DECOLONIZING MANAGEMENT
AND LEADING CHANGE
THROUGH AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract: Africa currently operates and manages her affairs with and from a colonial perspective, in business, politics, and education. Living everyday life through a colonial lens has stunted growth and innovation because instead of using her strengths, which is leading with African management philosophy, Africa continues to operate with a Western framework, that is a system where the toxic influence and effects of coloniality continues to permeate African political institutions, the education system and culture. The authors advocate for a return to indigenous management philosophy, to ensure success and long-term sustainability. This paper sheds light on a historical background of African societies prior to the destruction of her cultures and institutions by slavery and colonialism. The authors offer key differences between African and Western approaches to show why the Western system has failed Africa. Lastly, the authors offer a framework for policy formulation in the form of propositions.

Keywords: African philosophy, leadership, colonialism, decolonization, management.

INTRODUCTION

How is it that Africa, despite its achievements, its glorious past, and its future potential, wallows in poverty in this age of global business? Africa, a continent with a history of many unfavourable climatic conditions and which has suffered many ills, continues to persist, and survive owing to what has become an enviable resilient spirit. The construction of the many African societies was done mostly on tough terrains, yet agriculture, architecture, and technology were harnessed in ingenious ways (Ilife 2007). The African story is one of bravery, grit, and glory as well as of conflict, war, and oppression (Ilife 2007). The African life centered on building up the family and society. Africa gave the world the prototypes for human achievements. Archaeological research concludes that the first humans were Africans, which also makes every human African (Balter 2000). The oldest book in the world was written by an African, Ptah Hotep, 2375-2350 BC (Ptahhotep 2016). The world's first multigenius, Imhotep, was African (Berghult 1999). The oldest concept of justice, called Maat, which espouses truth, justice, righteousness, harmony, balance, and order, is African (Delpit, White-Bradley 2003).

The first university in the world was African (Nadubere 2003), the first major libraries (Zulu 2012) and the world's oldest religion (Vogt, Belardinelli 2011) are African. Popular religions such as, Christianity and Buddhism, had faces of African founders. The oldest depictions of Buddha and Jesus were of African men (Acharya 2004). The first innovations in agriculture naturally occurred in Africa (Ilife 2007), medicine was developed in Africa (Adu-Gyamfi 2015), the first civilization is African (Ilife 2007), and consequently, the first management philosophy is African. Africans championed these firsts in grand African style without asking for recognition.

In order to strike a balance, it is important to acknowledge that Africa was not a perfect society before colonialism. Acheche (1958) asserted that Africa was a normal society that had its strengths and weaknesses before colonialism, and that colonialism disrupted and

violated this normalcy. Walter Rodney's (1972) classic commentary on "How Europe underdeveloped Africa" further portrayed how colonialism found Africa possibly "undeveloped" and went on to "under-develop" the continent.

The point to note here is that Africa and her foundations were ruthlessly shaken up by European incursion whose colonial landscape had denaturalized pre-colonial fluidity and permeated the African genuineness and processes (Zeleza 2006). This permeation created social structures whose survival was hinged on the existing parasitic relationship that helped and fuelled colonial yearnings in a more duplicitous and subverting manner (James, Laitin 2000; Robb 1997; Welsh 1996; Willis 1992; Ekeh 1990; Ekeh 1980; Robinson, Gallaghar 1961). This experience prompted disquieting fluxes that displaced authentic social order for the African and brought to fore perplexing conditions for the society and its future trajectory. This altered and new social order brought about disjointed "fault lines" that became amplified as colonialism advanced.

When observed through this lens, colonialism is a process which significantly shakes up existing social structures by the introduction of consolidated enduring social forms and processes whose effect pervade the society. Thus, colonialism shapes and molds behavior, having enduring consequences long after its orchestrators and visible institutions have been removed (Ekeh 1980). In this regard, colonialism was an incomparable force of alteration that encountered the natives, institutions, and socio-cultural artefacts and meted out its inescapable assault. Hence, in the process of rearranging "whatever colonialism [touched] it must have distorted and debased" (Robb 1997: 247). The legacy of colonialism brought about the acquisition of power by a few who wield this to their advantage. This brought to fore the weak and corrupt nature of the entire social structure. In many cases, what happens is an outright dismantling and maiming of people and culture to the point that what is left is a damaged community – a shadow of itself. This destruction has happened in all facets of African life, including management.

Management can be defined as the process of directing and deploying human, financial, technological, and natural resources to reach a goal. Management is not exclusive to business. It is necessary for the vitality of society as a whole. This paper focuses on management because it is a skill we have to use in our everyday lives and it cuts across all disciplines, including business, education, law, and politics. Today, Africa is mismanaged in these and other areas because the management philosophy by which Africa currently operates is not African. Current management approaches in Africa are ineffective, and they do not align with African values, such as co-prosperity (Osiri 2020). Doing business in Africa today follows a path put in place by colonial governments who came to extract, maim, and destroy. Indeed, colonialism is the socio-economic parasitisation (SEP) of a society. Colonial governments left Africans with institutions, which has made Africans vulnerable to a new assault by neo-colonialists (Larmer 2017). For example, most of Africa's political systems do not cater to Africans: They are designed to install leaders who do not have a vision for their people or do not have the mandate of the people (Fu-Kiau 1985). This was further elucidated by Ndulo who noted that the "future of democracy in Africa depends on the development of political systems that give people a sense of ownership of the political system" (Ndulo 2003).

The #ENDSARS movement led to the disbanding of the Nigerian Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) – a unit created to protect the people which turned rogue by brutalizing and terrorizing citizens. Interestingly, the creation of SARS and their modus operandi can be traced back to Nigeria's colonial past. Thus, it is imperative that modern global government and business leaders reject any form of SEP and learn to use an approach that recognizes the rights and needs of the African people. In other words, the perspective that government agencies, civil societies, and organizational leaders must adopt is a decolonized approach to management and one that ensures success and long-term sustainability. The authors advocate for a return to indigenous management philosophy predicated on

well-known African practices. This decolonized management perspective should inform the framework used as a blueprint for policy-making and effective management in Africa.

In this paper, the authors provide a panoramic view of the African society prior to the destruction of her cultures and institutions through the Trade of Enslaved People (TEP) and SEP which stems from Quijano's (1992; 2000a; 200b) seminal article on the four critical planks of the Colonial Power Matrix (CPM): "Economy control (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural resources); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity)" (Mignolo 2007: 56). The authors describe African management philosophy and contemporary thoughts in international management and offer key differences between African and Western approaches to illuminate why the Western system has failed in Africa. The authors offer a framework for policy formulation that is consistent with African ideals.

