overview

The 20th century witnessed unprecedented developments in technology and also created powerful new international norms around war. Many crises remain unresolved, and of these, many centre on the postcolonial state in Africa and in much of the non-Western world. These precepts, the consequence of the displacement and abnegation of indigenous knowledges, practices, and wisdoms, have led to the alienation and objectification of nature, a de-spiritualisation of human development, and an extractive and exploitative relationship with the natural world. They have stunted the development path that systems of knowledge would have undergone. Because of the universalisation of dominance, the world lost its opportunity to learn the lessons of sustainable development from those it defines as 'other'. The challenge for us is how to recover from the hurts inflicted by domination. The question is how to imagine new models of leadership that address these resentments. Education is needed that will embrace the 'other' and encourage leaders to question and transform the rules of the game both at the institutional level and at societal and systemic levels.

Introduction: The challenge of transformative leadership

> *Wanderer, there is no path, you lay down the path in walking. And where you look behind, you see the path that will not be trod again. Wanderer, there is no path, but the ripples on the waters.*
> *(A poem by Antonio Machado, cited in Conn, 1991, p. 74)*

By transformative leadership is meant leadership that directs change in systems, as opposed to transactional leadership – leadership that directs people. This latter definition of leadership focuses on the styles and traits of leaders, and engagement between leaders and followers. According to Swartz, transformative leadership is 'intent on attaining systemic and social justice outcomes for societies and employing ethical and people-centred processes…in order to achieve these ends' (Chapter 1, this volume, p. 5). These are profound words that challenge us to view anew, to come to a sense of the preconditions that must exist to allow transformative leaders to emerge in Africa. What is the level of diagnosis that can allow a person to develop insights into a situation, such as in Africa, as we emerge

from the ravages of decolonisation, epistemological disenfranchisement, and, worse still, our stuckness in academic systems that cry out for transformation, so that a new future can be born in our time?

We look left and we see the dominant norms of modern culture that make us suspicious of our own cultures. All of us have legitimate access to our own humanity! But Hélé Béji (2004), in a landmark publication by Unesco, *The Future of Values*, forewarns us that modern culture no longer offers us access to our humanity. She says that we should be aware that the culture that surrounds us today is characterised by the distortion of human rights into inhuman codes:

- where sovereignty is replaced by supremacy;
- where tolerance, which in the first place is the rejection of the intolerable, becomes the right to practise the intolerable;
- where democracy becomes a slogan in support of hegemony, or cultural difference, which was supposed to diversify peacefully, converges instead into a practice of violence;
- where anti-racism becomes as intolerant as racism; and
- where the rights of the weakest are modelled on the abuses of the rights of the strongest. (Béji, 2004, pp. 30–32)

The result is that victims are turning into a new force of cruelty in their own right. These realities impose upon us an obligation to rethink the content and paradigm of learning itself.

We look right, and see our indigenous knowledge subjugated almost to a point of no return. But Foucault, a French philosopher, expressed a powerful articulation of the state of indigenous knowledge which gives remote hope. Subjugated knowledges, he argued, are whole sets of knowledges that are either hidden behind more dominant knowledges but can be revealed by critique, or those knowledges that have been explicitly disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. They are historical forms of wisdom that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systemisations (Foucault, 1980). These articulations embody a call for strategic transactional leadership within the academy, leading to a transformative leadership model that surpasses the debate between the leadership models that Swartz elicits in this volume. The understanding of the monumental efforts being undertaken worldwide to recognise, promote, develop, and protect these knowledges is key to illustrating the adage that the true path to emancipation lies beyond critique, in transformative action.

For this we make three proposals – one, general, for the world; another, specific to us here in Africa; and a third, addressed to our young leaders. The first, a call for transformative action 1: *the moment of renegotiation of agency,* as we put it later, is for the preparation of young and able youth who are well versed in the

long and continuous history of human development and the contributions of all people, everywhere, to the development of our capacities as morally sentient beings. Human development, we must teach all the world's young people, and, perhaps more importantly, their elders, is not the invention or the product of what we have come to describe as European civilisation. The development of all of our capabilities, scientific, cultural, and spiritual, in all of their moral expressions, both good and bad, could never have taken place without the great contributions of the people of Africa (Kies, 1953). Our second proposal, a call for transformative action 2: *the integrative paradigm shift,* builds on the first. It proceeds on the basis that inclusive and respectful approaches to development will work with all our knowledge resources, not only, in any sense of deference and obligation, with those that come from our European experience of the last five hundred years. Our third proposal, a call for transformative action 3: *making generative leaders,* in acknowledgement of the specific situation of the youth of our continent, calls for the development of an educational process that taps into and nurtures their cognitive and affective capabilities and empowers them to confront any and all forms of subjection and objectification.

Our hope is for an education that works with our young people's diverse capabilities and so enriches them as individualised human subjects. Each of them has potential. That potential lies in reserve in infinitely different forms. There, among them, as in the past, are great astronomers, physicists, mathematicians, craftspeople, agriculturalists, adventurers, engineers, storytellers, spiritualists, linguists, philosophers, artists, and musicians. The educational experience, however, must never detach them from their social and ecological contexts – their connectedness to their pasts and their responsibilities for their and their descendants' sustained and sustainable futures. The future depends on living in a relationship of boundless respect with our natural world – a world which we share as equals with other life and inanimate forms (Latour, 2013).

A note on leadership

A cursory reference to any source on leadership will generate many wise insights into what the term can mean. Doug Firebaugh (n.d., p. 3), for example, tells us that '[l]eadership is the art of seeing the invisible…then touching it'. The task of a leader, say Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010), is to create an alignment of strength that makes people's weaknesses irrelevant. Leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do. How to do is the task of a manager. From Kouzes and Posner (2011) comes the timeless insight that the most effective leaders are living demonstrations of how values and character, when combined in action, carry the day. They pay attention to their inner growth, knowing they must fully develop themselves as human beings if they are to develop as leaders. The inner journey is a prerequisite to authentic leadership. Inherent to these insights, everyday as

they may seem, are two constants: a good leader, firstly, is by their example a natural educator and, secondly, an ethical warrior.

We know that contemporary culture determines our understanding of reality and how power works. In these understandings we have a heightened sense of external attributes such as territory, property, academic success, wealth, and political access. But we also know that this external world is in a serious state of depletion and distortion as a result of our manipulations. What then is our task? What do we need to do to develop a sense of how we might think and act in contemporary times? How can we execute leadership for a humane and democratic world at such a time as this? When we say humane, we mean conduct that is marked or motivated by concern with the alleviation of suffering for all life forms and a desire for the moral and intellectual advancement of all human beings. We seek, hereby, to recover an ontology of self that works with a sense of our human differences, and which is not encoded in hierarchy and in narrow and essentialised understandings of our complex and multifarious identities, but which looks, always, for the new and wondrous.

We consider the challenge of leadership from the vantage point of the privileged space of the university. We begin with a discussion of ethics in the context of the postcolonial African continent and what this means for leadership. We then proceed to a consideration of ethical leadership in the contemporary African university.

Ethical African leadership: A challenge

A fresh start in diagnosing leading to prognosis needs to be made urgently. Ethical African leadership needs to pay attention to what we call second-level indigenisation (Odora Hoppers, 2009, 2012). What do we mean by this? Béji (2001) states that if the 20th century was the century of Africa's political independence, the 21st century will be the century of Africa's reclaiming of human agency, and of its status in world citizenship as a subject, not object. The 21st century will be one in which the political freeing of the continent from various strands of colonial control as an act linked with the attainment of political sovereignty transforms and metamorphoses into Africans freeing themselves as a creative act of the spirit. If by attaining political freedom and sovereignty the continent attained the right to act politically, awareness of freedom in the 21st century, however, brings with it what Béji (2001, p. 286) calls 'a greater consciousness of our duties'.

Yet, awareness of spirit in our times, and of being free as a creative act of the spirit, takes us far beyond the cries of reparation and claims of injustice against a historical experience that was cruel and, in some instances, actually evil. It goes beyond the dictates of modernity and enlightenment in which all nations

of the world are locked into the grids of the European experience. It takes us to quite a different place, a place in which the idea of freedom in the 21st century is held up against the great demand of unconditional human recognition: of its offering to every single human being an unqualified common good in a world of undifferentiated common well-being – a new future.

A key question for the task of creating new futures for Africa is how we in Africa cultivate in ourselves the capacity for being active and fully knowing human agents in an ethically cognisant dispensation. The question is about us as human subjects, in the first instance, but also about the institutions and structures we bring into being, nurture, and sustain. We come to this point with the awareness and acknowledgement that, ontologically, given our colonial history of mental subjugation, political, cultural, and psychological freedom creates for many of us a strange aporia or contradiction. Inherent to the moment is a sense of handicap and incoherence.

This comes to us in intensely intimate and personal ways. We have in these the psychosocial juxtaposition of the past, the present, and the future in all its tumultuous and discordant complexity. We are, as a consequence, stretched, distorted, compressed, and manipulated all at once. Paralyse us as this aporia may, it is also a moment of immense possibility. We are positioned, uniquely almost in the world – *almost* because there exist, always, analogues of our experience elsewhere that we do not yet see clearly – to imagine the world beyond its dominant ontological templates. From the aporia we have a view of human history, of its racialised, gendered, and spatialised sequestration of subjectivity, and a yearning for an alternative which stimulates imaginations of possible new dispensations with new social and ecological compacts of respect.

To ground all this, where Europe destroyed and dehumanised with apparent elation, then got the Rostovian illusion and curse combined fully ingrained into development thinking, which told Africans: 'You see, just do as we did, and you will get there', we see only plunder, desolation, and collapse. To attain what the West has attained using the formula it espouses, one would need a lot of other countries and lands to conquer, subjugate, dehumanise, and thereafter, 'develop'. Africa must therefore carefully weigh its methods of transcending the realms of that bondage – in other words, it must go beyond naming what it is fighting against, to courageously naming what it is fighting for.

Where Europe needed to destroy and subjugate so many, Africa must define new formulas for its reconstruction (in relation to the historical destruction), name the new icons symbolising its points of departure, and articulate the kind of energy it will bring to bear in the building of its future in the new, more humane dispensation.

We have to tighten and deepen our diagnosis in the following ways.

1. As Africa confronts the malfunctions of modernity and, behind it, European-programmed notions of progress and their offsprings of development, progress, rationality, and so forth, we take as a founding premise of our agency the need to recuperate the definition of 'time' with which we operate. Such a recuperation involves a *lived time* that needs to be humanised, beyond the rhythms of capitalist accumulation. It is therefore Africa that, in transforming the contours of its struggles from archaic resistance to domination, holds the key to the world's future – hence the call to foster a cohort of astute young Africans to take on the leadership role and take us forward.
2. But to do this, a lot depends on how Africa reconfigures and refashions the temporal narrative in which it is locked: its past (one which is still painful) and the kind of future it would like to see unfold, not just for itself, but also for humanity at large. Much will depend on how Africa articulates itself out of the experience of historic humiliation, suffered at the hands of colonialism, and avoids adding to self-perpetuating cultural cycles of violation and vindication which would seem to say, 'I have the right to be angry and make others suffer forever because someone hurt me in the past.' The question then for the future – towards a new time – becomes this: How can Africa generate fewer humiliation entrepreneurs, such as Hitler, Mussolini, and, latterly, Idi Amin, and more Nelson Mandelas who interrupt the cycle of humiliation by triggering new cycles of dignity? How can we cultivate together enduring instruments and practices that can disarm this singular weapon of mass destruction – humiliated hearts and minds – and turn them into weapons of mass creativity and solidarity (Lindner, 2006)? How can we move, using the existing resources already at our disposal, to free the many hearts clogged with resentment?
3. Clearly, we need new concepts to guide our thinking and action in this generation. Here, we draw from Nandy (1983, 1997), who argues that the transition from bandit colonialism through the intricate systems of the modern triage society that is wired for Western cultural compliance requires more than just critique, or a prayer for the meek to inherit the earth. It requires a decisive consensus that the meek do not inherit the earth by their meekness alone. They need defences of the mind and conceptual categories around which they can organise their thoughts and actions. Turning the previously colonised into participants in a new moral and cognitive venture against oppression requires more than just periodic elections, significant though that process is. Addressing the atrophy of human capabilities that has characterised human development in the context of both bandit colonialism and the modern triage society demands the development of a plurality of insights, of critical traditions, and deepening the tools for diagnosis and hence the quality of prognosis (Nandy, 1983, 1997). It may, in certain instances, demand a cognitive indifference to the Western model and a robust

engagement with the basic foundations of modernity's knowledge production systems themselves – the disciplines.

4. We also draw from Blum (1991), who argues that an agent may reason well in moral situations, uphold the strictest standards of impartiality for testing maxims and principles, and even be adept at deliberation, and yet, unless they perceive situations as *moral* situations, and unless they perceive their moral character accurately, not succeed. Their skills at deliberation will be for nought, and may even lead them astray. One of the most important moral differences between people is between those who miss and those who see various moral features of situations confronting them. Perception is the setting for action, and salience – that is, the adequacy of an agent's consciousness concerning the situation, or ability to grasp the contours of a problem prior to being called upon to exercise that agency – is key in this (Blum, 1991; Odora Hoppers, 2012).

What is education's response to this? How do we go beyond critique to transformative action? How do we build an 'ethics' on the ruins of modernity? How can actual citizenship be built and how can we carve out a pathway towards a planet-centred paradigm in which we hold a sense of respect and dignity for all of life? How might we acknowledge our special potentialities as human beings to think critically, to reason, and to dream, but also, simultaneously, our symbiotic dependence on our organic and physical environment? How do we conceptualise a future that accords radical equality to all inside our ecological universe, with which we are in relationship – our fellow human beings, however they may wish to describe themselves? How do we consider our extraordinarily varied relatives in the biological world and, last but by no means least, our physical environment, the air we breathe, the water we drink and are composed of, our soils, rocks, mountains, forests, and deserts? How can we rethink the ethics of education, the questions of development, progress, sustainable human development, and the making of livelihoods in ways that are more conscious, more self-aware, and more alert to the conveniences and seductions of knowledges and practices that portend the end of humanity?

