

Discourse and decolonization: Analyzing the impact of colonial history and culture on African
leadership narratives

by

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B.Sc., University of Fort Hare, 2015
M.S.A., University of the Free State, 2021
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Abstract

This qualitative research study explored how colonial history and culture have shaped African leadership, while also examining how African traditions, philosophies, and values can inform the development of inclusive leadership models relevant to the African context. Focusing on South Africa, a nation with a history of colonialism and apartheid, the study analyzed the discourse of community leaders during the transition from apartheid to democracy. Participants in various leadership roles engaged with the research to address overarching questions about the enduring influence of colonial legacies on leadership practices and the potential of African traditions to foster more inclusive and culturally relevant governance. Sub-questions investigated key elements of traditional African leadership, the ongoing impact of colonialism on current structures, and the benefits of integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks for improved community engagement and governance outcomes.

The study was grounded in the theoretical frameworks of social constructionism, critical social theory, and decolonization, which provided a vigorous foundation for critically examining the interplay between colonial history, cultural identity, and leadership practices. Discourse analysis was employed as the primary methodology, enabling the study to uncover hidden power dynamics, cultural disconnects, and transformative pathways for decolonizing leadership. This approach aligned with the study's emphasis on context, meaning-making, and the reclamation of indigenous knowledge systems.

The findings, derived from discourse analysis, revealed four major themes: (1) colonialism as a persistent force in African leadership, (2) traditional African leadership as a foundation for inclusive governance, (3) the disconnect between contemporary leadership and African cultural values, and (4) decolonization as a pathway to inclusive and responsive

leadership. These themes highlight the enduring impact of colonial legacies while also pointing to the transformative potential of integrating African traditions and philosophies into modern governance. The study contributes constructive insights for reimagining African leadership in ways that are inclusive, culturally relevant, and responsive to the needs of local communities, offering a roadmap for decolonizing leadership practices across the continent.

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Approved by:

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List of Abbreviations

ANC – African National Congress

CODESA – Convention for a Democratic South Africa

COMSA – Commonwealth of Nations Mission to South Africa

COSATU – Congress of South African Trade Unions

IFP – Inkatha Freedom Party

IMF – International Monetary Fund

MPNF – Multi-Party Negotiation Federation

NP – National Party

NNP – New National Party

SACP – South African Communist Party

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

USA – United States of America

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Dedication

The world is not kind to children with disabilities, and I was no exception, but from as early as I can remember, my grandparents, Nomgqibelo ‘MamaDuna’ and Bhungeni ‘Bhele’ Maqashalala always said “wena uzakuba ngu Gqirha” (You will be a Dr.). This PhD is dedicated to my grandparents who saw me and believed in what I could be long before my grandfather taught me how to write my name. I am who I am today because of their love and the values they instilled in me.

To my parents, Xoliswa ‘Mambhele’ and Vusumzi ‘Mntungwa’ Garane, and my sister Mbali Ayakha Likuwe, you have sacrificed so much for me and the dreams I carry, more than words could ever truly capture. Thank you for giving me the wings to travel the world and the freedom to explore it. Every step I take is because you first paved the way with love, faith, and unwavering support.

To my family, my grandparents’ children; Nomsa, Nomfundiso, Khangelani, Bongani, Gcobani, Xoliswa, Ntombekhaya, and Sithembiso, thank you for extending your love and discipline. I extend my gratitude to the village that raised me, my home, Mabheleni in Matatiele, South Africa.

To the community of Africans I found at Kansas State University, thank you for being home away from home.

I am nothing without God who has made what seemed impossible, possible for me. In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen.

Preface

To my brothers and sisters

From Madagascar to Morocco, from Cape to Cairo, from the islands of the Indian Ocean to the shores of the Atlantic, we are bound by more than just geography. We are bound by a shared history, a resilient spirit, and a collective dream of a continent rising.

Too long have our borders divided what our hearts know to be one. Too long have our tongues been separated by colonizers' languages, forgetting the melodies of our own. But today, we remember, Africa is not 54 fragments. Africa is one body, diverse in rhythm, united in soul.

When a child in Kinshasa dreams, a girl in Khartoum should feel it. When innovators rise in Lagos, builders in Lusaka should be ready to collaborate. When farmers in Malawi face drought, engineers in Tunisia must answer the call.

Because our liberation, our development, our future, will not be outsourced. It must be crafted by us, together. African minds, African hands, African hearts, building something that the world has not yet seen: a continent that reclaims its power not by dominating others, but by lifting each other.

Let the message be clear, *A luta continua*, the struggle continues, but so does our hope. So does our solidarity, so does our resilience. So does the rising of a new Africa.

May we rise together, from Madagascar to Marrakesh, from Dodoma to Dakar, not as scattered voices, but as one echo, bold, beautiful, and unstoppable.

Xatyiswa Maqashalala

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I was raised in Mabheleni, a small village in South Africa, where community was not just a concept but a lived reality. Growing up, we shared an unspoken responsibility for one another, knowing every family, their children, their struggles, and their triumphs. This collective care was even more pronounced within families, where showing up for one another was not an obligation but an extension of who we were. However, my understanding of family and community was first challenged in school when a teacher corrected my family tree project, insisting that a ‘proper’ family consisted only of a mother, father, siblings, and perhaps grandparents. This moment marked the beginning of my questioning: Why was my lived experience invalid? What made the Western model of family and leadership the ‘correct’ one? These questions followed me to university, into leadership roles, and across my engagement with governance structures in South Africa. Time and again, I noticed a disconnect, systems designed for individualism and control expected Africans to abandon communal ways of being. My participation in the Mandela Washington Fellowship, The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Fort Hare Autumn School, and exposure to broader African experiences revealed that this was not unique to me but a shared continental struggle. How could a system built to marginalize and extract be expected to help us thrive? This dissonance led me to explore the complex relationship between colonial history, cultural traditions, and leadership in African societies. At the core of many African cultures is the philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasizes the interrelation of humanity and places a collective ethos above individual interests (Ncube, 2010). Community stands as the fundamental system through which values are shared, and societal structures are maintained. Afrocentric theories and indigenous African leadership models stress the importance of the collective good and community well-being over individual interests (Ncube, 2010). Within this cultural context,

community becomes the fundamental system through which values are shared, and societal structures are maintained (Ncube, 2010). The lens of this framework allows an expectation of leaders to possess a nuanced understanding of the community's cosmology, rituals, and belief systems, and to integrate these elements into their decision-making and problem-solving processes (Reciprocity, 2024). Colonialism was marked by power dynamics and segregation, where colonizers imposed political control and extracted resources. Colonial administrators imposed Western-derived models of governance, bureaucracy, and leadership on African societies, often with little regard for local customs and traditions (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The Western models were characterized by individualism with no regard for community (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Mudimbe (1988) observed that colonialism imposed external systems of governance and constructed narratives and knowledge systems that reinforced the superiority of Western cultures and marginalized indigenous African knowledge. The continued influence of neocolonial power dynamics and external interference has also posed ongoing challenges for African leaders in asserting autonomy and self-determination (Chilisa et al., 2016). Significantly, there are deliberate efforts within African societies to preserve and uphold cultural traditions and norms (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). In this chapter, I will investigate the rationale of this study, the purpose of the study and the research questions. Additionally, I will introduce the theoretical frameworks and methodological approach for the study, as well as the operational terms.

Rationale of Study

The leadership landscape in Africa has been profoundly influenced by the continent's colonial history and cultural heritage (Madlingozi, 2017). According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002), access to political power, economic resources, and decision-making processes in the African continent has historically been skewed towards the colonial elite and their descendants,

who were immersed in the Western, capitalist discourse. Despite the formal end of colonial rule, many contemporary leadership practices continue to reflect the legacies of colonialism, which often marginalize indigenous cultural values and traditional leadership structures (Thompson, 2001). The colonial approach to African leadership was mainly characterized by a Eurocentric perspective that not only undermined traditional African leadership structures and practices, but sought to replace them (Chilisa et al., 2016). These models, imposed by colonialists, were portrayed by centralized, top-down decision-making, hierarchical structures, with a focus on efficiency and control, rather than community-oriented approaches (Chilisa et al. 2016) which are central to the African culture. This creates a complex environment where the needs and aspirations of local communities are frequently overlooked in favor of Westernized models of governance.

South Africa became a democratic country in 1994 after a successful inclusive election that witnessed the African National Congress (ANC) ascend to governance. The 1994 elections were preceded by negotiations of transitioning to democracy from apartheid led through forums such as the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and then by the Multi-party Negotiating Forum (MPNF) (du Toit, 2016) which aimed at providing a peaceful transition, considering the diversity of stakeholders. The ANC has alluded to the fact that they compromised during the negotiations leading to democracy and culmination of the country's constitution (du Toit, 2016). The constitution favors settler colonial powers. According to Inman and Rubinfeld (2013), it was clear to the ANC leadership during the negotiations that a peaceful transition would require a credible commitment to protect elite incomes. To this end, the parties reached a compromise. In their research, Beall and Ngonyama (2009) found that the compromises made by the African political parties included the undermining of certain African

ideologies and beliefs to accommodate the demands of a new political landscape. Fanon (1967) suggested that the sacrifice of certain aspects of their intellectual heritage by the colonized can be seen as a form of cultural adaptation, reflecting the complexities of navigating and integrating into the colonizers' culture. CODESA negotiations included South African parties; South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), National Party (NP), and other minority parties. CODESA also involved powerful international stakeholders including the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and the European Community. The Commonwealth Observer Mission to South Africa (COMSA) was deployed to further take part in the negotiations and engage the parties involved (Anglin, 1995). Claiming that the presence of international observers in South Africa was instrumental in calming the volatile political situation, COMSA recommended that an international presence, in any form, should be maintained in South Africa both leading up to and during the first democratic elections (Anglin, 1995). The imposition of Western presence both undermined African leadership and ensured persistence of Western leadership models (Chilisa et al., 2017). This dissertation seeks to explore the extent to which the imposition of Western presence undermined African leadership while simultaneously entrenching Western leadership models. Specifically, it aims to investigate the impacts of these persistent Western models on the political and social structures within post-colonial African societies.

The discourse surrounding the negotiations at CODESA and the MPNF reveals significant power dynamics influenced by Western models. Analyzing the public statements made by major political parties, ANC, SACP, and COSATU, during and after these negotiations will highlight how these discourses reflect and reinforce power relations. This analysis will focus on the shifts in rhetoric and priorities before and after the negotiations, highlighting how the

presence of international stakeholders and the compromises made by African parties affected the representation of indigenous values and leadership. Examining both pre- and post-negotiation discourse can better reflect the impact of these influences on contemporary African leadership practices.

Problem Statement

The problem this research aims to address is the disconnect between existing leadership frameworks and the cultural traditions inherent in African societies. This disconnect hinders the development of inclusive leadership practices that resonate with the diverse experiences and values of African communities. This research seeks to investigate the interplay between colonial history, culture, and leadership in Africa and to propose a model that integrates traditional values and practices into a contemporary leadership framework, fostering more effective and culturally relevant governance.

Research Purpose and Question

The purpose of this research is to explore the complex relationship between colonial history, cultural traditions, and leadership practices in African societies. This study aims to propose an integration of traditional African values and practices into contemporary leadership frameworks by examining the disconnect between existing leadership frameworks and the cultural values inherent in these communities. This integration seeks to promote inclusive leadership practices that resonate with the diverse experiences and values of African communities, ultimately fostering more effective and culturally relevant governance. To guide this purpose, the research questions below are considered:

1. How has colonial history and culture shaped African leadership, and how can African culture, tradition, and philosophy inform an inclusive leadership relevant for the African context?

To further explore this overarching question, the following sub-questions will also be addressed:

- a. What are the key elements of traditional African leadership practices that can enhance contemporary governance?
- b. How do colonial legacies continue to influence leadership structures and practices in Africa today?
- c. In what ways can integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks improve community engagement and governance outcomes?

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the understanding of African leadership by critically examining the interplay between traditional values, such as Ubuntu, and contemporary governance practices. As African nations navigate the complexities of post-colonial identity and neocolonial influences, this research emphasizes the need for leadership models that resonate with indigenous cultural philosophies and prioritize collective well-being over individualism. Exploring the historical context of colonialism and its lingering effects on African leadership, the study sheds light on the challenges that contemporary leaders face in asserting autonomy and self-determination. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective leadership strategies that align with local customs and values, ultimately fostering more inclusive and representative governance.

This research highlights the importance of integrating Afrocentric theories and indigenous knowledge systems into modern leadership practices. The study aims to inspire policymakers and leaders to draw from cultural strengths by advocating for a return to community-oriented approaches, thereby promoting resilience and sustainability within African societies. The findings of this study hold practical implications for leadership training and development programs. Future leaders can better navigate the complexities of governance in a way that honors the rich cultural heritage of their communities by incorporating traditional values and community engagement into these programs.

Theoretical Framework

Decolonization provides a framework for critically examining the impact of colonialism on African leadership paradigms (Chilisa, 2019), with the acknowledgement of the historical realities of colonialism, imperialism, and exploitation of indigenous peoples (Chilisa et al., 2016). A core goal of decolonization is to restore the right of formerly colonized peoples to self-govern, make autonomous decisions, and determine their own political, economic, and social futures (Asadullah, 2021). Decolonization involves actively dismantling and reconstructing the colonial-era institutions, laws, policies, and practices, as well as harmful traditional structures (Cox et al., 2021), that continue to oppress indigenous populations, while also reviving and incorporating beneficial traditional approaches.

The social constructionist lens highlights leadership as an inherently relational, emergent, and socially negotiated phenomenon, shaped by the collaborative creation and maintenance of social realities (Burr & Dick, 2017) including those influenced by both colonial legacies and beneficial traditional practices. This emphasizes leadership as a community-based process rather than the outcome of single, heroic individuals. Social constructionism focuses on how certain

narratives, practices, and discourse become established as the way and standard (Burr, 2015), thus shaping people's understandings, behaviors, and identities (Kim, 2001). Through critically analyzing the social and historical processes underlying these dominant discourses, social constructionism challenges their assumed objectivity and inevitability.

Critical Social Theory (CST) is an interdisciplinary framework for understanding and critiquing society, particularly the structures of power, inequality, and domination that shape social relations and institutions (Leonardo, 2004). It is a broad tradition of social and political thought that aims to critically examine and challenge existing social structures, institutions, and power dynamics. Critical theorists analyze how capitalist economic systems and existing power structures perpetuate social inequalities, exploitation, and oppression with the aim of uncovering the hidden mechanisms that maintain these systems. CST, which is used to analyze these social processes, is inherently emancipatory, aiming to identify and transform the conditions that lead to the domination and marginalization of certain groups (Dugan, 2017). Dugan (2017) also states that CST allows for self-reflection, uncovering hidden biases and power structures, towards material and institutional changes.

The integration of social constructionism, critical social theory, and decolonization thus provides a powerful analytical framework. The dominant narratives and power structures have been shaped by colonial powers and oppressive forces can be critically examined through these frameworks.

Methodological Framework

For this research, a qualitative discourse analysis will be conducted by examining archived public statements by the ANC, SACP, and COSATU. The utilization of discourse analysis as a research method offers a framework for a comprehensive exploration of the

narratives that have shaped African leadership over time. As asserted by Stuhlhofer (2022), discourse analysis proves to be a potent tool in uncovering the complex historical and cultural influences that have molded perceptions of leadership within the African context. This methodological choice is grounded in the understanding that language is far from neutral; every linguistic element, from word choice to metaphorical expressions, can unveil profound cultural, political, or ideological meanings, as emphasized by Wall et al. (2015). The research method incorporates a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, guided by the methodological insights of Eisenhart and Johnstone (2008).

Discourse analysis provides a powerful framework for examining how language constructs and perpetuates power dynamics, which is crucial for understanding my research interest, colonialism in Africa. The diversity of discourse analysis and its intersection with other fields makes it an appropriate methodology for studying colonialism and culture. Through analyzing colonial discourse, I can uncover how language was used by colonial powers to justify domination, control narratives about African cultures, and marginalize indigenous voices.

Operationalization of Terms

This study uses several key terms:

- **Discourse Analysis:** Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method that helps us understand how language is used to construct social realities and identities (Gee, 2014). Through discourse analysis we see every linguistic element, from word choice to metaphorical expressions, can unveil cultural, political, or ideological meanings (Wall et al., 2015).
- **Decolonization:** The process of dismantling the impacts and structures of colonialism (Asadullah, 2021). The process of decolonization seeks not only to correct historical

injustices but also to create a more equitable world where diverse cultures, knowledge systems, and histories are respected and valued.

- **Apartheid:** Apartheid in South Africa was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that lasted from 1948 until 1994 (Jolobe, 2014). It was characterized by a systematic approach to social engineering, with the aim to establish a fully segregated society, ensuring white political supremacy and economic advantages while elevating the Afrikaner community (Mhlauli et al., 2015).
- **Ubuntu:** An African philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity. The term originates from the Nguni Bantu languages and is often translated as “humanity towards others” or “I am because we are.” Ubuntu promotes the idea that individuals exist in relation to others, and one's humanity is realized through meaningful interactions and mutual support within the community (Ncube, 2010).

Limitations

In examining the influence of Western leadership models on African political structures, it is important to recognize several limitations. The discourse shaping current leadership extends beyond the selected timeframe and artifacts, potentially constraining the context of this study. The discourse surrounding indigenous African community values may not be readily accessible in public formats, risking its underrepresentation and discounting its impact in the analysis. Discourse is dynamic, and meanings evolve over time. Public content often emanates from privileged sources. This may limit the study's ability to fully capture the diverse voices within communities, potentially overlooking grassroots perspectives.

My own biases and perspectives may inadvertently influence the interpretation of discourse. Awareness of these biases is crucial to mitigate potential subjectivity in the analysis.

Despite temporal constraints, the study has the potential to conduct a longitudinal analysis, tracking changes in discourse over time. This could reveal shifts in cultural perceptions and the impact of ongoing social and political changes.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a background of the study by highlighting the dissonance of culture in African leadership created by colonialism. The rationale and significance of the research study was outlined. The chapter also introduced the research purpose and the research questions that guide the investigation of this research, while also defining key terms used throughout the study. In the next chapter, a review of the literature informing the study will provide context of the study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The leadership landscape in Africa, particularly in South Africa, has been profoundly shaped by the continent's colonial history and the enduring influence of Western models of governance. Colonialism introduced centralized, hierarchical leadership structures that marginalized indigenous African values and traditional systems, prioritizing efficiency and control over community-oriented approaches (Chilisa et al., 2016; Madlingozi, 2017). The Western nuclear family model imposed in my school project mirrors the broader imposition of hierarchical, individualistic leadership frameworks in postcolonial Africa (Mudimbe, 1988). This disconnect between indigenous collectivism as practiced in Mabheleni and colonial bureaucratic systems underscores the epistemic violence of standardized governance models (Chilisa et al., 2016). Even after the formal end of colonial rule, the legacy of these imposed systems continues to influence contemporary leadership practices, often at the expense of local needs and aspirations (Thompson, 2001). This tension between Western and African leadership models is particularly evident in South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, a process marked by significant compromises and the involvement of international stakeholders (du Toit, 2016; Anglin, 1995).

This literature review explores the interplay between colonialism, neo-colonialism, and African leadership, with a focus on South Africa's transition to democracy. It examines how Western leadership models were entrenched during the negotiations at the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum (MPNF), and how these models continue to shape the country's socio-political landscape. By analyzing the roles of key political parties—such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—and

the influence of international stakeholders, this review highlights the power dynamics that have undermined indigenous leadership structures and values. Furthermore, it employs theoretical frameworks such as social constructionism, decolonization, and critical social theory to critically assess the persistence of Western models and their implications for post-colonial African societies.

The review is organized thematically, beginning with an exploration of African leadership and colonialism, followed by an analysis of apartheid and neo-colonialism. It then delves into South Africa's transition to democracy, focusing on the CODESA negotiations and the roles of key political actors. Finally, it examines the socio-political context of South Africa and the theoretical frameworks that inform this study. Through this analysis, the review aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how colonial legacies continue to shape leadership practices in Africa and to identify pathways for decolonizing leadership in the region.

