

# Political Leaders in Africa: Presidents, Patrons or Profiteers?

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## **Abstract**

It is easy to experience a sense of *déjà vu* when analysing political leadership in Africa. The perception is that African leaders rule failed states that have acquired tags such as “corruptocracies”, “chaosocracies” or “terrorocracies”. Perspectives on political leadership in Africa vary from the “criminalisation” of the state to political leadership as “dispensing patrimony”, the “recycling” of elites and the use of state power and resources to consolidate political and economic power. Whereas African states enjoy external sovereignty, internal sovereignty has taken on a new meaning as political leaders outside the so-called formal Westphalia arena compete for power, provide state-like services and have monopoly of and over organised violence. Against this background, some states that were once “wholesalers” of security are now mere “retailers” of security, authority, resources and power.

Given their present rates of growth and development, it is clear that most African states will not meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This paper is an attempt to review and analyse the multiple layers of formal and informal political leadership in Africa. Leaders play a pivotal role in political agenda setting, the distribution of resources and political actions. The contemporary state in Africa is a remnant of a colonially imposed system. At the time of independence, elites attempted to transform this but only succeeded in entrenching their interests. The paper also addresses new indications of transactional and transformational leadership on the continent as illustrated by the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

## **Introduction**

The international perception of and focus on Africa as a continent of endemic conflict largely overshadows the significant progress made towards

more stable, accountable and open political systems. A recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report concluded that more governments are adhering to the rule of law and human rights and, by 2006 two of every five African states were regarded as democracies.<sup>1</sup>

Clapham's, *inter alia*, observations on the continent are somewhat contrary to this, "The architecture of post colonial Africa is still unfolding, with much of it already in place. It is a messy constructive, comprising of areas of effective and even democratic statehood; areas under control of personal rulers of one kind or another, some of them formally recognised and others not; borderlands and zones of shifting control; and areas altogether beyond the realm of statehood. As inevitably happens when major transformations are afoot, this shifting scene of subject to numerous conflicts, some of them between the embattled adherents of the formal state order and those who are seeking to contest it, others between competitors for control over disparate resources – ethnic identities, diamond mines, smuggling networks and arms supplies – that have been left up for grabs as a result of post colonial states to maintain effective control."<sup>2</sup>

In 1992, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni published, *What is Africa's problem?*<sup>3</sup> Museveni does not offer a final answer, but for the purposes of this contribution, "leadership" is the short answer.<sup>4</sup> Africa is, by its leaders' admission, in crisis due to its loss of the spirit of its traditional leadership and postcolonial "questionable leadership". The "challenge to strengthen and sustain progressive political leadership" is one of the major constraints in implementing NEPAD. Wiseman Nkuhlu, the former CEO of NEPAD, maintains, "What Africa has to get right in order to claim the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to improve leadership across the board."<sup>5</sup>

History reminds us of the *turning points* initiated and facilitated by political leaders (some would call them "Great Men", "Heroes of history" or "Evil Men") such as Josef Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Kwame Nkrumah. Given leaders' role in causing and sustaining conflicts, they are also particularly important for mitigating, transforming or resolving these conflicts, peace building and post conflict reconstruction, and the reconstruction of collapsed states.

Africa politics and political institutions do not conform to the notion of the predominant institutionalised Western-type state system and a performance-

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based understanding of leaders and the state. For Boas, “politics in Africa are a game played out on a marginal site, beyond institutionalised regulations in a Western bureaucratic sense”, while others maintain it to be a “typical extra-legal contest for political and economic domination between elites and politicians.”<sup>6</sup> For some, African politics “is increasingly patrimonial and spoils-orientated”<sup>7</sup> In patrimonial systems, power is centralised in one individual applying it for his self-interest and loyal supporters are rewarded and selectively favoured. These supporters, or “clients”, are expected to mobilise political support for the incumbent and refer all decision making to the “patron”. Some of these characteristics are evident in a contemporary *neo*-patrimonial system. For instance, power and the right to rule is located in a powerful individual, not in a traditional political environment, but in the context of a state based on traditional and Western state structures. Furthermore, politics continues to be conducted within a closely knit network of dependent relationships. Although this type of system occurs elsewhere, it is particularly prevalent in the majority of African states where political power is personal and politics is a type of business as political positions give access to economic resources.<sup>8</sup>

It is impossible to deal with all aspects of political leadership in every state. Research on political leadership is scattered. Some recent studies on political leadership in Africa focused on indigenous political leadership and institutions<sup>9</sup>, traditional leadership<sup>10</sup>, perspectives of leadership in African, Caribbean and Diaspora polities<sup>11</sup>, warlords<sup>12</sup>, former African presidents<sup>13</sup>, neo-patrimonialism<sup>14</sup>, African elites<sup>15</sup>, recruitment, and succession.<sup>16</sup> These also include biographies<sup>17</sup> and autobiographies of and by African leaders and make a significant contribution to our understanding of leadership and governance in Africa.<sup>18</sup> Political regimes in Africa range from an absolute monarchy (Swaziland), transitional governments (Somalia), governments of national unity (Sudan), one/no party state (Uganda 1986-2006), one party dominant government (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) to a multi-party democracy (Botswana).

Political leaders are the primary holders, controllers and distributors of power and resources in a particular institution (i.e. institutional power) and/or territory (i.e. geo-political power). This includes leaders who gained power by ballots and those who gained power by bullets including warlords, vigilante and

rebel leaders. The latter control and govern specific areas, and wield considerable power and authority. Organised around ethnic, tribal, sectional and clan lines, this type of leadership is often personality-based and charismatic. Warlords have access to arms, are able to marshal support and have the ability to either trade in natural resources, or collect “taxes” from areas under their control.<sup>19</sup>

This paper does not address pre-colonial and colonial political leadership. Prior to colonialism, leaders such as chiefs and kings ascended to power via their lineages. In certain kingdoms (e.g. the Cayor, Bur, Ga, Asante, Yoruba, Kongo, Luba and Buganda), kings were believed to possess certain divine and/or supernatural powers due to their bloodline. Notwithstanding, kings were often removed if they did not live up to the expectations of the people they ruled.<sup>20</sup> This study is an attempt to analyse some aspects of political leadership relating to actors (political leaders as defined above), issues (such as the nature of features of leadership and leadership Renaissance), trends (the militarisation of leadership) and the imposed and self-imposed context (the post colonial state and the African Union) of political leadership in Africa.

