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African Postcolonial Leadership: The Contribution of African Student Leaders in the United States

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African Postcolonial Leadership: The Contribution of African Student Leaders in the United

States

By

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Dedication

I dedicate this project to my parents, Pastor and Mrs. Karikari without whose support and encouragement graduate school would have remained just a dream.

Abstract

Eric Karikari, a student in the Department of Communication Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato is the author of the study titled, *African Postcolonial Leadership: The Contribution of African Student Leaders in the United States* in May 2013.

This qualitative study which is a contribution to literature on postcolonialism in Africa emphasizes the work of leaders in African student organizations in the US. The study seeks to investigate if the agenda in African student organizations align with those of postcolonial leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere. There were four male and three female leaders interviewed for the study. The leaders, who came from universities in the Midwest, Northwest and the South, talked about their leadership styles, organizational vision, and knowledge of African colonial history in the context of postcolonial leadership on the continent. The study employed techniques in grounded theory and thematic analysis to analyze participants' sensemaking of their own leadership. The study found that all seven participants engage in postcolonial leadership strategies as evidenced by their leadership styles and qualities, organizational vision, and their knowledge of African colonial history. Most of the leaders had an organizational vision centered on ideological and cultural liberation. An implication of the study includes the fact that the process of sensemaking is a natural human process which applies to organizational members regardless of context. Another implication is that mimicry and hybridity significantly complicate the discourse of organizational sensemaking for colonial/neocolonial subjects.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

What is it about a name that makes it so important to us? I am not just referring to the names that we are given – or give to ourselves – as individuals. I am also speaking about family names, brand names, association names, and so on. I assume that most cultures have a certain importance attached to names apart from the purpose of identification because many names have meanings. "African" is the name that I have been given since my entry into the United States. This is not to say that I was not African before I entered the US; I have always been African. I did not choose to be African, and I have never been reminded that I am African as much as I have upon my arrival to the US.

First, back home in my native Ghana I was hardly ever prompted to notice the color of my skin much less the implications of having that skin color. Second, I have come to know that being a black African has implications for my self-cognizance of identity. It is more so the perception about Africa than anything else that announces my identity to the rest of the world – in this case, the rest of America. I sometimes wish that I was given the opportunity, devoid of previous assumptions, to tell my own story as a person instead of the already-ingrained notions of "Africanness" doing it on my behalf. Most of the time, being African has been associated with unpleasantness, lack of civility, under-development, irk, mystery, and misery. This story, on the one hand, does not represent the reality in most cases – because the Africa portrayed in Western media is not always a true representation of the 'real' Africa. On the other hand, even the 'real' Africa, is largely seen by most of its citizens, as the result of decades of oppression by the western world.

The oppression that most of the continent of Africa still suffers is the main reason why I decided to embark on the project. My involvement in the African Student Organization for

Development and Progress (ASODP), a recognized student organization on Minnesota State University, Mankato campus has afforded me the opportunity to know, critically analyze, and engage in discussions of Western imperialist activities on the African continent even today. I have researched, written short papers, and participated in panel presentations regarding imperialism in Africa and the ways by which it can be overcome. I simply want to contribute to the advancement of the continent of Africa, for it is by the liberation of the people that I will find my own liberation ideologically, economically, politically, and culturally. I need to be ideologically liberated from thinking that only Western concepts and ideas are good enough to be considered. I need to be economically liberated to be financially viable to live a more fulfilled life. I need political liberation to actively engage in the democratic tenets which make a better society. Finally, I need to be culturally liberated to accept that African cultural norms are simply different from others and beautiful in a unique way; not mystical or uncivilized.

My academic discourse in the period of my Master's degree has been about seeking the modes by which peoples of the Third World – the world's poorest nations including most of Africa, Latin America, and Asia – are, politically and economically oppressed by Western powers, eventually leading to ideological and cultural subservience. This means that as an African, my agency[1] as a person is highly limited; limited within the confines of western imperialist thought and perception. Without thinking, I bought into the rhetoric of Africans as second class citizens of the world. This form of oppression is summarized in Young's (2001) description: "The postcolonial era…describes the conditions of existence that have followed [colonialism] in which many basic power structures are yet to change in any substantive way" (p. 60). For my own sake and for the sake of posterity, I have decided to be involved in the struggle to overturn the notions of dependence and incapability that Africa is bridled with.

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[1] Agency is used here to refer to the ability of an individual to make their own choices.

My personal conviction about race, class and economic status are deeply rooted in my belief that these power structures exist to perpetuate the seeming disadvantage of people from my part of the globe. This situation demands extensive change; ideologically, culturally, economically, and politically. I believe that leadership at all levels significantly accounts for the extent of desired change. My passion and desire to investigate and understand responsible African leadership emanates from my perception that leaders have the single biggest influence on the way of life and thought patterns of any group of people. Leadership is a combination of personal traits and characteristics capable of causing group change by influencing others to accomplish goals (Northouse, 2004). This is why I believe that if leadership fails there is very little that can be done to salvage the plight of any group of people.

It is the seeming leadership failure that continues to feed the unfortunate notions of African depravity. For example, I was in a discussion with one of my African American female friends some time ago about Africa, African Americans, and stereotypes. It is a discussion I have been forced to have on many occasions since I have been in the United States. In our discussion, she found out that there are modern high-rise buildings in African cities, that we had access to the internet in our homes, and that it was possible for people like my father, a middle class man, to own a Mercedes. The only reason I was not thrown into a fit of anger is that it was not the first time I had been indulged in such a conversation. Before we got into this conversation, she had told me that she sometimes felt sorry for Africans due to the state of the "African economy". I knew then that I was dealing with two major issues. First, it is quite erroneous to unify the "African economy" because it is a continent of 54 sovereign states. Second, her pity for the state of the continent, from further discussion, had been exaggerated – not by her, but by the sources of her information on the matter. I could see she had a patronizing, but well-meaning pity for

Africans as she continued to speak about her media-influenced perception of Africa. Of course, I would not let her go without correcting this obviously erroneous perception which unfortunately has been perpetuated by different versions of the same story – Africans as untamed, primitive, mystical, and suspicious.

The conversation I had with this friend got me thinking about the actual state of the African in the 21st century; a century which offers so much promise but is yet to provide enough hope for Africa. Even though I would like to think that people like this African American friend are often misinformed either by other people or by the mass media, I know that the state of most African countries is sad, to put it lightly. Until I started learning about Marxism and postcolonialism, in particular, I was as oblivious as many other African students to the global structures of domination which are bound to perpetuate the condition of Africa if the whole continent does not rise to subvert them.

Problem Statement and Objectives

Colonialism or imperialism is not a figment of my or other Africans' imagination. It is real (Gauhar & Nyerere, 1984; Mandela, 1994; Said, 1978; Young, 2001). It has a long, winding relationship with what has become the perception of many people about Africa. In effect, the damage to my personal identity as an African is informed in many ways by the repercussions of imperialism in Africa. This is my biggest motivation for this project.

The current study dwells on the premises of both leadership and postcolonialism to investigate the contribution of African student leaders in the US. The study aims to add to the literature on African resistance to Western imperialism and contribute to understanding anti-imperialism in Africa, by showing how African student leaders across the U.S. contribute to the struggle against imperialism by the nature of their leadership. The essential question that I am interested in understanding is: What are African student leaders learning from anti-imperialist

leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere? I hope to find out if African student leaders, by their self-confessions are involved in the postcolonial struggle and the manner in which they talk about their leadership. This represents the objectives of the current study and my contribution to anti-imperialism in Africa.

Purpose of the Study

In part, the notion of African mystery, suspicion and lack of civilization is informed by the actual state of the continent currently. Africa is still the poorest continent in the world. This is a fact which has been attributed to a number of factors which include corrupt leadership, greed, and imperialism –which the current study seeks to investigate. The current study, from the standpoint of postcolonialism, asserts that the economic and political state of Africa is attributable mainly to factors external to the continent.

In this study, I have chosen to investigate leadership in African student organizations in the United States to determine 1) the leadership agenda in such organizations, and 2) if the agenda reflects any part of the overall postcolonial African vision. The postcolonial African vision, if any, will be determined using the examples of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere, three of the continent's foremost leaders of resistance to imperialism.

I have chosen to include these three leaders in my study because together they form what I believe is the core of African resistance to colonialism in the middle of the 20th century after decades of European rule. Amilcal Kabral of Guinea, Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia among others were also very notable leaders in the struggle. It is obvious that there are no women among the leaders mentioned. This is not because there were no women in African struggle against oppression, but within the time frame being considered – the mid-20th century – there were no women who rose to become president, prime minister or leader of any African government. This situation could be attributed to the patriarchal nature of most

African societies. It was not until 2006 that Africa saw its first female President in Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia. She became the country's leader after serving as opposition leader for more than two decades.

This study contributes to the literature in postcolonial studies in considering the ways in which the continent of Africa can be emancipated from Western imperialism. By interrogating the overall African leadership agenda I have found certain strands of postcolonial studies immensely useful in offering a lens through which a careful examination of the ways in which Western imperialism thrives and can be subverted.

Précis of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I will discuss relevant literature on leadership as the main construct used in the study, and certain strands of leadership which are contextually relevant to the study of African postcolonial leadership. I will also review literature on postcolonial studies, and Mimicry and Hybridity as the two main postcolonial concepts at play in the discourse of colonial/neocolonial subjects. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the methodology used in the study. This includes a description of the sampling technique, participants, interviews, and transcribing process. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the themes that emerged from the data. In this section I will also use the participants' responses to address the research questions. In Chapter 5, I will draw conclusions on the themes discussed in the analysis section. I will also discuss the implications of the study, limitations, and suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will discuss relevant literature on leadership as the main construct of the study. I will also provide a contextual background of postcolonial studies and its implications for the study. I will then introduce two main postcolonial concepts, Mimicry and Hybridity, as they pertain to the colonial/neocolonial discourses. Finally I will analyze the lives, leadership style and vision of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere. This will be done in the context of African postcolonial leadership and their examples will be used to determine if the participants of this study are postcolonial leaders.

While, there is plenty of literature on postcolonial studies and African leaders (Apter, 1968; Howe, 1997; Mandela, 1994; Young, 2001), and a few on minority student leadership (Harper & Quaye, 2007), few studies focus on African student leadership and what contributions student leaders are making in the postcolonial discourse. The current study aims to bridge this gap in research between postcolonialism and African student leadership especially in the United States. Additionally, this study seeks to add to the literature that conceptualizes leadership as situated in a cultural and historical context. In the ensuing sections I will talk about the contextually-relevant history of postcolonial studies, charismatic leadership in the African leadership context, some postcolonial constructs that influence the colonial/neocolonial discourse, and the lives and leadership styles of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere.

Leadership: A brief Overview

Leadership, as a construct, is the main focus of the current study. There are many definitions and descriptions of what leadership is. Whether leadership is a process, action, or event, the practical implications are of more concern to the current study than its definition. It is

yet to be established if leadership is the single most important aspect of organizational/political

life as is purported (Johnson, 2005; Northouse, 2004). But one thing is certain: since the

beginning of recorded time, there has always been evidence of leadership usually – but not

always – embodied in one person (Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson, & Uhl-Bein, 2011). The

successes and failures of individual leaders, however, have been strongly linked with the success

of organizations. The current study is grounded in the notion that leadership in the context of

African organizations is crucial to the achievement of any set goals in pursuing a meaningful

postcolonial agenda**.** In this sense, I briefly describe the charismatic leadership framework from

which the study was conducted and will be analyzed.

Charismatic Leadership

In the past, charismatic leadership was a term used to describe only leaders of the

Christian church. This kind of leadership was used to denote the possession of supernatural gifts

bestowed on a person by God. Max Weber, however, used it to describe leaders "based on

perceptions of an extraordinary individual" (Bryman et al., 2011, p. 86). Charismatic leadership

is believed to result from a condition of distress – as exemplified by Nkrumah, Mandela, and

Nyerere in subsequent sections – and the possession of special powers of mind, speech, heroism,

or magical abilities. To note, nonetheless, charismatic leadership is not only about what a leader

embodies, but also what she/he is perceived to be.