African Leadership

Afrocentric theories and indigenous African leadership models stress the importance of the collective good and community well-being over individual interests (Ncube, 2010). Within this cultural context, community becomes the fundamental system through which values are shared, and societal structures are maintained (Ncube, 2010). Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) found that one of the central principles in Afrocentric theories and indigenous African leadership is the idea of the leader as a servant of the community, rather than a hierarchical authority figure. Leaders are expected to prioritize the needs and concerns of the communities they serve. African leadership frameworks value inclusive, participatory, and consensus-based decision-making processes that involve consultation with community members (Mazibuko, 2021), founded on Ubuntu philosophy (Ncube, 2010), thus emphasizing the importance of dialogue, consensus, and

inclusivity (Haruna, 2009). African tradition holds that disputes within a village should be resolved through public, communal self-criticism, fostering accountability and collective harmony (Fanon, 1967). According to Reciprocity (2024), within the lens of this framework, there is an expectation of leaders to possess a nuanced understanding of the community's cosmology, rituals, and belief systems, and to integrate these elements into their decision-making and problem-solving processes. African leadership models thus take into consideration the diversity of African cultures as well as the importance of grounding leadership practices in the specific historical, cultural, social, and political contexts of diverse African societies.

There has been research associating African leadership with negative qualities such as power hunger, corruption, and dysfunction, highlighting the potential challenges and complexities inherent in these leadership models (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). Economic dependency on external actors and the unequal global economic order continue to constrain the decision-making power and policy options available to African leaders (Gumede, 2017). Gumede (2017) further states that the lack of appropriate policies is one of the fundamental constraints to Africa's development, and it is a critical challenge that African leaders and policymakers have grappled with for decades. Numerous African countries face challenges in building and retaining a critical mass of skilled and capable leaders, managers, and technocrats due to issues such as inadequate investment in education, training, and professional development, as well as the ongoing brain drain of talented individuals seeking opportunities abroad (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

Colonialism in Africa

Understanding Colonialism

According to Nzungu-Ntalaja (2002), access to political power, economic resources, and decision-making processes in the African continent has historically been skewed towards the

colonial elite and their descendants, who were immersed in the Western, capitalist discourse. The colonial approach to African leadership was mainly characterized by a Eurocentric perspective that not only undermined traditional African leadership structures and practices, but sought to replace them (Chilisa et al., 2016). Mudimbe (1988) observed that colonialism imposed external systems of governance and constructed narratives and knowledge systems that reinforced the superiority of Western cultures and marginalized indigenous African knowledge. Colonial administrators imposed Western-derived models of governance, bureaucracy, and leadership on African societies, often with little regard for local customs and traditions (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Fanon, 1967). These models, imposed by colonialists, were portrayed by centralized, top-down decision-making, hierarchical structures, with a focus on efficiency and control, rather than community-oriented approaches (Chilisa et al. 2016) which are central to the African culture. Hartmann (2016) stated that the dominance of Western epistemologies and ontologies has often resulted in a narrow, homogenized understanding of human experiences, which failed to capture the diversity and nuances of African perspectives. The imposed paradigm reinforced a blind reliance on Western models, strategies, and techniques that often prove inadequate and sometimes counterproductive when applied in the African context (Chilisa, 2016). Post-colonial African countries inherited political, economic, and social systems that were designed to serve the interests of colonial powers and not the African countries (Thompson, 2001).

Apartheid

Apartheid in South Africa was a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that lasted from 1948 until 1994 (Ellis, 2019; Jolobe, 2014; Sanders, 2002). It was characterized by a systematic approach to social engineering, as highlighted by Sanders (2002). Unlike earlier fragmented practices of racial segregation that primarily impacted voting rights,

labor, and land ownership, the apartheid government took proactive measures to refine and intensify these policies (Seidman, 1999). Apartheid aimed to establish a fully segregated society, ensuring white political supremacy and economic advantages while elevating the Afrikaner community to a status of equality with the English-speaking population (Jolobe, 2014; Mhlauli et al., 2015).

The roots of apartheid can be traced back to the colonial era, when both Dutch and British governments implemented policies that marginalized indigenous populations (Jolobe, 2014). These policies laid the groundwork for racial segregation, which became increasingly pronounced in the early 20th century (Mhlauli et al., 2015). The 1913 Natives Land Act restricted black South Africans' land ownership, designating areas for different racial groups (Seidman, 1999). This act was a precursor to the systematic segregation that would follow (Thompson, 2001). From 1948 onward, the government sought to rigorously segregate every aspect of political, economic, cultural, sporting, and social life, leveraging existing legal frameworks and establishing new laws as necessary (Ellis, 2019).

The formal implementation of apartheid began with the National Party's election in 1948 (Jolobe, 2014; Sanders, 2002). This party, representing Afrikaner nationalism, aimed to entrench white supremacy and maintain control over the country's resources (Seidman, 1999). The architects of apartheid believed that racial segregation was essential for preserving the economic and social dominance of the white minority over the black majority (Seidman, 1999). Once in power, the governing party introduced a series of laws to institutionalize racial segregation. The Population Registration Act of 1950 classified South Africans by race, creating categories such as white, black, Indian, and colored, to enforce segregation and restrict rights based on race (Seidman, 1999). The Group Areas Act of 1950 assigned specific residential areas to different

racial groups, resulting in the forced removal of black South Africans from urban areas to designated townships (Seidman, 1999). Seidman (1999) states that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 established a separate and inferior education system for black South Africans, designed to prepare them for lives of manual labor. Furthermore, the Pass Laws required black South Africans to always carry passbooks, restricting their movement and access to certain areas (Ellis, 2019), especially urban centers (Seidman, 1999).

The apartheid laws severely impacted society, affecting millions of lives and shaping South Africa's socio-political landscape (Mhlauli, 2015). One significant effect was social segregation. The Population Registration Act led to a rigid social hierarchy that influenced every aspect of life, from housing to marriage (Seidman, 1999). The Group Areas Act enforced physical separation, resulting in the forced relocation of black South Africans and the fragmentation of communities (Mhlauli et al., 2015).

Economically, apartheid laws created stark disparities. Employment opportunities for black South Africans were severely restricted, with the Bantu Education Act ensuring inferior education and limiting access to skilled jobs (Jolobe, 2014). These perpetuated economic inequalities favoring the white minority (Mhlauli et al., 2015), resulting in a poorly educated workforce and restricted advancement opportunities.

Laws systematically disenfranchised black South Africans and other racial groups, denying them the right to vote and participate in governance (Mhlauli et al., 2015). This lack of representation led to significant political disenfranchisement. The suppression of dissent, exemplified by laws like the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Terrorism Act of 1967, further stifled political activism and created a climate of fear (Ellis, 2019).

Apartheid laws sought to suppress non-white cultures and languages, promoting Afrikaans and English while marginalizing indigenous languages and traditions (Mhlauli et al., 2015). Policy discouraged African families, favoring a system of migrant workers for the mining industry. This system required men to live in all-male compounds, while their families were relegated to the reserves (Jolobe, 2014). This approach aimed to control African population numbers and maintain their connections to tribal areas (Mhlawuli et al., 2015). The Natives Land Act of 1913 which was also enforced by the apartheid government and subsequent legislation such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 restricted land ownership for black South Africans, often confining them to poor-quality areas, thus contributing to long-term economic disadvantages.

The psychological effects of apartheid were profound, leading to widespread trauma among affected populations (Mhlauli et al., 2019). The legacy of discrimination and violence continues to impact mental health in communities today. Furthermore, apartheid laws entrenched social divisions, fostering resentment, mistrust, and conflict among racial groups (Ellis, 2019), which still influence contemporary social relations in South Africa. According to Fanon (1967), the colonized individual often first expresses their anger toward the oppressive system by directing it at their own community.

The impact of apartheid laws was far-reaching, affecting the social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions of South African life (Seidman, 1999). The enduring legacy of these laws continues to shape contemporary South Africa, highlighting the ongoing challenges of addressing historical injustices and promoting social equity.

Table 2.1. Apartheid Laws Designed to Enforce Racial Segregation and Inequality

Year	Act	Aim
1913	Native Land Act	Prohibited Natives from purchasing, leasing, or acquiring land outside scheduled native areas.
1945	Natives Consolidation Act,	Prohibited Natives from acquiring land within an urban area.
1950	Group Areas Act	Segregated different racial groups into different areas and, on grounds of race alone.
1950	Suppression of Communism Act	Allowed non-European leaders to be charged with bringing about political, industrial, social or economic change by the promotion of disturbance or disorder.
1950	Population Registration Act	Required citizens to be registered by race.
1951	Native Building Workers Act	Prohibited employment in urban areas of Natives as skilled workers.
1951	Bantu Authorities Act	Abolished the Natives' Representative Council.
1952	Pass Laws Act	Required black people over 16 to carry a passbook, or <i>dompas</i> , at all times.
1953	Bantu Education Act	Enforced racial segregation in schools, with black children receiving inferior education and training.
1953	Public Safety Act	Militated against campaigns of resistance to discriminatory laws.

1953	Government Notice	Prohibited meetings of more than ten Africans without permission of the Minister of Native Affairs.
1955	Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act	Prohibiting the residence of more than five Africans in any building in a proclaimed area.
1956	Natives (Prohibition of Interdicts) Act	Suspended the right of Africans to apply to the Supreme Court for an interim interdict against a summary removal, ejectment, or arrest.
1959	Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act	To preserve separate white and African communities and abolished the parliamentary representation of Africans.
1960	Unlawful Organizations Act	Banning the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress.
1967	Terrorism Act	Against acts of sabotage, protests, and political organizing against the apartheid regime.

Neo-Colonialism

According to Uzogiwe (2019), neocolonialism refers to the continued economic, political, and cultural relationship and dominance of former colonial powers over nominally independent countries, even after the end of formal colonial rule. In post-apartheid South Africa, neocolonialism is perceived as the persistence of structures and systems that perpetuate inequality, dependency, and exploitation, often influenced by global international financial institutions (Dladla & Webster, 2024). It is argued by Mhlauli et al (2015) that despite Africa's decolonization and the presence of Africans in office, the global economy remains dominated by former colonial powers and their major corporations, including international financial institutions

and lending agencies. This reality is true for many African nations. A clear example is the Commonwealth of Nations, which unites all African countries that were formerly British colonies, still under the influence of the British monarchy (Mhlauli et al., 2015).

In South Africa, following the end of colonialism, people were categorized by race, positioning whites as the superior race and the indigenous population as inferior (Seidman, 1999). Civility was defined by the actions and standards set by white individuals. According to Mhlauli et al. (2015), the world is structured by the racial contract, evident in colonial conquests, constitutions, exclusionary legal frameworks, histories of racist ideologies, and the struggles against slavery and colonialism, as recorded in historical disciplines. White supremacy is often regarded as the norm, leading people to accept the resulting inequalities as they manifest in political, economic, and social spheres (DeCur-Gunby, 2006). The system of apartheid continued to prevail regardless of the change that took place in South Africa, and this was evident in how the education syllabus celebrated white supremacy and nationalism, while simultaneously marginalizing and rendering Black nationalism invisible (Mhlauli et al., 2015). Mhlauli et al (2015) further states that the curriculum deliberately distorted South African history to favor whites at the expense of blacks.

The continued influence of neocolonial power dynamics and external interference has also posed ongoing challenges for African leaders in asserting autonomy and self-determination (Chilisa et al., 2016). Many African economies have struggled with issues such as underdevelopment, resource exploitation, debt burdens, and unequal trade relations, which limit the ability of African leaders to pursue autonomous and sustainable development strategies (Chilisa et al., 2016). Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) note that some African countries have experienced prolonged periods of political instability, including military coups, civil wars, and

the rise of authoritarian regimes that have undermined democratic governance and the rule of law. These challenges have led to concentration of power, the suppression of opposition, and the loss of accountable and transparent leadership (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

South Africa Transition

Conference of a Democratic South Africa

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was a series of negotiations launched in 1991 aimed at ending apartheid and establishing a democratic government in South Africa (Jolobe, 2014; Raliglia, 2017). The dismantling of apartheid began in the late 1980s, driven by internal resistance and international pressure (Inman & Rubinfeld, 2013). The primary goal of CODESA was to negotiate a peaceful transition from apartheid to a multi-racial democracy (Raliglia, 2017). This process sought to involve various stakeholders, including political parties, civil society, labor unions, and international actors, to ensure broad-based participation and representation in the new government structure (Inman & Rubinfeld, 2013).

CODESA was influenced by significant international events and pressures (De Klerk, 2002). The geopolitical landscape of the late 1980s, including shifting dynamics in Southern Africa, prompted a push for negotiations (Jolobe, 2014). The involvement of external stakeholders, such as the UN and the World Bank, added weight to the discussions and influenced the South African government's approach (Barnes & De Klerk, 2002). The apartheid regime faced mounting pressure to engage in dialogue, as international sentiment increasingly favored democratic reform (Raliglia, 2017).

The negotiations unfolded in two main rounds. The first round in 1991 focused on establishing principles for a new constitution, emphasizing human rights and non-discrimination (Jolobe, 2014; Raliglia, 2017). The second round in 1992 addressed more specific issues, such as

the electoral system and the future of the apartheid government (De Klerk, 2002; Raligia, 2017). While CODESA produced important documents outlining agreements on key issues, several contentious topics remained unresolved, particularly around land reform and the legacy of apartheid policies (Raligia, 2017; Thompson, 2001).

Power dynamics within CODESA were complex. The presence of various political factions, including the ANC, the NP, SACP, and the COSATU highlighted the varying interests at play (Jolobe, 2014). Hardline factions opposing change posed a significant threat to the negotiation process, creating tensions that could derail progress (Edward & Hecht, 2010). The principles established during CODESA greatly influenced the drafting of South Africa's new constitution, which was adopted in 1996 (Barnes & De Klerk, 2002). CODESA's legacy lies in its success in fostering dialogue and compromise, which remains a crucial aspect of South Africa's ongoing journey toward reconciliation and equality.

National Party

The National Party (NP) was a political force in South Africa, primarily known for its role in establishing and maintaining the apartheid system (Jolobe, 2014). Founded in 1914, the NP emerged from a coalition of Afrikaner nationalist groups that aimed to promote Afrikaner interests and assert the dominance of the white population in South Africa (Mhlauli et al., 2015). The party came to power in 1948, implementing a formal system of apartheid that institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination against non-white South Africans (Seidman, 1999).

During its rule, the NP introduced a series of laws designed to enforce racial segregation in all aspects of life, including education, healthcare, and housing (Jolobe, 2014; Seidman, 1999; Ellis, 2019). Key legislation, such as the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act,

laid the groundwork for the systematic oppression of non-white citizens (Raligia, 2017; Seidman, 1999). The party maintained strict control over the political landscape, suppressing opposition and enforcing its policies through state mechanisms, including the police and military (Seidman, 1999; Thompson, 2001).

NP in South Africa secured various forms of international support, primarily from Western nations that aligned with its anti-communist stance during the Cold War (Edwards & Hecht, 2010). Key allies included the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK), which viewed the NP as a bulwark against communism in Africa (Arnold, 1992). This support manifested in economic aid, trade, and investment that bolstered the South African economy (Thompson, 2001), as well as military assistance and training from countries like the USA and Israel, crucial for maintaining the NP's security forces and suppressing internal dissent (Mhlauli et al., 2015). The NP benefited from diplomatic backing that resisted international pressure for sanctions, forming strategic alliances with other anti-communist nations like Portugal and Rhodesia (Jolobe, 2014). While many international organizations condemned apartheid, some countries within the United Nations provided a platform for the NP's policies (Arnold, 1992), allowing it to leverage these relationships to sustain its governance throughout the apartheid era. Western countries such as the UK, USA, and Israel had significant economic investments in South Africa and relied on its resources for their industries, thus were hesitant to support strong measures against apartheid (Andresen, 2020). Imposing strict sanctions would have disrupted these economic ties, leading to resistance from businesses and governments alike. Andresen (2020) reveals that prime ministers under the government of apartheid made frequent visits to the USA, UK, and Germany.

As the years went by, the NP faced increasing resistance from various groups, including the ANC, labor unions, and international anti-apartheid movements (Seidman, 1999). This resistance culminated in widespread protests and uprisings, most notably the Soweto Uprising in 1976 (Arnold, 1992). As global condemnation of apartheid grew, South Africa faced economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, further pressuring the NP government to reconsider its stance (Edwards & Hecht, 2010).

By the late 1980s, amid internal unrest and external pressures, the NP began to engage in negotiations for a democratic transition (Arnold, 1992, Raligia, 2017). Recognizing the need for reform to ensure stability, the NP participated in the CODESA negotiations, which aimed to create a new democratic South Africa (Arnold, 1992). Key figures within the party, including then-President F.W. de Klerk, played crucial roles in facilitating dialogue with the ANC and other political groups (Jolobe, 2014). Following the transition, the NP rebranded itself as the New National Party (NNP) and participated in the democratic process (Edward & Hecht, 2010). However, it struggled to retain significant support and eventually dissolved.

African National Congress

The African National Congress (ANC) played a crucial role in the CODESA negotiations (Jolobe, 2014). The ANC was founded in 1912 and became a leading liberation movement against apartheid and gained significant support among the black majority population (Edwards & Hetch, 2010). By the time CODESA commenced in 1991, the ANC had emerged as the primary political force advocating for a democratic South Africa (Thompson, 2001).

During the CODESA negotiations, the ANC was a key participant, representing the interests of various anti-apartheid groups (Jolobe, 2014). The party sought to negotiate a peaceful transition to democracy (Edwards & Hecht, 2010), emphasizing principles such as human rights,

equality, and non-discrimination (Arnold, 1992). The ANC aimed to dismantle the apartheid system and establish a government that reflected the country's diverse population (Rantete & Giliomee, 1992). The ANC fostered an atmosphere of dialogue and compromise, crucial for reaching agreements with other political factions, including the NP (Jolobe, 2014). The ANC's strategy involved building alliances with other groups, such as the SACP and labor unions, to strengthen its bargaining position (Edwards & Hecht, 2010).

The ANC encountered several challenges during CODESA, including internal divisions, pressure from radical factions, and violent clashes between rival political groups (Thompson, 2001). These tensions sometimes threatened to derail the negotiations, requiring the ANC to demonstrate resilience and commitment to a peaceful process (Rantete & Giliomee, 1992).

According to Seidman (1999), the ANC's participation in CODESA ultimately led to significant achievements, including the agreement on the principles that would guide the new democratic Constitution. Jolobe (2014) states that the ANC was drawn into a settlement where the first post-apartheid election became a straightforward endorsement of a power-sharing constitution. While this arrangement facilitated a transition from apartheid to a more inclusive political framework, it also allowed the apartheid government to maintain its power through strategic compromises and control mechanisms, reflecting the complexities of the transition (Rantete & Giliomee, 1992). The negotiations set the stage for South Africa's first multiracial elections in April 1994, where the ANC won a decisive victory, leading to Nelson Mandela's election as the country's first black president (Mhlauli et al., 2015).

South African Communist Party

The South African Communist Party (SACP) played an integral role in the CODESA negotiations, contributing to the broader struggle against apartheid and the establishment of a

democratic South Africa (Jolobe, 2014). The SACP was a key player in the anti-apartheid movement, advocating for social justice and equality. The party aligned itself with the ANC (Jolobe, 2014) and other liberation movements, participating in various forms of resistance against the apartheid regime (Thomas, 2007).

During the CODESA negotiations, the SACP was an active participant, representing the interests of leftist factions within the anti-apartheid coalition (Jolobe, 2014). SACP aimed to ensure that the transition to democracy included commitments to social and economic justice, not just political rights. It sought to influence the negotiations to reflect its socialist principles (Adams, 1997).

The SACP maintained a close alliance with the ANC throughout the negotiations (Jolobe, 2014). Jolobe (2014) states that this partnership allowed the SACP to work alongside the ANC in promoting a progressive agenda that included labor rights, land reform, and social equity. The SACP's involvement helped strengthen the ANC's negotiating position by representing a broader spectrum of the anti-apartheid movement (Boister & Devenish, 1993). One of the SACP's primary concerns during CODESA was the need for economic reforms that would address the deep inequalities perpetuated by apartheid (Adams, 2007). Adams (1997) continued to note that the party advocated for policies that would promote social welfare, equitable land distribution, and economic empowerment for the historically marginalized populations.

