Creative Leadership for The African Leadership Crisis.

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Abstract
Africa is bedevilled with myriads of problems. Attempts at proffering solutions result in multiple ideas and concepts that accomplish little in ameliorating the condition of ordinary citizens on the continent. A leadership crisis has gripped the region despite the numerous postulations about leadership for Africa's growth and development. This paper examines the African leadership problem in order to suggest ways to transform the African narrative by institutionalizing creative leadership. This will facilitate a departure from what is occurring across the African continent. It delineates the concept of leadership with an expose of creative leadership. It discusses the need for creative leadership as gradual and immediate, depending on stakeholders' needs assessment and the different contexts in which individuals and organizations may apply its elements. It calls on governments, research institutes, policymakers, individuals and groups across Africa to invest in this new form of leadership.

Keywords: Leadership; creative leadership; creativity; change; creative change; breakpoint

Introduction

Despite the rich endowments of the African continent, it is replete with myriads of problems. For instance, Corcodia (2022) identified a deficit of women involvement in fostering peace thereby exacerbating efforts to facilitate peace due to their exclusion. Cilliers (2020) identified the huge African health crisis. She asserted that "Humans only started to multiply once they escaped the high disease risk on the continent where Homo sapiens and nature had coexisted for thousands of years"(p.9). In the same token, Heussen-Montgomery and Jordans (2020) examined the past, present and future perspectives of leadership in Africa. They determined three major characteristics, namely a changing perceptions on hierarchy, community and servant leadership. They revealed also that part of the perceptions on leadership in Africa is that leaders should do good and have integrity. The study of Heussen-Montgomery

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and Jordans (2020) revealed that leadership development and the need for it is very limited in Africa. The above instances indicate some of the attempts made to proffer solutions to these multitudes of challenges confronting the African continent. A cursory look into these solutions show that some of the solutions proffered for the African leadership challenge are borrowed from leadership sytems outside the African continent. This reality prompted Obiakor to counsel that: "theories of effective African-centred leadership must be taught in African schools from pre-kindergarten to university levels. Africans need African-centred leaders and not European-centred leaders. African-centred education is the key to building patriotic African leadership" (Obiakor, 2005:417). This assertion strongly implies that a home grown solution is prefered to any borrowed solution. Interestingly, there have really been leadership styles or systems that have been sourced from within the continent. Admittedly there have also been success stories in some cases. For instance, numerous news outlets globally agree that Rwanda is a success story (Habumuremyi & Habinshuti, 2019; Ruhumuliza, 2019; Cascais, 2020; Kaven, 2021). The work of Biedermann (2016) also acknowledges the progress in Rwanda attributing it to transformative leadership which uses home grown solutions among other factors. Nonetheless, the narrative of the African continent has not significantly departed from lamentations and woes. One is tempted to think there is a curse on the African continent. This temptation to think that Africa is jinxed stems partly from the fact that solutions that are proven effective in some climes do not seem to impact the continent and its people positively. The story is constant regardless of the area in which the African experience is viewed and evaluated. Sorrow is almost everywhere. The African people seem to need help to assess and address their predicament deliberately. That is why a radical approach to finding a way out of the African crisis is advocated in this work. While there are many ways to resolve a crisis, this work believes that the problem of the African continent can be solved by tackling the challenge of leadership in Africa. This article believes that leadership concerns the facilitation of any group's resources whether human or otherwise to realise the group's goals and aspirations. This group could be a society, community, an organisation or nation.

Leadership is critical to any people's existence. Every society is endowed with resources, both human and otherwise. However, a leader must mobilize the people to harness whatever resources exist in any given society for its growth and development. That is why leaders assume preeminent positions anywhere they emerge. To underscore the importance of leadership, people, organizations, and governments commit resources to comprehend its intricacies for the benefit of people everywhere. The African continent first tackled the question of leadership in the 1990s, during the advent of the democratization of African Countries (Igue, 2010). There was an emphasis on the quality of leaders for the formation, sustenance and success of the democratic process. However, the problem of leadership persists. Igue

(2010) identifies two fallouts of the leadership crisis: the first relates to the prospects of the post-colonial states within the backdrop of recurrent socio-political crises and the complications experienced by the citizens in adapting to them, and the second is the need to invent a new system of governance which will not compromise the democratic process embarked upon since 1990. This is manifested already in the frequent election rigging and the steady return of the military to power.

