Dynamics of Social Transformation: Myth and Reality in Africa

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Abstract

Social transformation in Africa calls for creating solutions that address the plethora of issues that the continent faces. Already burgeoning evidence shows how societies around the world are undergoing social transformation, and presents the actors behind it. Studies on social transformation in Africa by Africans and its necessity in Africa is an urgent need for African countries. This study focusses on how social transformation is happening in Africa starting from the individual, through the household occupants, and culminates in the larger community, the nation. It addresses the African issues that call for social transformation of Africans and by Africans today. Transformation of the mindset, the willingness to start a process of systematic change, and the prevailing tendency of the heart to do what is morally good, are some of the most important requirements for a sustainable social transformation in Africa. This paper defines social transformation in African perspective and examines what drives social transformation in the continent. There is enough consensus that African problems must be addressed through African solutions, that is why African indigenous solutions to African social issues will significantly contribute to creating sustainable working solutions that can socially transform Africa.

Key Words*:* Social Transformation, Social Change, Africa

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Introduction

Since the start of human history, change has been part of the universe as well presented by Charles Darwin (Haught, 2013), and Africa has been part of this change. This second largest continent, has had to go through notable phases of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, dictatorial regimes and in the recent times democratization processes. Though part of the world trends of globalization and current environmental phenomena, Africa has had to face deep challenges of economic and financial crises, bad governance, growing inequalities, extreme poverty, exclusion and the denial of basic human rights (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021). Attempts to look deeper into these challenges have invited scholars to focus on social transformation in the contemporary world. Joining the world scholars, this paper seeks to address social transformation, with a special interest in Africa.

Studies have largely addressed social change, which is described as the incremental or gradual change over a period of time (Khondker and Schuerkens (2014). Social transformation, the interest of this paper, adopts the definition of de Haas and Fransen (2018) who look at it as the fundamental change in the way societies are organized and resources distributed, and goes beyond the continual, incremental processes of social change that are always at work. For Hegmon and Peeples (2018) social transformation includes lasting major changes that occur in societies.

Social transformation has been taking place around the world. In Europe, major human led events characterise the continent's social transformation. Among them, the Bourgeois-Proletariate phenomenon brought in the forces of the masses among labourers, changing the status quo of the monarchies (Marx, 1953). The famous Hegelian as well as Marx's position that the human being only makes sense of his life when he is productive, informs the work ethics and wealth distribution in Europe. The contributions of Max Weber with the Protestant Ethic, brought together religious puritanism and modern capitalism. Its contributions continue to inform Western Europe's operations. The wake up calls leading to the 1215 realization of the *Magna Carta*, played a significant role in enhancing the Rule of Law, check on the monarchy (at the time, King John), and the institution of the parliament (Hazell & Melton, 2015). This force has been notable in the world since. These human led interventions, among others, set a clear foundation on Europe's social transformative history. Looking at social transformation in the recent times, Böhnke and Kohler (2010) provide a detailed framework regarding the complexities of European societal transformations.

In the United States of America, Social transformation identifies four factors: Bipolarity, Modernization, Bretton Woods, and the Neoliberalism. *Bipolarity* refers to the two sides of the political divide that was led by the United States on the one side and Soviet Union on the other. This came at the end of the 2nd World War in 1945. The bipolar positions divided the world into the pro-US, the pro-SU, and those that took a non-affiliate position. Distribution of resources, as well as subsequent foreign policy took diverse polarities. Among

some notable events are the Chinese Civil War (1946-1949), Korean War (1950) and the Geneva Conference (1954) that led to the partitioning of Vietnam. Many resources were spent on military and weaponry as each side attempted to outdo the other.

As bipolarity was progressing, classical *modernization* was also taking place in the 1950s to the 1970s. This was characterised by the address of nations and their societies, economies, and politics at the macro level. At the micro level, there is a focus on urbanization, gender and income inequality, skills acquisition and education, the role of political communication and the media, and bureaucratic corruption among other related aspects (Goorha, 2018). With modernization the world was divided into high and low income countries. Social Transformation took a fiscal turn as economies became institutionalised. Also, "Modern societies became characterised by more productive, children became better educated, and the needy received more welfare" (Smelser, 1964). There was also a change towards "differentiation of political structure; Secularization of political culture -with the ethos of equality-, which enhances the capacity of a society's political system" (Reyes, 2001).

The third significant component that brings to play the Social Transformative journey of the US is *the Bretton Woods conference*. This was held in 1944 in New Hampshire US and involved 44 countries. This came as a result of the end of First World War and the Great Depression in 1929. Led by two reknown economists Harry Dexter White (US) and John Maynard Keynes (Britain), it led to the formation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) also known as the World Bank. IMF's role was to control national economic policies while the World Bank was to aid developing nations (Kenen, 1994).

The fourth component demonstrating US social transformative efforts is the *Neoliberalism*, which started in the 1920s. These reforms concentrated on monetarism, de-regulations and market-based reforms. It sought to address the negative impact of the Great Depression, among them unemployment (Bordo & Eicehngreen, 1993).

The policies of the neoliberalism led by among others the Institute of Economic Affairs (I.E.A) and by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), were adopted by the I.M.F., World Bank, World Trade Organisation (W.T.O), and the European Union (E.U.) and by the North American free Trade Agreement (N.A.F.T.A). Neoliberalism is noted for its structural adjustment programmes.

In Asia, Social transformation has touched on the Asian Tigers among them China, India, Japan and South Korea. These nations are taken to represent the other Asian countries that have pursued the social transformative model towards their realization of integral development including economic growth.

China's social transformation is founded in the words of Mao Zedong: As early as forty years ago, Chinese leader Mao Zedong said in his work "*Ren dezhenque sixiang shi cong nali laide*?"("Where do correct ideas come from?"):

> Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the sky? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practices and from them alone. They come from three kinds of social practices, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiments. It is man's social being that determines his thinking (Hu, 2007).

