The Mandela Legacy: A Creation of the Media or Product of Astute Leadership?

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Abstract
The article examines the Mandela Legacy in the context of multiple leadership failures encountered globally, particularly in Africa, where effects of *leaderism* and *elitism* have yielded unprecedented suffering on society. It reviews literature to appraise Mandela's charismatic leadership style and statesmanship which transformed South Africa's political stalemate to democracy. Functional agenda setting by the media and critical ideological analysis of the historical narratives about Mandela's incarceration, ascension and transition politics are engaged. This is used to demystify the view that Mandela's political achievements were a product of media purveyance or ideological grandstanding, rather than an outcome of conscientious astute leadership engendered in inclusive politics. The article concludes by projecting how Mandela's vision for humanity can be espoused or shared among the current and future generations of leaders.

Key words: Mandela, legacy, leadership, media, politics.

Mandela Mirası: Medyanın Yaratımı mı Ferasetli Liderliğin Ürünü mü?

Özet
Makale, Mandela Mirasını, küresel olarak, özellikle liderlik ve elitisizmin etkilerinin toplum üzerinde benzeri görülmemiş acılara yol açtığı Afrika'da karşılaşılan çoklu liderlik başarısızlıkları bağlamında inceliyor. Mandela'nın karizmatik liderlik tarzını ve Güney Afrika'nın siyasi çıkmazını demokrasiye dönüştüren devlet adamlığını değerlendirmek için literatürü gözden geçiriyor. Medyanın işlevsel gündem belirleme ve Mandela'nın hapsedilmesi, yükselişi ve geçiş politikaları hakkındaki tarihsel anlatıların eleştirel ideolojik analizini yapıyor ve bu analizi Mandela'nın politik başarılarının kapsayıcı siyasette ortaya çıkan ferasetli liderliğin sonucu olmaktan ziyade bir medya arzı ya da ideolojik üstünlüğünün bir ürünü olduğu görüşünü açıklamak için kullanıyor. Makale, Mandela'nın insanlık vizyonunun şimdiki ve gelecekteki lider nesiller arasında nasıl benimsenebileceğini veya paylaşılabileceğini tahmin ederek sona ermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mandela, miras, liderlik, medya, politika

Introduction

For most people the world over, Nelson Mandela's dedication to the cause of freedom and his regard for all people regardless of race, spared South Africa the bloody civil war that many saw as inevitable. Undoubtedly, it was Mandela's determination that facilitated a negotiated transition to democracy and the spirit of reconciliation that made South Africa one of the envious constitutional democracies, seemingly poised to be a beacon for democracy and human rights in Africa and abroad (Lyman, 2014). The Mandela legacy is a personification of the complexities within which the South African social, political and psychological milieu transpired through a man who dedicated his entire life to the struggle and liberation of his people (Muswede, 2017). For this reason, numerous artistic works including media texts have successfully showcased the convolutions attendant to the multi-faceted political context within which Mandela's qualities as a leader and revolutionary were tested. A careful study of these texts (press, prose, poetry, film and broadcasts) conceal his great vigour, stature and virtuous calibre that meticulously championed and reconfigured the nefarious dynamics of the apartheid state to deliver the "miracle" rainbow nation. Apparently, this was against the divergent and largely narrow aspirations of various political constituencies characterised by deep-seated colonial bigotry and its accompanying prejudices (Muswede & Masvopo, 2018).

The Mandela legacy is better understood in the context of the multiple leadership failures among African states which upon attaining independence, made power and the politics of patronage their pre-occupation (Nyamnjoh, 2005), thereby clouding their transformation trajectories into a bliss. During the transition from colonialism to independence, notable former African nationalist leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Samora Machel of Mozambique, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Mobutu Seseko of Zaire were cascaded in the media in heroic celebrity styles. Some of these leaders' governments are credited for the enactment of new reforms that lifted censorship laws and facilitated civic participation and freedom of speech. Apparently, the rule of law, accountability and upholding of human rights would be benchmarks of the new social order to characterise the post-colonial African states (Muswede & Lubinga, 2017). However, the past few decades have witnessed evidence of weak political and socio-economic systems, largely blamed on dictatorship, maladministration and poor implementation of existing policies. This

has created and continue to cause unprecedented suffering on a majority of the poor and defenceless people in the continent.