Our response to these questions is that we have a global responsibility to 'up our game' and nurture future leaders who know the contours of the terrain of struggle precisely, in order to take whatever action they deem necessary.

Tightening the diagnosis: From transactional to transformative leadership and back

Modernity was consolidated in the 20th century: its laws undergirded by retributive justice; its linear ways of thinking and its exclusionary and detached science wedded to the applications of technology, not to expanding the philosophical base of science; its economics closely tied to scarcity; its puritan

model of governance distinctively un-nuanced about the suffering it creates. In the words of Indian scholar Visvanathan (2002, cited in Odora Hoppers, 2002b, p. viii), the science discipline in particular turns the 'self' into an ultimate manipulator,

> a spectator, a recorder of events, an act of alienation…Over time, the gaze of science over the so-called 'non-scientific' for instance became a gaze of surveillance, preventing the entry of pain and compassion, leaving the "I" of science an impoverished self without a backstage. He argues that science is not only political, but goes beyond politics to create its own 'micro-physics of power, with its own capillaries by pre-empting and terminally judging the way one thinks'.

While the sage in the African and Indian indigenous forests was not interested in acquiring and dominating, but in realising and enlarging their consciousness by growing with and into their surroundings, the West took pride in subduing nature (Merchant, 1980). Visvanathan (2000, 2001) argues that the American wilderness, unlike the Indian or African forest, lacked cosmic power. For the West, nature belonged to the category of the inanimate, and Western thought posited a disjunction between nature and human nature.

Suzuki and McConnel (2006) state that the way we see the world shapes the way we treat it. If a mountain is a deity, not a pile of ore; if a forest is a sacred grove, not timber; if other species are biological kin, not resources; or if the planet is our mother, not an opportunity, then we will treat each other with greater respect. Thus, the challenge is to look at the world from a different perspective.

The dialogue between Western and African universities should, in terms of epistemology, therefore, be between a city science and a forest science, between a mode of being that sought harmony with nature, and a way of doing that sought possession of it. While we cannot deny the power of Western science or the dynamism of the Western university, the dialogue of knowledges can only begin when the differences are understood and recognised (Visvanathan, 2000). It is on the recognition of this epistemological tenet of the university's agenda for reconnection with the context, therefore, that an ethics for transformation is likely to be built.

In tightening the diagnosis, we have to move beyond the appraisals of the work of individual scientists, beyond the assessment of the output of particular research teams, beyond the competitive acumen of research centres, to the question of what type of knowledge is being generated, what type of research questions are being asked, and what is not being asked (Hountondji, 1997). We have to realise quite rapidly that part of the economic and epistemological dependency of the South on the North lies in the problematic belief that in Northern or Western ways of knowing are guarantees of certainty – scientific and epistemological

validations of knowability and comprehensibility – and in the South, only the resources or raw materials – objects – of curiosity. It is a relationship of superiority and inferiority sanctioned by the present intellectual property rights system, which necessitates a whole systems approach.

To change this system of dominance we need to make profound changes in existing rules and regulations governing scientific activities, and look closely at, and where appropriate interrogate, progressive but still exclusionary knowledge-production practices currently taking place in universities. To contemplate including non-Western conceptions of knowledge and systems into the mainstream of university life, we need to acknowledge, is extremely challenging. The challenge begins in understanding the normative culture of the 'scientific method'. This scientific method, with its formulaic rules of observation, hypothesis-making, and testing, presents itself as the only methodology for arriving at the 'truth'. Seeking to challenge it is to court academic suicide, because the burden of proof, of credibility, lies exclusively in the scientific method, in written text, in regulations, and in sacrosanct evidential routines.

How do we generate transformative leaders out of this morass? How we permit the possibility for alternative orders of validation, claim-making, and truth-assertion is an important task for knowing in the university. Thus, we need to develop a notion of equity that goes beyond making concessions to marginal groups, or allowing them access to goods that mainstream dominant groups enjoy, or being 'nice' to those less fortunate than ourselves, to one which works reciprocally in all directions. A truly equitable society is one in which the mainstream groups see it as essential to have access to the linguistic and cultural resources of marginalised groups, and demand such access as a matter of equity. Equity cannot be left as a matter of making concessions. It has to be seen as a matter of equality of cultural trade, where each social group is seen as having contributions of equal value to make to all other social groups in the larger social unit (Kress, 1996). Even 'international' as a qualifier, we suggest, ends up denoting a form of diversity that is cohered and brought together in terms of a Western perspective.

A call to transformative action 1: The moment of renegotiation of agency

In our minds, the postcolonial theorists offer important insights as to how young leaders and postcolonial scholars-in-action should position themselves for deep change. They take cultural difference as an important heuristic and argue that in the process of respectfully working with our differences lies the opportunity for constructively working with all of our knowledge affordances. In embracing difference, we open ourselves to managing ourselves and our relationships in truly critical ways, ways that recognise value wherever it arises, but which

also have built into them a curiosity for explanation and a suspicion of dogma. Through this we nurture our human capability for working critically with all our grand narratives, old and new. We, in this mindful of processes of subjugation, approach science and the scientific method with cautious respect. We take from its workings the extraordinary wonders of technological discovery, but we pause, repeatedly, over its sense of itself, of itself as whole, wholesome, and essentially worthy. According to Bhabha (1994/2004), history is now taking place on the outer limits of the subject/object, giving rise to new moments of defiance that rip through the sly civility of those grand narratives, exposing their violence.

Subaltern agency emerges as a process of reversing, displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value coding which had been monopolised by the colonial 'default drive'. Bhabha states that it is the contestation of the 'given' symbols of authority that shifts the terrain of antagonism. *This* is the moment of renegotiation of agency. It is the voice of an interrogative, calculative agency, the moment when we give up the desire of close resemblance with the coloniser, the moment of (in the term used by Toni Morrison) 'rememoration' (cited in Bhabha, 1994/2004, p. 284) that turns the narrative of enunciation into a haunting memorial of what has been 'excluded, excised, and evicted' (Bhabha, 1994/2004, p. 284).

What is unfolding in important regions of the academy is a growing demand that scholarship should not be content with documenting the histories of resistance of the colonised to colonialism. Scholarship should turn those accounts into theoretical events that make those struggles not only relevant for their moment in time, but also relevant for other moments in times to come. The 'people without history' then not only regain their central place in history and finally move away from the dingy ethnography corner to which colonial discourse would have them cast for eternity, but also become full agents and makers of history current and future.

In this way, the light that began by being cast on colonialism and the legacy of domination and abuse is changed to vigilant analysis of its failures and silences, and a systematic spotting of transformative nodes that were not recognisable before, but are now released into public spaces. The casting of light at last onto subjugated peoples, knowledges, histories, and ways of living unsettles the toxic pond and transforms passive analysis into a generative force that valorises and recreates life for those previously museumised (Odora Hoppers, 2008; Prakash, 1995). In Prakash's (1995, p. 6) words, it 'throws open for realignment the conflictual, discrepant and even violent processes that formed the precipitous basis of colonialism'. It is a process of engaging with colonialism in a manner that produces a programme for its dislocation. This dislocation is made possible not only by permitting subalterns direct space for engaging with the structures and manifestations of colonialism, but also by inserting into the discourse arena totally different meanings and registers from other traditions.

It is here that subaltern and heterogeneous forms of knowledge, such as indigenous knowledge systems and related forms of agency, that had no place in the fields of knowledge that grew in compact with colonialism and science, at last have a place. And by their stirring presence, they become revolutionary heuristics in a postcolonial transformation agenda. Of significance here, then, is how the victims of unjust and dehumanising systems go about exercising their power. The immediate task, according to Rahnema (1997), is that of deciphering the hidden transcript of the subordinate group's resistance.

A call to transformative action 2: The integrative paradigm shift

A second call for preparedness comes through naming the conditions for dialogue. Second-level indigenisation differs from post-independence indigenisation, which focused on the inclusion of Black people into the game. It questions the rules of the game, engages the paradigmatic frames, and engages the constitutive rules of systems (Odora Hoppers, 2009).

In this second-generation indigenisation, the errors of the past are taken as starting points for new directions. For instance, it is recognised that during a lot of social change there is a period when, to establish the recognition and strength prerequisite to an effective presence in dialogue and discourse, there is a polarisation or over-reaction against the incumbent (in other words, defining oneself as being 'different from', as being important in the process of claiming space to define oneself through self-referencing). The force it takes against established and resistant hegemony to create this space is reflective of an exaggerated and confrontational antithesis, such as radical feminism, the anti-development lobby of the green movement, and, in the White settler colonies, the anti-White elements of the Black Power movement – each spawning an equally distorted backlash (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002; Odora Hoppers, 2002a).

With this new stream, there is a growing maturity of dialogue that is not the result of a paradigm shift, but is the shift itself. Thus, from the ignorance and depreciating ideology, along with social theories that claimed *terra nullius* (nobody's land) as a convenient rationalisation for colonisation and ill treatment, there is a need for honest recognition of the existence of indigenous knowledge systems. In fact, there is a need for those knowledge systems themselves, not just the recognition that they exist (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). The knowledge paradigms of the future are beginning by reaching out to those excluded and epistemologically disenfranchised, to move together towards a new synthesis.

In this synthesis, while 'empowerment' is usually more about resuming power (because power is never voluntarily relinquished), it is recognised that shifting of power, without a clear shift of paradigms of understanding that makes new propositions about the use of that power in a new dispensation, leads to

vicarious abuse of power by whoever is holding it – old or new (Venter, 1997). Co-optation without a shift in authority, power, and control is empty. Transfer of symbolic power has usually been about a change of actors without changes in the structures of privilege, power, and oppression or an understanding of the attitudes that sustained those systems, leaving new incumbents behaving 'just as the masters did', with new tensions emerging as fellow members from the previously oppressed groups continue to hold expectations of change and sociocultural justice. In this new stream, modernisation proceeds without following Western values (Huntington, 1996), time, or sequences, but rather with a restrengthening of core values from different traditions of knowledge and living. It is about equal access as citizens of a nation and of the world to the mainstream society, with an emphasis on equality – the right to participate on an equal footing in a negotiating partnership. This includes identifying and deconstructing the mechanisms of any form of assimilation or imposition of other cultures on others (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). It is about indigenous and marginalised peoples reclaiming the custodianship over their knowledge in public spaces along with the right to speak and to be determining agents of cooperative contemporary change and creative knowledge sharing of these knowledge systems.

The assumption of superiority of the West and its patronising obsession with facilitating the entry of traditional societies into the 'developed' world is hereby brought under sharp scrutiny. Western modernisation, progress, and thought are seen as a temporary epoch in human history, with both advantages and disadvantages, and one which must re-engage with the rest of the world. They must enter a mode of discourse and valorise modes of engagement – in deliberately more holistic and integrated conceptualisations of our ontologies and epistemologies – with cultures that have, fortunately, not been down the path of 'Westernisation'. In other words, it is a rapprochement of modern and older cultures, including modern culture's older roots, where each complementing the other opens up the possibility of a more viable future for humankind (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002; Huntington, 1996; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992.

A call to transformative action 3: Making generative leaders

The intended meaning of generative is 'making a difference', 'giving back', 'taking care' of your community and your planet. When society has been stable and predictable – that is, when one's community has been doing the same things the same way for generations – identity, intimacy, and generativity come easily, almost innocently. A person knows their place, the place of contemporaries, and the place of successors, for these were carefully taught to them (Kotre, 1975). But when a society is in flux, when understandings of what 'it is all about', when descriptions of one's role as a citizen, as a researcher, scientist, worker, or friend

turn over ever more rapidly, when major shifts in the continental plates are more than evident, then identity and choice of direction become matters of conscious deliberation. The generative adult stands between the past and the future to be built, and, looking into the future, makes that crucial distinction between merely producing more offspring or producing offspring that are not crippled. The generative adult not only welcomes change, but brings something into it, creating socially valuable work.

Today, out there in the margins, demands for new theories of freedom, expanded definitions of knowledge, sharpened understandings of the notion and practice of justice, as well as understandings of context, diversity, difference, and culture are emerging from the very coffins that had been custom built for them by modernisation, with the burial area policed in advance by the Western paradigm. And it is precisely here that Kwenda's (2003) notion of 'cultural justice' becomes both pertinent and instructive. He takes for his analogy the situation of Africa, which is very instructive for deepening our discussions here. In Africa, he argues, social cohesion does not depend on state sovereignty, liberal democracy, the advance of modernity, or the global economy, but upon the millions of African people willing to sacrifice what they 'take for granted', by bearing the uncomfortable burden of speaking and acting in unfamiliar cultural idioms within all areas of everyday life. Africans are not passive victims of cultural imperialism (although they have been subject to coercive interventions), but active agents in negotiating unfamiliar, strange, and alien cultural terrain.

Social cohesion, especially in the southern part of Africa, would easily collapse if Africans as the natural majority were not willing to suspend 'that which is taken for granted' and bear the burden of unfamiliar cultural transformations. Cultural justice therefore requires, at a minimum, that this burden of the unfamiliar is shared more equitably by people from different cultural backgrounds across society (Kwenda, 2003). In other words, cultural justice takes us from tolerance to respect in cultural politics, arguing that what is needed is functional, respectful coexistence. Respectful implies mutuality in paying attention, according regard and recognition, as well as taking seriously what the other regards as important. By functional, the intention is that coexistence is predicated on a degree of interaction that invokes the cultural worlds of the players, in essence what they, in their distinctive ways, take for granted.

Cultural injustice occurs when 'people are coerced or persuaded to submit to the burdensome condition of suspending – or permanently surrendering – what they naturally take for granted'. This means that, in reality, the subjugated person 'has no linguistic or cultural default drive – that critical minimum of ways, customs, manners, gestures, and postures that facilitate uninhibited, unselfconscious action' (Kwenda, 2003, p. 70).