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

African management philosophy has been defined as an attempt to make folklores, myths, adages, religions, education, and other aspects of African culture relevant to the process of leading and dealing with people and controlling things within an organization (Oyeshile 2008). African management philosophy is related to African management theory, which can be explained as "attempts to present in a concerted manner those facts about human behavior in organization" (Nwachukwu 1992). We define African management philosophy as a set of beliefs and behaviors based on ancestral knowledge and practices that are repeatedly observed in management processes of Africans. Based on a historical analysis, some common beliefs and behaviors within the African society as a whole can be teased out (Mapunda 2013; Inyang 2008).

As this study explores what happened between pre-TEP/SEP and today's Africa, it inevitably pinpoints the root cause of Africa's problems as arising from its socio-economic parasatization (SEP) at the turn of the twentieth century. The SEP inaugurated a subversive model that encourages African leaders who are beholden to former colonial or neo-colonial governments. This meant that the leaders were either oblivious to the desires of the communities they lead or do not care (Afigbo 1999). These African leaders gave their loyalty to the foreign powers and not to their people (Afigbo 1972). Unfortunately, the practice in which leaders do not have the mandate of the people continues to plague Africa today (Afigbo 1966).

The governing elites advocated non-African systems, which is a trend that persisted after SEP and well into the present day. African values were neglected and destroyed, and the result of this style of leadership in Africa has been disappointing. At the political level, it is important to note that democracy as practiced in Africa today is not African. Similarly, the management practices of businesses in Africa are not adapted to the African culture. For example, in a study of a diverse South African workforce, it was shown that a leadership style that emphasized African values outperformed an approach that relied on Western management practices (British Council Management Express 2007). Therefore, African management philosophy has the potential to positively transform the continent if it is nurtured and assimilated by Africans (British Council Management Express 2007; Osiri 2020) through policies that are based on ancestral knowledge.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

This paper relies on earlier and contemporary peer-reviewed articles, news media, and books as well as commentaries from popular press. This research is a historical exposition that explains the root cause of current mismanagement in modern Africa, which affects everyday life. In order to properly analyze the root cause of

Africa's problems, a panoramic view of African society prior to the destruction of African cultures and institutions is presented.

To begin with, Quijano's (1992, 2000a, 2000b) seminal article on the four critical planks of the Colonial Power Matrix (CPM) provides a good springboard to this conversation. The colonial matrix of power, gender and sexuality helps us to better understand the coloniality of power. In his study, he focused on sphere of economy control (mostly labor exploitation) and the coloniality of knowledge; his argument was that it is imperative to analyze the limitation of the hemogenic structure of Eurocentrism. Quijano asserted that, "It is necessary to extricate oneself from the linkages between rationality/modernity and coloniality, first of all, and definitely from all power which is not constituted by free decisions made by free people"; this he referred to as "desprenderse" (Quijano 2007: 177). "Desprenderse" means de-linking or put differently "epistemic disobedience". He further elucidated that this has driven those designing global affairs to colonize "the economy (appropriating land and natural resources), authority (management by the Monarch, the State, or the Church), and police and military enforcement (coloniality of power), to colonize knowledge (languages, categories of thoughts, belief systems, etc.) and beings (subjectivity)" (Mignolo 2011:45). Hence, "delinking" is a necessary way out from the coloniality of power.

Based on the analysis of key historical events, we use the Strength-Based Theory (SBT) to explain the current socio-economic and political turmoil observed in Africa today. The SBT is a social work practice theory that suggests that individuals have the capacity to overcome their problems if they focus on leveraging their strengths and future goals (Rath, Conchie 2008). Instead of emphasizing on weaknesses and deficits, the strengths-based approach takes into account the individuals' personal strengths and social and community networks (Social Care Institute for Excellence 2015). Specifically, an assessment of personal attributes, talents, skills, environment, interests, and aspirations are conducted in order to develop a plan to promote the individual's wellbeing

(Adams, Grieder 2013). The strength-based approach is not without criticism.

Five drawbacks are associated with the SBT for focusing only strengths (Chamorro-Premuzic 2016). One, despite its popularity, there is no scientific evidence that the strengths-based approach to management without addressing weaknesses and deficit works, since effective leaders excel by developing new strengths. Two, the SB approach can give people a false sense of competence because people could just be great at displaying them. Three, since the SB approach argues that everyone has strengths, then it leads to a waste of resources if resources are committed to everyone, instead of to the top 20 per cent performers responsible for 80 per cent of organizational productivity (the Pareto effect). Four, the SB approach can lead to overconfidence and arrogance due to an overemphasis of strengths. Five, the SB approach is criticized for not addressing the real organizational problems because it is awash with optimism. To address these criticisms of the SBT, we incorporate both strengths and weaknesses into the analysis and framework while applying the SBT to a societal model, thereby extending the theory beyond the individual model. Based on observations of historical events, which occurred in Africa, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the continent, we develop a framework for creating robust and decolonized policies for effective leadership and followership.

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF ANCIENT AFRICA

African management philosophy can be traced back to ancient times before external forces disturbed Africa. Great and small African civilizations, such as Ashanti, Kemet, Kikuyu, Kongo, Timbuktu, Songhai, Igbo, Mali, Mapungunbwe, Hausa, and Yoruba, all had developed management systems that served their socio-economic societal life. Of the thousands of peoples or nations across Africa, the authors examine the cultural values of three ancient African societies (Igbo, Kemet, and Xhosa) because appreciating

them can inform our understanding of African management practices. As noted by scholars (Jackson et al. 2008), managing styles and approaches are manifestations of culture rather than independent variables.

The Igbo People

In West Africa, the Igbo society is characterized with the co-existence of both highly individualistic and collectivistic values wherein Igbo individualism is "a sense of independence born out of a sense personal pride but adequately mixed with a sense of communalism, not communism" (Nnadozie2002). Igbo individualism allows for the pursuit of individual freedom of expression with a high degree of social responsibility. Personal responsibility is paramount in the Igbo society, and it manifests in the form of a strong desire to care for one's family and a deep support for one's community. Scholars have reported four pairs of values that were entrenched in the Igbo society (Anyanelle 2013; Idang 2015). They are sacrifice and hard work, integrity and honesty, kindness and co-prosperity, and truth and justice (Osiri 2020). These values along with practices and institutions have been discussed and offered as a possible approach that would ensure success in Africa (Osiri 2020).

The People of Kemet

Kemet (also known as Ancient Egypt) is the world's oldest civilization, peering from over 5000 years ago. It has influenced, and arguably, spun, other great civilizations, such as the Greek and Roman, who wrote about them (Kemet Expert 2016). With a timeline that starts prior to the first millennium BCE, the Pre-Dynastic Kemet was governed by a set of laws, which was personified by the goddess Maat, representing truth, justice, and harmony. Through

this concept of Maat, the people of Kemet got their sense of ethics and order and no one was above the law.