## **The Political Legacy of the Liberation Struggle**

The struggle against colonialism is the best-known example of political competition. More recently, struggles against **African** colonisers in Eritrea, Namibia and the Saharawi Republic and “reform insurgencies” (Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda) have also emerged and, in some cases, took control of government. African liberation struggles left various legacies. Struggle credentials (or lack of them) determine access to power and resources and often divide liberation movements-turned governing parties into “insiders” and “outsiders”. Struggle leaders turned presidents are not only reluctant to surrender power, but state ownership is firmly held by the power holders of the former liberation movement. Most of the pre- and post-independence politics and leadership revolved around the personality of its first president. Côte d’Ivoire under Félix Houphouët Boigny is an example. Post-liberation leaders enjoy “structural autonomy”, i.e. being able to remove themselves from

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society and implement the struggle's ideals. They also have the capacity to penetrate society politically and secure their hegemony. Leaders enjoy ideological legitimation to justify and implement their policies. Initially, states performed government functions efficiently. However, when faced with political and economic crises, these governments' hold on state power. Where these crises have occurred, an exclusivist mode of autocratic rule emerges, drawing on struggle credentials and rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

### **Africa's "Triple Crisis of Governance"**

African states share the imposition of artificially created nation-states and imperial state structures.<sup>22</sup> Africans had little time to prepare for independence and at independence the incoming elite inherited alien structures. It inherited state structures developed through coercive mechanisms and centralised political and economic controls such as the army, police and the bureaucracy. This resulted in the establishment of a political culture based on ethnicity and authoritarian patterns of governance. Controlling the state and its resources became the primary purpose of political contestation.<sup>23</sup>

In situations where the state is unable to provide basic services and security, the concept of "failed/fragile state" often applies. This "performance based" understanding of statehood and political stability underscore states' obligation to provide specific public goods, for which, in turn, its citizens imbues it with legitimacy and authority. Failing to provide these results in crises where the state loses its monopoly on the use of force. State failure, or state collapse, refers to a condition where the structure, authority, power, law and political order fall apart and must be reconstituted. Six African states are ranked by the Foreign Policy among the ten most vulnerable states<sup>24</sup> and are experiencing a "triple crisis of governance", which includes the lack of accountability and the rule of law, the inability to manage and resolve intra and inter-state conflicts; and economic crises.<sup>25</sup> Mamdani maintains, "It is not just any state that is collapsing; it is specifically the colonial state in Africa that is collapsing."<sup>26</sup> Somalia, for example, has not had a functioning government since 1991.

## **The State in Africa**

The “scramble for Africa” created states without any regard for ethnic diversity. All groups in a state simply ‘belonged’ to various European powers.<sup>27</sup> This “great transplantation” of certain European conceptions of the state, its institutions and authority created nation states, which the eminent African scholar Basil Davidson described as “the black man’s burden” and a “curse” as it included and subjugated ethnic groups within specific superficial political spaces. It was exactly the politics of inclusion/exclusion by some ethnic groups that caused many of Africa’s inter and intra state wars.<sup>28</sup>

All post independence constitutions were a compromise between major political actors and their interests. As post independent incumbents took on a winner takes all approach, they amended constitutions, contravened the norms of constitutionalism and good governance – accumulation of state power was the sole objective. Africa experienced its own wave of democratisation in the 1980s and the 1990s. For the first time since independence, Africans revolted against personalised dictatorships and accepted the idea of limited terms for heads of government. Whereas only eight African presidents went into voluntary retirement and only one stood down after an election defeat between 1960 and 1989, the corresponding figures from 1990 to 2004 were 17 and 15. By the end of the Cold War, pro-democracy movements, as well as multi-party politics and constitutional reviews, emerged across the continent.<sup>29</sup> This “confirms the contention that the release of the Cold War straitjacket and the rise of pro-democracy movements did not mean that Africa became more able to re-design its institutions of governance, or reform its state structures” without hindrance.<sup>30</sup> Somalia, for example, is one of Africa’s most glaring failed states. Since it fell apart in 1991 when clan militias removed Mohamed Siad Barre from office, fourteen attempts by foreign countries to restore order have failed.<sup>31</sup>

States are *the* principal, sovereign, authoritative and legitimate actors in the international arena. The nature of some Africa states makes it a breeding ground for undermining formal leaders’ efforts to govern. The African condition is low on the Human Development Index (HDI) ratings, due to economic underdevelopment, conflicts, crime, militant non-state actors with international



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networks, resource depletion, the rise in Islamic fundamentalism, high levels of debt, endemic corruption, unemployment, political alienation and exclusion, large numbers of internally displaced persons, structural poverty and cyclical food insecurity.<sup>32</sup> These conditions undermine public/state authority. The resultant authority and power vacuum enable the emergence of private authority in Africa. Private authority lies outside the realm of the formal state where positional leadership is exercised. This relates to formal state structures and requires the performance of clearly specified duties and responsibilities, often outlined in constitutions. Preferential leadership is more informal, requires the performance of less duties and responsibilities, is relatively unconstrained, and is shaped by the individual's preferences. Power is thus exercised both *de jure* and *de facto*. In some areas, a *de facto* contract exists between patrons and clients, i.e. clients trade political submission for military protection from their patron.

The emergence of new sources and locations of authority, and sources undermining it, indicate changes *vis-à-vis* the state's status. It is important to distinguish between formal/illicit leadership (i.e. political leadership – be it elected or some or other politically significant position) and informal/illicit leadership. In Africa, powerful informal/illicit leaders proliferate amidst state collapse and challenge the state's authority. Examples of these illicit leaders include criminal cartels, mercenaries, warlords in Somalia, the Ninja rebels in Congo-Brazzaville, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the New Forces in Côte d' Ivoire, the *Interahamwe* (the militia that carried out the 1994 Rwandan genocide), and the heavily armed *Zaraguina* (highway robber bands controlling key roads in Extrême-Nord Province) in Chad. This also includes rebel movements such as the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Darfur. It is estimated that 60 000 armed militias operate in Somalia. These militias includes small marauding armed bands terrorising citizens, large groups linked to warlords controlling specific territories, and militia sub-contracted to protect business interests around ports and trade routes.<sup>33</sup>