Some scholars have argued that Mandela's presidency benefitted greatly from a barrage of positive media leverage, which provided him the opportunity to communicate his commitment to political reform to the entire world. While this reference is made with respect to multi-media platforms, live television broadcasts or "media events" and radio addresses are believed to have cajoled the masses towards embracing a sense of unity for South Africans out of a profoundly scattered nation (Evans, 2010). For these reasons, Mandela has been described as the "myth-making guest leader"… the messiah figure, a mediator of extreme oppositions, a realistic dreamer, both utopian and practical, shrewd and imaginative" by all forms of press (Dayan & Katz, 1992:181). Arguably, this purview became one of his most important acts of "mediapolitiek" (Edwards, 2004:267) that glorified him as a "forgiving and reasonable saviour … as a forgone conclusion" (Evans, 2010). Since the media are also viewed as "nation building tools", some critics have argued that Mandela's press charm succeeded in diverting attention away from the real implications of the transition (from apartheid to democracy), rather choosing to offer reconciliation without socio-economic reform (ibid). Within this context, as scholars, can it be then argued that the media's iconisation of Nelson Mandela succeeded to establish and sustain his legacy for a period spanning two and half decades, including 6 years after his death? To interrogate this question, the chapter provides an overview of Africa's experiences of democracy, leadership and governance; critiques Mandela's narratives in terms of media agenda setting and ideological framing of the Mandela legacy as pedigree for a new leadership epoch in Africa and beyond.

Democracy, Leadership and Governance Challenges In Africa

State of democracy in post-colonial Africa

Although the transition of Africa from colonial rule to independence from the 1960s came with potential opportunities for a progressive continent, this development has been accompanied by numerous challenges. This is despite most of these countries having inherited or established auspicious governance systems essential for effective accountable and transparent governance to consolidate the gains of their hard worn independence. In their revolutionary outlook, most of these governments boasted functional political systems, multi-party democracies with sound electoral systems (Nyamnjoh, 2005) and in some cases still continue to enjoy independence of the judiciary. With somewhat independent and pluralistic press, their endeavour to address the erstwhile colonial machinations and neo-liberal

tendencies were set on track. Subsequently, many people hoped that the era would provide effective checks and balances where the executive would become more responsive to the needs of the citizens (Pippa, 2004).

Fanon's (1963) observation of some of the earliest attempts at democratisation bemoans the dangers associated with the "one party state" approach as a modern form of democracy. In his "Pitfalls of national consciousness", Fanon put emphasis on the value of the multi-party nature of politics as a true reflection of democracy as opposed to the centralised system of governance. In most African states, Koenane and Mangena (2017) noted that regardless of how government is structured, a minority always hold real power. This occurs in environments where active citizenship is particularly low and is largely limited to citizens merely casting a ballot during elections without understanding the meaning of democracy (Dieltiens, 2005).

Apparently, there has been an increasing trend, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa for governments to impose draconian laws that supress freedom of speech and access to information (Koenane & Mangena, 2017). In numerous instances, the news media have carried disheartening news where ordinary citizens have been brutalised or denied the right to register their discontent against corruption and misrule through peaceful demonstrations (Nyarota, 2018). Conversely, democracy should be viewed as a system of governance that is engendered and concerned with the human rights and broad interests of the citizens. This entails a situation where humanistic demands are placed on those in power in order to pressure them to be responsive towards the will of the people, regardless of the latter's race, creed, gender, origin et cetera. This concurs with Heywood's (2007) view that democracy should allude to a scenario where the system of rule is defined in terms of governance by the people, punctuated by continuous participation in the decision making processes of government.