There are 42 laws of Maat, also called the "Forty-two Negative Confessions," which guide the spiritual, moral, and social life of the Kemet people (Lehman 2001). Of the 42 laws, twenty-two have direct relevance to management and are tied to five value sets; namely: 1) Hard work and Productivity (e.g. #16 – I have not laid waste the ploughed land), 2) Integrity and Honesty (e.g. #13 – I have not dealt deceitfully), 3) Truth and Justice (e.g. #30 – I have not judged hastily), 4) Kindness and Gentleness (e.g. #12 – I have not caused shedding of tears), and 5) Communalism and Social Responsibility (e.g. #35 – I have not fouled the water).

The Xhosa People

The Xhosa people in the South embody the African values of Ubuntu in so many ways. These values are peace, harmony, and responsibility. In the Xhosa community, each person is treated and respected equally, in accordance with the traditions of Ubuntu, which means "I am because we are, and because we are therefore, I am" (Mbiti 1970: 108). It is well documented, especially prior to SEP, that "African people live communally, expressing the reality of the old popular phrase that umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person only through other people) (Ntombana 2011: 635). The Xhosa law, Umthetho, set by traditional courts and family households, is "for the common good of all – to promote the peaceful cohabitation of people" (Ntombana 2011: 633). Additionally, the custom, Isiko, a spiritual practice connects the people to their ancestors and Umdali (God).

One of the critical customs of the Xhosa people is the male circumcision rite of passage (Ntombana 2009). During the process, "good moral values are instilled in boys as they graduate to manhood" (Ntombana 2011). Without initiation, boys cannot become men and cannot speak at meetings since they have not earned their

place in the community (Mager 1998). Therefore, the rite of passage allows boys to transition from boyhood, characterized as a time of irresponsible and animalistic behavior, to manhood, a stage of responsibility. This process, which includes learning from a guardian about family, community life and responsibilities that come with becoming a man, transforms the boys into amakrwala (new men). In essence, the young men no longer live for themselves, but for the good of their families and community.

EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON AFRICA POST-INDE-PENDENCE

It is imperative to note that institutions such as the state, and systems such as western education, and the global media, maintain coloniality in Africa long after Africa countries became independent from administrative colonialism. Some colonialists adopted what the literature referred to as indirect rule: "each cultural or religious group should be governed by its own traditional codes, administered where feasible by a community elder (overseen, naturally, by the colonial power)" (Mamdani 2012: 192) and by so doing "the colonial mission shifted from civilization to preservation and from assimilation to protection" (Mamdani 2012: 28). The Colonial Power Matrix (CPM) illustrates how African economies are controlled, how African political authority is controlled, how African identities, including gender and sexuality, are controlled, and how African knowledge, culture and subjectivity continue to be controlled and dominated by the Euro-America Empire (Quijano 2007).

An example of this would be drawn from Yahaya's (2016) study on the stateless societies in northern Nigeria. Their history was altered by the re-designing of the pre-colonial socio-political practices and institutions; this impacted the constitutional structure and a fertile soil for fragmented cultural clusters and rigid dividing walls erected; thereby creating highly obdurate identities for

groups. Furthermore, by intentionally averting some groups from intensive missionary activities and permitting others to be over-whelmingly affected by it, colonialism concurrently solidified the groups' walls of differences by defusing the possibility of the inte-grative effect that might have followed. Thus, "transforming [pre-colonial] flexible custom into hard prescription" (Ranger 1984: 212). Interestingly, colonialists have largely depicted these societies as fundamentally the "locus of permanent and […] irreducible tribal hatreds" (David 2002). But more significant is the notion that colonialism barely evened out the terrain for the several cultural groups to operate with pecking order of some sort emerging among their competing elites (Zeleza 2006; Mamdani 1994). Considering that the colonial state of affairs created the rise of fairly larger cul-tural clusters, it actually fictionalized an identity for those groups into existence (Ekeh 1975; Ranger 1984). This is more obvious in the colonial administration of the Stateless societies of the former Zaria Province in northern Nigeria, where the British administra-tion sectioned the politics.

MODERN AFRICA

Africa holds a substantial number of natural endowments. About 80 per cent of the cell phone technology components are extracted from Africa (Abdelkader 2009), and 20-50 per cent of uranium, an element used for nuclear energy production, is in Af-rica (Hecht 2012). The African continent consists of 1.3 billion peo-ple, which accounts for 16.64 per cent of the global population (Worldometers 2019), a population that is projected to increase to 2.4 billion by 2050. In a world where many countries are grappling with an aging population, Africa has the world's youngest (Ighobor, Essoungou 2013). There is consensus that Africa is the next emerg-ing economy and is already churning double-digit returns on in-vestments (Signe 2018). Notwithstanding these endowments and

unique history, Africa is considered as the poorest continent. Despite being the first on many fronts, today the table seems to have turned and Africa takes the very back seat on many performance metrics. African countries rank the lowest on innovation measures developed by Cornell University and their collaborators (Dutta et al. 2018). Economic vitality is often seen to be low, and African countries are said to be among the poorest countries of world based on these rankings (Dutta et al. 2018) and several other sources. Political and legal institutions are weak (Dutta et al. 2018). Corruption is rampant and high (Transparency International 2018). Public infrastructure and amenities are lacking (Dutta et al. 2018), and the state of health care is abysmal (Miller, Lu 2019).

This paradox has baffled many observers and Africans themselves. We ask again "how is it that Africa, given its achievements, its glorious past, and its future potential, wallows in abject poverty?". Could it be that Africa as we know it today is not really Africa? It does appear that today's Africa is a shadow of itself, a westernized Africa, and a place in which the world comes to take the resources they need to thrive and dump the waste and excesses it does not need. To make matters worse, African institutions are re-inventing the wheel by adopting and immersing themselves in colonial systems and practices. Current political systems in Africa are not indigenous: they have been greatly influenced and fundamentally altered by non-African thought, and Africans worldwide are mis-educated in systems that do not teach them their correct history and values, and do not offer them a path to community and economic growth (Woodson 2010). Additionally, instead of visiting and staying as good neighbors, foreign actors, operating with a colonial mentality in Africa, have wreaked havoc and inflicted pain on the African people just as parasites do to unsuspecting hosts.

African management systems were destroyed and replaced with Western management systems, which were considered superior (Kiggundu 1991). African management philosophy was corrupted, destroyed, and supplanted with Western management phi-

losophy, whose proponents and practitioners, largely, do not appreciate African management philosophy. Prior to the Trade of Enslaved People (TEP) and the Socio-Economic Parasitization (SEP) of Africa, African leaders and people used a set of ideas that were different from Western thought and authentically African. The dismantling of African management systems, which took root during TEP and SEP, is now endemic that even scholars who are calling for more studies in African management are doing so because they believe that indigenous and traditional concepts can enrich "mainstream" management literature (Jackson et al. 2008). In other words, the primary focus of developing African management philosophy is not to advance the livelihood of Africans, but to make non-African foreign companies operating in Africa more effective. An example of how many foreign entities is operating in Africa can be located in the affairs of Royal Dutch Shell.