These non-state leaders exert significant power and authority. Like religious organisations, informal authorities enter into the power vacuum left

by a collapsed/failed and/or de-legitimised state. They provide social services (protection, security, order) akin to what a state ought to provide. Some groups diversify their interests by, for example, governing certain areas, controlling its resources, trading in drugs and arms with other trans-national criminal organisations and money laundering. In some recent conflicts, African governments extensively used regular and irregular armed forces. France, for example, maintains a 1 000 strong Operation Epervier force in Chad. The Sierra Leone government used the Kamajors, and in Rwanda, *inter alia*, the Interahamwe was used. These militias were used as part time forces to uphold law and order, maintain national defence, and counter insurgency.<sup>34</sup>

Is the western notion of the state a viable option for the post-colonial state in Africa? Ethiopia, for example, has experimented with the emulation of various alternatives over the past 140 years. These alternative models included imperial Russia and Japan, post World War II United Kingdom and other Western states, and a revised Marxist model. None of these models “worked”.<sup>35</sup>

### **“Advanced Cases of Stayism”<sup>36</sup>**

Personal politics, personality politics and *politics by leadership* are distinguishing features of contemporary African politics.<sup>37</sup> It refers to the centralisation of all political power in the executive, i.e. the institutionalisation of executive political leadership. In Nigeria, for example, the personalised nature of the political arena is evident in the domination by a powerful “godfather” at the apex of a vast patronage network at federal, state and local level. Political outcomes are the function of intense competition between these godfathers, often at the expense of the population.<sup>38</sup>

Mazrui refers to the African political system as patriarchal, i.e. a political father figure emerges as the symbol of the venerated elder and patriarch. This often resulted in personal rule and personality cults (such as Touré, Banda, and Mobuto), and the phenomenon of “long distance men”. African political (state) leaders are, on average, older than leaders elsewhere in the world. Namibia’s president, Hifikepunye Pohamba, for example, turns 70. His predecessor,

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Sam Nujoma was 75 when he left office. The Cameroonian president, Paul Biya, turns 74, his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, is 79 in 2007 while Mwai Kibaki of Kenya is 76. Some of these “long distance men” declared themselves presidents for life (like Zaire’s Mobuto Sese Seko), Emperors (like Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic), God (Ali Solihi of the Comoros), Brother Leader (Muammar Al-Qaddafi of Libya) or amended constitutions to stay on (like Namibia’s Sam Nujoma and Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe). In Ethiopia, the emperor was called *Seyum Egziabher* (Elect of God). Nkrumah of Ghana was also accused of actively promoting a cult of his own personality, i.e. the Cult of Nkrumahism.<sup>39</sup> Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya was almost 60 years old when he assumed power in 1963. Another patriarchal African leader is the Ivory Coast’s Félix Houphouët-Boigny who ruled from 1960 until 1993. More recently, Bakili Muluzi of Malawi referred to himself as “the political engineer” of his country. Muluzi introduced his successor, Bingu wa Mutharika, to Malawians as “the economic engineer”. In Swaziland, Africa’s last remaining absolute monarch, the traditional title for the king is *ngwenyama* (The lion), whereas Mathieu Kérékou of Benin referred to himself as “The Chameleon”.<sup>40</sup>

After independence, leaders who were able to retain power grew extremely rich and retained power more coercively. Signalling the rise of the so-called Big Men, these leaders used their control of state resources to build vast networks of clients across ethnic boundaries. Robert Michel’s “iron law of oligarchy” applies here – as powerful individuals retain their position as long as possible.<sup>41</sup> Robert Mugabe has been ruling for the past 26 years, Paul Biya of Cameroon for almost 24 years and Libya’s Muammar Al-Qaddafi has also been ruling for decades. Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak is ruling for almost 26 years, Burkina Faso’s Blaise Compaore won a third successive five-year term in 2005 after 18 years as president and Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni has been in power for 21 years. In 2005, Omar Bongo of Gabon won a next seven year term. Bongo, in power since 1967, is now Africa’s longest serving head of state. In February 2005, Africa’s longest serving leader, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, of Togo died, after being in power since 1967. Despite many assassination and coup attempts against him, his army honoured him by mounting a coup within hours of his death to place his son, Faure Gnassingbé, in power. The move was supported by Togo’s

parliament, which soon afterwards amended the constitution to legalise the coup.<sup>42</sup>

South Africa's Mandela is a patriarchal, charismatic and reconciliatory leader, whereas Nigeria's Murtala Muhammad and Muhammad Buhari were disciplinarian leaders.<sup>43</sup> Some of these patriarchs fell victim to "leaderism". Emerging during the 1960s, "leaderism" refers to leaders who set themselves up as the champions of the people and "leaders behaving like sergeant majors, frequently reminding the people of the need for silence in the ranks."<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary African political leadership is neo-patrimonial featuring presidentialism, clientelism, the use of state resources, and the centralisation of power.<sup>45</sup> In presidentialism, the leader's power is unlimited, unopposed and unchecked. Here, formal institutions exist, but are merely symbolic rather than democratic. Post independence examples of presidentialism include Ghana during Nkrumah's rule, Sierra Leone under Siaka Stevens, and Uganda during Idi Amin's rule. A recent example of presidentialism is Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe whose power increased incrementally since independence. Enjoying absolute power, Mugabe sidelines parliament, allows elections, but crushes any signs of political opposition. Presidentialism establishes imperial presidencies and produces strong presidents centralising all power in the office of the president. In Libya and Egypt, for example, Muamar Qaddafi and Hosni Mubarak are seen to be grooming their sons (Seif al-Islam and Gamal respectively) as their political heirs.<sup>46</sup>

Constitutional amendments are one way of staying in power. Historically, African presidents have been hesitant to leave office. Limited terms intends to prevent "presidents for life" as they have a bad record of accomplishment, elimination of opposition, narrowing of the political field, establishing personal armies, often looting national wealth and using the constitution to consolidate personal power.<sup>47</sup> In Gabon, the constitutional restrictions on how many terms a president may serve were abolished in 2003. Bongo came to power as the head of a one party state. A multi-party system was introduced in 1991. In August 2006, Chadian President Idriss Deby won a third presidential term after pushing through a referendum to lift the constitutional two-term limit. Some reports suggest Deby is eager to appoint his son, Brahim, as his successor.

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“Stayism” also relates to liberation movements turned governing parties. Since its independence in 1966, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has governed Botswana. Botswana is an exception in the African political landscape; the country is Africa’s longest-running multi-party democracy. Botswana’s population is among the continents wealthiest. The country is also regarded as Africa’s least corrupt. States such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria and Cameroon, for example, have hundreds of languages and ethnic groups. Furthermore, Botswana’s House of Traditional Leaders chaired by Nkosi Seepatitso, plays an important role in policy formulation, consultation and implementation.

