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## Exploring the Prospects and Limits of Modern Democracy in Africa: The Role of Leaders

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**Abstract** This chapter seeks to highlight the prospects of procedural and substantive democracy in Africa, emphasizing the limitation and shortcomings of African countries in their pursuit of democracy, citing a transformational-transactional leadership mix ('transfor-sactional') in countering the shortcomings. It achieves this purpose by reviewing literature on democracy, transformational and transactional leadership styles to develop a leadership mixture (transfor-sactional) and further goes on to draw a conceptual framework to show the relationship between transfor-sactional leadership and democracy. This chapter then discusses the concepts in the framework by explaining the relationship between them. The review of literature shows that procedural democracy has good prospects across the continent; however, African countries are lagging behind with reference to substantive democracy. Additionally, this chapter reveals

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that, the persistent economic hardship, poverty and underdevelopment across the African continent, the role of leaders in mitigating these pertinent human problems cannot be overemphasized. As such, the complementary role of transformational leadership to transactional leadership is shown and thus, leaders who are able to effectively combine attributes of the two leadership styles can achieve effective leadership which is crucial to African countries in achieving growth and development.

**Keywords** Democracy · Transformational leadership · Transactional leadership · ‘Transfor-sactional’ leadership · Development · Africa

## Introduction

The concept of Western democracy is perhaps the most popular form of governance, judging by its wide acceptance by those who in reality are averse to its tenets (Oyekan 2009). While democracy has been consolidated in Western countries like USA and Britain, Bratton and Houessou (2014) maintain that several countries in Africa, notably Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe continue to experience a *deficit of democracy* in which popular demand for democracy greatly exceeds the amount of democracy that political elites are willing or able to supply. Most scholars attribute the economic growth and development of these Western countries to successful democracies. As Haggard (1990) notes in a paper prepared for USAID; in the long run there is a definite positive association between economic prosperity and democracy. However, Samarasinghe (1994) notes that the relationship between democracy and development is a two-way process. Arthur (2010) writes that many African countries sought to pursue democracy and strengthen it, in response to the wave of democracy that blew over the African continent in the late 1970s and 1980s causing them to abandon authoritarian regimes of one form or another, to adopt and pursue multiparty politics and democracy; described by Huntington (1991) as the “third wave of democracy”.

Janda and Goldman (1995) attempted a division of democracy into two parts. The first aspect is procedural in nature in the sense that it provides the framework for people to vote, contest election, debate public issues among other things African Countries like Botswana, Benin and Ghana have achieved impressive feats in this aspect. The second aspect focuses on meeting human needs and satisfying basic goals. It is in line with substantive democracy, which lays emphasis on economic rights, growth and development (EISA symposium 2007). Substantive democracy has remained elusive to many African countries though some of these countries are epitomes of procedural democracy.

The initial steps towards democracy with the organization of competitive elections proved not to be enough to deliver on the high expectations for improvement in the lives of people (World Movement for Democracy 2008). International indices of economic growth and development indicate that poverty and corruption levels are high while standards of living and per-capita income are low in many African countries. According to the UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index, almost 1.5 billion people in 91 developing countries are living in poverty with overlapping deprivations in health, education and living standards (UNDP 2014). In the report, many African countries fell in the category of low human development. Furthermore, out of the last ranked 20 countries, there were 18 African countries (UNDP 2014). In 2013, the Corruption Perception Index indicated that only four African countries, namely Botswana, Cape Verde, Rwanda, Mauritius, scored above 50 points out of 100; where 100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt (Corruption Perception Index 2013).

