

Erosion of African Cultural and Family Values by Colonial Experience: The Role of Transformational Leadership as a Tool for Reconstruction



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Abstract

This paper reviews the role of colonialism in the erosion of African cultural family values on the continent and the role of transformative leadership as a tool of their reconstruction. This paper argues that colonial domination led to the erosion of many positive African cultural and family values such as sense of solidarity and brotherhood and led to the adoption of western values such as of individualism and self-seeking which are partly responsible for the many ills afflict the African society today. The paper proposes that transformative leadership can be an effective tool for review, reconstruction and enhancement of the positive African cultural and family values.

Paper Type: Literature Review

Keywords: African cultural family values, colonial era, socialization, family leaders, transformational leadership, rebuilding.

Introduction

Culture broadly refers to the distinct characteristics of any society or social group in its social, political, economic spiritual and material spheres of life. One of immaterial elements of culture is a set of values which permeate all aspects of private and social aspects human life. Cultural values generally refers to that which is held to be wrong, or right or even important in any given society and influence the attitudes, interests, preferences, needs, sentiments and dispositions and relationships with others. The endeavours of the individual or any group of individuals within all spheres of life is dictated by the values, espoused by that society which broadly guides on what is the right or wrong way to view, behave or relate in any given context. This paper argues that colonial domination led to the erosion of many positive African cultural values such as sense of solidarity and brotherhood and led to the adoption of western values such as of individualism and self-seeking which are to a large extent responsible for the many ills that currently afflict the African society. The paper proposes that transformational leadership can be an effective tool for reconstruction and enhancement of the positive African cultural values.



Africa is well known for cultural richness in traditions and values which are cherished by its various communities. Ganguli and Krishnan (2005) highlights that values are concepts or beliefs which act as guiding principles in life. Idang (2007: 4) has argued that, "Values actually permeate every aspect of human life. ... and there is no society without some [sense of] value system." Values are like hinges that stick family and community members together. For example hard work, humanness, sense of sharing and caring, unity, respecting others, among others are values that are highly observed and encouraged in African societies. Parents as family leaders and role models transmit these values across generations. Unfortunately, the colonial era eroded cultures on the African continent including family values. It imposed colonial rule that resulted into practices of individualism and ethnic hatred partly because of the emerging elitism among African tribes. After gaining political freedom in the 1960s many African governments inherited countries that were created and influenced by colonial practices and values including use of violence and divisions based on ethnic differences.

As observed by Igboin (2011), these practices took over and crippled down existing into family and community value systems leading to practices including corruption, land grabbing, and oppression, irresponsibility and the like which have affected African culture and values. It is not surprising that the ramifications of colonial practices continue to be felt in form of economic decline, mismanagement of natural resources, health-related and social economic problems, as well as political instability which interfere with the orderly life of the people. This paper revisits some of the traditional African family values cherished by African communities before the colonial era, and addresses the effects of colonial experience on African countries and family value system.

Many thinkers on this subject such as Idang (2015) are of the view that Africa needs restore a culture that rewards merit, hard work and high morals as well as traditional values that embrace African culture. This particular leadership style embodies a sense of direction and brings social change among people (Burns, 1978). In the course of relearning what has affected African communities, transformational leadership can be employed as one of the approaches to assist in the rebuilding of African family value system. As highlighted by Chibairo (2015; 5), transformational leadership is defined as a "leadership that causes change in individuals and social systems." On the same note, Rokeach (1979) defines transformational leadership as an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct and therefore can be a useful tool for reviewing African cultural family values and revitalizing them.

Methodology

This paper is based on a review of current literature role of colonial role in the erosion of African cultural family values, impact that European colonial values have had on African communities in the colonial and post independence era and the discourse around revival of these values and especially the role of transformative leadership as a tool for revival of positive cultural values of African communities. Relevant sources including books and journal articles were retrieved from different electronic databases and analyzed to establish



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key scholarly positions on these issues, and current trends and positions. The findings were evaluated and synthesized into a paper under various thematic issues with due consideration to the author's views on these issues. Arising from the results of the reviews, some recommendations are made on the way forward in the revival of authentic African cultural family values through transformative leadership.