Cultural justice denotes that 'the burden of constant self-consciousness is shared or at the very least recognised, and where possible rewarded'. The sharing part is very important because 'it is only in the mutual vulnerability that this entails that the meaning of intimacy and reciprocity in community can be discovered. It is in this sharing that on the one hand, cultural difference is transcended, and on the other, cultural arrogance', by which is meant that the disposition to see in other cultures not simply difference, but deficiency, is overcome (Kwenda, 2003, p. 70–71).

The cultural work that is entailed in constructing functional tolerance therefore goes beyond providing equal opportunities in, say, education, to the unclogging of hearts filled with resentment (Kwenda, 2003; Odora Hoppers, 2007, 2009).

Conclusion

Howard Richards (15 November, 2009), in a personal conversation with the author, Odora Hoppers, states that sometimes the entities that perform the functions and wield the authority are actually *not* persons, like pilots and doctors, but *words*. How can our thoughts and words be condensed into a point that can be turned into an arrow? How can we go beyond postcolonial theorisations to transformative interventions in knowledge production in the academy? In this chapter we have sought to deconstruct the issues of leadership, decolonisation, epistemological disenfranchisement, transformation of the academy, ethical identity reconstruction, and societal transformation as a methodology to turn the words into an energy needed for the building of a new human future. Beyond the natural resources of gold and silver in Africa, there is a motherlode of joy to be recognised. It is only blocked. Remove the block, and it will be a free-flowing source of energy. And that is the task we have taken on: to remove the blocks.

#AfricaGenuineFreedomLeadership

A call for leadership to lead Africa out of the morass of colonisation, decolonisation, and epistemological disenfranchisement to a state of genuine freedom is a monumental task. We must find complementarities to tackle the depth of change necessary.

Questions for discussion

1. How might we go beyond critique to transformative action?
2. How can we rethink questions of development, progress, sustainable human development, and the making of livelihoods in ways that are more conscious, more self-aware, and more alert to the conveniences and seductions of knowledges and practices which portend the end of humanity?

3. The authors call for us all to 'up our game' in terms of transformative leadership. How could you up your game as an individual and as part of a collective (whatever that collective may be)?

References

Béji, H. (2001). Tomorrow, women. Learning to live together: Towards a new social contract. In J. Bindé (Ed.). *Keys to the 21st century* (pp. 286–288). Paris, France: Unesco.

Béji, H. (2004). The culture of the inhuman. In J. Bindé (Ed.). *The future of values: 21st-century talks* (pp. 27–33). Paris, France: Unesco.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994/2004). By bread alone: Signs of violence in the mid-nineteenth century. In H. K. Bhabha (Ed.). *The location of culture* (pp. 284–302). London, United Kingdom: Routledge Classics.

Blum, L. (1991). Moral perception and particularity. *Ethics*, *101*(4), 701–725.

Conn, S. A. (1991). The self-world connection: Implications for mental health and psychotherapy. *Woman of Power: A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics*, 20, 71–77.

Fatnowna, S. & Pickett, H. (2002). The place of indigenous knowledge systems in the post-postmodern integrative paradigm shift. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.). *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 257–288). Cape Town, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Firebaugh, D. (n.d.). *Leadership*.
Retrieved from http://passionfire.com/Doug_Firebaugh_QuoteFire.pdf (no longer accessible).

Foucault, M. (1980). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse of language*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Hountondji, P. (Ed.). (1997). *Endogenous knowledge: Research trails.* Dakar, Senegal: Codesria.

Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Kies, B. M. (1953). *The contribution of the non-European peoples to civilisation.* Cape Town, South Africa: The Teachers' League of South Africa.

Knudtson, P. & Suzuki, D. (1992). *Wisdom of the elders*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Kotre, J. N. (1975, 20 December). Generative humanity. *America.*
Retrieved from https://www.johnkotre.com/images/generative_humanity.pdf.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2011). Leadership begins with an inner journey. *Leader to Leader*, *2011*(60), 22–27.

Kress, G. (1996). Representational resources and the production of subjectivity: Questions for the theoretical development of critical discourse analysis in a multi-cultural society. In C. Caldas-Coulthard & M. Coulthard (Eds). *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 15–31). London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Kwenda, C. V. (2003). Cultural justice: The pathway to reconciliation and social cohesion. In D. Chidester, P. Dexter, & W. James (Eds). *What holds us together: Social cohesion in South Africa* (pp. 67–82). Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Latour, B. (2013). *An enquiry into modes of existence: An anthropology of the moderns.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lindner, E. (2006). *Making enemies: Humiliation and international conflict*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International.

Merchant, C. (1980). *The death of nature: Women, ecology and the scientific revolution*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Nandy, A. (1983). *The intimate enemy: Loss and recovery of self under colonialism*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Nandy, A. (1997). Colonization of the mind. In M. Rahnema & V. Bawtree (Eds). *The post development reader* (pp. 168–177). London, United Kingdom: Zed Press.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2002a). Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a conceptual and methodological framework. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.). *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. 2–22). Cape Town, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2002b). Introduction. In C. A. Odora Hoppers (Ed.). *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: Towards a philosophy of articulation* (pp. vii–xiv). Cape Town, South Africa: New Africa Books.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2007). Knowledge, democracy and justice in a globalizing world. *Nordisk Pedagogik*, *27*(1), 38–53.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2008, 29 October). *Lifelong learning in Africa: Lessons, experiences and opportunities from cultural and cognitive justice*. Speech at the Unesco 21st Century Talks, Unesco, Paris, France. Retrieved from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000163618.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2009, January). *Lifelong learning and accelerated national development: Speaking truth to African society, and truth to humanity*. Keynote address at the University of Ghana, Institute of Adult Education, 60th Annual Year School, Accra, Ghana.

Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2012, March). *Ethical African leadership: We know the theories, but what is the task?* Presentation to the Unisa Pre-Senate Executive Committee, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.

Prakash, G. (1995). Introduction: After colonialism. In G. Prakash (Ed.). *After colonialism: Imperial histories and post-colonial displacements* (pp. 3–20). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rahnema, M. (1997). Introduction. In M. Rahnema & V. Bawtree (Eds). *The post development reader* (pp. ix–xix). London, United Kingdom: Zed Press.

Suzuki, D. & McConnel, A. (2006). *The sacred balance: Rediscovering our place in nature.* Vancouver, Canada: Greystone Books.

Venter, L. (1997). *When Mandela goes: The coming of South Africa's second revolution*. London, United Kingdom: Transworld Publishers.

Visvanathan, S. (2000). Democracy, plurality and the Indian university. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *35*(40), 3597–3606.

Visvanathan, S. (2001). *Culture, culture on the wall.* India Seminar. Retrieved from https://www.india-seminar.com/2001/501/501%20shiv%20visvanathan.htm.

Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. (2010). *The power of appreciative inquiry: A practical guide to positive change*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

26 *Tame, erode, rupture, or exit: Strategies for transformative change*

Sharlene Swartz

Overview

Erik Olin Wright described four kinds of transformation: anarchic change, which occurs when people choose to *exit* an existing system; *ruptural* or revolutionary change through protest or seizing power; interstitial change, which happens in the soft alternatives to existing policy and has the effect of *eroding* societies' harms for some; and symbiotic or negotiated change, which depends on *taming* existing systems, usually through legislative change. Transformative leadership aligns with the latter – bringing about change in social policies to alleviate the suffering of many rather than just a few. This chapter reflects on Wright's and others' theories and compares these with the strategies for change described in this book, and more broadly on the African continent. Drawing inspiration from both Desmond Tutu and Julius Nyerere, it challenges change-makers to focus on negotiated, policy-driven efforts to ensure that people's suffering is alleviated and that conditions encourage thriving.

Introduction

This book began by making a case for transformative change that needs to do far more than merely help people beat the odds. Instead, it argued, real transformative change needs to deconstruct and reconstruct social and structural systems that ultimately help people to change the odds of thriving in life. This 'changing the odds' rather than 'beating the odds' kind of leadership needs to allow *most* people the opportunity to succeed and to thrive. This means that transformative change is at its heart political – it has to engage with laws, policies, people, and practices that cause suffering, and enact new ways of being and doing that allow the opposite: that is, thriving instead of suffering. This is not party politics, but politics in the sense of dealing with *polis* – a body of people in society. Transformative leadership needs, therefore, to be about courage, vision, and expertise. It requires *courage* to take on entrenched injustices, *vision* to know what can be done, and *expertise* to bring about deep systemic change. Leaders need to be able to see clearly what must be in place to achieve this goal of human thriving, must have the courage to address that which prevents it, and must have the skills, ability, and expertise to marshal these skills to effect change.

Chapter 1 of this book presented a working framework towards transformative leadership, one that included action motivated by an ethical and moral purpose to bring about just solutions and social changes and one that placed people at the centre of its way of leading, so that African thinkers, in the words of Stephen Bantu Biko (1987, p. 47), can offer a final gift to the world from the African continent: 'giving the world a more human face'. This people-centred framework of collaboration, consultation, and empowerment in leadership encourages both individual and collective agency. Such an understanding of transformative leadership needs to act at the levels of institution and organisation, social system, and systemic structure. Of course, it is possible to lead among friends, peers, family, and in local communities, but it is only when leaders bring about change at organisational, institutional, system, and structural levels that widespread, deep change becomes possible.

The change needed on the African continent

In Chapter 19, De Kock and Nyamnjoh address the notion of 'a crisis narrative' that seems to dominate accounts of leadership on the African continent. To be sure, there is much wrong on the continent, from corrupt and self-serving leadership to multiple examples of sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, ethnic favouritism in politics, and the impoverishing tale of aid and charity, among many others. Much has been written about these issues. This book has engaged with these issues as contextual, as part of the history of the continent, and, while not glossing over them, has offered something different – ideas and strategies for new ways of acting based on a moral understanding of transformative leadership.

The chapters in this book are more than correctives; they represent an attempt by African scholars to address the failures of leadership without resorting to perpetual crisis narratives or Afro-pessimism. Each chapter also represents an approach to leadership that seeks to go beyond superficial Band-Aids to consider how the many institutions of our public and private lives need to change. Each chapter offers analysis and questions for further reflection so that thinking around which institutions and systems must change is deepened and further contextualised. How should the structures of courts, the gendered location of power, the overwhelming presence of transnational companies in our economies, and the policing of private relationships be restructured? All these domains, and many others, require transformative action. There is much to be done, and transformative leaders need to take action in every institutional, organisational, and structural aspect of our common polity. This book aims to inspire further analysis that addresses these issues in greater detail, and to offer strategies for change in multiple areas. Change, however, is complicated, and theories of change have a long and rich history.

A brief history of change and its theories

There are several theories of change that have been proposed across the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and political science. Charles Darwin's (1871) evolutionary theory shows that change happens gradually over time through a process of natural selection, with the organism or, in this case, ideas that are best suited to their current environment thriving. Kurt Lewin (1947) describes how change happens only when it is actively managed and when opportunities to begin and embed change are taken. Social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977) postulates that change happens as actions are observed and emulated over time, and when actions become normalised and 'everyday'.

Most change theorists agree on one foundational principle – change is complex, seldom linear, and takes time to become embedded in social practices and systems. The popular aphorism 'Change happens gradually and then all at once', arising from Ernest Hemingway's book *The Sun Also Rises* (and referring to how bankruptcy occurs), is often quoted to show how change is chaotic and unpredictable (Gleick, 2008). Kauffman (1996) has popularised the notion of complexity in change in what he calls 'complex adaptive systems theory' – change involves multiple interactions *between* agents in a system that may lead to changes *within* the system as a whole.

Around 30 years ago, the term 'theories of change' began to be used in the social sciences (Bickman, 1987; Connell, Kubisch, Schorr, & Weiss, 1995). In simple terms, theories of change are conceptual representations and theoretical assumptions that explain how and why activities of an initiative (such as projects, programmes, organisations) generate particular changes (Mason & Barnes, 2007). Popularised by those attempting to evaluate research, community, and policy initiatives aiming to bring about change, theories of change have enabled activists, researchers, and policy-makers to move beyond *hoping* for change to *acting* to bring about change.

Recent contributions to 'how change happens'

Four books, all entitled *How Change Happens* (Crutchfield, 2018; Green, 2016; Krznaric, 2007; Sunstein, 2019) address the debate from various vantage points: Sunstein (2019) from the point of view of behavioural economics, predominantly in health; Crutchfield (2018) from the perspective of social activism and social movements in development contexts; Green (2016) by foregrounding the role of power as a central player in change; and Krznaric (2007) by focusing on the process of change by asking a series of processual questions.

Cass Sunstein (2019) is probably best known for his work on 'nudge theory' (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008): the idea that through small actions people can be

moved or 'nudged' towards 'doing the right thing' – that is, adopting behaviour that is healthy and in their best interest. Examples of nudge theory in practice include removing unhealthy foods in grocery checkout queues and adding nutritional values and warning labels on food and tobacco products. Sunstein (2019) also shows how these various nudges can lead to tipping points in behaviour – when shifts in attitudes occur that tip the scale in favour of new behaviour or actions. Examples of these shifts include a global decrease in smoking that was thought impossible a generation ago, the growing uptake of vegetarianism due to growing awareness of environmental degradation and climate change, and decreased use of plastics globally. Sunstein (2019) shows how change often happens in small, incremental steps until a tipping point is reached. These incremental steps can occur through legal action, social movements, and grassroots activism, and the most effective change often comes from a combination of these different strategies. He also examines the role of decision-makers and institutions in bringing about change and argues that change is often driven by individuals or small groups who are able to mobilise others to support their cause. One criticism of nudge theory is that it aims at bringing about change without the consent of the actors involved.