Critique of the leadership approaches in Africa

The transition from colonialism to African rule in a majority of the African countries was expected to transform the colonial patterns of governance from authoritarian practice to pluralistic-consultative approaches (Dieltiens, 2005). Thus, the rule of law, accountability and regard for human rights would characterise the new social order for effective structural redress of the injustices associated with the colonial rule. This would yield positive and sustainable socio-economic gains for the majority of citizens, particularly the poor and formerly disenfranchised masses. However, this has remained a pipe dream as decisional and regulatory powers have continued to be associated with the state (Buscher & Dietz, 2005). In

the context of discursive power, which has traditionally resided within the state, this has shifted to non-institutional actors leading to a *hollow state* as most African nations fail to fulfil their obligations (Strange 1996 cited in Buscher & Dietz, 2005). Subsequently, some post-colonial African governments have continued to "serve distributive regimes and patronage on behalf of the elite and private financial interests" (Sebola & Tsheola, 2017: 2).

Early studies of the post-colonial governments in Africa viewed the military as part of an institutional transfer of western paradigms of governance along with models of political administration (Naidoo, 2006). This was common in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria where, after the military rulers captured power, they quickly recognised coups as the easiest and fastest route to state power. By implication, this trend became the agency for guaranteed self-aggrandisement. Unfortunately, this created predatory public administrations that consolidated what came to be called the "criminalisation of the state", subsequently squandering the military's legitimacy as a promoter of good and democratic governance (Naidoo, 2006:34). In the contrary, in a democratic environment, it is the responsibility of representative public institutions such as parliament to both mandatorily monitor and oversee executive action as part of constitutional provision. Notably, in most African states, the military as an institution of the state has enjoyed the monopoly of violence, something that has made it to lack legitimacy as an agent of good and democratic governance (Hutchful & Bathily, 1998). However, in other instances where democratic principles have been overrun by complacency, impunity and politics of patronage, the military has taken the role of 'king maker' by either staging coups or assisting some people to power.

Governance and rule of law in post-colonial Africa

Naidoo (2006) argues that a prominent diagnosis for Africa's post-colonial developmental crisis has been the absence of good and democratic governance among its member states. Literature on governance with respect to the developing world has demonstrated that, the transition from the former colonial masters to inclusivity and multi-stakeholder politics has not been unproblematic (Givens, 2013; Croucamp & Malan, 2016). To a large extent, this has yielded intractable governance problems entangled in state linked corruption that has led to a breakdown of the rule of law, lack of accountability and ultimate poor governance (Tshandu, 2010). Despite the promulgation of succinct government structures, systems and strategies, in most cases, these elements have not effectively translated into any formidable transformation owing to *inter alia*, conflation of the political party, state and society (Sebola & Tsheola, 2017). This has legitimised a barrage of social ills resulting from maladministration, corruption, patronage, nepotism, and tribalism.

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Essentially, the post-colonial era has largely failed to provide effective checks and balances where the executive become more responsive to the needs of the citizens (Pippa, 2004). For this reason, it can be argued that, the rule of law, accountability and upholding of human rights as benchmarks of the new social order have not characterised the post-colonial African state. Sustainable socio-economic development for the majority of citizens, particularly the poor and formerly disenfranchised masses remain a pipe dream in some parts of Africa such as Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo due to civil strife. Widespread corruption and lack of accountability have grown to be precursors of overt systematic misdeeds of human rights abuses. In some instances, this has led to the seizure of laws to the advantage of those in authority who use their political influence to misdirect government goals (French, 2004). Overall, this tendency has undermined the prospects of post-colonial African governments to advance towards effective democratisation.