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The Notion of Culture and Values and Their Role in Society

Both culture and values go together. According to Oni and Segun (2014), culture is a way of life of any group of individuals which gives them identity and distinguishes them from other groups. The people of a society share common experience, beliefs, values and attitudes. According to Ezedike (2009: 455) African culture "...refers to the sum total of shared attitudinal inclinations and capabilities, art, beliefs, moral codes and practices that characterize Africans." It can be conceived as a continuous, cumulative reservoir containing both material and non-material elements that are socially transmitted from one generation to another. African culture, therefore, refers to the whole lot of African heritage.

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Therefore culture entails a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies. These peculiar traits go on to include the people's material aspects such as dressing, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and so on. The immaterial part of culture is to be found in the actual behaviour of the group, as manifested in customs, and institutions, social norms, taboos and values. Arising from this, it is clear that one of the essential aspects of culture seems to be an appreciation of values with reference to life conditions. Generally, the term values has been taken to mean moral ideas, general conceptions or orientations towards the world or sometimes simply interests, attitudes, preferences, needs, sentiments and dispositions (Idang, 2015). Values here are to be understood as beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life Sociologists use this term in a more precise sense to mean "the generalized end which has the connotations of rightness, goodness or inherent desirability" (Idang, 2015).

Values in general are crucially important in any organizational set up, no matter the stage in one's life. Values are held dear by any family unit because they are inculcated by parents into their children who learn and internalize them, put them into practice and pass them from generation to generation. In other words, values are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. They have a major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serves as broad guidelines in all situations. In essence therefore values represent basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence

According to Kanu (2010), every society has set of values, covering every aspect of human endeavour. These values are the guiding principles found in any society. Value system is the cultural outlook of the people and the understanding of the value system of the people is the understanding of the belief system and cultural system of the people in question. These values cover the whole



ramifications of the society, and values apparently play regulating roles in human relationship and also stabilizing factors of the society. A value can be seen as some point of view or conviction which we can live with, live by and can even die for.



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African and Colonial Experience

An overview

In Africa, the period between 1870s and 1900s was a turning point in the history of the continent as it marked a tumultuous period characterised by imperialist aggression, military invasions, and eventual conquest and colonization of the continent by European powers (Oni & Segun, 2014). The colonization process led to disintegration of most of old African kingdoms and empires and establishment of new political entities under the direct control of foreign powers. The colonial brigade included not only colonial administrators, white farmers, traders and their employees but also white missionaries whose main endeavour was to convert African to Christian religion. Therefore, alongside political conquest, Africans were forced to adopt the culture of the colonial races including education, technology, religion, economics, social ideas and political ideology and values (Ocheni and Nwankwo; 2012).

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The weapons of choice in colonial cultural aggression included not only religious conversion, western education, political and administrative repression but also propaganda and distortion. The main ideology of the colonialism was that the colonial culture was superior, the epitome of civilization while African culture was primitive, devilish and backward (Moti, 2011). The result of colonial aggression was enslavement of the African through forced, imperial autocracy, and cultural domination of the African peoples. In the post-independence era, there have been calls and efforts to revive African cultural values as part of the African renaissance. However, there has been a lot of debate around what is truly African values are and the best way to re-entrench them in the cultural fibre of the African peoples.

The first objective of colonialism was political domination. Its second objective was to make it possible the exploitation of the colonized peoples. Other reasons included the need for raw materials; the search for new markets for the metropolitan industries where European surplus manufactured products as a result of the industrial revolution could be sold; the need to provide more food for the growing urban industrial population; and the need to find a place where the surplus accumulated profit from the industrial revolution could be invested to make more profit (Moti, 2020).

In Africa, colonial powers also imposed its socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures on the colonized territory. This stemmed from the erroneous belief that the mores of the colonizer are superior to those of the colonized territory. The colonizer then used this belief to legitimize or promote the cultural displacement of the colonized people. This was accompanied by sustained process of the African peoples' assimilation of western culture by Africans (Moti, 2011).



Colonial Eurocentric vis-à-vis African Social Values: A juxtaposition

Overview

There has been effort among African scholars since independence to trace and define Africanity, that is, what it means to be an African and what are the unique African cultural values, and how to revive them. These efforts arose from first, the axiom that colonialism had led to a systemic denigration of African values in favour of Eurocentric values of the colonizing powers, and secondly, a general agreement that that there are enduring social values which in spite of the invasion and the encroachment of Western value system are still alive. One major issue noted is that African values are humanistic, practical and pragmatic hence they are human and community centered. Julius Nyerere at the early days of African independence period observed that colonialism attempted to make us believe that Africans did not have an indigenous culture of their own or that what they were worthless or something of which Africans should be ashamed of instead of being a source of pride.

