

CHAPTER 8

Leadership as governance practice in post-colonial Africa: post- independence flaws, formative theoretical fault lines, and the need for ‘African wisdom’

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Introduction

Reforms in public administration cannot be realised until the leadership is reconsidered in both theory and practice, particularly in Africa. Effective leadership is one of the integral components of good governance. In instances where scant development occurs in African states, leaders are usually the primary subjects of blame. This is the story of post-colonial Africa, where development has been a pipedream in most countries, making the continent susceptible to neo-colonisation (Langan, 2018). Post-independent heads of state in Africa face the daunting challenge of championing development from a blank or Western/Eurocentric template. Consequently, African heads of state fail in their leadership, especially because their philosophies and leadership styles are either incompatible with the demands and expectations of their offices or constituencies, or they become covetous and are derailed from the mandate that placed them at the helm of their states (Muvingi, 2008).

This chapter on the literature review explores leadership theories and philosophies adopted by some post-independence African heads of state. Classical theories of

leadership are teased out in order to sketch a framework from which leadership and governance can be viewed. The conceptual framework explores the rich African heritage of leadership, emphasising key value systems as foundational elements of what is termed the *African wisdom* of leadership and governance. This African wisdom serves as a potential solution for addressing collective continental development challenges and positions Africa as a beacon of pride within the global community. The study offers overarching recommendations for embracing African value systems and adopting *ubuntu*-informed leadership, aiming to foster collective developmental gains across the continent.

Background

Granted that leadership and governance are not identical, there is not so much difference between them, especially in their practice and application in public sector organisations (Naidoo, 2004; Siswana, 2007; Lord, Martin, Atkinson, and Mitchell, 2009). This is mainly because leadership is executed within a particular governance framework (Nzimakwe, 2014; Onolememe, 2015). Kantharia (2011) posits that leadership is a social influence process wherein team leaders provide support, guidance, and motivation for others to take initiatives and accomplish them towards achieving team objectives while incurring chances of risk and success for the team. Leadership is executed in social institutions such as households, organisations (government departments, companies, and entities), and continents (countries, regions, and international institutions across micro, meso, and macro scales). Therefore, leadership is quintessential for effectiveness and efficiency in the functioning of social institutions. Poor leadership may, *inter alia*, account somewhat for the poverty that is predominant in Africa (Muvingi, 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014; Gumede, 2017; Khasoane, 2019). While it is acknowledged that the current *status quo* on the continent may be an offshoot of defective leadership, it is also *fait accompli* that defective leadership and weak governance systems on the continent can be traced back to imperial and colonial

epochs (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). There is a view that the dire situation in which the continent finds itself in terms of socio-economic status is exacerbated by the Western world, which continues to exploit African resources and mock the continent for its underdevelopment (Rodney, 1973). Masango (2012: 1) argues that:

“the Western world has always viewed the African continent as plagued by corruption; dictatorship; military coups; rebellious leaders; greed; misuse of power, and incompetent, politically unstable leaders – in effect, suspicious leaders who undermine their own democracies”.

On the basis of this view, this chapter seeks to canvass for a pressing need for an improved leadership and governance system in Africa in order to eradicate the prevailing negative conditions on the continent and to showcase an African peculiar system and leadership philosophy/model that can be useful to the human race. Leadership involves examining circumstances and applying germane strategic approaches to respond to those circumstances (Goleman, 2000). It is also argued that effective leadership involves the execution of several approaches as dictated by a myriad of circumstances (Goleman, 2000). On this basis and at the core of this literature analysis, *African Wisdom* is discussed as a *sine qua non* (an essential condition) for effective leadership and good governance in Africa. The concept of *African Wisdom* will be given much attention and be canvassed as an apex need for collective development in Africa.