Some of challenges faced by the SACP during the CODESA negotiations included balancing its ideological goals with the pragmatic compromises necessary for a peaceful transition (Adams, 1997). According to Thomas (2007), there were concerns among some party members that the ANC might prioritize political stability over socio-economic reforms, potentially sidelining important leftist agendas. The SACP's participation in CODESA

contributed to the framing of policies that aimed to address both political and economic injustices in the new South African Constitution (Boister & Devenish, 1993). While not all of the SACP's goals were fully realized, its influence helped ensure that issues of social justice

Congress of the South African Trades Union

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was one of the key players in the CODESA negotiations (Misra, 2008), influencing the trajectory of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Upon COSATU's establishment, it became the largest and most influential trade union federation in South Africa, representing millions of workers across various sectors (Adams, 2007). According to Thomas (2007), the organization emerged as a crucial player in the anti-apartheid struggle, advocating for workers' rights and broader social justice.

COSATU was an important participant in the CODESA negotiations, advocating for the inclusion of workers' rights and social justice in the new democratic framework (Misra, 2008). The federation aimed to ensure that the transition to democracy would not only address political rights but also tackle economic inequalities and improve living conditions for the working class (Jolobe, 2014). During the negotiations, COSATU emphasized the need for labor rights, fair wages, and decent working conditions (Jolobe, 2014). The federation sought to secure commitments from political leaders that would protect workers' rights in the new constitutional order (Misra, 2008). COSATU's participation underscored the importance of integrating economic justice into the political transition (Kirby & Lallah).

Arnold (1992) noted that COSATU had a close relationship with the ANC and supported its leadership in the negotiations. The federation aligned its goals with those of the ANC, advocating for a democratic South Africa that would prioritize both political and economic

reforms (Misra, 2008). This collaboration strengthened the ANC's position and broadened the base of support for the negotiations. There were concerns within COSATU that political compromises made during negotiations could undermine workers' rights and economic reforms (Kirby & Lallah). COSATU had to navigate these tensions while remaining committed to the overall goal of a democratic South Africa (Kuye & Cedras, 2011).

Reconciliation

Reconciliation has been a central theme in South Africa's post-apartheid era, serving as a mechanism to address the deep-seated divisions and injustices of the past. According to Doxtader (2001), South African reconciliation has been a subject of considerable interest and heated controversy. One of the central debates revolves around the intricate balance between forgiveness and accountability within the context of the country's transition from apartheid (Murithi, 2006). The discourse surrounding this tension has prompted questions about whether the resulting political dispensation adequately addressed the needs of those who endured the injustices of apartheid (Gibson, 2006). Reconciliation is not merely a process of healing past wounds but also a means of redefining power relations and fostering inclusive governance.

The concept of Ubuntu, deeply embedded in South African philosophy, adds layers to this discourse (Doxtader, 2001). Ubuntu, emphasizing interconnectedness and community harmony, posits that forgiveness is a fundamental aspect (Ginsberg, 1996). Doxtader (2001) also notes that this perspective suggests that holding onto resentment, anger, or a desire for revenge undermines the collective harmony sought through reconciliation. In this view, Gibson (2006) suggests that forgiveness becomes not just a personal choice but a societal obligation for the greater good, however, the call for forgiveness should not work against the demand for justice.

Leaders must recognize that reconciliation is not a linear path but a complex journey that requires careful consideration of the diverse needs and perspectives within society (Ndinga-Kanga et al, 2020). Striking the right balance between forgiveness and accountability is a leadership challenge that necessitates a nuanced understanding of the cultural, historical, and socio-political context (Gibson, 2006). Effective leaders navigate this tension by fostering an inclusive and participatory approach, acknowledging the importance of justice while actively promoting healing and reconciliation (Owen, 2014).

Reconciliation in South Africa provided a platform for addressing systemic inequalities and promoting social cohesion. Considering that South Africa is still battling inequities of the past, this leaves me with the question on whether the reconciliation efforts in the country truly served the people for which it was meant? When the right questions are asked, the TRC's emphasis on truth-telling, accountability, and restorative justice model can serve as reconstruction model for other post-colonial societies grappling with similar legacies of oppression.

South African Socio-Political Context

Apartheid policies systematically marginalized most of the population, disproportionately affecting Black South Africans in terms of land ownership, employment opportunities, and access to education and economic resources (Morris, 2012; Sanders, 2002). The legacy of these policies cast a long shadow over the economic landscape, perpetuating disparities that demanded attention during the reconciliation process (Barnes & De Klerk, 2002). While reconciliation efforts aimed at uniting the nation, economic challenges persisted, hindering the realization of genuine social cohesion (Doxtader, 2001; De Klerk, 2002, Seidman, 1999). The post-reconciliation period witnessed a continuation of disparities in income, employment, and access

to economic opportunities, raising questions about the effectiveness of reconciliation in addressing systemic economic issues (Ocheni, & Nwankwo, 2012; Thompson, 2001).

Unequal access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities played a significant role in shaping the complexities of the reconciliation process in post-apartheid South Africa (Rwebangira, 2013; Mhlauli et al., 2015). The historical context of apartheid left a lasting impact on these critical aspects of human development, and addressing these disparities became a vital component of the broader efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society (Morris, 2012; Barnes & De Klerk, 2002). Apartheid policies systematically discriminated against Black South Africans (Morris, 2012; Jolobe, 2014), limiting their access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities (Seidman, 1999). Educational institutions, medical facilities, and workplaces were segregated, perpetuating inequality and hindering the development of marginalized communities (Rwebangira, 2013; Mhlauli et al., 2015).

Economic disparities had direct implications for social stability, as communities grappling with economic marginalization often faced higher levels of social unrest and dissatisfaction (O'Brien, 2001; Sanders, 2002). The reconciliation process, while addressing political injustices (De Klerk, 2002), had to contend with the socio-economic realities that continued to shape the daily lives of many South Africans (Morris, 2012). Leaders during the reconciliation period faced the daunting task of not only fostering political unity but also implementing policies that could meaningfully tackle economic disparities (Murithi, 2006). The effectiveness of leadership in navigating these economic challenges became a critical determinant of the success of the broader reconciliation process (Ginsberg, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge in sociology and communication that examines the development of collectively constructed orientations in the world (Burr, 2015). It is the idea that knowledge and reality are dependent on human interaction within a social context (Crotty, 1998). The legacy of colonialism has established enduring systems of meaning that prioritize Western models of governance, often at the expense of indigenous practices and cultural frameworks (Chilisa et al., 2016). Social constructionism focuses on how certain narratives, practices, and discourse become established as the way and standard (Burr, 2015), thus shaping people's understandings, behaviors, and identities (Kim, 2001). Colonial powers imposed their political and social structures on colonized nations, creating a narrative that framed Western governance as superior and legitimate (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). These narrative marginalized indigenous practices, which were often viewed as primitive or less effective (Fanon, 1967). Through critically analyzing the social and historical processes underlying these dominant discourses, social constructionism challenges their assumed objectivity and inevitability.

Crotty (1998) also states that in constructionism theory, meaning is constructed and not discovered, thus highlighting how leadership practices in Africa have been influenced by the narratives imposed by colonial powers. Individual subjectivities are fundamentally shaped by the broader cultural and institutional contexts they are situated within (Crotty, 1998). Our knowledge and understanding do not arise in a vacuum but is deeply embedded within historically situated and socially constructed systems of meaning (Burr, 2015). Burr's analysis of socially constructed systems of meaning underscores the importance of analyzing rhetoric and priorities surfaced

during the CODESA negotiations. This prioritization not only shapes political frameworks but also influences the collective consciousness of societies, affecting how leadership is conceptualized and practiced (Dugan, 2017). Swidler (2000) defines collective consciousness as the shared beliefs, values, norms, and understandings that shape how society perceives and interprets the world. Swidler (2000) and Burr's (2015) ideas on social construction encompass the collective mindset or worldview of a group, community, or society, which influences how individuals think, behave, and interact with one another. The prioritization of certain leadership models or ideologies becomes embedded in the shared understanding of a society. Over time, these priorities shape not only formal political structures but also the way people collectively think about leadership, what it means to be a leader, what qualities are valued, and how leadership should be practiced. The meanings constructed around leadership roles and governance are often rooted in these colonial legacies, perpetuating a disconnect between the needs and aspirations of local communities and the governance models in place (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Chilisa et al., 2016). Consequently, this creates challenges for contemporary African leaders who strive to honor traditional values while navigating a political landscape dominated by Western ideologies.

Critical Social Theory

Critical Social Theory (CST) is an interdisciplinary framework for understanding and critiquing society, particularly the structures of power, inequality, and domination that shape social relations and institutions (Leonardo, 2004). It is a broad tradition of social and political thought that aims to critically examine and challenge existing social structures, institutions, and power dynamics (Dugan, 2017). CST serves as an essential framework for analyzing the continuing impacts of colonialism on leadership practices in Africa. Critical theorists analyze

how capitalist economic systems and existing power structures perpetuate social inequalities, exploitation, and oppression with the aim of uncovering the hidden mechanisms that maintain these systems (Burr & Dick, 2017). By scrutinizing the structures of power, inequality, and domination established during colonial rule, CST enables a deeper understanding of how these structures persist in contemporary governance (Burr, 2015). The framework does not only uncover the hidden mechanisms that sustain these inequalities, but it also advocates for a more equitable approach to leadership that recognizes and validates diverse cultural perspectives (Dugan, 2017)

Decolonization

The process of decolonization is the dismantling of the impacts and structures of colonialism (Asadullah, 2021). Broome and Collier (2012) state that decolonization is a multi-dimensional term that involves political, cultural, educational, and psychological aspects. It is the transfer of political authority to indigenous or local leadership, as well as the establishment of independent governance structures, while recognizing and challenging the cultural dominance that often comes with colonialism (Benton, 2002). Chilisa (2019) noted that this framework includes the recovery of indigenous cultures, languages, religions, and traditions that have been suppressed or marginalized by colonial powers. This process also involves critically examining and challenging the cultural dominance that colonial powers imposed. Decolonization seeks to correct historical injustices and to also create a more equitable world in which diverse cultures, knowledge systems, and histories are respected and valued. Monchalin (2016) emphasizes the moving away from colonial structures, discourse, and ideologies aligns with the broader goal of decolonization, thus allowing for the validation of indigenous cultures and a thoughtful acknowledgment of the enduring impact of colonial legacies.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a methodological approach to understanding how language constructs social realities and identities (Gee, 2014), examining the role of language in shaping social interactions, power dynamics, and cultural values. Researchers have described different approaches to discourse analysis; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Conversational Analysis (CA), and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). CDA focuses on the relationship between language, power, and social change, emphasizing how language reflects and reinforces social inequalities and ideologies (Fairclough, 2013; Rogers, 2004), while seeking to uncover hidden assumptions and ideologies within language use, with a commitment to social justice and empowering marginalized groups (Fairclough, 2013), and integrating multiple modes of communication, such as text, speech, and images, in meaning-making processes (Rogers, 2004). CA studies human interaction in both written and spoken forms, examining norms, reasoning processes, and the institution of interaction (Clayman & Gill, 2023; Johnstone, 2002), emphasizing the analysis of interactional conduct and the production of action within conversations (Kasper & Wagner, 2014). MDA investigates how multiple semiotic resources (e.g., speech, images, gestures) interact to create meaning in communication (Kress, 2023), challenging the traditional view of text as solely written language and emphasizing the importance of analyzing the entire semiotic ensemble (Chen et al., 2020). The key principles of discourse analysis include language, identity, and power dynamics. Language ideology refers to beliefs about language's role in society, including notions of linguistic correctness, authority, and the relationship between language and identity, power, and culture (Johnstone, 2002; Gee, 2014), influencing perceptions of language use and contributing to issues of social inequality and language rights (Johnstone, 2002). Social languages are varieties of language that express

distinct social identities and practices, each with its own grammar and linguistic patterns (Gee, 2010; Johnstone, 2002), which discourse analysts use to uncover underlying ideologies and power dynamics within discourses (Joseph, 2004). Identity is constructed through language and discourse, rather than being a fixed attribute (Davies & Harré, 1990; Kroskrity, 2004), as language provides the tools for individuals and groups to negotiate and reshape their identities, highlighting identity as a social process (Joseph, 2004; Gee, 2014). Finally, discourse is a site where power dynamics are negotiated and reproduced, playing a central role in maintaining social inequality (Gee, 2010; Rogers, 2004), with power being integral to discourse analysis as it critiques how language exercises and sustains social power (Gee, 2010).

Review of Literature

While there is significant discussion of Afrocentric leadership models and Ubuntu philosophy, there is a lack of in-depth research on how these indigenous leadership frameworks are being applied or adapted in modern governance and organizational settings. Most studies focus on historical or theoretical aspects, leaving a gap in understanding how these models function in practice today. The literature often emphasizes the roles of political parties, international stakeholders, and elite actors in shaping leadership dynamics. However, there is limited exploration of how grassroots communities and local leaders perceive and engage with leadership structures. This gap obscures the voices of those most affected by colonial and neo-colonial legacies.

The role of gender in African leadership is underexplored. While the literature discusses power dynamics and marginalization, it rarely addresses how colonial and post-colonial leadership structures have disproportionately affected women or how gender intersects with other forms of inequality in leadership practices. The psychological effects of apartheid and

colonialism are mentioned in literature, however, there is limited research on how these traumas influence contemporary leadership behaviors, decision-making processes, and intergenerational dynamics.

The literature often critiques Western models but does not sufficiently explore how indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated into modern leadership practices. There is a need for more research on how traditional African values and practices can inform contemporary governance and organizational leadership. The perspectives and contributions of youth in redefining African leadership are largely absent from the literature. Given the demographic youth bulge in Africa, understanding how young people are challenging or reshaping leadership norms is crucial.

While neo-colonialism is discussed, there is a lack of critical analysis of how global economic systems, such as international trade agreements, debt structures, and multinational corporations, perpetuate dependency and undermine African leadership autonomy. The literature on reconciliation with former colonizers is heavily focused on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). There is a need to explore how other African countries have approached reconciliation and the lessons that can be drawn from these experiences

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a literature review that examines the intersection of African leadership and the historical context of colonialism in Africa. The review began with a discussion of African leadership, emphasizing Afrocentric theories and indigenous models that prioritize community well-being over individual interests. The impact of colonialism, detailing how colonial powers imposed Western governance structures that undermined traditional leadership practices were explored. A specific focus was placed on apartheid in South Africa,

characterized by institutionalized racial segregation, and its roots in colonial policies. The discussion extended to neo-colonialism, highlighting ongoing challenges faced by African leaders in asserting autonomy amidst external influences. Furthermore, the chapter addressed the South African transition to democracy, particularly the roles of various political parties during the CODESA negotiations, including the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP), and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). I theoretical framework encompassing social constructionism, decolonization, and critical social theory, setting the stage for understanding the complexities of leadership in post-colonial Africa and discourse analysis as the research methodology used for this study. The chapter concluded with a review of the literature, thereby highlighting some gaps that still exist in literature.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore the complex relationship between colonial history, cultural traditions, and leadership practices in African societies through a qualitative approach, employing discourse analysis as the primary methodology. This study aims to propose an integration of traditional African values and practices into contemporary leadership frameworks by examining the disconnect between existing leadership models and the cultural values inherent in these communities. By utilizing theoretical frameworks such as social constructionism, decolonization, and critical social theory, this integration seeks to promote inclusive leadership practices that resonate with the diverse experiences and values of African communities, ultimately fostering more effective and culturally relevant governance. To guide this purpose, the research questions below are considered:

1. How has colonial history and culture shaped African leadership, and how can African culture, tradition, and philosophy inform an inclusive leadership relevant for the African context?

To further explore this overarching question, the following sub-questions will also be addressed:

- a. What are the key elements of traditional African leadership practices that can enhance contemporary governance?
- b. How do colonial legacies continue to influence leadership structures and practices in Africa today?
- c. In what ways can integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks improve community engagement and governance outcomes?

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is a methodological approach used to explore and understand complex social phenomena by examining people's experiences and interactions in their natural contexts (Cairney & Denny, 2015). It involves exploring the underlying assumptions, biases, and perspectives that shape one's thinking and behavior, as well as considering alternative viewpoints and perspectives (Facione, 2011). Drawing from the insights of Orlikowski (2010), qualitative research methods are instrumental in unveiling the subjective interpretations and meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences. Bhattacharya (2017) states that this methodology allows for a holistic exploration that goes beyond statistical measures, offering a more comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of the phenomenon.

This research employs a qualitative approach, as it provides a platform that encourages and respects vulnerability. Crotty (1998) states that the approach emphasizes the depth and value of human experiences, allowing participants to share personal narratives and perspectives in a more open and subjective manner. Qualitative research often involves open-ended questions and flexible interview structures, allowing participants the freedom to express themselves beyond predefined categories (Orlikowski, 2010). According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), this flexibility creates a space where participants can reach into their experiences and emotions. Researchers can reach into the complexities and nuances of participants' stories, uncovering layers of meaning and context that may not be captured in quantitative approaches (Bhattacharya, 2017). While quantitative research focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research emphasizes depth, context, and meaning (Bhattacharya, 2017). It seeks to answer questions about how and why things happen, rather than how much or how

many. This study seeks to ask how colonial legacies continue to shape African leadership narrative; thus a qualitative approach is guiding that research question.

The choice of a qualitative research methodology for this study is well-aligned with the research objectives focused on unveiling the complexities of leadership dynamics within the context of African experiences and perceptions. As highlighted by Bhattacharya (2017), qualitative methods are particularly adept at capturing the nuances of lived experiences, providing an understanding of the distinct aspects inherent in the phenomenon under investigation.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a study method for understanding how language is used to construct social realities and identities (Gee, 2014). Gee (2010) states that discourses contain not only language but also the values, beliefs, practices, and identities associated with particular social groups or communities. Discourse analysis is grounded in the understanding that language is far from neutral; every linguistic element, from word choice to metaphorical expressions, can unveil cultural, political, or ideological meanings (Wall et al., 2015). Gee (2010) mentions that discourse analysis approaches are based on ideas, themes, and issues, and not just language details. The history of discourse analysis as a methodology crosses various disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and communication studies (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). While the roots of discourse analysis can be traced back to ancient philosophical inquiries into language and meaning, its modern development is often associated with several key historical movements and intellectual developments (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

Discourse analysis has evolved as a methodological approach that includes a range of theories, methods, and applications (Gee, 2014). The goal of discourse analysis is to identify and

challenge oppressive structures, with the aim of promoting social change and more equitable social systems. Discourse analysis has shaped educational research by exploring how language is used in classrooms, curricula, and educational policies (Gott, 2016). It helps identify how power dynamics and cultural assumptions influence teaching and learning (Johnstone, 2002). According to Gee (2014) In political science, discourse analysis helps uncover how language is used to legitimize power, mobilize support, or marginalize opposition, and it is used to study political rhetoric, policymaking, and the construction of political ideologies. Discourse analysis has been instrumental in examining how social norms, identities, and power structures are constructed and maintained through language in sociology (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000), studying topics like gender, race, class, and social inequality.

The utilization of discourse analysis as a research method offers a framework for a comprehensive exploration of the narratives that have shaped African leadership over time. As asserted by Stuhlhofer (2022), discourse analysis proves to be an effective tool in uncovering the complex historical and cultural influences that have molded perceptions of leadership within the African context. This methodological choice is grounded in the understanding that language is far from neutral; every linguistic element, from word choice to metaphorical expressions, can unveil profound cultural, political, or ideological meanings, as emphasized by Wall et al. (2015). The research method incorporates a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, guided by the methodological insights of Eisenhart and Johnstone (2008).

The diversity of discourse analysis is particularly well-suited for studying the legacies of colonialism in African leadership because it provides a framework for examining how language and power intersect to shape identities, ideologies, and social structures. Colonialism imposed not only political and economic systems but also language ideologies that marginalized

indigenous languages and knowledge systems, reinforcing Western dominance (Gee, 2014; Johnstone, 2002). The diversity of discourse analysis, ranging from political rhetoric to everyday communication, reveals how language constructs and perpetuates power dynamics, such as the privileging of Western leadership models over African traditions (Gee, 2010; Rogers, 2004). Discourse analysis allows for the exploration of how African leaders and communities negotiate, resist, or adapt to these colonial legacies, offering insights into the ways language is used to reclaim identities, challenge inequalities, and reshape leadership practices (Joseph, 2004). This approach is essential for uncovering the hidden mechanisms through which colonial ideologies persist and for identifying pathways toward decolonized, inclusive leadership in Africa.

