

African Leadership Problems

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### **Introduction**

The African continent has been facing numerous challenges since most countries got independence. A significant number of the problems have been prevalent despite the many reform strategies and developments in changing governments' structures and leadership. Years after all the countries are gained independence; the continent is still the number one receiver of aid from other countries. Colonialists and other external parties have offered and always seem to have solutions for the continent's problems. However, together with their leaders, Africans are majorly to blame for the problems the continent faces. This document discusses the role of African leaders in the prevalence of problems in Africa.

### **Body**

Significant challenges facing the African continent include poverty and underdevelopment. While Africa might have acquired independence, the continent did not gain economic independence (Mbandlwa, 2020). The fight for economic freedom is not against foreigners but Africans themselves. African leaders fight for political positions not because they have a great vision for revolutionizing their areas of power and bringing development but because they want to control the economy and the existing resources. African leaders perceive leadership positions in the government as offering chances to escape poverty (Mbandlwa, 2020). This perception is what causes political violence and political conflicts in significant parts of the continent. For African leaders, the government is the best avenue to exploit the economy. Before African gained independence, they united to fight a colonial government. Oppressed people were mobilized by African liberation movements with the slogan of setting people free from bondage. However, a significant part of Africans, especially in rural areas, do not experience the freedom achieved by being characterized to them-it is only in books but not actualized (Olamosu, 2018).

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A significant number of African countries cannot sustain themselves economically and survive on Western countries' loans. Those who own the economy in African countries have control of the government. Since African leaders control the government, financial aid from developed countries is often abused through funds misappropriation, money laundering, and for private benefits by African leaders (Olamosu, 2018). Most of the leaders elected are business-minded people who immediately after being elected begin exploiting resources. Corruption is a major theme in African problems, with leaders manipulating voters for support and exploiting resources. Whenever new leaders who genuinely want change for Africa rise and challenge the status quo, political violence begins. Political violence in African countries is a control mechanism to ensure little to no change in Africa's economic situation.

The prevalence of African problems can largely be attributed to its foundation from past African leadership and liberation movements. Votes were mobilized in the past through blackmailing people on liberation influence. Blackmailing has been a major method for African leaders to mobilize support for their agendas (Olamosu, 2018). African liberation movements and their leaders have played a significant role in promoting the mobilizing strategy in Africa. Even recently, Africans still elect leaders without plans or ideas of changing the economic situation of their countries. The elected leaders are after personal gain and blackmail citizens for support with false and overly ambitious plans to improve the continent's state. For instance, corruption is a major problem in Africa, as mentioned earlier. Almost all leaders guarantee citizens that they will end corruption during their years of service (Mbandlwa, 2020). This is an overly ambitious statement considering that corruption is deeply instilled in people's culture hence its prevalence despite being identified as a problem for many years. The leaders themselves are corrupt and significantly mismanage the power and resources available to them for

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improving their regions. After promising citizens to fight corruption as soon as they are elected, their actions reflect their forgotten promise and pick up from where the last corrupt leader left. This has led to most people considering the independence of Africa as not being beneficial since some Africans gain the power to economically oppress others while governing resources(Olamosu, 2018). African leaders have continuously demonstrated their incapacity to address the challenge of corruption, which significantly derails progress in the continent.

Africa gaining independence revealed the dark side of liberation movement leaders. It exposed leaders that were previously perceived as anti-elite, pro communists, and a system of capitalism. Once the liberation leader gained power, they changed their behavior and approach(Metz, 2018). They hired bodyguards to protect them and become distant from the people. Before independence, the common enemy was the colonialists, but the war was divided into ethnic fights after independence. Africans developed an ethnic group's power struggle. In this new power struggle, leaders established the principle of punishing enemies and rewarding friends, which is still present today. Friends and family members of leaders are treated differently from other people. Additionally, the law does not apply to all Africans. African leaders have established themselves above the law and are immune to the system(Metz, 2018).