Leadership and Governance Challenges in Africa

Underdevelopment in Africa is blamed on poor leadership by some of the post-independence heads of state. This sentiment is shared among most African scholars (Achebe, 1993; Iheriohanma and Oguoma, 2010; Nnadozie, 2010; Mbandlwa, 2020). Some post-independent African heads of state were forced through structural adjustment programmes (SAP) to adopt some classical leadership theories that were antithetical

to the development of the continent. This, of course, was a result of the verminous effects of centuries of imperialism and colonialism (Botha, 2012). Evidence of this was the adoption of classic leadership philosophies and theories that created self-serving heads of state with less regard for citizens and their developmental needs, which is an inherent limitation of those theories. The limitation with some classical theories of leadership that were adopted in Africa is that they do not theorise leadership inclusively in the way that contemporary or modern leadership theories do, which attempt to consider followership and the relationship between leaders and followers in the domain (Tiftik, Tiftik, and Saglam, 2015; Essa and Alattari, 2019). Examples of these theories include the Great Man Theory and the Trait Theory, which are the main classical leadership theories adopted in Africa (Harrison, 2018). The adoption of classical leadership theories provided some justification for other African leaders who viewed and conducted themselves as super-humans who are far above everyone and deserving a better life at the expense of the people they lead (Poncian and Mgya, 2015).

Case studies of some post-independence African leaders by Rodney (1973), Muvingi (2008), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Khasoane (2019) expose traits of dictatorship, greed, egoism, and self-centeredness. Undoubtedly, such traits are inimical to the African value systems of solidarity and collective development. This notwithstanding, African heads of state become epitomes of such leadership traits to the detriment of their own people who had already endured bitter years of colonialism, imperialism, and oppression from European institutionalised bigotry. The traits of dictatorship, greed, egoism and self-centredness are based on the classical theories of leadership that will be critically expounded in the section below.

Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Analysis on Leadership

This section comprises theoretical perspectives on leadership and a literature discussion focusing on the concepts of Africanism and leadership.

Theoretical perspectives on leadership

In the narrative that follows, some of the leadership theories are discussed alongside some of the critiques that are noted in the literature. Without necessarily attempting to discuss all of them in detail, it is safe to utilise the approach by Bolden and Kirk (2009) to highlight some of their clusters as essentialist, constructionist, critical, and relational theories.

Essentialist theories of leadership

The essentialist leadership theories consist of the behavioural model, the trait model, and the Great Man Model, among others, which are designated as traditional or classical theories of leadership (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). The essentialist cluster of theories places less consideration on followers while placing more regard on leaders. They are not consummate for sustainable development in a society. This is probably the reason for scant development in some African countries because post-independence heads of state in Africa have adopted essentialist leadership theories (Dartey-Baah, 2011). This is because this cluster of theories subscribes to the notion of an essential difference between leaders and the people they lead. As such, on the basis of innate qualities and exposition of certain behavioural traits, when one is merited to be in leadership, attention is given to that particular person (Van Zyl, Pietersen, Dalglish, Du Plessis, Lues, Ngunjiri, & Kablan, 2015). Owing to this, it is argued that the essentialist theories have an objectivist viewpoint on leadership (Bolden and Kirk, 2009).

The essentialist cluster of theories is defective in that they focus on the leader and neglect those that are led. The mutually reinforcing relationship required between leaders

and followers is essential for achieving team goals. This necessitated the need for modern and contemporary theories that are more inclusive (Dartey-Baah, 2011). For example, the Great Man Theory is undermined by its inability to see the leadership role for organisational coherence and stability (Harrison, 2018). The Trait Theory is criticised because “there is no evidence to prove that leaders who possess all the identified traits mentioned...will be effective” in leadership roles (Harrison, 2018: 20). Behavioural theories are criticised for their inability to proportionate contingencies that are context-dependent and circumstantial in line with leadership. Granted, essential theories are criticised as limited, and, therefore, not very useful for sustainable and collective development (Harrison, 2018).