Maybe the broadest approach to distinguishing African value system is through the use the Ubuntu philosophy, as the lens to focus on what is truly African and how it can be applied today's world. According to Mbae (2020), one of the leading proponents of education with values, Africans were traditionally guided by the practical philosophy of ubuntu with its emphasis on the importance of the society and the responsibility towards realizing the common good. Because they fully embraced this foundational philosophy, traditional Africans knew exactly who they were, their place in society, and the values and norms of their society. In contrast, today, most people have either forsaken this philosophy or they have embraced other ideologies and philosophies which are incompatible with Ubuntu (Mbae, 2020).

According to Mbae, Ubuntu underlines the universal brotherhood of man. The African, like all other people are first and foremost human beings. To be an African therefore is to belong to a family, to a clan, to a tribe, to a community or society that identifies itself as African, a citizen of a country, of a continent, of the world. Ultimately, therefore, the African is a citizen of the world, sharing that identity with all other human beings. However, the world does not, and must not demand that the African should drop his identity and adopt a new one so as to be fit for global citizenship. The global village, just like ubuntu, must not swallow ones African identity but rather recognize and respect it for what it is (Mbae, 2020).

Unique African Socio-cultural and Family Values

Efforts have been made to identify truly African values. Kanu (2010) has noted the following as truly African values: sense of good human relation, sense of community, sense of hospitality, sense of respect for authority and the elders, sense of extended family and sense of religiosity. According to him, before an era of colonialism there were traditional values that were highly treasured within African culture which include: sense of understanding, sense of family, showing respect to elders, word of wisdom, hard work, true brotherhood and sisterhood, mutual respect (Kanu, 2010).



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(a) Sense of understanding

This particular value surpasses general knowledge. Understanding from the African context pertains practical understanding. In traditional Africa, there was a sense of concern, being in solidarity with the one in need or the sufferer. An application of active listening created the sense of understanding between the sufferer and the active listener to be able to assist the one in need. This is why the value of understanding stands out in African communities because it goes with the application of action practically.

(b) A sense of family kinship and communal identity

From the African context, one felt proud to identify himself or herself with her own family. It originated from the African ancestral roots. Family members always maintained a sense of community across extended family and beyond. As Banda (2014) has argued, the sense of family was intertwined within traditional culture of which our human ancestors were also cherished. In the same manner the enjoyment and interconnectedness were always revered and maintained across people from the same ancestral root because of the value of togetherness. The same value permeated to immediate and extended family as well as to clan and tribe.

According to Ogbonmwan (2008:3),

Everybody is linked with all the other members, living or dead through a complex network of spiritual relationship into a kind of mystical body. Consequently, it is not just “being” that the African values but also “being with others” or being rooted in kinship. A person is an individual to the extent that he is a member of a family, clan or community as manifested in polygamy, extended family system and kinship patterns.

Magesa (1998:110) has for example observed that in African marriages, the communities involved share their very existence in that reality they become one people, one thing, as African themselves would put it that through their marriage, their families and clans are also united so that what is done to one of their members is done to all. By this gesture marriage also means that the partners’ responsibilities are not limited to them alone but have a much wider application. Their own personal identity and identification are equally extended

This train of thought suggests that in African societies, marriage is not only a relationship between two individual people but also as a structural link between families, clans, tribes, and nations. In marriage the family is the person’s channel of integration into the clan and the wider society. Consequently, in marrying, the man accepted the some responsibilities towards another family and the wife likewise which underlines this social and communitarian character of African marriage. This underlines the observation that for Africans, for instance, we see that close kinship relations are held at a high premium, a synergetic character of the society that allows people to build houses and work on farms together.