Mao Zedong also said:

> Correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge (Hu, 2007).

This quote sets ground for understanding China's pristine days when its society was agrarian. Then, her people lived in poor conditions, a factor that went on until the 1980s when she started economic reforms. Since then, standards in China have substantially improved. From this foundation, China has grown to be among the world's leading economies (Maddison, 1998; Sen, 2003).

In India, the New Economic Policy also known as the Indian Socialism took place in 1991 and 1992. It focussed on reduction of bureaucracies that led to a positive increment in life expectancy. This increment represented a cumulative effect of nutrition, housing, labour, hygiene, access to health services, education, and the quality of the natural environment (Maddison, 1998; Sen, 2003).

In Japan, developmental capitalism has been put into place in two phases. The first ran from 1960-1973 following the 1960 socio-political crisis. During this period, "national economic growth was redefined from a project for national greatness depending on individual sacrifice into a path of shared growth towards general well-being" (Chiavacci, 2007). The second period was experienced in the 1970s and 1980s. In this period, "the social basis was strengthened through the institutionalization of the Japanese way of life". In both instances, social transformation starting from the minds of the citizens and later having an effect on social fabric is noted. Similar conditions are noted in South Korea (Chung, 2014), where social policy plays a significant role in development.

In Latin America, a plethora of issues has been found to initiate and shape the social transformation agenda. Notable is Paulo Freire's Conscientization (Freire, 1996; Freire, 1998). Addressing the same country Brazil, Hall and Wise (2019) find sports too significantly influence social transformation. This is due to the importance of sports as a cultural and political response that facilitates social transformation and addresses the underlying various social challenges. Further, various innovations especially in the agricultural sectors work as tools for social transformation in Brazil. Social technologies present new techniques, methods and products as effective solutions for social transformation in the country (Levidow, Sansolo & Schiavinatto, 2021).

Munck (2013) provides new paradigms for studying social transformation in Latin America stressing on the emergence and development of social classes and conflicts among classes. The different societal classes have varying interests, which often cause clan contests.

In Africa, social transformation cuts across various spheres of society among them religion (Agbiji & Swart, 2015; Erasmus, 2005), natural resources (Bryceson et al., 2013); role of universities (Lebeau, 2008) and even gender (Kiingati, 2019a). In Nigeria, Aboluwodi (2015) calls for education, while in South Africa policies addressing various academic

barriers to bring social translations in access to higher education in the country (Abed & Ackers, 2021) have been considered. Changes have factored in pre- and post-apartheid eras (Maile, 2020). In Ethiopia, Tadele (2015) finds that civil society plays a critical role in societal transformation. So, what exactly needs to be done for Social Transformation to take root in Africa?

Social transformation implies a change involving processes that occur in society and that alter the existing structures, creating a more just and equal society- enhancing people's lives (Pierli & Selvam, 2017). Sometimes, this may be a change that is not recognizable until years later by sociologists, and at other times, it may be systematically implemented. What is true is that since time immemorial, human society adapts and transforms itself because of the innate desire to develop and respond to the social, cultural, and political as well as environmental spheres at any given time. This was embedded in Greek philosophy. Heraclitus, the ancient Greek philosopher stated, 'you cannot step twice into the same river', which tries to capture the nature of change in humankind's history (Khondker & Schuerkens, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Africa's challenges need to be based on her issues and on her history. However, this continent appears to heavily rely on foreign literature and on foreign bred solutions. Despite the large amounts of monies that have been brought to the continent over decades, Africa continues to struggle with basic issues culminating in abject poverty of her citizens. In the wave of Social Transformation, a clear understanding of the dynamics, informed by experiences of those who have "made it" outside Africa, needs to be tapped. The present study seeks to address this gap.

Social Transformation as a Concept

Life satisfaction, psychological and social wellbeing are fundamental to actualizing one's full potential. Humankind has been on a path of development since its inception, and indeed the study of transformation is core to the study of Sociology having its roots on Weber, Durkheim and Marx (Western Sociology fathers). For the early Sociologists, understanding change and its dynamics were central though social transformation was seen from a social revolutionary and linear perspective. This position later took a historical, and social change perspective, which saw transformation as unpredictable and random (Khondker and Schuerkens, 2014). Drucker (1994) argues that the twentieth century social transformations were not instigated by historical determinism or political powers but by deep undercurrent movements within the society as it developed. For Schuerkens (2017) however, social transformation is informed or determined by power and politics shaped by any given contextual setting. It is a "structural change to a society that is fundamentally different to its predecessor" (IMI Working Paper Series 2020, No. 166, p. 15). The understanding and the diversity between social change and social transformation that this paper adopts is stated within the two definitions that follow:

> Social change refers to the micro-level, day-to-day and cyclical changes that
> occur all the time; they mostly pertain to issues such as lifecycle events or the
> fortunes or misfortunes of particular social groups, communities or political

regimes (IMI, p. 16). Social transformation refers to macro-level fundamental change in the deep structures and organisation of society, affecting all dimensions of social life (IMI, pp. 16-17).

Our world, Africa, and our countries within it, are servants to this continually changing world, and so fall subject to the study of social transformation.

Significant events in our world have remained profound in their implications to the development of society. These events have been fundamental to social transformation. In the world, the great empires of the world, among them the Roman and the Ottoman empires, the colonial regimes led by the English and the French, and the two world wars, left unforgettable marks. All through Europe's history, concerted efforts to improve disadvantaged sectors' conditions in society since the 9th and early 20th centuries were often led by groups of people from religious and socialist backgrounds. Drucker (1994) suggests that this change or transformation happened in a slower but persistent manner in the past. In the last century, there has been a notable due pace.

