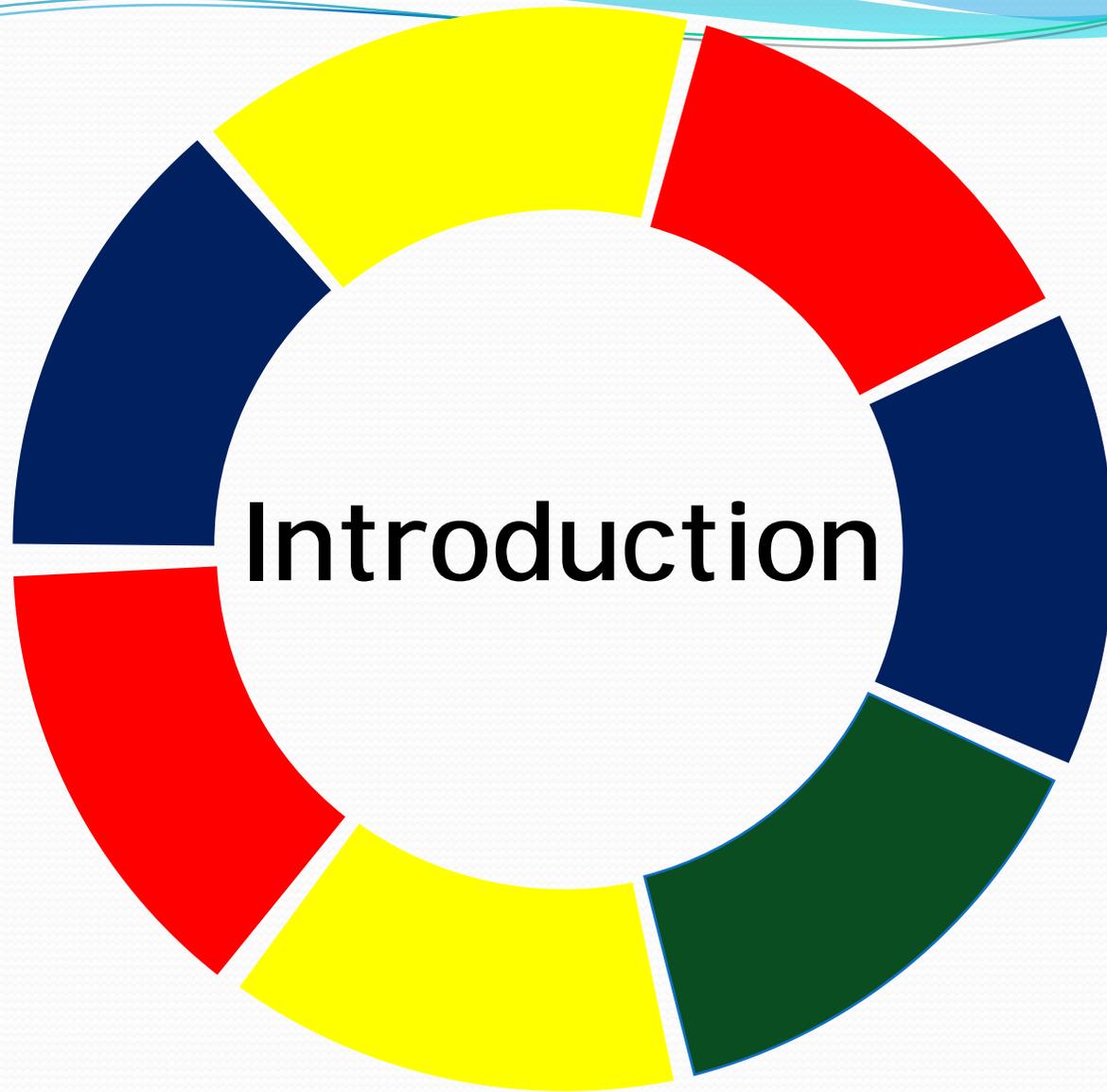




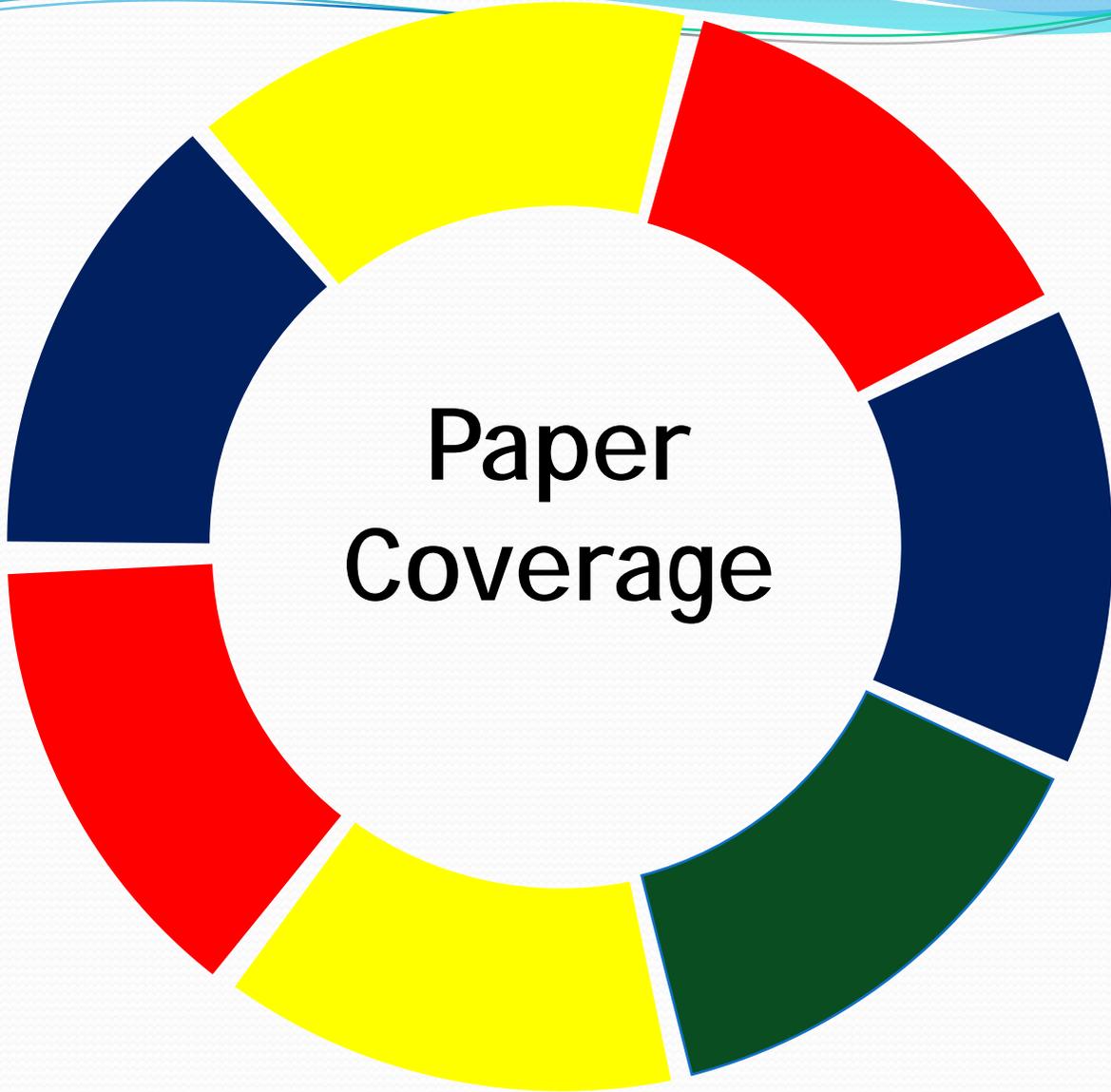
UNISA Presentation

Topic:

**African Leadership Systems
or Leadership in Africa?**



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**Paper
Coverage**

1. Abstract 2. Introduction

3. Leadership