For so many years, Shell has extracted oil from the Niger Delta region of current day Nigeria while spilling oil and toxic waste, polluting land, and water, and rendering the affected regions uninhabitable for humans and other living things. This they have done with great impunity and without repercussion. Shell's activities continue to degrade the environment and damage the social fabric of the communities in the affected regions. Shell polluted water bodies, destroying people's source of livelihood, and forcing many to abandon their communities. As a result, many Africans became sick, homeless, and depressed. In a testimony before the public at Hague in May 2010, Bradford Houppe, Ethical Affairs Committee Royal Dutch Shell, said:

Today, Shell announces a new program that leverages the power of truth and reconciliation about our past to build a sustainable future […]. To do what is right, we first had to publically admit what was wrong […]. Today I am proud to say we know what we have done wrong […]. In the next two years, we will be undergoing an extensive review of our past operations and fully disclosing all of our problems. The reconciliation process will involve a series of public hearings here in the Hague, where we will solicit testimonies from within and outside Shell that fully reveal the

extent of our abuses. And today I am proud to say that we make a sym-
bolic new start by saying to the people of the Niger Delta, "We are sorry".
We are sorry for the oil and gas spills that have made your rivers toxic.
We are sorry for the gas flares that stink up your villages. We are sorry for
the fact that you cannot eat your fish, that you cannot grow on your land,
and that you cannot drink your water. We've had similar extraction oper-
ations in Alaska with little problem. We know there is a double standard,
and that must end. We are sorry (World Press News 2010).

It is important to stress that actions by foreign multinationals,
such as Shell, do not only have economic and environmental rami-
fications. They also destroy the culture and interrupt everyday life,
which has enormous negative multi-generational consequences on
the people. When foreign companies enter Africa, their top execu-
tives and managers are non-Africans who neither understand nor
appreciate the African culture. This has been the practice since the
times of the Trade of Enslaved People (TEP) and the Socio-Eco-
nomic Parasitization (SEP), also known as colonialism, when Eu-
ropean actors embarked on a mission to extract from African na-
tions with little respect for the cultural practices of the people. The
consciousness of Western supremacy meant that imperial and co-
lonial officers paid little heed to African management philosophy.
They often arrived in Africa with an air superiority ready to put in
place structures and practice management styles they learned from
Europe and for the purpose of transferring resources from Africa
to Europe.

SEP mostly left a legacy of dysfunctional educational systems,
in which Africa produces western-educated graduates in Africa to
support foreign occupation and operations in Africa. Largely, the
educational system in Africa today does not spark real advancement
on the continent, which some Western authors have called the
Dark Continent (Thompsell 2018), the Hopeless Continent (The
Economist 2000), and the Forgotten Continent (Bryant 2016). In
addition to the challenges brought by foreign corporations and the
dysfunctional education system, most African political leaders do
not have a vision to advance their countries, which are vestiges of

Europeans carving (Rodney 1981). Today, African businesses, like the political, legal, and educational institutions in Africa, continue to look to the West for sustenance. They are divorced from African values and systems in many respects.

AFRICAN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Since Africa is so diverse with thousands of languages and ethnic groups (One World Nations 2019), one can expect a diversity of management practices across the continent with each practice influenced by the culture that produced it. Nonetheless, despite the cultural and linguistic differences, there are common features of the African management philosophy. One of such commonalities is cooperation, which has even been observed among African American entrepreneurs (Prieto, Phipps 2019). Another feature that is shared among Africans is that while many African societies developed texts to document their way of life, virtually all of them relied on the oral tradition. As such, certain management philosophies that are unique to Africa as a whole have been advanced, though some scholars say further work is required in developing African management thought (Ajibola, Akeem 2018). Howbeit, Africa's management philosophies must draw from its history and culture (Kamoche et al. 2004). Specifically, the "aspect of management which lacks universality has to do with interpersonal relationships, including those between management and workers, management and suppliers, management and the customer, the community, competition and government" (Gonzalez, McMillian 1961).

It then means that trying to treat African societies as though they are Western societies, without taking into account the African culture and values, would not be effective. The Western management system cannot be expected to be imported and implemented successfully in Africa because management systems are not universal. The lack of universality of management becomes even more

conspicuous as managers attempt to lead across borders, necessitating a careful consideration of history in international management.

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

An analysis by Amankwah-Amoh (2014) shows that two schools of thought influence the research and practice of African management philosophy: the "convergence" and "divergence" schools of thought. The convergence school of thought assumes the superiority of Western management thought and advocates for the standardization of managerial values and behaviors across countries in order to support the process of industrialization (Jones 1988). This convergence school of thought has dominated over the recent centuries. As such, Western management philosophies gained currency in academic circles and was pushed and adopted everywhere as the gold standard (Kerr et al. 1960). Some have even advanced that industrialization may be necessary to transition countries from autocratic regimes to democratic systems (Kerr et.al. 1960). The convergence school of thought is adamant about management being a science that knows no boundaries and that its universal principles can be applied in any setting (Negandhi, Estafen 1965; Koontz 1969). In contemporary practice of international management, an orientation towards the convergence school of thought would ultimately lead to the development of a global strategy, in which multinational companies favor efficiency over local responsiveness, emphasizing the need to gain economies of scale and by introducing the same products and operations to each country using the same leadership and marketing approaches.

The divergence school of thought, on the other hand, maintains that every local context is different due to the uniqueness of culture and institutions that influence behavior (Ejiofor 1981). Culture is "the pervasive and shared beliefs, norms, and values that

guide the everyday life of a group" (Cullen, Parboteeah 2014). Social institutions are "a complex of positions, roles, norms, and values organizing relatively stable patterns of human resources that sustain viable societal structures within a given environment" (Cullen, Parboteeah 2014: 92). The notion that peoples from different cultures have different ways of making sense of the world has gained momentum. In her book, *The Culture Map: The Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, Erin Meyer contends that leading across national boundaries requires a degree of cross-cultural competency.

She outlined eight dimensions for managing across cultures, including communicating, evaluating, persuading, leading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing, and scheduling, and laid out how performing each task effectively can vary from one country to another. For example, evaluating, according to Meyer, is about giving negative feedback: "more direct cultures [e.g., Russia] tend to use what linguists call upgraders, words preceding or following negative feedback that make it feel stronger, such as absolutely, totally, or strongly: 'This is absolutely inappropriate,' or 'This is totally unprofessional.' By contrast, more indirect cultures [e.g., Japan] use more downgraders, words that soften the criticism, such as kind of, sort of, a little, a bit, maybe, and slightly" (Meyer 2014).

