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Rethinking the Ideas of Pan-Africanism and African Unity: A Theoretical Perspective of Kwame Nkrumah's Leadership Traits and Decision Making

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Abstract

The search for Africa's political unity has been one of the underlying ideas drawn from Pan-Africanism for several decades. Besides political leaders such as Sékou Touré and Modibo Keita with similar ideas on continental unity, Kwame Nkrumah was the central figure who vigorously championed the cause for Africa's political unity. The role of Nkrumah as the iconic personality for the unification movement continues to attract scholarly attention and debate. This article contributes to the literature on Pan-Africanism and African unity by examining Nkrumah's ideas and decision making through the lens of his leadership traits and personality styles. Grounded on the existing scholarly works in the field, the article employs the theoretical framework of Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) to examine the way Nkrumah's leadership traits shaped his decision making on Pan-Africanism and African unity. The article finds some utility in the theory (LTA) and concludes that Nkrumah's decision making was partly driven by his leadership traits and personality styles.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism, African Unity, Kwame Nkrumah, Leadership Trait Analysis

Introduction

Pan-Africanism has generally been considered as one of the enduring concepts within the global Africana community for the past several decades. According to Williams (2005:175), Pan-Africanism fosters a sense of “cooperative movement among peoples of African origin to unite their efforts in the struggle to liberate Africa and its scattered and suffering people.” Although the ideas of Pan-Africanism and African unity are intertwined and often used interchangeably, the concept of Pan-Africanism predates the idea to politically unite Africa (Williams 2005; Legum 1975). In other words, the long term aspiration for the unification of Africa is grounded on the ideas of Pan-Africanism. As Okhonmina (2009:86) observes, the transformed Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) is a clear institutional manifestation of Africa’s quest for unity.

Scholars like Olaosebikan (2011), Biney (2011&2008), Agyeman (1975), Okhonmina (2009), Adogamhe (2008) and Saaka (1994) argue that former President Nkrumah was not only a visionary leader, but a leading voice that vigorously campaigned for the political unification of Africa. In fact, Nkrumah understood the importance of shared strength in political unity and considered the idea as the surest solution to the socio-economic and political problems that confronted the newly independent states across Africa. Of course the current challenges of underdevelopment, problems with elections and democratic consolidation (Kumah-Abiwu 2011) are not excluded. While Nkrumah’s idea of unity for African countries was novel, it was not embraced by other African leaders. Leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria and Sourou-Migan Apithy of Benin were in principle for the idea of unity, but were opposed to Nkrumah’s radical proposal for immediate political unification. In contrast to Nkrumah’s idea, these leaders advocated for a step-by-step approach to a continental unity (Olaosebikan 2011; Botwe-Asamoah 2005).

Notwithstanding the competing perspectives on the unification agenda, Nkrumah’s idea continues to engage the attention of scholars, politicians and ordinary Africans and the African diaspora for many decades. In fact, Ali Mazrui’s thoughtful statement, which was cited in Olaosebikan’s (2011:218) work, demonstrates the relevance of Nkrumah’s idea. For Mazrui:

Nkrumah’s greatest bequest to Africa was the agenda of continental unification. No one else has made the case for continental integration more forcefully, or with greater sense of drama than Nkrumah. Although most African leaders regard the whole idea of a United States of Africa as wholly unattainable in the foreseeable future, Nkrumah even after death has kept the debate alive through his books and through the continuing influence of his ideas. (2004:22)

The article has therefore two main objectives. First, it attempts to contribute to the vast literature on Pan-Africanism and African unity by re-examining Nkrumah's ideas on continental unity through the lens of his leadership traits and decision making. Second, unlike the existing literature on Nkrumah and African unity which appears to be driven by historical analyses/narratives, this study takes a different approach (*theory-driven*) by employing the theoretical framework of Leadership Trait Analysis, (*a theory associated with foreign policy decision-making literature*) to examine Nkrumah's leadership traits and his decision making on African unity. In essence, the article attempts to answer the following research question: To what extent can one explain the decisions of Nkrumah on issues of Pan-Africanism and African unity through his leadership traits? In other words, the article explores the extent to which the theory (LTA) explains Nkrumah's decision making on Pan-Africanism and African unity.

The article is structured in two parts. The first part examines the competing ideas on Pan-Africanism and African unity. The second part employs the theory to examine the extent to which Kwame Nkrumah's leadership traits shaped his decision making on issues of African unity. Furthermore, the article also underscores the utility of the theory (LTA) and argues that leadership matters (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Ayittey 1998) in any attempt to achieve development and political unity in Africa.