Systems
Create Ubiquitous
Political Decisions

4. Leadership Systems at all levels of human endeavor-
the linchpin that holds organizations and countries together.

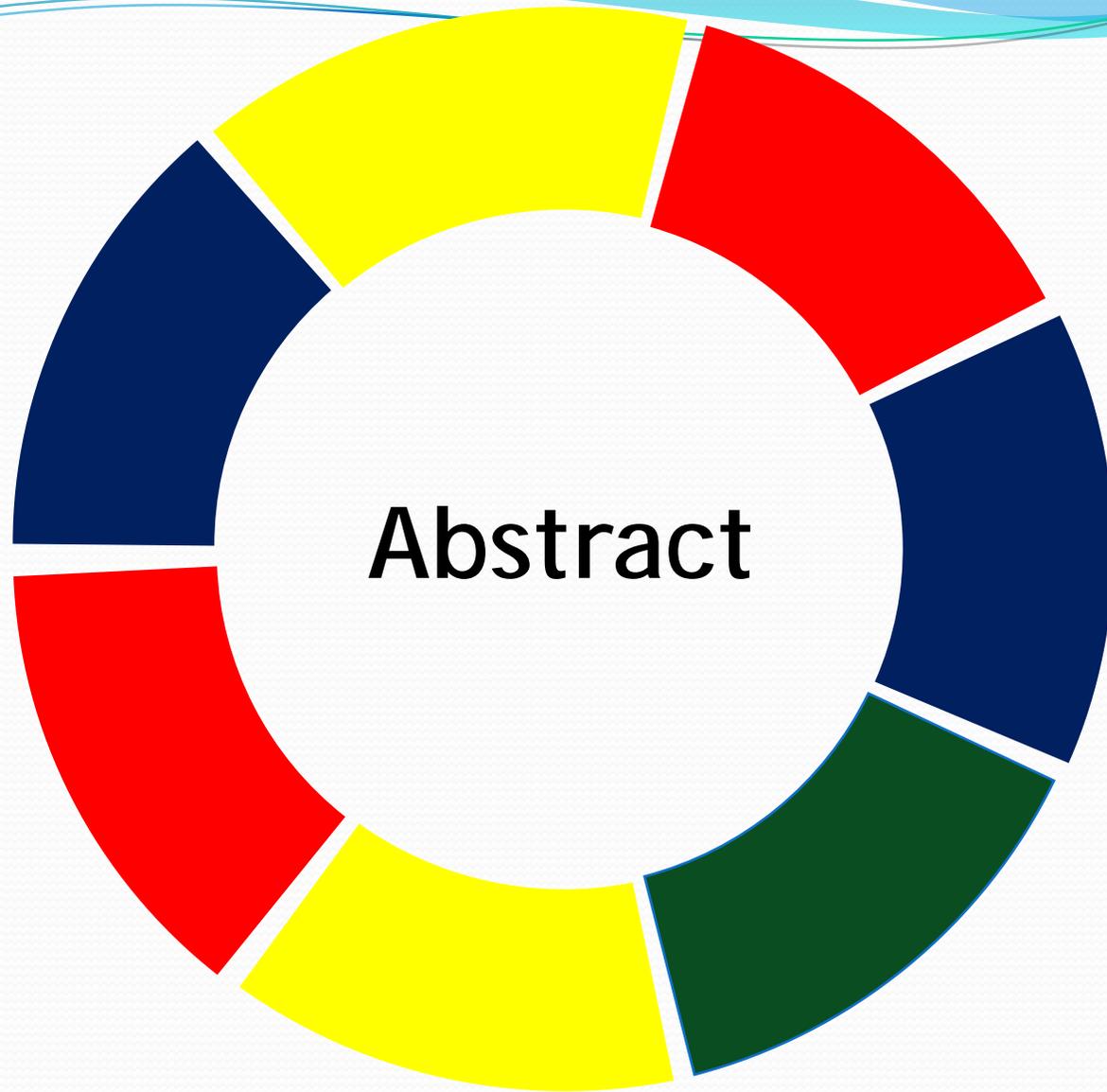
5. Are Africans sufficiently innovative and creative vis-a-vis leadership
systems?