From this description of charismatic leadership, African leaders like Nkrumah, Mandela,

and Nyerere embody charismatic leadership given their special abilities of heroism, speech, and

motivation, and the general perception of the people they led. The social and historical contexts

within which these leaders rose to prominence also, according to Bryman et al, contributed to

their being considered charismatic leaders. These leaders rose in times of distress and revolution

– a condition necessary to precipitate charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership described in this context is similar to ideas and descriptions of transformational leadership. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is more concerned with the higher order needs of people. For instance charismatic/transformational leaders are more concerned about the self-esteem needs of their followers than about more basic ones like physiological or safety needs. The leadership agenda of a charismatic/transformational leader serves a self-actualizing purpose for both leader and follower. Leaders who are seen as charismatic by their people are also deemed more effective in the achievement of their goals, and have a more satisfied followership than other types of leaders (Bryman et al., 2011; Noguera, 1995). The followership of the three leaders used in this study was a satisfied one owing to the fact that they all fought for and achieved political independence from British rule (Bretton, 1967; Mandela, 1994). For Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere, the achievement of ideological, cultural, political, and economic liberation for their people served as motivation for the kind of leadership they exhibited.

Postcolonialism: A Brief Historical Background

Postcolonialism has assumed an interventionist position – it is done as an intervention to the covert structures of imperialism that still persist across the world, especially in Africa and most of eastern Asia (Young, 2001). The structures of imperialism have been put up for intentional de-legitimization of the "other" – the subaltern according to Said (1978). Said explained in *Orientalism* that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (p. 3). The ways in which, according to Said, Europeans were able to systematically manage and subordinate the Orient – the people of Eastern Asia – politically, socially, ideologically, and scientifically in the

post-Enlightenment era can be understood by critically studying how they persistently and consistently used power to promote their rhetoric of European superiority.

Said gave an account of the reasons for European rule in eastern, central and western Asia, and in some eastern parts of the world. For instance, he analyzed Arthur James Balfour's speech to the British House of Commons in June 1910. In this speech, Balfour stated that the reason for British colonization of Egypt was "not merely for the sake of Egyptians… [they were] there also for the sake of Europe at large" (p. 33). Said further explained that the British justification for their presence in Egypt stemmed from the inferiority of the Egyptians and the latter's incapability of "self-governance." In their public addresses and political activities, the British would not explicitly confess their belief in the inferiority of the people over which they wielded control. Said, in view of this, enlightened his readers and pointed out an agenda backed by the conviction that "England knows Egypt…" (p. 34) probably more than Egypt knows itself. This is implied in the idea that the English used their limited knowledge of their colonies to justify claims that they knew Egypt more than Egyptians knew themselves and thus were more capable of ruling the latter.

The postcolonial movement, in light of the above, has been concerned with overturning notions of inferiority among people in former colonies, and dismissing the idea that these people were incapable of governing themselves (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978). Africa and its intellectuals have also, since the turn of the 20th century, been concerned with similar struggles against European colonialists, and later against western imperialists (Achebe, 1994; Mandela, 1994; Nkrumah, 1955).

African anti-imperialism struggles, which started more than a century ago, are still on-going and moving from a fight against colonial domination to a war on colonial/neocolonial

oppression (Young, 2001). Colonial/Neocolonial oppression refers to the sum total of the condition of Africa which has resulted from western hegemonic exploitation or, what Young refers to as global imperialism. Power is at the center of such exploitation since it is "the ability to get another actor to do what it would not otherwise have done" (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2010, p. 45). This means that the more powerful actors/states are able to get their way with less powerful ones. Young described the significance of postcolonialism as a means of challenging and unpacking the subtle but profoundly totalitarian nature of western colonialism/imperialism. He disagreed with the notion that colonialism/imperialism was merely an accidental result of modernity, adding that any attempt to undermine it constitutes a far too convenient deflection from the matter. In this study, "colonialism" is often substituted with "imperialism" because even though colonialism denotes a period of domination, it was also a form of imperialism. Imperialism involves all the structures used to sustain the domination of one group over another (Said, 1978).

The purpose of the study can be tied into the postcolonial agenda of seeking an intervention to the covert forms of oppression still at play against most of the Third World especially Africa. The use of "postcolonial" or "postcolonialism" covers the entire academic discourse which resulted from the need for ideological, political, economic, and cultural liberation: "the politics of anti-colonialism and neocolonialism, class, race, gender, nationalisms, and ethnicities" (Young, 2001, p. 11). The current study posits that an African student leadership agenda modeled after those of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere is likely to advance the goal of seeking new ways to create social and ideological transformation.

In this study, I argue that the role of African leadership in the discourse of the continent's postcolonial challenges is crucial to furthering the course of Africa's fight for economic freedom.

The study determines the agenda of the above mentioned African leaders who through pain-staking determination rekindled a sense of African nationalism, and eventually won political freedom for their people. Through the lens of African colonial history, this study will analyze the accounts of African student leaders and how they make sense of leadership in their student organizations. By allowing the student leaders to talk about their leadership style and vision, they are afforded a chance to do a retrospective sensemaking of how the work they do aligns with the leadership in a postcolonial context (Hall, 2011).

Additionally, the study seeks to show how African student leadership agenda aligns with those exhibited by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, South Africa's Nelson Mandela, and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere. These leaders have been selected for this study because of the significance of the period[2] in which they led, their philosophical thought, African nationalist[3] postures, and overall influence on the African postcolonial discourse as will be shown.

Key Constructs of Postcolonial Studies in the Study

Two of the main constructs of postcolonial studies in this study are Mimicry and Hybridity. The accounts of the student leaders interviewed for the study will not only be analyzed in the context of organizational sensemaking but also based on the fact that as colonial/neocolonial subjects their actions are influenced by discourses of colonialism and Westernization (Hall, 2011).

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[2] The period in which Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere rose to prominence was the mid-twentieth century – after World War II. This was the period when most colonies around the world began to seek political independence from their colonizers.

[3] I used the term African nationalist to describe an individual who is passionate about Africans and Africa. He/she believes in the ability of Africa to succeed by itself; without the help of others.

Mimicry

Bhabha (1994) explained mimicry as being associated with issues of control. This idea relates directly to the ways in which the postcolonial social actor navigates the process of sensemaking by mimicking the colonizer.

> Mimicking was not designed to be an incidental outgrowth of the colonial experience; the purpose of setting up a colonial outpost was to teach the citizens of the colonies mimicry of the colonizer's institutions and of the hierarchical colonial discourses of race, class, and national identity. (Hall, 2011, p. 618)

The unintended but actual outcome of mimicry is that the colonized become similar but not exactly the same as the colonizer. This means that the colonized becomes a false version of the colonizer. As Bhabha explained, "if colonialism takes power in history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce" (p. 85). The repeated performance of the colonizer's identity only creates the colonized as a copy of the former. This situation fortifies the authority of the colonizer by introducing in the colonial/neocolonial discourse a dialect between agency and control[4]. Mimicry produces a virtual self which rids the colonized of her/his agency and gives control to the colonizer who is being mimicked. This is because the colonizer is seen as the owner of the real Westernized identity.

Hybridity

Even though the current study is focused on African student leadership, the concept of hybridity becomes important to consider because as a postcolonial construct, it explains the mixing of local cultural identities with Western culture, creating one which is distinct from both the local and Western culture. Hall (2011) explained that, "increasingly, organizations and their

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[4] Control is used to denote the mechanisms put in place to regulate individual or group behavior.

internal cultures cannot be understood separately from the unique cultural realities of the societies in which they exist" (p. 619).

The effect of Western thought and ideals on an individual is powerful enough to produce a hybrid identity from a mixture of indigenous culture and that of the Western powers. Hybridity is not a phenomenon which occurs by choice. It occurs because "not all ancestral roots are accorded the same symbolic privilege within nation-building projects." (Munasinghe, 2002, p. 664). Therefore one group or another are forced to find an association with the ideals of the culturally dominant one. In producing a hybrid identity there is, therefore, the subordination of one or more groups to another. The current study posits that colonial/neocolonial subjects are hybridized and this introduces a complexity in the discourse. This complexity is brought about by the constant switch between two separate identities; the Western identity and, in this instance, the African identity.

Kwame Nkrumah: Champion of Pan-Africanism

Kwame Nkrumah is a leader in the postcolonial realm who gained world-wide respect and admiration for his leadership of the Gold Coast – now Ghana – to independence in 1957. During and after 1957, his vision of a liberated Africa, starting with his native Ghana, helped create a nationalist consciousness across Africa (White, 2003). Kwame Nkrumah had a Western-style education in his native Gold Coast, and later in the US and England. His leadership therefore cannot be said to have been uncontaminated by Western ideals. He admitted to being an eclectic reader who was influenced by quite a number of black Western intellectuals such as W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey and George Padmore (Nkrumah, 1957). He was also a very staunch Roman Catholic. Even though the colonized mind remains a hindrance to the development of the African continent (Lauer, 2007), a leader like Nkrumah, despite his several

years of Western education, proved his commitment to the progress of the continent. More

importantly, most of Nkrumah's achievements as a postcolonial leader can be attributed to his

strong sense of Africanism[5].

Nkrumah possessed the confidence, even as a student leader in America, to stand up for

beliefs. At the University of Pennsylvania, Nkrumah demonstrated the desire to take his African

nationalism and liberationist ideas to a higher level by helping to organize the first African

Students' Association of the US and Canada. He then was elected its first president (Nkrumah,

1957). Perhaps Nkrumah's most significant contributions were his Pan-African ideals and his

views on socialism which defined the entire scope of his leadership later in his life (White,

2003).

As a postcolonial leader, Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in 1947 during a time

when European colonialists were losing ground in many parts of the world as a result of World

War II (Apter, 1968; Young, 2001). He joined and later led the independence movement in the

Gold Coast. He wanted to use the liberation of the Gold Coast as a spring board for what he

believed would be the emancipation of the entire African continent from imperialism. He was

figuratively the biggest believer in the capability of black people and Africans, as seen in his

desire for the industrialization of Ghana and the achievement of a united African state.

After leading Ghana to political freedom in 1957, Nkrumah knew immediately that the

difficult part had only just begun. The economy of Ghana was still controlled by expatriates:

> Not only were export and import trade, banking, insurance, transportation and
>
> communications essentially in expatriate (i.e., mainly British) hands, but the country's
>
> major source of foreign exchange, cocoa was securely tied up in a maze of international

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[5] Africanism is used to describe a strong belief in Africa. It is a passion driven by a sense of belongingness to the continent of Africa.

financing, marketing, and processing arrangements. Policy and decision-making

concerning Ghana's cocoa crop was centered in London, not Accra. The same was true of

other primary products such as diamonds, gold and timber. (Bretton, 1967, p. 16)

Nkrumah therefore recognized this situation as his biggest challenge and started working

immediately for the Africanization[6] of political and administrative agencies within the country.

This constituted a valuable part of Nkrumah's postcolonial agenda, which seeks to flourish on

the basis of ideological, cultural, political, and economic independence of the African. However,

even Bretton, who was an ardent critic, agreed that Nkrumah was very strategic and systematic

in his plans to support the idea of a free African continent. He carefully mapped out how the

political independence of Ghana was going to send a continental wave of colonial resistance.

Upon his return to the Gold Coast in 1947, Nkrumah started working immediately, first

with the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and later with his own political party the

Convention People's Party (CPP), to achieve political independence in the shortest possible time.

Nkrumah believed that if the Gold Coast worked quickly to gain independence, other African

countries would evidently follow in seeking independence.

Nkrumah always knew and was quick to admit that his vision for Ghana and Africa

would take the concerted effort of all Africans. At no point was the Ghanaian leader and his

comrades fazed by the tribulations, imprisonments, and other forms of persecution they received

from the colonial masters and his own political opponents. In fact, Nkrumah (1955) indicated his

determination to see his vision to the end when he said, "all these difficulties have come and

gone. We may yet be faced with difficulties, but these will also be overcome because we are

determined and confident that victory will be ours" (p. 398). Nkrumah believed that discipline

meant postponing rewards and gratification until the ultimate goal of independence was

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[6] The creation of institutions and ideals based on indigenous African principles and beliefs

achieved. For this reason, he continued to advance ideologies like Pan-Africanism which he believed would result in the independence of African states.

