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## **Exploring Leaders' Inclusiveness in Post-Conflict Political Transitions of East and Southern Africa**

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### **Abstract**

A great deal of research has shown that current conflicts are in fact recurrences of past conflicts. While some studies focused on underlying causes of these conflicts, political leaders' inclusiveness as influence had been neglected. This article addresses this gap by exploring the role of inclusive leadership in the context of a post-conflict political transitions in East and Southern Africa. Based on semi-structured interviews with former Presidents and Prime Ministers and experts in the fields of conflict resolution, and peacekeeping, we found that leaders' inclusiveness play critical roles in preventing conflict recurrence and maintaining social cohesion. We identified specific barriers and enablers to this role in developing a conceptual framework of leader inclusiveness, inclusive practices, barriers and outcomes.

**Keywords:** Transition; Inclusiveness; Political Leadership; Conflict

## **1. Introduction**

African history has shown that political transition taking place in a post-conflict environment can be quite complex (Monga, 1997; Osaghae, 1997; Seely, 2005; Strachan, 2017). These transition periods are characterised by periods of instability with high risk of recurring conflict outbreaks (Giordano and Ruiters, 2016). Palmer, D’Orazio, Kenwick and Lane (2010) calls Africa the most disputations region in the world, according to their MID4 dataset (era between 2002-2010). In that context, choices made by political leaders during the period of transition can have a tremendous influence on the future of a country. There exist complex social issues in many of these emerging democratic contexts (Wilson-Prangley and Olivier, 2016). Yet, the role of the leader has received little scholarly attention. According to Lieberfeld (2018: 58), “research in political science on causes of war and peace making has focused mainly on impersonal structural factors to the virtual exclusion of the level of individual agents”. The critical question of how leadership can influence a country’s predisposition to go back to conflict following a political transition has not been much addressed in political science and development studies. This is the gap that the current study is aiming to address. This research focuses on political transition in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the large number of democratic transitions that took place in that region since 1990 (Seely, 2005; Aidt and Leon, 2016). Monga (1997) observes that since the early 1990s, most of sub-Saharan Africa’s 48 countries have undergone major political and social changes. Moreover, although the literature on Africa has seen an increase in the last decade, there is still a need to conduct more research in this generally under-served context.

International organisations such as the United Nations (UN) have been advocating for long-term peace, stability and ensuring violent conflicts are not repeated by focusing on three areas mainly, “inclusivity, institution-building and sustained international support, and mutual accountability” (United Nations, 2014: 2). The purpose of this research is to explore one of the three proposed areas, inclusivity, and whether it is perceived to prevent conflict from reoccurring following a post-conflict political transition. According to Walter (2015: 1242), “by the 2000s, 90 percent of all civil wars were repeat civil wars”. With this alarming percentage in mind, there is a compelling reason to explore factors that would prevent conflict from occurring again.

Existing studies on leader inclusiveness in the Organisational Behaviour domain found that inclusive leadership has a positive impact on employee’s perceptions of psychological safety (Shore et al., 2011). According to Randel et al. (2016: 218), “inclusive leaders could contribute positively to a psychological diversity climate through their emphasis on including individuals from a variety of backgrounds”.

In line with these observations, the present study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of leader inclusiveness by studying it in the specific context of post-conflict political transition in East and Southern Africa. We elicited the perspectives of two groups namely, political leaders and experts in the field of conflict resolution, mediation, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Focusing on leaders for this research is supported by the fact that leaders are “instrumental in championing inclusion initiatives” (Boekhorst, 2015: 242). Triangulating leaders’ perceptions with the ones from a group of experts was meant to generate more accurate data. The present study takes a qualitative approach and explores leader inclusiveness through fourteen semi-structured interviews.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: the next section presents the existing literature on the context of post-conflict political transition with a focus on how inclusion is addressed in that field. Then we explore how leader inclusiveness is currently studied. This is followed by a description of our research aims and methodology. Finally, our empirical findings will be presented followed by our proposed model of ‘leader inclusiveness, inclusive practices, barriers and outcomes’, before offering our practical implications of this study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Post-Conflict Political Transition Context***

A political transition is defined as “the interval between one regime and another” (Osaghae, 1995). To date, transition to democracy is the most studied form of political transition. In the 1980s and 1990s, a wave a political transition started hitting the African continent and attracted numerous studies on the democratisation process. Osaghae (1995) was one of the first to criticise the western dominated study of African political transitions. Osaghae (1995) claimed that the way they were focusing only on the democratisation period was flawed. According to him, antecedent factors including past transition that occurred prior to the democratisation phase, were also relevant and needed to be considered. What Osaghae (1995: 188) defined as the antecedent factors included the “gains, failures and lessons of previous efforts at democratisation”.