6. The Reason Behind the Million Dollar Question and Position Adopted.

7. Eurocentric Leadership Systems at
Work in African Organisations and
Countries

8. The Afro Centric
Leadership
System and Its Critique.

9. African Leadership
System-
The Way Forward.



African Leadership Systems

Definition

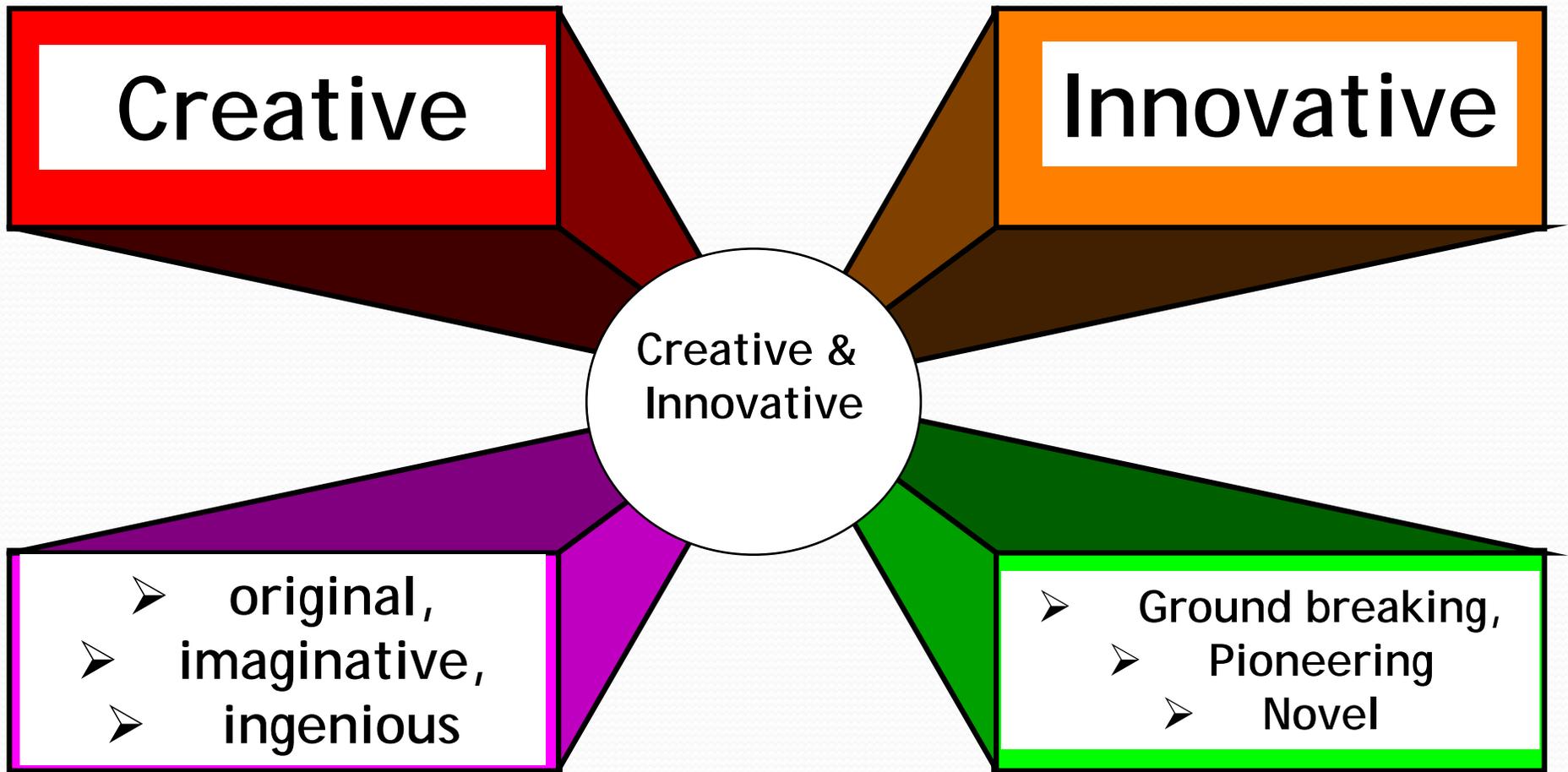
Assertion

Abstract

Methods, techniques,
procedures,
routine and practices.

There are no recorded,
globally competitive and
innovative African
leadership systems.