In recent times, poor and ineffective leadership has been highlighted by most scholars as a major cause of Africa's woes. Adejumbi (2000) posits that political megalomaniacs like Mobutu in Zaire; Samuel Doe in Liberia; and Siad Barre in Somalia created for themselves "political fiefdom" in their respective countries; unreservedly obtained national wealth, devalued the lives of the people and destroyed the fabric of the society. Oyekan (2009) argues that there are factors that impede the relationship between democracy and development in Africa, and the most central factor is leadership failure. Therefore, the role of African leaders is essential to attaining substantive democracy. Extensive

research has been conducted on two leadership styles initially propounded by Burns (1978), namely transformational and transactional. While transformational leadership style is one that inspires followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the organization (Robbins et al. 2009), transactional leadership style is all about an exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates (Bass, 1999), where the leader gives followers something they want in exchange for something the leader wants (Kuhnert and Lewis 1987, as cited in Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Burns (1978) considered the transformational leader to be distinct from the transactional leader; however, Bass (1995) viewed the transformational/transactional leadership paradigm as being comprised of complementary rather than polar opposite constructs and integrated the transformational and transactional styles by recognizing that both styles may be linked to the achievement of desired goals and objectives. Bass, Avolio and Goodheim (1987) suggest that in this view, the transformational leadership style is complementary to the transactional style and likely to be ineffective in the total absence of a transactional relationship between leaders and subordinates (Lowe et al. 1996). All leadership approaches or styles involve some form of transaction, some of which may be medium or long term in nature (Locke et al. 1999). Bass (1985) explains that effective leaders make use of both approaches simultaneously to achieve best results and that transformational leadership actually augments transactional leadership. Dartey-Baah (2015) labels the effective mix of these two leadership theories; transactional and transformational, as “transfor-sactional” leadership.

This paper seeks to throw more light on how far democracy has been consolidated on the African continent and its limits, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership in Africa to augment democracy in reducing poverty and bringing development to the continent. By effective leadership, this chapter stresses the essence of a mixture of transformational and transactional leadership styles (Transfor-sactional leadership), where transformational leadership is seen to support or complement transactional leadership to achieve the best results in leadership.

## Literature Review

### Democracy

Democracy is generally a heavily contested concept (Sachikonye, 1995). Different scholars from different parts of the world have defined democracy. According to Schattschneider (1960), democracy is a competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process. Dahl (1971) has identified five main criteria by which a country can ideally be classified as a democracy: equality in voting, enlightened understanding by citizens, effective political participation, access to the agenda of the issues available for decision-making and inclusion of all adult citizens (Arthur 2010). However, Dahl (1989, 1998) has asserted that, given that the ideal form is virtually non-existent, among others, the main elements of a liberal democratic society include political participation, freedom of expression, access to alternative sources of information, the right to association, free and fair as well as competitive elections and the existence of fundamental human rights (Arthur, 2010).

For purposes of this paper, democracy will be conceptually defined as a system which involves the participation of the people in the making of decisions and policies in their countries; upholds and guarantees their rights and liberties (civil, political, economic, social rights, and so on) through a working constitution and also makes concerted efforts at ensuring socioeconomic growth and development to improve living conditions of people.

### Prospects of Democracy in Africa

Some African countries like Benin, Botswana and Ghana are considered as yardsticks on the continent as far as periodic elections, multiparty politics and civil rights are concerned. Gyimah-Boadi (2009) points out that the independence and administrative capacity of Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) has improved with each election, while levels of

public interest in national elections remain high. He maintains that the country's key democratic institutions—the judiciary, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and parliament—continue to develop and solidify, and media freedoms and respect for human rights have expanded from one election to the next (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009).

According to Oyekan (2009), a lot of scholars have argued that democracy is an ideal that does not, and cannot deliver on its exaggerated promises. He maintains that some have taken it further, on the evidence of the development of many Western democracies, that its success abroad may not yield the same result for Africa. The problem of democracy has led some scholars to wonder whether its promises are not exaggerated. In fact, they are skeptical about its ability to replicate its much-vaunted results in the west in Africa (Oyekan, 2009). Morrow (1998) postulates that liberal democratic theories go contrary to African indigenous values and could not address developmental problems of countries that were hitherto colonial territories. Thus, it is not far-fetched to say that the progress of and prospects for substantive democracy remains marginal in many African countries.

## Limits to Democracy in Africa

Bratton and Houessou (2014) note that even though a lot of Africans want and demand democracy, the demand for it far exceeds the supply of it across the continent, based on their survey which revealed that fewer than half (43%) consider their country a democracy and, at the same time, say they are satisfied with the way democracy works.