For Omale and Amana (2014), leadership drives the development process through agenda setting, resource mobilization and utilization and forgetting political action. They emphasized that "leaders define the context and development pattern by policies and allocations of resources" (Omale and Amana, 2014, p.2). A replication mentality seems to pervade the post-colonial African leadership style, which Ayittey (2005, p. 84) calls the 'so-too-must-we' syndrome. This copycat mentality has been disastrous as it needs more creativity and innovation. Furthermore, it denies contemporary African leaders the opportunity to nurture and exploit their God-given and innovative potential to take advantage of Africa. Neo-colonialism in Africa is underscored by leaders who are seen as stooges or mere tools in the hands of their colonial masters. If every human being, as well as culture, is gifted with the potential to be creative and, as such, innovative (Obialo, 2018), then a new style of leadership must necessarily evolve to take advantage of creativity to solve the crisis in Africa. Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, and Strange (2002) hypothesized that influence tactics are explicit attributes of leadership correlated to creativity and innovation. The next section of this chapter unpacks the concept of Creative Leadership as a veritable option for resolving the current leadership crisis. The questions to address include the following: What is Leadership? What is Creativity? What is Change and Creative Change? What, then, is Creative Leadership? How should the African continent foster Creative Leadership?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nature of Leadership

The idea of leadership has continued to captivate people globally. The question of who a good leader is is integral to the leadership conversation. How or what helps one to become an effective leader is also central to the understanding of leadership. Research reveals multiple theoretical approaches to understanding the leadership process, birthing numerous programmes in leadership studies globally (Northouse, 2013). Some scholars conceive leadership as a trait or behaviour. Others see leadership as an information processing or relational concept. The studies "provide a picture of a process that is far more sophisticated and complex than the often-simplistic view presented in some of the popular books on leadership"(Northouse, 2013, p. 1). Defining leadership, therefore, is challenging as there are as many definitions as there are practitioners and scholars. These definitions have also been influenced by factors

such as politics, world affairs or from the discipline's perspectives that leadership is being studied. Northouse (2013) proffered that the definition of leadership has evolved over the centuries, and in the 21st Century, scholars have conceded that there cannot be one definition of leadership. The fallout of the variety in the definition of leadership is the classification of the definitions. Fleishman, Mumford, Levin, Korotku, and Hein (1991, cited by Northouse, 2013) reported 65 classification systems established to define dimensions of leadership. This chapter emphasizes Bass's (1990) and Northouse's (2013) classifications of the numerous definitions of leadership. They assert that

1. Some definitions perceive leadership as the focus of the group process. The leader personifies the group's will and is at the core of group activities and change.

2. A set of definitions perceives leadership from the viewpoint of personality. Leadership becomes a combination of unique traits that some people enjoy. These characteristics assist such people in motivating others to achieve tasks.

3. Leadership is an act or behaviour. Leaders do things to facilitate change in a group.

4. Some conceive leadership as regarding the power relationship between followers and leaders. Leaders thus possess the power they wield to facilitate change in members.

5. Some conceive leadership as a transformational process that motivates followers to exceed expectations.

6. Other scholars take the skills approach. This set of definitions generally emphasizes the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that enable effective leadership.

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of the conception of leadership, Northouse (2013) identifies three constituents central to the phenomenon of leadership, namely that (a) leadership is a process,

(b) leadership comprises influence, (c) leadership transpires in a group, and (d) is about shared goals. He defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2013, p. 5). The implication is that leadership is not a trait or characteristic a leader possesses but a transactional experience between the leader and the led. Further, the idea of process means that a leader touches and is affected by the led, implying that it is not a one-way, linear phenomenon but an interactive experience. Influence is the condition for leadership. The leader must necessarily influence followers for leadership to ensue. Groups are the setting within which leadership occurs. A leader influences these individuals to accomplish common goals. A leader directs attention and energies towards the collective interests of people aspiring to achieve something. "Attention to common

goals gives leadership an ethical overtone because it stresses the need for leaders to work with followers to achieve selected goals" (Northouse, 2013, p.6). Accentuating mutuality reduces the possibility of leaders acting in a manner that will be forced or unethical. It further escalates the probability of leaders and followers cooperating to attain a collective good (Rost, 1991, cited by Northouse, 2013).

Leaders and followers are equally engaged in the leadership process and need each other. However, the leader regularly initiates the relationship, generates the communication connections, and bears the burden of sustaining the relationship. Leaders have an ethical obligation to attend to the apprehensions and needs of followers. Leaders are not superior to followers or above them. The two must be understood in relationship to each other. They form a whole and are in a relationship together. This means that leadership is available to all and not limited to the officially designated leader in any group. Leaders need to be more capable of possessing all answers or solutions to issues. The burden of leadership must be shared with followers for any leader to succeed in leading any group of people. It is convenient to hold that a leader is not a Great Man with innate qualities with which they achieve greatness (Puccio, Mance& Murdock, 2011). Leadership is, therefore, about "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization" (House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan, and Dickson (1999, p.184). Smircich and Morgan (1982, p. 258) contend that "Leadership is realized in the process whereby one or more individuals succeed in attempting to frame and define the reality of others". Yukul (2006, p. 8) defines leadership as "a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". The above convinces the author to conclude that leadership is about harnessing available human and material resources for realizing group, system or communal interests.