Constructionist theories of leadership

Constructionist theories focus on the leadership approach in order to construct collective meanings for people towards understanding their situations (Sanchez, Ospina, Salgado, 2020). Johnston (2016) argues that this cluster of leadership theories integrates approaches to leadership in terms of development, effectiveness, and evaluation in order to determine if they produce the desired results. She also argues that constructionist theories have shown integration among various leadership styles, interdisciplinary approaches to leadership analysis, and inventive approaches to analysing leadership (Johnston, 2016). Constructionist theories involve three elements in their make-up, namely: social constructionism (fluidity, dynamism, and social arrangements); discourse (language resources); and the systemic thinking approach (rational, connectedness, and interaction) (Austin 2012).

In his 2000 study, Campbell outlined several key components within constructionist theories and suggests that adopting a systems thinking approach in leadership offers a framework for understanding the intricate interplay among diverse social phenomena within a society. He adds that “it is the way of thinking that gives practitioners the tools

to observe the connectedness of people, things, and ideas: everything connects to everything else” (Campbell, 2000:7). Austin (2012:14) indicates that language and communication integrate discourse in leadership. This is the case because discourse is a language that is utilised for communicative purposes, and it is realised in organised texts “interactively, linguistically and cognitively”. Systemic constructionist theories of leadership are anchored upon three theoretical questions, which are “How is leadership performed?”; “What counts as leadership?”; and “What are the consequences of particular leadership constructions?” (Barge and Fairhurst, 2008: 230-231). Constructionist theories of leadership are criticised for their “failure to distinguish content from process” (Stam, 2001:293). This makes them fallible as leadership theories, necessitating contingent modern theories of leadership.

Critical theories of leadership

Critical theories offer a sceptical viewpoint on leadership, thereby exposing crucial dynamics of power and politics in organisations (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). They stem from critical leadership studies (CLS) related to a variety of perspectives with a purpose to critique power relations and identity constructions upon which dynamics of leadership are reproduced, transformed, and rationalised (Chandler & Kirsch, 2018). Critical theorists do not only identify bad practices in leadership, but also create and support ethical leadership frameworks in order for leaders to practice them for success in their roles (Western, 2008). Critical theories of leadership can be applied to determine applicable styles for different situations. Research in critical theory is essentially focused on the manner in which followers can emancipate themselves from being controlled and dependent on their leaders, and how unconventional approaches can be developed (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Chandler & Kirsch, 2018; Kolasi, 2019).

Alvesson and Spicer (2012) support critical theories on leadership in view of the role they play in the social context. They argue that there is a need to develop “strong critiques

of leadership ideology as a general source of domination” and to “counteract problematic authority relations but also cultivate responsibility and acknowledge asymmetries between people in terms of experiences, skills and other relevant characteristics” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Critical theories downplay hegemonic perceptions that undermine the notion that leaders take decisions while followers simply implement those decisions without questioning anything (Collinson, 2011).

Relational theories of leadership

Leadership from the relational theoretical perspective does not necessarily rest within leaders, but rather within a relationship that exists within a team (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). This cluster of theories covers a range of theories that “focus on identifying attributes of individuals as they engage in interpersonal relationships and a relational perspective that views leadership as a process of social construction through which certain understandings of leadership come about...” (Uhl-Bien, 2006: 654). Theories such as the Leader-Member Exchange Theory, Servant Leadership, and Transformational Leadership theories are examples of relational theories (Locke, 1996). Relational theories encompass both the leadership and followership aspects as main ingredients for effective leadership. Some of the basic traits of novel transformational leadership and servant leadership theories are aspects that are common in African value systems, which are what strengthens the relationship between modern theories of leadership and African wisdom (Brubaker, 2012; Nzimakwe, 2014).

Komives, Lucas and McMahan (2006) opine that elements such as inclusiveness, empowerment, ethics, purpose, and process orientation are fundamental to the relational theories of leadership, which provide a framework to study leadership as a process of “social influence through which emergent coordination and change are produced” while addressing “relationships both as an outcome” and “a context for action” (Uhl-Bien, 2006:654). This cluster of theories transcends mutual relationships between leaders and their

followers, and considers leadership inclusively, regardless of context. Hunt and Dodge (2000) indicate that relational theories are dynamic systems that embed environmental, leadership and organisational arrangements. Notwithstanding the benefits and advantages associated with the holistic and subject-inclusive character of relational theories, these theories are subject to criticism. For example, Hunt and Dodge (2000) as well as Uhl-Bien (2006) note criticisms that are levelled against the relational theories regarding their generic approach to analysis, which neglects specifics on leadership matters. Owing to these criticisms, these theories may not always be an ideal approach for analysing leadership.