The divergence school of thought ultimately leads to a multi-domestic strategy, which fine-tunes its business activities to respond to the local context and needs of each market. This strategy is a complete opposite of the global strategy, which treats all countries as if they are the same. In order to develop an effective leadership strategy, for example, instead of forcing a Western management style in Ghana, the divergence school of thought would advocate the adoption of a leadership approach that resonates with the Ghanaian people, because what works in the West may not work in Africa. In the same vein, it is even more effective, if leadership is adapted to align with the cultures of the people within each country since virtually every African country is comprised of multiple na-

tion-states. Congruent with the strengths-based theory (SBT), African organizations that manage with African values and practices would likely be successful. This thinking aligns with a study of Kenyan organizations in which the researchers proposed that: "SMEs that are indigenous to a local community will be both a product of and reflect insider knowledge from the immediate community as in-group and directly reflect the interests of the in-group in way that the executive group conceptualize organizational success" (Jackson et al 2008).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFRICAN AND WESTERN MANAGEMENT THOUGHTS

African management thought must be different from Western management thought since they emerge from different cultures, institutions, and histories. These thoughts underlie how a people politic, manage, and lead. Some African organizations, which adopted only Western management principles, are beginning to realize that Africa needs a different set of strategies that are congruent with Africa's history and culture (Kiggundu 1996; Kamoche et al. 2004; Amankwah-Amoah 2014). The differences between African and Western management philosophies can be explored along the following five dimensions: 1) Large kingdoms versus State-lets, 2) Modernity versus Traditionalism, 3) Firms versus Families, 4) Individualism versus Collectivism, and 5) Linearity versus Circularity.

Large kingdoms versus State-lets

Africans organized their communities mostly in a manner that enabled leaders to be closely connected to the masses. This changed during socio-economic parasitization (SEP) of Africa. Falola and Heaton noted that "Western-modeled independent Nigerian state – became culturally disconnected from the relatively uneducated

masses in a way that had not existed in the precolonial period" (Falola, Heaton 2006). In most African traditions, the leader-led connection contributed to how nation state-lets formed, which is by the hard work of groups of families, young men and women who are friends, brothers and sisters, or Big Men who led large families. State or community formation was a very slow process of coming together of multiple family units or small groups, which allowed people to know and become comfortable with each other.

One of the legacies of colonialism, what we have called a SEP, is that Africa continues to seek answers from the West and takes a misguided approach to its history. By doing this, Africa recreates the past to "conform to European models of state development and empire-making, while focusing too heavily on the role of large kingdoms in the development of pre-colonial societies" (Falola, Heaton 2006). "Since the development of European nations was explained as the result of the rise and fall of great kingdoms, special attention was paid to Nigerian traditions [for example] that indicated the same process" (Falola, Heaton 2006: 163). Not surprisingly, these preoccupations of Africa's history of large kingdoms and centralized political systems followed the examples of the writings of Europeans (Falola 2006), which centered on Africa's large-scale political units since that was what the West was acquainted with (Falola 2006).

Europe's political formations appeared to celebrate expansion and consolidation of power. Conversely, African political formations favored disintegration. Diffusion of power is ideal in the African context. When a society becomes too big and a leader is perceived to have garnered too much power, groups, especially those living on the edges of the community, would break off from the powerful ruler and separate to form their own tight knit community (Ilife 2007). Therefore, while European leaders were focused on concentrating power, African leaders, on the other hand, were largely more concerned with caring for their followers and seeking their loyalty. Except for notable exceptions, such as Kemet (i.e., Ancient Egypt) and Songhai, African civilizations occurred in

small communities. The quest for expansion led the West to develop guns and weapons of mass annihilation, which allowed it to control vast areas of land and maintain power. The West also came to celebrate war generals and people who used deception and elements of surprise in war. One prime example is Winston Churchill, who said about World War 1, "I love this war. I know it's smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment" (Crimes of Britain 2016). Conversely, most of Africa's civilizations celebrated benevolent leaders, hunters, pioneers, and Dibias who won hearts by meeting the needs of their people. In fact, certain African societies shunned conflicts and wars, and looked down on people who use ambush and deception in war (Ilife 2007).

Modernity versus Traditionalism

Modernity is more than just bringing about a material change in the world; it is a way of thinking about the world in terms of how humans can transform it. It is about industrialization and Western democracy. It stands against the past and looks into the future to conquer and shape it. Capitalism and capitalistic tendencies are values that align with modernity – a worldview that is determined to liberate individuals and claims to grant economic access to members of society. Therefore, values that are espoused in modernistic societies are often utilitarian in their orientation and as such includes materialism, individual achievement, personal freedoms, objectivity, right for an individual to own land, and the rule of written law. Western countries tend to be "modern" societies. Agreements are written down to track ownership. Laws are written down to protect personal freedoms. These freedoms are not sustainable since they often come at the expense of the environment and the personal freedoms of others.

On the other hand, traditionalism is about honoring the past. Traditionalism seeks to preserve or draw from ancient practices

with the aim of maintaining stability and harmony in society. African societies tend to be traditional. Traditional societies welcome change, but in a manner that is sustainable. People living in traditional societies tend to integrate with their natural surroundings instead of transforming it. Communitarianism and consensus-driven decision-making characterize traditional societies, which draw lessons from the past to make changes in the present. Members with common goals organize traditional societies, and because members generally feel safe and secure, traditional societies, given their relatively harmonious past compared to societies based on modernity, do not see any need to significantly transform their society. Members of traditional societies rally behind each other and support their neighbors in times of need.

Values espoused in traditional societies are hard work, trust, community engagement, and the application of wisdom to situations. Consequently, the oral tradition reigns supreme and there is no need to write down the rules of engagement because people rely on social contracts. Western management philosophy advocates "individualism and modernity, whilst African management philosophy favors traditionalism, communalism and cooperative teamwork" (Nzelibe 1986). We conjecture that consistent with modernity, most Western societies built upwards (e.g. skyscrapers) as a show of efficiency and productive use of scarce land, whereas most African societies, except for a notable few, mushroomed laterally, seeking the comfort that new territories could bring.

Scholars often discuss the pros of both modernity and traditionalism systems, but they have cons as well. One con of modernity is that it has resulted to over-engineering or what some have called reverse improvement, such as devices that are difficult to use; over-complicated machines with long instruction manuals, computerized buttons to open car doors instead of manual door handles, and an apple phone equipped with a facial recognizing system that is prone to malfunction (Maher 2019). One con of traditionalism is the tendency of people in those societies to be overly trusting, even to the detriment of oneself. This is a weakness, which may explain

why many African communities and other traditional societies, such as Native Americans, welcomed Europeans not knowing that their act of kindness would be exploited by their visitors and used to dominate them.