Nkrumah championed the Pan-African agenda. Although it existed before his time, Pan-Africanism[7] was philosophically different than it is now. However, it was not until the fifth annual Pan-African Conference in 1945 that Marxist socialism was adopted as the philosophy that would drive this nationalist ideology (Tsomondo, 1975). Tsomondo recounted that Nkrumah, in supporting the idea:

> …maintained that the principles and purposes underlying Pan-Africanism would be realized through socialism. While Pan-Africanism was essential for black political liberation and unity in Africa and abroad, socialism was essential for Africa's economic liberation through industrial development. (p. 39)

It is evident that the goal of achieving not only political freedom, but also cultural and economic liberation was evident in Nkrumah's leadership agenda. It was no wonder that in his time as President of Ghana, Nkrumah undertook some of the most ambitious projects in Sub-Saharan Africa at the time, notably, the construction of the Akosombo Hydroelectric Dam and some other major road and rail networks in the country. These projects spurred the rapid industrialization of Ghana which in Nkrumah's vision would be the gateway to a developed Africa.

Although there are conceptual inconsistencies with trying to merge Pan-Africanism and socialism, Tsomondo accepted that Nkrumah was successful in pushing colonialists out of Africa and the Caribbean. The branding of colonialism as evil by Pan-Africanists, including Nkrumah alerted European colonialists that they would not be able to hold on to their colonies. Thus, Pan-

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[7] The ideology that asserts that African political freedom can only be achieved by the concerted effort of all people of African descent around the world

Africanism has been a 'strand' of the African postcolonial discourse which received much attention because of its influence on decolonization and its socialist ideals.

It was evident that Nkrumah was seen as leader who was highly cognizant of prevailing circumstances. As the Gold Coast's first Prime Minister, Nkrumah was tactical about the nature of his leadership. He switched from one power base to another, depending on his assessment of the circumstances. In describing what he termed the five power bases of leaders, Johnson (2005) described coerced power as based on punishment and penalties, reward power based on delivering something of value, legitimate power based on occupying a certain position, expert power based on characteristics of the individual, and referent (role model) power based admiration for an individual. Nkrumah for instance, in the period leading to Ghana's political independence in 1957 drew from expert and referent power through his charismatic leadership posture (Apter, 1968; Monfils, 1977; Nkrumah, 1955).

For Nkrumah, the only means by which Western imperialism would be overcome was through sound, African-led, socialist policies. To be able to achieve this he had to get everyone and everything behind him. This included using specific strategies to rally popular support for his vision. Nkrumah employed and relied heavily on the use of extrinsic rhetorical strategies (Monfils, 1977). Extrinsic rhetorical strategies are "those factors exterior to the speech itself, although of salient significance to it" (Hillbruner, 1966 as cited in Monfils, p. 314). This is also a characteristic of charismatic leadership. A number of scholars have criticized Nkrumah for his use of these strategies. These scholars criticize Nkrumah for his apparent projection of himself as the Christ-like figure to which Ghana had to look for redemption (see Bretton, 1967; Holden, 2004). However, he needed to create and heighten a sense of nationalism, which is epitomized by a political figure like none other but himself (Monfils, 1977). This once again, points to

Nkrumah's embodiment of the charismatic leadership framework. While many of his opponents accused him of resorting to a myriad of psychological schemes to manipulate people, Nkrumah's admirers described his use of setting, rituals, dress and other symbols as most effective for preparing people psychologically to receive his message of African liberation and transformation. Nkrumah knew that pursuing rigorous socialist policies required popular support. He therefore invested a significant amount of time and resources to creating ideological change. He used publications, seminars, task forces, and rallies to educate the citizenry on the policies and projects he was undertaking. The current study would therefore examine the style leaders in African student organizations across the US use to execute their leadership agenda.

Acclaimed as one of the four men to have altered and shaped world civilization in the last fifty years (Holden, 2004), Kwame Nkrumah's contribution to the African postcolonial agenda can hardly be surpassed on the continent. His vision, drive, and determination as a leader can only inspire the quest for higher heights as was done by Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela: Father, Friend, and Foe

Nelson Mandela, born on July 18, 1918, was the oldest and only male child of his mother, Noqaphi Nosekeni (Meer, 1990). The position of first-born male child is significant in many African cultures and was perhaps significant to shaping him as an individual. As a first-born male, he wielded a lot of responsibility in his family and society. In his early years, Mandela attended a Methodist mission school and was immersed, even in his native South Africa, in Western education and religious practice. It was in his first mission school that Mandela learned about the British political structure and honed his argumentative and reasoning skills. In fact, the name "Nelson" – a British name – was given to him by one of his teachers (Lieberfeld, 2004).

Mandela's sense of nationalism towards his native Xhosa did not wane despite his association with the Europeans. On the contrary, it increased his sense of African nationalism soon after his exposure to the African National Congress (ANC), an organization formed to fight discrimination and white supremacy in the country. His sense of African nationalism placed demands on his personality and actions. It is no wonder that he was branded a terrorist in the 1980s by personalities like Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Dick Cheney for his endorsement of violence as a means of political resistance in the 1950s and 60s (Boehmer, 2005); for "from the nationalist, the nation insists upon an ultimate, destructive, even terroristic sacrifice: through such sacrifice, the true nationalist, still according to this canonical definition, comes fully into his or her own" (p. 47). Mandela, at the time, however, did not seem to care about which brand – terrorist or otherwise – was ascribed him. He was more focused on being and remaining an African 'soldier' until what he deemed imperialism manifested through white supremacy had ended. In more recent definitions of terrorism, Mandela's approach to resistance would not be termed as such. Accordingly, terrorism is political violence that deliberately and indiscriminately targets civilians to use as leverage on parties in a conflict (Boehmer, 2005; Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2010). It was perhaps Mandela's charisma that gained him widespread affection from his people and disdain from his opponents (Lieberfeld, 2004).

In Lieberfeld's account, while remaining the unifying element of the ANC in those times, Mandela left the country to seek military help for the movement. This was a marked deviation from the philosophy of non-violence that he championed in his early years in politics. Under conditions of extreme difficulty especially unsuccessful dialogue, Mandela believed it was wise to use more force or risk losing a winnable fight. In his own words, Mandela stated "violence would begin whether we initiated it or not. If we did not take the lead now, we would soon be

latecomers and followers in a movement we did not control" (p. 389). Thus, an essential part of the leadership style of Mandela was to remain in control – not of people, but of his vision – because, like Nkrumah, he was always confident about the final destination. If Mandela's life and leadership were to be seen as a trilogy, the period described above would only constitute the first third of it.

The other two chapters of Mandela's political career would constitute a period of incarceration and a period of humanist reconciliation as Boehmer (2005) put it. Typical of charismatic leadership, the distressful circumstances determined what Mandela did later on in his life; the rest was partly due to his vision and personal attributes (Bryman et al., 2011). Mandela spent a quarter of a century in prison on Robben Island, a situation which obviously was extremely difficult, but which he largely made to work in his favor. An exceptional trait of Mandela's was his desire to overcome odds and keep going. As he recounted in *Long walk to freedom: Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, "I was now on the sidelines, but I also knew that I would not give up the fight…We regarded the struggle in prison as a microcosm of the struggle as a whole" (Mandela, 1994, p. 341). His optimism and patience for victory epitomizes the demeanor of postcolonial leadership, because the quest for social and ideological transformation – the fundamental goal of postcolonialism as described by Young (2001) – can prove to be a painfully slow exercise.

Nelson Mandela's success as a student leader, as a leader of the ANC, and then as South African president dwelled on the idea of teamwork. In his autobiography, Mandela (1994) described the significance of interdependence between him and his comrades at every stage of the struggle. His colleagues, some of whom were in prison with him, and his former wife, Winnie Mandela were regarded as his closest and most dependable comrades (Meers, 1990). He

had a vision of liberation for his people, and a definite plan for achieving the vision even if it meant losing his life. But he also believed that this vision was only achievable in collaboration with others. His reliance on the intellectual, moral, and emotional support of others is perhaps indicative of the fact that the postcolonial agenda on the continent of Africa is too big for any individual person or state to pursue alone, as Kwame Nkrumah promptly agreed (Nkrumah, 1955).

Mandela remained steadfast to this vision and more importantly to his comrades and followers who had a great deal of trust in him. It is for this reason that even after 27 years of imprisonment he remained the leader people would listen to and follow. Mandela's legacy is rooted in the fact that he believed in the African, and like Nkrumah, even though the struggle was different in many respects, it was to the same emancipatory end.

Even though he continued to work for the liberation of his people while still in prison, it is the period immediately following his release which has earned Mandela global praise and which actually, according to Sheckels (2001), provided the good-will he needed during his presidency. Mandela's leadership qualities were unique in the sense that even in the very difficult moments of South Africa's history his rhetorical posture[8] is perhaps unsurpassed in African political history. Despite his previous knack to resort to violent political protest, Mandela also had in his repertoire "an ethos from which he steadily drew" (Sheckels, 2001, p. 86). Charismatic leadership as described by Bryman et al. (2011) also involves the leader's ability to guide their followers. Mandela's rhetoric during his presidency sustained and even increased the level of his veneration. Despite this fact, at the time of South Africa's independence, the country's social and economic structures were weak, and therefore Mandela

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[8] I used the term rhetorical posture as a metaphor to describe the pattern of rhetoric. For instance, Mandela was known to appeal very frequently to the emotions of people.

needed to be very tactical. In Sheckels estimation, Mandela rightly tilled the ground on which the desired economic and social interventions for Black South Africans would grow while being careful not to trigger a flight of White South Africans away from the country:

> His ability to inspire ordinary men and women with the belief that they can and should make a difference has given his presidency a lustre lesser politicians would kill for… When he took up the reins of power in 1994, the world was holding its breath, expecting the racial tensions splitting the country to explode into a bloodbath. Instead, the world witnessed a miracle. Mandela's achievement is colossal. (Davis, 1997 as cited in Sheckels, 2001, p. 86)

It is the almost unrecognizable transition from militant, to reconciliator[9] that made Mandela the perfect symbol of African postcolonial struggles on one hand, and a true global icon of peace on another hand.

Julius Nyerere: The African teacher

Julius Nyerere, commonly referred to as "Mwalimu" in Swahili – which is translated "teacher" – was one of the founders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) – now African Union – in 1963. He was the one who led Tanganyika to independence and was subsequently the country's first leader. Tanganyika was the name of most of what is known today as Tanzania until it merged with Zanzibar in 1964. Nyerere became the first president of Tanzania and ruled from 1964 to 1985 (Bienin, 1967).

The philosophy and political thought of Nyerere especially his views on African socialism, democracy, and economic policy made him one of Africa's most influential leaders of the mid-twentieth century (Bienin, 1967). Bienin described Nyerere as the most ideological of

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[9] A person who acts a symbol of reconciliation

the East African leaders given the systematic nature of his ideas, and his use of symbolism to frame his thoughts. Nyerere is also described as a charismatic leader given his powerful use of words and the dire circumstances which triggered his rise to national leadership. Nyerere's writings can be found in several anthologies under the headings of "African Socialism", "Pan-Africanism", and "Democracy". Even though he was a strong advocate of systems and ideas, Nyerere was "suspicious of creeds and dogmas" (Bienin, 1967, p. 212). He was therefore less inclined to creating a blueprint for his ideas than he was about being pragmatic. This is because in his view, it was better to be seen making progress than to have solid frameworks which amount to nothing (Nyerere, 1979).

The Tanzanian leader was one of the most ardent critics of the British and other countries of the West. He criticized countries like the United States, France and Britain for what he implied was their conveniently selective knowledge of the problems of the Third World. Nyerere lamented on several platforms that institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which were created to serve the interests of countries in the West, were not suited to the issues confronting developing countries.