Competing Ideas on the Origin of Pan-Africanism

Although the concept of Pan-Africanism has been the subject of many scholarly debates and interpretations as far as its origin is concerned, there is a considerable consensus among some scholars (Adogamhe 2008; Williams 2005; Panford 1996) regarding the broad definition of the concept. For Williams (2005:173), Pan-Africanism is a global movement to unite Africa and its people against racial oppression and exploitation associated with European hegemony. From a continental (African) perspective, M'bayo (2004) and Okhonmina (2009) argue that Pan-Africanism involves efforts to mobilize continental Africans against colonialism and racism as well as recognizing the concept as the philosophical grounding for the unity of Africa through the African Union. In fact, the theme (*Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*) for the 50th anniversary celebration (*May 25, 2013*) of the AU provides a good description of Pan-Africanism and African unity. According to the African Union:

Pan-Africanism is an ideology and movement that encourages the solidarity of Africans worldwide. It is based on the belief that unity is vital to economic, social and political progress and aims to 'unify and uplift' people of African descent. The ideology asserts that the fates of all African peoples and countries are intertwined. At its core Pan-Africanism is a belief that African peoples, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny. (AU Echo 2013:1)

Most scholars share some commonality on the conceptual definition and the goals of Pan-Africanism, but they differ on the interpretation of its evolution. Drawing on scholars such as Nantambu (1998) and Lonsdale (1968), Okhonmina (2009) categorizes the concept of Pan-Africanism into Afrocentric and Eurocentric perspectives or interpretations. The Afrocentric interpretation, according to Okhonmina (2009:87) and Nantambu (1998), is often used to explain the struggle by Africans for self-assertion dating back to the era of 3200 B.C. The Eurocentric assumption, on the other hand, interprets Pan-Africanism as the response to slavery and colonialism by Africans (Okhonmina 2009; Lonsdale 1968).

Williams (2005) shares a similar Afrocentric perspective, but with different interpretation on the evolution of Pan-Africanism. Contrary to the dominant argument that Pan-Africanism originated from the African diaspora, Williams (2005:174) maintains that there are sufficient reasons to trace the evolution of the concept to the experiences (*slavery and colonialism*) of Africans on the continent of Africa. For Williams (2005), the *deep desires* expressed by those on the continent for the safe return of their fellow Africans taken into slavery (New World), were manifestations of the ideas of Pan-Africanism. The philosophical notion of *deep desires*, in this case, could be interpreted as the *longing for unity* by Africans for their enslaved brothers and sisters (fellow Africans) who were taken to the land of the unknown. We share the centrality (*deep desires for unity*) of Williams' (2005) argument on the continental manifestations of Pan-Africanism. Another continental perspective relates to what Williams (2005) describes as the fight by some African warriors like Yaa Asantewaa of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Chaka Zulu of South Africa against European slave traders and colonial domination. Like those Africans who expressed the desires for the safe return of their "stolen" brothers and sisters, the African warriors who fought against the slave traders (*European instigators and their African collaborators*) also displayed some elements of Pan-Africanism (Williams 2005).

While the Afrocentric and Eurocentric categorization of Pan-Africanism might be useful to the broader understanding of the concept, the use of *Eurocentrism* as an approach by Lonsdale (1968) and Okhonmina (2009) is not only problematic, but misleading as well, because of the so-called Eurocentric categorization. Thus, we argue that the use of Eurocentrism as a classification terminology appears to suggest that the idea of Pan-Africanism evolved from the European intellectual tradition, rather than the philosophical heritage of Africa and the African diaspora. In fact, Nkrumah re-echoed a similar sentiment in his book, *Africa Must Unite*, that:

The expression of 'Pan-Africanism' did not come into use until the beginning of the twentieth century when Henry Sylvester-William of Trinidad, and William Edward Burghardt DuBois of the United States of America, both of African descent, used it at several Pan-African Congresses which were mainly attended by scholars of African descent of the New World. (1970:132)

Regardless of the contending interpretations of Pan-Africanism, many scholars, politicians, and ordinary Africans are certain that the concept has been the philosophical foundation for Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's idea of transforming the continent into a strong supra-political union or a United States of Africa (Okhonmina 2009; Olaosebikan 2011; Panford 1996; Biney 2008; Adogamhe 2008; Afari-Gyan 1991).