Brown and Kaiser (2007) assert that impediments to democratization in Africa are stronger than in any other region; the state and civil society, two critical actors in a democracy, both tend to be weak. In addition, African countries generally suffer from long standing economic crises, extreme poverty, little experience with liberal democratic governance, and widespread societal alienation (Brown and Kaiser 2007). Furthermore, Brown and Kaiser (2007) postulate that a fundamental obstacle to democratization throughout the continent is

neo-patrimonial rule, described as “the core feature of politics in Africa” (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Neo-patrimonialism is inimical to democratization because the distribution of state resources is based on the ruling elite’s personal ties, rather than on principles such as the public good, national citizenship or equal opportunities. The ruler’s personal prerogatives also eclipse the role of formal institutions and the rule of law (Brown and Kaiser 2007).

A report on the EISA conference highlighted nationalism and ethnicity; religious fundamentalism; high socioeconomic inequalities; the absence of a healthy civil society; and the absence of effective, honest and moral leadership as factors that obstruct the consolidation of substantive democracy over the African continent (EISA Symposium 2007).

One plague that is, and has continued to be inimical to both procedural and substantive democracy and development on the African continent is corrupt, ineffective and inefficient leadership. Adejumbi (2000) maintains that Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) is one of the largest and richly endowed countries in Africa, yet, it is a country that lacks basic amenities and her citizens live in dire poverty. Apart from the damaging political crimes misdemeanour of Mobutu, the living standards in Zaire under him stooped below that of the pre-independence era (Nzongola, 1982; Sandbrook, 1985; Human Rights Watch, 1997); it was the apogee of political misrule and bad governance (Adejumbi 2000). It is this dearth of effective, transparent, visionary and goal-oriented leadership that many scholars believe is, and has been cankerous to substantive democracy and development across the African continent.

## Leadership

Leadership, it seems, is increasingly becoming the panacea of the twenty-first century (Bolden 2004). Winston and Patterson (2006), after reviewing 160 books and articles that contained definitions, scales or constructs of leadership, gave an integrative definition of a leader as; “one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s)

who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives". Although there are many theories on leadership (see Stodgill, 1948; Argyris 1955; Hemphill and Coons 1957; Mahoney et al. 1960; Likert 1961; Nicholls 1988; Bryman 1992; Quick 1992; Kouzes and Posner 1995; Yukl 1994; Fiedler, 1996; Townsend and Gebhardt 1997), this study will focus on two theories within the organizational context, namely transformational, transactional theories of leadership.

Transformational and transactional leadership style was first introduced by Burns (1978) based on his qualitative analysis of political leaders. Yukl (1989) defined transformational leadership style as the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organizational members, and building commitment for the organization's mission, objectives and strategies. It is a leadership style that "inspires followers to transcend followers' self-interests for the good of the organization and is capable of having a profound and extra ordinary effect on the followers concern" (Robbins, Judge and Sanghi, 2009). Transformational leaders seek to enhance the relationship by arousing and maintaining trust, confidence and desire (Einstein and Humphreys, 2001). Leaders who are identified with these behaviours show concern and respect for individual group members, open to input from others, treat all group members as equals and are friendly and approachable (Bass, 1990). The leaders in a way build followers respect and encourage them to on the welfare of the group or organization. They are also said to endow visions and sense of missions, and inspire pride in followers through charisma (Bass and Avolio, 1990).

A key objective of transformational leaders is bringing and developing followers to a level where they can successfully accomplish organizational goals and tasks without the direct intervention of the leader (Dartey-Baah et al., 2011). Bass (1985) stated that transformational qualities lead to performance beyond expectations in organizational settings. Transformational leaders are considered to be visionary and enthusiastic, with an inherent ability to motivate followers (Bycio et al.,



1995, as cited in Dartey-Baah et al., 2011). The attributes of transformational leadership are charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Charisma or idealized influence is the degree to which the leader behaves in admirable ways that causes followers to identify with the leader. Inspirational motivation is the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Intellectual stimulation is the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' creative ideas and lastly, Individualized consideration is the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs (Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