> When we appeared on the scene we were provided seats in those institutions but that was all. We didn't really fit in. The power remained in the hands of those who had formed those institutions. We are now saying that we should have a say in the operations of those institutions. We are being denied this. In a sense the United Nations is also one such institution but there at least we can make our voice heard. (Gauhar & Nyerere, 1984)

Nyerere continually criticized these institutions despite the fact that at the time neither he nor any leader of the Third World had enough power to do more. He was of the opinion that if the issues that are most important to the Third World were constantly kept on the agenda of international

conferences and seminars, the necessary pressure would be created to trigger action at least in the direction of fairness. He was however, cautious that an over-dependence on the rhetoric of imperialism and economic inequity without the adequate practical steps would be fruitless (Gauhar & Nyerere, 1984). He also strongly advocated for African unity in terms of policies and economic planning to bridge the widening North-South gap (Nyerere, 1963).

Nyerere (1985) was concerned with how the international institutions largely ignored the plight of the Third World. He accused these institutions of ignoring trends of poverty and economic decline in Africa, and for making it seem as if each individual country is responsible for its own condition. He blamed the powerful countries of the West for the perpetuation of imperialism in the form of neocolonialism – the practice of using capitalism, globalization and cultural forces to control a country – and prescribed African socialism as the way to economic freedom for the Third World. According to Nyerere, African socialism is the practice of socialism merged with the tenets of the traditional African society. It was based on the principle familyhood or brotherhood (Bienin, 1967). This form of socialism was seen by Nyerere to be more of a mental attitude than an adherence to a political philosophy. The extended family unit was the foundation of this kind of socialism, which meant nation-building through the unity and support of the African people. The new philosophy was also proposed to rally support for a unique political stance, originally African, and created to suit the specific conditions of African countries.

Even though this idea of African socialism resembled what Nkrumah was trying to do with Ghana, Nyerere was fundamentally opposed to Marxism-Leninism in Tanzania. He insisted that his notion of African socialism dwelled on the use of a unique characteristic of the African community, and urged his critics across the African continent to accept it. Nyerere's legacy has

been in the area of ideological change and explicit opposition to the West. Even though he had quite a number of opponents with regards to his overall political position, Nyerere was successful not only in leading his people to independence, but in charting a new path for leaders after him to follow.

The above description of the styles and leadership agenda of three of the foremost fathers of postcolonialism in Africa says one thing about the postcolonial agenda of the continent: that it was focused on the political and later the ideological, cultural, and economic liberation of African states. The study will therefore use the following research questions as a guide to understanding postcolonial leadership in African student organizations:

RQ1: How do African student leaders in the US make sense of their leadership in the postcolonial leadership context?

RQ2: What do the accounts of the leaders say about the influence of colonial/neocolonial discourses?

RQ3: How does the leadership agenda of African student organizations reflect the overall postcolonial vision?

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The current study aims to determine if African student organizations across the US have a postcolonial agenda at all, and if they do, how that agenda ties into the overall postcolonial vision of the continent from the examples of Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere. Charismatic leadership is a construct which is centered on perceptions of an individual's leadership qualities; therefore qualitative interviews were used in this study to seek participants' self-confessions of their own leadership in African student organizations.

The previously stated questions are structured to cover the purpose of finding out if African student leaders across the US are involved in the postcolonial struggle. In what follows, I briefly describe 1) sample and data collection procedures and 2) the data analysis methods.

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

Sample Size

I used my position as an African student to identify the subjects of the study. I have several friends all over the country who are either members or leaders of African student organizations. I interviewed seven (7) leaders of recognized African student organizations across the US. The interview questions focused on the leadership style, organizational vision, how their vision is influenced by addressing the needs of Africans, their knowledge of African colonial history and their perception of Africa's biggest challenges. Producing claims that can be generalized to a given population was not important for this study. It was more important to get in-depth personal insight from these leaders, because they afforded the study a deeper perspective of the participants' leadership. As Todres and Galvin (2005) explained, "breadth and depth are not necessarily about numbers of respondents or sample size but about focus" (p. 2). For qualitative interviews of such nature the focus on obtaining rich data by providing

opportunities for spontaneous comments from participants is more important than seeking higher numbers (Brown, 2011).

This study does not seek generalizations also because African student organizations across the US are established for various reasons – and the agenda of their leaders are accordingly different. The study simply aims to see, from the themes that emerge, what the leadership agenda is and if this agenda aligns with the overall postcolonial vision.

Participants

Participants for the current study were chosen by referrals from friends and colleagues. This method, a snowball sampling method, is usually employed when the population may be difficult to identify at the outset (Reinard, 2008). I specifically used the method of purposive sampling because this study required a specific population albeit difficult to identify (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In this instance, I needed to specifically locate African student leaders in universities across the US. I used my position as an African student to identify the subjects of the study. Having lived in Ghana for almost my whole life, I naturally have a lot of friends who, like me, have come to the US as international students and therefore belong to African student organizations in their various universities.

I first contacted my friends in my university and others, and they subsequently led me to African student leaders. Participants were then contacted via email. I interviewed four male and three female leaders of African student organizations in colleges and universities across the US. All participants were from Africa; two from Ghana, three from Nigeria, and one each from Niger and Kenya. Out of the seven participants that I interviewed, six were Presidents of their organizations, while the other participant was the vice President of his organization. Two of the seven participants founded and started the organizations in their University. Three of the

participants were undergraduate seniors, two were students seeking a Master's degree, and two were PhD students. Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 45.

I only contacted Presidents or Vice Presidents of African student organizations. This is because these individuals influence and communicate the vision of the organization, which will constitute a significant portion of the investigation. Again, as seen in the examples of Nkrumah, Mandela and Nyerere, it is expected that leadership in such organizations dwells on the personal leadership style of the highest-ranking officials. In Table 1 in the appendices, I have provided information about participants' demographics, the cities they studied or are currently studying in, what position they hold/held in their African student organization.

Interviews

When the participants agreed to be in the study, they were asked to conduct their interviews on Skype, or in person depending on their schedule and proximity. In addition to providing verbal consent, participants completed a signed informed consent form. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained for this study and the interviewing process took about six weeks to complete. I conducted two face-to-face interviews on a college campus. I conducted five interviews via Skype. I chose Skype rather than phone interviews because I wanted to simulate a situation as close to face-to-face interactions as possible. This would give a more personal feel than phone interviews would afford.

Each interview lasted between 45minutes to one hour. I obtained participants' permission to audio record the interview before starting each interview. I also took notes of the participants' non-verbal behaviors during each interview. The non-verbal behaviors included shrugs of the shoulder, shaking of the head, scratching of the head and so on. The audio recording was transcribed thereafter. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all the data obtained from the

study was kept confidential. Participants' names and other identifying information were kept confidential.

I developed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendices) to focus on questions about leadership style and organizational vision. I used semi-structured interviews in order to have a fairly fixed set of questions while providing flexibility with follow-up questions. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), it takes experience to be able to confidently and competently use unstructured interviews. The experienced interviewer, without the benefit of a pre-determined set of questions, is able to conduct an interview without the benefit of a question guide (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Structured interviews, however, would also not be convenient for the purpose of the current study because they would restrict the responses of the participants and the flexibility of the interviewer.

During the interviews, I used open-ended questions intended particularly to solicit responses that touched on the different aspects of leadership. The open-ended questions also allowed the student leaders to do a retrospective sensemaking of their leadership style and organizational vision. In all interviews, I asked the leaders about their organizational vision, personal leadership style, views on African leadership in general, and their knowledge of African colonial struggles. I, however, occasionally asked specific questions depending on a given response. My insider knowledge of African cultural, political, and economic history also gave the chance to ask specific questions in certain instances. For instance, I was able to ask specific questions concerning Nigerian independence, or French invasion of the Ivory Coast because I was already aware of these events. My status as a fellow African helped to get the leaders to feel comfortable about sharing their views on history, imperialism, culture, and the discourse of African postcolonial leadership.

For this study, I transcribed all interviews. Transcribing is particularly suitable when there are a large number of interviews or field notes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this study since the seven interviews were each about an hour long there was the need to transcribe them to help with coding and analysis. The interviews occupied 60 single-spaced pages and 19 pages of notes. I transcribed all paragraphs and indicated all breaks, laughter, sighs and other nonverbal communication I also transcribed verbal responses to the interview questions.

After transcribing interviews, I coded transcriptions by breaking down the data, reconceptualizing them within the context of the study, and putting them back together (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding is the central portion of the analysis which determines the themes that emerge from the data. For data analysis, I used techniques based on grounded theory methodology. Ultimately, grounded theory was desired for a more rigorous, precise, and yet creative analysis of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, I used the inductive analysis approaches of grounded theory methodology to uncover "the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (Patton, 1980, p. 306 as cited in Bowen, 2006, p. 13). In these interviews, no specific questions were asked that pertained to postcolonial leadership or the existence of a postcolonial vision. I was interested in the themes that emerged naturally from participants' responses. In addition to using grounded theory techniques, the transcripts of the interviews were subjected to an inductive thematic analysis which allows the researcher to sort out themes from the data.

The thematic analysis technique briefly involved: 1) becoming familiar with the data through transcription of the interviews and repeated reading of the transcripts; 2) generating initial codes during further readings and analyses of the transcripts; 3) searching for themes

within the sets of codes; 4) creating themes from the derived codes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing, examining, and potentially revising the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006 as cited in McGavock & Treharne, 2011, p. 74). In the coding process, I looked for words and phrases that the participants used to describe their leadership style and vision, and the ways in which they talked about Africa's challenges in relation to the colonial/neocolonial discourse. With respect to the themes, I grouped and regrouped the major issues which seemed topical after the coding. For instance, I found out after coding that most of the participants described themselves as participative leaders so I made participative leadership a theme. In all, four thematic categories emerged; participative leadership, cultural and ideological leadership agenda, charismatic leadership qualities, and the evidence of knowledge of African colonial history.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this section I will analyze the responses of the leaders interviewed for the study with three different lenses. First, I will look at their sensemaking process; how they talk about leadership style, organizational vision, leadership qualities, and their knowledge of African colonial history. This will be done in the context of African postcolonial leadership. It is evident from the interview data that the participants were engaged in sensemaking retrospectively, as a means of labeling their activities/experiences, or as a way of noticing and bracketing already-existent but unnoticed occurrences.

Second, I will analyze the responses from the perspective of African colonial/neocolonial discourses. The leaders constantly reproduced ideals informed by their positions as colonial/neocolonial subjects. In some cases, they were skeptical about Western influence on Africa and Africans; in other instances, they seemed to align themselves with Western thought. According to Hall (2010), the Black elite in former colonies found and maintained relevance by aligning themselves with the thought and assumptions of the colonial institutions. This is what Bhabha (1994) explained, with more detail, as mimicry. The section will analyze - the responses of these African student leaders to understand how they aligned with or opposed Western impact on Africa.

Third, I will analyze the responses from the perspective of African postcolonial leadership given the examples of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere. These leaders were trail-blazers in charting the agenda for postcolonial leadership on the continent. Through their responses, the participants for the study suggested that their leadership agenda was postcolonial in nature either because they pursued ideological change, African cultural awareness, or political liberation in their own small ways.

The Liberatory Effect of Postcolonial Sensemaking

The opportunity to speak about their leadership styles, vision, qualities, and the impact of African colonial history on their work provided a liberatory experience in postcolonial sensemaking. This is because, as Maitlis (2005) explained, "Sensemaking activities are particularly critical in dynamic and turbulent contexts, where the need to create and maintain coherent understandings that sustain relationships and enable collective action is especially important and challenging" (p. 21). The pursuit of a postcolonial agenda albeit important is quite challenging and can be uncertain so my assertion is that the chance to express themselves about their leadership in this context afforded the participants the platform to freely put their organizational processes into perspective.

Leadership style and Sensemaking

African student leaders talked about their leadership vision and style in different ways during my interviews. A number of the leaders were quite modest when talking about their style of leadership. Many of the leaders described themselves as participative leaders even when there were instances where their style did not sound democratic. For instance, Chinedu had this to say about his leadership style: "So I think that's the way I work, I like working in a team and I like hearing ideas." This statement is an example of participative leadership because these leaders are participative in the decision making process (Huang, Rode, & Schroeder, 2011; Jago, 1982; Somech, 2003). Aja also had this to say about her style of leadership:

> As a leader I try to involve everybody in what I'm doing but it's hard because at some point I feel like I'm slow when I have to wait for everyone's consent… but I also feel that it's important to keep everyone on the same page and let everyone know what's going on, let everyone contribute and have a say in what's happening.