Development expert Duncan Green (2016) addresses the issues of power and interconnected systems in his take on how change happens. He argues that since systems are interconnected, multiple issues need to be addressed simultaneously for meaningful change to occur. He describes various development contexts in which social activism fails because it focuses on a single issue rather than on the ecosystem of the struggle. He draws attention to how social change happens frequently when individuals mobilise others to support their cause. He describes various examples of successful social movements across various parts of the world and highlights the importance of decision-makers in bringing about change – both those who are social activists and those with whom activists engage in institutions where change is required. Green (2016) also addresses the difficulties associated with maintaining change and overcoming resistance from powerful actors once change has begun, as well as the need to build coalitions to ensure that change 'sticks'. He offers some ways to engage those who benefit from the status quo (doing nothing) so that change efforts have a better chance of success.

Leslie Crutchfield (2018) also considers the role of social movements in bringing about change, but focuses on the importance of 'changing hearts' rather than using only rational argument to bring about change, including with policy-makers. She addresses some of the serendipitous drivers of change, such as timing, luck, and cultural shifts, that affect the likelihood of social movements succeeding. She contends that social movements that create and leverage power *with* others rather than exerting power *over* others are more likely to succeed. Like Green (2016), she lauds the role of coalitions and alliances with a wide

range of stakeholders to achieve change. Crutchfield (2018) further emphasises the importance of strategic planning and the use of evidence-based tactics, such as data-driven decision-making and experimentation, to achieve change. Finally, she examines the role of technology and social media in social movements, arguing that they can be powerful tools for organising and mobilising people, and diffusing change through communication.

With a focus on the process of change, Roman Krznaric (2007) practically invites those who would be change-makers to ask a series of questions when embarking upon action to bring about change:

- What was the situation before the change, and what is the desired outcome?
- Who needs to be involved in the change if it is to provide alternatives that endure? (individuals, social groups, institutions of state, institutions of society, global governance institutions)
- What strategies should be used to bring about the change? (changing individual behaviour, reshaping understanding, grassroots participation, approaching people of influence, creating alliances, forming a movement, mobilising, communicating)
- How might the current context affect the desired change? (power, freedom, inequality)
- What is the process or pathway of change?

These four books draw on real-world experiences in the fields of health, development, and business to show how change can be effected. The missing element in these practice-oriented books, and the many theories that Darwin, Bandura, Lewin, Kauffman, and others propose, is a more overarching mechanism of change. Are there multiple ways in which change happens? What are the key drivers in each? What are the outcomes for each strategy? Here, the late Berkeley sociologist Erik Olin Wright offers a framework that answers these questions and bridges the divide between practice and theory to show how different strategies can drive change producing various outcomes – not all transformative in nature.

Engaging the work of Erik Olin Wright to decide on strategies for change

Wright (2010) differentiated between the aims of *critical* social science and *emancipatory* social science. Critical social science pinpoints and diagnoses how human suffering has come about due to existing institutions and structures, he argues, whereas emancipatory social science offers ways in which these existing institutions and social structures can be transformed to alleviate human suffering. This latter aim, that of emancipatory social science, maps most easily onto the notion of transformative leadership, the notion with which this book has engaged extensively. For Wright, transformation is emancipatory – it brings about freedom.

Transformative leadership too is emancipatory in nature. It seeks to offer people freedom and a respite from suffering, and invites them into a life where flourishing is possible.

Over the course of his career, Wright has written extensively on class and inequality (1997, 2005) and how change happens in a capitalist society (2010, 2013, 2019). His theory of change emphasises the importance of developing and strengthening democratic alternatives to existing structures. He argues that instead of focusing solely on overthrowing the capitalist system, social movements should work to build alternative institutions, such as worker cooperatives and community-controlled organisations, that can gradually replace capitalist ones.

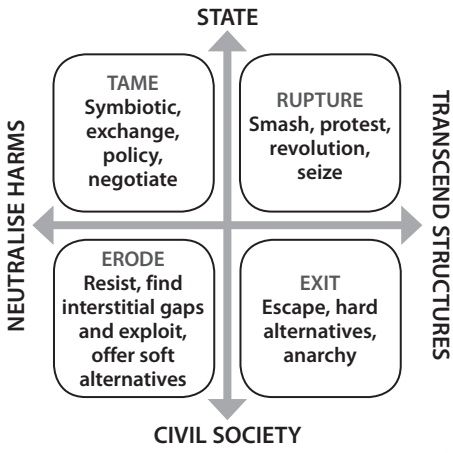
His work analysed multiple institutions in Northern and Southern contexts, asking the questions many continue to ask: How is this other world that we want possible? What are we aiming for and how are we going to get there? Central to Wright's thinking is the need for a vision, or a utopia (Wright, 2010, 2013) to guide change. For Wright, this utopia is a realisable rather than impossible dream; something towards which change efforts can aspire.

Wright (2010) identifies four key strategies to bring about change and build these alternative institutions to transform society (Figure 26.1). According to Wright, the outcome of change must be to address harm. This can be done along a continuum of neutralising the harms of existing structures and institutions that cause suffering, to, at its best or most utopian, transcend and replace these institutions and structures. This is the horizontal axis indicated in Figure 26.1.

Wright also speaks of the actors involved in change which range from civil society, with limiting outcomes, through to involving the state and its primary actors – the vertical axis in Figure 26.1. For Wright, change is always collective, never individual, because it is within collective systems that human suffering and flourishing occur.

Within these broad parameters – of aims and actors – Wright describes four strategies for change: taming, rupturing or smashing, eroding and resisting, and exiting or escaping the system. Taming and rupturing the system relies on engagement with the state, while resisting and exiting the system rely on civil society action. Taming and resisting tend to have the effect of neutralising the harms of systems and structures, whereas rupturing and exiting the system have the potential to remake the systems and structures that cause suffering in society. Each will be considered in turn, not to place them in opposition to each other, but to ask how each may be used productively to bring about social and systemic change on our continent, in our communities, and in our specific contexts.

Figure 26.1 *Four strategies for how change can happen*



Source: Author, based on Wright, 2010

Taming the system – negotiated, symbiotic change

According to Wright, taming the system is a change strategy through symbiotic relationships between people and the state working towards policy change in a negotiated manner. Ultimately, this kind of change aims to create regulatory frameworks that limit the power and excesses of institutions that have the potential to result in suffering. Examples of these symbiotic relationships of change include labour laws, environmental regulations, and consumer protection laws. This change is often also called symbiotic change, because not everyone gets what they want, but there is agreement about actions that neutralise harms for those who are suffering and ensure some incentives for those who depend on the status quo (or current legislation). Competing agendas are thus accommodated in what could be called exchange-based transformation. Market regulations, media regulations, the provision of some health and education services (some free and some paid for), and some social support all form part of taming the system. Here, change for the powerless depends on some reward for the powerful. In the case of social grants, for example, this occurs with some form of guarantee to limits in taxation for the wealthy. Social democracies around the world frequently operate on this system of compromise.

Eroding and resisting the system – interstitial change

Resistance to the system, according to Wright, can result in erosion of these systems and the successful creation of alternatives:

> Interstitial strategies have the capacity to create alternative institutions that weaken [the power of existing institutions]…existing constraints can be softened to the point that a more accelerated process of

> interstitial transformation can take place…There will thus be a kind of cycle of extension of social empowerment and stagnation as successive limits are encountered and eroded…In effect, the system-hybridization process generated by interstitial strategies would have reached a tipping point in which the logic of the system as a whole had changed in ways that open up the possibilities for continued social empowerment. (Wright, 2010, p. 235)

In this way, interstitial change can transform the systems that cause human suffering and in best-case outcomes results in the creation of alternative institutions. Examples of these new institutions include worker cooperatives, community-controlled organisations, and public banks. Often driven by NGOs and social movements, further examples of eroding the system include how regimes of social grants have been transformed into unconditional basic income grants in countries such as Brazil, and in more limited ways in India, Iran, Finland, and Namibia.

Wright describes these kinds of change as initially happening in the interstices – the spaces between our cells filled with fluid that make it possible for us to grow, for dead skin to be replaced with healthy cells, and for healing to occur when damage takes place. His metaphor is apt, since working at resisting the system by eroding it is, for Wright, neither violent nor disruptive. Instead, it occurs when civil society takes opportunities to propose alternatives and models them by finding gaps in the system, achieving small successes that can then be used to transform the current systems and institutions through policy and legislative change. Wright contrasts these 'soft' alternatives with 'hard' alternatives that aim to produce change by smashing or rupturing existing systems.

Rupturing or smashing the system – disruptive or revolutionary change

Rupturing the system takes the form of sudden, often violent change, and refers to the many examples of protest and political pressure used to bring about regime change. According to Wright (2010, p. 235), '[the] revolutionary anarchist strategic scenario argues that eventually hard limits are encountered that cannot themselves be transformed from within the system'. To rupture the system is to smash or tear down what was and remove the structures that keep it in place. Sadly, the outcome of rupture is seldom the immediate reduction of suffering, since violent rupture takes time to produce stable change. Examples of violent rupture include the communist revolution, multiple socialist revolutions, frequent overthrowing of governments by military dictatorships, and wars of decolonisation.

Sometimes revolution is non-violent and takes the form of a quantum leap or shift in ideology, such as has been experienced in the application of technology

and in environmentally friendly technologies. The blockchain revolution and the green revolution are examples of non-violent rupture. On the African continent, the revolution in mobile money technology has helped those previously held hostage by exchange control rules, exorbitant charges incurred in moving money, and the inability to send and receive remittances globally. This rupture also leapfrogged several stages the rest of the world had to traverse due to slow incremental changes in technology – from moving from the gold standard in finance, to cheques, to credit cards, to moving money through encrypted apps and blockchains. Similarly, during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the world experienced a revolution in online, virtual communication. The world went from communicating virtually sometimes, to only communicating virtually. Of course, this sudden transition exposes the huge inequalities across the Global South and the African continent, not just in technology, but in access to data and the electricity needed to power technology devices. Ultimately, the aim of smashing the system is to quickly transcend the harms of the systems and structures of society. The change, however, is seldom felt immediately nor universally, because new forms of governance (or technology) take time to implement and frequently fail to reform existing systems.

Exiting the system – escape or anarchic change

Wright's (2010) final strategy refers to those who exit or escape the system. This involves creating spaces within society that operate on a different basis, such as alternative economic models or intentional separatist communities. For some who exit the system, it is a quiet departure, while for others it is accompanied by rupturing the system. Examples of those who exit the system are religious, cultural, and ideological collectives such as the Amish of Pennsylvania, the hippies of the 1960s, nomadic farmers, or high-earning individuals who move to tax havens. Exiting the system is frequently accompanied by establishing new conventions for the group or espousing anarchy. It could also be argued that exiting the system does not bring about change or reduce human suffering, except for a select few. This form of change invites the question of whether change that only affects a select few, rather than maximising flourishing for the majority, is real transformative change. While Wright refers to 'exit' in his *Envisioning Real Utopias* (2010), it is clear that he does not view it as a legitimate strategy for change, despite the fact that some choose it.

Evaluating these strategies for change in multiple contexts

In the opening chapter (Swartz, this volume) the distinction was made between transactional, transformational, and transformative leadership. It was argued that transformative leadership takes as its unit of influence wider social, political, and material issues. Key in each of the chapters in this book has been the argument

that transformative change, drawing on the influence of Paulo Freire (1970) and Carolyn Shields (2010), is change that must always and ultimately be concerned with changing the systems that result in human suffering so that human beings may flourish. Drawing on Archbishop Desmond Tutu's injunction that 'there comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in' (cited in Ledwith, 2015, p. 134), each chapter has tried to show how systemic change, while difficult, is possible.

Bringing together Wright's (2010) framework and the quest for systemic change, the next section of this chapter attempts to show how transformative change is linked to each of Wright's strategies for change (see especially his 2019 book for a fuller explanation of strategies for change) as well as how each modality is interlinked with others. For example, revolutionary change can bring about systemic change, but it is also linked to anarchic exit. Erosive legislated change, while bringing about symbiotic and systemic change, can also lead to revolution. In fact, multiple permutations are possible. The following analysis uses three cases: the documentary *The Spirit of Kanju*, written about in Chapter 4 (Mahali & Paramoer, this volume), this book, and the current state of leadership on the African continent. The analysis explores what avenues for change are pursued and asks which strategies are more inclined to bring about systemic change.

The Spirit of Kanju *documentary*

The documentary *The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa* (Mahali, Swartz, Cook, Paramoer, & Alumni Behind the Lens Team, 2022) features research participants from the Imprint of Education research study (Swartz, Mahali, Juan, & The Imprint of Education Research Team, 2022). Nineteen young study participant filmmakers were tasked with showcasing leadership on the African continent, both by telling their own stories and by interviewing those they knew and admired and who portrayed some aspect of transformative leadership. The elders, artists, religious leaders, educators, community leaders, business leaders, politicians, and activists they chose to interview all had compelling stories to tell. Looking at each leader's actions and strategies using Wright's framework presents a clear pattern.

Of the 15 leaders interviewed in the documentary, 6 can be classified as attempting to erode or resist the system. Ann Tasamba is a university lecturer in environmental energy in Uganda who spends her time outside the university engaged in helping community members acquire land, sustain biodiversity, and learn the financial skills necessary to make a success of their projects. Ann, in the words of the young filmmaker who interviewed her, offers a 'bridge that will cover the knowledge divide' in her work. This is clearly an example of eroding the current system while not yet offering alternatives to the policy that makes land acquisition difficult or impossible in the first place. Reverend Canon Gideon

Byamugisha, a protestant minister and the first religious leader in Africa to publicly declare his HIV status, has set up an NGO that offers support for people living with HIV and AIDS and has been instrumental in changing attitudes towards the illness from both church and community perspectives. Others, through the NGOs they have founded, tell positive stories about the African continent in an effort to erode negative stereotypes (David Boanuh, Beautiful Stories, Ghana), use dance and play to teach life skills to youth in Nairobi slums (Francula Odhiambo, Cheza Cheza, Kenya), have set up a model farm to make agriculture attractive to youth (Joseph Male, Avale Group, Uganda), and have founded a school specifically aimed at empowering girls (Victoria Gichuhi, Daraja Academy, Kenya). These are all examples of creating soft alternatives to diminish human suffering and advance flourishing. It is clear, however, that this erosion does not bring about systemic change, but more often individual and sometimes community change.