Methodological Framework

This study employs a qualitative research approach grounded in discourse analysis to examine the leadership discourses that emerged during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. The methodological framework is informed by the theoretical lenses of social constructionism, Critical Social Theory, and decolonization, which collectively provide a strong foundation for analyzing the interplay between language, power, and cultural identity in the construction of leadership paradigms. By integrating these approaches, the study seeks to uncover the cultural, historical, and ideological dimensions of leadership in a post-colonial context.

Qualitative research is particularly suited to this study as it emphasizes depth, nuance, and the subjective experiences of individuals and communities (Crotty, 1998). This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how leadership was constructed and contested during South Africa's transition, particularly through the analysis of language, values, and ideologies embedded in historical discourses. discourse analysis is particularly well-suited to this

research as it provides a framework for uncovering the historical and ideological influences that have shaped perceptions of leadership in the African context. By analyzing archival texts from the transition period, this study seeks to illuminate the ways in which language reflects and reinforces cultural, political, and ideological contexts (Wall et al., 2015) and explores how these parties negotiated the tension between Western and indigenous leadership paradigms.

The discourse analysis is guided by a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Eisenhart & Johnstone, 2008). Key steps in this process include gathering archival materials, conducting interviews and discussions with young South African leaders, identifying recurring themes and rhetorical strategies from the interview discussions, and linking the findings to the study's theoretical frameworks. This research is community-engaged, as it actively involves young South African leaders in the research process, ensuring that their voices, perspectives, and experiences are central to the study. Through engaging with the community, the research not only generates knowledge but also empowers participants to reflect on and contribute to the decolonization of leadership in their own contexts. This participatory approach aligns with the principles of decolonization and CST, which emphasize the importance of including marginalized voices and challenging power imbalances in knowledge production (Chilisa, 2019; Dugan, 2017).

The methodological framework is deeply informed by the study's theoretical foundations, which include social constructionism, CST, and decolonization. These frameworks provide complementary lenses for analyzing the leadership discourses of the transition period. Social constructionism underscores the importance of understanding leadership as a socially constructed concept shaped by cultural and historical contexts (Burr & Dick, 2017). The study highlights the role of language in shaping perceptions of leadership and identity through analyzing how

leadership was constructed during the transition. CST provides the tools for critiquing the power dynamics and ideological influences embedded in the discourse (Duga, 2017). It enables the study to explore how Western institutions shaped the transition process and how African leaders contested or adapted to these influences. Decolonization guides the study's focus on reclaiming indigenous values and challenging colonial legacies (Chilisa, 2019). The study seeks to contribute to the broader project of decolonizing leadership in post-colonial contexts. Together, these frameworks enable a nuanced and critical analysis of the leadership discourses that emerged during South Africa's transition to democracy.

Research Design

Research Site

The research site for this study is South Africa during its transition from apartheid to democracy, with a specific focus on the discourses and narratives articulated by three key political parties that participated in the CODESA: ANC, SACP, and COSATU. These organizations were central to the liberation struggle and played a major role in shaping the vision for post-apartheid leadership and governance. Through examining texts and discourses from these parties during two critical time periods, 1986 and 1994, the study seeks to explore how the transition process influenced their leadership approaches and ideological orientations.

The study focuses on two key moments in South Africa's history:

1986: A period marked by heightened resistance to apartheid, international sanctions, and the intensification of the liberation struggle.

1994: The year of South Africa's first democratic elections, which symbolized the formal end of apartheid and the beginning of a new era of governance.

The study's geographical scope is defined by the locations of the participants, who are based in three of South Africa's provinces; Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape. Gauteng is the economic and political hub of South Africa, home to Johannesburg and Pretoria, where much of the CODESA negotiations took place. KwaZulu-Natal is a province with a rich history of political activism and a strong influence on the liberation struggle. The Eastern Cape is a region known for its significant role in the anti-apartheid movement and as the birthplace of many prominent ANC leaders. These locations capture a diversity of perspectives and experiences, reflecting the varied ways in which the transition process was understood and negotiated across different regions of South Africa.

Participant Selection

The selection of participants for this study was guided by the need to engage individuals who were born during the years 1986 to 1994, a period that spans the final years of apartheid and the early years of South Africa's democratic transition. This generational cohort was chosen because they experienced the impact of the transition of power, whether through their education, communities, or workplaces. These individuals were uniquely positioned to reflect on how the discourses and values of the transition shaped their understanding of leadership and community engagement. It was also important for participants to be leaders in their communities and to have engaged with programs of national interest, ensuring that they could provide informed and nuanced perspectives on the study's focus.

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Born between 1986 and 1994, ensuring they experienced the transition from apartheid to democracy during their formative years
2. Demonstrated leadership in their communities, professions, or fields of work.

3. Active involvement in programs of national interest or community service, reflecting a commitment to social transformation and development.
4. Possession of at least a graduate degree, ensuring a strong foundation for critical reflection and analysis.
5. Fluency in English, the primary language of the study's discourse analysis and interviews.

Recruitment Process

Participants were recruited through a combination of purposive sampling and networking. Initial contacts were identified through professional, academic, and community networks. These individuals were then invited to participate based on their alignment with the selection criteria. The recruitment process prioritized diversity in terms of geographical location, professional background, and areas of community engagement to ensure a range of perspectives.

Participant Profiles

The study involved four participants, each of whom brought unique insights and experiences into the discourse analysis process. Below is an overview of their profiles.

Table 3.1. Research Participants Profiles

Participant	Province	Profile
Yolokazi	Gauteng	Political analyst with extensive experience in analyzing South Africa's political landscape and has been actively involved in programs aimed at promoting democratic governance and youth empowerment.
Thobani	KwaZulu-Natal	Queer school principal and a trailblazer in promoting inclusivity and social justice within the education system.

		His leadership in a traditionally conservative sector highlights the tensions and possibilities of navigating identity and leadership in post-apartheid South Africa.
Pedro	KwaZulu-Natal	A decolonizing scholar and professor whose work focuses on challenging Eurocentric knowledge systems and promoting indigenous ways of knowing. His academic and community-oriented work aligns closely with the study's focus on decolonization and cultural authenticity.
Madoda	Eastern Cape	A rugby coach and the son of a tribal chief who has played a key role in fostering community development through sports and cultural initiatives. His dual identity as a modern sports leader and a custodian of traditional leadership provides a unique perspective on the intersection of Western and African values.

Rationale for Participant Selection

Engaging participants who have demonstrated leadership in their communities by mobilizing collective efforts to confront and overcome complex challenges (O'Malley & Cebula, 2015) and have actively contributed to programs of national interest validated a discourse analysis that is grounded in the lived experiences of individuals who are actively shaping South Africa's future. The inclusion of participants from diverse geographical and professional backgrounds, ranging from political analysis and academia to sports and education, ensured that the findings reflected the multifaceted nature of leadership in post-apartheid South Africa.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines in the recruitment and engagement of participants. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time. Written consent was shared prior to their participation. While the study adhered to ethical guidelines by informing participants about the purpose of the research and obtaining their consent, the participants affirmatively declined confidentiality upon enquiry. This is because their involvement in the study aligns with their professional work and public roles, and they are accustomed to engaging in public discourse on issues of leadership, social justice, and community development. Participants were also given the opportunity to review and comment on the findings to ensure that their perspectives were accurately represented.

Data Collection

Discourse Documents

The study aims to trace the impact of colonial discourses on post-colonial leadership structures and styles. The data collection process involved a combination of archival research and participatory discourse analysis with participants. The study examined excerpts from texts produced by the ANC, SACP, and COSATU in 1986 and 1994, including speeches, documents, and public statements. According to Bhattacharya (2017), the data sources may include transcripts of conversations, written documents, online discussions, or other forms of communication. This qualitative, document-based approach allowed me to explore the perspectives and narratives of these key political parties during pivotal moments in South Africa's history. By comparing the analysis of colonial and post-colonial leaders' rhetoric, the

research aims to delineate continuities, adaptations, or resistances (Eisenhart & Johnstone, 2008) within post-colonial leadership discourses.

This approach provides in-depth and contextual understanding of the South African leaders' roles in the transition, as well as the broader historical and political dynamics at play. The selected data sources provide varied perspectives, genres, and time periods relevant to the research aims (Taylor, 2001). The data are appropriate as they are representative of the context and discourse intended (Taylor, 2001). The study aims to uncover shifts in language, values, and leadership paradigms as these parties transitioned from liberation movements to governing entities by comparing texts and discourses from these two periods.

In conducting this study, I focused on South African organizations that played a pivotal role in advocating for Black South Africans during the apartheid era. Despite formal bans, many of these organizations persisted in their efforts, adapting their strategies to continue the struggle for justice and liberation. Through a preliminary review of organizational documents and archival texts, I observed that not all groups were consistent in their participation in key national dialogues, particularly the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). To ensure a focused and coherent analysis, I selected three organizations, the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP), all of which demonstrated sustained and active engagement with the CODESA process. Their consistent presence in this space provided a reliable basis for examining leadership discourse during a transformative period in South African history.

The excerpts chosen for analysis were drawn from official texts, speeches, and policy documents produced by these organizations between 1986 and 1994, a period marked by heightened political transition and renegotiation of national identity. The selection of these texts

was guided by Gee’s discourse analysis framework, specifically utilizing his “Big D” Discourse tools and framing principles. The “Big D” tools facilitated an exploration of how language within these texts reflected and shaped broader discourses, not only within South Africa but also in relation to continental and global narratives around liberation, governance, and leadership. These particular excerpts were also chosen for their capacity to illuminate the ways in which leadership was constructed and communicated during this critical juncture. They provided insight into the values, power dynamics, and ideological tensions embedded in political discourse, offering a window into how leadership was imagined, contested, and legitimized in the late apartheid and early post-apartheid eras.

Table 3.2. Texts analyzed from the ANC, COSATU, and SACP

ANC 1986	The principal conclusion we should draw from this situation is that through our sacrifices, we have prepared the conditions for us further to transform the situation to that position when it will be possible for us to seize power from the enemy. Thus the central task facing the entire democratic movement is that we retain the initiative until we have emancipated our country. The central focus of our continuous offensive has to be the imposition of the will of the democratic majority over the racist minority, however desperate and stubborn the resistance of this minority. African National Congress, 1986
ANC 1994	The forthcoming elections are not just about the demise of the old order. They begin a process by which the old must yield to the new. They constitute the first step of our entry into the modern political world with its concepts and practices of democracy, fundamental human rights and equality among the peoples without discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour or belief. African National Congress, 1994
COSATU 1986	

	"But we have always recognised that industrial issues are political. Workers have long realised when they are paid lower wages that it is a political issue. But what is difficult is how to make the link between economic and political issues. Congress of South African Trade Unions, 1986
COSATU 1994	the lower rungs. We go further. In the public sector you regrade the jobs because the present grading keeps blacks at the bottom of the ladder. You work out a new career SA Labour Bulletin, 1994
SACP 1986	"The Party declares that the revolutionary people of South Africa cannot merely take over existing State and government institutions designed to maintain colonialism, but must destroy them and create new people's institutions in their place." Inkululeko Publications, 1986
SACP 1994	Programme (the RDP). But they are doing so with their own agenda — to dilute, to subvert and generally to frustrate our attempts to empower the majority of South Africans. South African Communist Party, 1994

Interviews

This research takes on the co-creating pillar of the continuum of engaged scholarship, as it is a stakeholder-based participatory research activity and discovery. Community engagement encourages platforms for dialogue that allow citizens to express their experiences, fostering empathy and understanding among diverse communities.

To enrich the analysis, the study engaged four participants in semi-structured interviews on Zoom. These participants provided valuable insights into the historical and cultural context of the transition period. This participatory approach not only deepened the analysis but also ensured

that the interpretation of the texts was grounded in the lived experiences and historical knowledge of individuals who were directly or indirectly affected by the transition process. My upbringing in Mabheleni, where community knowledge was co-created and oral, informed my choice of participatory action research. This method mirrors the village's ethos of collective problem-solving. This collaborative, co-creation of knowledge aligns with qualitative research as it allows for a deeper, nuanced understanding of the archived materials and the broader political and social context.

Gee (2010) provides analytical tools for discourse analysis that enable researchers to uncover the ideas they seek to explore and address the questions they aim to investigate. One of Gee's (2010) tools is the figured worlds tool, which examines the typical stories, narratives, or assumed realities that underpin communication. Analyzing data with participants from South Africa who are deeply informed about the country's transition and its socio-political nuances, enabled this study to effectively apply the figured worlds tool. These participants provided insights into the narratives and assumptions that shaped leadership discourses during the transition, allowing the research to uncover the implicit stories and cultural frameworks that influenced how leadership was understood and practiced in post-apartheid South Africa. Gee's (2010) Big D Discourse tool helped examine how language and communication are embedded within broader social, cultural, and historical contexts, revealing the underlying ideologies and power dynamics at play. This tool allowed the research to uncover how leadership discourses were shaped by the historical and ideological legacies of colonialism, as well as the ongoing struggles for decolonization and self-determination across Africa. Gee's (2010) frame tool examines how language is used to frame or structure meaning, highlighting the perspectives and assumptions that shape communication. In this study, participants, who are deeply informed

about South Africa’s transition and the broader African context, helped identify the frames through which leadership discourses were constructed during the post-apartheid era.

During the interviews, the participants collaborated with the researcher to analyze the selected texts, offering their perspectives on how the discourses reflected shifts in leadership approaches and ideological orientations. These texts were analyzed in three structured sessions, each focusing on one of the three political parties.

Table 3.3. Interview Sessions

Zoom Session	Dates and duration	Participants	Texts analyzed
1	November 18, 2024 (62 minutes)	Pedro & Thobani	ANC;1986 and 1994
2	November 19, 2024 (53 minutes)	Yolokazi	COSATU;1986 and 1994
3	November 20, 2024 (73 minutes)	Madoda	SACP; 1986 and 1994

Data Analysis

Data Management

For the interviews, I utilized Zoom as the primary platform. During these sessions, I shared excerpts from the ANC, the SACP, and COSATU, which we subsequently analyzed together. To ensure proper organization and security of the data, I stored the Zoom recordings and accompanying transcripts in a secure folder on Google Cloud. The folder structure was designed to facilitate easy access and efficient organization, with folders named after the respective organizations discussed during the interviews. Access to the Google Cloud folder was strictly controlled. Only my Principal Investigator (P.I.) and I would be granted authorization to

view the contents. I utilized Google Cloud's sharing settings to enforce these access restrictions, ensuring that the data remained confidential and secure.

The Zoom sessions, which involved collaborative analysis of archival texts with participants, were recorded and transcribed with prior consent. To prepare these recordings for analysis, audio files were reviewed to ensure technical quality, with any background noise or interruptions minimized. Transcripts were generated using automated Zoom transcription, followed by manual verification to correct errors, fill in gaps, and ensure accuracy. During this process, filler words and irrelevant tangents were removed to streamline the transcripts while preserving the participants' core insights and analytical contributions.

All data collected during this study will be retained for a period of three years from the completion of the research. After the three years, all digital files containing participant data will be permanently deleted, and any backup copies will also be removed to ensure no residual data remains. Data destruction procedures will comply with institutional policies and relevant legal regulations regarding data protection and privacy.

Coding

Qualitative coding involves a flexible and iterative approach to analyzing data, where researchers systematically organize, categorize, and interpret text-based data to uncover meaningful patterns and themes (Bhattacharya, 2017). This process involves applying qualitative coding techniques to categorize and analyze data obtained from both document analysis and collaborative discussions (Saldana, 2021). The coding focused on identifying key themes, patterns, and insights. Through thematic coding, the analysis becomes more structured, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the data's nuances.

This study employed a manual coding approach for thematic analysis. The process began with immersion in the data, where transcripts were read multiple times to ensure deep familiarity with the content. During subsequent readings, patterns were systematically identified and highlighted, focusing on key elements such as institutional names, political figures, and national or international actors involved in South Africa's transition before and after CODESA. Particular attention was given to discourses surrounding leadership dynamics, community engagement, and broader socio-political narratives shaping both the country and the African continent.

First Cycle Coding

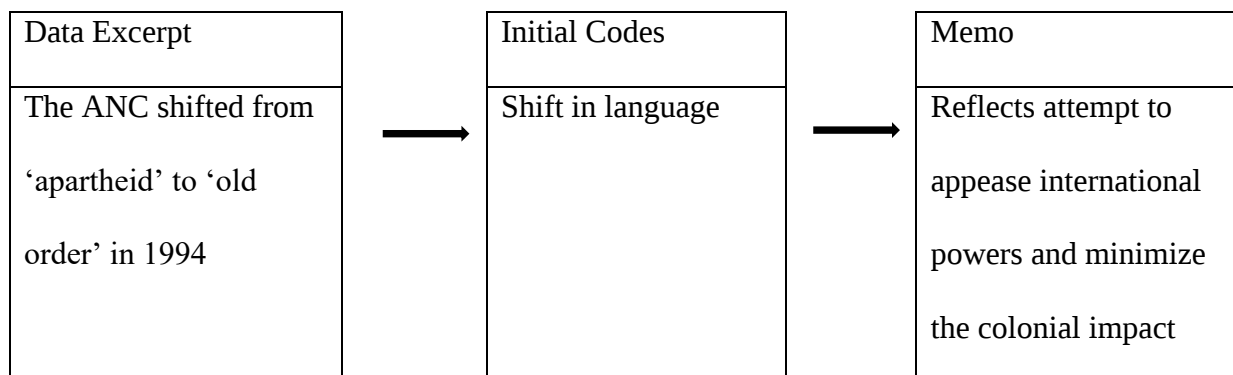
Guided by Saldana's (2021) framework, the first cycle coding process employed an exploratory, inductive approach to surface themes and patterns in the archival texts and Zoom session transcripts without imposing preconceived categories. The analysis was data-driven, with codes, categories, and themes emerging from the data rather than being imposed by pre-existing theories, thus an inductive approach. While the research questions and theoretical frameworks provided a general direction, the specific insights were derived from the data itself. Saldana (2021) states that this approach is particularly useful for exploratory research, where the goal is to uncover new insights and patterns rather than test pre-existing hypotheses.

The first-cycle coding phase involved extracting significant words, phrases, and sentences from the transcripts. I circled names of organizations, places, people, institutions, and countries with the purpose of finding out who was involved in the framing and construction of the transition of South Africa. I then highlighted what was being said about the institutions, organizations, and places, this surfaced the levels at which these institutions are in society, what their roles were and/or are, and what influence and power or lack thereof they have in society, and therefore what role they played framing the discourse of the country. With a different color, I

highlighted names and terms under which social realities are constructed. Names and terms such as ‘apartheid’ ‘colonialism’ ‘homelands’ emerged from the data. I highlighted events and time periods, who was involved, what the events meant for the people involved as well as the larger community. I leaned on the tenets of discourse analysis to identify patterns. Tenets of discourse analysis include social language, practice, power, context, values, beliefs, and identities (Gee, 2014). The first-cycle coding involved multiple rounds, with each round I noticed more patterns which I coded using highlighters, pencils, and pens, circling and underling the patterns.

I recorded the codes on large post-it notes for physical sorting and visualization. Through multiple rounds, these codes were subsequently grouped into preliminary categories based on conceptual similarities. To enhance the validity of the analysis, a participatory validation step was incorporated: preliminary categories were shared with available participants to solicit feedback. This member-checking process allowed for refinement, including the reclassification of certain codes into more appropriate categories. Following this, the transcripts were revisited to identify overlooked patterns or underrepresented themes, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the data.

Figure 3.1. First Cycle Coding for Language and Discourse

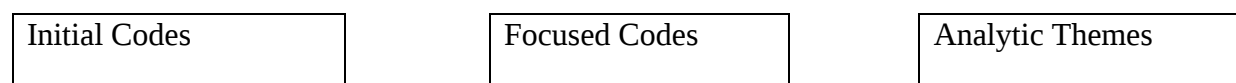


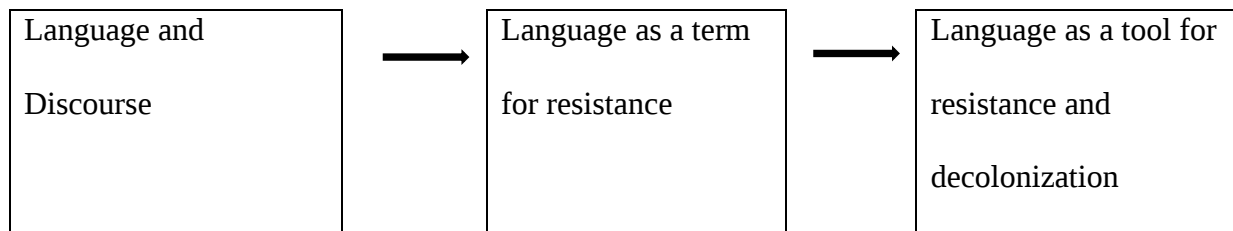
Second Cycle Coding

The second cycle coding approach directly addresses my research questions by refining and consolidating the insights gained from the first cycle (Saldana, 2021). Code mapping plays a crucial role in the auditing process for research study. Code mapping involves tracing the connections between codes and the underlying data they represent (Saldana, 2021). Visually mapping out the relationships between codes and data segments using different colored pens and highlighters helped me detect patterns, themes, and emerging insights more effectively.