Ikejiaku (2009: 15) analysed the instability on the African continent and paints a bleak picture of “political corruption [which] stands out as the most persuasive, compelling and primary explanation of the relationship between poverty, conflict and development as

issues behind Africa's instability". More recently, Joshi (2013) also critiqued the democratisation literature pointing out that many of the current attributes of democratisation are not relevant in a post-conflict environment. Instead, scholars that have studied this complex environment have found that the journey to democracy for countries emerging from conflict is haunted by a high risk of recurring conflict (LeVan, 2011; Brancati and Snyder, 2012; Joshi, 2013, Graham et al., 2017). Therefore, the next section explores the existing literature on post-conflict transition.

Walter (2015) argues there are mainly two schools of thought when it comes to the causes of repeated wars. The first school claims that repeated wars are a result of how countries are left poor and with weak institutions, which in turn revive the cycle of violence (Walter, 2015). The second school claims that repeat wars are often due to unreconciled conflict that has lagged over many years with two opposing groups fighting for something they both consider valuable (Walter, 2015). This view relates to the Human Needs Theory on conflict, and conflict management, as originally described by Burton's theory (1979) and in the more recent conceptualisation of Rubenstein (2001), who emphasizes that certain universal needs must be satisfied if people are to prevent or resolve destructive conflicts. Political leaders can be the source of or blamed for unmet needs.

In a post-conflict environment where a country is going through a political transition, one needs strong institutions which are believed to prevent the repeated outbreak of violence (Walter, 2015). These institutions are inclusive because they ensure the marginalised minorities are not excluded and the political elite's authority is weakened.

The literature lacked an analysis of the type of leadership that could prevent countries to fall into the vicious circle of repeat conflicts. It is on this premise that an analysis of leader inclusiveness, a principle often studied in the business context, was explored as a potential leadership type that can prevent repeated conflict. The study of this construct is expected to be relevant based on the similarities shared between business leaders and political leaders.

## ***2.2 Leader Inclusiveness***

The Social Exchange Theory of Blau (1964) posits that inequality and power distributions were emergent properties of ongoing social exchanges. According to this classic theory, inequalities therefore are caused by exchanges, where some people control more highly valued resources than others. This theory is therefore highly relevant for the current study, since the Human Needs Theory (Burton, 1979) also used these unequal exchanges and unmet needs to explain potential conflict situations, and thus a lack of peaceful political transitions. Another aspect relevant to the current study is humans' reciprocal behaviour, when an exchange took place which positively influenced them. Shore et al. (2011) use Social Exchange Theory to explain the outcomes of inclusion, where group members who perceive their leader as inclusive, will experience a sense of obligation and would reciprocate with helping behaviours towards the leader. Shore et al. (2011) presented an inclusion framework that combines the concepts of belongingness and uniqueness which "work together to create feelings of inclusion" (Shore et al., 2011: 1265). To this date, the construct of leaders' inclusiveness has been studied in the context of organisations.

We argue that this construct can also be studied by focusing on political leaders, because they have similarities to organisational business leaders. Indeed, "several scholars

have supported this claim by drawing comparisons between the challenges, skills, and responsibilities of top managers and political leaders” (Baur et al., 2016:159). Antonakis and Jacquart (2010) indicate that political leadership offers insight to leadership studies in commercial organisations. For example, the charismatic aspect of leadership is studied across the political and private organisation milieu (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Political leaders can be described as individuals who have a disproportionate level of influence and decision-making power within their communities (Von Vugt, 2006).

Shore et al. (2011) argue that inclusion can only exist when the employee’s perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness are fulfilled. Belongingness happens when the employee feels that he or she is accepted by the other members of the organisation whereas uniqueness occurs when the employee is valued for his or her unique contribution to the group (Shore et al., 2011; Boekhorst, 2015). Balancing both needs is what leads to inclusion. We argue that these needs also apply to citizens’ needs who do not want to be marginalised and excluded. In fact, according to Simons et al. (2013) when followers’ interests are not taken into consideration by political leaders, they may result to violence.

Unfortunately, Ilorah (2009) notes that unequal treatment of citizens on the basis of ethnicity is a common characteristic of the political leadership in many African countries. We argue that studying these concepts are relevant because “Africa’s emerging democracies have struggled with [...] the context of extreme social heterogeneity” (LeVan, 2011: 35). This social heterogeneity, which is often driven by ethnicity, religion or geographical region, frequently results in inter-group conflict which could be addressed by achieving the balance between a feeling of belongingness and uniqueness. Therefore, this study focuses on outcomes of inclusive leadership at a country level.