Four leaders in the documentary could be said to be working towards taming the system, bringing about policy shifts, and promoting negotiated change. Boniface Mwangi from Kenya has been advocating for clean politics and has spoken out for justice and fighting corruption. Cynthia Ablordey, a 17-year-old high school prefect in Ghana at the time the film was made, has been advocating for and achieving changes in her school around physical sanitation facilities and menstrual hygiene supplies for young women. Prince Adu-Appiah, the CEO of a non-profit organisation in Ghana, advocates for 'connecting to our history as an African people' in order to build self-esteem and change people's lives. Sabella Kedir is a fashion designer and model in Ethiopia who lives with severe physical disability, which she does not allow to get in the way of her ambition. She has advocated for inclusion of people with disabilities across multiple industries. Their advocacy has resulted in some policy change in their respective countries.

Four other leaders in *Kanju* can be said to be disrupting the system. Their revolutions are all environmental or technological in nature: Freda Yawson in Ghana is championing young women's involvement in robotics; Puleng Tsie from South Africa is championing girls' involvement in science and technology (STEM) education; Tawana Kupe, the former vice chancellor of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, is promoting the digital revolution for students; and Malassen Hamida leads the Kibera Green Movement in Kenya, carrying out projects and advocacy on solid waste management, and public education on environmental conservation. While these disruptions remain modest, they have smashed the glass ceiling for young women often excluded from STEM education and helped to enable access to both the green and tech revolutions for those living in slums. These examples could be said to be bringing about systemic change, and are thus transformative by definition – even though they are not national initiatives.

In *Kanju*, there is only one example of change that represents an exit from the system. Zumra Nuru is the leader of the Awarambe community in Ethiopia that focuses on self-sustainability through a number of enterprises, and runs a school and farm. His mantra is one of love, humanity, and self-sufficiency, values that Nuru believes sets the community apart from those from whom they have exited. While exit benefits those within its embrace, it has little impact on the suffering or flourishing of those outside its community.

It is more difficult to place Emmanuel Niringiyimana's actions. He is a 25-year-old unemployed man who dug a 7 km road single-handedly to connect two villages in rural Rwanda, so that people from his village could get quicker access to medical care. It would seem that he is both working to erode the system and tame it. His work has come to the attention of local political leaders and may result in government getting involved to build on his initiative. Now, while his work is laudable, it is alleviating suffering for some, but not changing the system of roads or access to health care.

What is clear in all 15 examples of leaders making change happen is that when 'state-driven social welfare, and economic opportunities have failed to materialise, ordinary people – everyday leaders – take ownership of their fate' (Mahali & Paramoer, Chapter 4, this volume, p. 60). Furthermore, these young filmmakers were keen to show that 'African leaders work to *solve* their own problems, that they *create* their own things, and that they *serve* others' (Mahali & Paramoer, Chapter 4, this volume, p. 64). While Niringiyimana's digging of a 7 km road, and then planning to build a lake and ensure electricity for an entire village, does not engage the key question that Tutu admonishes people to ask – why people are without roads, healthcare, and water in this case – his actions have brought about change for many in his community. A key question is whether Niringiyimana's leadership is transformative. The answer is that it has the potential to become transformative if his advocacy with local political leaders succeeds.

So, while many examples of leadership in *Kanju* could be labelled as only reducing suffering for individuals and communities, rather than achieving the large systems change characterised by transformative leadership aimed at unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity, justice, and freedom (Swartz, Chapter 1, this volume), they remain useful. As Mahali and Paramoer (Chapter 4, this volume, p. 71) conclude, '… leadership is complex. It is everyday and exceptional, human and extraordinary, innovative and responsive, and requires working together, but *also starting alone*' (emphasis added). Furthermore, returning to Wright's (2010) classification of change strategies, it is taming and rupturing actions that tend to have the most transformative potential. Eroding actions have a place since they alleviate suffering, but they are not transformative by definition.

In this book

In many of the chapters in this book, authors integrate past practices and consider the cultural heritages that animate action as well as the political heroes, villains, and historical thinkers that have encouraged current leadership practices and warned against others. Through a series of nuanced case studies, the authors set out how contemporary leaders on the African continent navigate complexity, chaos, struggle, temptation, controversy, and roadblocks, in a context that is both emerging from colonial exploitation and domination, and suffering from a myriad of postcolonial ills and aspirations. Many shine a spotlight on the anticipated challenges facing leadership in the future. These include the rapid social, technological, and cultural shifts, and struggles around gender, mobility, and commercial practices already sweeping the continent. Multiple chapters offer markers for the way ahead, based primarily on the notion of ubuntu, for a new generation who must lead and find their own path to the future. How does Wright's framework for change map onto these chapters?

Several chapters show how working at the interstices can bring about change in, for example, scholarship and leadership programmes (see Klugman, Chapter 15; Mwamelo, Chapter 16; Adigun, Chapter 17; Chikane & Atouguia, Chapter 18); in a forward-looking ethics of leadership (Odora Hoppers & Soudien, Chapter 25); in critiquing traditional forms of leadership (Mnqwazi, Chapter 7); in the work of Maggie Barankitse who worked tirelessly in Burundi through an NGO she created to resist current systems (Birantamije, Chapter 6); and in an autoethnographic account of how one student resisted patriarchy in an international educational institution (Mwale, Chapter 10). These chapters can be said to be describing eroding and resisting strategies for change, and while having the potential for transformative change, are not yet achieving the systemic change at which transformative action aims.

Five chapters address policy change in some form. Three deal with education: Oanda (Chapter 11) calls for policy reform around higher education access, and resourcing to promote greater diversity and inclusion; Pusumane and Auerbach Jahajeeah (Chapter 14) offer strategies to renegotiate relationships between students and faculty members in light of the decolonial turn; and Juan and Hannan (Chapter 12) reflect on the role of fee-paying versus no-fee schools in driving school reform.

One chapter deals with the role that could be played by the African ethic of ubuntu in bringing about legislative change (Chivasa, Chapter 8), and another critiques what Ellen Johnson Sirleaf both was able to do and failed to do to bring about change in Liberia during her presidency (Badaru & Adu, Chapter 20).

Six chapters address the strategy of rupture, whether through revolution or protests. While the African continent has a history of violent revolution, both

as a result of struggles against colonial domination and in struggles for power in postcolonial times, few chapters referred to these political revolutions (see for example, Ampomah, Chapter 21, on Jerry John Rawlings from Liberia). This topic is definitely an important one and ought to receive further attention. However, other chapters show how student leaders have attempted to bring about change through protest (Oyori Ogechi, Chapter 13) and, through radical ideas, to address inclusion for people with disabilities (Muzite, Chapter 22). By far the most significant contributions in this book concerning disruptive change address those in technology. Chetty (Chapter 5) shows how blockchain can be used to disrupt existing systems of banking and bureaucracy to secure financial inclusion for many, while both Mokoena (Chapter 23) and Biljohn (Chapter 24) address the disruptive role of ubuntu in dealing with technological innovations.

Finally, four chapters address multiple strategies of change, as Wright describes them. Mahali and Paramoer (Chapter 4) describe the outcome of students' understanding of leadership in the documentary *Kanju* – as previously described. De Kock and Nyamnjoh (Chapter 19) describe multiple manifestations of political leadership on the African continent – the good, the bad and the ugly – and warns against 'crisis narratives' and single stories. Makgamatha (Chapter 3), shows how precolonial leadership cannot be uniformly valorised or criticised, but can be shown to resist, tame, and rupture the status quo. Moletsane (Chapter 9) shows the many strategies women have used in bringing about change, which can also, according to Wright's framework, be described as encompassing all four strategies of taming, eroding, rupturing, and exiting.

None of the chapters in this book addresses the issue of exit or escaping human suffering. Such a strategy, as described above, has limited potential for transformative change, since it operates in a closed community rather than aiming for systemic change.

On the African continent

In 1989 Julius Nyerere, then president of Tanzania, produced a report called *The Challenge to the South* (1990), the result of a lengthy consultation with leaders of Global South countries (most of which were formerly colonised countries). The report outlines a number of features that needed to be in place for countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to take their place as equals in the world. His charter made it clear that while Southern countries frequently lag behind in terms of development, the South needs to take responsibility for its own development, since it is the South that suffers in the absence of change. To do so, he argued, Southern countries needed to learn from each other, strengthen their capacities for change, promote their own well-being, and find their own solutions to their problems. Nyerere was adamant that Southern countries should not wait to be

given opportunities to bring about change: they needed to create these change opportunities for themselves. In order to create these changes, it is critical that people who consider themselves to be transformative leaders step up, speak out, are not spoken for, and engage in considered ways in order to bring about the change they envisage. To do so requires confidence, good communication, and a large amount of hard work.

Krznaric's (2007) questions, described previously, invite reflection on past campaigns for change and also offer guidance for future action on the African continent and beyond. They expand Wright's ideas of four kinds of strategies for change (his question #3 especially: 'What strategies should be used to bring about change?') and bookend them with questions about what the expected outcome is and who needs to be included in these strategies, how context will affect the envisaged change, and what steps are needed to bring about the desired change. Krznaric also echoes Nyerere's call for solidarity across contexts and taking responsibility for change.

There is much to learn about processes of change. Change seldom proceeds in a straight line; instead, it is frequently convoluted and deeply dependent on circumstances. Change depends on contested values and goals, unforeseen contingencies, and emergent system interactions. Social activism (Crutchfield, 2018), behavioural 'nudges' (Sunstein, 2019), and being able to interpret and anticipate the ebbs and flows of power (Green, 2016) are all critical components of transformative change. Krznaric (2007) alerts us to the importance of communication in processes of intentional change: how to diffuse change (see also Rogers, 2010), ensure its longevity, and grow the circle of those involved in it. Here the communication skills required of transformative leaders, at multiple levels, cannot be overstated. Communication done with humility, creativity, compassion, and excellence is critical.

Conclusion

Transformative leadership is not content to change the lives of individuals without also unearthing, problematising, and dismantling those structures of power and privilege that act against equity and freedom and that necessitate the need for change or help in the first place. To 'stop just pulling people out of the river and find out why they are falling in', as Desmond Tutu put it (cited in Ledwith, 2015, p. 134), is to pursue transformative leadership – leadership concerned with systemic rather than local or individual change, leadership directed at just rather than self-serving outcomes, and leadership that intentionally seeks to address institutional and systemic challenges. In Wright's terminology, while exiting and eroding bring about change for some, it is through taming and rupturing current systems that deep change is experienced.

This chapter (and this book) has offered multiple examples of how change happens and can happen across multiple fields. It has traced pathways across history and various academic disciplines, and noted with some enthusiasm the four ways in which Erik Olin Wright describes how change can be achieved. In doing so it becomes clear that there are multiple pathways to change, that change is complex, and that change includes various kinds of actors – from individuals, to organisations, institutions, and systems. Overall, Wright offers a conceptual framework through which to both conceive strategies for change and analyse change that has occurred in the past. While Wright does not prescribe a particular form of action, he is clear that emancipatory social scientists ought to employ strategies for change that ultimately alleviate human suffering on the one hand and transform the institutions and systems that cause this suffering on the other.

The examples cited in this book and *The Spirit of Kanju* documentary show very clearly how strategies for action frequently accumulate around eroding the system – for some, bringing about change in interstitial spaces. While eroding the system is laudable, these efforts at change do not go far enough to neutralise the harms of systemic oppression. The task of taming or rupturing the system is far more easily spoken about than achieved. In addition, both taming and rupturing require alternative models to inform and inspire the policy change and disruption necessary to change people's lives. Clearly, understanding the many ways in which change happens is important. Ultimately, however, it is the courageous and skilled action of transformative leaders that is needed to negotiate change in systems of suffering and oppression or, where necessary, to rupture existing practices. Ultimately, even rupture requires the next step of implementing negotiated change.

#ChangeHappensTameErodeRuptureExit

Transformative leaders bring about change through modelling alternatives and negotiating new ways of doing things through policy change, as well as by rupturing the existing status quo.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the linkages between erode, tame, rupture, and exit as forms of change?
2. Think about a project you in which you are currently involved. How would you describe it? Is it revolutionary and disruptive, eroding and symbiotic, or does it offer soft or hard alternatives?
3. Think of a current problem you can see in your country or community. What approach might best bring about the change that is needed?

References

Bandura, A. & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bickman, L. (1987). The functions of program theory. In L. Bickman (Ed.). *Using program theory in evaluation* (pp. 5–18). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Biko, S. (1987). *I write what I like*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann.

Connell, J. P., Kubisch, A. C., Schorr, L. B., & Weiss, C. H. (1995). *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods, and contexts*. Queenstown, MD: Aspen Institute.

Crutchfield, L. R. (2018). *How change happens: Why some social movements succeed while others don't*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Darwin, C. (1871). *The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex*. London, United Kingdom: William Clowes & Son.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Herder and Herder.

Gleick, J. (2008). *Chaos: Making a new science*. London, United Kingdom: Penguin Books.

Green, D. (2016). *How change happens*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Kauffman, S. (1996). *At home in the universe: The search for the laws of self-organization and complexity*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Krznaric, R. (2007). *How change happens: Interdisciplinary perspectives for human development*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxfam GB.

Ledwith, M. (2015). *Community development in action: Putting Freire into practice*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Policy Press.

Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science; social equilibria and social change. *Human Relations*, *1*(1), 5–41.

Mahali, A., Swartz, S., Cook, F. (Producers), Paramoer, E. (Director), & Alumni Behind the Lens Team. (2022). *The spirit of Kanju: Leaders transforming Africa* [Motion picture]. South Africa: CutToBlack Media in association with the Human Sciences Research Council and the Mastercard Foundation.

Mason, P. & Barnes, M. (2007). Constructing theories of change: Methods and sources. *Evaluation 13*(2), 151–170.

Nyerere, J. K. (Ed.). (1990). *The challenge to the South: The report of the South Commission*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Rogers, E. M. (2010). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.