African leaders have effectively normalized nepotism after independence. Nepotism is a crucial factor accounting for the significant poverty levels in Africa. Many people with adequate skills for jobs do not utilize their skills because the hiring process depends on the relationship with leaders. As such, many government institutions in Africa are failing and falling because people running the operations are unqualified and received the roles as favors from leaders(Mbandlwa, 2020). The mentality of employing family or friends in government positions is prevalent in Africa. It is common for people coming from the same ethnic groups to offer each

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other employment opportunities overlooking others with better qualifications from different ethnic groups. African leaders supporting nepotism do not care about the efficiency of institutions but rather their selfish needs and that of people close to them. This leads to the collapse of many institutions in place for helping the public. African leaders have been characterized as not having a vision for improving the nation through their elected role. They only consider how they are going to exploit the resources afforded to them by the elective position. Often there is little to no plan on how the resources can be mobilized for the greater public good.

The problem with African leadership is that they emulate some or all parts of leadership (Gberevbie et al., 2017). Freedom fighters were not taught how to develop or sustain national economies in the liberalization camps. Leaders in Africa emulate freedom fighters which leads to them fighting amongst themselves. Research shows that a significant part of leaders leaving government offices are often wealthy, a position in which they were not before being elected in office (Gberevbie et al., 2017). Additionally, the lifestyle of African leaders and their families does not match the salary they receive from their positions. For African leaders, government leadership positions are an influence point and receiving kickbacks point.

A significant number of leaders lack good governance skills and leadership ethics. African leaders lack moral values but are effective in promoting a different image in the media (Mkono, 2019). Living without moral values does not change the lack of virtue when elected in leadership roles. A big problem for Africans, and this is not only a problem for African leaders, but Africans too are the lack of ethics. This is the major reason why problems such as nepotism and corruption are greatly rampant and affecting African continent progress. Since lack of ethics is a problem with Africans, the leader Africans elect also lack leadership ethics (Metz, 2018).

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This, in turn, affects how the leaders control government resources and manage public funds. Lack of ethics and innovation is a significant factor when accounting for leadership problems in Africa. Leaders lacking ethics display an image of leaders not requiring ethics. This image applies to the next generation of leaders(Abebe, Tekleab, Lado, 2020). Africa's incumbent leadership does not plan for their exit strategy or the impact they've had on leaders taking over. African leaders also rarely give up their political seats, if ever; they ensure they have someone to continue from where they left. By incumbent leaders having their preferred successors, they ensure they are protected after they leave power. African leaders are aware of the adverse actions they are taking for selfish reasons; hence they nurture leaders that will not go after them after they leave power and will also continue looting what is left. Past selfishness and greed portrayed by leaders are still being reflected by leaders in Africa today. Looking at the current state of events in African leadership, the generation that will break free of this bondage is still yet to come. There is a lack of bold leaders in Africa that will stand with decisions to better the African continent despite objections from other continents(Abebe, Tekleab, Lado, 2020). The leaders available together with their successive plans continue to have detrimental impacts on the continent's progress.

Another problem with African leaders is that they use the youth as their tools for political battles. African leaders greatly contribute to the youth unemployment characterized in all parts of the country. African institutions greatly diminish the chances of their youth getting employment. For instance, institutions require work experience from freshly graduated students, which further adds to the high unemployment rate of youth in the community (Abebe, Tekleab, Lado, 2020). The education system in Africa is in shambles, and African leaders have played a significant role in this state. An education system should address economic needs and enhance Africa's image

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and status as among successful economies. Other continents recognize the education (University and college) in providing various global solutions. The education system utilized in Africa is designed by other countries but still fails to produce pioneers of innovation to propel Africa forward. African leaders do little to solve the unemployment issue that is present in all parts of the continent (Gberevbie et al., 2017). Instead of African leaders developing open spaces for young Africans' innovations, they use the unemployed youths for their political battles. Unemployed youth in the continent are forced to work for older politicians because of poverty. Older politicians use unemployed youth as their militia.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, African leadership is greatly to blame for the problems in the continent. The selfishness and greediness of African leaders have caused the continent to lag behind in development despite having a lot of resources. African leaders lack ethics and virtues, which allow evils such as corruption and nepotism to be deeply rooted in African institutions. African leaders also ensure that the next generation of leaders follows in their footsteps by selecting successors who are like them. This has led to most of the African problems being prevalent despite many years of change in leadership. However, this does not mean that people deploy the bigotry that Africans are endowed with qualities that make them bad leaders- a false claim. The lack of proper leadership can be blamed on previous leadership, which influenced almost all aspects of society, breeding space for poor leadership and prevalence of African problems.

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