Nemhard and Edmondson (2006: 947) introduced the notion of leader inclusiveness which “captures attempts by leaders to include others in discussions and decisions in which their voices and perspectives might otherwise be absent”. These findings make the study of leader inclusiveness relevant in the context of post-conflict political transition. This critical and complex period usually involves dynamics of status, power and in some cases repression of diversity of opinions through exclusion of free media. As such, leader inclusiveness needs to be explored further to assess if in that context, it can address those group divides and prevent conflict from reoccurring.

### **3. Research Method**

#### ***3.1 Research aims***

This study aims to explore leader inclusiveness in the context of a post-conflict political transition from the perception of political leaders and experts. Three research questions were developed to attain this objective:

1. What inclusive leadership behaviours are likely to be demonstrated following a political transition?
2. What are the factors that would hinder to leader inclusiveness following a political transition?
3. What are the possible outcomes of leader inclusiveness following a political transition?

#### ***3.2 Research Philosophy and Paradigm***

The approach that was adopted for this study is inductive, qualitative, and exploratory with an interpretivism philosophy. This method was deemed appropriate because the purpose of



the current study was to better understand the nature of leader inclusiveness and generate new insights (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Exploring the perceptions of the culture of inclusion was likely to generate subjective views, making the interpretivism approach appropriate. Lieberfeld (2018) supports that the post-conflict context is a highly delicate topic due to the traumatic sufferings endured by people. As such, in-depth semi-structured interviews were deemed more suitable for this sensitive topic.

### ***3.3 The Research Sample***

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with two groups. The first group consisted of political leaders and the second was made up of experts in the fields of conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, peace-building and peace-keeping. Tables 1 and 2 provide an overview of the respondents for each group.

**Table 1.** Information and details on respondents from Group 1 – Political Leaders

<b>Respondent Number*</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Sub-Saharan Region Covered</b>
Respondent 4	Male	Former Minister	East Africa
Respondent 5	Male	Former Vice-President	East Africa
Respondent 6	Male	Former President	Southern Africa
Respondent 7	Male	Former President of Transition Senate	East Africa
Respondent 10	Male	Former President	East Africa
Respondent 12	Male	Former Prime Minister	Southern Africa
Respondent 13	Male	Former Minister	East Africa

**Table 2.** Information and details on respondents from Group 2 – Experts

<b>RESPONDENT NUMBER*</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>TYPE OF INSTITUTION</b>	<b>SUB-SAHARAN REGION COVERED</b>
<b>RESPONDENT 1</b>	Male	Head of Regional Office	Regional Organisation	East and Central Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 2</b>	Male	Expert in Mediation and Negotiation	Regional Organisation	East and Central Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 3</b>	Female	Senior Regional Specialist in the Transition Office	International Organisation	All of Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 8</b>	Male	Expert in Mediation and Negotiation	Foreign Government	East, West and Central Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 9</b>	Female	Africa Program Director	International Organisation	All of Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 11</b>	Female	Executive Director	Regional Organisation	Southern Africa
<b>RESPONDENT 14</b>	Female	Managing Partner	Private Practice	East and West Africa

Note: Initially, Tables 1 and 2 disclosed the age group of the respondents. However, to protect the respondents' identity it was decided to remove this information.

\* The respondent number was attributed based on the order in which the interviews were coded. This order does not coincide with the order in which the interviews were collected.

The study used a two-layered technique namely, purposive sampling and snowball sampling, which are non-probability selection techniques (Zikmund et al., 2011). For the first group, interviews with the most senior level of national government leaders were conducted due to their ability to make a significant impact during a post-conflict political transition. The sample included former presidents, prime ministers and ministers who were office-holders at the time of the transition.

Unfortunately, the gender balance was reflective of the existing imbalance in governments (Lees-Marshment and Smolovic Jones, 2018). As such, the first group only included male respondents. The second group of respondents was experts who were selected based on their level of seniority, years of expertise and ability to interact with the highest level of political leaders at the time of the transition. The second group was made up of 57% of women which countered the lack of women in the first group. This led to a final women representation of 29% over the total sample size of fourteen respondents. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was the perception of leader inclusiveness from the perspective of these two groupings.

### ***3.4 Data Collection***

The semi-structured interviews were conducted telephonically, via videoconference and face-to-face. The interviews lasted on average fifty-five minutes and were recorded except for one respondent who preferred not to be recorded. Therefore, comprehensive notes were taken for that interview. Two pilot interviews were conducted to get insights on how the interviews would flow and how participants understood the questions. Pilot interviews were conducted in French and English to ensure that the interviewer could articulate fluently all questions in both languages as these were the languages spoken by the respondents. The recordings and detailed notes were then used to transcribe, translate, and code.