Creative and Innovative



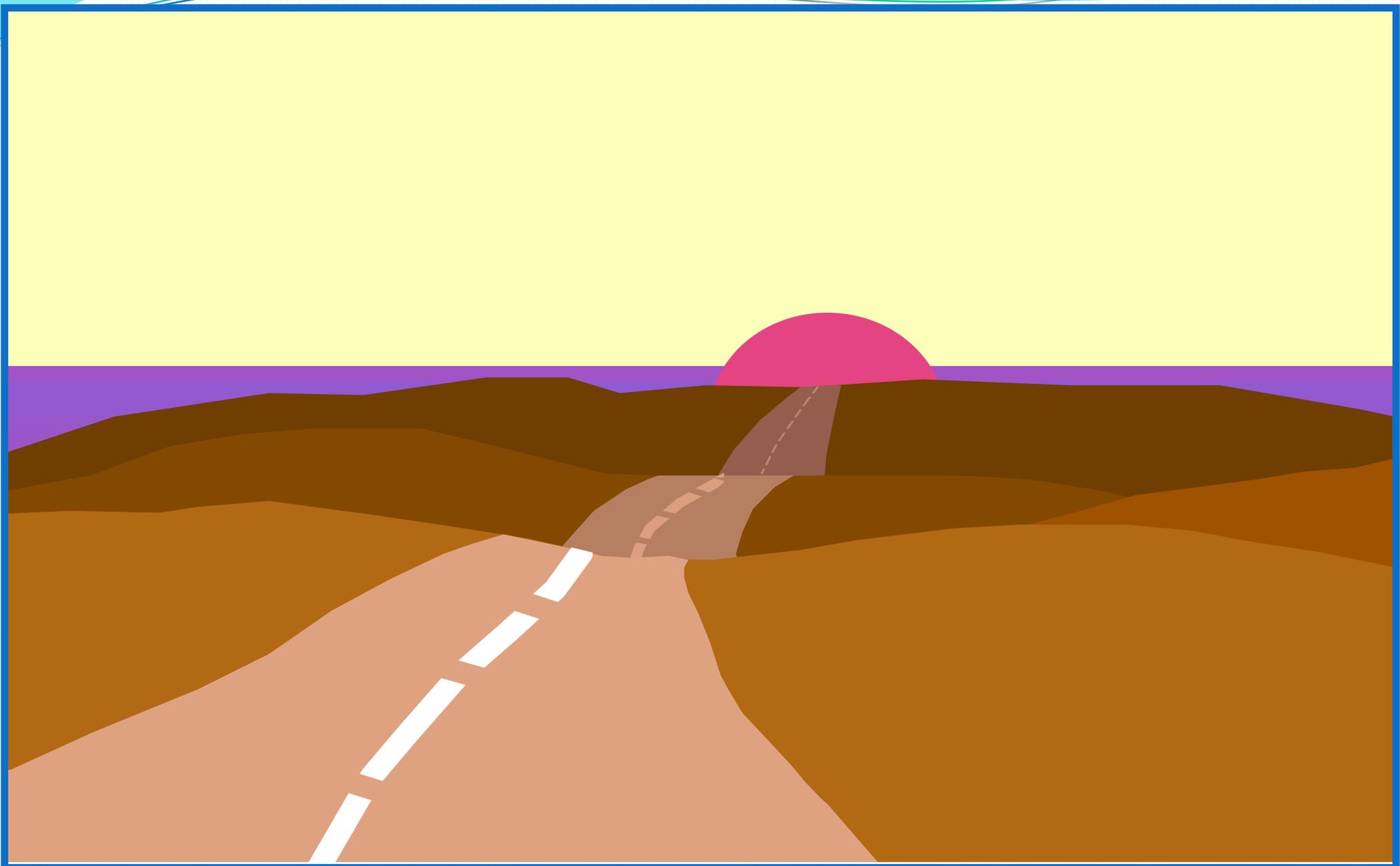
Abstract: Assertions

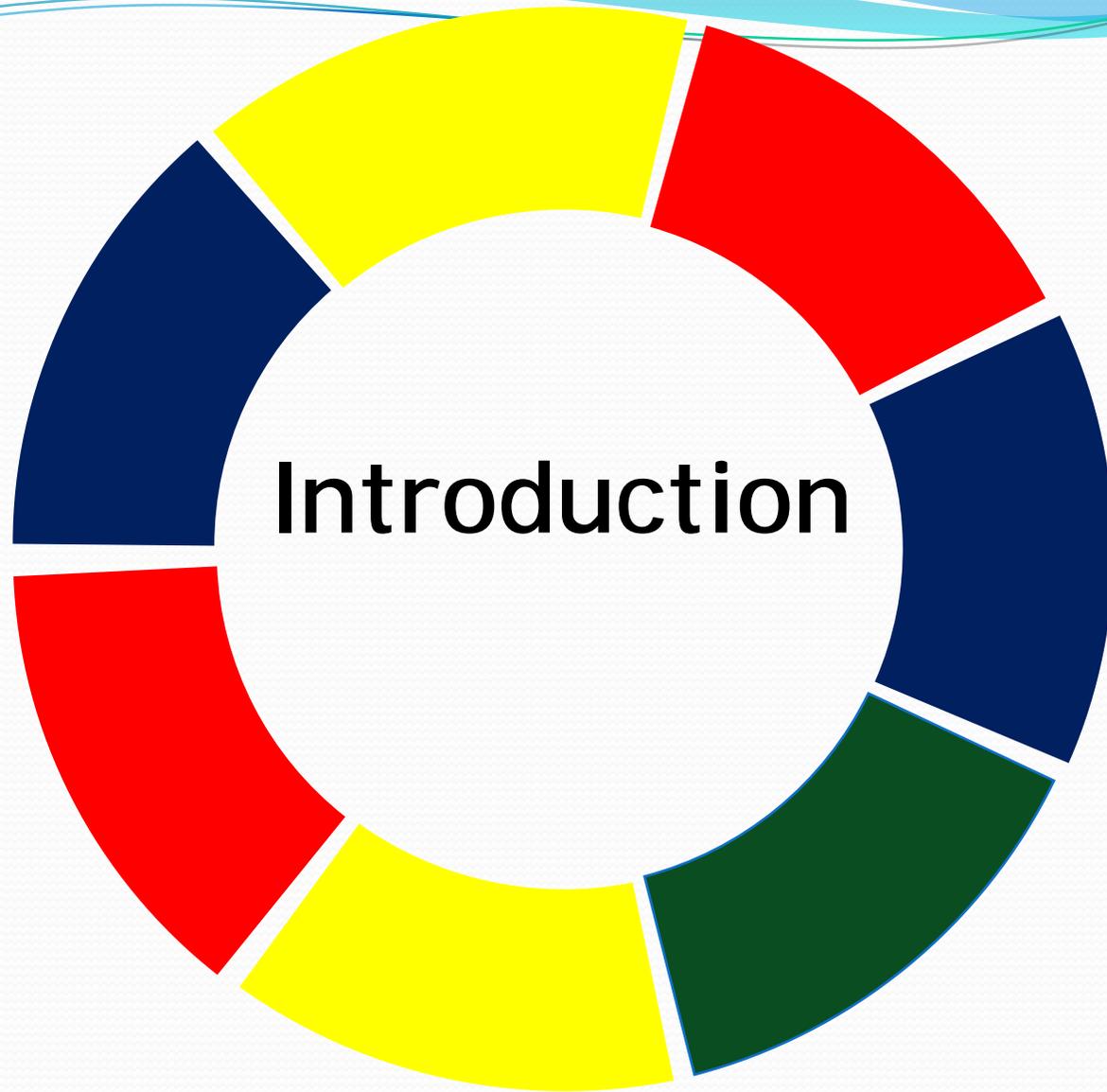
1. Leadership systems in Africa come from the West, the East as well as from Africa itself.

2. African leaders are at the level of rhetoric vis a vis creation of globally competitive and innovative leadership systems.

3. One creative and innovative African author, Lovemore Mbigi has attempted to go beyond the level of rhetoric.

4. The road to a fully-fledged practical and globally competitive Afrocentric leadership systems approach, tried and tested, is very long.