After laying the theoretical foundation for leadership within this chapter, the following section delves into observed practices of several leadership styles witnessed by various heads of state in the post-independent era. To illuminate these lived experiences, the chapter also examines the heritage of African leadership.

Literature Discussion on Africanism and Leadership

Concerning the literature on Africanism and leadership, there is ample room for discussion as both are broad subjects comprising various constituent elements. However, for the purposes of this chapter, discussion is limited to: (i) African leadership heritage; (ii) the need for African wisdom and practices in governance; and (iii) African wisdom beyond continental borders.

The African leadership Heritage

An authority in political sociology, Walter Rodney, argues that Africa was underdeveloped by Europe (Rodney, 1973). Based on this argument, the prevalent underdevelopment in Africa can be attributed to deliberate acts of exploitation, domination, and cultural imposition, all intrinsic components of colonialism and imperialism (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). In order to conduct a balanced analysis of the African leadership heritage, it is always expedient to consider the pre-colonial

and pre-imperial epochs as a starting point. This is the case because it is generally acknowledged among Africans that colonialism and imperialism impaired leadership in Africa, among other things, and as a result, economic, social, and political aspects of African governance have been paralysed (Oliver and Oliver, 2017).

In his *magnum opus*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1963) details the negative effects of colonialism and imperialism. Horvath (1972: 46) posits, “colonialism is a form of domination and control of people over territories and behaviour of others”. Ciaffa (2008) associates’ colonialism with exploitation, domination, and cultural imposition by foreign authorities that physically settle in a particular area. Imperialism is defined as an ultimate form of capitalism with the intention to dominate, plunder resources, conscription, and slave trade in a particular area without necessarily settling in that area (Resistance Marxist Library, 1999: 92). Imperialism and colonialism are almost similar. Colonialism involves settling in the area of the colonised, whereas imperialism is about dominating from outside without settling in the area (Horvath, 1972; Reddy, 2015; Kumar, 2021).

The pre-colonial era in Africa can be marked as the period that was characterised by activities such as European adventure in Africa for research and trans-continental movements in search of raw materials, among other things. This was followed by the imperial and colonial eras, although history literature provides different dates for the exact starting period of imperialism and colonialism in Africa. Hence, Stuchtey (2011) argues that imperialism and colonialism were already practiced in other areas from the late 1400s onward. Stuchtey (2011) adds that activities between Europe and Africa were already taking place even before the period when imperialism and colonialism were institutionalised. During this period, the activities occurring between the two continents are regarded as the initial stages leading toward imperialism and colonialism in Africa.

Chapter 8

The Industrial Revolution in the 1800s forced European countries to seek supplemental raw materials on other continents (Satterweight, McGranahan, and Tacoli, 2010; Ocheni and Nkwanko, 2012; McGranahan and Sattrerwaite, 2014). This created Europe's interest in Africa. At that time, Europe was pioneering industrial capitalism, and as such, demands for more resources and raw materials increased exponentially (Chinweizu, 1979). It seems European leaders acknowledged the necessity of fully capturing Africa to assert complete control over the continent and claim ownership of its wealth of resources. The abundant natural resources and raw materials in Africa have always been a source of envy, particularly for European countries.

The United Nations (2015) acknowledged that "Africa is self-confident in its identity, heritage, culture and shared values and as a strong, united and influential partner on the global stage making its contribution to peace, human progress, peaceful co-existence and welfare" (United Nations, 2015: 2). Idang (2015) contends that Africa boasts a rich heritage characterised by talent, art, literature, diverse cultures, and enduring values, among other pillars of continental pride. The history of leadership in Africa is characterised by distinct contributions, which created different kinds of leaders in the continent whose attributes, traits, personalities, and leadership methodologies were different (Masango, 2002).