Transactional leaders, in contrast, focus on the proper exchange of resources. The concept of transactional leadership is all about an exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates (Bass, 1999). If transformational leadership results in followers identifying with the needs of the leader, the transactional leader gives followers something they want in exchange for something the leader wants (Kuhnert and Lewis 1987, as cited in Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Transactional leaders make clear the task performance expected of subordinates and the rewards for meeting those expectations, anticipating task-oriented problems and taking corrective action (Avolio et al. 1991). Thus, they use rewards and known standards of performance to motivate, encourage and arouse subordinates' commitment. The dimensions of transactional leadership are contingent reward, management by exception—active, and management by exception—passive. Contingent reward is the degree to which the leader sets up constructive transactions or exchanges with followers; the leader clarifies expectations and establishes the rewards for meeting these expectations. Management by exception is the degree to which the leader takes corrective action on the basis of results of leader–follower transactions. Active leaders monitor follower behaviour, anticipate problems and take corrective actions before the behaviour creates serious difficulties. Passive leaders wait until the behaviour has created problems before taking action (Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

## **“Transfor-Sactional” Leadership (A Transformational–Transactional Mix)**

Burns (1978) considered the transformational leader to be distinct from the transactional leader, where the latter is viewed as a leader who initiates contact with subordinates in an effort to exchange something of value, such as rewards for performance, mutual support, or bilateral disclosure and the former as one who engages with others in such a way that the leader and the follower raise one another to a higher level of motivation and morality. Contrarily, Tosi (1982) indicated that every charismatic leader is supported by someone with the ability to manage the mundane, day-to-day events that consume the agendas of many leaders; thus transformational leadership augments transactional management.

Dartey-Baah (2015) argues that the “expansion of knowledge on leadership should be centred on how an effective mix of the transactional and transformational leadership theories would yield best results” (p. 106). The term transfor-sactional leadership seeks to bring a new twist to the transformational–transactional argument. This term denotes a mixture of transformational and transactional leadership styles where the transfor-sactional leader is viewed as one who effectively fuses and exhibits attributes and characteristics of both transformational and transactional leadership styles (Dartey-Baah 2015). Therefore, there should be a converging point between these two leadership styles where effective leadership is activated to induce the best performance from followers and subordinates. By this, the author is of the view that the four attributes of transformational leadership, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Judge and Piccolo, 2004), when combined with the three attributes of transactional leadership, namely contingent management, management-by-exception (active) and management-by-exception (passive) (Judge and Piccolo, 2004) result in effective leadership, hence; transfor-sactional leadership.

## Democracy and Transformational Leadership- Conceptual Framework

One of the strong principles of democracy is periodic, free and fair elections, that is, where citizens of a country vote leaders into power at all levels of governance (district, national, etc.) to represent them and to promote their interests, needs and wishes through the making of informed policies and decisions. Thus, the concept of leadership plays a very vital role in democracy. These elected leaders are those who will make decisions that will affect the lives of citizens in the country. Therefore, the style of leadership of these representatives is imperative in the attainment of substantive democracy and development on the African continent. In other words, for African countries to enjoy the benefits of substantive democracy, leaders at all levels of governance must endeavour to adopt certain principles and attributes. If leaders adopt appropriate leadership styles, they will in-turn ensure that adequate policies are pursued, while subordinates and employees are properly motivated to be creative, committed and innovative in bringing out ideas in policy formulation and implementation as well as increase productivity in both the public and the private sectors of the economy. In the long run, as these elected leaders exhibit competence, efficiency and effectiveness, the democracy of the country, that is, both procedural and substantive, will be fortified.

## Discussion

Democracy, like all other systems of government, has its flaws that come along with its benefits. Oyekan (2009) contends that there is no system of government that is not fraught with problems, meaning that democracy is not an exception and should not be dismissed on the basis of its imperfections. Thus, drawing on knowledge of its success in the western world, African countries could ensure that certain principles and practices be upheld in order to sustain their democracies and reap the full benefits thereof. One of such principles is effective and efficient

leadership, leadership that is visionary, innovative and creative in solving pertinent problems of African countries. One guide for leaders to be effective is through the adoption of leadership styles and the pursuit of their attributes. In the organizational setting, two behavioural leadership styles, namely transformational and transactional, have been subjected to rigorous studies with various variables.