Change Vs Creative Change

Change is the only known permanent phenomenon in life. No wonder the early Ionian philosopher, Heraclitus, popularly asserted, "You can never step in the same river twice". Life must be seen as a constant effort to manage the change that is integral to living, progress and development. Whether one births what did not hitherto exist or reacts to something different or new, change remains a constant process in life. It is a fact that life and its attendant activities are constantly in flux. Consequently, the ability to manage change will determine the success or otherwise of individuals, groups and societies from generation to generation.

For Puccio, Mance and Murdock (2011), there are two broad ways of categorizing change. There is a change that occurs naturally and is ongoing or cyclic. Good examples of naturally occurring change are

the rising and setting of the sun, the change in the seasons, the fluctuation in body temperatures and the growth of parts of the human body. The second type of change is the one people make on purpose or due to the need to respond to events around them. Examples of this second category of change are job change, the way one does things such as the purpose, method or order and changing one's mind, to mention a few. The first category reveals that change is a natural occurrence. The second also has the element of naturalness, but the difference is in the role of human intervention or the element that births the change. The implication is that the change made on purpose engages the thinking process of the one facilitating change. This kind of change also requires one's thinking skills. The main difference is thus in how one deliberately engages one other than the other.

Change is the introduction of a new thing, which can fall anywhere along the continuum from continuous (incremental improvement) to discontinuous change (paradigm shift), implying that not all change is creative (Puccio, Mance& Murdock, 2011). Within the creativity conversation, change or creative change concerns "situations in which an explicit attempt is being made to bring an idea into being that has some degree of novelty-a creative change" (Puccio, Mance& Murdock, 2011, p.5). Creative change is introduced deliberately and intentionally to produce creative thoughts that will develop individuals and influence others positively. Creative outcomes endure because they serve some purpose or need. However, since needs or goals change and life is in flux, creative products or ideas stick for only a period. Therefore, there is a need to develop new ideas or outcomes to solve existential challenges. Creative thinking is an ongoing phenomenon buttressing the inevitability of change. Since change is a constant in life, creative change assists the change manager in determining that: "It is not simply a question of when to change, but also of when not to change and how to be able to identify the 'right' changes" (Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2014, p.34).

Dawson and Andriopoulos (2014) stress that change management needs to be prioritized. Change managers must confront the challenges of a continent such as Africa, which has myriad problems. No wonder Puccio, Mance and Murdock (2011, pp. 5-6). reflecting on the need to have creative leaders who must rise to the challenges associated with the temporality of contemporary society, note that:

> In today's world, stability is temporary at best or, at worst, is an illusion. Therefore, successful leadership relies heavily on an individual's ability to respond to change and effectively respond to change and to proactively drive change-in short, to be creative. And, since one change is so quickly replaced by another, leaders need to be continuously creative. Creative thinking is no longer an afterthought in terms of those skills deemed important to leadership effectiveness: instead, many contemporary leadership experts now see creativity as a core leadership skill.

Change in our contemporary world is not only fast, alarming, and complicated; it also comes with opportunities and challenges. A creative change leader is, therefore, a person who can use their creative imagination to successfully exploit challenges and opportunities while managing human and material resources for group or societal goals and aspirations. Such a leader must possess the ability to harness other people's creativity to attain group or communal interests because no individual can resolve the myriads of complicated life issues.

What is Creativity?

The multiple dimensions of what is creative or what qualifies as creative make the idea of creativity a phenomenon that has yet to be completely unravelled. One dimension that is particularly of concern is the cultural conceptions of creativity (Obialo, 2018; Mpofu, Myanbo, Mogaji, Mashego & Khallefa, 2006). This aspect brings the conversation to the context of creativity. However, there is a need to examine some definitions of creativity before one is chosen as the working definition for this paper. Amabile (1982:1001) defines creativity as "the quality of products or responses judged to be creative by appropriate observers, and it can also be regarded as the process by which something so judged is produced". Talbot (1997, p. 181) laconically describes creativity as "making a change that sticks (for a while)". Kao (1989, p.14) defines creativity as a "human process leading to a result which is novel(new), useful (solves an existing problem or satisfies an existing need), and understandable (can be reproduced)". For Dawson and Andriopoulos (2014, p.61), "Creativity is the process through which new and useful ideas are generated". They note that novel and valuable ideas are produced by people in organizations working within milieus that more or less support the thinking process that allows the creation of these new ideas. For anything to wear the garb of creativity, it must be new and valuable within the context in which it will be used. It is pertinent to note that creativity is in every human being. However, not all can fully realize their creative potential. Some societies have developed to the point of deliberately exploiting creativity gains to their advantage (Obialo, 2018). Since this paper focuses on creativity within the more prominent African societal context, it adopts a perspective that studies creativity in the individual, group, organizational and societal contexts. Consequently, creativity is perceived from the perspective of

> a process that occurs within society, it is part of individual and group activities that cannot be fully understood without a broader understanding of the dynamic interplay between our social life experiences and our attention to various business tasks and organizational activities" (Dawson & Andriopoulos, 2014, p. 62).