Despite being regarded internationally as “a model for democracy in Africa”, constitutional and political power is highly centralised in the presidency – the country’s president is also the president of the ruling BDP. Furthermore, the president is not directly elected by the people and consults no one in making a decision. As President, Festus Mogae, directly controls important levers of state power; i.e. the military and police, and the public service. Recently, Mogae threatened an academic with expulsion for criticising his decision to hand pick Lieutenant General Ian Khama, the current Vice President, as his successor. Mogae has indicated his intention to step down in 2008 after serving two full terms as president. This will allow Khama to assume power before the general elections in 2009. By law, the Botswana Vice President becomes the president.<sup>48</sup>

In 2006, Olusegun Obasanjo lost his bid to amend the constitution to accommodate him for a third term. In the run up to the Nigerian National Assembly’s vote on the proposed amendment, officials were accused of strong arm tactics and offering bribes of up to US\$ 270 000 to keep Obasanjo in office for a third term. In Malawi, Bakili Muluzi also attempted constitutional amendments to give him a third term in office. Muluzi’s attempts backfired but he managed to have Bingu wa Mutharika ascend to power. After a fall out with Muluzi and the party that brought him power, Mutharika formed his own political party. In Uganda, Yoweri Museveni was successful in his attempt to stay in power for a third five-year term.<sup>49</sup>

## **Traditional Leadership**

In Africa, the kingdoms of the Ashanti in Ghana (led by Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II) and the Zulu in South Africa (led by Goodwill Zwelithini) continue to be the largest by force of their numbers, political influence, cultural and linguistic dominance. Since independence, liberation movements, and subsequent post liberation governments have marginalised traditional authorities and leaders. Nkrumah, for example, excluded the Asantehene and other traditional leaders from his government. In 1971, President Nimeiri of Sudan abolished the so called “native administration system” and replaced it with regional and area councils. Skinner concludes that the failure of post independent political leaders in Upper Volta/Burkina Faso to compromise with traditional leaders led to “disaster”.<sup>50</sup> The removal of traditional levels of government created a power vacuum. Traditional authorities were politically emasculated. This resulted in the militarisation of ethnic groups.<sup>51</sup> As liberation movements turned-governing parties struggle with governance, they increasingly turn to traditional authorities for political and administrative support. In Uganda, Somaliland, South Africa Namibia and Zimbabwe, for example, traditional authorities are legally recognised.<sup>52</sup> In South Africa, eleven kings recognised by the government serve on its Council of Traditional Leaders. These traditional leaders are the custodians of their ethnic group and its culture. In certain rural areas, governments only have access to the rural population if it goes through the traditional leaders.

In 1993, President Museveni of Uganda permitted the installation of Museta II's son, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi, as the new *Kabaka* (king) of the Kingdom of Buganda, as well as the *Lukiiko* (the Buganda Parliament). Present during the installation were the traditional leaders of Uganda's other kingdoms of Ankole, Toro, Busoga and Bunyoro. But though the king has the crown, the scepter belongs to the president. Although this was a politically calculated move, it indicates the significant power of traditional leaders. The National Traditional Council of Liberia is involved in good governance and capacity building programmes at community level.<sup>53</sup>

Post genocide Rwanda is regarded as an example on integrating traditional and modern conflict resolution mechanisms. The country's more than

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60 000 community selected *Inyangamugayos* (persons of exemplary conduct and values) continue to act as volunteer conflict mediators and leaders in their communities. Swaziland is an example of a darker side of traditional leadership. Since 1973, opposition parties are banned; it is an absolute monarchy.

Recently, in Sudan, both the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Constitution of Southern Sudan contain specific references to traditional authorities; the Constitution recognises the institution, status and role of traditional authorities. It also provides for the establishment of a Council of Traditional Authority Leaders, whose role is that of an institution at local government level on matters affecting communities.<sup>54</sup>

### **Presidents or Profiteers: African Leadership Styles**

African leaders agree on the severity of the crises on the continent. However, how do they respond to these crises? What leadership styles are maintained or emerging? *Leadership style* is of importance as one style may produce a very different outcome than another. Leadership style is defined as “a general concept that includes a leader’s beliefs, decision making methods, and typical ways of dealing with others.”<sup>55</sup>

*First*, the need for power includes the desire to influence, control and dominate other people, groups or the agenda. Like their predecessors, contemporary African leaders are concerned with establishing, maintaining and/or restoring their power, as well as their influence and control over others. The generation of African leaders that took power at independence and stayed in office for decades afterwards are often referred to as “the long distance men.”<sup>56</sup> Their reluctance to step down shapes the destiny of their states.

Another aspect relates to the role of the liberation movement turned governing political party, which is most likely to stay in power for decades. In Botswana, the Botswana Democratic Party has been in power since 1996, whereas the Zimbabwe Africa National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has been in power in Zimbabwe since 1980. Since 1990, the South-West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) has been the ruling party in Namibia.

In South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) is ruling since 1994. Of all of these ruling parties, the ANC is the oldest and gained government control the most recently. Closely related to the need for power, are the various forms of violence and/or corruption that often accompanies it. A system of clientelism/patronage operates whereby the leaders have the state as his client, and the state the private sector as client. In Africa, *coups d'état* have been carried out largely by the military. These governments are often referred to as kleptocracies, i.e. rule by stealing. The military governments of Nigeria's Sani Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida were described as such. Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaire also falls into this category. During his three decades in power, Mobutu amassed a fortune of about US\$ 5 billion.<sup>57</sup>

*Second*, nationalism refers to a worldview in which one's own nation or group is superior and exceptional. There are strong emotional ties to one's own nation with an emphasis on national honour and identity.<sup>58</sup> In Africa, this often manifested itself in attempts by leaders to re-define the exceptionality of their ethnic group or nation. This often resulted in new nationalistic ideologies. In Tanzania, for example, Nyerere introduced *ujamaa*<sup>59</sup>. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia introduced *humanism*, in Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser introduced *Arab socialism* and Libya's Muammar Al-Qaddafi introduced his ideas in his Green Book.<sup>60</sup> More recently, Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki introduced the idea of an *African Renaissance*, which subsequently became one of the premises of the AU and NEPAD.

*Third*, and closely related to nationalism, is distrust of others. Some leaders believe that others' actions and motives are not sincere, suspicious and should be doubted. Mazrui refers to the pre-colonial sage tradition in African leadership.<sup>61</sup> Involving respect, wisdom and expertise, the sage tradition has been modernised in post independence Africa. Modern exponents of the sage tradition developed amongst some of Africa's founding fathers who philosophised about humankind and society, and Africa's international role. Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Augustine Neto and Julius Nyerere became philosopher kings, authors, philosophers and poets.