### ***3.5 Data Analysis***

A content analysis technique was used whereby the “researcher searches for structures and patterned regularities in the text and makes inferences on the basis of these regularities” (Myers, 2013: 172). Braun and Clarke (2006) six phases thematic analysis approach was

followed. A comparative approach was also used to compare data from the two groups of respondents. Validity looks at the accuracy of the measure and whether the study can be generalised to other studies (Zikmund et al., 2011). To ensure that the political leaders and the experts' perceptions of leader inclusiveness were accurately measured and generalisable, the study was exploratory and the respondents were selected from various countries and organisations to minimise the risk of country bias.

### ***3.6 Research Limitations***

The nature of qualitative research makes the study prone to researcher's bias. Moreover, limitations of our methodology include loss of information because the transition period was not captured in full. Some respondents highlighted that defining the transition period was complex and sometimes subjective. Finally, obtaining access to senior government officials is quite difficult therefore, the first group ended up being 71% of respondents from East Africa and 29 % from Southern Africa leading to a lack of representation of all Sub-Saharan regions. To counter the latter limitation, the researchers ensured that respondents from the second group were representative of all Sub-Saharan regions.

## **4. Research Findings**

### ***4.1 Background on Political Transitions***

The findings and their analyses are presented as per the three research questions below. However, before focusing on the research questions, the findings reported here include background information shared by the respondents that are relevant in a post-conflict political transition environment. The remainder of this section is organised as follows: first, these contextual antecedent factors are addressed, then the findings for the three research

questions are presented and finally a new conceptual framework adapted from Shore et al.'s (2011) initial framework is proposed, based on the current study's findings. We offer some unexpected findings and in some instances, confirmation of Shore et al.'s (2011) model and extend the initial work with specific application to the Sub Saharan African post-conflict transition context.

Current literature highlights that political transition following a period of conflict tend to be complex and represent periods of high risk of re-emergence of conflict. Most respondents did in fact confirm that belief and went as far as making a link with how important inclusion is in that context. Respondent 9 (Expert, Female, International Organisation, All of Sub Saharan Africa) stated:

Oftentimes, we find that in countries coming out of civil war, the big challenge is inclusiveness. The big challenge is being a leader for the entire country. We find that the very reasons the country went to conflict in the first place are still very much present in the post-conflict situation, and therefore the transitions tend to be very, very difficult and leaders tend to repeat those mistakes that led to civil war in the first place.

In the context of existing literature, these findings support Walter (2015) claims that recent civil wars are a problem of repeat civil wars. Moreover, the findings support Walter's second school of thought which claims that repeat conflict often results from many years of unreconciled conflict. This means that this study first required a better understanding of the underlying causes of conflict in order to make a valid analysis of the period of transition.

Observations made by the participants on exclusion concur with Simons et al. (2013) findings that what leads citizens to result to violence is when they are marginalised and excluded. The legacy of colonialism in Sub Saharan Africa was another factor

mentioned by some of the respondents. For example, when asked about the root cause of the Burundian conflict, Respondent 8 (Expert Male, Foreign Government, East and Central Africa) stated:

Well, I think it's really, if you want, a strong legacy due to the colonial period, a process of independence that was probably not clear enough, defined into what we call a nation building state model, and a cleavage that was seen as being an ethnic cleavage but had sub cleavages below it.

Despite the popular belief that the legacy of colonialism is the root cause of many conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are academic studies that claim that conflicts were prevalent in Africa even prior to colonialism (Besley and Reynal-Querol , 2014).

The exploration of leader inclusiveness was conducted through the analysis of three research questions. The next section is structured according to the research questions:

#### ***4.2 Findings for Research Question 1***

The first research question, What Inclusive leadership behaviours are likely to be demonstrated following a political transition? was divided into three sub-questions aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of what the political leaders and experts perceived as inclusive leadership behaviours and how important they perceived it to be during a political transition.

The first sub-question addressed the general behaviours and values that the respondents perceived an inclusive leader to have. Table 3 illustrates the top seven behaviours and Combines the findings from both groups of participants. These findings were similar across both groups. However, the groups differed on the level of importance they attributed to each behaviour.