Mandela the Man, Narratives and Controversies

The village boy, political activist and freedom fighter

Mandela's optimism and resilient character is traceable to his childhood life where he grew up herding cattle under the harsh socio-economic challenges in South Africa's country side of the Eastern Cape. His childhood narrative depicts the vulnerability of thousands of young desperate youths who saw the City (Johannesburg) as the only haven of hope against the backdrop of life in their impoverished rural communities (Limb, 2008). It was Mandela's love for wisdom and subsequent ambition to be a professional law expert that helped him to circumvent the route that many of his uneducated peers endured in the farms and mines. This pursuit for education further enlightened him about the plight of his people's prejudiced working conditions in the mines, farms and their masters' domestic habitats (Mandela, 1994).

Upon arrival in the City of Johannesburg, Mandela made friends with a number of like-minded political activists from whom he learned the language of the struggle as informed by African nationalism and other proletariat-inclined ideologies including Marxism (Mandela, 1994). Arguably, this period of intellectual exposure left indelible marks of dutiful persona that birthed the strong sense of his wisdom and love for justice, thoughtful precision, critical appreciation of other people's views and sense of public duty (Henderson, 1996). These aspects became the utmost attributes that characterised his tenure as chief negotiator and president of democratic South Africa in the early 1990s. Contrary to the view that his perspective of the struggle was inspired by communism, it was lack of positive reciprocity from the white government and experiences of prejudice, police brutality and racism that

compelled him and his compatriots to adopt means of violence to overthrow the apartheid government. Thus, engaging in violent and "terrorist" activities which were outlawed as treasonous actions earned him a life-time incarceration leading his 27 year stay in prison. Numerous artefacts including media reports further highlight the unbearable conditions of life in apartheid prisons which he had to undergo including espionage, deprivation and loneliness intended to break the revolutionary's volition to advance the struggle (BBC Worldwide, 2013).

The saint, celebrity and socialite

For many people in the world, the name Nelson Mandela resonates with numerous versions of the saintly man whose life remains the world's favourite fairy tale that mythologises South Africa's transition to democracy (Gevisser, 2000). This has led to the numerous accumulative collection of artistic expressions by a wide number of authors in an attempt to describe, interpret and celebrate his life in diverse, albeit convergent ways. This is evident in some of the autobiographical works authored by Southall (2011); Zagacki (2003) as well as book reviews by Walshe (1987); Campbell (1991); Pollard (1994); Henderson (1996) and Gevisser (2000) among others. In all these works, the authors present Mandela as the very symbol of black resistance against apartheid and a charismatic leader who delivered the "miracle rainbow nation" from minority rule to democracy.

As the world's most famous political prisoner (Pollard, 1994), Mandela's auto biographers have reckoned how he emerged with unbroken and unbowed dignity and strength after many years of incarceration. Indeed some scholars have observed that it was largely the media coverage that foregrounded his celebrity status ironically attributed to his ban, incarceration and iconisation of his image (Evans, 2010). This was evident at his release from prison where Mandela was glorified in a "media event" which has widely been considered as one of the most memorable moments of television both at home and abroad to date (ibid). His association with the sporting heroes during the World Rugby tournament in the mid-1990s and their subsequent victory earned him widespread accolades for both mobilising black support towards the sport and also generating white allegiance towards nation building.

Political activist and combatant

Contrary to the approaches that characterised the liberal stance adopted in the latter years of the struggle, most narratives present Mandela as being instrumental in the formation of the ANC Youth League, ultimately making it the militant "brains trust and power station" of the organisation (Henderson, 1996; BBC Worldwide, 2013). Although the resolve to take a more militant mode in the struggle shook up the conservative leadership of the ANC,

Mandela emerged as a stronger revolutionary ready to straddle ideological paradigms including courting the communists to dethrone the apartheid system by any means. Following a series of altercations with the police, courts, and prison stints, Mandela and his comrades embraced these encounters, as "a badge of honour" (Henderson, 1996), prompting them to further intensify their focus on resisting violence with violence. After thorough consultative meetings and counter arguments within the movement, Mandela became the engine behind the formation of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the military wing of the ANC. as a pragmatic stance to resist apartheid oppression (Mandela, 1994). This led to actions of sabotage, nomadism, conviction, and an ultimate life imprisonment. Thus, the composition of all these events are useful in creating a balanced view of a politician who symbolises both moral integrity based on justice and political imperatives located in violence.