*Fourth*, a task orientated approach in order to accomplish a particular objective. Certain "task words" illustrate this.<sup>62</sup> The establishment and implementation



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of NEPAD, AU and the APRM are examples. On an inter-personal level, leaders apply words and concepts such as *African Recovery*, *African Renaissance*, *pan-Africanism* and *non-alignment*.<sup>63</sup> Mazrui identified Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana as a charismatic leader with considerable personal magnetism and one major political objective: the first African country to gain independence. Other task orientated, or mobilisation leaders are Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Both men were charismatic and able to mobilise their countries towards independence.<sup>64</sup>

### **Paths to Power: Ballots or Bullets?**

Leaders acquire their position through ascription, succession, nomination, appointment, election or self-appointment. It therefore involves legitimacy, authority, influence and power. In Laswellian terms, political leadership is essentially about power, how it is obtained, maintained, distributed, exercised and legitimised. There is a link between ethnicity and leadership succession in Africa, as leaders from larger ethnic groups are more likely to lose power. Large ethnic groups are more willing to remove leaders and replace the incumbent from their ethnic group, as they know their interests will be cared for. A leader with a military background and from a minority group is able to stay in power by coercive means. Leaders are also more likely to be removed by members from their own ethnic group. This is a type of “incumbency advantage” for ethnic groups.<sup>65</sup>

Political leadership can be coercive, authoritarian, consultative and/or enabling. “Good” political leadership is exercised in the public interest, rather than in leaders’ self-interest.<sup>66</sup> It contributes to higher levels of state and human security. Rotberg concurs, “Good leaders produce results, whether in terms of improved standards of living, basic development indicators, abundant new sources of personal opportunity, enriched educational opportunities, skilled medical care, freedom from crime, or strengthened infrastructures. Bad and despicable leaders...tear down the social and economic fabric of their lands; they impoverish and immiserate their increasingly downtrodden inhabitants.

Bad rulers oppress their peoples, depriving them of liberty, prosperity and happiness.”<sup>67</sup> More recently, good governance has become an indicator of “good” political leadership. Realising the governance-development nexus, the drafters of NEPAD, AU’s Constitutive Act and the APRM deal with good governance in four thematic areas: democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance and socio-economic governance.

Africa’s wave of democratisation started in the 1990s. This process did not consolidate properly. For Monga<sup>68</sup> and Wenger & Zimmerman<sup>69</sup>, amongst others, this is evident in the continued weakness of African political parties *vis-à-vis* the governing/dominating party (for example, Namibia, South Africa and Malawi), the manipulation of the electoral process (such as the Zimbabwe election of March 2005), a narrow political field, i.e. a focus on loyalty (with regards to the governing party as liberator) rather than issues (as in the case of Zimbabwe and South Africa), a constrained civil society and the absence of civility (as recent as June 2005 when Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe severely cracked down on civil society manifestations of opposition), a controlled press (this is evident throughout Africa), privatised violence and politicised armies, intra-state conflict manifesting in ethnic rivalries (as is in Rwanda and Burundi) and international support for dictatorships (such as the support of Laurent Kabila of the DRC by multi-national corporations interested in the country’s mineral wealth).<sup>70</sup>

### **Women as Political Leaders**

In 2003, African states adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which seeks to improve the status of women, gender equality and ending gender-based discrimination. Since its adoption, women’s role in decision-making processes at the highest levels seems to be improving. In 2004, Luisa Dias Diogo became Mozambique’s first Prime Minister, and, in 2005, Pumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was appointed as South Africa’s first deputy president. Marie-Angelique

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Savane was the chairperson of the APRM between 2003 and 2005, and, in 2004, Gertrude Mongella was elected as the first speaker of the Pan-African Parliament. Furthermore, half of the ten members of the African Union Commission are women.<sup>71</sup> In 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia became Africa's first elected female head of state. For Johnson-Sirleaf her election "...has certainly sent an unmistakable message of a growing need for an alternative leadership style" in Africa.<sup>72</sup> Boni Yayi, the recently elected president of Benin, included a number of women in his cabinet.<sup>73</sup>

### **A Return of the Military?**

Since January 1996, political instability has been steadily declining as more governments reacted against political instability (strikes, demonstrations, violence and attempted and successful coups) by hardening the political regime (imprisoning opponents, dissolving political parties and increasing state violence).<sup>74</sup> This notion is supported by the re-emergence of the military in African politics, as well as the overall militarisation of the political arena. Since 1991, there have been 19 occasions in 14 African states where governments have been overthrown by the military. Since 2000, successful military interventions occurred in the DRC, the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea-Bissau, Togo and Mauritania, whereas failed military interventions occurred twice in Burundi, the DRC and the CAR, and in the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, São Tomé & Príncipe, Mauritania, Equatorial Guinea and Chad.<sup>75</sup>

One of the key features of the current presidential race in Nigeria is a return to politics by the military. In 1966, a mere six years after independence, the military seized power in Nigeria; the subsequent civil war lasted until 1970, but the military relinquished political power in 1979 – only to return in 1983. This period lasted until 1999 when the military again relinquished power to a civilian government. Two former generals turned presidents, Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1995) and Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), are prominent actors here. A large network of military men who benefited from military governments supports both generals.

In Mauritania, a bloodless military coup ended Ould Taya's (who himself took over via a military coup) authoritarian regime in August 2005. Taya's rule was characterised by severe actions against any form of opposition, which resulted in a failed coup attempt in 2003. Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, Taya's director of national security, his nephew and commandant of Taya's presidential guard led the coup in 2005. Vall appointed a junta, the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (MCJD) and promised to establish the conditions for a democracy. Vall's coup has been described a "consolidation of instability" in the country.<sup>76</sup>

In Chad where numerous domestic and neighbouring rebel groups vie for political power, President Déby maintains power with the assistance of the army – supported by a French garrison stationed in the country. Since 1986, France maintains three military bases in Chad. President Déby is a Zaghawa, whose tribe comprises just 2% of the Chadian population. This group, then, profits from presidential patronage and dominates all ranks in the armed forces.<sup>77</sup>