The above delineation brings us to the application of creativity in leadership. Creativity is a life skill relevant to all fields of human activity. It can and must be applied to the leadership-followership context for societies to witness progress and development. The implication is that creative leadership within the socio-political milieu must be fostered. Nurturing creative leadership must also be a deliberate practice that needs to become systemic for the Africa of our dreams. Having established the necessity of creative leadership for communal growth, it must be mentioned that every nation or group of people's social-political setting differs. Each setting's peculiarity demands a peculiar approach to engaging with this distinctiveness. The creative leaders who are critical to Africa's development and transformation must be able to take advantage of Africa's peculiar human and natural resources to meet its needs. In other words, future African leaders must be able to exploit the challenges and opportunities in and outside the African continent to realize the numerous African interests.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical basis of this work is the investment theory of creativity by Sternberg and Lubart (1995a;1995b). They posit that creative thinkers are like good investors. They buy cheap and sell high. While investors operate in the finance world, creative people operate in the world of ideas. Creative leaders produce ideas that seem like undervalued stocks. People usually initially reject ideas, the same way undervalued stocks are rejected. "When creative ideas are proposed, they often initially are viewed as bizarre, useless, and even foolish and are summarily rejected. The person proposing them is often regarded with suspicion and perhaps even disdain and derision" (Sternberg et al., 2003, p. 456).

Further, creative ideas are novel and possess value, but they are frequently rejected because the creative innovator opposes vested interests and dares the multitude. Further, they contend that people do not deliberately or hatefully reject creative thoughts but do not appreciate that the suggested idea typifies a valid and advanced method of thinking. People usually frown at opposition to the status quo and thus ignore or miss innovative ideas.

The above theoretical framework is germane to the African leadership challenge in many ways. One, many people who want to change the leadership structure of the African continent are assassinated, opposed or prevented from becoming leaders. A typical case is the Nigerian example where millions of people trooped out on June 12, 1993, against all odds to vote in the late Moshood Abiola. He promised hope and change. Though he won the election, he was never declared the winner and the whole process was annulled by the Nigerian military junta. Essentially, one of the climaxes of Nigerian military rule was the scuttling of the Third Republic through the annulment of the 1993 presidential balloting, which is generally adjudged the freest and fairest in Nigeria's history (Adejoh, 2016). The second justification

is that even though people will benefit from creative and innovative ideas in leadership, they still oppose them. The implication is that a creative leader is needed to facilitate creative and innovative change in the society. The role of creative living and creative leadership in fostering success has been variously documented in different contexts (Obialo & Dada, 2022; Obialo & Adelore, 2023). Therefore, citizens of Africa must be taught the rudiments and advantages of creativity and creative living.

What is Creative Leadership ?

No one can overemphasize that change is essential to the human experience. The fact of change naturally implies the necessity for creativity to engage the challenges and opportunities that naturally come with change. Creativity is humanity's response to the exigencies of life. Those who have exploited their creative potential naturally become leaders. They become natural leaders because they engage their creative abilities where others fail and solve problems confronting their fellow human beings. They become leaders naturally by providing the direction in which society's existential opportunities and challenges would be tackled. As understandings of leadership have evolved, portrayals of leadership have incorporated characteristics ascribed to creative individuals. There is now a departure from the Great Man perception of leadership of past years to a new understanding of highly effective leaders as people who tend to possess creative abilities and traits such that creativity concepts now dominate leadership studies (Puccio, Mance, & Murdock, 2011). The fact of change necessitates the need for creative leaders. There are so many uncertainties in the world that creative skills become the tools for navigating these life complexities. Spretzer and Cummings (2001, p. 242) captured the situation thus:

> An important job of the leader will be to continuously scan the environment and try to make sense of it. Leaders who find comfort and security in stability will have difficulty in surviving. Instead, tomorrow's leaders must find comfort in the mantra, "change is constant".