Firms versus Families

Business organizations and the idea of offering one's time and labor in exchange for something (e.g. money) were not commonplace in Africa until the West popularized it during the SEP of Africa. In African societies, representatives from different families (Fu-Kiau 2007) formed traditional political units, such as the Council of Elders, to support communal leadership and development. To a greater extent, economic activities as well as institutions for educating and socializing citizens centered on the family (Osiri 2020). In the West, individuals, in the pursuit of personal freedoms and happiness, created organizations to exploit opportunities. Educational facilities were later built to socialize people and to teach skills required for employment in firms. With more separation of the family and firm, it was easy to commoditize human talent and regard people as inputs of production in the West (Applbaum 2000). In Africa, families specialized in trades and taught skills of the trade to their children, family members and apprentices (Osiri 2020) such that trades got better from one generation to the next. Therefore, it is noteworthy that many modern industries in Africa have succeeded because they have historical connection to the people like the connection the Igbos had to textile, pottery, iron smithing, palm oil processing, soap manufacturing, and carving (Falola 2005). Interestingly, families were the gatekeepers, teachers, and curators of these trades and indigenous knowledge prior to the SEP of Africa, and thus, knowledge was created and sustained for the benefit for the community.

Individualism versus Collectivism

In individualistic cultures, people take care of themselves and their immediate families, and the preference is for a loosely knit society. According to Hofstede (2019), compared to their African counterparts, Western countries score very high on individualism, with the United States leading the way at 91 out of a possible score of 100. Conversely, collectivist societies prefer to live in tightly knit societies where individuals see themselves as part of the whole and tend to project a collective image of "we" instead of "I". The Individualism scores of Nigeria and Kenya, 30 and 25, respectively, are much lower than the scores of their Western counterparts. Highly individualistic cultures emphasize personal freedoms and the sanctity of contracts to protect investments and the strong protection of private property (Gonzalez, McMillian 1961). In the African context, people-built relationships, and trust that the good judgment of members of their group would protect their rights.

In many Western societies, individuals own land and have title deeds to prove ownership, while in many African societies, a family, a clan, or a community owns land. A group of elders, who could each give account of the land, oversees the usage of land. To sell part of the land, all the elders must be present and agree before transferring ownership to the buyer. That is an example of how communitarianism works. In case an elder was absent during a transaction, he must be informed later, in order for him to update his record of the land and give consent to the new land boundaries. This approach of keeping decentralized, public ledgers, and mental and written notes, is akin to today's blockchain technology.

Linearity versus Circularity

In communication lingo, linearity as a concept implies that something be straightforward, discrete, objective, sequential, monochronic, and following a clear and concise pattern. Conversely,

circularity is about being flexible, subjective, synchronic, poly-chronic, and nuanced and complex in communication. African societies are often oriented towards circularity, whereas the West tends towards linearity. Members of polychronic societies juggle many things at once and do not mind interruptions, which is in contrast to the West, where people tend to do one thing at a time and do not like to be interrupted. Thus, Africans imbue flexibility into time, meaning that appointments for meetings are not rigid because many are the reasons that may cause the delayed arrival of someone to a meeting. A common misconception is that Africans are often late to meeting. To the contrary, Africans are extremely punctual. In many instances people arrive very early and way ahead of the meeting time. However, African culture gives enough room for people to arrive late to meetings without reprimand. The idea is that the persons involved in an appointment are just as important, if not more important than the aim of the meeting. As such, it is crucial to accommodate for other things that may be happening in their lives without asking questions. Unfortunately, during and after the SEP, Africans began to abuse this privilege, and the culture that governed it was destroyed or began to disintegrate.

In the West, time is sacrosanct, and the times agreed upon for appointments are firm. The notion of linearity means that the West must be achievement-orientated societies, measuring time, money, and energy – if not for any other purpose, at least, for the aim of accurately determining how to reward an individual. Thus, the West created a world of contracts, and accounted for everything. Consequently, labor pricing is prevalent, title deeds confer land ownership, and geographical boundary lines are drawn. Since Westerners are linear in their worldview, it is not surprising that they tend to be objective-oriented compared to Africans who are more context-orientated.

The linear and circular worldviews have implications on leadership, management practice, and daily living. The linear worldview means that leadership must be clear. That is, there is the need for a dichotomy between the led and the leader. Thus, politics

in the West is characterized by a "winner takes all" mentality as opposed to a consensual and power sharing model of Africa (Afigbo 1980). The Winner-Takes-All mentality is congruent with capitalism and communism, because in capitalism, economic power is concentrated in the hands of private elites and in communism, economic power rests in the hands of a few political elites. Africa, on the other hand, favors communalism or communitarianism, which is a system where political power is decentralized because family units and small communities hold economic power. It is worth noting that some African societies, like the Igbos and Kikuyus, promote a strong individual entrepreneurialism amidst the communitarian backdrop, and the Igbos, for example, are known to be notoriously egalitarian.

Furthermore, due to the objectivity associated with the linear worldview, the West makes sense of the world by categorizing and defining things. That is, things are black and white, whereas Africans accommodate for gray areas. These had positive and negative consequences. Thus, Western scholars developed narratives to support their worldview, consistent with their linear view of the world, the West advanced that people who are "black" are inferior to "white" people. Thus, black people can improve themselves if they adopt the ways of white people. Nzelibe, in his seminal work notes that informal economies must become formal economies in order for them to be legitimate in the West. He stated:

the Europeans have conceptualized the world in a linear, evolutionary process that progresses from the less to the more progressive, from the primitive to the civilized, from feudalism to socialism, and from the old to the new world. Because European culture, according to this view, is the most advanced, it represents the ideal to which other cultures must aspire. Clearly, this concept of the world is demonstrably unsympathetic to alternative viewpoints of the world (Nzelibe 1986).

Countries that are "underdeveloped" or "developing" based on Western standards must adopt systems from "developed" countries in order to become developed. "Uncivilized" people or

"tribes" should adopt Western values, including capitalism and Western democracy, in order to become civilized. It is for these reasons that we are advancing a decolonized language, including the use of the term "European" or "European American" instead of "White". Similarly, using "non-Western" instead of "underdeveloped," "developing," or "Third World," and using "people" or "ethnic group" instead of "tribes". The authors offer these terms for everyday use as a means of also decolonizing our language.