According to Ezedike (2009), kinship ties and love are what characterized the traditional African culture. It is only love that would make a community, for instance, to tax themselves through the sale of the products of cash crops like oil



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palm and use the proceeds to educationally support a child who is brilliant. In this respect, the synergetic nature of African culture is what made the society very amiable. The African sense of brotherhood and sisterhood extended beyond immediate family, extended family, clan and tribe. In case of any calamities, village members were always there to assist any family that had a problem. For example if a child of a certain family performed academically well in school and is supposed to excel to another level but had financial crisis, the whole village stepped in to bridge the gap. This was because of communal spirit and a sense of sharing. It was believed that once the child completed his education as a medical doctor or a teacher would always be there for the entire village not only for his family or clan.

(c) Sense of Environmental protection

It is part of the African world-view to treat the environment in which he finds himself with respect. In other words, the African cooperates with nature and does not try to conquer it. According to Ezedike (2009), in the African world-view the environment is regarded with respect. The African cooperates with nature and does not try to conquer it. This synergetic nature of society, guaranteed the conservation of nature.

(d) Showing respect to elders and wisdom

Within the African society, high respect was given to elders regardless of their economic status. While great emphasis was placed on respecting elders the practice also included ancestors because of closeness between the two groups as highlighted by Kanu (2010). On the same note, respect extended to ancestral wisdom which applied to respecting forefathers, and mothers, extended family, clan members including our ancestors who were always remembered with reverence. Keeping in mind a word of wisdom from parents or elders before they passed on to another life was a sign of great respect among African family members. Any word of wisdom such as maintaining unity and family name among others, such words were highly remembered and treasured as words of wisdom from forefathers as well as ancestors. Respecting ancestors was part and parcel of obtaining blessings for the entire family members, upon certain activities, farm produce and for the sustainability of animals and creation. Africans believed ancestors' spirits were always with us and around us and once one died became part of them. The irony behind it was to avoid a curse upon any of the family members. It was crucially important to not go against the word of wisdom of deceased parents or ancestors.

(e) Hard work and mutual respect

Each member of the family felt the responsibility for hard work. In traditional Africa, it was believed that there was no family that would go hungry without enough food to sustain it. One's identity and value was determined by how much one contributed to the family and to the community. Every member of the family felt a sense of duty and responsibility assigned to the person, based on different season of time and gender roles. In African set up, there was mutual respect starting from their African kings, influencing their followers within their kingdoms. They were always there to serve their people first instead of



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being served only by their followers. The same type of leadership was followed or practiced all the way into the family unit. Just as Chibairo (2015) in African idiom, the king depended on the people just as much as the people depended on him.



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Colonial values and Impact on African Society

Overview

There is a general agreement among scholars that colonial experience disrupted and damaged African history and culture leading to a disconnection of people in the continent from their values (Banda, 2014). This destruction of African values may have been accelerated by postcolonial forces such as globalization, migration and technology but it is correct to say the genesis of the changes are rooted in the colonial domination of Africa by western colonial powers. However, the advent of colonialism has affected these activities. Colonialism brought about infiltration by Western civilisation and culture, and the relegation of African culture to the periphery (Arolowo, 2010). During the period of colonialism, traditional African culture and values were seriously threatened and in some cases, African subjects were forcefully assimilated into the cultures of their colonial masters.

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Uniquely Colonial and European Values that Eroded African Values

(a) Destruction of communitarian life and entrenchment of individualism

Pre-colonial Africans lived a communal lifestyle. That is to say, there was interconnectedness among members of a community. Indeed, community was an extension of the family system. The imposition of colonialism on Africa altered its cultural values completely. African modes of thought, patterns of cultural development, and ways of life were forever impacted by the change in political structure brought about by colonialism (Setles, 1996). It is an incontrovertible fact that the advent of colonialism and imperialism nearly caused a dethronement of African communitarian life in favour of individualism. Colonialism brought about individualism. It is now me and my family hence, the distinction between distant and close relations. In essence, the social effect of colonialism is the glorification of individualism of families and fragmentation of family and social relations as against close knit-family structures (Banda, 2014).

(b) Colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism and ethnocentrism

Invasion of the Western values of materiality over humane value system was based on western values of racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. Europe in many ways has attempted to propagate these values which do not tally with the African society. There is no gainsaying that our value system is in the process of decaying. Stemming from the adulteration and overthrow of African culture by colonialism is the inferiority complex of dependency on foreign culture which is manifested in African unreflective and blind copy and introduction of alien values into African cultural milieu. Another factor is European ethnocentric nature, which viewed their culture as superior to others. As a consequence, there was the need to assimilate Africans into European civilization.