Sunstein, C. R. (2019). *How change happens*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Swartz, S., Mahali, A., Juan, A., & The Imprint of Education Research Team. (2022). *The Imprint of Education study: A longitudinal cohort study of African alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. Year 1 research report*. Cape Town, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council.

Thaler, R. & Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wright, E. O. (1997). *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, E. O. (Ed.). (2005). *Approaches to class analysis*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. London, United Kingdom: Verso Books.

Wright, E. O. (2013). Transforming capitalism through real utopias. *American Sociological Review*, *78*(1), 1–25.

Wright, E. O. (2019). *How to be an anticapitalist in the twenty-first century*. London, United Kingdom: Verso Books.

Contributors

Ajibola Adigun (MA) is a Mandela Rhodes scholar who holds a master's degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa. He is a research assistant at the African Youth Leadership Study, and democracy and governance specialist at the Policy Innovation Centre of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group. He is Nigerian.

Emmanuel Olusola Adu (PhD) is a professor in the School of General and Continuing Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare. His research interests include economics education, politics, teacher education and development, curriculum studies, ICT in education, and educational studies. He is Nigerian.

Emmanuel Ampomah (MA) is a PhD (political studies) candidate at Queen's University, Canada. Prior to joining Queen's, he was a young African research fellow at the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. He holds a master's degree in international relations from the University of Cape Town (where he was a Mastercard Foundation Scholar). Emmanuel is from Ghana.

Monique Atouguia (BA Hons) is a policy analyst, writer, researcher, and advocate from South Africa. Monique has worked and published on a range of policy and implementation recommendations, including the governance gap on the African continent and driving a nature-positive economy. She currently works for NatureFinance.

Jess Auerbach Jahajeeah (PhD) is an associate professor at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Stanford University, and is an Iso Lomso Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study. Jess is South African.

Kazeem Ajasa Badaru (PhD) is a Nigerian and postdoctoral fellow at the University of South Africa. He obtained his doctorate in political education from the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. His research interests include political studies, intergovernmental relations, political education, teacher education, education and security, and sustainable development goals.

Maréve Biljohn (PhD) is a senior lecturer and the head of the Department of Public Administration and Management at the University of the Free State in South Africa. She holds a PhD in public administration and management from the same university and is an NRF-rated researcher. She has worked in the public sector, and is South African.

Gérard Birantamije (PhD) was a postdoctoral researcher at Université Libre de Bruxelles and an invited professor of political science at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Science in Rwanda. He worked on international peacekeeping and peacebuilding policies, especially those related to state reconstruction. Gérard, who passed away in August 2023, was Burundian.

Krish Chetty (MPhil) is a senior research manager in the Equitable Education and Economies division of the HSRC. He holds a master's degree in knowledge and information management from the University of Stellenbosch and is currently pursuing a PhD in Computing Sciences at Nelson Mandela University. Krish is South African.

Rekgotsofetse Chikane (PhD) is a lecturer at the Wits School of Governance, a research associate at the Wits Institute of Socio-Economic Research, and the education and learning manager at the Tayarisha Working Group for Digital Governance. His research focuses on decolonial thought, critical development, complexity economics, and public policy in South Africa. Rekgotsofetse is South African.

Norman Chivasa (DPhil) holds a master's and a doctorate in conflict resolution and peace studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He is currently teaching at the university of Zimbabwe in the Department of Peace, Security and Society. His research interests include community peacebuilding and development, local institutions, ubuntu leadership, social inequalities in ageing, and statelessness in southern Africa. Norman is Zimbabwean.

Tarryn De Kock (MA) is an independent researcher and has worked for the Human Sciences Research Council. Her research interests include public–private partnerships, educational planning and school governance. She is currently completing her PhD in education at the University of Cape Town. Tarryn is South African.

Sylvia Hannan (MA) is a chief researcher in the Equitable Education and Economies division at the HSRC. She is also involved in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, focusing on student achievement and the contextual factors, including school leadership, that are associated with performance. Sylvia is South African.

Andrea Juan (PhD) is a chief research specialist in the Equitable Education and Economies division at the HSRC. Her research interests include non-cognitive determinants of student performance in basic education, and school climate, governance, and leadership. She is extensively involved in the evaluation of South African student achievement as a lead researcher of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Andrea is South African.

Barbara Klugman (PhD) provides freelance support to social justice NGOs, social movements, and funders globally in strategy development and evaluation-for-learning through her company Barbara Klugman Concepts. She is also a visiting associate professor at the School of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Barbara is South African.

Alude Mahali (PhD) is a chief research specialist in the Equitable Education and Economies division at the Human Sciences Research Council. Alude's research experience ranges from youth social justice work to innovative visual and participatory methodologies in the sociology of education. Alude is South African.

Matthews Makgamatha (MSc) is a research manager in the Equitable Education and Economies division at the HSRC and has been seconded to work on school assessment in South Africa's Department of Basic Education. Matthews has a master of science in psycholinguistics from the University of the Witwatersrand. Matthews is South African.

Olwam Mnqwazi (BA Hons) is the managing director of the Black Hat Leadership Academy, an innovative research and leadership development agency. He is also the founder and chairperson of the Fruits of Democracy, an NPO recognising youth excellence and public engagement. He is currently working on an MA in conflict transformation at Nelson Mandela University. Olwam is South African.

Katleho Mokoena is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria. His research topic is Ubuntu Ethics and Technology. He is an emerging scholar who is captivated by technological advancements as well as African philosophies such as ubuntu. Katleho is South African.

Relebohile Moletsane (PhD) is a professor and the J. L. Dube Chair in Rural Education in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research interests include rural education and development, youth-led participatory policy-making, participatory visual methodologies, gender, comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual violence. Lebo is South African.

Precious Muzite (PhD) is a postdoctoral fellow in the College of Education, Department of Educational Foundations, Unisa. He has a PhD from the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies, with a special focus on critical realist disability studies and assistive technology inclusion in technical vocational colleges. Precious is from Zimbabwe.

Lauryn Mwale (BSc Hons) is a Zambian writer, speaker, intersectional feminist, and young professional, currently based in London. She graduated from the University of Edinburgh, where she studied as a Mastercard Foundation Scholar, with an honours degree in mathematics in 2021. She is the author of *The Shuri Effect: Bridging the Gap for Young Black Women in STEM*.

Sepiso Dean Mwamelo (MSc) is a programme manager for Africa Oxford Scholarship at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. Upon completion of her master's degree in Africa and international development from the University of Edinburgh, she was named best-performing Mastercard Foundation Scholar at the postgraduate level. Sepiso is from Tanzania.

Anye-Nkwenti Nyamnjoh (PhD) is a Cameroonian senior research officer at the University of Cape Town, where he works on leveraging the African humanities in ethical debates around new and emerging health technologies. He holds a PhD in politics and international studies from the University of Cambridge.

Ibrahim Oanda is head of the Research Systems Strengthening pillar of the research function at the Mastercard Foundation. At the time of writing this chapter, he worked at the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria), based in Senegal. His research and academic areas of focus include higher education studies, education and policy studies, women and gender studies, and education and social policy research in developing countries. Oanda is Kenyan.

Catherine A. Odora Hoppers (PhD) holds a professorship in education at Gulu University in Uganda, and is a professor extraordinarius at the University of South Africa. She consults on expert panels for Unesco, the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, the World Economic Forum, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation. She is a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa and a fellow of the African Academy of Sciences. Catherine is Ugandan.

Nathan Oyori Ogechi (PhD) is a professor of African linguistics at Moi University, Kenya, presently serving as vice chancellor at Kisii University, Kenya, and holds a PhD in African linguistics from the University of Hamburg, Germany. His involvement in university management triggered his interest in student activism and leadership, thus motivating him to write about transformative leadership. Nathan is Kenyan.

Eugene Paramoer (MA) is a South African film artist, community activist, and facilitator of media and film-creating processes. Eugene is specifically interested in working collaboratively with young filmmakers and communities to explore practically how culture and story can be used as tools of radical social change. He is currently making a film work called *Days and Nights of Love and Faya,* while also reading for his PhD at Rhodes University in South Africa.

One Pusumane (MPhil) is a PhD candidate in African studies at the University of Edinburgh and holds an MPhil from the University of Cambridge. She is particularly keen on producing scholarly work that is critical to disrupting knowledge production infrastructures that present a singular Africa and the idea of Africa as a problem. One is from Botswana.

Crain Soudien (PhD) is an emeritus professor in education and African studies at the University of Cape Town, and has honorary appointments at Nelson Mandela University and the University of Johannesburg. He is chairperson of the Independent Examinations Board, a fellow of a number of local and international academies, and serves on the boards of several cultural, heritage, education, and civil society structures. Crain is South African.

Sharlene Swartz (PhD) is head of the Equitable Education and Economies division at the HSRC and an honorary professor of education at the University of Cape Town. She was president of the Sociology of Youth Research Committee of the International Sociological Association (2018–2023) and is a commissioner of the Lancet inquiry into adolescent health and well-being. Her current research centres on the just inclusion of youth in a transforming society and the future of work. Her recent books include *Educational Research Practice in Southern Contexts* (2024), *The Oxford Handbook of Global South Youth Studies* (2021), and *Studying while Black* (2018). Sharlene is South African.

The editors are indebted to the following people for their editorial assistance throughout: Vuyiswa Mathambo, Mamela Siwendu, Leya Mgebisa, Tania Fraser, John Seager, the staff at the HSRC Press, and the copy editor, Alison Paulin.

Index

A
Abahlali baseMjondolo
  and active inclusivity 319–321
  and democracy as popular practice 319
  and emancipation 324
  and living politics 322
academic leadership 174, 178, 182, 186
acephalous societies, 45–46, 48
Achebe, Chinua 278, 283
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi 158, 161–162, 165
AFLI *see* African Leadership Institute
Africa
  average age in 280, 290
  average age of leaders in 280, 290–291
  declining governance in 285–286
  external imaginations of 224, 235, 237
  GDP per capita in 283
  transformative leaders in 62, 63, 69–70
Africa Rising narrative
  and leadership 224
  and leadership programmes 283–284, 293, 298, 302, 303, 304
African
  cultural values, and feminism 165, 166
  political leadership, and democracy 311
African leadership
  and complexity of social structures 27–28
  conceptualisation of 224, 228, 230, 234, 237
  ethics and the future 416, 417, 419, 420
  models 382, 383
  negative perception of 226–227
  and post–1990 elections 293
  programmes 280, 301, *301*
  sociohistorical complexities of pre-colonial 41–42, 44, 46, 48, 53
  and ubuntu 123, 126–127
African Leadership Institute (AFLI), 2018 report by 292, 298–302, 303
African Renaissance 126, 376
African Union 123, 150
African Union Youth Charter 293
African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) 35
African Youth Leadership Study (AYLS) 280, 281
Africanisation 383
afrophobia 122, 123, 131
Agenda 2063 123, 330
amaXhosa leadership
  and arbitration 108, 112, 115, 116
  Archie Mafeje's interpretation of 108, 114–116
  and female leadership roles 114–115
  and followers 113, 115, 116, 117, 118
  and individual accountability 110–111
  and Kingdom of the youngest 109–110
  oral traditions of 108
  and power and authority 111–113, 116
  and social justice and harmony 113–114
  and social responsibility 107, 108, 110–111
  and transformative leadership 111, 113–114, 115, 116, 118
  transformative leadership attributes of 107–108
anarchic change 249, 437
Angola, and pre-colonial social stratification 51–52
anti-homosexuality laws, in Liberia 339
Apartheid
  'divide and rule' tactics of 320
  and gender 144
  and school leadership in South Africa 193–194
  social movements against 324, 373
  and transition to democracy 316, 317
Association of African Universities 178, 182
authoritarianism 52, 129, 210, 279–280, 361
autoethnography 108, 109, 158–159, 223, 264
AWLI *see* African Women's Leadership Institute
AYLS *see* African Youth Leadership Study

B
Barankitse, Marguerite (Maggie)
  awards/distinctions of 92, 97, 101
  and child survivors of war 91, 95, 98–99
  and concept of orphanage 98–99
  decolonial approach to donors and external partners of 99–100
  and education programmes 97–98, 99
  and elitist dimension of conflict management 102–103
  and establishment of Maison Shalom 91, 93, 95, 99
  and humanity 99–100, 102
  as post-heroic leader 94–95, 104
  as transformative leader 93, 100–104

and work with Burundian refugees 94, 95, 97–98
Bass, Bernard 22, 23, 142, 143, 144
batho pele 121
Biko, Steve 68, 113–114, 388, 430
black consciousness 114

black tax, and ubuntu 272
blockchain
benefits of 74–75
business models 75
and Decentraland (case study) 81–83, *82*, 84
and decentralised leadership 84–85
description/representation of *75*, 75–76, *76*
and developing countries 75, 83
and ethics 86
functionality of 81–82
revolution 437
smart contracts 83, 84
and social justice 74
and transaction chain 76, *76*
transformational potential of 79–81, 85–86
and transformative leaders 76–77, 79, 80, 81, 85
and trust 74, 75, 76
brands/branding, and higher education 229, 230–231, 232, 234
Buganda kingdom (Uganda) 45, 47, 48
Burundi, political and identity-based conflicts in 91–92, 96, 98
see also Barankitse, Marguerite (Maggie)