Negotiator or traitor?

Although Mandela tried with great effort to use the treason trial in the early 1960s as an opportunity to brand the ANC as an organisation based on common history, principle and virtue, his oracle yielded no positive outcomes. This is demonstrated through the court proceedings, where despite being the prisoner, he remained the symbol of justice in South Africa. Faced with the livid arrogance and unrepentant approach of his enemies' belief in the apartheid system, Mandela adopted a mild strategy that saw the beginning of private but tentative negotiations, meanwhile clandestine communications with inmates and those in exile sustained the struggle (Henderson, 1996; BBC Worldwide, 2013). This application aesthetic, depicts Mandela's political and moral maturity coupled with realistic reasoning featuring the tenets that later led to reconciliation and eventual circumvention of the inevitable carnage in South Africa. However, it was this approach to the transition politics that later earned Mandela the tag of traitor, particularly because it initially went against the advice of the prison collective (Langa, 2018).

In the midst of all these complex political dynamics, Mandela's forthright challenge was that, from within the ANC and among his followers were those who were not democrats (Lyman, 2014). These are the forces that have continued to mar the Mandela legacy with pessimistic feelings about the economic exclusion of the black majority of South Africans, particularly on the land question. They argue that Mandela ignored to prosecute the historical dispossession of land from the blacks by the white settlers (Mabula, 2018). This confirms Hallengren's (1999) view that Mandela's narrative is largely presented as a one man's remarkable life history that eventually blossomed into a national vision resulting in the abolishment of the apartheid system. This ideological flaw is premised within the dominant

paradigm that justifies and credits Mandela with masterminding the achievements of political rights, electoral reform and accompanying freedoms in South Africa without the collective. Furthermore, it fits in well with Lyman's (2014) observation that on the foreign policy front, "Mandela saw himself personally as someone who could help to resolve other north-south confrontations" such as the Libya-Scotland conflict of 1988, the Lesotho and Nigerian skirmishes on governance and human rights in the mid-1990s. Subsequently, he received a backlash from both the Organisation of African Union (precursor to the AU) and SADC countries for acting "pro-Western" which led to South Africa's isolation at the time (ibid). To further compound this fuss, Mandela's divorce with his struggle wife Winnie Madikizela Mandela (referred to as mother of the nation) compromised his stature as a moral hero, relegating him to the level of "bitter ex-husband" and "sell-out" whose negotiation outcomes were skewed against the black majority (Mabula, 2018).

Theoretical Assumptions

Agenda setting function of the media

The agenda setting function of the media is derived from the theory of agenda setting which explicates how the news production process, particularly the press is engendered and influenced by the editors' adoption of predetermined news selection criteria (Nel, 2005). This is despite the number of people who regard the topical subject in question as worthwhile to generate a public debate on or not. Subsequently, this leaves numerous topics competing for public attention with only a few succeeding in meeting the set standard based on a news selection criteria. The selected topics usually exert significant influence on audiences' perceptions of what the most significant news affecting society is. This process sets the agenda for public thought and public thinking since the imposed agenda of the media becomes the schema of the public to inform public dialogue. Thus, the media's ability to communicate a host of editorial cues about the relative salience of topics on their daily agenda (McCombs, 2013), often becomes the predetermined agenda setting process for target audiences.