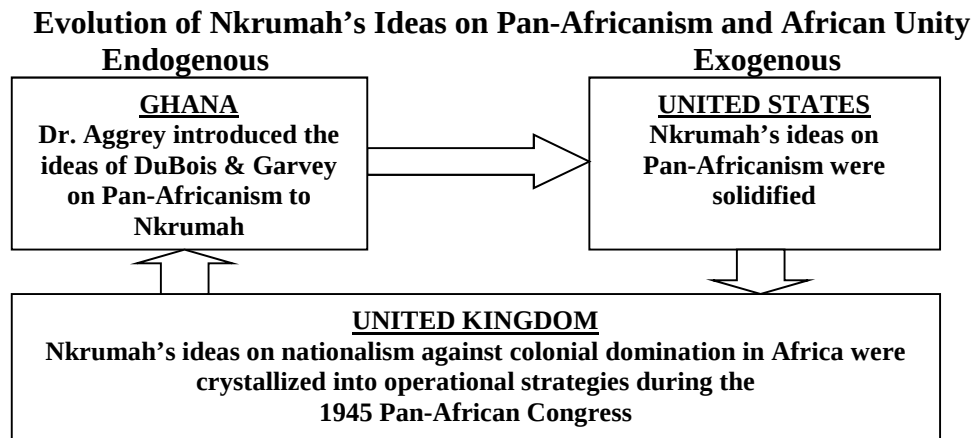
Another element with respect to the competing ideas in the literature deals with whether Nkrumah's formative thoughts on Pan-Africanism and African unity developed internally or externally. The dominant assumption underscores the fact that Nkrumah's ideas on Pan-Africanism were externally driven because of his association with Pan-Africanist scholars of the African diaspora such as George Padmore, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois (Olaosebikan 2011; Clarke 1974; Panford 1996; Adogamhe 2008). Although Nkrumah's ideas on Pan-Africanism and his subsequent philosophical thought on African common government were inspired by Pan-Africanist scholars of the diaspora (Clarke 1974; Panford 1996), it might be erroneous to argue that Nkrumah's formative ideas on Pan-Africanism were exclusively formed outside the shores of Africa.

The goal of advancing this argument is not to diminish the enormous influence that George Padmore, Marcus Garvey, and W.E.B. DuBois had on Nkrumah's ideas, but to underscore the point that Nkrumah's foundational thoughts on Pan-Africanism started on the shores of Africa. As Botwe-Asamoah (2005) contends, Nkrumah's formative ideas on nationalism were stimulated by Dr. Kwagyir Aggrey when he was a student at Achimota Training College in the Gold Coast. Besides Nkrumah's broad ideas on nationalism, Botwe-Asamoah (2005:2) and Biney (2011:12) agree that the philosophical and political thoughts of W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey on Pan-Africanism were also introduced to Kwame Nkrumah before he left for further studies in the United States of America (USA/US). Nkrumah's thoughts on African nationalism were further solidified during his school days in the US as well as his involvement in many Pan-African conferences, particularly the 1945 Congress in Manchester, United Kingdom (UK). The 1945 Congress actually deepened Nkrumah's operational strategies for Africa's freedom from colonial oppression. In his words:

Pan-Africanism and African nationalism really took concrete expression when the Fifth Pan-African Congress met in Manchester in 1945. For the first time the necessity for well-organized, firmly-knit movements as a primary condition for the success of national liberation struggle in Africa was stressed. (Nkrumah 1970:134)

Clearly, Nkrumah's ideas on Pan-Africanism and African unity as we have seen from the preceding discussion were driven from two main sources, namely *endogenous and exogenous* (Botwe-Asamoah 2005). Figure 1 provides a good illustration of the two sources.

Figure 1



Source: Figure 1 was designed by the authors of this article with ideas from Botwe-Asamoah (2005)

Nkrumah's Political Life in Africa

Having been energized for action to end colonialism following the 1945 Pan-African Congress, Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in December 1947 after twelve years in the US and the UK (Nkrumah 1976; Biney 2011). He became the General Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a political organization devoted to secure independence for the Gold Coast (Nkrumah 1976). Nkrumah did not last long with the UGCC following his disagreement with the party's leaders regarding the best strategy for achieving political independence for the Gold Coast.

Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC on June 12, 1949 and formed a new political party called the Convention People's Party (CPP) with the slogan of "Self-Government Now," as opposed to the UGCC's "Self-Government in the shortest possible time" (Nkrumah 1976:19). For Nkrumah, the UGCC's slogan of "Self-Government in the shortest possible time" was not specific for any urgent action against colonialism. Nkrumah's interpretation of his CPP's "Self-Government Now" was for positive and urgent action to end colonialism now and now! Nkrumah's CPP won the general election and the party became the platform on which the Gold Coast gained freedom from British colonial domination. On March 6, 1957 the Gold Coast became the sovereign state of Ghana with Kwame Nkrumah as the first Prime Minister and later President after Ghana became a republic in 1960 (Biney 2011; Nkrumah 1976).

Debating Nkrumah's Ideas on African Unity

The collapse of colonialism in the Gold Coast did not end Nkrumah's nationalism, but the era marked the beginning of his support for other nationalist movements across the continent. In his famous independence celebration statement, Nkrumah (1970: 136) noted that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa.....While our independence celebrations were actually taking place; I called for a conference of all the sovereign states of Africa, to discuss plans for the future of our continent."

Nkrumah's major foreign policy decision soon after Ghana gained independence was the first conference of Independent African States he convened in 1958. The conference, which was held in Ghana, was significant for two reasons. First, all the eight independent countries (Egypt, Ghana, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Liberia, Morocco and Ethiopia) were in attendance. Second, the conference, which was held in April, was seen as the prelude to the All-African People's Conference held in December of the same year (1958) in Accra, Ghana. About 62 delegates from African nationalist organizations attended the December conference where nationalist agitation strategies were devised for the political independence of other colonized territories across Africa (Nkrumah 1970; Olaosebikan 2011).