(c) Deep-seated corruption, unbridled materialism and exploitation

In most African states and the selfish behaviour of some of the political leaders to sit tight in office even when they have obviously outlived their usefulness in the eyes of their people, are attributable to the effects of colonialism and imperialism. Some manifestations of these negative traits are first, forced labour which placed obligatory labour on persons of the labouring classes to give labour for public purposes. The colonialists appropriated the surplus labour of Africa for their own profit and development. The African people were dehumanized, incarcerated and forced to work in colonial plantations at very low wages after displacing them from their lands. Secondly, there was imposition of taxes. The first was that it was a source of labour for their industries and plantations. The second reason was because they wanted the colonies to bear the cost of the personnel and the administration. Thirdly there was payment of low wages to Africans employed in the colonial service. The payment of low wages to Africans was seen by the colonialists as a method or strategy to compel more Africans to make their labour services available to the colonial plantations and industries (Pwiti, & Ndoro, 1999).

The major impact of colonialism in African is that it brought about the under-development of African territories in many different ways. By the end of the day, there was an emergence and institutionalization of classes and class struggle in the socio-economic and political life of the people (Pwiti, & Ndoro, 1999). Colonialism aided a clear emergence and development of classes in Africa. These classes include comprador bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat and the peasant. In 1960s, most African countries celebrated political independence from colonial powers with great anticipation of developing their natural resources, maintaining cultural richness, values and the like for the benefit of Africans. Not only that but also, during post-colonial Africa, many Africans had high expectations of regaining or having a share in the new leadership African power system. Unfortunately, good governance and “ethical power was lost during the colonization period” (Maritz, 1987: 120). As a result many African governments inherited countries that were created and influenced by colonialism practices, such as the mentality of instant success without putting into consideration the value of hard work. Not only the above mentioned miseries, but also, “...millions of Africans are threatened by famine, real income are continuing to decline, foreign debt is increasing at an alarming rate and socio-political institutions are disintegrating” (Maritz, 1987: 120).

With these factors at play, it is not surprising that tribal clashes, land grabbing, civil war, power greed among political and government leaders and the like are on the rise. These are some of the frustrating situations that continue to deprive African countries and families a sense of sharing, a sense of concern for fellow Africans, sense of hope, peace and reconciliation (Igboin, 2011). As a result, Africa continues to be placed on the periphery of human underdevelopment in terms of economic and social status (Rodney, 1982). Despite gaining political freedom, Africa still faces a number of challenges. One of the challenges in particular is that Africa remains undeveloped. The trend is similar to what Rodney (1982) has observed whereby colonial practices has produced Africa's



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underdevelopment and continue to plague Africa today.

Postcolonial practices continue to contribute to economic decline, corruption, mismanagement of natural resources and health related problems that interfere with African family values, socio economic, political stability and transformational leadership. Today, the class values and ineffective leadership are major concerns within African families and communities. As pointed out by Kiai (2016), currently, Africa has lost the moral compass that has a sense of humanity and consideration.

It is believed that western civilization, the major product of colonialism is responsible for the unbridled corruption in modern African society. According to the work of Mulinge and Leseted (1998) some of the ways through which the historical event of colonialism could be linked to corrupt practices include, monetization and taxation policies introduced by the colonialists among others. One can also add imperialism of trade. To start with, it is important to state that a closer examination of pre-colonial African economies reveals that there were no sizeable monetary economies in the territories acquired then by the emerging colonial power. The pervasive use of money made it to become a very useful commodity, but often exchanged on unfair terms.

Reconstructing African Cultural Family Values

Since independence, culture has been a major topic of discussion among social scholars, development experts and populace in African countries with a call to rediscover the African values as the basis of building authentically African nations (Malunga, 2014). Idang (2015) reckons that the relevance of African cultural values to the contemporary society should be critically assessed, and those found to be inimical to the well-being and holistic development of the society, be discarded while the positive ones are re-evaluated, their relevance established and sustained in order to give credence to authentic African identity

Many scholars aver that in spite of the damaging effect of colonialism, African cultural values were not wholly destroyed and therefore their reconstruction is indeed possible (Banda, 2014; Olanya, 2013) In the last few decades culture has been identified as a major factor in sustainable development in that culture, as the foundation of values, gives us a sense of rationality, judgment and moral commitment to progress. Values help us make the right choices that in turn influence our development efforts (Katundano, 2020).