 Ibrahim also stated:

> If you want my leadership style it's more collaborative…even with our presentations and the way we lead meetings, I would kind of rotate the people who lead the meetings that's just because I want everyone to feel that their voice counts in the organization.

After labeling himself a participative leader, however, Chinedu then said elsewhere in the interview: "I apply different leadership styles to different types of people I work with. I apply a little bit of both…participative and a little bit of autocratic."

The above statements point to the role of retrospective sensemaking in the responses of these leaders to questions about their leadership in the postcolonial context. There is a constant sensemaking process throughout the interviews. For instance, in the excerpt above, Chinedu is clearly recalling what methods he has applied in his leadership in the past especially with respect to his African student organization. He did not have a particular leadership framework that he follows. He chooses to employ whatever works given the situation. The interesting aspect of Chinedu's response is that in spite of his approach to leadership he still wants to be regarded as a largely participative leader. This is what Jago (1982) revealed as the result of the fact that democratic/participative leadership is seen in a more positive light by followers than autocratic leadership. According to Jago, productivity and morale are positively associated with participative styles of leadership thus leaders satisfy a self-esteem need of their followers by being democratic. Compared to the three leaders – Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere – who also relied on popular support in their leadership, it can be inferred that African postcolonial leadership is fairly participative in nature. This is contrary to the notion that African leaders are inclined to autocratic leadership.

Organizational Vision and Sensemaking

In this section, I discuss responses related to the organizational vision of the participants and how those visions impact the African postcolonial agenda. For the most part, organizational vision was spoken about in a fairly straight-forward manner. The leaders mostly talked about the vision of the organization and their own vision. The following represent responses regarding organizational vision: In her response to the question of organizational vision, Hawa mentioned, "our main aim is to basically teach our community about who we are." Adu also had this to say about the same question:

> […] my aim is that by the time I leave we would have extended Shades of Africa to at least other campuses around Johnson City. There are two other campuses that I wish to introduce Shades of Africa to…the bigger picture is to get Shades of Africa on almost every campus in the US.

Ibrahim agreed, but stated quite differently:

> Our main aim is just to raise awareness about the pretty subtle and unnoticeable power distance that still exists between African nations and western nations…and by western nations I'm talking about former colonial powers.

> The above responses were clear and direct. For instance, when Adu says "there are two other campuses that I wish to introduce Shades of Africa to" he did not come up with that during the interview. He already knew it as an organizational vision from the start of his leadership tenure. This is similar to when Ibrahim said "our main aim is just to raise awareness." His vision is clear from the start and he did not need to think about it any further. This can be attributed to the fact that organizational vision is mostly predetermined or preplanned. However, when it came to the question of how organizational vision impacts Africa, Chinedu stated:

We have the "Touch the Community" initiative to do something for the community, to

help these people and to try to do different things to touch their hearts. Once you help to

touch people's hearts they can actually now listen… but you want to first touch them and

hopefully, they will listen to you and be willing to change their perception [about Africa].

In another interview when discussing his organization's vision, Adu stated:

I think what we need the most is changing the Western world's perception about us,

Africans…that is what I think we should do and that is what I want my leadership to

impact. We need to change the perception of us as beggars…people coming and holding

a cup asking for money to fund this or that.

From the above responses it can be inferred that the leaders are trying to align events, activities

or initiatives carried out in their organizations with an agenda related to African postcolonial

leadership. Weick et al., (2005) explained that sensemaking is essential in organizations because

action and identity are formed and rationalized by it. By explaining how their activities and

initiatives are related to one or a combination of ideological, cultural, political or economic

liberation the leaders are validating the postcolonial nature of their organizational vision and it

gives them an indication of how effective their leadership is.

Sensemaking and Leadership Qualities

Another theme that emerged from the interviews evolved around the kind of leadership

qualities needed by African leaders to pursue the postcolonial agenda. In response to the

interview question on what they would change about Africa given the chance, five of the seven

leaders suggested that they would change African leadership. Some of their responses were

simple and straightforward: Ibrahim said, "Leaders." Moraa affirmed, "Leadership! Leadership!

I would change leadership, Eric; nothing else." The popular answer of leadership as Africa's

biggest problem then led me to ask a follow-up question about what the participants thought were the leadership qualities needed by African leaders in order to gain true African liberation. Chinedu answered, "I think the biggest quality that every man or every person regardless of their country or continent can have is true and genuine love…for not just their families but love for their fellow being."

Another participant, Koku had this to say in response to the same question: "African leaders need to be disciplined, committed and proactive." Aja added, "I feel like they have to have the knowledge, the qualifications; they have to know their history well and know how to deal with the problems in the nation and they should be open to new ideas." Adu also contributed by saying, "African leaders? They should put their personal interests aside and work for the people. We have to go back to the basics…go back to what people like Kwame Nkrumah fought for." Moraa also had this to say: "I would want to see a leader who speaks for the voices of the people not personal interest. I'd want a leader who is issue-focused and I would want a leader who is non-partisan in their leadership."

The question about leadership qualities was one of the last in each of the interviews. Participants used the discussion of topics concerning leadership style, organizational vision, African history, and current state of affairs as a springboard to articulate their views on what they perceived are the desirable qualities African leaders ought to have. Instead of asking, "Is leadership Africa's biggest problem?" I allowed them to infer it through previous responses and then when the opportunity came I asked them what they thought was Africa's biggest problem. This is what Weick (1995), explained as giving them the chance to make concrete through words, the meaning of an event or series of events. The sensemaking process afforded the participants the chance to put their leadership into the perspective of African postcolonial

leadership qualities like selflessness, dedication, tact, and above all a belief in the capability of Africans to control their own destinies.

Sensemaking and Knowledge of colonial history

The last theme to have emerged within this section was the participants' significant knowledge of African colonial history. All the participants had some knowledge of African colonial struggles and for the purpose of the study this was very important because the history provides the context for the postcolonial leadership being investigated. Since all the participants originally come from formerly colonized African countries there were points in the interviews where the discussion switched to their knowledge of their countries' colonial history, the significance of knowing that history, if and how that impacted the work they do/did in their respective African student organizations. To the question of colonial history, Koku stated:

> Ghana was one of the first countries that experienced colonialism in the 1800s where the Europeans came to settle on the coast of Ghana in their quest to do business…I don't know what happened but some hands were twisted, some minds were manipulated and we ceded our loyalty to the Europeans…it took us a very long time to recover, it took us struggle from people who were trained as military officers to serve the then government to come up.

In talking about African colonial history, Moraa responded:

> We were a British colony for several years until 1963 when we gained independence. I'm going to zero in on the education; when the British were there they established schools but those schools were only meant for them…They also used divide-and-rule; they sided with a certain tribe more than others so this tribe felt that it was better than the rest and

even after the British left they still felt they were superior and it has been a problem for

us up till today.

The above statements provide evidence of how the sensemaking process is constantly at play

during the interviews. Even through their accounts of African colonial struggles, the participants

tried to contextualize it based on the discussion on leadership we had had earlier. Instead of

talking about of their countries' colonial history most of the participants spoke in context to give

meaning to those facts. Making meaning is central to the sensemaking process. For instance,

when Moraa stated that, "they also used divide-and-rule…and it has been a problem for us up till

today," she wanted to place the events of Kenya's colonial times in the context of certain

challenges the country faces now. In the context of our discussion, the "divide-and-rule" tactic

adopted by the British colonial government in Kenya has created a postcolonial leadership

dilemma because sections of the Kenyan population are divided against each other. This is a fact

which Moraa probably knew, but articulating it, she gives the issues a defined identity within the

context of her work, as an African student leader pursuing a postcolonial agenda. Again, when

Koku talked about Ghana's period of colonization he mentioned that "some minds were

manipulated." This is significant to understand that he believes colonialism involved an

ideological conquering of the colonial subject in order to succeed. Both Moraa and Koku's

accounts provide a context for the pursuit of the postcolonial agenda.

Another important response in this theme considered the significance of knowing

colonial history to Africans in general. In response to a question about the significance of

knowing African colonial history participants discussed the essence of Africans knowing and

telling their own story. Again by knowing the history Africans, especially their leaders would

know the strategies to use to address their challenges. For example, Chinedu stated: "We need to

know the truth about what went down…unless the lion tells its tale the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Koku also responded,

> Whenever you know where you are coming from it charts your course, it deepens what you stand for. I think the idea of educating people to know where they have come from informs their decision [on where they are going].

In providing more commentary on his knowledge of colonial history, Ibrahim stated: "Because it's already part of every single African; it's already part of you no matter where you go… that is how we can achieve the real African unity that people have been fighting for, for many years."

There is further evidence of sensemaking from these sample responses. The participants were asked to organize and articulate their thoughts on the significance of colonial history, in validating the work they do in their organizations. In talking about their experiences, participants put their work in those organizations in the perspective of colonial history. One important aspect of this exercise is that it places a label on the interplay between one's knowledge or experience of an event and the articulation process.

The final aspect of the theme is how the knowledge of African colonial struggles impact the work the participants do/did in their organizations. In the question on how the knowledge of African colonial history impacts the work they do Koku responded: "…it reminds me of where I'm coming from. It makes me feel that I need to help build a stronger African mind on campus." Aja also stated: "It helps me approach matters in a delicate way because I'm aware that not every person is like the other person from another country."

Similar to the process of labeling, Weick et al (2005) explained that sensemaking starts with noticing and bracketing an experience. This simply means creating a new meaning for something that has always happened but did not have an identity yet. For instance, in Aja's

response, we can infer that she acknowledges, from her knowledge of the different African colonial stories that there may be issues that are sensitive for sections of the people she leads. She must therefore pay attention to those delicate issues. Through the sensemaking process she now acknowledges in clear terms that sensitivity is an attribute needed in her leadership of an African student organization. This was similar to Koku who also regarded the knowledge of African colonial history as an opportunity work towards ideological change on his university campus.

In the above section, I have discussed the process of sensemaking in the responses of the participants relating to four themes generated by the interviews. It has become evident that the participants engaged in retrospective sensemaking in some instances, used it as a means of labeling their activities/experiences, or as a way of noticing and bracketing already-existent but unnoticed occurrences. This shows that the participants were able to place their leadership into the context of postcolonial leadership through the process of sensemaking of their style, vision, knowledge of history and leadership qualities.

Postcolonial Leaders Expose their Colonial/Neocolonial Identities

This section of the chapter will analyze the responses of the participants in relation to colonial/neocolonial discourses. Being that these participants are colonial/neocolonial subjects who live in the US, I will explain how they engage in mimicry and hybridity as a means of maintaining relevance within the community in which they live (Hall, 2010). I will analyze the responses based, on four themes that have emerged from the data; leadership style, organizational vision, leadership qualities, and knowledge of colonial history.

Westernized Postcolonial Leaders

From the accounts of the participants it became evident that both mimicry and hybridity were vividly at play. Hybridity is seen in the mixed cultural identities of the participants. The impurity of their cultural identities produces a complex relationship in the discourse of postcolonial leadership. As Munasinghe (2002) explained, "a fundamental concern of postcolonial studies, which has now assumed transdisciplinary significance, is to understand the nature of postcolonial societies within an international order dominated by standards set by Europe and the United States" (p. 665). These Western standards are what has become, especially among educated Africans, a means of showing intelligence and gaining credibility among their peers. Even though they all confess to being purely African there were several instances where their responses revealed their Westernized selves and this is likely to affect their leadership style as well. When asked what solution she would give to the leadership crises in Africa, Hawa suggested,

> That's a very big question. If I could change one thing about Africa today I would change …it's really weird what I'm going to say but I feel like we don't have a mind of our own but I would still want to believe that we should be governed by Western thought.