The central theme that emerged from the meetings convened by Nkrumah was his idea for a political unity of the continent. By the late 1950s to the early 1960s, it was very clear that Nkrumah was so determined to push his unification agenda without any delay. His first major step was taken in 1958 when the Ghana-Guinea Union was formed. Mali joined later to form the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (Nkrumah 1970; Olaosebikan 2011). Nkrumah's idea was energized by the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, to the extent that the Union in 1961 produced a draft Charter for the United States of Africa (Olaosebikan 2011; Nkrumah 1970; Biney 2011; Agyeman 1975). Key components (Olaosebikan 2011:221) of the proposed African Union Government included: (1) immediate creation of a continental supra-national political institution, (2) the surrender of sovereignty of independent African states to the supra-national body, (3) the creation of an African High Command (*a unified defense system*) and the (4) harmonization of all sectors (e.g., open borders, one passport and one currency).

Nkrumah's reasoning for advancing his ambitious agenda for Africa's unification was simple. To him, no single independent African country could develop without a complete political unification of the continent. Although some critics of the idea argued that Africa could not achieve any meaningful political merger because of the non-existence of the so-called necessary conditions (common culture, language, infrastructure, etc.), Nkrumah maintained that some level of fragmentation might exist, but Africans have much more in common to necessitate unity (Nkrumah 1970) through the harmonization of the continent's natural and human resources (Biney 2008, 2011; Olaosebikan 2011).

As noted above, some African leaders expressed skepticism about Nkrumah's agenda. In fact, sharp differences emerged between leaders who favored gradual integration and the more radical group who favored Nkrumah's idea of immediate political unity. The gradual (moderate) group, also known as the *Monrovia Group* was made up of Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Togo, Benin and Sierra Leone among others. The more radical group, also known as the *Casablanca Group* consisted of countries such as Ghana, Ethiopia, Guinea, Egypt, Libya and Mali (Olaosebikan 2011). One of the reasons for the skepticism on Nkrumah's unification agenda, as Olaosebikan (2011) contends was the fear that the sovereignty of the newly independent states would be eroded. Other leaders were also apprehensive about what Olaosebikan (2011:223) describes as "Ghana's hegemonic political ambition and Nkrumah's purported attempt to become the president of Africa." Notwithstanding Nkrumah's domestic critics (*African leaders*), one must also not forget the external machinations of the imperialists against Nkrumah's vision for a united Africa (Rooney 1988; Biney 2008). In fact, Gebe's (2008:174) recent work reveals that Nkrumah's overthrow from power in 1966 was to some extent linked to imperialist influence.

Interestingly, some consensus was reached between the moderate and the radical views, which led to the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 in Addis Abba, Ethiopia (AU Echo 2013). While a political unity for Africa is yet to be attained, the idea, as earlier mentioned, has not diminished completely from the general discourse on Africa's future agenda (Adogamhe 2008; Kete 2012). Perhaps, the transformation of the OAU into the African Union in 2001 demonstrates another element of hope and aspiration for Nkrumah's ideas. In view of the sustaining nature of Nkrumah's thoughts, one wonders, as an empirical question of interest, whether his leadership traits and personality styles could offer some theoretical explanation for his decisions and advocacy for African unity. In other words, to what extent can Nkrumah's leadership traits help us to understand his political behavior and decisions on issues of African unity? The next part of the paper employs the theoretical framework of Leadership Trait Analysis to answer the empirical question.

Leadership Trait Analysis Theory: An Overview

The Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) or the technique of measuring leadership traits and personality styles of political leaders has become one of the dominant theories in the fields of foreign policy decision-making and political psychology in recent years. The theory is grounded on the conceptual ideas of operational code (values and world views of leaders) analysis of political leaders (Walker 1990). The theory, which was developed by Margaret Hermann, focuses on the leadership/personality traits of political leaders and the way their traits shape decision making, especially foreign policy (Hermann 1980; Dyson 2006; Kaarbo 1997).

Hermann's (1980; 1999) theoretical idea, which is shared by other students of foreign policy decision-making (Dyson and Preston 2006; Kaarbo 1997; Dyson 2006; Kesgin 2012; Gorener and Ucal 2011) underscores the fact that leaders matter in shaping foreign policy making. For Hermann (1999:1), understanding the personal characteristics of leaders matter, because of the realization that their "preferences, the things they believe in and work, and the ways they go about making decisions can influence our lives." Kesgin (2012) reflects on similar ideas on the significance of political elites in foreign policy making. Kesgin (2012:29) argues that individual leaders are not only the center piece of domestic politics in terms of their influence on state behavior, but they are capable of employing their personality traits, beliefs, motives, and personal styles in shaping the framework of foreign policy.