Introduction

Definitions

<p>1. African:</p> <p>1.1 that which pertains to the continent of Africa.</p> <p>1.2 that which is conceived, born, produced and or created in Africa</p>	<p>2. African Leadership Systems:</p> <p>conceived and created by Africans.</p>
<p>3. Who Are Africans:</p> <p>3.1 People born in Africa.</p> <p>3.2 People who live in Africa and have acquired status in an African country.</p>	<p>4. In the final Analysis: Who Are Africans?</p> <p>People, whether with natural African identity or acquired African citizen status resident in Africa.</p>

Assertions

1. African Leadership Systems presuppose African creativity and innovation, both of which give societies a competitive edge over others.

2. Competitive edge through creativity and or innovation creates national wealth through people's production and productivity.

Assertions

3. Creativity and innovation in a given local culture and country is an asset especially if it is regionally and Globally competitive.

4. Leadership, particularly at a national level, is crucial in the creation of enabling environment in any locality in which creativity and innovation thrive.



**Leadership
Systems Create
Ubiquitous
Political
Decisions.**

Assertions

1. Political decisions in most cases precede economic, social, environmental, scientific and indeed all other decisions generally speaking.

2. One of the political decisions that African political leadership should make is to engender and unleash the latent and often dormant creativity and innovativeness in African societies.



Leadership
Systems at all
levels of human
endeavor- the
linchpin that holds
organizations and
countries together

Assertions & Definition

1. Leadership at all levels of human endeavour is the vital glue, the buckle, the linchpin that holds organizations and countries together and propels them to a better or worse tomorrow depending on the leaders at work in the situation.

2. Process of influencing the led to willingly and enthusiastically do that which they are supposed to do in line with the vision.



Are Africans
sufficiently
innovative and
creative vis-a-
vis leadership
systems?



Africans are not sufficiently creative and innovative in leadership systems and this is self evident if one compares with other societies that are not African.

Assertions

1. Creativity and innovation are usually involved and hard processes, while copying and critique can be perceived as comparatively easier.

2. Success in a competitive situation usually boils down to which ideas are more creative and innovative in meeting the needs and wants of the intended beneficiaries.

Where Are Africans?

3. Innovation

4. Creativity

1. Copying

2. Critique



The Reason
Behind the
Million Dollar
Question and
Position
Adopted

1. Assertions

1.1 The first generation of African leaders has to a very large extent failed to respond effectively and positively to the challenges of change.

(Mohiddin 1998: 2).

1.2 For various reasons the first generation of African leaders lacked the capacity to fully comprehend the long-term implications of the domestic and global changes, the problems facing their people and the competence to provide sustainable solutions.

(Mohiddin 1998: 2).



. 1.3 More importantly, they failed to create an environment that would enable the continuous evolution of succeeding generations of young African leaders with competence, integrity, vision and commitment,"

(Mohiddin 1998: 2).

Assertions

2. Leadership systems, do not operate in a vacuum. They operate within a defined socio-political and cultural context.

3. The so-called "truths" and "practices" of today are sometimes discarded as better ways are discovered and new philosophies and practices are embraced in line with the needs and the demand Of those times.

4. At times, the philosophies and practices of today are not necessarily discarded. They are modified and adapted to today's use.

5. The new philosophies and practices that are responsible for the modifications do not necessarily have to come from the local environment



6. Assertions

They can come from distant and diverse cultures. They can literally come from anywhere where there are innovative and creative people.