In Africa, the reigns of the Ghana, Mali, and the Songhai Kingdoms, as well as the Ashanti and the Zulu, the Luba and the Baganda Kingdoms, with their expansions across territories, brought change to people's lives (Bakamana, 2021). These effects coupled with the eras of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and democratization efforts in Africa, continue to influence Africa's past and present. With the presence of poverty, human rights violations, practices of exclusivity, bad governance, amidst other vices, to what degree can we say that Africa is positively undergoing social transformation?

The understanding of social transformation as a concept, differentiates it from social change. This section states how significant world events and earlier African reigns have realised different changes. However, amidst these possible African phenomena, the vices mentioned appear to influence the present deplorable state of Africa. What then needs to be done for Africa to realise her full potential? Various theories have been used by scholars in dealing with social transformation. The following section points towards these mega and middle range theories, before discussing an empirical theory that was used in a recent study on social transformation.

Social Transformation and Theorists

Evolution Theories: Evolution came to the Social Sciences through biological evolution with knowledge of Darwinian Theory. Within these theories, society and culture are seen as undergoing the same patterns as nature. Darwin (1859) explains the species of organisms that evolve over time to be more complicated as they adapt to the environment. The founding fathers of Sociology such as Comte, Durkheim and Spencer were influenced by the physical and biological sciences, among them evolution theories (Ritzer, 2011).

Radical and conservative theorists used the theory of evolution to explain social change as predictable, irreversible that evolves from the simple to the complex (Khondker & Schuerkens, 2014). This conception of evolution was applied not only to the development of societies but also to art, literature, music, philosophy, sciences, religion, economic and political life (state) and almost every other achievement of the mind of the people. Durkheim contended that as society develops so does it develop different functions and becomes more structurally complex (Ritzer, 2011).

Structural theories: Structuralists view "society as a social system consisting of various structures, organizations and institutions, influencing each other and affecting the whole system" (Laluddin, 2016). Scholars using the structural theories look at the different aspects of the social systems and how they are structured. Structuralism is helpful because it views the world (individuals and communities) not as independently existing objects but as structures within some framework. According to Gough (2010), a structuralist analysis assumes that inquiry objects are characterized by underlying structures seen as systems of interrelated parts. It is interested in knowing the relationship between objects as opposed to the objects themselves. Piaget (as cited in Hawkes, 1977) states that the world is an arrangement of entities characterized by wholeness, self-regulation and transformation. Therefore, the world can be understood in terms of how objects or underlying structures are related to each other and lend to transformation.

Functionalism developed mainly as a reaction to evolutionism, in the early years of twentieth century. Functionalism believes that a social pattern is best understood in terms of its consequences for and functions in a given society (Audu, 2014). According to the proponents of functionalism, including Durkheim, society is an interconnected system of parts that work together to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. From this perspective, society can be likened to a human body with interrelated parts, each with specific roles or functions so that together they work to make the body function properly. Functionalism posits that society is more than the sum of its parts- each part works for the stability of the whole, and when one-part experiences a crisis, the others must adapt or transform to fill the void in some way (Crossman, 2020). In general terms, functionalism concerns itself with how the society maintains order, stability, cohesion and integration through its different social institutions (parts) family, religion, education, government, economy, and media, among other areas (Crossman, 2020).

Later, Parsons concentrated on the structure of society and their relationship to each other where they supported each other and how order was maintained (Ritzer, 2011). Parsons maintained that no system is in a perfect state of equilibrium although a certain degree of equilibrium is essential for the survival of societies (Fararo, 2006). As changes occur in one part of society, there must be adjustments in other parts. If this does not occur, the society's equilibrium will be disturbed and strain will occur (Ritzer, 2011, Bakamana, 2021d). These theorists give insight into how society is structured and how transformation takes place and how the different levels of society are interconnected. Other scholars associated with functionalism include Robert Merton, Herbert Spencer and Wilfredo Pareto.

Symbolic Interactionism another theory used to understand society focuses on individual's development of self-identity and how they use this to symbolically represent their world (Laluddin, 2016). This subjective perspective explores how communication builds social set-ups. Scholars associated with Symbolic Interactionism include Cooley Charles, George Herbert Mead, and William Isaac Thomas. Having its foundation on Symbolic Interactionism, Discourse Analysis plays a significant role in understanding the individuals representation of their world through language (Kiingati, 2019a). In Social Transformation, the understanding of the individual's symbolic representation of the world is key as scholars seek to explore how these individuals relate to their external world.

Conflict theories have their foundation in Karl Marx (Marx, 1963). In capitalist societies, persons are in conflict following the division between those in possession of the

means of production (bourgeoisie), and those who work for them (proletariat). Economics therefore, determine a society's religion, values, moral, law, and ideas (Chung, 2014). In social transformation, and in this case considering the case of Africa, conflict is a major occurrence. While it may be argued that this emanates from ethnicity, one may desire to explore to what degree poverty determines the conflict. Among the affluent and the elites, such conflict is hardly overt, contrary to the situation among the poor.

Theories inform causality. In the case of social transformation, the discussed sets of theories help the scholar to understand what may be causing challenges leading to societal mal-functioning. For there to be effectiveness, the activities of social transformation call for a systematic process within which best results are to be achieved, hence, the need to understand the transformational framework.

Transformational Framework

According to Camp (2001), a framework is a structure that allows the scholar (researcher) to describe best or explain the phenomena being studied. It is the researcher's 'visual' explanation of how the research problem would be explored. Research is made easier when specifying and defining the concepts within the study's problem (Luse, Menneke & Townsend, 2012). It gives a logical flow and systematic way of how the research problem is going to be explored. It describes the particular actions that the researcher will undertake during the study. Dickson, Hussein and Adu-Agyem (2018) have noted that a framework in process and rigor is key in offering the research credibility.