For the second-cycle coding, the focus shifted from categorization to theme development. Related categories were synthesized into broader themes, guided by their capacity to capture the study's central discourse. The second-cycle coding also included multiple rounds of sorting the categories. This process requires stepping away from the data and the post-it notes frequently to gain fresh perspective on where the categories fit best. There are some codes and categories that I had to let go during this phase because they did not show up enough to find a place in the themes. This phase emphasized interpretive depth, moving beyond descriptive labels to articulate the underlying significance of each theme (Saldaña, 2021). Finally, the themes were framed and defined to reflect their role in addressing the research objectives, ensuring a coherent analytical narrative. The analysis was guided by my interest in understanding how colonial history and cultural traditions shape leadership, which directed the interpretation of the data, thus the second cycle coding introduced elements of deductive coding.

Figure 3.2. Second Cycle Coding for Language and Discourse





Analytic Memos

I employed analytic memos to help me keep track of the analytical process, documenting key decisions and considerations that may influence the interpretation of the data. I began using memos while look Memos provided space to explore alternative explanations and reflect on the implications of my findings. Saldana (2021) found that memoing promotes reflexivity and transparency in research practice, enhancing the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings. Memos were used to record questions, thoughts, ideas, and insights that emerged during the coding process, they help capture the analytical process and provide a basis for documenting decisions and interpretations (Saldana, 2021). Engaging in ongoing reflections to critically examine assumptions, biases, and preconceptions allowed for consideration on how my background, experiences, and positionality may influence interpretations and shape the research process. I used journaling as a means of documenting my experiences, emotions, and insights throughout the research process. Journaling allowed me to express my thoughts and feelings as I go through the data, providing an outlet for processing the challenges and rewards of conducting qualitative research.

Data Process Timeline

Table 3.4. Data Process Timeline and Activities

Dates	Activities
November 1	IRB Approval

November 18	Data Collection Session 1
November 19	Data Collection Session 2
November 20	Data Collection Session 1
January 22	Data Cleaning
February 3	First Cycle Coding
February 11	Second Cycle Coding
February 20	Writing Findings
March 10	First Dissertation Draft Submission

Ethics and Researcher Responsibilities

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to the design and implementation of this study, ensuring that the research process respected the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants while maintaining the integrity of the data. The study received ethical approval from the researcher's institutional review board (IRB) in Kansas State University, ensuring compliance with ethical standards for research involving human participants. The researcher completed the CITI Program certification in human subjects' research, which provided training on ethical principles, informed consent, confidentiality, and risk management. Participants signed consent prior to their involvement in the study. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Although participants were comfortable being identified due to their public roles, an option for anonymity was offered.

Positionality

As the researcher embarking on this study, I acknowledge the deeply personal and lived experience of being born during the apartheid era in South Africa. Growing up in a society

marked by institutionalized racism and segregation, my formative years were inevitably shaped by the pervasive impact of apartheid policies. The echoes of this oppressive system have left an indelible mark on my worldview and understanding of cultural dynamics. The post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa in which this study is situated continues to grapple with the enduring effects of historical injustices (Madlingozi, 2017). Madlingozi (2017) continues to highlight that despite the dismantling of apartheid laws, the legacy of colonialism and apartheid persists in various aspects of society, influencing political structures, social dynamics, and cultural narratives. Given this personal connection to the apartheid era, I am acutely aware of how these experiences may shape my approach to the research. My lived experiences of the transition and post-apartheid period contribute to a heightened sensitivity to issues of social justice, cultural authenticity, and the need for decolonization. However, this subjectivity does not diminish the commitment to rigorous research practices, including critical self-reflection and an acknowledgment of the potential influence of personal experiences on the interpretation of findings.

A key strength of qualitative research is its capacity to engage in critical reflection, a process that involves the thoughtful and analytical examination of one's own experiences, beliefs, and assumptions (Purnell, 2018). As a researcher, I recognize the importance of critically reflecting on my positionality, biases, and the broader social, cultural, and political contexts that shape this study. This reflexive practice aligns with the principles of CST, which emphasizes the need to question and challenge dominant narratives and power structures (Leonardo, 2004). As a qualitative researcher, I am committed to maintaining a reflexive and ethical approach throughout the study.

Limitations

In examining the influence of Western leadership models on African political structures, it is important to recognize several limitations inherent in this study. First, the discourse shaping current leadership extends beyond the selected timeframe and artifacts, potentially constraining the scope and context of the analysis. This limitation may result in an incomplete understanding of the historical and contemporary dynamics at play.

The discourse surrounding indigenous African community values may not be readily accessible in public or formalized formats, risking its underrepresentation in the study. This lack of accessibility could lead to an overemphasis on Western-centric narratives, thereby discounting the profound impact of indigenous values and practices on African political structures. Furthermore, discourse is inherently dynamic, and meanings evolve over time, which may complicate efforts to draw definitive conclusions from static or historical sources.

Public content often emanates from privileged or institutionalized sources, which may not fully capture the diverse voices and grassroots perspectives within African communities. This limitation could skew the analysis toward dominant narratives, potentially marginalizing the experiences and insights of local actors who are central to understanding the true impact of Western leadership models.

Additionally, my own biases and perspectives as a researcher may inadvertently influence the interpretation of discourse. While awareness of these biases is crucial, complete neutrality is challenging to achieve, and subjectivity may still permeate the analysis. To mitigate this, reflexive practices and critical self-awareness will be employed throughout the research process.

Finally, despite temporal constraints, the study has the potential to conduct a longitudinal analysis, tracking changes in discourse over time. Such an approach could reveal shifts in

cultural perceptions and the impact of ongoing social and political changes. However, the feasibility of this analysis may be limited by resource and time constraints, which could restrict the depth and breadth of the findings. By acknowledging these limitations, the study aims to provide a critical examination of the interplay between Western leadership models and African political structures, while remaining transparent about the constraints that shape its conclusions.

Chapter Summary

In chapter 3, I outlined the methodological framework for the research, emphasizing a qualitative approach grounded in discourse analysis. The chapter details the research design, specifying the focus on South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, with an emphasis on key political parties involved during pivotal moments in history. The chapter also discusses data collection methods, including archival research and semi-structured interviews with participants. The chapter concludes with a detailed outline of data analysis methods, including first and second cycle coding, analytical memos, and the importance of reflexivity in interpreting findings, all aimed at uncovering the cultural and ideological dimensions of leadership in a post-colonial context.

Chapter 4 - Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study, detailing the results that emerged from the analysis of the data collected. The chapter is structured around the four major themes that were identified, each of which provides critical insights into the research questions that guided this investigation. These themes explain the interaction between colonial history, traditional African leadership practices, and the potential for inclusive governance rooted in African cultural values and philosophy.

To contextualize the findings, we begin by revisiting the overarching research question and its sub-questions, which framed this study:

1. How has colonial history and culture shaped African leadership, and how can African culture, tradition, and philosophy inform an inclusive leadership relevant for the African context?

To further explore this central question, the study addressed the following sub-questions:

- a. What are the key elements of traditional African leadership practices that can enhance contemporary governance?
- b. How do colonial legacies continue to influence leadership structures and practices in Africa today?
- c. In what ways can integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks improve community engagement and governance outcomes?

These questions guided the investigation, providing a framework for understanding the interplay between colonial history, traditional practices, and the potential for culturally rooted, inclusive leadership in Africa.

In my analysis of the selected discourse excerpts from the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), I observed a significant shift in language, tone, and framing between the years 1986 and 1994. These excerpts, situated at critical junctures of South Africa's political transformation, offer insight into how leadership discourse evolved under changing social and political conditions.

A particularly striking observation was the changing use of terminology related to apartheid. In the 1986 the ANC speaks directly and repeatedly about “apartheid,” “racism,” and “white rule,” naming the system as a specific and structural enemy. In contrast, by 1994, the term “apartheid” appears only three times. Instead, more ambiguous terms such as “the old order,” “the past,” and “that which must yield” are used to describe the previous regime. This linguistic shift signals a move away from direct confrontation to a more reconciliatory and future-oriented discourse. The language is abstracted, distancing the new leadership from explicitly naming systems of oppression, which raises critical questions about who the new discourse is designed to speak to and appease. Furthermore, the 1994 statement frames the forthcoming elections not only as a political victory but as South Africa's “first step into the modern political world,” emphasizing democratic concepts aligned with global norms. This contrasts sharply with earlier rhetoric that grounded democratic aspirations in the collective will of the majority and the historical struggles of the oppressed. The earlier discourse centers people and their lived experiences, naming victims, speaking directly to youth, women, and the church, while the 1994 narrative becomes more technocratic and globally legible.

Another notable shift involves the language of labor and worker struggles. In the COSATU speech from the 1980s, the discourse is deeply rooted in solidarity, emphasizing unity

and the shared burden of apartheid's economic violence. Phrases like "we must stand together" and "we must be united" are repeated throughout. The speaker frames worker demands not as isolated economic issues but as deeply political, tied to the broader context of national oppression and systemic inequality. Importantly, COSATU rejects the notion that wage demands are the cause of rising labor costs, instead pointing to the economic failures of the apartheid state. However, by 1994, a notable discursive shift occurs. The emerging Government of National Unity (GNU) narrative begins to problematize labor resistance, framing it as a threat to economic stability. The blame for economic strain begins to shift onto workers rather than systemic or historical factors. This realignment reflects a tension between revolutionary labor movements and the newly integrated post-apartheid government. The change in tone may also be linked to international influence on South Africa's transition, including the presence of global financial institutions such as the IMF, the U.S. Treasury, and the European Union during the CODESA negotiations. These institutions' involvement likely influenced the political and economic discourse, pushing for stability and market-friendliness over radical transformation.

Lastly, there is a noticeable change in who is spoken to. The 1986 speech speaks directly and extensively to various constituencies, youth, women, clergy, and the broader oppressed masses, often naming them and honoring fallen comrades. In contrast, the 1994 text appears more generalized, symbolic, and distant from the grassroots language that characterized liberation discourse. This suggests a shift in audience, from mobilizing oppressed communities to addressing a national and international audience seeking reconciliation and legitimacy. Taken together, these shifts in discourse reflect broader tensions in South Africa's political transition: between resistance and reconciliation, grassroots mobilization and elite negotiation, and between African-centered leadership ideals and global political-economic pressures. These findings offer

a critical lens into the evolution of leadership language, the strategic silencing or softening of radical terms, and the reconfiguration of whose voices are centered in national narratives.

The preceding analysis informed the development of interview questions and discussion prompts. Excerpts were introduced during the discussions, with the analytical insights providing a framework for structuring the questions and guiding the conversation. The findings from the interviews are presented thematically, reflecting the key patterns and perspectives that emerged.

Each theme is discussed in detail, supported by direct excerpts from the data to illustrate the perspectives and experiences of participants. This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of how colonial history, traditional practices, and cultural values intersect to shape leadership in Africa. It also offers insights into how these elements can be employed to create more inclusive and effective governance systems that resonate with the African context. The themes were derived from categories adapted from codes during the coding cycles as shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Representation of Categories and Themes Derived from Data

Categories	Sub-Categories	Themes
Colonial legacies	Economic exploitation Western influence Cultural fragments	Colonialism as a persistent force in African leadership
Traditional African leadership	Ubuntu and communalism Resistance Role of elders, women, and youth	Traditional African leadership as a foundation for inclusive governance

Contemporary leadership and governance	Post-colonial Neo-colonial structures Role of unions and workers	The disconnect between contemporary leadership and African cultural values
Decolonization and inclusive leadership	Reclaiming indigenous knowledge Challenging Eurocentrism Youth and community engagement	Decolonization as a path to inclusive leadership

Theme 1: Colonialism as a persistent force in Africa

The first theme explores how colonialism evolved into neoliberalism, with a focus on land dispossession, labor exploitation, and the role of global markets. It addresses how colonial history continues to influence leadership structures and practices in Africa. The findings explain how colonialism's legacies, such as land dispossession, cheap labor, and resource extraction endure in Africa. The theme thus answers the research sub-question (b) on how colonial legacies continue to influence leadership structures and practices in Africa through the surfacing colonial economic structures, cultural fragments, and exploitation still embedded in African leadership and governance. Table 4.2 outlines the codes and categories that emerged to form this theme.

Table 4.2. Theme1 Categories and Codes

Category	Sub-Categories	Codes
Colonial legacies	Western influence	Transition from colonialism to neoliberalism International influence on African governance
	Economic exploitation	Land dispossession Labor exploitation
	Cultural fragments	White supremacy and racial hierarchies

		Divide tribes and conquer
--	--	---------------------------

Western Influence

“Democracy heavily relies on what the foreign direct investment says... if they are not happy, democracy doesn’t hold water.” Yelokazi.

The findings revealed that colonialism and its modern iteration, neoliberalism, continue to shape African leadership through Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank which exert significant influence, thus perpetuating economic exploitation. John et al. (2023) noted that following the wave of independence, the hopes of many who had fought for freedom from colonial rule were soon undermined, as most African nations achieved political independence but remained economically and socially dependent. John et al. (2023) further stated that imperial powers no longer require physical or direct control but instead maintain influence through mechanisms such as foreign aid, trade, multinational corporations, foreign direct investment, international financial institutions, media, and literature. Participants described neoliberalism as a continuation of colonialism, where Western powers extract resources and labor under the guise of investment. This shows how economic exploitation has evolved from overt colonialism to a more subtle, institutionalized form through neoliberal policies. International institutions like the IMF and World Bank impose conditions that prioritize foreign investment and resource extraction over local development, perpetuating economic dependency (Evans, 2011). For example, Pedro’s discussion of neoliberalism as “modern colonialism” highlights how Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank perpetuate economic exploitation:

“Neoliberalism is more of an institutional way of running colonialism... You rename yourself to be an investor, but you are there to do the same thing: extract resources from cheap labor.”

“By 1986, Britain and America are beginning to take over the global affairs of the economy.”

“The SACP assumes that there would be maintenance of colonialism if we take over existing state and government. What they’re talking about is neo-colonialism. That there will be some kind of reiteration some kind of maintenance of the colonialist approach.” Madoda stated.

African countries continue to guide their institutions in Western forms, Yelokazi stated:

“They took the memo from the West... even the interpretation of what democracy is.”

Madoda said:

“You are not reclaiming what was taken. You’re inheriting what was set up for your oppression.”

“Where there are settlers, they have monetary influence and hegemonic influence from Europe... Even the way they govern, even the interpretation of what democracy is” states Yelokazi.

To illustrate the extent of indirect influence exerted by Western institutions over African governance and economic systems, Yelokazi highlighted the 2015 incident in which a democratically elected South African president replaced the finance minister with a relatively obscure figure. This decision triggered a negative reaction from international markets, leading to a significant depreciation of the South African Rand (ZAR). Participants interpreted this event as evidence of the undermining of South African governance and democratic processes.

Furthermore, they argued that the incident underscored the underlying power dynamics at play, revealing the extent to which external actors can shape domestic political and economic outcomes. Yelokazi noted:

“South Africa is said to be the best democracy because it accommodates everyone after the other group committed atrocities and there were no repercussions.”

Economic Exploitation

“Colonialism essentially was about the capturing of land in the south... Black people are cheap laborers. And white people are the owners of the means of production. This system persists today, with black people still occupying low-wage labor roles, such as cleaning toilets and working in mines.” Pedro.

Colonial powers dispossessed Africans of their land, forcing them into cheap labor to sustain the colonial economy (Mhlauli et al., 2015). Data revealed the evidence of persistence in the shift from colonial land dispossession to modern resource extraction by surfacing the Marikana massacre of 2012 where black mine workers were exploited and killed while extracting platinum for foreign capital. Yelokazi explained:

“Workers have long realized that when they are paid lower wages, it is a political issue.”

Pedro further argued:

“Colonialism was the north declaring the south sub-human for the extraction of land, cheap resources, and cheap labor.”

“Black people clean toilets today at universities. Nothing has changed.”

This highlights the link between economic exploitation and political structures. Workers are paid low wages and face poor working conditions, which are directly tied to the political and economic systems inherited from colonialism. The shift in COSATU’s focus from worker rights

to appeasing neoliberal policies in the 1990s further demonstrates how economic exploitation persists under new leadership. Participants also discussed how foreign powers control South Africa's financial systems and resources, revealing that even after colonialism, foreign powers continue to control Africa's resources and economies. The resistance to land reform and economic justice reflects how economic exploitation is maintained by both local elites and international actors. Madoda noted:

“The ownership structures of the financial services industry in the country... will lead you to Europe.”

“Marikana was platinum taken using cheap laborers killed by the police in defense of British white capital.” Noted Pedro.

Despite formal independence, the continent's economies remain captive to foreign corporations and financial institutions that control strategic sectors: from South Africa's platinum, gold, and banking monopolies to the Democratic Republic of Congo's cobalt, Niger's uranium, and West Africa's oil (Udegbuma, 2020). The resistance to land reform and economic redistribution in South Africa mirrors patterns across the continent, where transnational capital and comprador elites deliberately suppress industrialization, maintain export-dependent economies, and perpetuate debt traps through institutions like the IMF and World Bank (Udegbuma, 2020).

Cultural Fragments

“The Berlin conference is where pre-colonial culture dies... the cosmopolitan African man is forced into migrant labor.” Madoda.

Deliberate fragmentation of African communities along ethnic, linguistic, and cultural lines was a key colonial strategy to weaken collective resistance (Sanders, 2002). By dividing

people into smaller, competing groups, colonial powers ensured that Africans would not unite against their oppressors (Jolobe, 2014). This fragmentation persists today, as seen in the tribal and ethnic divisions that continue to influence politics and social dynamics in Africa. This strategy involved not only dividing Africans along ethnic lines but also creating class and racial hierarchies within African societies. The participants noted that this racial hierarchy was not just about physical domination but also about psychological and cultural domination. For example, colonial powers favored certain groups such as granting privileges to some tribes or creating a small elite class to create internal divisions. This tactic ensured that Africans were too divided to challenge colonial rule effectively. Colonial powers often favored certain groups by granting privileges to specific tribes or by creating a small elite class, thereby fostering internal divisions that weakened collective resistance to colonial rule. In some cases, these tensions have erupted into violent conflicts, as seen in Rwanda, Sudan, and Nigeria.

Pedro explicitly discussed how colonial powers fragmented African communities to prevent unity and resistance:

“In South Africa, we must fragment black people into Xhosas, Zulus... They must never unite.”

“Whites made themselves look like a majority by dividing blacks into homelands.”

Pedro.

“If you are black and you are staying in Ciskei, you need a dom pass to come to South Africa... Black people must know that they are different from each other.” Pedro.

Under apartheid, the South African government deliberately fragmented Black South Africans along ethnic and tribal lines to prevent unified resistance. Policies such as the creation of Bantustans or ‘homelands’, including the Transkei for Xhosa speakers and KwaZulu for Zulu

speakers, were designed to manufacture ethnic identities and divide the Black population (Mamdani, 1996; Posel, 2001).

“There’s definitely a hierarchy within our Black culture... it always seems hegemonic.”

Thobani.

“This cosmopolitan African man exists now... forced into mines, displaced, earning European currency.” Madoda said.