Notably UNESCO (1982:4) observed that,

It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations can only be ensured by making cultural factors an integral part of the strategies designed to achieve it.

Mbae (2020) has advocated for the revival of African values arguing that “mkosa mila ni mtumwa” (he who has no culture is a slave”), meaning without a commitment to a set of values, any society will continue to engage in pursuits that



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are alien and often counter-productive to the aspirations of its people. Iroegbu (1994), in his case for re-awakening of African culture and values has noted that first, there are indispensable basic cultural values in African tradition which are necessary for genuine development and secondly these values promote a sense of pride and dignity in the African society.



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Arolowo (2010) has observed that colonization by facilitated erosion of cultural heritage and values of Africans and robbed them decades of opportunities for self-development, self-government and self-styled technological developmental pace. To remedy the situation he has argued on the need for urgent measures steps need to “reorder and reverse this evanescent trend of cultural emptiness, without which Africa may experience seasons of cultural extinction and drought of African values”. According to Arolowo (2010), this underlines the need to recreate values overcome their present social, economic, political, health, education woes, etc., there is the urgent need for the people and the leadership to create their own indigenous identity, culture, technology, economy, education, religion, craft, etc. that would be interwoven in good governance.

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Many African scholars such as Arolowo (2010), has also noted that African value system was instrumental in keeping a balance between human activities and environment which has been neglected in managing our environments and rapidly destroyed. Knowledge accumulated from generation to generation could be very useful in managing the current global crisis of climatic change. However capitalist values have altered people’s attitudes towards natural resources, being seen as objects for exploitation instead of being a cultural heritage in achieving a sustainable development, African habits, practices, traditions, and values that protect, and foster natural environment, and further explains how people’s attitudes have changed towards sacred forests, exploiting and cutting down trees to meet individual ends.

As the debate on the renewal of Africa values continue to rage the basis for renewal has also been the subject of the discussion. Ezedike (2009) has argued that values that are necessary for the survival of their people. while positive dimensions of our culture ought to be practised and passed on to succeeding generations, negative dimensions of our culture have to be dropped in order to promote a more progressive and dynamic society. Kyalo has emphasis on the need for a recovery of our traditional values in marriages, especially marriage alliances in our societies. There are, truly, relevant and useful values in African spirituality to enrich marriage today. What is required is negative dimensions of our culture have to be dropped in order to promote a more progressive and dynamic society and which are necessary for the survival of their people.

Reconstruction of African Cultural Family Values: The Case for Transformational Leadership

Leadership and Transformation in Africa

The Zulu and Shona of African societies believe in traditional African philosophy of Ubuntu “a person is a person on account of other people,” the same applies to “A king is a king on account of the people” (Chibairo, 2015). The implication of the African philosophy is a reminder to any leader that there is



no leadership without people. Important as this message is, it provides us with a value of interdependence which stems from the level of family leadership all the way to the government and political levels. In everyday life, no king or leader can be self-sufficient and no follower can be self-sufficient. As human beings, we all need each other for personal value development, life skills, leadership principles and attitudes that contribute to human interactions with the society without being self-centered or power greed. The same is expected of African leaders even after gaining political independence (Butera, 2011).

In traditional Africa leadership meant being a servant first instead of being a leader. Surprisingly, what leadership means today is to be served and being powerful in terms of possession and financial gain. Instead of offering royal service to people most African leaders focus on their own benefits and their associates. Consequently, abandonment of the people who elect and trust leaders with different political positions has become every term game. Empty promises from both civil and political leaders have damaged trust of their followers. If only African political freedom fighters like Kimathi of Kenya, Mkwawa of Iringa Tanzania, and many others would come back to witness what they fought for, they would shed tears of blood. It is not easy today in most African countries to trace selfless leaders who are also transparent and moral. In the same vein, Salawu (2012), points out that African continent is now suffering from leadership vacuum which is contrary to effective leadership.