McQuail's (2010:513) analysis of the correlation between the press' emphasis of a particular issue and its eventual degree of significance to the target audiences and how they finally perceive it is a case in point. He observes that the agenda setting function of the press not only defines what news is salient to target audiences, but captures the attention of the public and directs public discourse. This happens largely through the individual editors' creative approaches involving deliberately omitting alternative ways of thinking (Katz,

2001:273), in the news packaging process. Since only a limited number of issues can remain newsworthy at a particular time, and the choice of what is included (or excluded) sets the agenda and defines public interest, news editors focus society's attention on what issues to discuss about on a daily basis (McCombs, 2013:2). Thus, the agenda setting process builds consensus about what political, economic and policy imperatives are most important to society in order to facilitate guided dialogue among citizens, particularly slanted towards the elite. Thus, Mandela's achievements may be perceived as a product of a corroborated media stance to create a calculated outcome of his public image.

Ideological criticism of media text

An ideology may be understood in terms of the systems used to justify the actions of those in power by distorting and misrepresenting the realities experienced by those in subordinate positions (Devereux, 2014). This agrees with Kress's (2012) who noted that ideological narratives focus on the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination to influence public thinking. As agents of ideological discourse, the media provide information about events and social conditions of society to the world through explaining, interpreting and commenting on the meaning of those events and information (McCombs, 2004). This process eventually propagates the ideas of the elite or dominant class that controls the media to legitimise the power of the dominant social group. Although audiences have their views regarding numerous issues in life, only particular topics are selected with which editors exercise significant influence on audiences' perceptions of the important issues (ibid). As such, the media content indirectly prescribes societal discourse and influences opinions regarding matters of importance including the manner in which people should behave and how they respond to socio-economic and political challenges.

Rosen (2006) depicts the media as public opinion shapers as they bring issues to public attention, affect how the issues are framed, and give voice to selected opinion holders, whom society esteem highly. Kress (2012) noted that ideological criticism focuses on the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. In this view, media texts can be viewed as an ideological construct (O'Shaughnessy, 2005), because their creators are not ideologically neutral. This entails the influence of news angles on the public as applied by media practitioners resulting from the dictates of their editorial processes. This implies the interpretative and ideological framework within which journalists report particular issues as well as the contextualisation of those reports in relation to public thinking. Essentially, the process generally supports the idea that the media deal with certain issues in different frames and perspectives (Kamalipour, 2010), to produce a desired effect on the way

audiences ultimately interpret political matters. Thus media, particularly television, are usually a major component of the mass communication environment capable of promoting specific perspectives of the dominant group. However, their ideological approach to dialogue is not immune to bias and subjective thinking, particularly where they highlight or overstate certain positions in order to reinforce the views of the dominant class (Muswede & Masvopo, 2018).

Mandela Legacy: Pedigree for New Leadership In Africa

The Mandela legacy should be understood in terms of fighting for justice for all, reconciliation and nationhood. Thus, despite the unbanning of all political organisations and subsequent release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, numerous hurdles stood on the way of the transition to democracy in South Africa. This challenge presented a "multiple trope of resistance, compromise and deliberation" (Doxtader, 2001), where Mandela emerged as the protagonist in the midst of his warring constituents. Media reports, formed part of the unfolding transition to democracy by aiding in the promotion of peace, stability and reconciliation, the pillars upon which reconstruction and nation-building could be buttressed.

Advocacy for peace and reconciliation

Mandela's resolve and quest for peace and reconciliation is explicitly represented when he took a giant leap to embrace his incarcerators and former foes including the widow of the apartheid architect Dr Verwoed and prosecutor Percy Yutar, who wished him death at the gallows during the Rivonia treason trial in 1964. While this projected Mandela as a modest person at a personal level, the media were compelled to highlight this profound gesture, not as a means of playing to the gallery nor to amplify his desire for public sympathy, but rather as part of a well thought reconciliatory strategy in his role as the model for national reconciliation. In addition to the SABC's televised reports and documentaries, Gevisser (2000) also noted how Mandela's long incarceration narrative played a major role in producing his almost inhuman lack of bitterness and desire for reconciliation after the intensely controlled environment in prison. The functional benefit of this experience enabled Mandela to reach out to his former incarcerators as he exploited this opportunity to allay their fears and insecurities regarding the level of nationalism and demands for democracy by the black majority.