A transformational framework according to Lederarch (2003) proposes three components each representing points of inquiry in developing a response. The first point in the process is the present situation; describe the trigger event, which provides the opportunity to look at the content and patterns. The questions asked are what are the immediate problems that need to be solved and the overall context that needs to be addressed to facilitate the transformation of destructive patterns. The focus is mainly on the relational and historical patterns in which the issues arise to the surface, giving clarity. The potential for change then lies in recognizing, understanding, redressing what has happened, and creating new structures and ways of greater collaboration and interaction within the community (Lederarch, 2003; Bakamana, 2021a).

The second point of inquiry is the horizon of the future and the image of what we would wish to create. It seeks to consider the ideal place to be while the present issue remains a motivation towards change. The future horizons point towards the possibilities of what is to be constructed. While the transformation process in the framework for transformation may look linear, it is also circular, continuous learning of the motivation for the change and organizational adjustment (Lederarch, 2003).

The third and last inquiry to look at is the design and change processes. This entails looking at the response to the issues and developing processes that attend to the web of interconnected needs, relationships and patterns. The immediate processes should address both the immediate and the broader relational and structural patterns, reflecting on multiple levels and types of change rather than focusing on a single operational solution.

There is no straightforward line in the process of moving from the present to a desired future but rather a set of dynamic initiatives set in motion change processes that create a sustained

platform to pursue long-term transformation. It emphasizes how to end something not desired and how to build something that is desired (Lederarch, 2003).

Relating the framework to the African setup highlights the three steps. Africa has had key trigger effects, among them her history (slavery and colonial effects) (Rodney, 1973) also a constant blame on these historical epochs, which are realised as escapism towards taking immediate and current responsibility towards change (Kiingati, 2021a). In the present times however, the trigger effects are largely informed by policies that emanate from governments, and the attempts to actualize the policies. An example is noted in the way Africans behave during elections. This repetitive behaviour during elections, and continued voting patterns based on ethnicity, kinship and neighbourhood (Leonard, 2009), have specific consequences in relation to the category of leaders that get into power.

A social transformative framework is future oriented. This means that for their to be transformation, the initiators of the different changes need to have a deliberate effort towards improving the future of Africa. The sacrifices in the present are aimed at improving tomorrow. A model of the future can be drawn from one's imagination, but also from one's ability to scout and see trends in different continents that are purportedly doing better than Africa. The third is addressing the design and change process that befits Africa. Indigenous knowledge is significant in deciding on the design and process of change (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). Not only do the indigenous people have their best interests at heart, but it is also inferred that they wish well for their people and their areas. A framework of social transformation for Africa has therefore to include Africans in all the levels of operationalizing it. This brings this discussion to a close on the theories and framework of social transformation. This background sets the platform for the next part in the discussion which seeks to understand social transformation in the African context.

An Understanding of Social Transformation in Africa

A growing number of definitions exist on what social transformation means for different scholars and entities. To Hegmon and Peeples (2018), social transformation is the lasting and major changes that happen in economies and socio-political organization such that the life experiences of people before and after the transformation are substantially different. Further, social transformation can be rapid, and occurs within an individual's life span or it can be gradual and happen over a period of several generations. De Haas and Fransen (2018) define social transformation as the fundamental change in the way societies are organized and resources distributed that goes beyond the continual, incremental processes of social change that are always at work. Social transformation encompasses a progressive shift in the lived values of people within a development spectrum (Joy, 2011).

Pierli and Selvam (2017) in their conceptualization of Social Transformation define it as '*a set of processes in which individuals and groups of people bring about large-scale social change with an aim of enhancing quality of life'.* They further elucidate on this definition by identifying the main constructs in the definition such as, social transformation is a social process; it includes different agents of social processes and, the outcomes that are expected from social transformation is quality of life- the wellbeing of groups and individuals in a particular society.

IMI (2020 p.18) identifies five spheres of social transformation: the political (the organised control over people); the economic (the accumulation and use of land, labour and

capital in the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services); the technological (the application of knowledge through the deployment of procedures, skills and techniques); the demographic (the structure and spatial distribution of populations); and the cultural (the beliefs, values, norms and customs shared by groups of people). Each of those spheres factors in power, resources, tools, population and ideas, in that order. An address of social transformation in Africa, therefore, has to factor in the five spheres.

Notably absent, is the environmental sphere of social transformation. Africa struggles with among other issues growing desertification and food deficiencies (Benson, 2004). According to Benson, 200 million people in Africa, in the years around 2004 were undernourished. This accounted for 27% of Africans compared to 14% globally. One of the reasons behind Africa's food insecurity is desertification.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as "land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas through natural processes as well as human activities" (UNESC, 2007 p.3). Desertification influences "human health, food security, economic activity, physical infrastructure, natural resources and the environment, and national and global security" (p. 3). With this understanding therefore, this paper looks at Social transformation in Africa, based on six spheres namely political, economic, technological, demographic, cultural and environmental.

Political Sphere: Indigenous African political systems were traditionally based on kinship and on lineage (common ancestry). With the coming of colonial powers however, these systems were interfered with introducing African states into political leaders whose interests served the European masters (Bakamana, 2021). Political leadership, therefore, determined the constitutions and the policies that would henceforth govern the citizens. Among these policies, democratization, fiscal, as well as social-cultural issues are factored in. Social transformative policies and subsequent actualization of the same, hence depend largely on the political goodwill of the same political leaders, more so the executive (and on the person of the president), the members of parliament, and the judiciary.

Economic Sphere: As noted under the conflict theory (Marx, 1963), resources play a significant role in determining a people's serenity, and comfort. In Africa, poverty, realization of the infrastructure, the debt burden, and the growth of the GDP, is all dependent on the economic muscle of the nation. Social transformation seeks to empower the people as a way of improving their wellbeing. The availability of basic needs, which is a cost, cannot ignore household economies (Kiingati, 2021b).