The findings reveal that colonial legacies, such as the extraction of resources, cheap labor, and cultural fragmentation, continue to influence African governance today. Colonialism’s economic structures persist through neoliberal policies imposed by Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank, which prioritize foreign investment over local development as witnessed in the Marikana massacre of 2012 which highlighted how black workers are still exploited for foreign capital, echoing colonial-era labor practices. The Marikana Massacre occurred on August 16, 2012, when South African police opened fire on striking mineworkers at the Lonmin platinum mine in Marikana, killing 34 and injuring many others. The workers had been protesting for better wages and working conditions, and the state’s violent response exposed deep-rooted inequalities and the close ties between political elites and corporate interests in post-apartheid South Africa (Alexander et al., 2012). The massacre marked the most lethal use of force by South African security forces against civilians since the end of apartheid and ignited widespread public outrage and critical reassessment of the post-1994 social contract (Satgar, 2012).

Theme 2: Traditional African Leadership as a Foundation for Inclusive Governance

This theme identifies the key elements of traditional African leadership practices, such as communal decision-making, accountability, and consensus-building, that can serve as a

foundation for more inclusive and effective governance. The participants' views noted in this theme surfaced research sub-question (a) on the key elements of traditional African leadership practices that can enhance contemporary governance by advocating for the practices that emerge as a result of Ubuntu, the legacy of resistance within the African culture, and the role of otherwise marginalized members of society. Theme 2 also advocates for research sub-question (c) which interrogates ways that integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks can improve community engagement and governance outcomes. The codes and categories found in the data for this theme are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Theme 2 Categories and Codes

Category	Sub-Categories	Codes
Traditional African leadership	Ubuntu and communalism	Ubuntu philosophy Consultation and consensus-building Imbizo
	Pre-colonial resistance	Strategic resistance Legacy of resistance Unity and collective action
	Role of elders and women	Inclusion in Decision-Making Women as community builders Elders as custodians of wisdom

Ubuntu and Communalism

“In 1986, the ANC spoke to workers, women, youth, clergy... but by 1994, they spoke for white markets.” Pedro

Participants emphasized the importance of collective decision-making and community engagement. The Ubuntu philosophy is seen as a key element of traditional African leadership emphasizes collective well-being, mutual respect, and shared humanity (Atijoni, 2024). This philosophy contrasts with the individualism and elitism often seen in contemporary leadership. Ubuntu offers a model for inclusive governance that fosters unity and accountability by means of prioritizing community over personal gain. Thobani reflects on the role of Ubuntu, stating:

“Ubuntu teaches us that we are all connected; leadership should reflect that.”

Participants discussed communal gatherings as an essential aspect of traditional African leadership and governance. These gatherings, referred to as *imbizo* or community meetings, are highlighted as spaces for collective decision-making, consultation, and consensus-building. It signifies an important communal meeting, typically initiated by leaders to address matters affecting the community in a direct and participatory manner (Pahad & Esterhuyse, 2002). These practices ensure that community voices are heard and that decisions are made collectively, reflecting the values of Ubuntu. Yelokazi discussed the importance of communal gatherings in African culture, stating:

“As Africans, there’s a culture to consult and to talk... we see it in our imbizo or even in our traditional settings where even if you’re not going to take everything the person says, but you just listen.”

Yelokazi further explains how communal gatherings foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity. Noting her observation of the stance of COSATU leader, she stated:

“We used to contribute intensely in terms of ideology and policy offerings of the ANC... now it’s about who gets deployed where.”

“He came to the job knowing... ‘I’m part of the government. But the people who have made it possible for me to be here, they are still not liberated.’” Yelokazi Mfuto said on Mboweni’s alignment with traditional accountability to the people

“But now there seems to be a shift in that... They only talk about the entire ANC government, because they actually say it at the beginning that President Mandela seems to have forgotten, but then with Mboweni, they say he’s still inclusive. He came to the job of knowing very well that, yes, I’m part of government. But the people who have made it possible for me to be here are still not liberated. So, I have to make sure I include them. I see them, they feel belonged, they feel like they belong.”

This indicates that while traditional practices like *imbizo* were central to pre-colonial and early post-colonial governance, modern leadership has moved toward more centralized and hierarchical decision-making, often excluding grassroots voices. Data suggests that communal gatherings are not just about decision-making but also about ensuring that community members feel seen and heard. This is particularly important in post-colonial contexts, where many people feel excluded from governance processes.

Pre-colonial Resistance

“1879 marked the end of organized pre-colonial resistance... after which political resistance took over.” Madoda.

The referencing of pre-colonial resistance movements as models for contemporary leadership emerged during data collection. The participants surfaced the resilience and agency of pre-colonial African societies in defending their land and resources. Resistance was not just a reaction but a strategic response to external threats, emphasizing the importance of unity and

collective action. This resistance is seen as a form of leadership that continues to inspire contemporary struggles. Pedro said:

“Our ancestors fought for our freedom; we must continue that fight in our leadership.”

Madoda discusses how pre-colonial resistance movements laid the foundation for later struggles, such as the anti-apartheid movement. He highlighted how pre-colonial resistance, even when unsuccessful, inspired later generations to continue fighting for freedom and self-determination. The legacy of resistance is seen in the anti-apartheid struggle and other liberation movements across Africa.

“1879 is a very important year in Africa, in African history. 1879 is the same year that the Zulu people of South Africa were decisively beaten, the same year that the Xhosa were decisively dispersed.”

Participants suggest that pre-colonial resistance offers lessons for contemporary leadership. Pre-colonial resistance often emerged from collective action rooted in kinship, clan, and communal structures. Leaders didn’t act alone, they mobilized entire communities based on shared cultural values, spiritual beliefs, and survival. This unity gave resistance a moral and social authority that extended beyond warfare. For example, the unity and strategic organization of pre-colonial resistance movements can inform modern governance:

“The ANC in the 80s was speaking directly to black people to mobilize different sections of Black people, workers, students, the clergy, you name it. They were deep in the mass and struggle.”

Yolokazi states:

“The struggles affect everyone... their lives are tightened.”

This shows how the spirit of resistance from pre-colonial times influenced later movements like the ANC, which used mass mobilization and collective action to challenge apartheid. The lessons from pre-colonial resistance, such as the importance of unity and strategic leadership, remain relevant for contemporary struggles.

Role of Elders and Women

“Our elders and women have always been the backbone of our communities; their wisdom is invaluable.” Thobani.

The participants noted the involvement of elders and women in leadership as crucial for inclusive governance. Participants emphasize how women and elders contribute to community-building, decision-making, and the preservation of cultural values. Highlighting the importance of intergenerational and gender-inclusive leadership, Yelokazi contributed:

“Women used to contribute intensely in terms of ideology and policy offerings of the ANC.”

“Before 1994, they spend a long time talking to youths... they spend a lot of time talking to women.” Pedro.

Elders are seen as custodians of cultural knowledge and wisdom, playing a central role in guiding communities and preserving traditions. Their involvement in leadership ensures that decisions are grounded in historical context and cultural values. However, participants note a shift away from the traditional roles of women and elders in modern governance, suggesting that contemporary leadership has moved toward more centralized and hierarchical structures, often excluding the voices of women and elders. This shift undermines the inclusivity and cultural grounding that traditional leadership practices provided. Yelokazi observes:

“But now there seems to be a shift in that... They only talk about the entire ANC government”

“Women in workspaces are also at the tail end. If you are not talking, they just see you as machines to do the work.”

The inclusion of women and elders in decision-making processes is a key element of traditional African leadership that can enhance contemporary governance by ensuring inclusivity and cultural grounding.

Traditional African leadership practices, such as Ubuntu and communal decision-making, offer valuable insights for contemporary governance. The role of elders, women, and community leaders in fostering inclusive governance indicates the importance of collective decision-making and community engagement. Pre-colonial resistance movements provide a model for contemporary struggles against neo-colonial structures. This theme stresses the need to include African practices in order to foster inclusive governance and reclaiming indigenous values and practices that prioritize unity, equity, and collective well-being.

Theme 3: The Disconnect Between Contemporary Leadership and African Cultural Values

This theme examines the gap between modern leadership practices and the cultural values and traditions that have historically guided African societies, underscoring the need for greater alignment between the two. Post-colonial leaders often adopt Eurocentric models, failing to connect with African cultural values. The theme looks at how psychological impact of colonialism has led to elitism and corruption among post-colonial leaders, creating a disconnect between leaders and communities. This theme helps us answer two research sub-questions; (a) the continued influence of colonial legacies in leadership structures and practices in Africa today,

as well as (c), the ways that integrating African values into leadership frameworks can improve community engagement and governance outcomes. The need to reclaim African knowledge and practices is emphasized, suggesting that integrating pre-colonial traditional values, such as Ubuntu and communal decision-making, can improve community engagement and governance outcomes by fostering a sense of collective responsibility and inclusivity. These principles are reflected in the participants' perspectives, as illustrated in Table 4.4, which outlines the codes and categories derived from Theme 3.

Table 4.4. Theme 3 Categories and Themes

Category	Sub-Categories	Codes
Contemporary leadership and governance	Post-colonial elitism	Disconnect between leaders and communities Adoption of Eurocentric models Corruption and self-interest
	Western capitalist structures	Economic dependency Western influence on governance Conditionality of Aid
	Role of unions and workers	Industrial issues are political Workers' struggles Government prioritizes profit over people Workers' rights are sidelined

Post Colonial Elitism

“The oppressed are a blurred mass to the oppressor... then they start to pick certain people to bring to their side... elitism develops within the cosmopolitan African man.”
Madoda.

Data showed post-colonial elitism as a significant issue in contemporary African leadership. It was highlighted that post-colonial leaders often adopt post-colonial elitist practices, prioritize personal gain, and distance themselves from the communities they are meant to serve. Participants expressed frustration with the elitism and corruption of post-colonial leaders. Referring to the ANC excerpt of 1994, Pedro said:

“The ANC here was already speaking in an apologetic tone of not wanting to name things by their names... They were trying to appear as this educated class of sophisticated black leaders.”

“The ANC see itself as a sole power that can do everything by itself... they see themselves as this superpower.” Yelokazi.

Madoda stated:

“There is elitism in the ANC... Christianized, educated black people saying, ‘We are not like other black people.’”

Pedro continued to explain how post-colonial leaders adopt Western governance models, which may not align with the cultural and social realities of their communities:

“In the 90s, they were already speaking with twisted tongues to impress white markets in South Africa and around the world.”

Yelokazi further stated:

“COSATU only mostly talks about who gets deployed where, how many seats... It’s never about workers’ rights.”

This reflects a shift from grassroots mobilization to appeasing Western markets. It was further stated that post-colonial leaders often prioritize Western approval over local needs,

adopting governance models that are inconsistent with the realities of their people. This Eurocentric approach challenges the relevance and effectiveness of leadership.

Yolokazi pointed out how post-colonial leaders often adopt a business-like approach to governance, prioritizing profit and output over the well-being of the people. This shift from serving the community to serving personal or political interests is a significant feature of post-colonial elitism.

“They don’t put the workers right up front as they did when they’re campaigning. We’re saying that we’re going to protect workers, we’re going to do a, b, c, but when they’re in government, they start to think of the output or of the profit on how best government can benefit, not how best the people who put us to govern can benefit.”

“They now behave like kings of the alliance... they do not listen to COSATU or SACP.”

“The language of liberation became the language of markets.” Pedro further stated.

Yolokazi also discussed how power can corrupt leaders, leading them to replicate the oppressive behaviors of their predecessors:

“Generally, when you get into a particular position of power, psychologically it does something to you. You see yourself as superior. You see yourself as the only thinker. You see yourself as someone who cannot be told what to do because now you have ascended to power.”

The point made by the participants surfaced the impact of power, where leaders begin to see themselves as superior and detached from the people they are meant to serve. This mindset contributes to elitism and a lack of accountability. In policy terms, this often translates into top-down approaches that lack grassroots consultation, resulting in legislation and development frameworks that are either misaligned with local realities or serve the elite’s agenda.

Western Capitalist Structures

“Neoliberalism is colonialism repackaged... investors extract resources while calling it ‘development’.” Pedro

The influence of Western capitalism on African leadership was noted as a major issue in the data. Western capitalism is a significant force shaping contemporary African leadership and governance. Participants highlighted how Western capitalist systems, often perpetuated through institutions like the IMF and World Bank, continue to influence African economies and political structures. Reflecting on Western capitalism operating under the guise of investment and development while it continues the colonial practice of resource extraction and labor exploitation, Pedro stated:

“Neoliberalism is more of an institutional way of running colonialism... You rename yourself to be an investor, but you are there to do the same thing: extract resources from cheap labor.”

“South Africa is an invention.”

The shift from colonialism to neoliberalism represents a change in form but not in substance. Western capitalist institutions exert control over African economies by imposing conditions that prioritize foreign interests over local needs. These conditions often undermine African autonomy and perpetuate economic dependency. Yelokazi discussed how Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank impose conditions on African countries:

“Institutions like IMF and the World Bank... come with conditions. You must use the money for a certain thing... They had their own conditions.”

Madoda further stressed:

“We are still being controlled by Western powers through their economic policies.”

“They are still the same people... same powers who chaired CODESA still fight National Health Insurance and Basic Income Grant today.”

Data shows the economic dependency created by Western capitalism, where African countries are forced to align their policies with the demands of international financial institutions. This dependency limits African countries’ ability to pursue independent economic policies, as Yelokazi highlights:

“We rely on most of the IMF, the World Bank, the other institutions... If they say this move is wrong, you can’t have a 6% increment for the warehouse. They listen to that.”

“Because of proximity to whiteness or proximity to the tools, the modes of existence and understanding of society, of the colonizer... you simply taking over that which was put here by the colonizer is you simply learning how to play chess.” Madoda noted.

Madoda went on to say:

“They have now been forced back into working within our reconstruction and development program... with their own agenda to dilute.”

Role of Union and Workers

“Unions were critical in mobilizing workers... but post-1994, they became entangled in politics.” Yelokazi.

Participants discussed the role of unions in shaping political discourse, advocating for workers’ rights, and holding leaders accountable. Unions are portrayed as critical actors in the struggle for economic justice and equitable governance, but their influence has diminished in contemporary leadership. Unions recognize the intersection of labor issues and political structures and understand that labor rights are deeply tied to political systems. Unions advocate

for workers' rights within broader governance frameworks, emphasizing the need for systemic change, as Yelokazi stated:

“Workers have long realized that when they are paid lower wages, it is a political issue.”

“If people are not empowered at work, they cannot participate in political discussions.”

“COSATU was created under a government that was against us.”

The need for resistance to Western capitalist structures and the creation of alternative systems that prioritize local needs and values has been evident. The call to “destroy” existing institutions reflecting a desire to break free from the exploitative practices of Western capitalism was noted in the excerpt of the SACP in 1986:

“The SACP declares that the revolutionary people of South Africa cannot merely take over existing state and government institutions designed to maintain colonialism but must destroy them and create new people's institutions in their place.”

Unions like COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) play a crucial role in mobilizing workers to resist exploitation and advocate for their rights. Unions were not just focused on labor issues but were also key players in the broader liberation struggle. They contributed to the fight against apartheid and the establishment of democratic governance in South Africa. The mobilization created through unions is essential for challenging unjust systems and holding leaders accountable. To emphasize this point, Yelokazi added:

“COSATU was created under the climate of government that was against us... We must by all means, show unity and must be able to push back without flinching.”

“Even before COSATU was formed... there were unions for everything else... because they realized that it's important that the workers are represented.”

“People are living beyond the means of the country... the struggles of workers are often blamed for economic issues.” Yelokazi.

The findings reveal a significant detachment between contemporary African leadership and the cultural values of community and accountability with leaders often adopting Western models. The influence of Western capitalism and the legacy of colonialism have contributed to a leadership style that prioritizes personal gain over communal well-being. The data revealed a disconnect between contemporary African leadership and traditional cultural values.

Theme 4: Decolonization as a Path to Inclusive Leadership

Theme 4 outlines the importance of decolonizing leadership frameworks by integrating indigenous values and philosophies, offering a pathway toward more inclusive and contextually relevant governance. Decolonization offers a path to inclusive leadership by reclaiming indigenous knowledge and practices. Participants emphasized the need to challenge Western leadership models and integrate traditional African values. The data informing this theme addresses the research question by demonstrating how African cultures, tradition, and philosophical principles can inform a more inclusive and contextually relevant leadership style. The codes and categories attributing to theme 4 are organized in table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Theme 4 Categories and Themes

Category	Sub-Categories	Codes
Decolonization and inclusive leadership	Reclaiming African knowledge	Building cultural identity Integrating traditional practices Indigenous knowledge as a tool for resistance
	Challenging Eurocentrism	Critique of Eurocentric models Decolonizing leadership frameworks

		Resistance to Western domination
	Youth and community engagement	Empowering youth Community-led decision-making Grassroots mobilization

Reclaiming African Knowledge

“Revolution in year two will not come from the fact that we have houses and cars.”

Madoda.

Participants emphasized the importance of reclaiming African knowledge as a critical step toward decolonizing leadership and fostering inclusive governance. They highlighted how indigenous knowledge, practices, and values can serve as a foundation for more equitable and culturally relevant leadership. The discussion around Ubuntu and traditional leadership implies the need to reclaim cultural identity and reflects the importance of cultural identity in shaping leadership practices. Data revealed the need to challenge Western leadership models. Madoda explained:

“In order to complete a revolution, the oppressed have to reclaim that which was taken by the oppressor.”

Reclaiming and reintegrating indigenous practices, communities can create governance structures that are more equitable and culturally relevant. Reflecting on the idea that indigenous knowledge can serve as a tool for resistance against colonial and neo-colonial systems, Madoda said:

“The SACP declares that the revolutionary people of South Africa cannot merely take over existing state and government institutions designed to maintain colonialism but must destroy them and create new people’s institutions in their place.”

“We are not non-Europeans, you are non-Africans.” noted Thobani, referencing black consciousness linguistic reclamation

The participants seemed adamant in that “We need to go back to our roots and use the knowledge of our ancestors to guide us.”

Challenging Eurocentrism

“The system was created for a select few.” Yelokazi.

Challenging Westernism surfaced as a critical aspect of decolonizing leadership and creating inclusive governance in the data. Western models of leadership and governance perpetuate inequality and exclusion, and the participants emphasized the need to dismantle these systems, reflecting how colonial and neo-colonial systems were designed to benefit a privileged minority while marginalizing the majority. Colonialism was founded on Western ideas that sought to oppress and exploit African communities. Madoda argued:

“They will find a new way regardless; to oppress... this is the point at which capitalism wins over communism. The social narrative between communism and capitalism... becomes a directional back and forth cycle.”

“Every institution that has to do with opportunity, money, access was made a white-only system.” Pedro elaborated.

Thobani further highlighted:

“Systems of oppression do alienate us from our own humanity.”

This alienation, rooted in Western domination, assures the irrelevance and effectiveness of leadership in African contexts. The adoption of Western models often prioritizes Western approval over local needs, as Pedro critiqued:

“In the 90s, they were already speaking with twisted tongues to impress white markets in South Africa and around the world.”

“The Constitution does not mention apartheid, only ‘injustices of the past.’ The past can be anything, even an earthquake.”

“The ANC had landed themselves to accepting parts of the worldview of the oppressor. We cannot accept the worldview of the oppressor. We need to actually have a thorough and satisfactory revolution.” Madoda stated.

“Liberation movements in Africa could turn exactly their oppressor’s way... There is a huge chance they can be abusers.” Noted Yelokazi.

The data highlights the need to reject Western domination and challenge systems that perpetuate economic and cultural exploitation. Westernism is seen as a continuation of colonial practices, and challenging it is essential for decolonization. This critique emphasizes how Western systems, such as neoliberalism, continue the exploitative practices of colonialism under a new guise. Challenging Westernism, a perspective and cultural framework that elevates the values, practices, and institutions rooted in Western Europe and North America as universally applicable, inherently superior, and the ideal model for all societies (Sardar, 1998) involves resisting these conditions and pursuing independent economic and political policies.

Youth and Community Engagement

“The youth became super impatient with the vestiges of apartheid.” Pedro.

Participants emphasized the importance of youth and community engagement as a critical component of decolonizing leadership and fostering inclusive governance. They highlighted how empowering youth and involving communities in decision-making processes can lead to more equitable and participatory governance. Inclusive leadership was emphasized and that of grassroots mobilization and community engagement in decolonizing leadership. Youth are viewed as critical to driving social and political change. Their involvement in leadership and governance can challenge existing power structures and promote more inclusive and equitable systems. Pedro stated:

“If you want to study the revolutionary power of students, you need to look at SA in the late ’70s and ’80s.”

“In 1986 they were calling things by name... mobilizing students, clergy, women. In the 90s, they were speaking for white markets.”