In many ways, the editors' selective emphasis of Mandela's handling of Chris Hani's assassination in 1993, addressed through the SABC's televised statesmanship speech, against the volatile political environment could have been blunderbuss had he been emotional about

the event. His careful rhetoric demonstrated that he was the president in the making, and the protector of peace and stability in the tumultuous situation that the country found itself (Sampson cited in Zagacki, 2003). Therefore, based on the news threshold or prominence value, it was incumbent on the press to highlight Mandela's "magic" which dispelled the vile and eminent revenge which had gripped the black population who were more inclined to apply violent means to achieve democratic change than ever before. Mandela succeeded in raising Hani's profound character as the voice that epitomised a united nation, thereby rising above the demur of identity politics and class struggles (Langa, 2018). From a conflict management perspective, it took Mandela's charismatic leadership style rather than the perceived *access* to the media to demonstrate the clarity with which he envisioned the democratic state. Over and above, his precision on promotion of peace and reconciliation pacified the fears initially fuelled by opposition politicians, particularly the threats by Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Afrikaner right wingers' that overtures of exclusive states were mere scape goats.

Democratisation, reconstruction and nationhood

After his release from prison in 1990, both the South African press and international media's deliberate focus on Mandela's reconciliatory stance was wittingly evident, among them, the SABC media events, BBC, Washington Post and the *Time* Magazine. Despite their individualistic posture, they traced Mandela's trajectory roadmap towards both democratisation, reconstruction and nation-building through a process of negotiated dialogue to redress the injustices of the past on the basis of social-political mobilisation and modalities of constitutional governance (BBC Worldwide, 2013). This stage precisely highlights the diplomatic skills that Mandela possessed to create a balance between "past legacies of animosity and a future of hope…" (Zagacki, 2003). Undoubtedly, the press decorated Mandela with especially loaded words such as "… hero, unifier, healer, savior…" (Time magazine, 26 Feb 1990) which they optimally used to deconstruct the erstwhile fears that could have further fomented deep divisions, particularly from the Nationalist Party and other conservative parties.

In the context of peace journalism antics, the media did their best to frame the South African ordeal through the progressivist lens, rather than the vengeance approach characteristic of what transpired during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Essentially, what the media focused much on during the talks underscored how Mandela successfully mapped and represented not only the aspirational hopes of his own people, but also the multitude of sympathisers across the whole world who feared that any "missteps could lead to bloodshed

(Langa, 2018) and the unprecedented suffering for millions of innocent citizens. Thus, despite Mandela having been born into a segregated society and suffered one of the deadliest experiences of incarceration, he stood firm by his belief in democratic values. This was validated through the enactment of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, renowned for its ardent commitment to upholding human rights and promotion of good governance (Lyman, 2014).

Progressive-inclusive leadership

Although the media largely presented Mandela more within the nationalist-reformist paradigm than as an intellectual, this frame justified how his youth activism earned him the position of ANC Military Wing (MK) Commander in Chief, a tactical responsibility that became handy when he had to deal with impatient combatants from exile during the *talks*. Since his shift from the violence paradigm, Mandela had to learn to be a "regal and intuitive leader rather than a judicious one" (Gevisser, 2000:176), as a requisite personal quality of statesmanship. Despite its controversial nature, Mandela's non-racialism stance remained a stumbling block to his envisioned democratic South Africa. This was owed to the fact that the ANC comprised a consortium of diverse political formations amalgamated into a coalition which united against a common enemy in the form of the apartheid regime. It was therefore difficult to manage the pluralistic voices that characterised the "ungovernability campaign" (Lyman, 2014), which comprised the United Democratic Front, military combatants, leadership from exile and that from the homelands into one protracted force. However, the media were instrumental in casting his personal restraint and democratic treatment of these divergent groups as a personal validation that Mandela was committed to "an elected government of the people, by the people and for the people" possibly inclusive of the conservatives and reactionaries (Zagacki, 2003:726).