Technological Sphere: The world is increasingly becoming a global village courtesy of technology. Among the major contributors to this globalization is the media (Lule, 2012). A social transformative intervention for Africa cannot overlook the power of the media, and increasingly the radio, for information dissemination. The prevalent use of the mobile phone and other communication gadgets, to solicit information needed for economic advancement, socio-cultural change of mindsets, and acquisition of knowledge on how to improve livelihoods, is available, thanks to technology. Advocacy, a key instrument in social transformation is possible with technology (Thackery, 2010).

Demographic Sphere: Studies on population and development take on two major positions. The first looks at the positivity of increased population that comes with increased GNP. Increased populations lead to increased households hence increased market. In addition, this contributes to an increase on production hence industries. This however, has to go hand in hand with proper planning. The other holds a contrary opinion where increased populations lead to the dwindling of resources (PAI & AFIDEP, 2012). This second position addresses issues such as desertification, pollution and environmental degradation following increased populations. Issues about unavailability of sufficient food resources are also discussed.

Cultural Sphere: Social Transformation in Africa cannot overlook the cultural sphere. Kiingati presents a comprehensive exploration of the African culture. He indicates how culture marks a people, thus granting them identity (Kiingati, 2019a). Culture incorporates a people's values: religious, political, aesthetic as well as economic. In so doing, it informs a people's practices and interactions. Looking at African culture from a social transformative position allows the questions: how do African cultural practices support the realization of human rights? How do these practices, enhance inclusivity? How do they encourage good governance practices?

Environmental sphere: The words of Wangari Maathai, "Mother Nature is very generous but very unforgiving; if you destroy Nature, Nature will destroy you" (Green Treasures Farms, 2018; Oniang'o et al., 2011), help summarise the vitality of having the environmental sphere in social transformative endeavours. This position is further supported by Pope Francis' Laudato Si (Ceballos, 2016). The human being is part of the environment. In the Creation story, the creation is released, only after the human being is created to manage it (Gen, 2:5). This means that there is a Divine call to the human being to manage the environment sustainably. Failure to do this is a pronouncement of destruction to future generations. Social transformative efforts therefore need to be sustainable.

Spiritual Sphere: In this subsection, spirituality and religion are addressed. Spirituality refers to the search for significance/meaning. Religiosity generates a complexity where intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, as well as intellectual dimensions are discussed. Within religiosity, beliefs, values, rituals and subsequent behaviours are considered (Holdcroft, 2006). While Africans are notoriously religious (Mbiti, 1999, p.1), a position also held by Obaji and Ignatious (2015 p.1) when he says that "Religion constitutes an inextricable part of African society", questions on the poverty levels of Africa are raised. Addressing social transformation in Africa cannot overlook Africa's myths, customs, traditions, beliefs, morals, actions and social relationships (Mbiti 1999:15), as well as value systems advocated by religious institutions.

Levels of Operationalizing Social Transformation in Africa

Individual level: Transformation essentially starts within the individual. The individual is meant to make life choices and with time transform the choices to desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2012). Increasingly in Africa, individuals are called upon to critically look at the traditional practices, evaluate how these have been influencing and contributing to the present condition. The changes come when the individual identifies the "resources embedded within [the] person's social network that influence decisions and

outcomes". The person hence needs to shape their personal identity, realise and effect the opportunities and remove the obstacles there-in (Belcher et al, 2011, p. 69).

Household level: This is the subsequent operational level leading towards social transformation. African families tend to have members within it that may not be considered direct family members. Families are obliged to be resilient. This refers to the "ability of families "to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges" (Walsh, 2003, p. 1). These challenges emanate from the different roles falling under the docket of households. These roles include provision of food, clothing and shelter. Also within households, emotional support and encouragement lie. These issues are realised through the different life stages that families undergo, carrying with them immense challenges. Among the challenges, there are financial and psychological issues. Other notable challenges include drug abuse, risky sexual behaviour, delinquency, as well as anti-social practices (Perrino et al, 2000). For transformation to take place, families need to be effectively engaged.

Community level: Social transformation at the level of the community asks two critical questions according to Lederach (2003), what needs to stop and what do we need to build? It involves a movement from one position to another, but it is not just looking at the starting point or the endpoint but the process of going from one point to another. It presents an opportunity for communities and organizations to engage in relationship patterns and systems. It is a comprehensive approach addressing a range of dimensions such as developing the members' collaborative capacities, supporting structural change, researching the dynamics, which are demanding a social transformation.

Adapting Lederach's (2003) model of transformation can give a valuable methodology into identifying processes that can bring about social transformation. In creating this atmosphere within the community or organization, one has to refer to change, which can be understood in two fundamental ways: a descriptive and prescriptive lens. Descriptively, it is necessary to conduct empirical research that identifies the root causes of underdevelopment, unemployment, corruption, injustice, discrimination, conflict within the system, which need transformation.

A concern in transformation at the community level is to know the right direction for the community. These goes hand in hand with attempts to create a society that understands the need for change. Reflection and awareness by the African community are best described by freire's conscientization (Freire 1996; Freire, 1998). A community can realise this through continued strategic exploration and visioning through dialogue. Through this, the community can evaluate their history, give a critical look at the present, and envision as well as develop alternative future modes that respond to the actual life triggers. This in turn shall avail catalysts for change (Kotnour, 2010), hence social transformation.

Social transformation at the community level also needs to factor in what is central to the community's identity. Identity gives individuals and communities a raison d'etre (Kiingati, 2019b). The persistent features that link the community members to their past and the present, inform their future through the questions, who we are but more importantly what and how we are becoming (Shultz & Maguire, 2013). Through these fundamental questions, communities constantly motivate themselves towards cohesion, as they participate actively in the processes of social transformation.

Institutional level: Institutions refer to legally constituted bodies within which individuals operate. Considering institutions of higher learning, there is a revisit of the four roles linked with these institutions: setting of ideological strategies of the hosting society; laying mechanisms of selection for the dominant elite (including political elite); generation of knowledge (through scientific research); and training of skilled labour (Castells, 2001). This lays ground for the question, to what degree are these institutions set for (and engaging in) social transformation?