The delineation of creativity revealed that it essentially entails problem-solving, novelty, usefulness, openness to ambiguity and the need to exploit change for progress and development. Leaders will be expected to be creative. A creative attitude to life becomes the antidote to the uncertainties of life. Creative leaders necessarily must possess these abilities. As Zacko-Smith (2010) noted, theories of leadership that possess all these features are transcendent and transformational approaches to leadership, and creative leadership is positioned somewhere between them. Thus, creative leadership is concerned about people's ability and capacity to face challenges that demand novel, original, applicable, and suitable solutions, which the contemporary dynamic world requires.

Furthermore, the pace and nature of change make it impossible for individuals to keep up with the changes, as their knowledge and skills might become inadequate. Leaders thus do not have to rely on their creative abilities but must be dexterous in facilitating the creativity of others. According to Puccio, Mance and Murdock (2011, p. 10), such leaders possess "the ego strength to admit that they do not have all the answers and the open mindedness to entertain and support others' ideas". Further, they hold that the applied imagination of many minds, which form a critical mass of minds, will consistently outperform the individual creative problem solver. The implication of "ego strength" is that leaders of the future must be adept at manifesting soft skills such as "the ability to accept and value diversity and harness its potential by unleashing people's creativity in the service of shared goals" (Weber, 1996, p. 306). The need for soft skills demands that creative leaders must also be emotionally intelligent people. In other words, creative leaders must be able to foster creative thinking and change by recognizing and facilitating all the facets of creativity.

How, then, does one define creative leadership? Puccio, Mance and Murdock's (2011, p. 28) definition will suffice. They define creative leadership as

> the ability to deliberately engage one's imagination to define and guide a group toward a novel goal- a direction that is new for the group. As a consequence of bringing about this creative change, creative leaders have a profoundly positive influence on their context (i.e., workplace, community, school, family) and the individuals in that situation.

4. METHODOLOGY

This work used secondary data that dealt with issues on leadership in Africa and globally and specifically on creative leadership. Consequently, the researcher collected and reviewed data from academic sources such as academic journals and published research studies. The researcher also utilised data from published sources such as books, reports, and newspapers. These sources furnished the author with comprehensive information on different topics. Information was sourced online from public data bases and international non profit organisations. Data from these multiple sources were analysed in line with the objective of this article.

5. CREATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP CRISIS

5.1. An Overview of Current Leadership in the African Social-Political Milieu

Despite the African continent's abundant material and human endowments, the political class still needs to translate these resources into benefits for the African people. This failure of leadership in virtually every area of life on the continent further underscores the need to do something different urgently. A

pearl of popular wisdom contends that one cannot do the same thing repeatedly and expect a different result. Metz's (2018) study revealed that most works on contemporary African leadership are descriptive, not prescriptive. This might suggest robust solutions to the leadership crisis seem unreachable or impossible. Again, researchers are overwhelmed by the crisis. Nonetheless, Masango's assertion aptly captures African leadership's actual current state. He asserts that:

> Developed countries have always viewed our continent as a place plagued by corruption, dictatorship, military coups, rebellious leaders, greediness, misuse of power, incompetent leadership, politically as well as economically ineffective and suspicious leaders who undermine their own democracies (Masango, 2002, p.707).

An impartial evaluation of the above statement will reveal that most Africans would agree. At this juncture, examining some characteristics of current African leadership is fitting. First, the competence and unpreparedness of most African leaders manifest in their policies, actions and inactions. African leaders have frequently come to their positions with limited experience. Though most of them have battled on, confronting their awesome problems of development and nation-building essentially not only unprepared but unaided, their efforts have been at best only a qualified success" (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012, p. 143). The list of Dada (2023) reveals that Faure Gnassingbé came to power after his father's death, Étienne Eyadéma, who ruled Togo from 1967 to 2005. Chad's transitional president, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, became president after Dérby Idriss, his father, died of injuries sustained while battling rebels on the frontline in 2021. Derby ruled for 30 years. Joseph Kabila succeeded his father, Laurent, as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ten days after his assassination in 2001. Ali Bongo became president of Gabon after succeeding his father, Omar Bongo, who had ruled for about 42 years. The unpreparedness is worsened by the paucity of literature and institutions preparing Africans for Leadership Development (Heussen-Montgomery & Jordans, 2020; Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012). Therefore, African leaders rely on trial and error to rule their people.