Regardless of the grubby identity associated with some of the post-independence African leaders and their crooked leadership styles, as exposed by Van Wyk (2007), Africa still prides itself in good heritage of African leadership. In this instance, attention is given to African leaders who made an indelible mark by upholding excellent and exemplar leadership. Without trying to discuss all African leaders who led with excellence and their contributions to the leadership heritage in their sequence of eras, a few of them whose names will always dominate in African leadership literature can be mentioned. Among them are leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, and Julius Nyerere.

The former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy was that of African identity and consciousness (Dodoo, 2012). Patrice Lumumba believed in unity and gender activism (Bouwer, 2010). Thomas Sankara believed in African renaissance (Leshoele, 2019). Julius Nyerere was known for the philosophy of *ujamaa*, which is a Swahili word for extended family or brotherhood, which stands for socialism and communalism as an African political ideology. The former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda's name is associated with humanism (Van Wyk, 2007). In South Africa, Nelson Mandela's leadership was that of unity, reconciliation and nation-building (Meiring, 2002).

The former South African President Thabo Mbeki advocated for an African Renaissance, which was meant to revive art and literature in Africa for self-awareness. Gamal Nasser of Egypt stood for African-Arab socialism (Van Wyk, 2007). Linking to Kaunda's leadership philosophy, among others, Africa has a fundamental value system that is associated with the African leadership heritage known as *ubuntu* (a Nguni word for humanness). Mbigi (1997: 1) defines the concept of *Ubuntu* as "a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings; it is the embodiment of South African culture and lifestyle". It is an African home-brewed philosophy that guides the manner in which Africans conduct themselves and interact with other people on the grounds of solidarity (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Common aspects across leadership philosophies or styles among the mentioned African leaders are fraternity, love, solidarity, ethics, care, and interdependence among people as embedded in the spirit of *ubuntu*. These leadership value systems are essential for Africa's collective development and success, constituting the foundational building blocks of African wisdom crucial for effective governance within African governments. Subsequently, the discussion delves into the necessity of African wisdom in governance, exploring its significance in depth.

The need for African wisdom and practices in governance

African wisdom is based on various aspects of Africanism, which are described as subscriptions, beliefs and practices that distinctly reflect the continent's way of life (Idang, 2015). Over the centuries, African value systems have been applied mostly at the micro level of social institutions (families and households), and the result of this has been the establishment of strong and intact African family structures (Mafumbate, 2019). While African families may be strong and well-established, the same cannot be said for African countries and their governments. Governments in Africa are plighted with corruption, nepotism, ineffectiveness, and self-serving public servants, all of which are aspects of defective governance (Masango, 2002). This is clear when one looks at poor audit performances and outcomes, among other governance yardsticks.

Diedericks (2017) cites one consequence of poor leadership in his reference to poor reporting in government. African governments are punctuated by ineligible officials and cadre deployments based on partisan politics and party loyalty. Such undeserved appointments result in ineffectiveness and poor performance in public service. Such ineffectiveness and poor performance in African public sector organisations are a reflection on both political and administrative leaders (Thusi and Selepe, 2023). This is a sign that these leaders either do not have African wisdom (value systems of African leadership heritage) or they choose not to apply it. As a result, African wisdom is indispensable in public service institutions, serving as a prerequisite for enhancing governmental effectiveness in securing the collective welfare of African society.