Innovative and Creative People

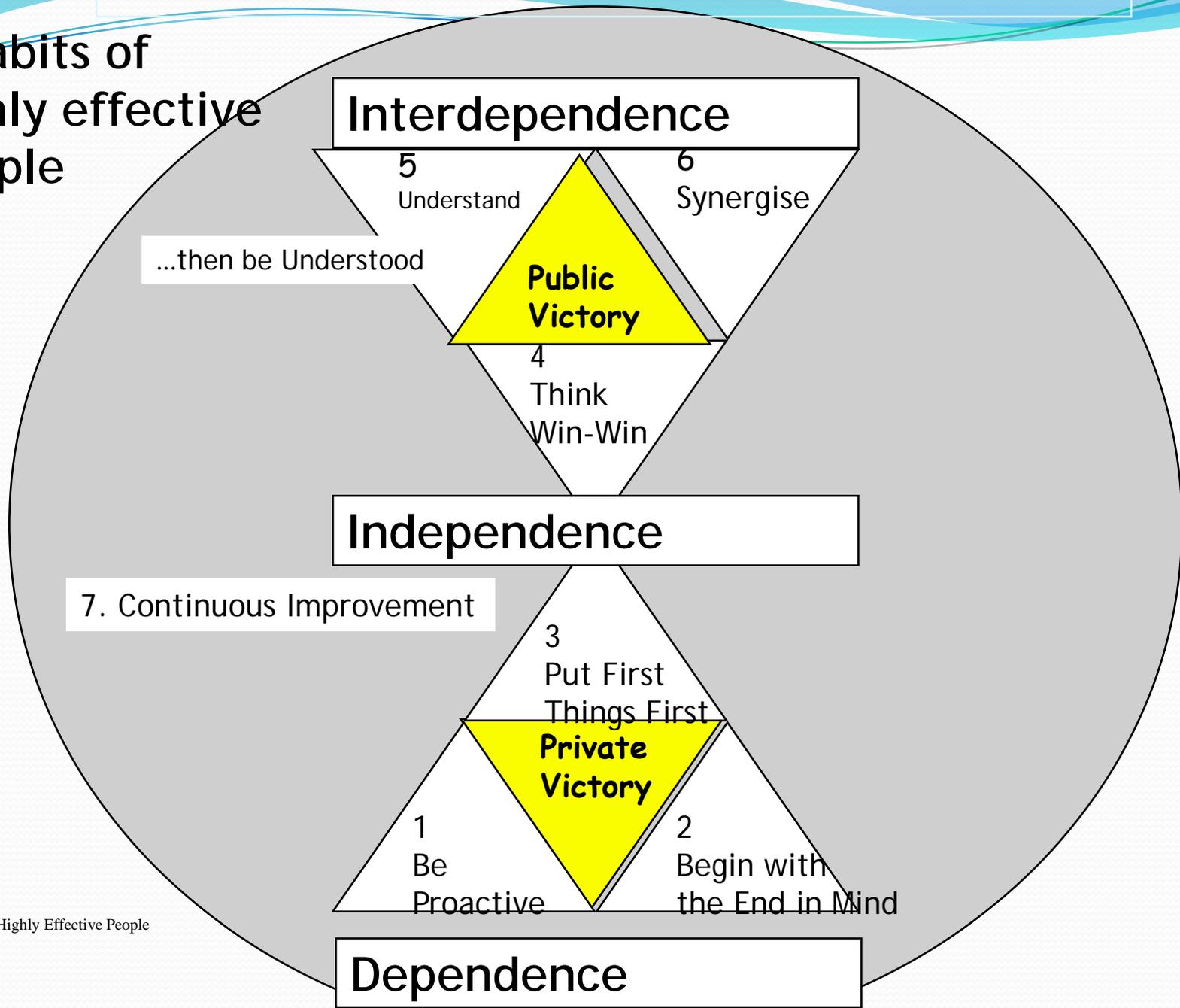




Seven Habits Paradigm

THE SEVEN HABITS PARADIGM

7 habits of highly effective people

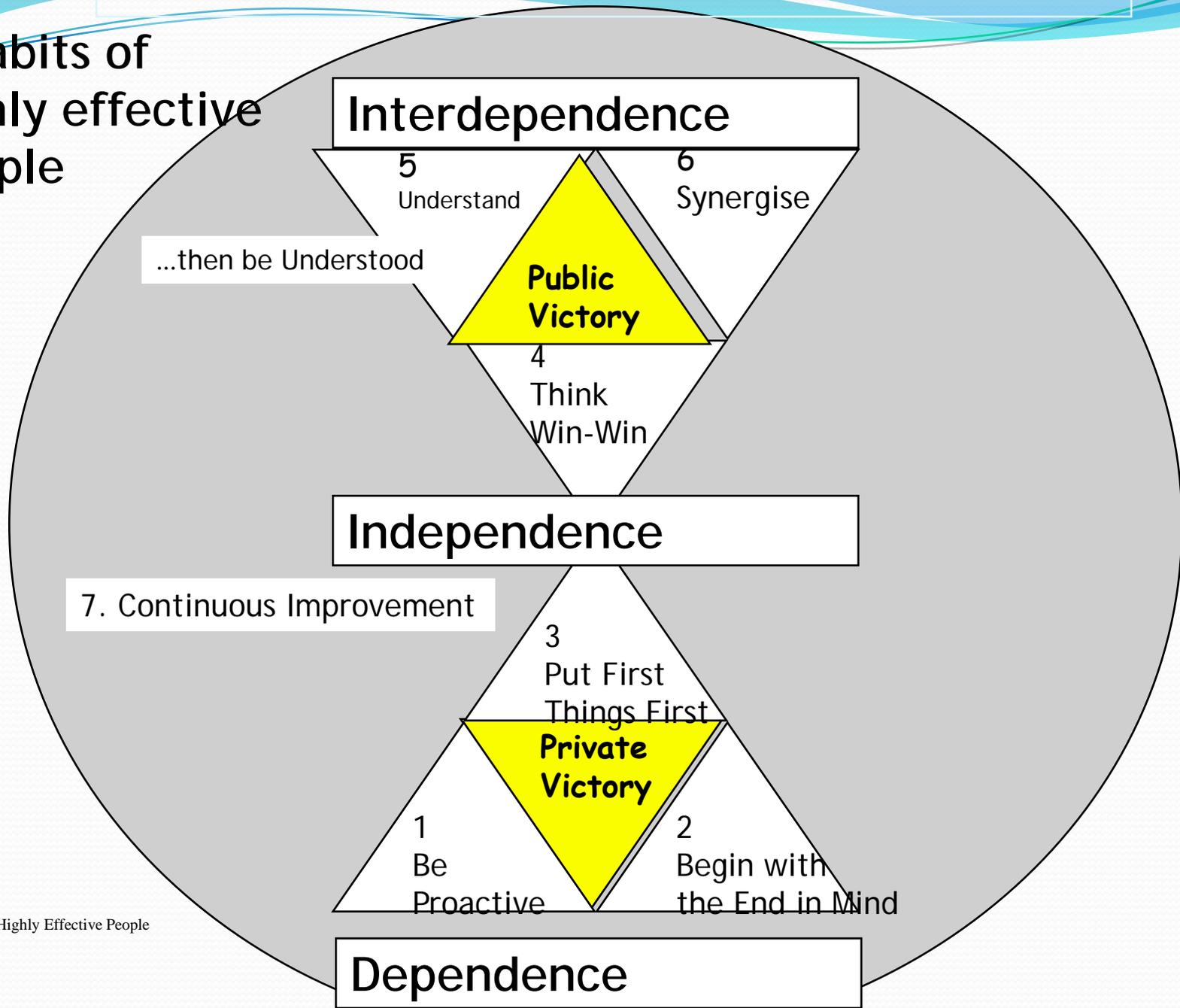




**It is argued that going by
what has been produced
in Africa, African
leaders--**

THE SEVEN HABITS PARADIGM

7 habits of highly effective people



Covey Model Emphasises

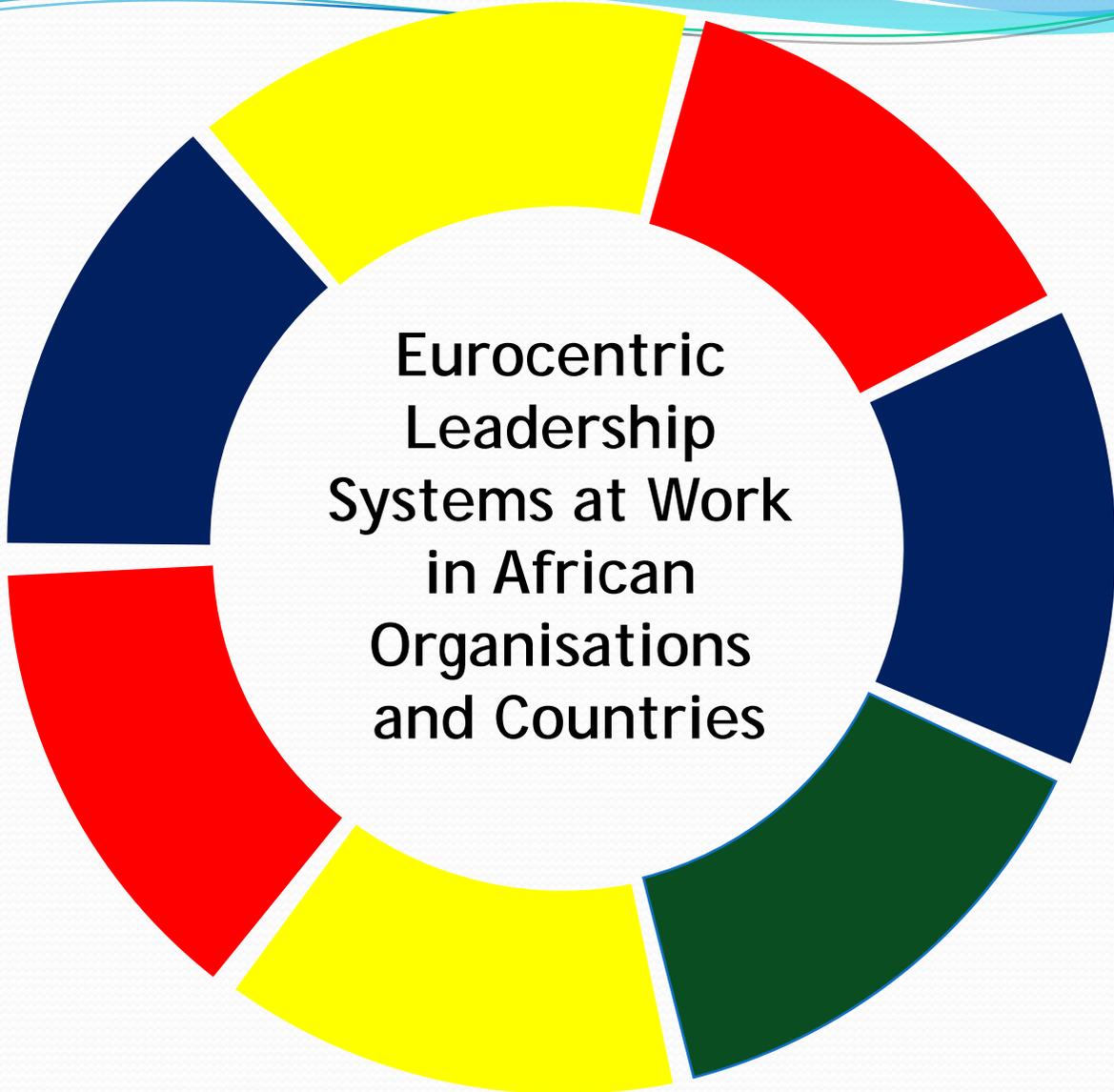
1. Fairness.
2. Integrity & honesty
3. Growth
4. Service
5. Balance
6. Continuous improvement



Question

What leadership models have Africans created and written about say since the 1920s?

This becomes a fundamental question that begs a comprehensive answer.



**Eurocentric
Leadership
Systems at Work
in African
Organisations
and Countries**



**The evolution of Eurocentric
leadership theories can be put
into two eras namely 1920 to 1970
and 1970 to 2010**

(Kuada 2010).

- 
1. Trait Theory
 2. Situational / Contingency Theory
 3. Transactional Leadership Theory
 4. Transformational Leadership Theory
 5. Complexity Theory of Leadership.
 6. Authentic Leadership Theory
 7. Servant Leadership Theory



**Assertion:
Sad To
Note That-**

No African leadership theory was articulated and recorded from the 1920s to the early 1990s until the work of Christie P, Lessem R & Mbigi L (1993) entitled African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications followed by the The African Dream In Management by Mbigi L.(1997) was recorded.



**The Afro
Centric
Leadership
System and
Its Critique**

Spirit of Harmony & Interdependence (Ubuntu)