Essentially, the idea that individuals matter in shaping foreign policy has historically been ignored by the traditional theories (*realism, neorealism and liberalism*) of international relations (IR). As Gorener and Ucal (2011:359) put it, the dominant theories in IR tend to "emphasize structural factors as critical variables in explaining international politics." By implication, the *structural explanation* of global outcomes (Waltz 1979), which was driven by the Cold War politics was embraced by many IR scholars at the expense of the *domestic (individual-level) explanation* (Hagan 1994). Actually, Hermann and Hagan (1998:125-6) have provided some clues in explaining why the individual-level analysis has been historically ignored. According to them, the traditional IR theorists often consider the individual-level analysis as unnecessary in understanding the "big issues" of IR such as international conflicts/wars, cooperation, security, balance of power and change in the global system (Hermann and Hagan 1998:124). Perhaps, the logic of these traditional theorists rest on the so-called assumption that such a knowledge (*individual-level analysis*) might not add much to the explanation of the "big issues" in international relations.

Like others, Hermann and Hagan (1998:125-6) disagreed with this assumption and have argued that the post-Cold War era has presented an ambiguous global environment with political leaders playing pivotal roles in balancing domestic pressures/constraints with international demands. To put it differently, political leaders matter to the scholarly discourse on the determinants of foreign policy.

Indeed, leaders define and shape policy outcomes (domestic and international) through their perceptions, interpretations, strategies, expectations and beliefs about the world. In fact, Dyson's (2006) recent work, which finds a strong connection between Prime Minister Tony Blair's personality and leadership styles in his decision to engage Britain in the Iraq War is not only useful to the foreign policy literature (individual-level analysis), but to our discussion as well. This article attempts to also contribute to the field (*opening the black box*), but from an Afrocentric perspective.

Tenets of LTA Theory

The central assumption of Leadership Trait Analysis, as previously noted, is the recognition that leaders matter in policy decisions, especially in the field of foreign policy. For scholars in the field of this research, the question of how a researcher can collect data for this kind of study continues to be an important issue. According to Hermann (1999; 1980), it could be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to administer psychological tests, questionnaires or series of clinical interviews to political leaders in order to determine their personality traits. One way scholars can learn about political elites that might not require any element of their cooperation is to examine what they say (Hermann 1999; Kaarbo 1997). This means that researchers can deduce information on leaders from their public statements, speeches, existing literature, and most importantly from their spontaneous utterances (Hermann 1999; Kesgin 2012; Winter et al. 1991). Hermann (1999) describes this methodology as *At-A-Distance* technique of assessing leaders.

To enhance our understanding of the theory, Hermann (1999) coined a combination of seven traits as key tenets in the analysis of the theory. They include: (1) belief in ability to control events, (2) the need for power and influence, (3) conceptual complexity, (4) self-confidence, (5) task orientation (*tendency to focus on problem solving*), (6) distrust or suspicion of others, and (7) in-group bias (Hermann 1999:10; Dyson 2006:291; Kesgin 2012:32). These seven variables constitute the central pillars on which the theory is based. For example, an individual leader's score on these variables are measured through a systematic content analysis of verbal statements, policy papers, and interviews (Hermann 1999; Dyson 2006). The underlying assumption is that the more a leader uses certain particular words or phrases in their interview responses, the more significant such issues might be important to them (Hermann 1999; Dyson 2006).

Although LTA theory is largely based on a quantitative methodology, we believe that it equally provides a persuasive conceptual framework that might be considered as broad-based and not limited or exclusive to quantitative applications alone. A careful review of the theory reveals that it could also be applicable to other methods of social science research and inquiry like the qualitative research method.

In essence, this article's application of the LTA to understand the leadership traits of Kwame Nkrumah in his decisions on issues of Pan-Africanism and African unity are grounded on a qualitative method of inquiry. Therefore, this article departs from the conventional approach when it comes to the application of the LTA theory in foreign policy making literature. While we are mindful of the fact that our approach might generate some scholarly debates regarding our choice of methodology, we do not anticipate the utility of the theory to be undermined let alone be diminished, but we consider the adoption of the theory as an opportunity to observe its explanatory power from a different methodological perspective. Our next task is to employ these traits to examine Nkrumah vis-a-vis his policy decisions.

Nkrumah's Leadership Traits and Decision Making

In his piece, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies*, Botwe-Asamoah (2005) agrees with Yousuf (1990) and Biney (2011) that Nkrumah was one of the prominent historical/political personalities of the twentieth century. Even after his death, Nkrumah continues to command great respect and admiration as a visionary leader of his time. For Biney (2008), Nkrumah's reputation and performance as Ghana's first president as well as his sterling leadership style of conviction on nationalism cannot pass without recognition. For example, Biney (2008:130) recounts that the popularity and the leadership credentials of Nkrumah was so high that he was voted as "Africa's Man of the Millennium" in 2009 by African listeners to the BBC Focus on Africa radio program.