Corruption and sit-tight practices thrive perpetuated by African leaders. The African Union (AU) estimated that about a quarter of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of African countries (approximately US$500 billion in 2017) was lost through corruption (Mlambo et al., 2023). They added that this embezzled money would have been spent on education, housing, and health care, essential and much-needed services that continue to elude many Africans. Unfortunately, South Africa, which held many promises with the unique example of the late Nelson Mandela and the return to majority black rule, is becoming a massive scandal with the frequent corruption cases by leaders. Ayee (2002) and Luiz and Stewart (2014) have reported widespread corruption offences among the top brass of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) led government at the expense of the populace. Corruption by African leaders

has paralysed development on the continent, and one wonders if African leaders have lost their sense of shame since they interface with their counterparts from other continents. Moghalu (2017, p. 175) asserts that "Corruption is not just a foundational cause of poor leadership in Africa; the failure of many countries afflicted by the scourge to fight it is one of the most glaring indictments of leadership failure". He further explains that "This reality renders governance incapable of achieving transformational outcomes. The payment of bribes to access public services is common in some of the continent's largest economies such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya where corruption has held back development" (Moghalu, 2017, p175). The sad part of the evil effect of corruption is that it trickles down from top to bottom. If leaders revel in it, followers will find nothing wrong in it. Consequently, society and the continent suffer significantly from such a development.

Another characteristic of contemporary African leadership is the transfer of the old traditional leadership attitude of kingly excessive power and privilege to the modern context of democratic institutions and civil and property rights. These modern rights accompany women's rights and deliberate provisions for the vulnerable. Moghalu (2017, p. 173) describes the scenario thus:

> In many African pre-colonial cultures, the power of traditional kings was absolute. This cultural reality has not adapted well to concepts of modern statehood, democracy, and the checks and balances offered by the separation of executive, judicial, and legislative power on the continent. Political leadership is thus often perceived in African countries more as authority than service, as raw power rather than responsibility. Being (in which achievement is identified as the position of privilege attained or occupied) is thus far more important than doing (results from leadership) and is often conflated with leadership.

What we thus have is a political class that holds hapless Africans by the jugular and persistently applies the same unproductive principles in ruling and ruining the African peoples.

Fighting or creating poverty is another characteristic of leadership in Africa. A typical example of one African leader fighting poverty is the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, who has succeeded mainly in dealing with poverty in his country. In contrast, most African leaders seem unperturbed at the level of poverty that their policies bring upon their fellow citizens. Moghalu(2017) describes the Rwandan poverty eradication thus: "Over one million Rwandans have been pulled out of poverty over the past decade… Rwanda today is largely the product of one man's vision and grit, a so-far successful but still fragile experiment at transformational leadership in Africa out of the ashes of conflict and poverty" (Moghalu, 2017, p.179).

Conversely, despite the huge earnings from oil, successive Nigerian governments have shirked their responsibility to provide socioeconomic prosperity and poverty elimination for the Nigerian people, necessitating the subsidy policy in the mid-1980s (Agu et al., 2018). This policy ameliorated the suffering and frustrations of the citizens due to the ripple effects of the high fuel cost. Despite the controversies around the removal or non-removal of fuel subsidies, the Nigerian president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on his first day in office, removed subsidies from fuel and other oil products. The decision has worsened the poverty woes of the Nigerian people. It has been over a year since the decision was made. Instead of the benefits touted for the removal, the poverty level daily increases at an alarming rate. The prices of goods and services have skyrocketed. Jobs have been lost. Foreign investors are closing down and moving to Ghana. Yunusa et al. (2023) studied the fallout of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. They identified an increase in the poverty rate, high cost of living, high crime rate and the struggle of people and businesses for survival, among other socioeconomic hardships.

The above points to an indubitable fact: Poverty has become synonymous with the African continent, as the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (2020) indicates. Again, the World Economic Forum (2017) reported that all sub-Saharan African countries performed worse on the Global Human Capital Index than the global average. A solution lies in the political realm, where effective leadership has yet to emerge. Consequently, Folarin (2013, p. 2) observed: "By far, the political challenges are more perennial and indeed central to the causation or escalation of the other challenges". The implication is that the political realm needs reformation. It is the area that needs rejigging for the growth of the African continent.

The above scenario provides an opportunity for a concerted effort to change the narratives of the African continent in all ramifications. Africans need to transition to what Inglehart (1981) describes as post-materialistic politics, which will initiate a departure from old values that prioritise fulfilling immediate material needs to those that emphasise self-expression, belonging, opportunity, diversity, environmental quality, community and quality of life. One can identify the materialistic politics in Africa, where leaders have been mainly selfish in their dealings with their followers through egocentricity, mismanagement, and mind-boggling corruption. The apparent breach between the God-given opportunities and their utilisation in a deliberate manner, as obtainable in other climes, queries the problematic nature of leadership in Africa and its centrality to the treatise on her development (Omale & Amana, 2014). Democracy has been touted as the ideal form of government to facilitate and guarantee human self-realisation and development. However, it has yet to become the panacea for solving the issues of human development and growth. Unfortunately, the African continent cannot lay claim to utilising its potential so that citizens can self-realise any form of potential. This deficiency is attributable to the character of

African leaders (Omale & Amana, 2014). It becomes inevitable for individuals, groups, and institutions to deliberately nurture a new type of leadership that will lead Africa from the contemporary context to the future Africa that will compare favourably with other continents. These leaders will define Africa's framework and development pattern by behaviours, policies and allocations of scarce resources. Creative leaders will model good leadership behaviour and philosophies before the upcoming generations.