### **Dictators in the Dock**

There is a perception that African leaders enjoy impunity. However, some political leaders' tenures were ended for them. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila ousted Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997. His promises of elections were never realised and the DRC slipped back into war. Unable to control the situation, Kabila banned opposition groups and some of his own supporters. One of his guards assassinated him in January 2001. Hosni Mubarak of Egypt succeeded Anwar Sadat who was assassinated in 1981. Mubarak himself has escaped at least six assassination attempts. Former Chadian president, Hissene Habre, has been in exile in Senegal since 1990.<sup>78</sup>

Since the Rwandan Genocide and the end of apartheid in South Africa, there seems to be an effort on the continent to end the culture of impunity for African leaders. South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone

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established truth commissions. Under the UN's auspices, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone were established. Various former heads of state/governments have been indicted or prosecuted in international criminal tribunals, national or foreign courts. The list includes, *inter alia*, Jean Kambanda (former Rwandan Prime Minister), Hissène Habré (former President of Chad), Robert Mugabe (President of Zimbabwe), Muammar Al-Qaddafi (Libyan President), Mengistu Haile Mariam (former Ethiopian president) and Abdukaye Yerodia Ndombasi (a former DRC Minister of Foreign Affairs).<sup>79</sup> Other African leaders also indicted on charges ranging from corruption, genocide and treason include Moussa Traore of Mali, Jean Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic who were sentenced to death but subsequently pardoned. Idi Amin of Uganda died in exile in 2003 in Saudi Arabia and Mobutu Sese Seko (president of Zaire) died in exile in Morocco in 1997. Both are regarded as human rights abusers but were never indicted. In 2005, former Mauritanian president Mohamed Khoum Ould Hialeah was tried for a series of alleged coup plots. After two presidential terms, Bakili Muluzi of Malawi relinquished power in 2004; he was subsequently arrested and charged with corruption and fraud. In Zambia, former president Fredrick Chiluba is on trial for corruption.

The list of indicted African leaders now also includes Charles Taylor (former head of state of Liberia), accused by a UN tribunal of war crimes in Sierra Leone. The Special Court for Sierra Leone, an international criminal tribunal similar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the ICTR (and not a national court of Sierra Leone), indicted Taylor as a "person who bears the greatest responsibility" for participation in the "joint criminal enterprise" in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. This indictment was within the terms of International Criminal Law. Hissene Habre, a former president of Chad, is in exile in Senegal since 1990. He was indicted for crimes against humanity in 2000 and his case was referred to the AU.<sup>80</sup> Moving away from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) "dictators' club" image, the AU is in the process of establishing an African Court on Human and People's Rights.

## **Challenges to Leadership and Authority**

In Africa, authority is often backed by coercive power. Authority is located along a compliance-defiance continuum, where compliance indicates a recognition of one or all of the following types of authority: moral authority, knowledge authority, reputational authority, issue-specific authority and affiliative authority. Defiance often occurs when there is an imbalance between the needs and expectations of the community and that of specific individuals in authoritative positions.

Most African states are politically unstable, with ethnic and religious differences as aggravating forces. By 2001, twelve separatist groups were engaged in negotiations and campaigns of violence in Africa. Some of these included Cabinda (Angola), the Touareg (Niger and Mali), the Toubou (Chad and Niger), the Bubi (Equatorial Guinea), the Oromo (Ethiopia) and some groups in Somaliland, the Sudan and Eritrea.<sup>81</sup> Three different types of private authority can be distinguished, i.e. market authority, moral authority and “illicit” authority.<sup>82</sup> Terrorism in Africa can be regarded as a combination, or a clash of these three types of private authority. Possible reasons are:

- Contemporary terrorism operates within local and international networked structures (i.e. “an informal community of individuals who share common norms and values”).
- The emergence in religiously motivated terrorism, suicide attacks, new types of membership, co-operation with a variety of other groups, different methodologies, global (communication) networks sharing the same objectives and beliefs, the increased use of information technology, using chemical, biological, radiology or nuclear weapons, the ability to orchestrate simultaneous attacks in different countries, less dependence on state sponsorship and more reliance on resources such as “conflict diamonds”, natural resources, drugs and money laundering, an increase in the lethality and casualties of terrorist acts, a concentration on non-state “soft targets” such as civilians, disrupting the economy, victimising the tourist industry (as occurred in Kenya, Egypt and Morocco) to drive out the infidels, the emergence of so called *ad hoc* terrorist groups, generating massive global

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publicity via its operations and television such as CNN and *Al Jazeera*, as well as new attitudes towards violence and the objectives to be achieved. *Al-Qaeda*, for example, operates in more than 60 countries.

### **The Politics of Leadership and Solidarity**

The sovereignty of states, which had previously been untouchable, is now increasingly being challenged via international interventions aimed at, for example, the protection of human rights, but also by globally shared challenges. Apartheid, for example, was regarded as such a severe infringement on human rights that the UN classified apartheid as a crime against humanity. At the time, the UN Secretary-General stated that, in such instances, a state's individual sovereignty needed to be superseded by a universal sovereignty. Apartheid South Africa experienced this change in the moral practice of international relations first-hand. The global campaign against apartheid under the leadership of the UN Committee on Apartheid and the worldwide Anti-Apartheid Movement became increasingly interventionist as measures such as cultural boycotts, economic sanctions and arms embargo, were instituted to weaken the apartheid government and to strengthen the liberation movements in exile and inside South Africa.

African leaders such as Thabo Mbeki, Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Al-Qaddafi and Olesegun Obasanjo have a significant interest in regional and international affairs.<sup>83</sup> Realising that it cannot effectively act alone to achieve specific objectives, but that it can have considerable impact, South Africa, has since 1994, used its influence in multilateral organisations to, *inter alia*, work towards a more equitable and democratic international order. South Africa's successes in this regard include the global campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines, blood diamonds (via the Kimberley Process) and its decision in favour of nuclear disarmament. The Ottawa Process, as the anti-personnel landmine campaign became known, was an opportunity for South Africa to cooperate with middle powers such as New Zealand and Canada to work towards the ban. In 1997, South Africa was able to announce a complete ban

on mines and convened an OAU conference on the matter. By December 1997, 120 governments signed the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel (AP) mines.

South Africa's ability to generate initiatives and assume a leadership position has enabled the country to act as a voice for the developing world and Africa. Other examples of its leadership include its contribution, via Thabo Mbeki, to the founding of the New African Initiative (NAI), the Millennium African Recovery Plan (MAP) and eventually NEPAD, its involvement in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), its efforts in working towards a Palestinian state and Nelson Mandela's initiatives concerning the independence of Timor-Leste.