Tracing the origin of Nkrumah's personality and leadership styles, Yousuf (1990) adds that his personality was rooted in the African culture, history, customs and traditions (Owusu 1997), which shaped his sense of natural grace, humor and charismatic personality. Talking about Nkrumah's charisma, Ake (1966) and Apter (1968) share similar views on how Nkrumah transformed his political environment through his charismatic personality. Like other young Africans of the 1930s and the 1940s, Nkrumah also grew up under colonialism which subsequently shaped his ideas on nationalism. His personality was equally shaped by his exposure to Western democratic culture, values and principles such as freedom, liberty and the rule of law during his stay in America (Yousuf 1990). Commenting on his decision to study in the United States, for example, Nkrumah noted that Africa was partitioned to the point that affected the education of the colonized Africans. Students from English-speaking territories went to Britain to study, just as those from French-speaking territories went to France. In his words, "a number of us tried to study at centres outside the metropolis of our administering power.... and that is how America came to appeal to me as a Western country which stood refreshingly untainted by territorial colonialism in Africa" (Nkrumah 1965:1). On Saaka's (1994:276) part, Nkrumah's leadership style might be subjected to some criticisms, but his personality has become part of Ghana's political tradition which has been admired by successive political leaders with respect to his decisiveness and personal magnetism.

One of the key tenets of the theory (LTA), as we have previously discussed, is the belief in ability to control events. The need for power and self-confidence by leaders are two other assumptions of the theory. Hermann (1999), Kesgin (2012) and Dyson (2006) agree that political leaders with high belief in their ability to control events as well as those with high need for power tend to challenge their environmental constraints. On the contrary, leaders who are low in these two traits tend to respect or consent to the constraints they face. Drawing on Hermann's (1999) assumption, this article asks a similar question in terms of whether Nkrumah challenged or respected the constraints he faced as a leader.

Applying the theory to Nkrumah's case, we argue that he tends to fit the description of leaders with high belief in their ability to control events. Thus, Nkrumah had a strong belief that he could influence and control events by challenging the environmental constraints he faced. For the purpose of this study, we define and interpret the environmental constraint as *colonialism* that existed on the continent of Africa. Without doubt, Nkrumah was aware of the destructive power of colonialism. He also knew how rooted colonialism was but he was convinced that his strong belief and strategic leadership styles were enough to confront his constraint (colonialism) through his decision to become the leading voice for the decolonization of Africa. In his book: *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development...*, Nkrumah advocated for a new African renaissance with no influence and history of colonial domination. In his words: "our history needs to be written as the history of our society, not as the story of European adventures" (Nkrumah 1965:63). Armed with these revolutionary ideas against colonialism, Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in 1947 and immediately altered the dynamics (*positive action*) of the nationalist movement. Through his trait as a determined political leader with the high belief in his ability to challenge his constraint (colonialism), the Gold Coast became the first black colonial territory south of the Sahara to gain independence from Britain in 1957 (Reeck 1976).

As Hermann (1999) suggests, leaders with high belief in their ability to control events also do take active participation in the planning and the execution of policy decisions. Nkrumah was no exception. He was actively involved in decisions and strategies that toppled colonialism in the Gold Coast and other parts of Africa. In his book, *I Speak of Freedom*, Nkrumah (1976) argues that positive action and good organizational strength were some of the dynamic forces that helped end the influence of imperialism in Africa. Another example to support our case is worth noting here. Soon after Ghana's independence, Nkrumah pursued an ambitious African foreign policy agenda by supporting nationalist movements across many parts of the continent (Thompson 1969; Asante 1997). In his other book, *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah noted that "the twentieth century has become the century of colonial emancipation, the century of continuing revolution which must finally witness the total liberation of Africa from colonial rule and imperialist exploitation" (Nkrumah 1970:x). Again, the preceding examples have clearly revealed that Nkrumah had a strong personality trait and the belief in his ability to challenge the constraints he faced.

Although one cannot ignore the contributions of other nationalist leaders like J.B. Danquah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, we argue, based on the preceding analysis, that Kwame Nkrumah was the most prominent nationalist leader who was unique and exceptional in challenging the constraint of colonialism.

Further evidence from the literature on Nkrumah shows his forceful personality trait as a leader in high need for power and influence at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic front, for example, Nkrumah and his CPP government consolidated power to the extent that Ghana was transformed from a multi-party system of government into a single party authoritarian state by the mid-1960s (Biney 2008). Nkrumah's desire for power and influence also reflected in the formulation of his foreign policy objectives. For instance, Tieku and Odoom (2012) and Gebe (2008) share Thompson's (1969) view that Nkrumah's foreign policy at independence was not only robust and aggressive, but ambitious with the goal of enlarging his influence, control and power over continental Africa. For these scholars, Ghana's foreign policy orientation at independence could best be described as an expression of Nkrumah's persona and desires.