Earlier in the interview, Hawa stated that she would not exchange her African identity for anything else, but in the above response, she advocates for African countries to be governed by Western thought. Not only is Hawa acknowledging the influence of Westernization on her personal identity, she is also, by implication, saying that African methods of governance are not capable of meeting African leadership challenges. For Hawa, there is no other acceptable method of governance than those of Western countries. This position within the colonial/neocolonial discourse is a result of the injustices served in the form of slavery, colonial rule, and racism

which has brought a deep sense of resentment towards the colonizer – or in this case Western powers – on one hand, and a lack of confidence in indigenous African cultural and social institutions, on the other hand (Hall, 2010). For example, I asked Hawa if she would rather be a native of another continent. She responded, "no, no….because I feel unique, I feel blessed, I feel like if I wasn't from where I'm from I wouldn't know what I know." Even though she acknowledges her African identity, Hawa doesn't believe African traditional leadership norms and institutions are capable of transforming the continent. The African colonial/neocolonial subject is in a position where s/he has to constantly deal with a mixed identity made up of indigenous traditions and values and Western ideas.

Mimicry is another postcolonial construct that is related to the idea of hybridity. Mimicry was prevalent in the discourses of these leaders. As Bhabha (1994) described, mimicry constitutes an "ironic compromise" (p. 86) in the sense that it is the desire to produce a reformed, reconstituted identity which is very close but not the same as that of the colonizer. The ironic nature of mimicry is that, while striving for difference, the colonial/neocolonial subject is also engaging in a process which tends to deny the colonizer; in one instance they put on the colonizer's identity and in the next they are seen denying it. This discourse only produces an advantage for the colonizer who is always seen as the original owner of the Westernized identity which is widely acknowledged as acceptable. Bhabha recognized that this aspect of mimicry institutes the colonial/neocolonial – in this case, Western – power as the dominant, acceptable identity.

In my interview with Hawa, she argued that one of the problems Nigeria faced in recent times was with the activities of the Boko Haram Jihadist group, which she claimed wanted to

take the nation back to the "traditional" ways of doing things. When I immediately asked, "What is wrong with that," she responded:

> What is wrong with that? Look at the age and stage we are today…you are talking to me now with your computer. In this age how else would you have communicated with me without technology? It's not going to happen because the world is advanced; we've moved past that. I've not even thought about how that is even going to work out even if it was given a try because what can you do today in this world without being westernized? It's not possible.

From the above statement, Hawa is suggesting that because "…the world is advanced" there is no longer a place for African traditional norms and institutions. This confirms the notion that colonialism was not only a system of economic and political domination; it was also intended to produce cultural domination (Young, 2001; Thomas, 2002; Thomas, 2004). This cultural domination has in turn produced mimicry which has been naturalized in almost all aspects of life for colonial/neocolonial subjects. In answering a question about how African history informs the work he does, Adu reiterated, "I always tell my people that they need the education you get from this country but they have to go back after they get it." Perhaps Adu was unaware of the fact that by saying "they need the education" he was suggesting that Africa should be governed by Western thought situated in their education system. Inasmuch as that statement seemed the most logical under the circumstances, it also suggests the existence of ideological domination.

In response to a question about the meaning of the word "African", Adu said, "It means pride to me. I want to wear it…I want to portray my Africanness and I do it at the least opportunity I get." Adu, in expressing his pride of being African, reveals the complex nature of

mimicry as a colonial/neocolonial by-product. By saying "…at the least, opportunity I get," Adu is suggesting that there are other circumstances where he has to be something other than an African; there are certain instances which do not offer him the opportunity to be African. Bhabha (1994) explained that mimicry creates an ambivalence where in some instances the colonial/neocolonial subject produces the "colonial imitation" (p. 86) and in others live as their African selves. Usually, the opportunities to be African are those moments when a person finds her/himself in the company of other Africans, or when there is an intercultural event where minority groups are expected to portray their indigenous selves. So in cases where the colonial/neocolonial subject is not afforded the opportunity to be African, s/he has to be a colonial/Western mimic because that is the civilized, accepted way of social conduct.

However, Koku refuted the earlier stance taken by Hawa by stating, "I am an Africanist, I believe in Africanism." This signifies a sense of belief in African capability in leadership, as opposed to the view shared by Hawa who only believes in Western concepts of leadership and governance. The word "Africanist" as used by Koku connotes Pan-Africanist which, at its most basic, can be defined as a person who believes in the principle that all people of African descent both within and outside Africa are connected by a similar set of unique cultural characteristics and that they are capable of managing their own affairs with these characteristics (White, 2003). This also embodies the practice of African postcolonial leadership; it is grounded on the belief that Africans are totally capable of handling their own affairs as is seen in the examples of Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere.

Africa as One Nation

In this section, I will take a look at the ways in which, as colonial/neocolonial subjects, the leaders I interviewed made reference to Africa as a unit and how they incorporated that idea

into their leadership agenda. In my interviews, some of the leaders explained that their organizational vision hinged on the entire continent of Africa as a unit or as, in some instances, one nation. More than anything, the common historical circumstances of slavery and colonialism have brought people of Africa and of African descent closer together (Young, 2001). From these interviews, I realized that this assertion is quite true because countries of especially Sub-Saharan Africa suffered and still suffer similar forms of imperialism hence there is a greater sense of unity among their people.

Moraa, for instance, talked about her leadership vision, "…my first objective when I took over was to bring people together so that we act as one; as family; we have that unity." As leader of an African students' organization in her university, Moraa wanted to bring the people in her organization together because she believed that Africans are naturally inclined to unite with each other. This is because almost every African country was at one time colonized either by the British, the French, the Dutch, or the Portuguese. This peculiar situation has unified most Africans. Most African countries still suffer the consequences of colonialism, and therefore Africans are able to understand to a considerable extent the circumstances prevailing in other African countries because it is similar to the situation in their own.

In response to the same question on the meaning of the word "African" Ibrahim stated, "Just knowing that we are a continent that has come through a lot and has somehow survived through all those struggles and is constantly trying to better itself…that challenge keeps me going, personally." Africa did not go through colonialism as an entire continent; different African countries went through colonialism as single colonies. This participant is however, unconsciously suggesting that Africa struggled together as a continent. It is important to realize that because the individual African countries went through very similar struggles in terms of

colonialism, they mostly relied on each other ideologically to gain their political freedom

(Young, 2001). About half a century after almost every colonized country in Africa gained

political independence, the challenges are still very similar; this is probably why some

participants refer to Africans as one people. While talking about his organizational vision

Ibrahim also said,

> My personal motivation is to try to get as many people as possible to the critical level that
>
> I believe I have personally reached when it comes to Africa. It's just getting people to
>
> think critically about what's going on…not just saying we're a nation that's hopeless,
>
> which is sort of the general perception about Africa.

The comment above embodies most participants' commitment to the African anti-imperialist

discourse. By "getting people to think critically about what's going on," Ibrahim is

communicating that his organizational vision concerns the critique of colonial/neocolonial

discourses. He also provides strategies for how the continent as a whole can address it. What is

important, however, is that he calls Africa "a nation!" In my experience as an African in the US,

I have heard countless instances where people – usually non-Africans – have unconsciously

referred to Africa as one country. This is probably due to media representations of the continent

as a large unit of Third world people. It is unlikely however, that Ibrahim called Africa "a

nation" for the same reason, because he is an African who has lived on the continent for several

years. The word "nation" in the context of how it was used signifies a community of people

bonded by a common descent, culture, language, ethnicity, or history (Nyerere, 1963). So for

Ibrahim his leadership agenda is shaped by his acknowledgement of Africans as one people who

seek a common economic, political, social and ideological destination.

Another instance of how the participants communicated the need for unity among Africans was from Aja, who said,

> As a leader I would like to see more involvement from graduate students and from the northern Africans because we have "Africa Night" every year and we usually represent three-quarters of Africa leaving the North out and I don't think that is representative enough of the continent.

One important issue that this statement brings up has to do with the apparent disconnect between Sub-Saharan Africa and the North African nations. This is probably because, for many North African nations, the racial, geographical, and religious proximity are closer to the Middle Eastern countries. Nyerere (1963) asserted that Africans are always brought closer together in the struggle against oppression because of the common history shared. This has often meant that the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa share closer ties especially because of their common economic and political struggles. North African countries are generally known to have better economic conditions than most Sub-Saharan countries hence, the apparent distance between them and the rest of the continent, economically. Growing up in Ghana, I have often heard that Nkrumah, married Fathia from Egypt to push his agenda of African unity; Nkrumah desired to bring the North and Sub-Saharan Africa closer together because he believed that total African unity was the only means of solving Africa's colonial/neocolonial socio-economic challenges. This is similar to Aja's goal of getting all Africans on her university campus together for their events. She believes that in order to tell the story of Africa effectively, all Africans should have the same version. Unity is thus a crucial aspect of postcolonial leadership.

Leadership as Africa's Biggest Problem

Another theme that arose from the interviews seemed to revolve around the challenges of leadership development in Africa. However, some leaders believed that these leadership challenges on the continent were due to external influences from former imperialists. Most leaders claimed that Africa's leadership failures represent a collusion between African leaders and the leaders of Western countries. Ibrahim, who had a lot to say about Africa's leadership challenges, insisted that if Africa were more independent the continent would be economically better than it is now. When I asked him about what he deemed to be the biggest problems on the continent Ibrahim said, "The first one I would say is bad leadership." he continued by explaining that the leadership problem was mostly due to external influences:

> The [African Student] organization was the result of a frustration, if you want. It was during the time of the Ivorian crisis [in 2010]. The crisis has been described by many as a model of the fact that colonialism still persists in Africa….that's how a lot of scholars see it.

Even though he constantly pointed out leadership as the main issue of concern for African countries during the interview, Ibrahim also accused the West of unnecessary interference in African leadership affairs. This, again, brings to the fore the colonial/neocolonial nature of leadership discourses of colonial subjects. As an African student leader, Ibrahim focused his leadership agenda on investigating the imperialist nature of interactions between Africa and Western countries. Chinedu also seemed to agree with Ibrahim when he said, "we've been deprived by many people. We know the obvious people…and there is even our people, the corrupt leaders." The "obvious people" refers to Western countries which he claimed still covertly held as much authority over African countries as they did in colonial times.

Ibrahim also revealed how his wish would be for all to know the subtle but real influence of the Western world in Africa and how to subvert them:

So in a sense what we are trying to address is making young Africans aware of the history of their continent…and what we talk about is an authentic history of what really happened and what's still going on and what we can do to address those problems in the future.

After admitting clearly that leadership is Africa's biggest challenge, Ibrahim continued to share how he believed imperialism was a major part of the leadership problem. Kwame Nkrumah (Apter, 1968), Nelson Mandela (Boehmer, 2005), and Julius Nyerere (Gauhar & Nyerere, 1984), like all African postcolonial leaders, conceptualized the African problem the same way. This is what I have labeled postcolonial leadership: the kind of leadership founded on the pursuit of ideological, cultural, political and economic liberation. This kind of leadership is modeled after the thoughts and actions of such African leaders as the three named above. This kind of leadership also asserts that the challenges of Africa – and the Third World in general – are subtly influenced by Western states that typically maintain economic, social, cultural, and political hegemony (Young, 2001).

Even though modern imperialism is often subtle and sometimes unnoticed, Ibrahim in our interview expressed his surprise in the way the world watches without reacting as Western states visibly invade independent African states with almost no provocation:

Ivory Coast for instance, is a case where the French government hijacked an airport, got their military in and the military went and took the president down…In what country can a simple ambassador go on TV and say the president is no more [the leader], we're going to deal with the president…while being in the same country? It's unheard of. The French

president, [Nicolas] Sarkozy before he lost the election, said that he was giving [Laurent]

Gbagbo this many hours to leave the presidential palace. Who says that?

    Ibrahim is not Ivorian, but he is obviously worried about such occurrences on the

continent. He blamed African leaders for not educating its people about such oppressive tactics.

He also blamed African leaders for failing to empower the people to meet developmental

challenges. Koku, in answering a question about Africa's challenges, affirmed Ibrahim's stance

on lack of strong leadership on the continent: "Yes, our leaders have been sleeping…they need to

wake up." So for these leaders the impact of Western hegemonic influence whether it is

ideological, cultural, economic, or political should always be a major consideration of successful

African postcolonial leadership.