5.2. The Breakpoint is Here: Time for Birthing the Paradigm Shift for Creative Leadership

Land and Jarman (1992) argue that the world has reached a *Breakpoint* where change touches every part of human life profoundly. They contend that any system or society that does not respond to this *Breakpoint* by looking for creative ways to manage the *Breakpoint* will die. They also assert that: "*A natural principle of Breakpoint change is creating what's never been seen before and- couldn't be predicted by the past"* (Land &Jarman, 1992, p. 12). With the multifaceted challenges confronting Africa, there is no doubt that she has reached the *Breakpoint*. Something drastic should be urgently done to reverse the consequences of not responding creatively to the *Breakpoint*. Consequently, Creative Leadership becomes inevitable. The clamour for change for Africa is because:

> Breakpoint change abruptly and powerfully breaks the critical links that connect anyone or anything with the past. What we are experiencing today is absolutely unprecedented in all of humanity's recorded history. We have run into change so different from anything preceding it that it totally demolishes normal standards. It has swept us into a massive transformation that will completely reorder all we know about living in this world. It demands totally new rules for success (Land & Jarman, 1992, p. 5).

Africa has been living by her outmoded rules. It is time for her and the unproductive and ineffective rules to change.

Florida (2012), in his best-seller, *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited*, argues that a new social compact, a creative compact, is required to upend the world's creative economy into a just and creative society where prosperity is shared. This position is so apt to describe the need of the current African social-political milieu. The African people need to deliberately grow a creative class to further the African interests. As it stands now, what reigns could be what Obialo (2017) sadly describes as "chance creativity" in virtually every segment of African existence. To underscore the need for the paradigm shift in favour of the *Creative Class*, Florida(2012, p. xv) further noted that:

> While driven and moulded by economic logic, the key institutions and initiatives of the future will be shaped, as they always have, by human

agency. They will be the products of political choices, which turn on political power. And the mobilizing force today-the leading force at the beachhead of social, cultural, and economic change-is the Creative Class.

Therefore, the challenge is for Africans to turn to their political life to facilitate the search for political leaders who will utilize their creative potential and begin a deliberate movement towards the growth of a new set of individuals who will constitute the creative class that will midwife the future growth and development of the African continent.

The case for Creative Leadership in Africa is to engender effective governance at every level of interaction that will add up to produce the Africa of our dreams. This will require African institutions and groups to abandon the old ways of doing things and nurture a new culture of creativity and innovation that will exploit the challenges and opportunities of the African landscape to realize the goals of the 21st Century and beyond. Governance according to the World Bank (2019, p. 1).

> consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

If the prevailing socio-political climate across Africa is measured against the above definition of governance, Africa will not measure up. That is why a fundamental adjustment to the African lifestyle towards everything leadership is expedient. One notices that successive African leaders seem to replicate what Land (1973, p. 42) described as "accretive growth", in which their successors are taught to be "exact duplicates of older generations, for example, in their dress, speech, and habits". No wonder African leaders are similar in the way and manner they rule their people. One African leader can conveniently fit into another African nation's socio-political milieu with their oppressive and unprogressive habits without being afraid of resistance from the people they govern. Land (1973) warned that societies in such stifled growth mode must either "grow or die". Therefore, Africa needs to grow to avoid the death that would become inevitable if there is no growth because of the complex change that has become the norm in the contemporary world.

The creative African leader will be one who has the ability and capacity for open-mindedness. Eze (1995, p.96 cited by Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012, p.150), captures the African leader's lack of accommodation for divergent opinions, discsipline and uprightness by saying

In considering the Nigerian situation, there seem to be certain issues in Nigerian leadership which require experimental investigations. For instance, it has been generally asserted that Nigerian management are marked by authoritarian leadership characteristics and practices. They are said to have maintained a rigid dictatorial approach, as well as master-servant, rider-horse relationship with subordinates. In fact, it is been said that a Nigerian man is by nature and training an autocrat who demands nothing but respect and obedience from his subordinates, and those younger and lower in status than him. Also in public sector, the leadership have been associated with certain undesirable traits such as double- standards, pursuance of selfish goals, lack of seriousness and indiscipline.