On the international stage, one could argue that Nkrumah's political thoughts and popularity were beyond Africa. Perhaps this rise to world fame (Grundy 1963; Aluko 1975; Clark 1974) made Nkrumah to become much interested in playing further active role on the world stage. A good case in point to demonstrate Nkrumah's need for influence was his strategic diplomatic maneuvering between the former Soviet Union and the US during the Cold War era. While he was mindful of the ideological war between the West and the East, Nkrumah successfully employed his influence and power to persuade the US to financially support the construction of the Akosombo Dam in Ghana, while he was still ideologically attached to the former Soviet Union (Gebe 2008; Asante 1997). In fact, Asante's (1997) explanation of Nkrumah's strategic decision might be useful here. To Asante (1997:35), Nkrumah was not only confident in his ability as an influential leader, but he was just a smart politician who played his game very well and benefitted from the East-West rivalry.

On the leadership trait of self-confidence, this article argues that Nkrumah had displayed key elements of the trait as the theory assumes. In one of his famous statements, for example, Nkrumah noted that: "We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility...we have the right to live as men...we have the right to govern ourselves" (Biney 2008:130). In another statement regarding the unity for Africa, he said that:

I do not believe in racialism or tribalism. The concept of 'Africa for the Africans' does not mean that other races are excluded from it. No! It only means that Africans shall and must govern themselves in their own countries without imperialist and foreign impositions; but that people of other races can remain on African soil, carry on their legitimate avocations and live on terms of peace, friendship and equality with Africans on their own soil. (Nkrumah 1976:30)

As the theory assumes, the trait of self-confidence, deals with personal image of self-worth of leaders. Leaders with high self-confidence are more likely to be generally content with who they are and what they can do to influence their environment (Hermann 1999). Applying a similar reasoning to our study, we argue that Nkrumah exhibited high self-confidence to successfully challenge colonialism from two fronts. The first was in Ghana, and the second was through his aggressive foreign policy decision to support (financial and material) nationalist movements across Africa (Armah 2004; Thompson 1969). As we have also discussed, Nkrumah's thoughts were shaped by his interactions (internal and external) with pan-African scholars. It is our contention that Nkrumah's domestic and international relationships which he fostered against colonialism also shaped his high level of self-confidence in the fight against colonial domination. For example, Nkrumah, as we know, participated in many Pan-African conferences, especially the 1945 conference in Manchester (Nkrumah 1970; Botwe-Asamoah 2005), which marked a defining moment regarding his journey of "practical nationalism" against colonial domination in Africa.

Hermann's (1999:21) theory also underscores the fact that political leaders who are low in self-confidence are more likely to be easily swayed on issues. In other words, leaders with low self-confidence are often without a well-developed sense of their personality. Again, we argue that Nkrumah did not exhibit any element of a leader with low self-confidence about his personality. As previously mentioned, Olaosebikan (2011) argues that Nkrumah's radical ideas on continental unity faced stiff opposition from many African leaders who held different views on the subject. While Nkrumah was flexible to some alternative ideas, he appeared not to have wavered in his self-confidence regarding his bold idea on the political unity for Africa. Perhaps, Obeng's (1979:26) work on the *Speeches of Nkrumah* offers another important clarification on Nkrumah's self-confidence in his vision of political integration. In a speech delivered in 1960, Nkrumah declared with self-confidence the three main alternatives he claimed were open to African states on the future of the continent: (1) to unite and save the continent, (2) to disunite and disintegrate, or (3) to sell out to outside intervention.

Conceptual complexity is another important tenet of the theory that shapes decision making of political leaders. According to the theory, leaders who are more conceptually complex are those who embrace flexibility in reacting to alternative ideas and events. On the other hand, conceptually simple leaders tend to classify ideas and events into either black-white or good-bad dichotomy (Hermann 1999; Kesgin 2012; Dyson 2006). In the case of Nkrumah, this article shares the view that he was a leader who was more conceptually complex because of the way he interpreted ideas and events as well as his flexibility in reacting to alternative ideas. As previously noted, Nkrumah was the prominent voice for political unity for Africa and was opposed to the idea of regional federations which was advanced by the moderate leaders as a building block to continental unity. For him, "regional federations are a form of balkanization on a grand scale" (Nkrumah 1970:214).

As we know, Nkrumah's idea did not receive popular support, but he still exhibited some flexibility and embraced the alternative idea that led to the establishment of the OAU in 1963. Going by the assumption of the theory, one could clearly notice that Nkrumah displayed high degree of flexibility and openness to information and alternative ideas in his decision to accept the alternative proposal. Hermann (1999) would describe such leaders, in this case Nkrumah, as a leader with high conceptual complexity because of his flexibility in reacting to alternative ideas. Again, we find some support from the preceding analysis that the leadership trait of conceptual complexity was evident in the decision making of Nkrumah. Similarly, we can infer from our general discussion that Nkrumah also displayed the trait of a leader who was not only task oriented, but was full of energy, vision and ideas to end colonialism and unite Africa for progress and socio-economic development.