“The late 70s and 80s showed the revolutionary power of students.”

“The youth are the future; we need to empower them to lead.”

The data underscores the critical importance of community engagement in governance, as it ensures leaders remain accountable to the people they serve. Inclusive governance fosters a sense of belonging and ownership, strengthening the bond between leaders and citizens through promoting active participation from communities. Decolonization further supports this vision by challenging Eurocentric models and reclaiming indigenous knowledge, thus paving the way for more inclusive and representative leadership. Ultimately, community engagement is essential for empowering the next generation of leaders, enabling them to build more equitable, participatory, and responsive.

A word cloud was generated from the data transcripts using an artificial intelligence-based tool to visually represent the most frequently occurring terms., as illustrated in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Frequently Occurring Terms



Chapter Summary

This chapter was organized around four key themes that explore the intersection of colonialism, neoliberalism, and leadership in Africa, while also highlighting the potential of traditional African leadership practices to inform contemporary governance.

The first theme examined how colonialism evolved into neoliberalism, emphasizing land dispossession, labor exploitation, and global market dynamics. It revealed how colonial legacies, such as resource extraction and economic structures, continue to shape African leadership and governance, addressing research question on the enduring influence of colonial legacies.

The second theme identified key elements of traditional African leadership, such as communal decision-making, accountability, and consensus-building, rooted in Ubuntu and

resistance legacies. It addresses research questions on advocating for integrating indigenous values to enhance contemporary governance and community engagement.

The third theme highlighted the gap between modern, Western leadership models and African cultural traditions, exacerbated by colonialism's psychological impact, elitism, and corruption. It underscores the need to reclaim indigenous knowledge and practices, such as Ubuntu, to improve governance outcomes and community engagement.

The fourth theme emphasized the importance of decolonizing leadership by integrating indigenous values and philosophies. It advocates for challenging Western models and reclaiming African traditions to create more inclusive and contextually relevant governance, directly addressing the overarching research question.

Chapter 5 - Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

Study Summary

This qualitative research study sought to explore the ways in which colonial history and culture have shaped African leadership, while also examining how African culture, tradition, and philosophy can inform the development of inclusive leadership models relevant to the African context. Examining both pre- and post-negotiation discourse can better reflect the impact of these influences on contemporary African leadership practices. The study focused on South Africa, a nation with a history of colonialism and apartheid, and analyzed the discourse of community leaders during the transition period from apartheid to democracy. Participants in various community leadership roles engaged with the aim of addressing the overarching questions on how colonial legacies have shaped leadership practices and how African traditions and philosophies can inform more inclusive leadership approaches suitable for the continent. To better understand these dynamics, several sub-questions were employed to investigate the key elements of traditional African leadership that could enhance modern governance, the ongoing influence of colonial legacies on current leadership structures, and the potential benefits of integrating indigenous values into leadership frameworks for improved community engagement and governance outcomes.

The combination of social construction, critical social theory, and decolonization as theoretical frameworks provided a strong foundation for the study, enabling it to critically examine the impact of colonial history on African leadership while also exploring the potential of African culture and tradition to inform inclusive governance. Discourse analysis, as a methodology, brought these frameworks to life by uncovering hidden power dynamics, highlighting cultural disconnects, and revealing transformative pathways for decolonizing

leadership. The methodology's focus on context and meaning-making aligned perfectly with the study's emphasis on social construction, critical social theory, and decolonization, making it an ideal choice for exploring the complexities of African leadership. Together, these elements made the study not only theoretically rigorous but also deeply relevant and impactful, offering valuable insights for reimagining African leadership in ways that are inclusive, culturally relevant, and responsive to community needs.

The findings of the study, derived from discourse analysis, revealed four major themes that provide critical insights into the intersection of colonialism, traditional African leadership, and contemporary governance. The four themes included: 1) colonialism as a persistent force in African leadership; 2) traditional African leadership as a foundation for inclusive governance; 3) the disconnect between contemporary leadership and African cultural values; and 4) decolonization as a path to inclusive leadership.

Discussion

The themes found in this research did not only reveal impact of colonial history on African leadership, a disconnect between contemporary leadership and cultural values, and how the continent has continuously been coerced into abiding by a system that does not favor them, but they also offer a way forward by providing a roadmap for reimagining African leadership in ways that are rooted in local contexts and also responsive to community needs.

Colonialism as a Persistent Force in African Leadership

Colonialism was not merely a historical period but a system that embedded itself deeply into the political, economic, and cultural composition of African societies. Colonial powers extracted resources and labor from Africa, creating economies that were dependent on exporting raw materials rather than developing self-sustaining industries. Participants noted that industries

in South Africa tie back to European companies. These systems were not dismantled after independence; instead, they were often inherited and perpetuated by post-colonial leaders, many of whom were co-opted into maintaining the status quo to serve both local elites and foreign interests. While direct colonial rule has ended, Western powers have adapted their methods to maintain influence over African nations (Thompson, 2001).

Framed as a neutral economic process, globalization often reinforces unequal power dynamics. African countries are integrated into the global economy on terms that favor Western corporations and financial institutions, perpetuating dependency (Chilisa et al., 2016).

Investments from Western countries and multinational corporations often come with conditions that prioritize the interests of investors over local development. These conditions can include trade liberalization, privatization of public assets, and austerity measures that limit social spending. Development aid and loans from institutions like the World Bank and IMF are often tied to policies that align with Western ideologies, such as deregulation and reduced state intervention in the economy. For example, USAID has historically promoted structural reforms emphasizing privatization and open markets in recipient countries, and similarly, IMF required countries to cut public spending, remove subsidies, and liberalize trade (Udegbumam, 2020).

The World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) also condition loans on adopting policy frameworks consistent with neoliberal economic models, often at odds with local development priorities (John, et al., 2023). These mechanisms ensure that African countries remain economically and politically subordinate to Western powers, even in the absence of formal colonial rule (Uzogiwe, 2019). Contemporary visa regimes serve as another example, where African citizens face stringent travel restrictions and surveillance, reinforcing global hierarchies of mobility and privilege that continue to favor Western nationals.

The imposition of sanctions on African countries that pursue policies contrary to Western interests is a clear example of modern-day control. South Africa's land reform bill of January 2025 was met with U.S. sanctions. Land redistribution is a critical issue in many African countries, where colonial and apartheid-era land dispossession left most of the population without access to land. However, efforts to address this historical injustice are often met with resistance from Western powers, who frame such policies as threats to property rights and investment security. Sanctions are used to punish African governments that prioritize local development over foreign interests. Zimbabwe's land reform program in the early 2000s, which sought to redistribute land from white farmers to black Zimbabweans, was met with severe sanctions from Western countries (Moyo, 2013). These sanctions crippled the economy and isolated the country internationally. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has faced similar pressures over its natural resources (Cazzini, 2007), with Western powers and corporations seeking to maintain control over the country's vast mineral wealth. Sanctions not only undermine the targeted governments but also harm the broader population, creating economic hardship and reinforcing dependency on Western aid and investment.

Colonialism in South Africa laid the groundwork for racialized economic exploitation, dispossessing indigenous populations of land and resources while privileging white settlers and international interests (Jolobe, 14). Apartheid institutionalized these inequalities, systematically excluding black South Africans from property ownership, quality education, and economic opportunities (Inman & Rubinfeld, 2013). The Group Areas Act, Land Acts, and other apartheid laws ensured that wealth and resources remained concentrated in the hands of the white minority (Ellis, 2019). By 1994, when apartheid formally ended, the economic disparities were deeply entrenched, with most of the land, businesses, and wealth still controlled by white South

Africans and foreign entities (Ellis, 2019). The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks in the early 1990s were pivotal in transitioning South Africa to democracy (Jolobe, 2014). However, these negotiations did not adequately address land reform or economic redistribution. The focus was primarily on political power-sharing and maintaining stability, which often meant protecting the economic interests of the white minority and international investors (Beall & Ngonyama, 2009). This compromise left the structural economic inequalities largely intact. The failure to prioritize land reform and economic justice during this critical period has had long-term consequences, as the black majority continues to face barriers to accessing land, capital, and opportunities.

While the end of apartheid allowed black South Africans to legally own property and participate in the economy, the historical disadvantages were so profound that meaningful economic catch-up has been nearly impossible for many. South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, with the top 10% of earners capturing over 65% of the nation's income (World Bank, 2022). This extreme economic disparity is deeply rooted in the country's colonial and apartheid history, which systematically excluded the Black majority from land ownership, quality education, and economic participation (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). The legacy of exclusion from education, skilled employment, and wealth accumulation during apartheid means that black South Africans often lack the financial resources to compete in the property market or start businesses (Mhlauli et al., 2015; Thompson, 2001).

Neoliberal economic policies adopted post-1994, often under pressure from Western powers and international financial institutions, prioritized market liberalization and fiscal austerity over redistributive measures. This further entrenched inequality by favoring corporate interests and limiting the state's ability to address poverty and land reform. Western powers and

financial institutions have historically supported policies that protect their economic interests in South Africa, often at the expense of equitable development (Ocheni & Nwanko, 2012). Neo-colonial powers often operate under the banner of the United Nations, utilizing two key UN-affiliated financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which they established after World War II and continue to control without any genuine democratic oversight (Udegbumam, 2020). As Nkrumah (1965) notes, this form of control manifests through what is termed ‘multilateral aid,’ facilitated by institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank (formerly the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), the International Finance Corporation, and the International Development Association, all primarily backed by U.S. capital. These agencies frequently impose stringent and intrusive conditions on borrowing countries, including demands for economic data, approval of national policies and development plans, and external supervision over how loans are utilized. This indirect governance has perpetuated a system where the economic benefits of South Africa’s resources and labor continue to flow disproportionately to global elites and the historically privileged white South African minority.

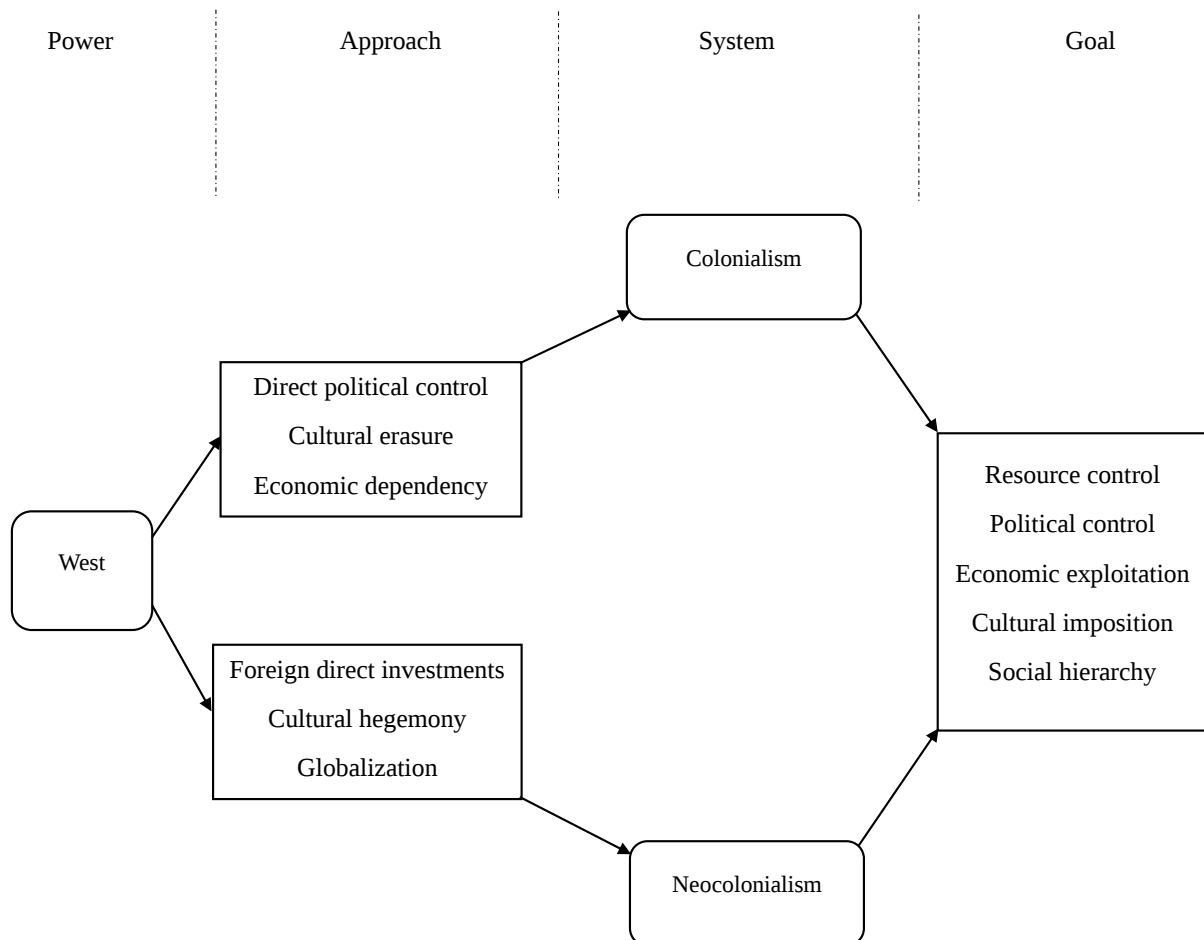
Today, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world, with poverty disproportionately affecting black communities who make up the majority in the country (Thompson, 2001). The lack of meaningful land reform, coupled with high unemployment and limited access to quality education and healthcare, has created a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break (Madlingozi, 2017). The poverty and inequality experienced by black South Africans today are direct legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Addressing these issues requires not only national efforts but also a reexamination of the global economic systems that continue to perpetuate these inequalities.

The study data surfaced the colonial exploitation of ethnic differences frequently used to maintain control, favoring certain groups over others and creating hierarchies that fostered resentment and division. This strategy of “divide and rule” left a legacy of mistrust and competition among ethnic groups. After independence, many African nations inherited these artificial borders, which often lacked legitimacy in the eyes of their populations. This has led to competition for resources and political power along ethnic lines, often exacerbated by colonial-era favoritism. In some cases, these tensions have erupted into violent conflicts, as seen in Rwanda, Sudan, and Nigeria. In Rwanda, Belgian colonial authorities reinforced ethnic divisions by privileging the Tutsi minority over the Hutu majority through administrative appointments and educational opportunities, sowing the seeds of long-term ethnic conflict (Mamdani, 2001). Similarly, in Nigeria, British colonial rule deepened divisions between the northern and southern regions by indirectly ruling through local emirs in the north while promoting Western education and Christianity in the south, leading to uneven development and enduring regional tensions (Falola & Heaton, 2008). In Kenya, the British allied with certain loyalist Kikuyu during the Mau Mau uprising, rewarding them with land and administrative positions while suppressing anti-colonial factions within the same ethnic group (Elkins, 2005). The lack of cohesive national identities in many African countries has made it difficult to build unified and inclusive governance systems.

Colonialism established racial hierarchies that privileged Europeans and their descendants, while marginalizing indigenous populations. Civility was defined by the actions and standards set by white individuals. This standard was both undermining to black identity and an impossible standard to live up to for the black people. These racial hierarchies were often codified in law and reinforced through education, religion, and economic systems. Ocheni and

Nwanko (2012) observed that the racialized systems of power created during colonialism have persisted in the form of economic inequality. Apartheid entrenched racial hierarchies that continue to shape the country's economic and social landscape.

Figure 5.1. Conceptual framework of the continuation of Western powers in Africa



Traditional African Leadership as a Foundation for Inclusive Governance

Traditional leadership practices, such as communal decision-making and Ubuntu principles, were identified as valuable foundations for fostering inclusivity and participatory governance. This theme emphasized the potential of traditional African leadership practices to address these challenges. The study identified key elements of traditional leadership, such as communal decision-making, consensus-building, and the philosophy of Ubuntu, as valuable

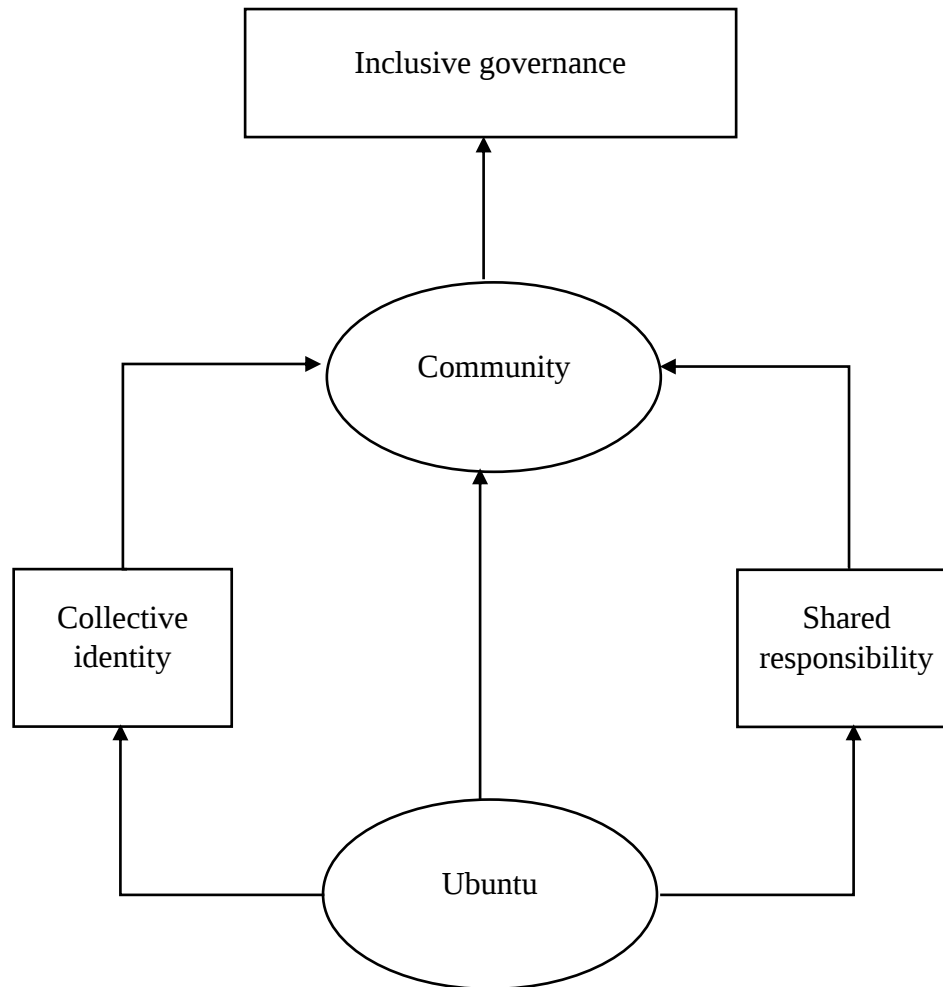
foundations for fostering inclusivity and participatory governance. These practices, rooted in African cultural values, were seen as offering a more contextually relevant approach to leadership that could bridge the gap between leaders and their communities. Traditional African leadership practices offer a model for inclusive governance that contrasts with the elitism and corruption often seen in post-colonial leadership. The emphasis on community, collective decision-making, and the role of elders and women provides a framework for more equitable and participatory governance. Ubuntu encapsulates the idea that humanity is interconnected, and that the well-being of the individual is tied to the well-being of the community. Community members are responsible for each other's well-being, sharing resources and supporting one another. Ubuntu emphasizes kindness, empathy, and mutual respect, and that every individual has inherent worth and deserves to be treated with respect, as shown in the data. Ubuntu is not just a philosophical concept but a way of life that informs traditional African leadership and governance. Leaders are expected to serve the community, prioritize collective interests, and act with humility and accountability.

Pre-colonial resistance movements as models for contemporary leadership were highlighted by the participants as being a powerful and insightful perspective. It underscores the resilience, agency, and strategic thinking of African societies in the face of external threats, such as colonialism and exploitation. These movements not only defended land and resources but also embodied principles of unity, collective action, and visionary leadership that remain relevant today. Many resistance movements were built on the principle of unity, bringing together diverse communities to defend their shared interests. This collective action was often rooted in traditional governance systems that emphasized consultation, consensus, and communal well-being. The Zulu King Shaka's military innovations and leadership united various clans to resist

colonial encroachment in Southern Africa. The Ashanti people, under leaders like Yaa Asantewaa, fiercely resisted British colonialism in West Africa (Fynn, 2023). Under Emperor Menelik II, Ethiopia successfully defeated Italian forces at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, maintaining its independence (Metaferia, 2023). Led by Samori Ture, the Mandinka people resisted French colonial expansion in West Africa for decades (Singh, 2020).