**Table 3.** Inclusive Leader behaviours and values likely to be demonstrated

<b>RANK</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURS OF INCLUSIVE LEADER</b>	<b>FREQUENCY: N = 14</b>
<b>1</b>	Someone who is open-minded, welcomes and considers others' point of views	9
<b>2</b>	Accepts diversity and sees it as value-adding	6
<b>2</b>	Will vary depending on the context	6
<b>3</b>	Restores dignity, encourages unity, and fights against revenge	5
<b>3</b>	Someone who has a clear understanding of the country's affairs	5
<b>3</b>	Someone who listens	5
<b>3</b>	Someone who puts the interest of the country before their own personal interest	5

Political leaders perceived a leader who is open-minded, who welcomes and considers others' points of view to be the most dominant behaviour of an inclusive leader. Antonakis and Jacquart (2010) confirmed the importance of openness as a characteristic of effective political leaders.

On the other hand, the most dominant behaviour for the group of experts was the acceptance of diversity and when a leader sees the latter as a value-adding factor.

Respondent 10 (Male, Former President, East Africa), stated:

I believe the most important thing is for the inclusive leader to have an open mind, to be tolerant, to have a willingness to listen and accept different opinions, to understand that diversity is an added value and that the fact that everyone is represented is something that strengthens politics and therefore strengthens society.

Two experts illustrated how accepting diversity and seeing it as value-adding is important for an inclusive leader. Both the views of political leaders and experts were in line with the literature on leader inclusiveness which claim that an inclusive leader is one

who promotes behaviours of openness where all members of the group are invited to participate (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

One other important element on which both groups agreed was the fact that a leader's behaviour is often dependent on the context. To illustrate the importance of context, Respondent 4 (Male, Former Minister, East Africa) stated:

So, if you are looking at the leaders in 94, the context was quite different. At that time, we were still fighting [...] So in another context I am sure [...] would have done things differently. But in that fighting context, he had no choice of being very radical because the context was like that at that time!

Respondent 4 was trying to argue that it is difficult to judge whether a leader is inclusive or not as sometimes his or her behaviour are dependent on the context at that time. The importance of the context was a factor brought up by five other respondents as well.

The six respondents that made reference to the importance of the context avoided the fundamental attribution error under which someone's behaviour is judged based on internal characteristics rather than external factors (Hooper et al., 2015).

Finally, Table 3 present four additional types of behaviours that were perceived by both groups of respondents to be representative of inclusive leadership. The ability to restore dignity, encourage unity and fight against revenge was similar to what is expected from reconciliation-oriented leaders in a post-conflict environment (Lieberfeld, 2018).

The majority of respondents perceived leader inclusiveness to be critical in ensuring a peaceful political transition. Respondent 13 (Male, Former Minister, East Africa) stated:

If people do not feel included in the affairs of their country [...] and their voices are not heard, sooner or later, they will make noise and that noise shall unavoidably disturb peace and retard reconstruction and development. Inclusion is key to successful transition.



This leads to question what other factors would be required to achieve a peaceful political transition. In fact, the belief that other factors exist is what led some respondents to give leader inclusiveness a score lower than nine. Respondent 10 (Male, Former President, East Africa) stated:

Obviously, being inclusive is not all. There are other issues that matter. There is the question of economic governance, the question of inequalities in the population. There are other factors that contribute to social peace.

Considering how leader inclusiveness is perceived by both groups of respondents to be critical, one would question why this topic is still undertheorized. This leadership style has mostly been studied in the context of organisations dealing with inter-group dynamics (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006; Shore et al., 2011). However, until now this leadership style had received little attention in the domain of political leadership.

Respondents were asked how diversity of opinion was treated in the context of post-conflict political transition. This question was then followed by a discussion on how leaders allow the participation of various groups as this usually drives the diversity of opinion. Table 4 summarises the top three types of participation and diversity of opinion that are likely to be present during a period of political transition.

**Table 4.** Type of participation and diversity of opinion

<b>RANK</b>	<b>TYPE OF PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSITY OF OPINION</b>	<b>FREQUENCY: N = 14</b>
<b>1</b>	Participation of civil society	9
<b>1</b>	Participation of women	9
<b>2</b>	Level of participation of the opposing party during negotiations	5

The results within both groups were similar on the aspects of increased participation of civil society and women during a post-conflict political transition. However, there were divergence between both groups as to what motivated that increased participation. Indeed, some experts noted that this participation of civil society and women was often not voluntary but rather forced by the international community during the peace agreement process. When referring to the Arusha peace agreements for Burundi, Respondent 14 (Expert, Female, Private Consulting Company, East & West Africa) , stated:

President Nyerere and then President Mandela allowed for groups to be included because the United Nations and others in the international community said their voices were needed.

On the contrary, some of the political leaders insinuated that this participation was driven by a willingness from political elites to include these groups. Indeed, one political leader, Respondent 7 (Male, Former President of Transition Senate, East Africa) stated that “real political openness has allowed civil society to develop” which implies the participation and flourishing of civil society at the time of the transition was driven by the will of the political elite.