The existing literature further reveals that Nkrumah had displayed the trait of leaders with in-group bias and distrust of others. Hermann's (1999) theoretical construct on these traits (*in-group bias and distrust of others*) assumes that political leaders with high in-group bias often maintain a separate identity of their group and try to protect their turf from other groups. Similarly, leaders with high trait of distrust have the tendency to be generally suspicious of others with the feelings of uneasiness, misgiving and doubts. In short, leaders with distrust of others are not only shaped by those feelings of distrust in their decision making, but are also shaped by the way they perceive threats around them as well as their response to those threats. The theory further assumes that leaders with high level of distrust of others are more likely to see the world as dangerous and conflict-prone (Hermann 1999:30).

In the case of Kwame Nkrumah, clear evidence from the existing literature reveals that he exhibited the tendencies of distrust of others in his policy decisions. For instance, on the widely held suspicion that Nkrumah was nursing a secret agenda to become the first president of his proposed United States of Africa (Olaosebikan 2011), he was aware of this widely held suspicion, which might explain his tendency of distrust for others. As Hermann (1999:31) suggests, leaders who are high in distrust of others tend to be suspicious about the motives, actions and criticisms of others, especially those they might view as competitors to their ideology or cause. Apparently, Nkrumah's domestic policy decisions revealed a lot about his high distrust of others. For example, Biney (2008:131) draws on Mazrui's (2004) analysis of Nkrumah's political legacy into *positive Nkrumahism*, which inspires many people for African unity, and *negative Nkrumahism*, which raises questions about his leadership styles. As previously advanced, Nkrumah's negative legacy was shown when he changed Ghana's multi-party system into a single party authoritarian regime by the mid-1960s. Perhaps, the constant assassination attempts on his life might have led to his high distrust of others, especially his political opponents. Not only did Nkrumah express his distrust of others by over centralizing his political powers, but he also used his authoritarian powers to introduce repressive laws (e.g., *Preventive Detention Act-PDA*) against his perceived political opponents (Biney 2008).

For most scholars, Nkrumah might be well known as a visionary and a revolutionary leader who fought for the total liberation of Africa, but he failed to promote multi-party democracy in his own country (Tieku and Odoom 2012; Thompson 1969). It is therefore plausible to argue that Nkrumah's over centralization of power and subsequent repressing of his political opponents led to the collapse of his leadership. In spite of Nkrumah's high score on his leadership traits, as far as the theory is concerned, he failed in his attempt to achieve the political unity he promised for Africa. While our discussion on the stiff opposition (*opposition argument*) from other African leaders could be responsible for his leadership failures (political unity), this article does not, however, intend to simply elevate the opposition argument at the expense of other explanations of Nkrumah's failures. Indeed, we are aware that alternative explanations such as the machinations of neo-colonial forces, geo-political factors, domestic considerations and strategic calculations and miscalculations on Nkrumah's part could also explain his leadership failures. While these alternative explanations are duly recognized, they are certainly beyond the scope of this current study.

Overall, it has been clearly shown from the preceding analyses with the supporting cases and examples of how LTA theory provides some utility in explaining the leadership traits of Nkrumah and his decision making regarding the constraints he faced and how he responded as a leader. While the theory provides a broad utility in helping our understanding of Kwame Nkrumah's decisions and his ideas (Pan-Africanism and African unity), we cannot claim that the theory has provided a complete explanation because of the structural/systemic explanations that might have also influenced Nkrumah's decision making.

Conclusion

This article has examined Kwame Nkrumah's philosophical ideas of Pan-Africanism and African unity. Undoubtedly, the literature on Nkrumah's ideas is vast and complex with no shortage of scholarly interest in the subject area because of the significance of these ideas to the current challenges facing Africa. On May 25, 2013, leaders from all parts of Africa gathered in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, to celebrate the Golden Jubilee (50 years) of the establishment of the OAU now AU under the theme: *Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*. Although there is still no consensus on the best strategy to achieve a continental unity, many leaders renewed their countries' commitment to preserve the idea of African unity. We consider this commitment and hope from our African leaders as one of the high points of the celebration. It also reminds us that Nkrumah's dream for Africa's political unification (*United States of Africa*) continues to occupy a center stage on the general discourse on Africa, thus giving relevance to Nkrumah's political thoughts, ideas and leadership.

Consistent with the foreign policy decision-making literature, we also argue that leaders do matter in decision making on any course of action. Based on our systematic analyses, by way of integrating the literature and the theory, we find that the theory offers some useful explanation of Nkrumah's political behavior and decision making. We conclude that Nkrumah's decision making was partly driven by his leadership traits and personality styles. Indeed, leaders do matter!... and we share the view that Africa needs visionary and strong leadership credentials, like Kwame Nkrumah (*although his leadership was deficient to some extent*) to achieve the dream of the United States of Africa. Clearly, this article is unique and relevant in two ways. First, the article contributes to the broader literature on Pan-Africanism and African unity by examining Nkrumah through the lens of his leadership traits and personality styles. Second, the article has successfully integrated the literature on Pan-Africanism and foreign policy analysis, which we believe provide a good starting place for future research agenda for scholars in the global Africana community.

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