Modern governance systems, often modeled after Western structures, tend to be centralized and hierarchical, marginalizing the voices of elders and women (Chilisa et al., 2016). These challenges have led to concentration of power, the suppression of opposition, and the loss of accountable and transparent leadership (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). This shift has led to elders and women, who were once integral to decision-making, are often sidelined in favor of more formal, bureaucratic processes. Decisions are increasingly made without the historical and cultural context that elders provide, leading to policies that may not resonate with community values. Participants noted that the exclusion of women and elders undermines the sense of inclusivity and shared responsibility that traditional systems fostered. It seems the pressures of globalization and modernization have contributed to this shift, as traditional practices are often viewed as outdated or incompatible with modern governance.

Figure 5.2. African Leadership



The Disconnect Between Contemporary Leadership and African Cultural Values

A significant gap was observed between modern leadership practices and African cultural values, leading to a lack of cultural relevance and community trust in leadership. The study found that many contemporary leadership models in Africa are heavily influenced by Western frameworks, which often fail to resonate with local contexts or address the needs of African communities. This disconnect has led to a lack of cultural relevance in governance, eroding community trust and hindering effective leadership.

Post-colonial leaders often inherited and perpetuated the hierarchical, extractive systems established during colonialism (Nzongolo-Ntalaja, 2002). These systems were designed to serve

the interests of a small elite, rather than the broader population. Many post-colonial leaders, instead of dismantling these systems, used them to consolidate power and wealth for themselves and their networks. The adoption of Western governance models, often imposed or encouraged by former colonial powers and international institutions (Nzongolo-Ntalaja, 2002), has further entrenched elitism. These models prioritize economic growth and profit over social equity and cultural relevance. Botswana has been relatively successful in avoiding the pitfalls of post-colonial elitism by combining traditional practices with modern institutions. According to Obasi and Lekorwe (2014), the Kgotla system, for example, ensures community participation in decision-making. The Kgotla system is a traditional Tswana model of governance and community consultation found primarily in Botswana and parts of South Africa (Molutsi, 2004). It is a public assembly or court presided over by a chief or headman, where community members gather to discuss and resolve matters of local concern (Lekorwe, 2014). Central to the Kgotla is the principle of inclusive dialogue and participatory decision-making, reflecting a deeply rooted communal ethos in African governance traditions.

Western capitalism continues to extract Africa's natural resources, such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products, often with little benefit to local communities. African countries are often forced to export raw materials at low prices while importing finished goods at high prices, perpetuating economic inequality. Data from this study supported that cheap labor in Africa is exploited to produce goods for global markets, often under poor working conditions and with little regard for workers' rights. This is evident in industries like mining, agriculture, and manufacturing.

The conditions imposed by international institutions undermine African countries' ability to make independent decisions about their economies and development. This erodes national

sovereignty and perpetuates a sense of powerlessness among African leaders and citizens. The focus on attracting foreign investment and aligning with Western interests often leads to corruption, as leaders and elites prioritize personal gain over public service (Mkandawire, 2001). This further entrenches inequality and undermines trust in governance.

Unions have historically been at the forefront of struggles for fair wages, safe working conditions, and social protection (Jolobe, 2014). They recognize that labor rights are deeply intertwined with political and economic systems. Through organizing strikes, protests, and campaigns, unions have played a crucial role in holding leaders accountable and demanding transparency and fairness in governance. Participants noted that unions often advocate for broader systemic changes, such as equitable wealth distribution, social justice, and the protection of public services. They understand that labor issues cannot be addressed in isolation from political structures. During the anti-apartheid struggle, unions like the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) played a critical role in mobilizing workers and aligning labor struggles with the broader fight for freedom and equality. In Zambia, mineworkers' unions have been instrumental in advocating for better working conditions and challenging exploitative practices by multinational corporations (Sikazwe, 2014).

The rise of neoliberalism, characterized by privatization, deregulation, and austerity measures, has weakened unions by reducing the power of collective bargaining and undermining labor rights. The shift towards a globalized economy has made it easier for corporations to bypass unions by outsourcing labor to countries with weaker labor protections. In some African countries, unions face repression from governments that view them as threats to political stability or economic growth. Economic changes, such as the decline of traditional industries and the rise of informal labor, have led to a reduction in union membership and influence.

Decolonization as a Path to Inclusive Leadership

The study highlighted the need for decolonizing leadership frameworks by integrating indigenous knowledge systems and values to create more contextually relevant and effective governance models. The study argued that integrating indigenous knowledge systems, values, and practices into leadership models is essential for creating more inclusive and effective governance. Decolonization, in this context, involves reclaiming African cultural traditions and philosophies as a means of addressing the enduring impacts of colonialism and fostering leadership that is both culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of African communities (Asadullah, 2021).

Indigenous knowledge has often been marginalized or dismissed as “backward” by colonial and post-colonial elites (Chilisa et al., 2016). The pressures of globalization and modernization have led to the erosion of traditional practices and values (Monchalin, 2016). Much indigenous knowledge is transmitted orally, making it vulnerable to loss as younger generations adopt modern lifestyles. Incorporating indigenous knowledge into formal and informal education systems can help younger generations understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.

The data highlighted the importance and role of youth and community in social change movements and the dismantling of apartheid. Youth are often at the forefront of social and political movements, bringing energy, innovation, and a fresh perspective to the struggle for justice and equality. #EndSARS in Nigeria was a youth-led movement against police brutality and government corruption. A student-led movement in South Africa advocated for accessible education and social justice through the #FeesMustFall campaign. Young people are less likely to be entrenched in existing power structures, making them more willing to challenge the status

quo and advocate for systemic change (Eyben et al., 2006). Communities are the foundation of any society, and their involvement in decision-making processes ensures that policies and governance structures reflect local needs and values. Inclusive leadership requires the active participation of all community members, particularly those who are often marginalized, such as women, youth, and rural populations. Community engagement ensures that governance is rooted in indigenous knowledge and practices, making it more culturally relevant and effective.

Implications

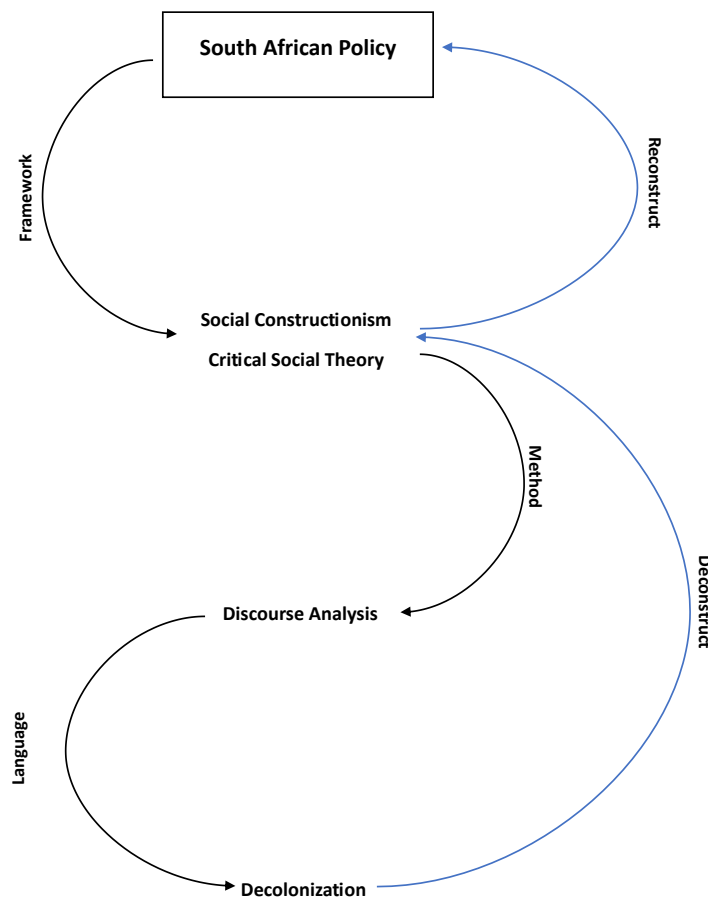
This study highlights the profound impact of colonial history on African leadership while also pointing to the potential of African culture, tradition, and philosophy to inform more inclusive and effective governance models. By examining the persistent influence of colonialism, the value of traditional leadership practices, the disconnect between contemporary leadership and cultural values, and the importance of decolonization, the research provides a roadmap for reimagining African leadership in ways that are rooted in local contexts and responsive to community needs. Ultimately, the study calls for a renewed emphasis on integrating indigenous knowledge and values into leadership frameworks as a means of addressing historical injustices and building a more inclusive future for African governance.

The enduring influence of colonialism on African leadership and governance is a complex and deeply rooted issue. While African countries have made significant strides since independence, they continue to face external pressures that limit their ability to pursue truly independent and transformative policies. Sanctions, conditional investments, and globalization are modern tools used by Western powers to maintain control, ensuring that African nations remain subordinate in the global order.

Yet beyond systemic change, this study insists on a fundamental truth: communities and people should not have to lose their identities to belong or thrive. What I care about is that children receive an education that nurtures their minds, one that does not force them to constantly question their worth or the validity of their lived experiences. I envision spaces where Africans do not walk into rooms dominated by Western norms and instantly feel small; where our governance, hospitals, and schools reflect our identities, beliefs, and ways of being. Places where safety and development are not concessions but birthrights. No child should sit in a classroom and be told their family, their language, or their community's way of life is 'incorrect.' The task ahead is not merely to dismantle colonial systems but to rebuild, centering African dignity in every institution.

Figure 5.3 illustrates how the South African policy can be analyzed and remodeled through the lens of theoretical frameworks used in this study, social constructionism, CST, and decolonization, employing the discourse analysis method, to deconstruct colonial legacies and reconstruct African relevant models.

Figure 5.3. Methodological and theoretical framework for policy analysis



Recommendations for Practice

There is growing interest in Re-Africanization of leadership approaches and governance, revitalizing traditional practices like imbizo and Ubuntu as tools for addressing contemporary challenges. Embracing Ubuntu and imbizo can help African communities reclaim their cultural identity and resist the eroding effects of globalization. Combining traditional practices with modern governance systems could create more inclusive and effective models of leadership. Addressing this issue requires a fundamental rethinking of governance structures, a return to culturally relevant practices, and a commitment to accountability and inclusivity. Only by

centering the needs and voices of the people can African nations overcome the legacy of post-colonial elitism and build a more just and equitable future.

Recording oral histories, rituals, and practices can ensure that indigenous knowledge is preserved for future generations and supporting grassroots initiatives that promote indigenous practices and values can help revitalize traditional systems of governance and resource management. Governments can integrate indigenous knowledge into policies and programs, particularly in areas like environmental management, healthcare, and education.

Addressing these deep-rooted inequalities requires a comprehensive approach that includes land reform, investment in education and healthcare, and policies that prioritize economic justice over corporate interests. There is also a need to challenge the global economic systems that perpetuate inequality, including the influence of Western powers and international financial institutions. Building trust in governance will require transparent and inclusive policies that genuinely address the needs of the historically disadvantaged majority. Addressing these challenges will require bold leadership, regional cooperation, and a reimagining of Africa's role in the world.

While external forces play a significant role, African leadership also bears responsibility for perpetuating colonial legacies. Many post-independence leaders have maintained economic systems that prioritize resource extraction and export over industrialization and self-sufficiency. These leaders have aligned with foreign powers to secure their own political and economic interests, often at the expense of their populations. In the process failed to address the deep-rooted inequalities created by colonialism, thus allowing racial and economic hierarchies to persist. However, it is important to recognize that African leaders often operate within a global

system that limits their options. The threat of sanctions, coups, or economic isolation makes it difficult for leaders to pursue truly independent policies.

Breaking free from the enduring influence of colonialism requires a complex approach. African countries must prioritize local value addition and regional trade to reduce dependency on Western markets and investments. Land reform and resource nationalization are essential for addressing historical injustices and ensuring that African populations benefit from their own wealth. African nations must work together to resist external pressures and build collective bargaining power. Initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are steps in this direction. African countries must advocate for reforms in global financial and political institutions to ensure fair representation and an end to exploitative practices. Ultimately, true independence will require both internal transformation and a reconfiguration of Africa's place in the global system.

Pan-African thinkers have long argued that fragmentation makes the continent vulnerable to neocolonial exploitation, and my vision supports this by calling for collective bargaining power. The inclusion of land reform resonates the work of Mahmood Mamdani and Ben Cousins, who argue that historical land dispossession remains central to inequality in Africa. By centering land and resources, these recommendations align with contemporary debates on reparative justice and economic decolonization.

Recommendations for Research

There is an urgent need for researchers to document and preserve African epistemologies and ontologies that are rooted in local cultures and relevant to African communities. This will help counter the dominance of Western knowledge systems and ensure that African perspectives are central to academic and policy discourses. Future research should explore how other African

countries are integrating traditional values and indigenous leadership frameworks into their governance structures. This includes examining case studies of successful, or unsuccessful, adaptations of traditional practices in modern political and organizational contexts.

Research should investigate how gender intersects with traditional and modern leadership practices in Africa. This includes exploring the roles of women in indigenous leadership systems and how these roles are evolving in contemporary governance.

Future studies should investigate the psychological and emotional impacts of colonialism and apartheid on leadership behaviors and decision-making processes. This includes exploring how historical trauma influences contemporary leadership practices and intergenerational dynamics. Given that identity emerged in the data, future research should explore how colonialism has shaped individual and collective identities in Africa. This includes examining how colonial ideologies, language, and cultural impositions have influenced self-perception, community belonging, and leadership identities. Research could also investigate how post-colonial societies are reclaiming and redefining their identities through decolonial practices and the revival of indigenous traditions.

Research should focus on how leadership education and training programs in Africa can be decolonized to reflect indigenous values and practices. This includes developing curricula that integrate African epistemologies and ontologies.

Conclusion

This study began as a personal reckoning with the dissonance between my lived experience of community in Mabheleni, and the leadership models imposed by systems rooted in Western individualism. Through examining the intersection of colonial legacies, African cultural traditions, and governance structures, I have come to recognize that what I perceived as

fragmentation was in fact a call to remember and reimagine. This inquiry has not only deepened my understanding of African leadership philosophies but also inspired the beginnings of a framework I call the Mabheleni Approach.

Rooted in the values of Ubuntu, collective identity, and shared responsibility, the Mabheleni Approach draws from the cultural memory of African communities where leadership was relational, inclusive, and deeply embedded in the communal fabric. This approach aims to offer a model that is not only culturally grounded but also transformative, centering community as the heart of leadership.

This study has encouraged me to pursue this work further, in the hope of contributing to leadership discourse that affirms indigenous knowledge systems and restores the dignity of African ways of doing and being. It is my next step, both as a researcher and a practitioner, to explore and develop the Mabheleni Approach as a meaningful contribution to inclusive and decolonial leadership practice.

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Appendix A - IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity,
Compliance and Security

TO: Mary Tolar
School of Leadership Studies
Manhattan, KS 66506

Proposal Number: IRB-12396

FROM: Lisa Rubin, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 11/01/2024

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Discourse and Decolonization: Analyzing the Impact of Colonial History and Culture on African Leadership."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written - and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, **45 CFR §104(d), category:Exempt Category 2 Subsection ii.**

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

Electronically signed by Lisa Rubin on 11/02/2024 6:31 PM ET

Appendix B - Participant Consent Form

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

University Research
Compliance Office

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Informed Consent Form
comply@k-state.edu | 785-532-3224

PROJECT TITLE:

Discourse and Decolonization: Analyzing the Impact of Colonial History and Culture on African Leadership

PROJECT
APPROVAL
DATE:

PROJECT
EXPIRATION
DATE:

LENGTH
OF STUDY:

6
Months

PRINCIPAL
INVESTIGATOR:

Mary Tolar

CO-
INVESTIGATOR(S):

Xatyiswa Maqashalala (Graduate Student)

CONTACT DETAILS FOR
PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

785-532-6085

IRB CHAIR CONTACT
INFORMATION:

Lisa Rubin
785 532-3224

PROJECT
SPONSOR:

N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The aim of this research is to explore how colonial history and African cultural identity shape leadership practices in South Africa, particularly through the lens of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) participants; namely the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) during the period of 1986 and 1994.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

Zoom discussions that will be conducted will involve the analysis of texts issued by the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) from 1986 and 1994. The first session will focus on texts from 1986, the second on texts from 1994, and the third will serve as a debriefing to discuss themes and nuances that emerge from the analyses.

All sessions will be recorded for research purposes.

Participant can withdraw at any time from the project without penalty or loss of benefit.

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED (Describe procedure, storage, etc.):

[Select a statement from the drop down menu]

Not Applicable.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

N/A

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

Participants may experience discomfort or emotional distress when discussing sensitive topics related to colonial history or cultural identity. This could arise from recalling personal experiences or confronting difficult social issues.

In collaborative analysis sessions, group dynamics may lead to discomfort for some participants if they feel their views are not valued or if disagreements arise. This could inhibit open discussion.

Prior to collaborative analysis sessions, a briefing to set expectations will be conducted to outline the session's purpose and provide participants with an overview of the topics to be discussed.

The participants are professionals who work on decolonization issues in South Africa and are aware of support resources available to them, therefore no major distress is anticipated. However, considering that the topic of colonialism can be uncomfortable, participants will be reminded to seek counselling services if they get uncomfortable.

Information about support resources, such as counseling services will be provided, that participants can access if they feel overwhelmed during or after the discussions.

The following regions (where the participants are located) offer counselling support;

Zululand; +27 35 902 6449

Pretoria; +27 800 747 747 or text 31393.

Cape Town; +27 800 24 25 26 or text 31393.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:

Participants will gain insights into how colonial history and cultural identity influence contemporary leadership practices in South Africa. This understanding can help them reflect on their own leadership styles and approaches.

Participants will have the chance to connect with other leaders from diverse sectors. This networking may lead to collaborative opportunities and the sharing of best practices.

The findings from this research may inform policy discussions and leadership practices in various sectors. Participants can advocate for more inclusive and culturally relevant leadership models based on the insights gained.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

While your contributions will be known to other participants, any published findings will focus on themes and insights rather than individual identities. Specific attributions will only be made with your consent.

All audio and video recordings will be stored in a secure, encrypted format. Access will be limited to the research team, who will handle the data with care.

All recorded information (videos and audio files) will be stored in an encrypted format to prevent unauthorized access. Recorded data will be stored in a secure cloud storage solution with strict access controls. Only Principal Investigator and Graduate Student researcher will have access to the files.

All data collected during this study will be retained for a period of three years from the completion of the research. After the three years, all digital files containing participant data will be permanently deleted, and any backup copies will also be removed to ensure no residual data remains.

Data destruction procedures will comply with institutional policies and relevant legal regulations regarding data protection and privacy.

The information or biospecimens that will be collected as part of this research could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS? ☐ Yes ☒ No

**PARENTAL APPROVAL
FOR MINORS:**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN
APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**

DATE:

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

**PARTICIPANT
NAME:**

--

**PARTICIPANT
SIGNATURE:**

--

**WITNESS TO
SIGNATURE: (PROJECT
STAFF)**

--

DATE:

--

DATE:

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Appendix C - Discussion Guide

Data Collection Instrument

Discourse Analysis through Text: Analyzing 1986 and 1994 ANC, COSATU, and SACP

Statements

Document Identification

Contextual Information

- Briefly describe the historical context during which the document was produced. What significant events were occurring?
- Who was the intended audience for the document? (e.g., public, party members, international community)

Key Themes

- What are the key themes present in the document? (e.g., leadership, cultural identity, resistance)
- Extract notable quotes that encapsulate the themes.

Language and Rhetoric

- What rhetorical strategies are used? (e.g., metaphors, appeals to emotion, repetition)
- Describe the language style. Is it formal, informal, persuasive, or descriptive?

Discourse Analysis

- What power dynamics are evident in the language used? How is authority portrayed?
- Are there any references to cultural practices or historical events? How do these enhance the message?

- Who is included or excluded in the discourse? What implications does this have for understanding leadership?

Personal Reflections

- If applicable, note any insights or reflections from participants regarding the document's impact or relevance to contemporary leadership.

Additional Notes

- Any additional observations about the document's content, tone, or impact.