Other institutions considered include the Faith Based Organisations as well as the Civil Society Organisations. For the former, Mugambi (1996) discusses how churches have been involved in democratization processes in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this area, they have created awareness and pushed for constitutional reforms, multiparty democracy and education of electorates. In addition, they have contributed largely to education, health and start-ups in Income Generation Activities. The Civil Society organisations have also been on the forefront on the areas contributed to by the Faith Based Organisations. In addition, they are noted for advocacy and for keeping the African governments on check (Niyel report, 2017).

National level: At the national level, the involvement and commitment of governments towards social transformation is addressed. A comprehensive look into the African governance issues has been done by *The National Academies of Sciences (*1992/2021). They have looked at the issues of accountability, corruption, transparency, foreign aid and freedom of information, as well as human rights violations. There is a continued urge on the African governments to decentralise power and devolve public authorities. Addressing the social transformative issues, while it is the government's responsibility using the public monies to effect the needed processes, it is clear that continued check needs to be done by the public. The call is for African leaders to govern under the control of the public.

Regional level: This level goes further to reiterate the role of international bodies largely operating in Africa. It also includes international bodies whose global focus affects Africa. The role of international bodies in Africa's social transformation cannot be underrated. Following the earlier discussed modernization era, World Bank and IMF have taken a central role in funding governments. Various Ngos have also received funding from multinational Organisations, geared towards aiding Africa (World Bank, 2006/7).

There is a growth towards social transformation. This is noted in literacy levels, health and technology. This growth has been noted despite the emigration of skilled workers from the continent (UNCTAD, 2018). However, there is need to mobilise local resources towards development. In addition, Africa needs to address issues of desertification, deforestation, water and food scarcity, drought and climate change issues with greater urgency and deliberation (Le Blanc, & Perez, 2008).

Drivers of Social Transformation in Africa
This section concentrates on six core areas that are opportunities to be exploited for Africa to realise her social transformative steps. These are natural resources, youthful population and gender inclusivity. The others are religion, church and other additives.

Natural Resources: Africa is the second largest continent. In terms of Natural Resources, Africa has an immense resources, " [it] holds more than half of the world's rare minerals and is rich in both renewable and non-renewable natural resources" (.. Nevertheless, it remains largely only a supplier of these resources to the rest of the world (mainly Europe, America, and recently Asia), due to its lack of ability to extract or even process the resources (Custers & Matthysen, 2009). This reality renders Africa a non-beneficiary of her own resources. The position contributes to the explanation on Africa's poverty, high levels of unemployment and subsequent low development. A social transformative approach cannot overlook Africa's provision of cheap raw material to the developed world, while expecting growth.

What then needs to be done? IDEA (2017) presents an eleven-point paradigm shift geared towards a social transformative exploitation of Africa's natural resources:

(i) transformative and visionary leadership accompanied by political will;

(ii) prioritizing the interests of citizens, their rights through strengthened public participation;

(iii) increased proactive role of local Civil Society Organizations (help in designing & promoting transparency);

(iv) link between governance of natural resources, its sustainability, inclusivity, owner- based transformative development and regional integration;

(v) link between natural resources governance and SDGs

(vi) link between natural resources governance and green development;

(vii) improved value chain contributing towards job creation;

(viii) organising local small scale artisanal operations;

(ix) gender inclusivity and women empowerment;

(x) private sector to be re-organised for the interest of the citizens of countries of extraction, rather than on private investors;

(xi) stress on continental and regional frameworks to monitor natural resource governance.

(IDEA, 2017, p. 3).

These points demonstrate that Africa can profit from her natural resources. However, there is work to be done. In this way, Natural Resources can be a driver towards Social Transformation in Africa.

Youthful Population: Another factor that should be considered a driver to the social transformation of Africa is the youthful population. In Africa's developing countries, there has been increased fertility rates and lowered child-mortality rate. The two factors have contributed to an increase in the youthful populations in this region (Ashford, 2007). Increased youthful population can be a driving force towards development. Is this the case for Africa? If the case were so, then Africa would not be grappling with poverty. Ashford therefore suggests various steps towards enhancing the productivity of this youthful population:

1. improved quantity and quality of schooling so that it is relevant to the workforce;

2. enactment of laws preventing early marriages that hinder individual's economic productivity;

3. remove barriers to starting work and encourage hiring flexibility while encouraging investors to invest and train, as well as equal access to employment for male and female;

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4. improve health conditions;
5. have multisectoral approaches towards youth skills formation;
6. encourage youth participation in public life, policy formulations, programmes and services to improve them (Ashford, 2007, pp 3&4).

Gender Inclusivity: Generally, population indices indicate an almost 1:1, male: female ratio. This means that there are as many males as there are females. In addition to that, female post a higher longevity in relation to me; women have a longer lifespan compared to me (Kiingati, 2019b). This means that women have a longer economic active life. These factors demonstrate the need for inclusivity if a country is going to realise her social transformative steps (Kiingati, 2019b).

What exactly does gender inclusivity entail? Civicus (2017), give three areas of focus. The first is economic inclusivity. This refers to women being engaged in production, distribution and in the sharing of resources. It also means policies to be formulated to include women in major asset ownership and use, such as in land matters. This shall create livelihood opportunities and allow them to participate better in development.

The second area of inclusivity is in social participation. The social fabric of the localities of operation has social amenities and services. Awareness creation among women for them to understand their presence and availability is crucial. In addition social security, protection, public safety as well as social cohesion endeavours need to be brought to the understanding of the women. This will allow them be more confident as they engage in public matters.

Political inclusivity is also essential. This entails political organisations devoid of violence and taking care of human rights issues. Such organisations need to involve women in their decision-making processes and policy formulation. In addition, there is need enhance representation of women as well as inculcate education on citizen responsibilities. This should include benefits of participation.