Sederer (2012), echoes on the same by highlighting that leadership is not just a colourful hat for anybody put on his head. It is a skill for one to work hard, be able to achieve, sustain and demonstrate with a proof of concept. Rolfe (2011) also indicates that what leaders need to keep in mind is to acquire a sense of trust and integrity by doing the right thing even when no one is looking at them. If the value of integrity is practiced by African leaders, effective leadership would suffice dictatorship and self-elected presidents. Instead of moving forward in effective leadership, Africa is being brought down by constant enemies namely, political conflict, different forms of corruption, greed power presidents and the like. It is about time to look for an alternative way of reclaiming African family value system by exposing and involving the young generation in transformational leadership. This is the type of leadership with a sense of vision or direction for the continent of Africa. The focus of transformational leadership should be inculcated in African families which is the cradle of shaping future leaders starts.

The Case for Transformational Leadership Approach

The power of any society is influenced by the members from different families who inculcate certain values into their children. The same applies to the leaders of societies because they are formed from different families. In the same context, African families play a big role in influencing societies in one way or another. In other words, the way families raise their children is the way they grow. If the family instills in children good leadership and family values, then the nation enjoys good leadership because families end up acquiring a stability culture of raising children with values that are essential for transformational leadership.



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Transformational leadership is about bringing change in any institution and is vital for the young generation to be able to rebuild African family value system starting from family unit. According to Bach and Ellis, (2011), transformational leadership shows that leaders give more importance to issues concerning others than those who are self centred. Additionally, Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) highlight that transformational leaders operate out of deeply held personal value system which include the value of integrity. Some of the values that are vital to transformational leadership include a sense of responsibility whereby young generation demonstrates total commitment to duties entrusted to them. As echoed by Bach and Ellis, (2011), African continent is in dire need of visionary leaders who build trust within themselves and mutual trust with others. Right from family levels, young generation has to learn to serve as role models by emulating from their parents and guardians. It is never too late for African children to employ open communication and active listening skills which align with showing compassion and caring values.

Parents are also encouraged to reinforce social skills in their children as they grow up. Social skills are vital in family interaction and among classmates in school. This is in view of creating holistic or wholesome human beings for transformational leadership. From a psychological point of view, social skills are critical to cognitive, emotional and psychological development (Mbotela, 2017). What is happening in modern societies, parents are very busy with work, campaigning for political positions and are busy minded. As a result, children are pushed aside from their social space at home and parent-child interaction is minimal. As emphasized by Mbotela (2017: 11), "But whatever the circumstances, adults have to make deliberate and intelligent decisions to entrench the culture of inclusivity for children at home, community and even in school." What is crucial is about the development of actual interaction whether direct or face to face interaction with fellow human beings starting right at home. This value is a good preparation for future transformational leaders for various institutions; whether in academics, in politics, government levels or elsewhere in society. Unfortunately, some parents are so much hooked to social media like watching television, using smartphones and the like instead of interacting with their children. If parents make deliberate time for their children and interact with them always, hopefully, they will instill the above mentioned values into young generation. This would be one way of preparing a platform for new leadership system in Africa that is meant to be able to engage, inspire and challenge its people while embracing African family values.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The paper has explored what could be done to reclaim African cultural and family values which were cherished by African communities before colonial times. The paper has examined how African communities and cultural and family values were affected by colonial practices and how this has impacted on African countries even after gaining political freedom in the 1960s. One key argument in the paper is that the destruction of traditional values has affected ethical decisions making of most policy makers in poor countries in favor of capitalistic values of individualism and self-satisfaction. For example, natural



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resources are seen as objects for exploitation and profit making, especially being used for individual private gain and self-satisfaction. African value system that used to help keep a balance between human activities and environment were not only eroded but also led to neglect and destruction of our environments. In contrast, African values ensured preservation of the environment as an alternative to individualistic capitalist values. Resources are used for individual private gain and self-satisfaction, subject to exploitation and profit making.

As a way forward the paper proposes transformational leadership as an alternative option for rebuilding and reclaiming African cultural and family value system by targeting the young generation. African families have to stick together through human dignity and self-esteem whereby nuclear family is not supposed to exist alone but to be supported by extended family, clan, the whole village, and the society at large. It is about time for African countries to rethink on rebuilding African family value system based on transformational leadership by fighting dehumanization, social injustices, power greed, different forms of conflict and corruption, famine and health related problems and the like among African families and beyond.

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