African and Western leadership systems are inherently different in their conception owing to the value systems and ideologies upon which they are based. For example, Eyong (2016: 133) argues that paradigms of leadership in the Western world consider “linear hierarchies, dyadic...relationship, acts and behaviours of heroic figures and as an essentially human action” whereas “an Afro-centric indigenous concept

of leadership...challenges heroism, linearity, individualism and objectivism” of the Western approach. This argument by Eyong (2016) clearly reveals that Western leadership paradigms differ from those of Africa. From this distinction, it is evident that arrogance is implied in Western leadership paradigms. On the contrary, in a typical African context, it is understood that “traditionally, a wise leader was grown from the community and steeped in its communitarian traditions which led the leader to apply practical wisdom in seeking the collective good” (Ogunyemi, 2018: 1); adding that “the communitarian element of African indigenous wisdom stands out as the polis where wise leaders are taught and groomed for their responsibilities to the community (society). Where the person is disconnected from this reality of community, it could become more difficult for him or her to attain and maintain moral uprightness” (Ogunyemi, 2018: 1). Therefore, the significant disparities in value systems and cultures between these two worlds are what render it challenging to fully implement Western leadership paradigms in African contexts (Theimann, April, and Blass, 2006).

Ogunyemi (2018) posits that African wisdom is acquired in a society as an institution of socialisation where an African leader can be trained on how to lead and show love to people, how to serve people with diligence, and how to generously share with other people. African wisdom also links with patriotism on the part of leaders in order for them to be eligible to take on top government positions and serve societies with love, care, and dedication. In the South African context, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (1997), which is commonly known as the *Batho Pele* Policy, is adopted to guide the public service in the delivery of social services. The phrase *batho pele* is a Sesotho phrase for *people first/people forward*. Within the spirit of the *Batho Pele* policy, a suitable public servant in an African public service should be someone who has been fully trained by a community on patriotism, caring for one’s own society by prioritising people and considering them as clients or customers for public service delivery. Thus, the *Batho Pele* Policy is an example of African wisdom that

can be applicable in public service for African governments in order to guide the delivery of social services for poverty alleviation in Africa.

African public servants must internalise indigenous African wisdom before taking public office. This means that schools, institutions of higher learning, and training centres should offer programmes on Africanism. African families constitute the primary institution for socialisation into African wisdom because they are better placed to build capacity in young ones in relation to Africanism. Highlighting the significance of the African family in this scenario acknowledges the potential existence of certain African families that have strayed from embracing Africanism and instead adopted a Eurocentric perspective, characterised by what Mbigi (2005: v) describes as “arrogant, narrow, empty, and materialistic”. Ilmi (2015) argues that African wisdom and indigenous philosophies can be found in oral traditions that are passed down through folktales, language, songs, proverbs, ceremonies, performing arts, cultural artefacts, myths customary law, traditions, customs, and ways of life.

Table 8.1 demonstrates and proves that African wisdom is based on ethical behaviour. The table also demonstrates countries where Ogunyemi (2018) conducted his analysis of ethical behaviour, and the common good produced by such behaviour.

Other African wisdom concepts in addition to the above include *ujamaa* (brotherhood), Pan-Africanism, solidarity, sharing, egalitarianism, and collectivism (communalism). As indicated before, these African wisdom concepts are significant for application in African governments for good governance, patriotism and the effective delivery of social services. Having advocated for African wisdom in leadership and governance for the collective development of the continent, it logically follows to examine how this wisdom can extend its benefits beyond African borders. Subsequently, justification for this perspective is provided.

Table 8.1: Indigenous Intellectual and Reflective Wisdom in Africa

Countries	Wisdom Concept /Ethical Behaviour	Common Good Orientation
Somalia	<i>Dhaqaan</i> philosophy; communalism	Resources are shared for the collective common good in a society.
South Africa	<i>Ubuntu</i> : “ <i>umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu</i> ”, meaning a person exists because of others”. Giving, sharing, and solidarity.	One is connected to others’ well- being such that the good of other(s) is as important as personal good to self.
Nigeria	<i>Iwa</i> ; <i>omoluwabi</i> as evidence of practical wisdom and virtue.	The virtuous leader exhibits moral excellence and prioritises the common good.
Ghana	Wisdom and hospitality, communitarianism.	Welcoming visitors – strangers are simply extended family.
Kenya	Philanthropism: Love for others and generosity are aspects of wisdom – benevolence.	Caring for others as a tradition. Magnanimity.

Source: Ogunyemi (2018: 3).