With gender inclusivity, the burden on one gender to take charge of the development shall be half shared. This means that both parts of the divide shall contribute to the enhancement of the development.

Religion plays a critical role in driving social transformation. Separating religion from whatever objectives one has in Africa will frankly be an uphill task. This is because of the way in which religion is practised in Africa. Majawa (2020) points out how church and state are called to be transformational societal entities serving the same God. Magesa (2010) notes that for Africans, religion and culture are basically one and the same and both represent the way of life among the people. For Magesa, religion and African traditional practises are one and refer to the same thing.

In Africa, indigenous communities have always had their forms of religions. In examining these religion(s), Magesa (2010) observes that traditional African societies lived in a way where honour was highly looked up to for instance, social taboos such as stealing were stigmatised because such behaviour was not tolerated in African societies. Spirituality and morality are thus inseparable (Magesa, 2010). As such, social transformers must not ignore the essential role that indigenous religious practices have to do with transforming the continent. Bakamana (2020a & b) retreats to this indigenous religious practise to retrieve

good values that can be incorporated into modern leadership to bring about social transformation.

Considering that separating culture and religion is difficult in Africa because it is the same thing, a retreat back to the indigenous traditional practices is worthwhile. Bakamana (2020b) provides pioneering work on how traditional indigenous practises with charms can contribute to improving leadership and thus create social transformation in Africa. A missionary priest who has worked in various African countries including Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia, Bakamana noted with concern how indigenous practises have been eroded. Bakamana (2021c) calls for the retrieval of good values found in indigenous African charms and incorporating them into modern leadership as a path to social transformation of Africa.

Church as a key driver in Social Transformation: The Catholic Church has been an agent of transformation over many centuries especially in Africa. By its very nature the Catholic Church, has been involved with building nations, transforming people, establishing society through institutions of education, and medical services and influencing political system's ideas. Bosch (1999) suggests that social transformation has been part of the mission of the Church from the beginning of Christianity. The Church has promoted and responded to bring about social transformation for all society's good.

Additives: positivity of conflict should not be at all times taken negatively. Dahley, Himes-Cornell and Metzner (2021) note that conflicts can provide new opportunities to drive social transformation. This is because the way in which conflicts are handled can be a drive of social transformation. In addition to this, Mavridis (2018) points towards the importance of economic destabilizations such as the 2008 financial crisis. These provide a number of various social issues including unemployment, poverty, emigration and exclusion, which aggregately are factors that can contribute to social transformation. Advances in technology can also act as tools for social transformation.

In addition, to Amundsen, Hovelsrud, Aall, Karlsson and Westskog (2018) social transformation can be influenced by local governments through cross-sectoral networks and policies to create sustainable development. This is due to the role that local governments and traditional chiefs have to play in social transformation, which includes transformation within their own organisations, villages, towns and to act as social transformation catalysts in their regions (Bakamana, 2021c).

Other societal issues can also drive social transformation. Rast III, Hogg, and Randsley de Moura (2018) find that marginalization of individuals and groups in societies lead to social transformation. This is so especially when such marginalized groups get behind a leader who are able to transform societies through social or organizational changes (Bakamana, 2021). De Haas and Fransen (2018) find that several political, cultural, demographic and social migration dynamics can contribute to social transformation. Sampson (2017) concurs, noting that migration has contributed to social transformation in America. For Lois and Montiel (2018) social movements, radicalizations, and violence or non-violence have a role in bringing about or failing to bring about social and political transformation.

Finally, Pavlovskaya (2018) finds geographical information systems critical tools for social transformation. Knowledge of one's locality contributes to informed choices on matters of environmental exploitation.

African Issues Calling for Social Transformation

(i) New Scramble for Africa: There is a new scramble for Africa. Countries endowed with vast resources such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (earth minerals, forests & water basins), Nigeria (oil), Ghana (cocoa), South Africa (minerals), Angola (oil), Libya (oil), Sudan (oil) just to name a few have seen untold destabilization activities including conflicts, wars, overthrows of government, corruption, invasions and so on (Goncalves, 2021; Nwachukwu & Ogundiwin, 2020; Guan et al., 2020; Bakamana, 2021b). War has been weaponized as a destabiliser, and behind the curtains, looting of resources, insecurity, arms trade; population displacement flourishes (Ugwuanyi, 2020).

There is an appeal to world bodies to exercise justice and fairness in dealing with Africa. This includes a lack of facilitation on the indiscriminate looting of Africa's resources by foreigners in collaboration with African leaders (Bond, 2006). It also calls for a balance between looking at Africa as only an asset, and realizing the suffering of the African populace that is instigated by a purely capitalistic wave, and having a preferential address at the poor (Peitrzak, 2017).

There is an urgent call for increased patriotism on the side of the Africans. This is because, entry into these African countries is often through some locals who desire to profit themselves (Bond, 2006). There is also a need for increased cooperation among African states. This unity would make the individual states more solid and harder to penetrate and misuse (Makaria, 2005; Mbodj, 2002). In addition, there is need for increased awareness. This would help the Africans realise the shrewd ways in which they fall prey to both local and foreign manipulation (Bond, 2006).

(ii) Poor Governance: This "refers to the lack of strong institutions and weak policies, aimed at short-term gains rather than at long-term development objectives… [aloes] easy access to and capture of revenues [to some]...make[s] governments less accountable and more likely to preserve the interests of the minority governing elite with limited benefits for the population" (IDEA, 2017, p. 1; United Nations Conference on Trade & Development 2018).

Africa is yet to heal from the wounds of her history; slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism (Rodney, 1973; wa Thiong'o, 1986). It is however, more disappointing to see her struggling under her dictatorial leaders (van Wyk, 2007), and in the present, under a set of elites that seek to profit selfishly from the public resources (Bond, 2006), as they wrongly use fetishes and charms to remain in power (Bakamana, 2020a).