THE DESTRUCTION OF MAAT

African societies lived by certain codes, values, and laws. In Kemet, those codes were captured in the Principles of Maat, which espouse justice and order. How then was Maat destroyed? Kemet traded with and was ruled by other cultures. The Hyksos (called the "rulers of foreign lands" by Kemites) from around the Palestinian ruled around 1700-1550 BCE (Dynasty 13). Around 818-715 BCE (Dynasty 23) and 747-656 BCE (Dynasty 25), Kemet was ruled by two African cultures, Libya, and Kush, respectively. When the Arabs ruled Kemet in 642 CE, they called it Misr, and when Macedonians and Ptolemaic ruled Kemet, it became Egypt. Kemet was the center of knowledge for the world, which attracted interest from outside cultures. The foreigners invaded and conquered Kemet so that there were several periods, including the Achaemenid Iranian (525-404 BCE), Second Persian (343-332 BCE), Macedonian and Ptolemaic (332-330 BCE), Roman (30 BCE-395 CE), Byzantine (395-668 CE) and the Islamic Period (642 CE).

Kemet maintained its traditional African culture during these periods until a new religion was introduced because the temples were abandoned and there was no King to carry on with the priestly duties of the temples (Harrison 2017; Asante 1990). The introduction of Christianity dealt the first blow to Kemetic culture, but the final blow was dealt by Islam, which changed the culture and lan-

guage, and consequently, Maat was destroyed. Therefore, the culture of modern-day Egypt, an Islamic country, is completely different from that of Ancient Egypt (Kemet).

The destruction of many African cultures through colonialism followed a similar trajectory, with the invasion of foreign powers who took over the society and supplanted it with their own culture. This is why the characterization of colonialism in Africa as a process of socio-economic parasitization (SEP) is appropriate. Thus, the researchers wish to point out that colonialism in Africa, in particular, is not studied in its proper context. Otherwise, people would not still have romantic association with the term itself. For example, we have observed an institution of higher learning the Midwest named one of its halls "Colonial Room," paying homage to the idea of colonialism, and some organizations adopting or incorporating the term "colonial" in their business names, such as Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Company and Colonial Pipeline, which was recently attacked by cyber hackers. This is a result of how colonialism is taught at academic institutions, which is not rigorous and candid. For example, very few have learned about one of the worst atrocities in the human history during the colonial rule of Belgium's King Leopold in Congo, which killed over 10 million Africans and left many tortured and maimed (Hochschild 1999).

AFRICAN MANAGEMENT PRACTICE TODAY

Communication (Blake 1979; Fanon 1969), civil service, politics, and education in Africa today are still based on Western values. Indeed, Frederick W. Taylor championed the notion of applying "true science" to management, advancing that human interactions are objective and not mitigated by one's culture and social institutions (Fanon 1969; Taylor 1911). Therefore, management in Africa today is about applying Western concepts in the African context and can trace its academic roots to Taylorism (Nzelibe 1986).

A strategy deployed by the West to exploit Africa was to create classes or exacerbate the small differences that exist among Africans. For example, Belgians extolled the Tutsis over Hutus in Rwanda and made the former supervise the latter on farms. In West Africa, Europeans created a privileged African group, the so-called "Black Frenchman" and "Black British", and treated them better than the masses, even though Europeans never regarded this privileged West African group as good as the Europeans. A similar tactic was used in America, where the "house negro" who lived and served inside the plantation house was placed by enslavers above the "field negro" who toiled on the plantation. The aspiration of the average African was then to become a privileged elite, which meant he or she had to abandon his or her African values to embrace Western values (Clignet 1970). In the colonial era, Africans learned to apply Western management styles pertaining to negotiation, operations, and organization in Africa (Gopinath 1998) while their Western bosses sapped the powers of traditional leaders in order to standardize the administrative systems across the regions (Crowder 1964).

Despite the adoption of Western standards in Africa, African markets are still characterized as an informal sector by the West because they lack strong regulatory enforcement institutions (Julian, Ofori-Dankwa 2013). The West considers African management leadership inferior, not taking into account that it uses Western metrics to evaluate the nature of institutions and the management performance in Africa (Ishola, Kenku 2018). The irony of it is that the West destroyed Africa's judiciary and economic systems while forcefully profiteering from Africa and leaving a legacy of non-African bureaucracies, corruption, and greed (Duke 2010).

The divide between privileged elite leaders and the masses in Africa continues to the present day. The #ENDSARS movement in Nigeria shows that Nigerian ruling class are far removed from the realities of the masses. They turn a blind eye to police brutality insofar the police are not abusing their own. The needs of the masses

do not drive the economic development agenda proposed and implemented by the ruling class. The desire to please Western investors and governments does. Therefore, major economic projects rarely help the average African. Educated African elites appear to draw academic inspiration from the West while the political elites depend on the West for political backing (Falola, Heaton 2006; Adom-Otchere 2019). Simply put, the practice of Western management practice by Africans without including African philosophies has failed to yield positive results because it has no historical or cultural connection to the people.

Africa continues to struggle with the various Western ideals it has incorporated in all spheres of management. Seeing that both imported and forced Western frameworks have failed, some are now calling for a return to indigenous African systems. For example, deeply concerned about the ugly partisan politics, which comes with Western democracy, a prominent Ghanaian Pentecostal minister, Duncan Williams, has advocated for an African style of political leadership and the need to institutionalize a national agenda in Ghana:

I believe that one of the things that will help the nations of Africa is for us to have national coalitions from all political parties. Come together. Get traditional rulers, religious leaders, labor, business community, the youth, even the army, bring them all together, and let's come together with a national agenda of what we want in this country. For instance, in Rwanda, it is law that no one sleeps in mad houses. You don't build a mad house. They will pull it down. It is against the law. Let's have a national agenda as a people that we will work on, and let's agree that for the next 25 years there will be no election every four years. Every five years we should appoint a president [not elect] from among the parties and coalition. So, these five years, it's your party and next five years is your party. No election, no party politics, no rallies, and our agenda is to follow, execute, perform the national agenda for the sake of the next generation. What we have right now, we are not going anywhere […]. I don't wish you well; you don't wish me well. So, the nation is bleeding. [There is] no continuity because when you come everything I have done you have to condemn it […]. The vindictiveness continues; the hatred continues; we

are dividing people [...]. The Arab uprising is coming, not just to Ghana but to West African and all over […].Because this party politics as much as it is democracy and it works, we have to do it in the context of what works with our tradition. You know if we don't look at it carefully, it will create an atmosphere that the countries of Africa will be very difficult to govern. Look at Nigeria, with all the resources they have. Look at Congo, DRC. Look at the wealth of that country, and yet the poverty in that country [is alarming], and it breaks you, it breaks your heart […]. You ask yourself why? What is wrong? It is the way our party politics is structured. This "winner takes it all" has to stop (Adom-Otchere 2019).