While acknowledging the inherent influence that international capital and geo-political agendas have on third world leaders (Henderson, 1996), the Mandela narrative explicitly rejects this philosophy, by categorically projecting his leadership as one driven by conscious transformative politics "where the people represent the core of the struggle" (Campbell, 1991:10). Thus, Mandela's astute leadership qualities were showcased when, at the brink of the collapse of talks towards the formation of a democratic society, could not adopt a "straight jacket" model to deliver the non-racist, non-sexist inclusive South Africa he espoused. Ideologically, both the local and international press should be lauded for framing Mandela as a protagonist who assumed the global inspirational pedestal for "the politics of self-

emancipation beyond leaderism" (ibid) that embodies internationally espoused human rights and democratic values.

Iconic international statesmanship

On the international front, most media coverage has presented Mandela as the "bridge" that could withstand the pressure to maintain the balance between historically acclaimed antagonistic ideological forces, particularly after the cold war era. Different media platforms including political documentaries have imbued him with the capacity to solve conflict problems outside South Africa (BBC World Wide, 2013). This includes cases such as Chad, Indonesia, Sudan, Algeria and the USA's involvement in Iraq where Mandela opposed western interventionist tendencies. His ability to sustain the friendships of Mr Bill Clinton, the former President of the USA and Fidel Castro, the former President of Communist Cuba were a vivid gesture towards the world's prospects for a new order demanding new statesmanship that could rise above ideological patronage (Muswede & Masvopo, 2018). Furthermore, some of Mandela's biographical works such as *Long walk to freedom*; *The struggle is my life*; *Conversations with myself*, and their accompanying analyses by scholars and journalists are confirmations of his commitment to humanity and endowed exemplary selfless leadership qualities. Hence, it is this legendary narrative and charisma that bestowed on him the accolade of the "complex… symbol of revolutionary resistance and hope" of humanity (Pollard, 1994: 79), rather than mere media rhetoric. Per adventure, the media texts may have served as complimentary monumental forms of art to authenticate Mandela's iconic statesmanship. Notwithstanding his alleged "love affair" with the media (Van Robbreoeck, 2014), this painstaking legacy continues to serve as a benchmark to the broader international community to guard against cultism, *leaderism* and elitism that often broods divisive politics in society.

Conclusion

Despite the media's contribution to Mandela's pedestal image and near-messianic heights to the world (Mabula, 2018), his legacy remains an organic narrative based on the protagonist's personal integrity, modesty, sacrifice, and tenacity with which he delivered a solid democratic foundation for a constitutional democracy under elusive conditions. With no record of undue editorial interference at the public broadcaster (SABC) nor ownership links in the private media space, this legacy glows against the common individualist paradigm synonymous with political conquest, dictatorships and one-party regimes upon which most African states were founded. His leadership stands in sharp contrast to other nationalist

leaders, who despite their ideological control of the local media, have continued to perpetuate prejudice and social injustices that threaten alternate voices, justify entitlement to exclusive privilege and unfettered plunder of state resources. Suffice to say, Mandela's one term presidency ironically juxtaposes the life-president syndrome where most leaders have abandoned the collective version of democracy to plunge their nations into oblivious hopelessness typical of failed states. His is a legendary precedent of "good citizenship" (Robbroeck, 2014), from which other leaders can learn to overlook their narrow political interests and embrace collectivist virtues of nationhood based on public aspirations. This illuminates how inclusive transformative politics premised on conciliation rather than confrontation can yield as well as engender sustainable democratic values. Thus, whatsoever *media charm* existed, it took Mandela's personal dedication, moral influence and commitment to principles of democracy inherent his leadership qualities to endow on him the world acclaimed Mandela Day accolade celebrated on his birthday.

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