One expert, Respondent 14 (Female, Private Practice, East & West Africa) claimed that civil society at that time “was comprised mostly of Tutsi, so it was just another way of accessing power”. The Arusha Peace Accords put an end to a long-lasting civil war between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups in Burundi. Therefore, this claim made by one of the respondents poses a risk on the equal representation of society’s needs through civil society and whether opinions coming from civil society truly represent diversity of opinion.

With regards to the finding that addresses the increased women participation, Randel et al. (2016) stated that women and ethnic minorities tend to react more positively to inclusive treatments due to the fact that their status in groups is often uncertain. As such, these two groups tend to be more appreciative of work environments that are non-discriminatory. Drawing parallels between the work and post-conflict environments, the eagerness for women to be included in political transitions came out in the interviews. Respondent 2 (Expert, Male, Regional Organisation, East & Central Africa) stated:

The Arusha Agreement comes almost in the forefront of the participation of women in this process. They made a lot of noise, they went to see President Museveni, and finally, Museveni asked that the Mediator be able to integrate them, they came, and it was really positive, the dynamic role played by Burundian women.

However, as mentioned above, the question as to whether this increased participation is a result of a genuine inclusive character of the leader or is imposed by peace agreements holds.

Respondents also noted that opposition parties were more likely to be included when the transition took place following a peace agreement. One expert, Respondent 1 (Expert Male, Regional Organisation, East & Central Africa) stated:

It always depends on where we are coming from, what led to the transition. If for instance, [...]it is a through a peace agreement, there is a chance that the opposition group has a share in the conduct of your business.

This finding is in line with literature on power-sharing. Power-sharing agreements often result in all opponents in a conflict being given an opportunity to participate in the transitional government (Brancati and Snyder, 2012).

All key findings from the sub-questions on participation and diversity of opinion lead us to conclude that they were not necessarily a result of the inclusive nature of the leader. The increased participation of civil society and women was often the result of lobbying practices for them to be included whereas the inclusion of opposition groups was mostly a result of peace agreements. Table 4 is not an exhaustive list of all the elements of participation and diversity of opinion mentioned by the respondents. In the interest of this article, Table 4 only summarises the elements that were mentioned by five or more respondents.

### ***4.3 Findings for Research Question 2***

The second research question, What are the factors that would hinder or form a barrier to leader inclusiveness following a political transition? had one interview question related to it. The respondents were asked to discuss the factors they perceived to be barriers to leader inclusiveness during a political transition. Table 5 illustrates the top six barriers.

**Table 5.** Barriers to leader inclusiveness

<b>RANK</b>	<b>BARRIERS TO LEADER INCLUSIVENESS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY (N = 14)</b>
<b>1</b>	Internal pressure (Constituency and/or Leader's own party)	10
<b>2</b>	Implementation of inclusive principles is challenging & requires a lot of time	8
<b>3</b>	When people join politics just to get power and self-enrichment	6
<b>4</b>	Doesn't come naturally to compromise	4
<b>4</b>	When inclusivity doesn't help leader achieve his/her goals	4
<b>4</b>	Continuation of old systems of exclusion (including colonial system)	4

According to both groups of respondents, the internal pressures faced by the country leaders at the time of a political transition were the most significant barriers. These included pressures from the constituency and the leader's own political party. They were followed by how challenging and time consuming the process of being inclusive is. These top two barriers were shared among both groups of respondents. Respondent 14 (Expert, Female, Private Consulting Company, East & West Africa) illustrated how internal pressures from the leader's constituency can lead him to perpetrate exclusion after the political transition. In this regard, Driscoll (2020) highlights the pressure political leaders experience by their own constituency. Respondent 5 (Male, Former Vice-President, East Africa), also stated:

There are pressure groups, influence groups, for example people who have a lot of resources, private people, who can see that your policy is a threat to the corruption they are accustomed to, such situation is met with resistance from people who do not want change.

While this view had not been highly representative in the sample, it confirmed the study of Ikejiaku (2009) which emphasised the role of corruption and how it might be a contributing factor towards instability on the African continent.

The second most significant barrier that was mentioned by both the politicians and the experts, related to the challenging implementation of inclusive principles and the time required to do so. Indeed, Respondent 6 (Male, Former President, Southern Africa) stated:

You see this way the South African society, I think many of us overestimated not the ease but the possibility to eradicate the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, we underestimated the time it would take.

Here the notion of time as an important barrier to inclusiveness was illustrated. Respondent 12 (Male, Former Prime Minister, Southern Africa) further cemented the challenging implementation of inclusiveness by stating:

What I can tell you is that policies will always be good, policies will always be somehow inclusive. The challenge is in implementation, how do you implement it, how do you make sure that you implement it in such a way that you convince the majority of your people that you are fair, you are just, you are considerate.