In contrast, the African leader who is a creative leader will be imbued with the skills of the creative leader which will enable them to depart from what currently exists across the continent and chart a new path for greatness. Political leaders are the executive leaders of their country. In Nigeria, presidents and governors are described as executive presidents and governors. Some of them take exceptions to not being addressed as executive this or that. Consequently, Greenberg-Walt and Robertson's (2001, p. 155) counsel about the evolving role of the executive leader is apt in describing the prescribed creative leadership presented by this article. They noted that

> a leader who embraces the status quo will be easily defeated by a competitor who is willing to try new ideas, seek out new opportunities, and change as needed-both within the corporation and the industry. Innovation is the key to the continued success of an organization, and using this key depends on having a leader wih an open mind.

The creative African leader will facilitate the transformation that the African continent desperately needs by providing different dimensions of leadership that cater for the needs of their constituents. Creative leadership will be a type

> that stimulates followers to be creative and innovative, and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization. This type of leadership supports followers as they try new approaches and develop innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues. It promotes followers' thinking things out on their own and engaging in careful problem solving (Northouse, 2010, p. 179).

The creative leader will see citizens as stakeholders who have something to contribute to the progress and development of their countries because they are committed stakeholders who must not be ignored but taken seriously for the growth of their respective countries. This is borne out of the leader's realisation that no one person or group of persons have the monopoly of knowledge or the wherewhital to solve their

nation's challenges as present African leaders comfortably do without any serious challenge from the followers.

5.3 Creative Leadership as a Vehicle of Growth and Development

The first step in achieving the creative leadership that is needed is a change in the African worldview. In Land and Jarman's (1992) delineation of the system and transformational growth process, the idea of breakpoint is presented as that point in the life of a system, organism, or society whereby change becomes inevitable. This change is occasioned by the fact that the old ways of doing things are no longer effective in solving problems of that particular context. Consequently, a new skill set is required for such an organism, system or society to survive through growth and development. Failure to move away from the old ways of doing things will lead to the death of such a being. Africa can be described as already at the "breakpoint" in the growth process. To achieve the paradigm shift, a new form of education becomes germane in achieving the reorientation that must come. Africans must be aware that the continent has reached a breakpoint and that only a radical departure from the prevailing uncreative lifestyle can deliver Africa from the consequences of creative stagnation. Education for creative change should thus be promoted. Individuals, groups, and institutions should be at the forefront of championing this paradigm shift in the formal and informal sectors of our traditional and modern African educational systems.

Leaders who value all aspects of creativity must champion the need to foster creative thinking and change. As creative people themselves, they must deploy their creative abilities and facilitate those of others for societal good. They must mentor younger generations and others to become creative leaders wherever they find themselves. This is achievable when individuals and groups begin to foster a culture of creativity. This culture of creativity will naturally birth leaders who will always see the need to apply creative thinking to their leadership styles deliberately. When any society embraces the culture of creativity, it is naturally positioned to produce people who will become creative leaders. Creative leaders must foster a culture of creativity by ensuring that the African environment is conducive to nurturing creative abilities among all categories of citizens. It is this shared pool of citizens with developed creative abilities who become creative leaders. When we have a critical number of creative people, Africa will undoubtedly have a critical number of creative leaders who will transform the African landscape.

Many nations make creative living attractive and profitable for individuals, groups, institutions, and communities (Obialo, 2020; Tahirsylaj & Wahlström, 2019; Cropley, 2012; NACCCE, 1999). This is done through deliberate policies that will consciously foster creativity in the citizenry, from the school system to other areas of existence. The outcomes of this deliberate policy for creative living are manifested in the numerous ways that progress and growth abound in their societies. Suppose creative

leaders take charge of the African political climate. In that case, political strategies and actions will facilitate the enabling environment where the average African will live fully and realize their God-given potential for the betterment of the African continent. As it stands, African leaders seem bereft of creative thinking. They seem mired in the past and expect their actions, attitude and so forth to lead Africa out of the backwardness their uncreative leadership has foisted on Africans. If present-day African leaders deliberately make a policy shift to nurture creativity in Africa, it is only a matter of time before creative leaders flood the African landscape. Africa and Africans will be the better for it. Consequently, policy must begin with the grassroots orientation of individuals towards imbibing creative skills and behaviour. The policy can then be applied to other sectors for national and continental harmony from the grassroots.

6. CONCLUSION

A leader facilitates group goals by applying the group's gifts, whether human or material, to accomplish group interests. This will only happen if a leader has the prerequisite skills to harness available resources. A creative leader who is the product of a system that promotes creativity deliberately and has creative skills will fare well in such an area of need. The ideas in this article are to enhance the search for a solution to the African leadership crisis. Those who lead across Africa must necessarily cultivate creative competency and enable the same in others to "circumvent obstacles that impede progress toward a known goal, as well as to facilitate the successful adoption of a novel goal in groups, organizations, and communities" (Puccio, Mance, & Murdock, 2011, p. 29). In Africa, therefore, creativity should be an integral characteristic of leadership.

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