A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

Given the preceding historical context and current lifestyle in Africa, we propose a framework to guide both Africans and non-Africans conducting business in Africa. This framework offers simple and clear ideas on how to decolonize management and everyday interactions in Africa. The framework is framed along one major cultural orientation (i.e., individualism/collectivism), two major business motivations (i.e., profit/people and intellectual property protection), three government motivations in the area of domestic politics and foreign affairs, and four key social institutions, namely: economic system, education, religion, and the legal system.

Cultural Orientations

In a recently retracted article, a European American author argued that African societies lag behind because they are less individualistic (Meads 2020). According to the author, "the United States has an individualist culture, derived from Europe, where most people seek to achieve personal goals. Racial minorities, however, all come from non-Western cultures where most people seek to adjust to outside conditions rather than seeking change". The author proceeded to advocate that "minorities" should adopt individualist

values. Besides ignoring years of parasitic behavior of the West against African societies and people in the US and abroad, the author demonstrated a lack of historical knowledge. For example, many African societies flourished prior to the SEP with collectivist values (Osiri 2020). Japan and China are collectivist societies that have thrived and continue to do so. Therefore, it is advisable to take a moderately relativist approach when cultures are criticized. In fact, since the westernization of Africa, more Africans have adopted a more individualistic culture, which has not served them well today. This means that Africa should return to its strength of collectivism. Thus, we propose that: P1a) African societies and people of African descent around the world will experience advancement if they shift from being individualistic to being more collectivist; P1b) non-Africans conducting business in Africa or with African people will likely achieve sustainable success if their approach is less individualistic and more collectivist.

Motivations in Business

Consistent with individualism, the Western world is profit-driven and goes through great lengths to protect intellectual property. This capitalist approach to business has served the West, especially the US well, but this has system has created unprecedented inequality (Antonelli et. al. 2019; Jodhka et. al. 2017). In the African context, people have always been at the center of human activities. Companies that tap into this humanitarian ideology will succeed in Africa. In fact, researchers have noted that African business leaders and managers seek to address high unemployment in their societies through their companies, where they tend to emphasize less on profit. This means that Africa should return to its strength of people-centeredness. Thus, we propose that: P2a) businesses based in Africa and by people of African descent around the world will experience advancement as a group by shifting from being more profit-driven to being more people-oriented; P2b) similar to the

above proposition, businesses will experience success and long-term growth, if intellectual property in the African context is constructed to be less about excluding the participation of others and made to be more inclusive and collaborative with the goal of providing solutions for the communities.

Motivations of Government

Government policies and the actions and inaction of those in political positions affect our daily lives. Around 1933 and 1934, the New Deal and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), among other things, aimed to provide housing to European American families. The FHA refused to insure mortgages around African American neighborhoods while subsidizing only developers who built homes for European Americans and stipulating that the homes should not be sold to African Americans (Gross 2017). It is easy to see that those policies devastated, denied, and disenfranchised African Americans for generations. Even with reparations, it will take generations to close the wealth gap created by these policies. In Africa, many governments have remained the puppets of the West. They allow and give permission to Western (and now Chinese) companies to pillage and drain resources from their people. Their leadership, or lack thereof, has serious implications on the livelihood of Africans.

Political leaders in Africa must recognize that democracy must be practiced in the African context, where power is pushed down to the grassroots level as much as possible and decision is based on consensus, which may or may not include voting. For example, democracy among the Igbos, as in many African societies, follows a lengthy deliberation and the robust input from various stakeholders. Having a real voice in the political process is critical. That is why there is no word for "voting" in Igbo and political partisan elections, which were instituted by the British is called *ndoro ndoro ochichi*, which translates to "scrambling for leadership or political

power". This suggests that the election system, as imported from West, is alien to Igbos and other Africans. Accordingly, it is important for governments, their agencies, and actors to adjust their motivations in domestic politics and foreign affairs and become more humane and globally minded. Thus, we propose that: P3a) in order to become effective at home, African politics should deemphasize elections and prioritize consensus-building; P3b) in order to become effective in foreign affairs, non-African governments should deemphasize the notion of national interest and advocate humane or global interest.

Social Institutions

Social structures within a country can attenuate or exacerbate the effect culture has on people. Institutions are powerful in dictating how people live their lives because they are codified regulations, which are enforced either explicitly or implicitly by people in various positions. Institutions are what stabilize and sustain societies. They include the economic system, education, religion, and the legal system. Western countries are capitalist, socialist, or in between. Historically, African cultures were communal or communitarian. Education in the West is compartmentalized and outsourced to schools, whereas in the traditional African educational systems, children were home-schooled, meaning that education is not separated from home training. African educational system was community-based, relying on the family and the village raise the child.

When it comes it religion, most Africans today are disconnected from their spiritual heritage. In fact, many adopted Christianity and Islam and even rejected the religions or ways of their ancestors. This has caused great pain and an identity crisis in Africa, contributing to the lack of substantial progress on Africa's own terms. Lastly, the legal system is a crucial part of the institution ecosystem. Moreover, unlike traditional African beliefs which focuses resolving matters in the present, Christianity and Islam believe that

a Final Judgement awaits in the afterlife. In the US, as with many Western countries, the legal system was designed to be punitive. In the West, the personal freedoms of individuals who commit a crime are limited: their ability to travel, express themselves, or seek opportunity are restricted. In the traditional African context, efforts are made to restore the person who committed a crime. In the Igbo land, for example, some communities asked people who commit manslaughter to leave the village for a period of time to reflect on what they have done. In Kemet, the goal of the justice system (Maat) was to restore harmony by healing broken hearts, and mending divisions. Thus, we propose that: P4a) African societies and people of African descent around the world will experience advancement if they shift from being ruggedly capitalistic and communist to being more communitarian; P4b) the educational system will flourish if Africans deemphasize compartmentalized, degree-based learning, and focus more on the communal system of education, where teachers confirm that mastery has been achieved; P4c) adopting African spiritual practice which refocused individuals' attention to the present will spur economic growth since current non-African religions have emphasized on the afterlife by the Africans who practice it; P4d) justice Reform will happen in Africa when indigenous customary systems are acknowledged and used, and non-African systems are challenged.

CONCLUSION

While there is an understanding that the past will apparently impact the future, it is imperative that separate perspectives are maintained in order to avoid the ruse of path dependence. This article brings to light the underlying challenges of African's problem which emerged from its socio-economic parasitization (SEP) in the form of slavery and colonialism. SEP inaugurated a subversive model that encourages African leaders who are beholden to former colonial or neo-colonial governments. There is the recognition that

there is an attempt to contextualize management styles, but there is still a significant lacking in the imbedding and integrating indigenous African management practices. This speaks to the dissonance between indigenous and western understanding of the African systems. Towards the end, the authors propose a framework to guide leaders as well as Africans and non-Africans conducting business in Africa. The propositions are means to decolonize management and interactions in Africa. It is time that Africans take the lead in illuminating this path.

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