Leadership style has been found to affect a wide range of factors such as job satisfaction, performance, turnover intention and stress (Chen and Silverthorne 2005) and helps achieve organizational success (Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006). An effective leadership style of the leaders in an organization is capable of providing motivational stimulus and direction to their followers to achieve the organizational mission and goals (Wan Omar and Hussin, 2013). Yousef (2000) found a positive relationship between leadership behaviour and job satisfaction and recommended adoption of appropriate leadership behaviours in order to improve management. Leadership is also known to be one of the determinants of organizational commitment and employee commitment (Aghashahi et al. 2013). Mehta, Dubinski and Anderson (2003) conducted a study on leadership styles, motivation and performances and indicated that leadership styles influence motivation and went further to claim that leadership styles that were participative, supportive and directive motivated the employees more and this resulted in higher levels of performance. Bass and Avolio (1999), in their studies, established a correlation between transformational leadership style and motivation (Buble, Juras and Matic 2014). Evidently, transformational and transactional leadership styles have substantive influences on the job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, among others, that ultimately lead to higher levels of performance.

In a study conducted in Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and UK on transformational and transactional leadership among building professionals, Chan and Chan (2005) found that “transformational leadership can augment transactional leadership to produce a greater effect on the performance and satisfaction of employees; however, transactional leadership does not augment transformational leadership” (p. 419). They further discussed that “transformational leadership has a substantial add-on effect on transactional leadership in prediction of employees’ rated

outcomes of extra effort, perceived leader effectiveness, and satisfaction with the leaders in the sample of building professionals” (p. 420).

However, these behavioural styles of leadership are prominent in the organizational setting. One mind-boggling question that arises then is this: If these behavioural leadership styles have been tested and proven to be effective in increasing organizational performance and growth thereby yielding great financial returns for organizations, why then can leaders at all levels of governance in African countries not adopt these styles in order to induce and incite commitment, motivation, innovation and creativity in solving social and economic problems that plague the continent?

In Fig. 9.1, we see transformational leadership as comprising transformational and transactional leadership styles, where transformational leadership augments, complements and has an add-on effect on the transactional leadership style resulting in effective leadership that ensures that goals are met, subordinates are satisfied, committed and well motivated, performance is high and sustainable growth is achieved. Research has found transformational and transactional leadership styles to have significant influence on performance and attitude of subordinates and employees to work, where subordinates are motivated, committed to their work, innovative, creative, productive and do not exhibit counterproductive behaviours such as absenteeism, turnover, burn-out, among others (Chan and Chan 2005; Stone 1992; Corrigan and Garman 1999; Mehta et al. 2003; Chen and Silverthorne 2005; Wan et al. 2013; Kent and Chelladurai 2001, etc.)

In Africa, one can confidently say that transactional leadership style is dominant. Thus, instead of district executives, members of parliament, ministers and other government officials conforming to procedures of state bureaucracies only, which are in line with transactional leadership, they could adopt principles of transformational style, such as idealized influence, where they would exhibit behaviours that are worthy of emulation such as eschewing corruption and embezzlement of state funds; inspirational motivation, where they would present a vision that is attainable, enticing and worth pursuing to their subordinates; intellectual stimulation, where leaders would challenge the mental abilities and capabilities of subordinates to think outside the box in producing