Follow the Leader

        This section of the chapter will analyze the responses of the participants in terms of how

their leadership resembles the examples given by Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius

Nyerere. Through the construct of charismatic leadership, I analyze how the participants can be

described as postcolonial leaders through attributes of their own leadership. Even though

charismatic leadership is not necessarily a postcolonial construct, it provides a framework for

determining the circumstances, qualities, and achievements of a leader in the postcolonial

context. Noguera (1995) asserted that charismatic leadership is not only based on a set of special

qualities that a leader possesses; it is mainly determined by the level of practical leadership

impact. Postcolonial leadership from the examples of the three national leaders demands

practical leadership. By practical I mean leadership whose results are real and visible and not just

philosophical. The analyses will highlight the four main themes focusing on; leadership style,

organizational vision, leadership qualities, and knowledge of African colonial struggles.

Participative Leadership is more acceptable to Postcolonial Leaders

Even though my analysis in this section uses the charismatic leadership framework, it is not my intention to equate charismatic leadership with postcolonial leadership. Postcolonial leadership as exemplified by the aforementioned national leaders involves certain attributes or characteristics of charismatic leadership. Since it has already been established through research from Chapter Two that Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere were charismatic leaders, I compare the leadership styles of these three national leaders to these participants to determine their capacity to engage postcolonial leadership.

When asked about her leadership style, Aja said,

As a leader I try to involve everybody in what I'm doing but it's hard because at some point I feel like I'm slow when I have to wait for everyone's consent… but I also feel that it's important to keep everyone on the same page and let everyone know what's going on, let everyone contribute and have a say in what's happening.

In thinking about postcolonial leadership, Aja explains apparent frustrations with having to "wait for everyone's consent," but also knowing she welcomes others input in achieving the organizational vision. Nkrumah and Mandela, particularly, showed this kind of participative leadership style in their leadership. Nkrumah (1955), for instance, was a leader who, despite his impatience with having to wait, always relied on the concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the achievement of his leadership ambitions. Likewise, Mandela never ceased to recognize the significance of joining together with others to resist the Apartheid (Meer, 1990). This participative leadership style was affirmed by Koku who also stated, "I believe in all-inclusive government and division of labor." By talking about his preference for an "all-inclusive" organization, Koku is stating his belief in leadership as a partnership between all stakeholders.

Hawa also had a similar answer to the same question of style; "Well, we have a board…it's more like a de-centralization…so if you have an idea you bring it and our board decides if we like your idea or not." Nyerere, likewise, was adamant about getting all of Africa involved in the struggle against imperialism, because he believed the continent needed the collective efforts of people from all countries to attain liberation (Gauhar & Nyerere, 1984).

Organizational Vision and Postcolonial Leadership

As seen from the examples of Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere postcolonial leadership is centered on the vision of the leader. All three of the leaders had a vision of African liberation from ideological, cultural, political and economic oppression. I found, from my interviews, that all participants had a similar vision, which guided the leadership of their respective organizations. For example, Ibrahim explained that,

> It's funny that after the 1960s a lot of people thought that Africa is an independent
> continent but I believe it's very important to understand what's still going on and that's
> how you can come up with efficient and effective solutions. That is what this
> organization is about.

This is an example of organizational vision centered on achieving political and ideological liberation even at the student leadership level. Nkrumah and Mandela both started as student leaders albeit in a different era, with the same vision (Mandela, 1994; Nkrumah, 1957). At the center of postcolonial leadership is the practical movement towards achieving liberation from oppressive ideology. The pursuit of ideological oppression makes this leadership a feature of charismatic/transformational leadership whose target is usually the achievement of some higher order need (Bryman et al., 2011).

Other participants like Hawa also shared the postcolonial nature of their leadership

vision: "Our main aim is to basically teach our community about who we are." The target of this

participant's leadership agenda is situated in the notion of Africans as untamed, uncivilized,

under-developed, and mystical. These notions about Africans are usually because people do not

know enough about the continent and its people. Aja added, "There are also positive things about

Africa, so we try to let people see both sides of the story…that's what we try to do." Both these

participants show that they are aware of the perception of people about Africa. Chinedu also

stated, "So we were trying to concentrate more of our energy on projecting how great we are

here first…like trying to get everybody to realize that these guys are really great and then also

promote self-worth." For these participants an ideological shift is as significant as the economic

liberation being sought at national the level. The ideological nature of their leadership comes

from these unfortunate generalizations that are consistently reproduced by many Africans

themselves. Here, they internalize assumptions about Africans, which thrusts them further into

ideological oppression. As Said (1978) explained, a significant tactic of the colonial powers was

to de-legitimize their subjects by making them think they are incapable of self-governance. This

crippled the self-confidence of their subjects, enabling the colonial powers to rule over them.

Nyerere (1979) strongly believed that Africans, like people from around the world, are fully

capable of finding solutions to their own challenges. He believed that Africans would understand

the adverse conditions of their own situation better than anyone else.

Another aspect of the leadership agenda, which was quite common among the

participants, was cultural leadership. Adu, for instance, stated, "in general we are trying to impart

our culture on at least the community around us." When I asked him why he thought this was

important, he explained that it was targeted more at Africans in the community, but also provides

more information about the continent to the rest of the community. Aja also suggested a cultural leadership agenda by explaining that "Our main aim is to basically teach our community about who we are…to teach them African culture." It demystifies certain notions which have been cultivated over time. The breakdown of Western cultural hegemony is an essential part of the African postcolonial leadership framework. Nkrumah was one leader who rigorously pursued an African cultural agenda when he became president of Ghana after independence. As Monfils (1977) explained, "the cultivation of African traditions and institutions was an important aspect of ridding Ghana of the colonial mentality" (p. 313) in Nkrumah's time. Nkrumah undertook a massive 'Africanization' of the traditions and institutions to fill the gap left by the rejection of British ideals. He used dress, setting, and other culturally symbolic structures to establish "Ghana's new nationhood" (p. 325).

Evidence of Postcolonial Leadership Qualities

A number of the participants frequently referred to past African national leaders when talking about their leadership qualities and the qualities needed to liberate the continent. Nyerere, Nkrumah, and Mandela possessed the kind of charismatic leadership necessary to catalyze the political independence of their respective countries. It is quite common to find African leaders at every level who refer to people like Nkrumah, Mandela and Nyerere as the embodiment of effective postcolonial leadership. For example, Ibrahim had this to say:

> As far as the people in power keep the colonial agenda going they can oppress their people for as many years as they want, no action will be taken. Those are what I call the puppets…they're just a façade. It's just sad, very sad… We can say the same thing for [Patrice] Lumumba, maybe Kwame Nkrumah's story is similar, where leaders who want to do something for their nations get taken down.

Ibrahim was referring to current and past African leaders who he blamed for the deplorable state of the continent. He believed that these leaders allowed themselves to be used by former colonial powers. He, however, pointed out that leaders like Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah, who actually carry out the postcolonial agenda, usually become the targets of Western attack. It is in keeping with the postcolonial agenda that Ibrahim formed an African student organization on his university campus to expose more people to the activities of Western powers against African countries and to discuss ways of resisting this influence.

When I asked Koku who the biggest influence on his leadership is, he said, "I am basically influenced by Nkrumah and…by someone like [Barack] Obama because I believe these two people came from a background like mine." Admitting to being influenced by Nkrumah means that Koku follows the former's style and perhaps his vision of a totally liberated Africa. He continued by saying, "It is in an association like this that I can use my experience to propagate my Africanism…so it's about serving my people." So it was for Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere, who could all have had more comfortable lives doing other things with their genius, but they chose to serve their people even in difficult conditions (Bienin, 1967; Meer, 1990; Nkrumah, 1955). Postcolonial leadership therefore requires selflessness and dedication to the cause of African liberation.

Another instance where participants communicated this kind of selflessness and dedication as postcolonial leaders was when Aja explained why she decided to become a leader of her African student organization:

> I really am passionate about my continent – that sounds like a cliché but it's true. I was really passionate about showing people that there is more to Africa than what they think so that's one of the reasons why I decided to get involved.

Mandela, for instance, is described as a highly selfless African leader who risked everything including his integrity to see to the emancipation of black people in South Africa (Lieberfeld, 2004). Nyerere, likewise, was known for his fearless criticism of the West in their dealing with Africa (Bienin, 1967). He was one of the biggest champions of African unity who would put everything on the line to see it happen. Selflessness and dedication are crucial to postcolonial studies because the achievement of ideological, cultural, economic or political liberation could be a painfully slow enterprise.

Postcolonial Leadership is grounded on the colonial history of the continent

The context of African postcolonial studies is underscored in the practices and impact of colonial history on people around the world (Young, 2001). Therefore, African postcolonial leadership is founded on the background of African colonial history as well. In the context of these interviews, leadership qualifies as postcolonial in nature when it is grounded on the knowledge that past and present struggles against Western imperialism find their foundation from colonial times. So I asked the leaders about their knowledge of African colonial struggles and how it informs the work they do in their organizations. Aja said, "I feel like African student leaders should strive to change how people think about the continent especially in how they carry out their duties." Aja believes that given the history of the continent there needs to be an ideological change in the way Africa is perceived in order to achieve the status the continent deserves. Adu, in response to the same question said, "sensitize the people…broaden their horizon…let them have the knowledge of what is going on." He intimated that he has gained knowledge about the colonial history of the continent and is now more politically aware of relations between Africa and the West. Adu makes it apparent that this is an important part of his leadership. Ibrahim also had this to say about the colonial history:

What I would tell young African leaders to do is, raise awareness…but mostly it's about

not giving up; constantly keeping their efforts up…and I think that's the only way that we

can get things going, talking to people about the fact that there is still hope; making it

clear that in spite of our different nationalities we are one people.

In this excerpt, Ibrahim points to the significance of history in postcolonial leadership. "Raising awareness" suggests a reference to something that has either happened or is still happening. He then states the need for unity in pursuing the postcolonial agenda even though Africans come from many different nationalities. Nyerere, in his writings and interviews, was a firm critic of the happenings in the international community of nations (Gauher &Nyerere, 1984; Nyerere 1985). He emphasized the need for Africa, given historical antecedents, to be cautious in its dealings with international organizations controlled mostly by Western powers. Nkrumah and Mandela were also big critics of the West mostly because of the historical relationship between the latter and Africa.

In this chapter I have discussed the ways in which the participants talked about their leadership with respect to African postcolonial leadership, the nature of the colonial/neocolonial discourses, and the alignment of the participants' leadership with those of Nkrumah, Mandela and Nyerere. The four themes that have emerged from the study, and which addressed the research questions were 1) the leaders regarded themselves as participative leaders; 2) their leadership agenda was either cultural or ideological; 3) leaders possessed leadership qualities necessary for postcolonial leadership; and, 4) all leaders had an expanded knowledge of African colonial history.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

I gained the motivation and passion for this study because of its implications for my identity as a person. Inasmuch as I do not agree with many people's perception of who I am, factors other than their seeming cynicism account for it. I know for instance, that my African American friend, has genuine love and respect for me as a person, but she also felt sorry for me because of the images that had been created in her mind about what Africa looks like. Through the lens of postcolonial studies and leadership perspectives, this study provided a means by which as an African, I can understand some of the factors which perpetuate both the real and perceived state of Africa. I was also afforded the opportunity to know, at the student leadership level, what African leaders are doing to subvert imperialist activities ideologically, culturally, politically, and economically.

In this study, there were three important research questions that were addressed through the responses of these African student leaders: First, I wanted to understand the sense-making process of African student leaders in the context of postcolonial leadership; Second, I wanted to understand the influence of colonial/neocolonial discourses on their leadership. Third, I wanted to show how the leadership agenda of African student leaders align with the overall postcolonial African vision as advocated by Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere. The analysis of the interview data was structured to address each of the research questions in the context of the four themes that emerged: First, African student leaders engaged in participative leadership styles; second, African student leaders sought an organizational vision in line with the ideological and cultural liberation of organizational members, third, African student leadership qualities closely resembled those of Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere, and; finally, all African student leaders maintained some knowledge of African colonial history, which informed the way they practiced

their leadership. In the following, I will expand on the three research questions and themes that emerged from this analysis.