The politics of solidarity is also evident in *first*, high levels of activism by both the Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki administrations in multilateral institutions, with an increased use of these institutions to achieve broader foreign policy objectives and an endorsement of multilateralism as the preferred institutional form of global interaction. South Africa's leadership in multilateral institutions included chairing the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) from 1998 to 2001, the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), the Commonwealth (2000-2001) and the OAU (2002). *Second*, attempts to revive and strengthen existing global and African multilateral institutions – especially those focussing on enhancing the interests of the developing world.

*Third*, a concerted commitment to introduce new norms and mechanisms to address the concerns of developing states, as well as concerns about Africa's marginalisation. Examples include the Fancourt Commonwealth Declaration on Globalisation and People-Centred Development (1999), the Berlin Declaration on progressive government (2000) and the Skagen Declaration signed between the South African president and his Nordic counterparts (2000). Positioning itself as a 'go-between' between the industrialised North and the developing South, South Africa took on a self-appointed role as bridge-builder. In 1996, South Africa's Alec Erwin was elected as the president of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) until 2000. In this capacity, South Africa attempted to advance the position of the South. Another example of South Africa's bridge-building role was the outcome of the 1996 World Trade



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Organisation (WTO) conference in Singapore, where it achieved an agreement between countries of the South and North on global labour standards. South Africa also achieved similar North-South agreements, including its Free Trade, Development and Co-operative Agreement (TDCA) with the EU and its relations with the US via the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA).

Recognising the support that Africans rendered to the liberation movement, the ANC government committed itself to Africa. Having an interest in a peaceful and economically strong Africa, South Africa made Africa a central focus of its foreign policy as early as Nelson Mandela's presidency. However, Nelson Mandela's foreign policy was often criticised for its inability to invent a credible role for South Africa in Africa – especially in the aftermath of the Lesotho intervention in 1998. Nelson Mandela also failed to reach a peaceful resolution in the DRC when Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia sent troops in support of Laurent Kabila. South Africa reconstructed its foreign policy by focusing on its position of leadership in Africa. Thabo Mbeki's concept of an *African Renaissance* is, in its essence, an attempt to strengthen democratic practices and economic liberalisation in Africa. Thabo Mbeki's attachment to this project reflects various foreign policy concerns, including the promotion of regional integration and development (via its membership of and leadership in the SADC), support for nuclear non-proliferation (by renouncing its nuclear weapons programme), a sensitivity to territorial integrity and state sovereignty (by rejecting, for example, US demands that South Africa should not have relations with Libya and Cuba), the peaceful resolution of conflicts (such as hosting the Great Lakes peace process), a commitment to the promotion of human rights and democracy (such as the intervention into Lesotho in 1998 to restore democracy and human rights), and a willingness to adopt the liberal economic model of free trade and investment in order to address the legacy of apartheid.

South Africa's identification with other states is based on feelings of solidarity, community, loyalty and concern for the other's welfare and fate. Solidarity also implies sharing burdens, risks and dangers.<sup>84</sup> One of the risks of African solidarity, as outlined by Thabo Mbeki, is "[T]he danger that .... we may fall victim to collective punishment as a continent."<sup>85</sup> This would

happen in the event that unacceptable behaviour in one or more countries is interpreted as being representative of our continent as a whole, producing negative responses, not only against the country or countries concerned, but Africa in its totality.” After its initial post 1994 “honeymoon”, South Africa was soon regarded with suspicion by other African countries in its conduct of continental affairs. Accused of promoting its self-interest, of being a lackey for the West, and of compromising its values, South Africa responded, especially during Thabo Mbeki’s first term as president, with a “charm offensive” to win back the trust of the continent. Thabo Mbeki, for example, assured “our neighbours and the peoples of the rest of Africa that the government we lead has no great power pretensions. We claim no right to impose our will on any independent country ... but will act within the context of our international agreements.”<sup>86</sup>

### **A Leadership Renaissance?**

African leaders, state structures and even informal sources of authority all contribute to high levels of insecurity for both the state and its citizens. In only a few African states is the rule of law functioning and political freedoms respected. Rotberg continues, “Good leaders produce results, whether in terms of improved standards of living, basic development indicators, abundant new sources of personal opportunity, enriched educational opportunities, skilled medical care, freedom from crime, or strengthened infrastructures.”<sup>87</sup> For a continent regarded as the cradle of humankind, Africa has a poor human development record. Recent editions of the *Human Development Report* and the *World Investment Report* indicate that human development and economic development in Africa remain the lowest in the world. In Botswana, Niger, South Africa and Egypt, for example, child mortality rates are among the highest on the planet. Simply put, Africans are some of the poorest and least developed people. In order to change these conditions, African leaders have to make a difference and pay more than mere lip serve to the idea of an African Renaissance and NEPAD.

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Julius Nyerere traced three phases of leadership in Africa.<sup>88</sup> He identified the first phase as that of the 1960s, the period of independence of most African states. Nyerere described this phase as one phase of visionary African leadership. It was a time of great idealism to address the economic and political challenges of the continent. It was also the time during which the idea of the creation of a united continent emerged. Nyerere's second phase covered the period from the 1960s to the 1980s. In this phase, some African leaders in alliance with the Cold War superpowers exploited the continent and its people. The third phase of African leadership is witnessing the emergence of a new generation of leaders.

A recent phenomenon is Africa's leaders' goals of leadership. Whereas liberation was one of the goals of the earlier generation, one of the most significant post Cold War developments in Africa has been the move towards greater regional integration in Africa. The idea of a "United States of Africa" and ambitious sub-regional proposals were first suggested by Pan-Africanists such as William du Bois and Kwame Nkrumah, and in the 1990s by Libya's Muammar Al-Qaddafi. Despite various setbacks, the pan-African (and mostly political) OAU and a regional economic organisation such as the Economic Community for the West African States (ECOWAS) achieved limited success. The OAU's *raison d'être*, for example, was collective security, the decolonisation of African states and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. Since the 1960s, the OAU, ECOWAS and SADC underwent various restructuring exercises in order to fulfil its objectives. In July 2002, the AU succeeded the OAU.<sup>89</sup>

## **AU, NEPAD and the APRM: Revolutions in African Sovereignty?**

A state's sovereignty bestows it with specific authority, legitimacy, certain prescriptions, obligations, rights, membership and prerogatives. Most African states experience at least three revolutions in their sovereignty<sup>90</sup>, i.e. colonialism (and a replication of the Westphalia system on the African continent) and, second, colonial independence, which coincided with the OAU's upholding of states' sovereignty and its corollary, non-intervention. Third, and against the background of the changed norms *vis-à-vis* humanitarian intervention, the