C
centralisation 42, 45–46
centralised
democratic political systems, types of 45
leadership systems 44
precolonial African states 45, 46, 47
social organisation 44
states, and ethnicity 47, 48
change, theories of 431–433
change, Wright's strategies for 433–435, *435*
disruptive or revolutionary change 429, 436–437
escape or anarchic change 429, 437
evaluation in multiple contexts of 437–443
interstitial change 429, 435–436
symbiotic change 429, 435
cinema, the power of 59–62
citizen consensus/participation, and blockchain 74, 80, 81
civil society 315–316, 317, 318, 321, 323, 325
co-creation and control, in educational leadership 226–231
collaboration, and political leadership 321, 322, 323
collaborative transformative leadership, and filmmaking 61, 62, 63, 64, 71
colonial epistemology, and higher education 233, 237
colonialism
and disability leadership 368, 371, 374, 375
and higher education 224, 233, 234, 235
influence on leadership programmes of 295
and slavery, and the power of film 59, 60
and women's leadership 144
community organisation, and leadership 44–46
conflict
civil 331, 335
and colonial legacies 287
contemporary and metaphysical 27–28
and governance gap 290, 291, 292, 305
interethnic action against 98, 100–101
intra-generational 112
political and identity-based 91, 93, 98
conscientisation (philosophy/theory) 124, 194
constitutionalism 217
'consulting and audit culture' 226, 231–233
convivial politics, and transformative leadership 233
corporate leadership, and higher education 225
corruption
and African leadership 12, 127, 396
and Ghana 346, 348, 351–352, 354
and Liberia 337, 338, 340
and South Africa 387
and student activism 210
and ubuntu 125, 127
crisis of leadership 309, 311–312, 318
curriculum decolonisation 175, 176

D
DAO *see* decentralised autonomous organisation Decentraland (case study) 77, 81–85, *82*
decentralisation 44–45, 47, 321
decentralised
good governance 84–85
leadership, and blockchain 84–85
social organisation 44–45
autonomous organisation (DAO) 77, 81–85, *82*
decolonial
approach to relations with donors and external partners 99–100
development 293, 296, 304
evaluation (of leadership fellowship programmes), politics of 252–257

leadership programmes, classification of 302, *302*
decolonisation
of curriculum 175, 176
and higher education 185, 186, 210
and ubuntu 383
and YLDPs 297
democracy
as attribute/value of transformative leadership 107–108
and crisis of leadership 311, 318
and decolonial development 293, 296, 304
and emancipation 323–325
and endogenous philosophies 27, 28
and feminism 163
in Ghana 349, 354, 355, 360, 361
and higher education 175, 176
in Kenya 216, 217, 219
as popular practice 316, 317, 318–319, 322, 323
in South Africa 316, 317, 383
and ubuntu 127, 129, 383
developmental state, and higher education 175–179
digital currencies, and blockchain 75, 82, 83
disability leadership
and colonialism 368, 371, 374, 375
definition of 369
examples of 372–373, 374
and indigenous epistemologies 367, 377
and ubuntu 367, 370–377
and a Westernised paradigm 368, 370
disadvantaged schools (in South Africa), transformative leadership in 193, 194
disruptive or revolutionary change 249, 436–437
distributed ledger 75, 76

E
education
Freire and Giroux's work on 23
for management, results of 279
and Nyerere's allegory of the hill 265–266, 274
and transformative action 415, 419
and transformative change 439, 441
see also higher education
educational
leadership, role of co-creation and control in 226–231
programmes, and independence in African countries 278–279
emancipation, and democracy 323–325
emergent decolonial
development 296–298, 303
leadership programmes, classification of 302, *302*
endogenous philosophies 26–27, 33, 34, 28
entrepreneurial
focus, and higher education 224–225, 229, 230, 232
leadership 223, 224, 225
entrepreneurialism 229, 230, 232
entrepreneurship
and higher education 178, 179, 181, 182, 184
and leadership in Burundi 94, 96
and state formation 42
equitable change
and collective good 401
as element of transformative leadership 7, 24, 93, 158, 333, 398
and facilitating change 400
and feminism 163, 164
escape or anarchic change 249, 437
ethical African leadership
and freedom in the 21st century 417
and human agency 416
and new cycles of dignity 418
and second-level indigenisation 416, 423
and tightening the diagnosis 418–419, 420–421
ethical leadership
and constitutionalism 217
and endogenous philosophies 26–27, 33, 34
example of 32
models 382
and school leaders 32
and sustainable development 33
and *The Spirit of Kanju* 63, 69, 71
and ubuntu 32, 33, 125, 128, 129, 376, 382
and women's leadership 140
ethics
and blockchain systems 86
and disability 372, 373, 377
and endogenous philosophies 26–27, 33, 34
and future African leadership 416, 417, 419, 420
in political context 32–33, 310
and precolonial African polities 52
and the role of religion 31–32
and transformative leadership 5, 10, 11, *15*, 16, 32, 93, 104, 128, 284, 296, 351
and transformational leadership 7, 11, 23, 143, 284
and ubuntu 125, 128, 129, 385–386, 390

Ethiopian government, and Oromo people 26
ethnicity 42, 45, 46–48, 183–184

F
4IR *see* fourth industrial revolution
feminism
  and African cultural values 164, 165–166
  and challenges facing Africa 163, 167
  definition of 158, 162–163, 164
  and equitable change 163, 164
  Four Ps Framework of 29–31, *29*
  and the need for feminist leaders 167–168
  and patriarchy 163, 166
  and transformative leadership 157, 158, 160, 161, 162–164, 167
  and women's rights 30, 161, 163
feminist leadership 29–31, *29*, 137, 152
fourth industrial revolution (4IR)
  characteristics of 386–387
  and the digital divide 387
  effects on Africa of 381, 387
  and humanity 387, 388, 390
  leadership in 386–388
  and ubuntu leadership 388–390
Freire, Paulo x, 5, 23, 228, 438

G
gada system, and social reconstruction 26–27
gender
  binary conception/construct of 48–49, 51
  equality 16, 35, 139, 141, 142, 149, 150
  and higher education 183
  and leadership development 142, 144–146, 149, 150
  and pre-colonial leadership 48–51
  quotas, and women's leadership 102, 141
  stereotyping, and leadership 138–139
gerontocracy 290, 291, 293, 305
Ghana
  and democracy 349, 354, 355, 360, 361
  and corruption 346, 348, 351–352, 354
  women's rights in 148–149
  political history of 345, 347–349
  and 1979 revolution 350–352
  see also Rawlings, Jerry John
Giroux, Henry 23, 25
graduate unemployment 175, 180, 181
grassroots political movements
  challenges of 320, 321
  and civil society 315–316, 321
  examples of 319, 324
  and transformative leadership 322, 324, 325–326
  and transition to democracy in South Africa 316–317
  see also social movements

H
Hesbol, Kristina 202, 217, 124
higher education
  access to 177, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184
  analysis of leadership in 173–174
  and 'brands/branding' 229, 230–231, 232, 234
  and collective social responsibility 226, 234
  and colonial epistemology 233, 237
  contributions in Africa of 175, 176–177, 178
  and decolonisation 185, 186
  and the developmental state 175–179
  and entrepreneurship 178, 181, 182, 184
  and ethnicity 183–184
  and funding 175, 176, 177, 178, 180, 185
  and inequality 225, 235, 236
  and intersectional identities and interests 182–184
  leadership models for 178, 179
  and political interest/leadership 176, 180, 183–184
  and training interventions in Africa 179–182
  transformative leaders in 177, 178, 179, 182
  and transformative leadership 175, 186, 225, 226, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236
  and unemployment 175, 180, 181
higher education leadership
  and alternative leadership styles 234
  and entrepreneurial focus 224–225, 229, 230, 232
  and funding 229, 230
  and improvisation 224, 233–237
  reconceptualising of transformative 185–186
hooks, bell, and definition of feminism 158, 162–163, 164
human development 413, 415, 418, 419
human rights
  abuses of 335, 357
  and disability 369, 370, 373
  and modern culture 414
  and the Rawlings era (Ghana) 357–360, 361
humanism 31–32, 122, 175, 383
humanity
  and Barankitse's leadership in Burundi 99–100, 102
  collective 27–28
  in context of 4IR 387, 388, 390

meaning of 125, 131
and modern culture 414, 419
and technological innovation 387, 388, 390
and ubuntu-driven leadership 68, 123
see also ubuntu

I
Igbo culture/society 45, 47, 49
improvisation, and higher education leadership 224, 233–237
inclusivity
and decentralised leadership 84
gender 49
pursuing active 319–321, 323
and transformative leaders 16
and ubuntu 128, 129
and women 49, 142, 147
indigenous knowledge
and disability 371, 373, 375
displacement and abnegation of 413, 414
and leadership in technological age 384
and modern culture 414
and transformative action 422, 423
individual accountability (as leader) 110–111, 226, 284, 333, 338
industrial revolutions 381, 386, 387, 389
see also fourth industrial revolution
inequality
and 4IR 380, 381, 387
and colonialism 60, 141, 235
gender 150, 151
and higher education 26, 225, 235, 236
and transformative leadership 25, 28, 124, 125, 157, 163, 236
and ubuntu 126, 385, 388, 390
informal settlements, and eviction 319, 320, 321
innovative leadership 34, 62, 177, 179, 180
institutional leadership 8, 28–29, 174, 176
see also higher education; school leadership
intellectual
decolonisation 175, 177
leadership 174, 178
international scholarships, and transformative leaders 262, 271, 274
see also scholarships
interstitial change 429, 435–436

J
Jagoe-Davies, Kate 373
Jiri, Jairos 373

K
kanju, spirit of 4, 61–62, 67, 71
see also The Spirit of Kanju
Kenya
and democracy 216, 217, 219
multipartyism in 209, 210
oppression and repression in 208–209
and 'big-man rule' 209, 210
and student activism 209–211, 213–217, 219
universities in 208, 209, 210, 213
Kinuthia, Rumba 209, 214, 215, 216
Kirkpatrick model (of evaluation) 249–250
Kituyi, Mukhisa 209, 215, 217, 218

L
leader identity construction 138–139
leadership
through activism 217–218
challenges in Africa 123, 140–141, 310-313, 330, 416–419
conceptualisation of African 224, 228, 230, 234, 237
council 84, 85, 112
crisis in 311, 355–357
definition/description of 21, 115, 173, 380–381, 415-416
for development programmes 280, 281, 284
and ethnicity 46–48
and fourth industrial revolution 380–381
and gender 48–51, 138–140, 144–146, 150
gerontocratic forms of 290, 291, 293, 305
improvisation in higher education 224, 225, 233–237
limitations of research on 138
as management 278, 279
models of 35, 179, 227, 229, 230
position-based styles of 279–280
practices in precolonial Africa 42
as a process 115, 174
for social change 245, 246
and social stratification 51–53
and societal and community organisation 44–46
and systemic change 12–13
theories of 5–6, *6*, 21–22
and women 138, 140–142, 148-149
see also women's leadership; transactional leadership; transformational leadership; transformative leadership
leadership development 149, 150, 151, 226–227
leadership development programmes 292, 295, 303–304

leadership fellowship programmes
challenges in evaluating of 245–246
and dealing with power 253–256
and dimensions of influence 248
and emergent learning 253, 254–255, 256
and evaluating shifts in individual capabilities 249–252
and evaluating the building and leveraging of connections 252
and evaluation criteria 251
and evaluation for learning 256–257
and evaluation process as focus of learning 252–253
and evaluation strategies 249, 250, 256
and individual capabilities and social connections 248–249
and Kirkpatrick model of evaluation 249–250
and outcomes 250, 251, 253, 255, 257
and politics of decolonial evaluation 252–257
and results-based management/monitoring 246, 250, 253
and social change 248, 251, 252, 253
and systems change 250–251, 253
and transformative leadership 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 254, 256, 257
Leadership Impact Programmes 303
leadership programmes (in Africa)
and Africa Rising narrative 283–284, 302
funding of 280, 283, 287
and governance gap 292–293
and grants/scholarships 279, 281, 282
historical background to 278–279
and leadership challenge in Africa 283
and market-based economies 279
review of 281–283
and transformative leadership as development 285–286
and Western institutions 278–279
see also emergent decolonial development; leadership development programmes; youth leadership for development programmes
LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) people 339
liberal democracy 28, 36, 354, 425
Liberia 263, 333–334, 336
see also Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson

M
Maathai, Wangari 165
Maison Shalom (NGO) 91–92, 93, 95, 97–100
management as leadership 278, 279, 280
Mandela, Gadla 117, 118
Mandela, Nelson 110, 116, 117, 360
Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program 9, 19, 59, 61, 155, 159, 268
Mbeki, Thabo 117, 118
Mghanga, Mwandawiro 209, 213, 214
Mo Ibrahim Foundation Prize for African Leadership 281, 283, 285, 241
monarchy systems 45, 51

N
nation-building, vs state-building 338
Ndebele rulership (Zimbabwe) 44, 46, 47, 48
negotiated change 429, 435
neocolonialism 279, 355
neoliberal
leadership 367
university 224
values and higher education 174, 179
neoliberalism, and political transformation 318
Nkrumah, Kwame 175, 278, 345, 358
no-fee schools (in South Africa) 193, 194, 196–197, *197*, *198*, 198, 199
see also disadvantaged schools
Nyerere, Julius
and allegory of the hill 263, 265–266, 274
and higher education 175, 264–265
and strategies for change 442–443
Nyong'o, Anyang 209, 215, 216, 218

O
Odinga, Oginga 210, 215, 217
Ogoni people (Nigeria) 52
Omar-Hassan, Hassan 209, 213, 215
oral traditions, of amaXhosa 108, 110
Orengo, James 209, 213–214, 215, 216–217
organisational transformation 22, 124
Oromo people, and Ethiopian government 26
Ovimbundu kingdoms of Angola 51–52

P
patriarchy 49, 51, 115, 141–142, 163, 166
political
centralisation 45, 46, 47
elite status in Africa, and Western education 278–279
entrepreneurs, and state formation 42
succession, and *gada* system 26–27
transformation, and transformative leaders 324, 325, 347, 353, 360
political leadership
challenges of 309
and higher education 176, 180, 183–184
and social justice 313

and xenophobia 320
popular politics 316, 317, 324, 325
position-based leadership 279–280
post-heroic leadership 94–98, 104
precolonial
Africa 44, 45, 49, 51, 52
centralisation 42, 45, 46
ethnic centralisation 48
gender relations 49
Ndebele rulership 44, 46, 47, 48
social structures 27–28
public sector
challenges in 395, 396
and corruption 337, 387
and higher education 178
leadership 399, 402, 407
and roles of public servants 33
and transformative leadership 395, 396, 399, 403
and TSI 399, 407
and YLDPs 286