This study sought to understand the nature and means by which African student organizational leaders practice or engage leadership in the U.S. My aim was to understand how African student leaders are involved in the postcolonial struggle through the manner in which they talk about their leadership. The study found that all seven of the student leaders who took part in the study engage in postcolonial leadership strategies as evidenced by their leadership styles and qualities, organizational vision, and their knowledge of African colonial history.

It was determined from the examples of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere that the postcolonial African vision is the sum total of the pursuit of ideological, cultural, political, and economic liberation of the continent as Young (2001) described. The African student leaders that I interviewed for the study stated in many ways how they were involved in these pursuits. Most of the leaders, however, had an organizational vision centered on ideological and cultural liberation.

The Significance of Postcolonial Sensemaking in African Student Leaders' responses

It was evident throughout the interviews that there was a constant sensemaking process with regards to how these African student leaders engaged in postcolonial leadership. The sensemaking process allowed the leaders to identify and label certain aspects of their leadership style, vision, and qualities in the context of postcolonial leadership. The process also helped the leaders to bracket existent but unnoticed occurrences in the performance of their roles as African student leaders. For instance, through the sensemaking process, leaders were able to connect African colonial history to their leadership practices and realize that the work they do is contributing to the postcolonial agenda.

African Postcolonial Student Leaders' identification with Colonial/Neocolonial discourses

It became evident that these student leaders engaged in colonial/neocolonial discourses in their leadership. First, it was concluded that the leaders engaged in mimicry as a means of gaining credibility among their peers. The process of mimicry is exhibited through the reproduction of Western thought and ideas at the expense of African traditional ideals. In addition, student leaders saw themselves through the discourse of hybridity, as they talked about the interplay between their traditional African identity and their Westernized selves. As was evident in the analysis section, the leaders as postcolonial subjects were constantly switching between being traditionally African and being Westernized. Second, all the student leaders described Africa as one nation with a similar purpose and destiny owing to the influence of the continent's colonial history. In these interviews, the leaders indicated that Africans have been brought closer together through the events leading to and proceeding colonization of the continent by the West. What this implies is that Africans from different countries can see themselves as one and the same because they face similar challenges. Third, in these interviews, most of the leaders identified leadership as Africa's biggest developmental challenge. In the context of postcolonialism, these leaders claimed that contemporary African leaders lack the will to stand against Western imperialists. For instance Koku said this about African leaders: "whenever we get leadership that yields to the wishes of the colonial masters we slow down in development…but whenever we get leaders who are willing to stand for what we believe in we move on a step." This indicated a mistrust in leadership that seeks to please the West and a willingness to see postcolonial leadership cast in the mold of Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere on the continent.

African Student Postcolonial Leadership was modeled after Nkrumah, Mandela, and Nyerere

Most of participants leadership styles, vision and qualities closely resembled those of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere. First, it was clear that, like the aforementioned leaders, participative leadership was the more acceptable style for the study participants. Postcolonial leadership as seen by the three leaders is characterized by certain charismatic leadership traits which demand participative leadership in order to rally a strong followership. Second, these African student leaders pursued an organizational vision that was postcolonial in nature. These leaders pursued and advocated ideological and cultural liberation, which was apparent in the agenda of the charismatic leadership of Mandela, Nkrumah, and Nyerere. The cultural leadership agenda was seen in the leaders' agenda of establishing their African culture on the campuses and in their immediate communities. The leaders also pursued an ideological agenda by working to change the perception of Africa among the people in their immediate communities. Third, in terms of leadership qualities, all the participants professed a selfless dedication to the cause of their postcolonial leadership vision, which was vividly seen in the lives and leadership of Mandela, Nkrumah, and Nyerere. This is because the pursuit of a postcolonial leadership goal is challenging and painfully slow, requiring leadership which is relentless. Finally, the participants, like these three leaders, grounded their leadership on the premise of African colonial history in the way they discussed issues of imperialism and the need for African unity. This was important in order to give their leadership a postcolonial outlook; postcolonialism is the result of resistance to colonialism/neocolonialism (Young, 2001).

Implications of the Study

       This study contributes to literature on postcolonial studies specifically in the area of leadership and African studies. From the student leaders' sensemaking process this study found that organizational sensemaking allows leaders to identify and interpret issues for the purposes of future strategic planning (Maitlis, 2005). One important aspect of this finding is that organizational sensemaking is not just a Western concept, only applied in a Western context. The process of sensemaking is a natural human process which applies to organizational members (Jago, 1982).

       It can also be inferred from this study, however, that mimicry and hybridity significantly complicate the discourse of organizational sensemaking for colonial/neocolonial subjects. This is because, for colonial/neocolonial subjects, organizational sensemaking is situated both in Western thought and African traditional values. Therefore, while the sensemaking process is important for organizational leaders' understanding of vision and processes it becomes complex for these colonial/neocolonial subjects whose identities are hybridized by Western thought and ideals (Hall, 2010). This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of context in organizational sensemaking, but also brings into focus the dialectical nature of agency and control in colonial/neocolonial discourses. Colonial/neocolonial subjects constantly have to deal with the conflict between making their own choices in thought and behavior and succumbing to the social pressures of conforming to a certain set of regulations.

       Another implication of this study is the significance of African student leadership in the context of postcolonial studies. It was concluded that the African student leaders that I interviewed emphasized a postcolonial agenda, especially as they made sense of it during the course of conversation. For most, when they talked about their leadership in the context of

postcolonialism, they realized the influence of the postcolonial nature of their leadership. This indicates African student leaders are, in diverse ways contributing to the postcolonial agenda. Because of this, postcolonial scholars should pay more attention to the work of African student leadership because, as has been established in this study, there is a strong relationship between the leadership agenda of national postcolonial leaders and that of African student leaders.

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations in this study which can be addressed in future research. First, the study only included seven participants from mainly the Midwest, Northwest, and one from a Southern University. I think that future research should include more interviews from participants around the country as well. This is because different regions of the US have different ethnic and racial distributions, and would probably produce different perspectives and results.

Being that I am African, another limitation is that participants potentially tailored their responses and perspectives to my expectations. For instance, when asked if they ever wished they were from another continent, all participants stated they would never want to be anything else apart from African. It is likely that these responses were due to the fact that, as the interviewer, I was also African and they, therefore, thought that was the answer I wanted to hear. This could have influenced their responses and probably the results of the study as well.

Therefore, future studies should focus on the actual contributions of African student leaders to the postcolonial agenda. One interesting aspect of this was the seeming difference between male and female African student leadership in the context of postcolonialism. From this study, it seemed as if the male leaders were more political, while their female counterparts were more cultural in terms of their organizational vision. This is an area of the postcolonial discourse which could be further investigated.

Even though postcolonialism asserts that certain subtle structures remain in place to perpetuate Western imperialism, the current study also found that most of the leaders interviewed blamed African leaders as having as big a part in Africa's developmental challenges, as Western oppressive mechanisms. Further studies could therefore be conducted on the role of African leaders in the cultural, ideological, political or economic oppression of their own people.

Furthermore, the current study only used three African leaders – Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, and Julius Nyerere – as case studies to determine the nature of postcolonial African leadership. Even though a pattern in responses from student leaders was established understanding their awareness of these three leaders' postcolonial leadership, it would be interesting to know what other studies using other past or present African leaders in the same context would produce especially if they included women.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Participants' demographics, cities, and position in their African student organization

#	Pseudonym	Gender	Country of Origin	US City/State	Position in Organization	Student Status
1	Chinedu	Male	Nigeria	Midwestern University	President	Graduate (Master's)
2	Koku	Male	Ghana	Northwestern University	Vice-President	Graduate (PhD)
3	Hawa	Female	Nigeria	Midwestern University	President	Undergraduate
4	Aja	Female	Nigeria	Northwestern University	President	Undergraduate
5	Adu	Male	Ghana	Southern University	President	Undergraduate
6	Ibrahim	Male	Niger	Midwestern University	President	Graduate (Master's)
7	Moraa	Female	Kenya	Midwestern University	President	Graduate (PhD)

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Consent form for project titled: Postcolonial Leadership in African Student Organizations across the United States
Eric Karikari
Communication Studies Department
Email: eric.karikari@mnsu.edu
Phone: 516 284 9699

You are humbly invited to take part in the research study to investigate Postcolonial Leadership in African student organizations.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to know and understand the agenda of leadership in African student organizations across the US to know what these organizations stand for and to determine if the leadership agenda ties into the overall postcolonial vision of the continent.

You are a potential participant because you are a leader of a recognized African student organization in a US university. I ask that you read this form before agreeing to take part in the study.

Procedures: As a participant you will be asked to take part in an interview which will last no longer than one (1) hour either by phone, video call or in person depending on your availability. With your permission the interview will be recorded onto an audio recorder. The recording will be transcribed thereafter.

Risks: During the interview you will be asked questions about your role as a student leader in your organization. Some of the questions may be personal, but the information will be kept confidential. You may refuse to answer any questions during the interview. I can provide you with information about programs and services that you can contact for help if you need it. I will not share information you share with anyone.

The interview tapes and transcripts may have names and other personal information in them so there may be the risk of breach of confidentiality. However, to reduce this risk only the two researchers (Dr. Christopher Brown and Eric Karikari) will have access to tapes and transcripts in the entire duration of the study.

Information from the interviews will be used by the researchers mentioned on this form to complete the project as titled above. There may be a breach of confidentiality but this will be prevented by eliminating all participant names from the project document.

There are no direct and/or immediate benefits of the study. The risk level of this research is considered to be minimal.

Confidentiality: All the data obtained from the study will be collected through interviews and will be kept confidential. The records of the study will be confidential. Your name and other identifying information will be kept from the public. The interview data will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers mentioned on this form will have access to the records. After the study is completed, all data will be kept under lock and key in the principal investigator's (Dr. Christopher Brown's) office for three years. After the three-year period, the data will be destroyed.

Voluntary nature of study: Participation in the research study is completely voluntary. There are no consequences of any kind if you choose not to participate. Non-participation will not influence your association with Minnesota State University, Mankato. You may choose not to answer any question you are not comfortable with or simply choose not to give any more details than you wish to give.

Contact: The researchers conducting the study are Dr. Christopher Brown (christopher.brown@mnsu.edu), and Eric Karikari (eric.karikari@mnsu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns please forward to the researchers at the above emails or on phone number 516 284 9699. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the treatment of human subjects, contact:

MSU IRB Administrator
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Institutional Review Board
115 Alumni Foundation
(507) 389-2321.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions. I certify that I am at least 18years old and consent to take part in the research study. I am aware that the interview will be tape recorded and the recording transcribed. I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and I may choose not to participate.

_____
Participant's name

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix C

Interview Script

Eric Karikari

Communication Studies Department

Topic: Postcolonial Leadership: The Contribution of African Student Organizations across the

United States

Interview Questions:

1. What is your major?

2. Where in Africa are you from?

3. How did you or your family end up in the United States?

4. Tell me about your organization here on campus.

5. What is your vision for this organization?

6. What influenced your decision to want to become a leader of this (your African Student)

    organization?

7. What is your leadership style?

8. Is there a specific individual who has influenced the way you lead?

9. In general terms, what does the word "African" mean to you?

10. In what ways do you associate yourself with Africa?

11. Have you ever wished that you belonged to another continent apart from Africa? Why?

12. How do you think your vision for your organization directly or indirectly impacts Africa?

13. What, in your estimation, are the top two (2) biggest problems of Africa?

14. What role(s) do you think African student leaders like yourself should play to advance Africa?

15. How much of the history of African (or your specific country's) colonial struggles do you know?

16. What do you think is the significance of knowing African colonial history?

17. In what ways does this history impact the work you do in your organization or group?

18. If you could change anything about Africa today, what is the one thing that you would change?

19. How important do you think Africa will be to the rest of the world in the coming years?

20. What qualities do African leaders need to have to improve the condition of the continent?