The third barrier that was identified by both groups of respondents was when leaders join politics just to get power and self-enrichment. Respondent 6 (Male, Former President, Southern Africa) stated:

You have people like here which say, no, we're in politics because we want to get into power, and then they abuse that power for self-enrichment.

Some of the other barriers mentioned by the respondents included the fact that the ability to compromise is not something that comes naturally, making inclusive leadership difficult to find. Finally, the continuation of old systems of exclusion such as colonialism was also identified as a potential barrier to leader inclusiveness. Respondent 8 (Expert Male, Foreign Government, East, West & Central Africa) stated:

The reproduction of government systems that have inspired a lot of African countries, not all, and a reproduction of the colonial model which was already dysfunctional.

From an academic perspective, according to LeVan (2011), inclusion makes “it more difficult to change the status quo” because it requires consideration of more

preferences. However, barriers to leader inclusiveness is a subject that is still not explored in the political leadership literature. This phenomenon is also undertheorized in the inclusion literature within the fields of human resource management and social sciences. Therefore, the present study is among the first to explore the barriers to leader inclusiveness within the context of a post-conflict political transition.

#### ***4.4 Findings for Research Question 3***

To answer the third research question, “What are the possible outcomes of leader inclusiveness following a political transition?” the respondents were asked what they believed were some of the outcomes of having leader inclusiveness in a country. Table 6 summarises the top five outcomes mentioned by the respondents.

**Insert Table 6 here**

**Table 6.** Possible outcomes of leader inclusiveness

<b>RANK</b>	<b>OUTCOMES OF LEADER INCLUSIVENESS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY (N = 14)</b>
<b>1</b>	Collective participation in the change process of the country	6
<b>1</b>	Peace and Security for all	6
<b>2</b>	Capacity to make an impact	3
<b>2</b>	Development of country	3
<b>2</b>	Responsiveness from Government	3

The order of priority between both groups of respondents differed in that the group of experts indicated that the most important outcome was the “collective participation in the change process of the country”. On the other hand, the group of political leaders indicated that the most important outcome was “peace and security for all”.

Peace and security for all was perceived as an important outcome of leader inclusiveness. Respondent 7 (Male, Former President of Transition Senate, East Africa) stated:

If inclusive leadership were well observed, there would be at least predispositions to prevent conflicts from escalating into violent crises.

Another political leader, Respondent 10 (Male, Former President, East Africa) added in this regard:

Inclusivity in my opinion is one of the outcomes for social peace, it is the feeling that people have, that they belong to the same country, that the system does not exclude them, it is generally peace and security as the result of inclusivity.

Other outcomes that were mentioned by the respondents included the ability to make an impact and to develop the country.

Respondent 13 (Male, Former Minister, East Africa) stated:

Leader inclusiveness is a major factor in building and maintaining social cohesion and preventing repeat of conflict. In the case of Rwanda, it is the politics of inclusiveness implemented in the transition [...] that have brought about unity and reconciliation, thus breeding national cohesion.

Here the respondent used the case of post-genocide Rwanda to illustrate the impact that leader inclusiveness can have on a country. However, although the majority of respondents perceived leader inclusiveness to play a crucial role, a few remained sceptical. Indeed, few believed leader inclusiveness could help but not necessarily make a difference. They believed processes could have a bigger impact than the inclusive nature of a leader. A political leader, Respondent 6 (Male, Former President, Southern Africa) observed

“I’m really worried about this leadership business. Inclusive processes, yes.”



This particular leader strongly believed inclusive processes had a bigger impact than inclusive leadership.