Chapter 8

African Wisdom Beyond Continental Borders

In striving to justify the relevance of African wisdom beyond continental borders, the contention arises that Africa possesses significant tools to offer the global community. Given the discussion on the African leadership heritage and the need for African wisdom, it is opportune to motivate and justify African wisdom beyond continental borders. Just as the discussion on the heritage of African leadership in this chapter refers, the philosophies of excellent African leaders are those that are built on solidarity, communalism, morality, humanness, ethics, and interdependence. These are philosophies that other countries may need for success, especially because, as discussed before, African wisdom relates to relational theories that improve understanding between leaders and followers.

As a value system, *Ubuntu* can therefore be a key leadership philosophy that Africa is offering to the global community. Tutu (2000: 1) argues that:

“Africans have this thing called UBUNTU. It is about the essence of being human; it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world. It embraces hospitality, caring for others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours”.

Ntibagirirwa (2012) analyses the ontological foundations of the concept of *ubuntu* from its roots, which are prevalent in various parts of Africa. He concludes that *ubuntu* is genuinely an African value system, both in terms of the ontology of the concept and the practice thereof (Ntibagirirwa, 2012). The concept of *ubuntu* exists right across the continent and is common in most African languages (Ntibagirirwa, 2012). He indicates that:

“...despite the cultural diversity observable in Africa, there is a common metaphysical backbone that unifies almost all

Africans. Central to this metaphysical backbone is the belief that the individual is ontologically part of the community... The particularity of the African sense of community lies in the way the Africans conceive the universe around them in general, and the human universe in particular” (Ntibagirirwa, 2012: 118).

The essence of Africanism lies in the practice of *ubuntu*, which underscores interconnectedness and mutual respect. Thus, advocating for the adoption and implementation of *ubuntu* is not only beneficial to Africa but also serves the best interests of the global community. The philosophy of *ubuntu* holds the potential to foster world integration, harmony, unity, peace, and socio-economic development. Given its potential for preserving peace, the United Nations may find it prudent to consider *ubuntu* as a guiding principle in its endeavours.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide a literature analysis and critically examine the leadership styles and philosophies embraced by certain post-independence African heads of state. This was achieved by considering the prevailing conditions in Africa and recognising that the situation was shaped by colonialism and imperialism from the outset. Notwithstanding, it is the authors' view that the situation of poor governance in Africa can be addressed if African leaders can sharpen their focus on good governance and align themselves with African value systems for collective development. Underdevelopment and social ills that are witnessed and experienced on the continent can be solved if the continent can invest in developing, nurturing and grooming patriotic leaders. Finding a panacea for African developmental woes is dependent on the kind of leaders and followers that are produced on the continent.

There is no means by which other continents or foreign organisations can extricate Africa from the depths of poor governance and limited development in which the continent presently finds itself. Solutions for Africa have to be designed by Africans themselves. Some of the leadership theories

adopted by post-independence African heads of state have inherent limitations that prove detrimental. Due to this, alternative modern theories of leadership that consider followership, such as transformational and servant leadership theories were developed. Incidentally, such theories comprise traits that other heads of state in Africa epitomise, which represents African wisdom that can be globally beneficial. In wrapping up the arguments presented in this study, the following suggestions and proposals are presented for consideration:

1. Current and future African leaders should learn from the mistakes made by some post-independence African heads of state to enhance the present socio-economic conditions of Africa.
2. Africans should abandon the idolisation of European value systems and cultures and instead embrace Afro-centric content, thus affirming their own global relevance and self-identity.
3. There should be partnerships among elders, scholars, and leaders in Africa towards building African leadership theories based on the spirit of *ubuntu*, *ujamaaa*, and *batho pele* value systems, among others.
4. Focused research should be conducted to enhance knowledge, literature, and intellectual debates on African leadership theories as they relate to African value systems.
5. As immediate institutions for socialisation, African families, schools, and other primary institutions for socialisation should install and instil the spirit of Africanism and *ubuntu* as part of fundamentals of nurturing African children.

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 8

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