These strategies facilitate voter apathy, as the citizens give up on trying changing their leaders. In turn, this slows the process of African democratization and any efforts towards decentralization, devolution and institutionalization (Kahindi, 2013). The media's ability to reach out to the populace continues to play a significant role in empowering her African consumers (Bakamana (2021b) proposes traditional ways of holding political leaders accountable. It is worth noting that citizen responsibility only starts at voting. Engaging in public participation is critical.

(iii) Environmental Concern: Under the different spheres within which social transformation functions, the environmental sphere was discussed. In it the statement "Mother Nature is very generous but very unforgiving; if you destroy Nature, Nature will destroy you" (Green Treasures Farms, 2018, quoting Wangari Maathai), she light on the need

to be responsible stewards of the environment. The human person is part of nature and so needs to fit in the eco-system.

As part of the environmental concern, natural catastrophes continue to increase in our world. Africans continue to face issues of desertification, drought, and floods (Dodo, 2020) threatening her food security. While it is easy to blame this on nature, the human activities contributing to climate change are evident. These include wanton felling of trees, as well as human encroachment leading to reduced forest coverage (Karachi, 2009). There is also an increase in effects of industrial pollution leading to global warming (Eke, 2018). In addition, cultural practices such as over-grazing as practiced by pastoral communities pause a threat (Jarvis, 1991). Some of the results of these practices include failure to access clean water (Jiwani & Antiporta, 2020), and threatened food security (Wegenast & Beck, 2020). There is need for a paradigm shift on matters environmental care a advocated by Laudato Si (Ceballlos, 2016)

(iv) Human Rights Violations: Human rights violations refers to a lack of respect to basic rights inherent in all humans (UNHR, 2016b). These are realised in different ways. In this paper, these violations are discussed under inequality and exclusivity, youth struggles and child abuse. In social transformation, there is a call towards gender inclusivity (Kiingati, 2019b), the inclusivity of the minority groups, and that of other marginalised communities such as the challenged (UNHR, 2016a) and the elderly (Clement, 2020). Inclusivity entails a physical representation of each of these persons in policy formulation and implementation (Gumede, 2018). This means that the voice of each is heard and considered.

Human rights violations are done towards the youth. In Africa, the youth account for over 60% of the population (Ashford, 2007). This means that not only does the region's future lie in their hands, but also increasingly the present. They however, are linked with delinquencies, drugs, pornography, and crime as discussed by Ashford (2007) when he questions whether they are a resource or a vice. Increased challenges related to mental health culminating in depression and suicide, befall these youth. With the policies on education focussing on passing of exams rather than on competency-acquisition, and with employment policies favouring the policy makers, a majority of the poor youth are left destitute and hopeless (Sommers, 2006). A society is violating on the human rights of the youth. By extension, a society is killing itself.

Children also suffer human rights violations: Notable in this area is child trafficking (Muluneh et al., 2020). Helpless children are abducted or lured into traps that see them taken to foreign lands. In these lands, with no guardians, and with no documents, they fall prey to any misuse, including sex exploitation and child labour. Having no defence exposes them to the host nation's criminal justice system, to illicit drugs and to early deaths (UNHR, 2016b). As noted previously, a society that kills her youth and children is signalling an end to itself.

(v) Poverty: Poverty in African states is noticeable, African poverty is realised through three main aspects namely, health provisions, education, and households (Kiingati, 2019a). In reference to health, whether a nation has available and affordable health care is a concern (Alegbeleye & Mohammed, 2020). A healthy nation is certainly a wealthy one, and vice versa (Bloom. 2000). When persons are ailing, their levels of productivity immensely goes down. In the developing world, the situation is worsened by a lack of, or poorly run National Health Insurance Fund scheme (WB &IMF, 2016). This leaves the health burden on individuals and on their immediate family members.

Poverty is also noted in the education system of a nation. Illiteracy levels in the developing world are wanting. When a society is struggling with high illiteracy levels, individual's ability to reason, participate in development issues, critically analyse situations, and take advantage of world technologies is challenged. Efforts in Africa towards Free Primary Education and Subsidised Secondary Education (Ingutia, Rezitis & Sumelius, 2020), are strides in the right direction. Social transformative efforts need to address issues of illiteracy related poverty.

The final component discussed under poverty is households. In the developing world, an address on income is better understood through a household rather than by looking at an individual (Kiingati 2019a). This is due to the social nature within which individuals largely support those in their households who are not necessarily blood relatives. African households suffer poverty. While systems have a portion of the blame, individuals wastefulness and poor planning also contribute towards the poverty. These in-house challenges coupled with economic surges and inflation (Bandura, 2020) continue to incapacitate households rendering them poor.

The five issues addressed, indicate areas that Africa needs to concentrate on as it strides towards a socially transformative society. In addition, we cannot overlook the pointers from Pierli and Selvam (2017), who bring to mind issues related to colonialism and its end [purported end], African subjectivity, devolution, missionary work, and theology [theologians of young churches]. Certainly, there is a myriad of areas of concern. However, unresolved, new and emerging factors still present grounds on which to launch and implement social transformation agendas and initiatives.

Conclusion

There is enough consensuses that African problems must be addressed through African or rather African-led solutions. A candid conversation with African scholars on the issues that have be-devilled Africa regularly yields confessions that indeed; Western remedies have largely failed to socially transform Africa. Recognizing these African issues is one of the pre-requisites for social transformation. It indicates a familiarization with what is happening, and therefore, enables development of appropriate measures, projects, institutes and programmes that can work to create social transformation in African societies. African solutions to social issues in Africa, will significantly contribute to creating bespoke working solutions that can socially transform Africa. Perhaps African scholars need to get more involved on matters related to African social transformative strides, for Africans and based on African realities.

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