AU's provisions in support of humanitarian interventions in Africa. With the establishment of the AU, African leaders "overcome the obstacle of sovereignty" and surrendered some of their claims to their supreme authority within a particular territory (state).<sup>91</sup> Whereas colonialism imposed social power on Africa, African leaders, with the establishment of the AU, established their own reputational social power, i.e. the willingness to address the continent's challenges in a new way.<sup>92</sup>

The authors of the NEPAD refer to "the new political will of African leaders";<sup>93</sup> Some of the key principles of NEPAD are African ownership and responsibility, protection and promotion of democracy and human rights, good political, economic and corporate governance and accountable leadership.<sup>94</sup> NEPAD's implementation as an AU programme was a significant development. During the late 1990s, the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, announced the idea of an African Renaissance. Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, supported him in this. This was the beginning of the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP). MAP was mandated by the OAU. Subsequently, President Wade of Senegal announced the Omega Plan.

On July 3, 2001, the MAP and the Omega Plan were merged into the New African Initiative (NAI) and approved by the OAU Heads of State. NAI was renamed NEPAD and finalised on October 23, 2001. For the first time in decades, Africa leaders agreed upon the pre-conditions for Africa's development, i.e. peace, security, democracy and political governance, economic and cooperative governance and regional co-operation and integration. Included in NEPAD are five priority sectors, i.e. infrastructure, technology, human development, agriculture, and the promotion of the diversification of production and exports. A third aspect of the NEPAD strategy is resource mobilisation. This will be addressed by increasing savings and capital inflows via further debt relief, increased overseas development assistance; and better management of public revenue and expenditure.<sup>95</sup>

In terms of Article 30 of the AU's Constitutive Act, a member state is automatically suspended if its leaders came to power through unconstitutional means.<sup>96</sup> In August 2005, the AU suspended Mauritania's membership in protest

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at the coup against President Maaouiya Ould Ahmed Taya (who came to power in 1984 after a successful coup and subsequently served three successive terms). In the same month, the AU appointed Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique's former president) as its envoy to address Zimbabwe's political impasse. The establishment of the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) in 2004 marks a departure from the OAU's principle of non-intervention. The PSC can intervene in any member state in respect of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. The functions of the PSC include the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, early warning and preventive diplomacy, peace making, peace support operations and intervention, peace building and post conflict reconstruction, humanitarian action and disaster management.<sup>97</sup>

The good governance/economic development nexus is widely supported.<sup>98</sup> Considered the most innovative aspect of NEPAD, the APRM is an ambitious attempt by African leaders to build states capable of good governance and sustainable development. The APRM is a voluntary mechanism, and monitors and assesses states' progress in meeting their commitment to good governance, sustainable development and social reforms. Its mandate is to ensure states' conformity to mutually agreed internationally recognised good governance standards. Ghana and Rwanda have already submitted country reports.

The APRM covers four focus areas, i.e. democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. After undergoing various consultation processes in the particular country, the self-assessment report is tabled in key regional and sub-regional organisations, as well as the Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the AU. However, NEPAD and APRM continue to be government and elite driven processes. Accession to the APRM is a government decision. Thus, NEPAD/APRM faces a number of obstacles. Not only are governments reluctant to criticise themselves, or others, but also tensions continue to exist between a governance system based on neo-patrimonialism, and the more liberalised democratic system of governance to which NEPAD subscribes. NEPAD's aspirations of good governance, market reforms and accountability are a direct threat to this neo-patrimonial system based on the

elite's ability to entrench their power and wealth, distribute public resources to their supporters and co-opt political opponents unchecked.<sup>99</sup>

In 2001, six African leaders launched the Leadership Aids Watch for Africa. The group was comprised of the presidents of Nigeria, Rwanda, Mali, Ethiopia, Kenya and Botswana. In 2004, a group of former and present African leaders decided to act against poor African leadership. Led by Sir Ketumile Masire, Botswana's former president, the African Leadership Council (ALC) was established. The ALC promulgated a Code of African Leadership and proposed a series of courses to train political leaders in good leadership and governance.<sup>100</sup>

## **Conclusion**

There is a national and pan-African leadership Renaissance on the continent. Some African states (such as Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya and Zambia) are moving towards new democratic and constitutional dispensations, and the AU system is moving towards its consolidation. However, contemporary political leaders in Africa operate in environments constrained by the past's colonialism, present instability and a possible future of further continental instability and marginalisation. This paper surveyed some of these constraints. It referred to leadership styles, and the negative impact of "stayism". It also discussed the proliferation of actors challenging the state, its authority and power. Lastly, it discussed the AU system as a significant indicator of a leadership Renaissance.

However, some perennial concerns persist: high levels of human insecurity and underdevelopment, "stayism", the entrenched dominance of the liberation movement-turned governing party, a return of the military, the personification of political power, the distribution of spoils and profits among a patronage network, state capture, and unresolved intra- and inter-state conflicts. In conclusion, this paper recommends the following:

1. Political leaders create societies, and societies create political leaders. Moreover, leaders initiate and maintain conflicts, but it is also leaders who make peace. It is imperative that Africa's conflicts are resolved, and that

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post conflict reconstruction takes place. In this regard, the role of the AU system is of critical importance.

2. It is imperative that the African elite adopt alternative political programmes that explicitly reject the bases of the postcolonial state.<sup>101</sup>
3. It is time to reconsider some traditional forms of political leadership, as well as the role of women.
4. The few civil society organisations that do exist are caught between an entrenched elite and non-state/informal political actors (such as warlords etc). This sphere of political agendas and activities, in which civil society operates, needs to be opened.
5. A key task of all African leaders is to develop their societies and state institutions. Political leaders within or outside the state allocate tangible or non-tangible resources. However, control over resources lubricates patronage networks and satisfies the ambitions of elites. This explains, for example, African presidents' reluctance to surrender power, their maintenance of an inner circle oligarchy, and the personalisation of political power. The underlying causes of the continent's underdevelopment *by its leaders* should be addressed. This paper proposes the strengthening and enforcement of the APRM, and, where applicable, that leaders should be indicted for bad governance.
6. Thabo Mbeki warned against the "risk of complacency in leadership development."<sup>102</sup> We propose the establishment of an African Leadership Academy under the auspices of the AU and civil society.

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