R
racism
and grassroots movements 320, 322
and modern culture 414
and student activism in Kenya 213
and women's leadership 139–140, 142, 144
function of 166
Rawlings, Jerry John
accountability of 350–352, 356
advancement in political leadership of 347, 348–349
and human rights 357–360, 361
shortcomings of leadership of 357– 358
and transformative political leadership 345, 360
as transformative leader 350, 359, 360–361
vision and values of 352–355
representative politics 315, 324, 325
revolutionary change 249, 436–437
ruptural change 249, 436–437
Rwandan genocide (1994) 94–95

S
scholarships
benefits of 268–269, 274
definition of 263
investment towards 262
motivation for providing 263
and non-financial support structures 274–275
and Nyerere's allegory of the hill 265–266, 274
providers of 262, 268, 270
and sustainable development goals 262, 274, 285, 374
scholarship recipients
and application process 266–267
and black tax 272
and challenges of returning home 270, 271, 273, 274
and development of countries of origin 267, 268
and giving back 271–274
and pressure of expectations 269–270
and reintegration into country of origin 270–271
and transformative leadership 262, 265, 266, 271, 274–275
school leaders 32, 33, 34, 201, 202
school leadership
and Apartheid 193–194
in South Africa 193, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203
and traditional leadership 194
SCR *see* spheres of complimentary responsibility
sectarianism 125, 131
'servant' leadership 24, 33, 34, 179, 404
sexism 144, 158, 162, 163, 167, 295
sexist oppression, and feminism 163, 164
Shields, Carolyn
and decolonial development 296
and feminism 164, 167
and school leaders 201, 202
and transformational leadership 211, 284
and transformative change x, 400, 438
see also transformative leadership (attributes/tenets of; Shield's concept/notion of)
Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson
and challenge of corruption 337, 338
and lessons for leaders in Africa 339–341
negative aspects of leadership legacy of 337–339
performance as transformative leader of 334–339, 340, 341
positive aspects of leadership legacy of 336–337, 340
and rights of LGBTI people 339
social
consciousness 8, 25, 371, 374, 376
organisation, centralised and decentralised 44
reconstruction, and *gada* system 26–27
solidarity 128

stratification, and pre-colonial leadership 51–53
structures, and colonial/postcolonial state 27–28
social change
contemporary understandings of 246
leadership for 245, 246
and leadership fellowship programmes 248, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257
social justice
and amaXhosa leadership 113-114
and blockchain systems 74
and disability 367, 370, 373, 377
and ethical principles 351
and higher education 175, 186, 226
principles of 127
and school leaders 32, 33, 34, 200
and student activism 207, 208, 210, 211, 219
and traditional leaders 129
and transformational leadership 7, 25
and transformative leadership 24, 34, 124, 127–128, 130, 157, 167, 211, 219, 413
and transformative social innovation 407
and ubuntu 125, 128, 129–130, 131
social movements
and capitalist system 434
in Global South 35–36
and interstitial change 436
and role in bringing about change 432–433
and transformative leadership 36
and transforming the political 319, 322, 323, 324, 325
see also grassroots political movements
social responsibility
and amaXhosa practices 107, 108, 110
and higher education 226, 234
as a leader 110–111
and roles of graduates 12
and transformative leadership 12, 24, 226, 234, 284, 333
societal organisation, and leadership 44–46
sociopolitical centralisation, notion of 42
South African education 193, 194–195, 386
South African schools
effective principals in 198
and leadership styles 203
and school leadership 198
and social justice 200
and transformation through common vision 195–197
and transformative leaders 200, 202, 203
spheres of complimentary responsibility (SCR) paradigm 49–50
state communities, in precolonial Africa 45
state-building, vs nation-building 338
statehood, conception of precolonial 44
stateless communities, in precolonial Africa 45–46
storytelling, and leadership in Africa 64, 68, 70, 71, 256
structural adjustment programmes in Africa 177, 280, 285
student activism (in Kenya)
definition/description of 207, 209–210
against discrimination 212–214
and ethnicity 213, 215, 216, 218
and future leadership 218
and genuine constitutionalism 217
historical context of 208–209
and the law 216–217
learning leadership through 217–218
and political change agents 215–216
and sanctity of life and justice 214–215
and social justice 207, 208, 210, 211, 219
and transformative leadership 212–217, 219
substantive democracy 317, 318–319, 323, 234
sustainable development 283, 285, 338, 389, 413
sustainable development goals 262, 274, 285, 374
symbiotic change 429, 435

T
Taylor, Charles 331, 334, 335
technological advancement/development
and community development 389–390
impact in Africa of 380
impact in South Africa of 380–381, 386–387
and transformative action 422, 437, 442
and ubuntu 388, 389, 390
The Spirit of Kanju: Leaders Transforming Africa (documentary film)
the filmmaking process 62–65, *63*
and leadership from behind the lens 62, 68–71
and leadership in front of the lens 65–68
synopsis of 65–68
and training of filmmakers 64, 65, 70
and trifecta of African leadership 63–64, *63*
Thembu people, and Mandela's leadership 116
TLT *see* transformative leadership theory
TLWR *see* Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights
TRC *see* Truth and Reconciliation Commission
traditional leadership 44, 47, 129, 194
transactional/transacting leadership 3, 5, 6, *6*, *7*, 22, 142, 185, 413

transformational leader, definition/description of 142–143
transformational leadership
and Africa's youth leadership 298–302, *301*, *302*
development 295–296, 302, 304
dimensions/mechanisms of 22–23, 284
and ethics 7, 23, 143, 284
and gender 145–147
inter-generational conversation on 226–237
feedback within technocratic institutions 295–296
and individual personalities 349
and Shields 211, 284
and social justice 7, 25
vs transformative leadership 3, 7, *7*, 8–9, 22–24, 32, 124–125, 211, 284, 296, 398
vs transactional leadership 3, *7*, 22
and women in African contexts 141–142
s*ee also* transformational leadership theory; transforming leadership
transformational leadership theory 6, *6*, 7, *7*, 124, 211, 332
transformative action
a call for 414–415
and human development 415
and integrative paradigm shift 415, 423–424
and making generative leaders 415, 424–426
and renegotiation of agency 414–415, 421–423
and Wright's strategies for change 433–437, *435*
transformative change
Desmond Tutu on x, 3, 9, 438
and education 441
and Freire x, 438
kinds of 429
and Shields x, 400, 438
Steve Biko and 430
and Wright's strategies for change 438–443
transformative disability leadership 368–373
transformative higher education leadership 185–186
transformative leader(s)
Africa's 62, 63, 69–70
Barankitse as 93, 100–103, 104
and blockchain 76–77, 79, 80, 81, 85
characteristics/traits of 24, 25, 30–31, 78, 144, 298, 350
and decolonial development 296
definition/description of 10, 16, 31, 92, 143
in *The Spirit of Kanju* 60, 66–68
and feminism 158, 160, 161, 167
Freire as 228
and higher education 177, 178, 179, 182
and international scholarships 262, 271, 274
and political transformation 324, 325, 347, 353, 360
Rawlings as 350, 359, 360–361
Sirleaf as 334–339, 340, 341
skills needed by 13–14, *13*
in South African schools 200, 202, 203
and strategies for change 430, 443, 444
and student activism 211, 217, 219
and transformative social innovation 400, 401
transformative leadership
academic scholarship on *20*, 21–25
in African contexts 8–9, 25–34
African graduates on 9–14
and Africa's youth leadership 298–302, *301*, *302*
and amaXhosa leadership practices 107, 111, 113–114, 115, 116, 118
attributes/tenets of 7, 24, 157–158, 160, 162–163, 284, 333, 398
barriers to 144–147
and blockchain advantages 76–77
challenge of 413–415
and change-making leaders 60, 66–68
and coloniality 295, 297, 298, 299
components of 15–16, *15*
criteria for content of review on 19–21, *20*
critical moments in development of 23–24
and decoloniality 297
definition/description of 93, 124, 125, 284, 413, 438
distinctiveness of 24–25
as ethic of humanism 31–32
and ethics 5, 10, 11, *15*, 16, 32, 93, 104, 128, 284, 296, 351
and feminism 157, 158, 160, 161, 162–164, 167
Freire's concept/notion of 5, 23
and gender 142, 144–146, 149, 150
and higher education 225, 226, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236
for higher education 175, 179, 184–186
key values of 402
and leadership programmes 284, 285–286
leading through 398
and literature review 19–21, *20*, 30, 33–34
origins of 113, 124, 398
outcomes of 10–11
in politics, conceptualising of 346–347
and the power of filmmaking 59–62

principles of 254
processes of 11, 195
programmes 257, 296, 297, 299, 301, *301*, 303
resources from Africa 34–36
Shields's concept/notion of 5, 6–7, 23–24, 124, 211, 314–315, 332
skills needed for 13–14, *13*
and social responsibility 12, 24, 226, 234, 284, 333
themes/underpinnings of the praxis of 396, 399–402
theoretical underpinnings of 396–399
traits of 212–217
vs transactional leadership *7*, 22
vs transformational leadership 3, 7, *7*, 8–9, 22–24, 124–125, 284, 296, 398
vs transforming leadership 6, *7*
and ubuntu 121–123, 129–130
understanding of 142–143, 430
and women 115, 140, 143–150
transformative leadership theory (TLT)
and Barankitse, Maggie 92–94
as branch of leadership theory 6, *6*
definition/description of 124–125, 157
and leadership training in Kenya 217
tenets of 157–158, 398
theoretical propositions of 398
vs transformational leadership theory 7, 211
Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights (TLWR) 8, 29
transformative political leadership
description of 309, 347, 353
and leadership challenge in Africa 310–313
and leadership of Rawlings in Ghana 345
and living politics 322–323
and politics of representation 315
and shift from concessions to emancipation 323–325
and state–society relations 316–317
and substantive democracy 317, 318–319, 323, 234
transformative schools (in South Africa) 195, 196, 197, *197*, *198*, 201–203
transformative social innovation (TSI)
definition of 397
leaders 400, 401, 403–406
leadership, a renaissance of 402–406
themes/underpinnings of the praxis of 396, 399–402, 406–407
theory 397
transforming through 397–398
and ubuntu 399–402, 403, 406–407
transforming leadership 5, 6, *6*, *7*, 142
see also transformational leadership
Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data 196–197, *197*, *198*, 199, 202
Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa) 383
Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia (TRC-L) 335
TSI *see* transformative social innovation
Tutu, Desmond x, 3, 4–5, 9, 384, 438

U
ubuntu
and Africa's leadership challenges 123
as African leadership style 126–127
and amaXhosa leadership 114
applications of 126, 129, 381, 382, 388
and challenges in southern Africa 122–123, 131
characteristics/values of 126, 129–131, 388, 389, 402
concept/notion of 4–5, 26, 27, 114, 121, 122, 370, 399
and common traits with transformative leadership 121, 122, 123, 126
defining of 125, 383
and democracy 127, 129, 383
and disability leadership 367, 370–377
and ethical leadership 32, 33, 125, 128, 129, 376, 382
and ethics 383, 385–386, 388, 390, 399
and leadership for the 4IR 388–390
origins of 122, 383
and parallels with transformative leadership and TSI 399–402, 403, 406–407
as a philosophy 374–367, 384–385
problematic aspects associated with 122–123
and public sector leadership 399
and social justice 121, 129–130, 131
in South Africa 122, 372, 373
as spirituality 385
themes/underpinnings of the praxis of 399–402
and transformative leaders 121, 127
and TRC in South Africa 383
and variations of term used 26–27, 371–372, 383
as a worldview 130–131
ubuntu leadership
and African leadership models 383
and ethics 128, 390

for the future 388–390
and oppressive structures 127–128
primary goal of 126
and resemblance to transformative leadership 126–131
and social justice 127, 128, 129, 130
and socioeconomic challenges 389, 390
unemployment 175, 180, 181, 294, 380, 387

V
virtual reality, and blockchain 77, 82, 83

W
Weiner, E.J. 107, 108, 226, 228, 284, 333
women
agency and activism of 150
barriers to transformative leadership by 144–147
empowerment of 148–149
and ethical leadership 140
in leadership in African contexts 138, 140–142
and leadership development 147–150
nurturing transformative leadership among African 147, 148
and transformative leadership 140, 143–144
women's leadership
in Africa 137, 139, 140
barriers to 139, 140, 141, 145, 144–147, 151
compared to men's 145, 146
as concept/term 137
and education 144, 147, 150, 151, 152
examples of pre-colonial 50–51
and gender quotas 102, 141
intersectional approach to 140–141
limitations of research on 138, 140, 143
and meaningful inclusivity 147–148
and patriarchy 141–142
and political activism 150
progress made in 141–142
and race 139–140, 142, 144
women's rights 29, 30, 137, 139, 144–145, 148–149
women-centred approaches to transformative leadership 29
workforce development model 178
Wright, Erik Olin, and strategies for change 429, 433–437

X
xenophobia 36, 130, 320, 322, 376
xenoracism 122, 123, 131
Xhosa praise poetry/singer 109, 110
Xhosa-speaking tribes 109, 110

Y
Yaa tradition, of precolonial Ogoni people 52
YLDPs *see* youth leadership for development programmes
Yoruba women, leadership prowess of 50–51
youth
definition of 293, 294
and leadership offerings in Africa 298–302, *301*, *302*
notion in African context of 293–294
and political agency 294
as social construct 294
and waithood 294, 295
youth leadership for development programmes (YLDPs)
examples of 281–283
funders of 287
and grants/scholarships 282
in Nigeria 286
and transformative leadership 284, 285, 286
types of 281–283
youth leadership programmes
AFLI report (2018) on 298–302, *301*, *302*
and coloniality 299, 300
and decoloniality 304
and trend towards transformational 295–296, 301, *301*, 302, 304
youth-led political engagement and protests 191

Z
Zambia, and ubuntu 372
Zimbabwe, and ubuntu 371, 373
Zimbabwean society, precolonial 44, 46, 48, 51