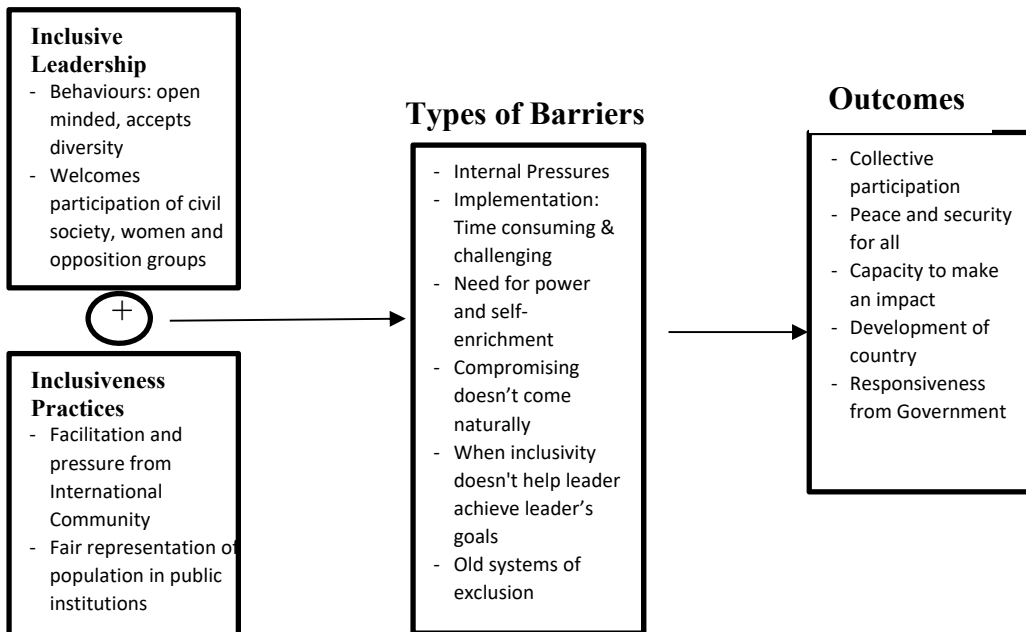
#### ***4.5 Conceptual Framework of Leader Inclusiveness Behaviour, Inclusive Practices, Barriers and Outcomes***

In order to consolidate the empirical findings of this study and add to the body of literature around political transition, post-conflict and inclusion, the authors have developed a model.

The new model was adapted from Shore et al. (2011) contextual factors model. The new developed model, based on the current study's findings is illustrated in Figure 1. It summarises the inclusive leadership behaviours (research question 1), the barriers to leader inclusiveness (research question 2). Finally, the new model demonstrates potential outcomes of leader inclusiveness that can be achieved (research question 3).

Our study has shown that political leaders and experts in conflict resolution, mediation, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, perceive leader inclusiveness to be a critical element. The proposed model shows how leader inclusiveness needs to be supported by inclusive practices such as inclusive policies and procedures in order to ensure a peaceful political transition. The study has also brought to light some of the barriers that an inclusive leader may face in that context. One final key finding from this study is that leader inclusiveness is expected to play a critical role in preventing conflict to reoccur and in maintaining social cohesion. Our proposed theoretical framing is important since “research on leader inclusiveness is in its early stages and has not yet been grounded in a consistent theoretical framework” (Randel et al., 2016: 227).

The only element of the initial Shore et al. (2011) model that was not addressed in the current study was the inclusiveness climate. We did not get sufficient evidence on the climate factor to draw conclusion on this component of their model.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework, based on current study's findings, and adapted from the original work of Shone et al. (2011) on leader inclusiveness, barriers and outcomes

## 5. Implications for practitioners

### 5.1 Implications for political leaders and experts

Experts in the field of conflict resolution, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping could use the outcome of this study to explore further these barriers that are preventing or hindering leader inclusiveness in the context of a post-conflict political transition. This will allow these experts to know how to support countries and political leaders that are going through a political transition following a period of conflict. Our study showed that there were some divergence in the way experts and political leaders ranked the outcomes of leader inclusiveness. By being aware of these differences, experts will be in a better position to assist political leaders achieve some of the key outcomes that they consider critical.

For political leaders, this study could help with insight into the barriers to leading in an inclusive manner to prepare them for the complexities of leading during a period of transition. This study also helps leaders understand how to become more inclusive by portraying the inclusive leader's behaviours, which these political leaders could purposefully exhibit.

### ***5.2 Implications for business organisations***

The findings of this study can also be applied in business organisations. Indeed, by studying leader inclusiveness in the context of a political transition, we have studied this phenomenon in a change environment. Change consultants and managers could therefore use the findings to guide organisational leaders during a period of change in their organisations on how to be more inclusive and how to navigate the complexities in a change environment.

## **6. Recommendations for future research**

The proposed conceptual framework in Figure 1, intends to guide future research by especially illustrating barriers that can be faced while trying to implement leader inclusiveness in the context of a post-conflict political transition. Our findings emphasise context driven behaviour and future research could investigate the stable personality traits of an inclusive leader, similar to the study conducted by Lieberfeld (2018) that looked into the personal traits of a reconciliation-oriented leader in the context of post-conflict reconciliation. Our conceptual framework does not provide an exhaustive list of possible factors in this context. Future research could further explore these barriers to leader

inclusiveness, and look into which measures need to be implemented in order to overcome these key barriers. Moreover, future research should expand our understanding of the combination of leader inclusiveness and inclusive practices and the other outcomes that can result from this combination such as the constructs of democracy and good governance.

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