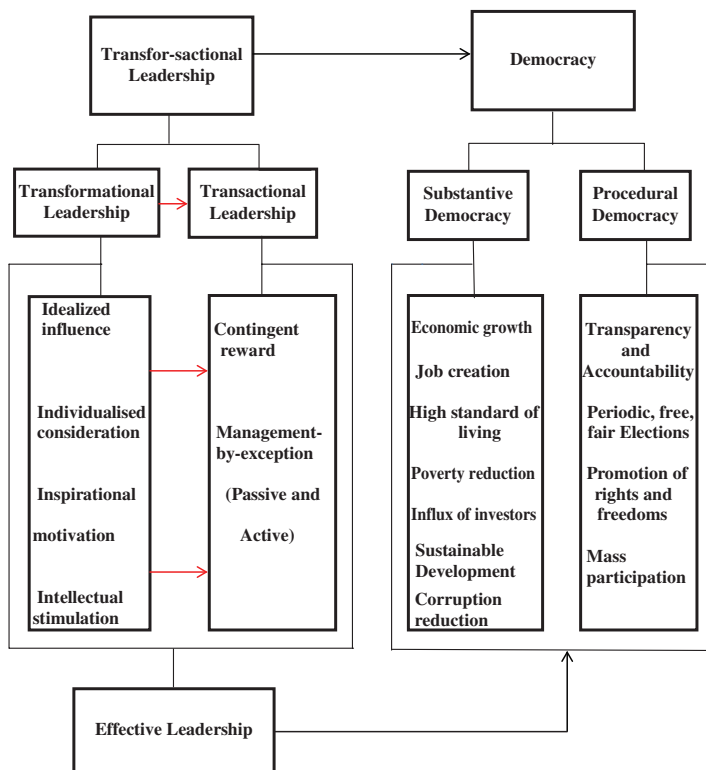


Fig. 9.1 Conceptual framework. *Source:* Dartey-Baah (2015)

lasting solutions to problems that plague the continent such as poverty, malnutrition, low standards of living, low per-capita income, high population growth rate, currency depreciation among others; and individualized consideration, where they would treat their subordinates as not mere civil servants but each as an individual with different potentials, capabilities, weaknesses and needs, at the same time showing concern for their well-being, to complement and augment attributes of transactional leadership style such as; contingent reward, where they make known to subordinates rewards for meeting expectations and sanction for failure to do so; and active management by exception, where the leaders closely monitor behaviours of subordinates and tackles problems at their budding stages.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the demand for democracy seems to be high across the African continent and the prospect of procedural democracy is good. However, that of substantive democracy, where economic growth and development is achieved, does not look promising, looking at international indices for measuring human development. A major limitation to substantive democracy has been poor, ineffective leadership that is not visionary and renders subordinates unproductive. As a way to counter this leadership limitation, this paper has highlighted the introduction and adoption of transformational leadership, a style that mixes transformational and transactional leadership attributes, where transformational leadership complements the more familiar transactional leadership resulting in effective, visionary leadership that makes subordinates committed, motivated, creative and productive.

In Africa, one can confidently say that transactional leadership style is dominant. Thus, instead of district executives, members of , ministers and other government officials conforming to procedures of state bureaucracies only, which are in line with transactional leadership, they could adopt principles of transformational style such as idealized influence, where they would exhibit behaviours that are worthy of emulation such as eschewing corruption and embezzlement of state funds; inspirational motivation, where they would present a vision that is attainable, enticing and worth pursuing to their subordinates; intellectual stimulation, where leaders would challenge the mental abilities and capabilities of subordinates to think outside the box in producing lasting solutions to problems that plague the continent such as poverty, malnutrition, low standards of living, low per-capita income, high population growth rate, currency depreciation among others; and individualized consideration, where they would treat their subordinates as not mere civil servants but each as an individual with different potentials, capabilities, weaknesses and needs, at the same time showing concern for their well-being, to complement and augment attributes of transactional leadership style such as; contingent reward, where they make known to subordinates rewards for meeting expectations and sanction for failure to do so; and active management by exception, where the leaders closely

monitor behaviours of subordinates and tackles problems at their budding stages.

This leadership mixture can help African leaders and countries achieve significant substantive democracy and strengthen procedural democracy. It is therefore recommended that leaders at all levels of the governance, that is, district, regional and national levels of African countries, be made aware of the attributes of transformational leadership, through avenues such as trainings, seminars, workshops and the benefits associated with it as a complementary and augmenting tool to transactional leadership. This will enable them in the discharge of their duties to obtain optimum commitment, motivation and innovation, creativity, satisfaction, high productivity and performance from subordinates so as to help mitigate political and socioeconomic problems and conflict within their countries. Eventually, this could strengthen the substantive democracy of these countries where they lag greatly behind Western countries and complement their procedural democracies.

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