Team Work

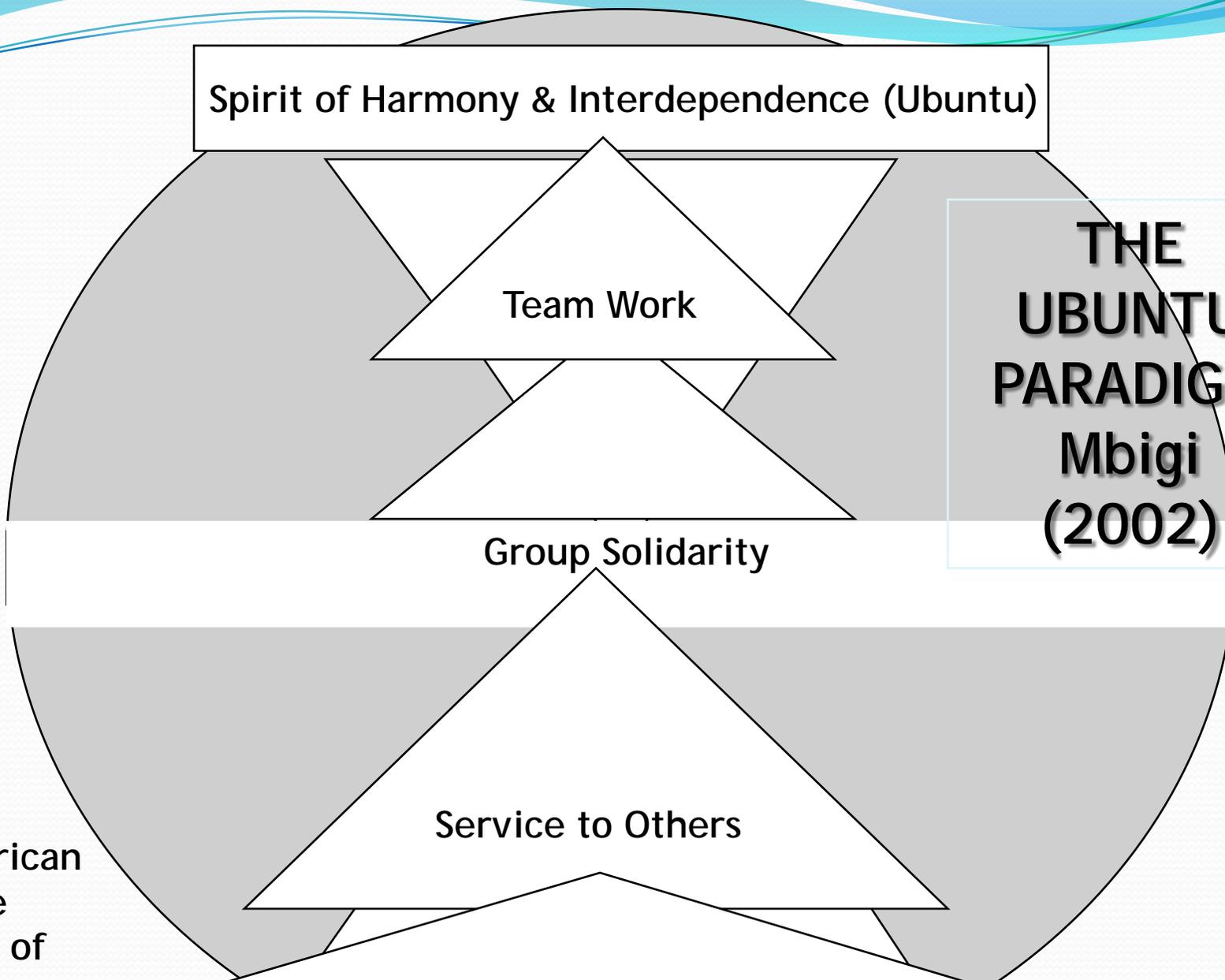
**THE
UBUNTU
PARADIGM
Mbigi
(2002)**

Group Solidarity

Service to Others

Respect For the Dignity of Others

5 Pan African
Core
Values of
Leaders





It is argued that the last core
value i.e Spirit of harmony
and interdependence has
been named the spirit of
Ubuntu

(Mbigi 1997 & Bolden 2006).

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

1. African managers need to shake away a slave mentality and begin to develop a royal mind-set which has pride in its cultural heritage.

2. He advocates for Ubuntu, which he defines as a concept of brotherhood and collective unity for survival among the poor in every society.

3. Ubuntu describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues which he believes is so central to the survival of African communities.

4. It is not only new nations that need strong cultural identity for the inspiration of confidence, courage and creativity but every nation.

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

5. For African organisations and companies, the challenges of social and political innovation, far exceed the technical challenges.

6. We must harness the social experience and innovation of African people and align them with successful management techniques from the West and the East.

7. In essence, this requires careful and creative strategic alignment by African managers. It cannot be imported from Either Japan or the West.

8. This has to be done locally by managers and intellectuals who understand Africa's situational reality and survival agenda.

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

9. It requires us to draw on the strength of our own cultural diversity and our triple heritage from Africa, the East and the West

10. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time. He speaks of a triple heritage from Africa, the East and the West.

11. Therefore, these experiences must be harnessed and turned into strengths for African organisations

12. One can only hope for competitive parity when one uses the technologies that one learnt from those that are ahead.

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

13. In this instance, it is just the business of catching up with those ahead.

14. Trying to outdo them is unthinkable because of the dependence created

15. Those that are ahead in technological innovation and creativity normally discard what they have when they have created something new.

16. It then becomes a question of copying with no adaptation and creativity.

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

17. In order to rewrite competitive rules, our companies need to be creative.

18. Creativity requires a high degree of collective self-confidence and cultural identity.

19. Our organisations have to be prepared to do things with our customers and clients that have never been done before.

20. The problem is that our companies are only focusing on two areas: cost reduction and quality improvement.

Afrocentric Leadership Assertions

21. Africa can never be free unless it has achieved economic liberation.

22. It is difficult to sustain political democracy on a poor diet of economic misery.



**African
Leadership
System-
The Way
Forward**



Conclusions

Conclusions

1. It has been stated that Africa is the world's richest continent.

2. Africa needs a thorough reappraisal of its past mistakes, hindsight and foresights.

3. What is needed is Africa unbound and African renaissance.

4. This can be achieved only through dedicated actions, sound policies and a collective dynamic spirit.

Conclusions

5. Imagination and visioning are necessary.

6. The recovery of the continent must lie in the release of the human spirit in its broadest sense under imaginative and purposeful direction and stimulation of political and governmental leadership.

7. There should be stimulation of the spring sources of creativity in Africans through the establishment of social Institutions that make for a humane society.

8. Creativity and innovation are usually involved and hard processes, while copying and critique can be perceived as comparatively easier.

Conclusions

9. Success in a competitive situation usually boils down to which ideas are more creative and innovative in meeting the needs and wants of the intended beneficiaries.

10. The million dollar question posed was whether Africans are sufficiently innovative and creative vis a vis leadership systems?

11. it is apparently self-evident that Africans are not sufficiently creative and innovative vis a vis leadership systems let alone in science and technology.

12. The effects of African leadership systems locally, regionally and globally are self-evident.

Conclusions

13. It is a difficult feat to accomplish but desirable if Africa is to be competitive vis-avis other continents and countries.

14. Most of the leadership research in Africa was Conducted by Anglo Saxon consultants.

15. It is fundamental that the research on suitable leadership systems in Africa should be conducted by African researchers using African paradigms

16 . Mbigi himself argues that it is important that Africa harness the social experience and innovation of African people and align them with successful management techniques from the West and the East.

Conclusions

17. This requires careful and creative strategic alignment by African managers. It cannot be imported from either Japan or the West.

18. It has to be done locally by managers and intellectuals who understand Africa's situational reality and survival agenda.

19. It requires Africans to draw on the strength of their own cultural diversity and the triple heritage from Africa, the East and the West. Mbigi speaks of a triple heritage from Africa, the East and the West and this is significant.

20. These varied leadership experiences must be harnessed and turned into strengths for African organisations.

Conclusions

21. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time. Of critical importance, therefore, is to adapt and fuse this diversity into a cultural fusion.

22. This cultural fusion creates the possibility which can make African organisations get inspiration to be competitive, have courage and creativity.

23. These are the prerequisites of establishing competitive world class organisations and products

24. Competitive parity can only be achieved when one uses the technologies that one learnt from those that are ahead.

Conclusions

25. It is just the business of catching up with those ahead

26. Trying to outdo them is unthinkable because of the dependence created.

27. Those that are ahead in technological innovation and creativity normally discard what they have when they have created something new.

28. It then becomes a question of copying with no adaptation and creativity.



**Organisational
Life (OLF)
Comments**

OLF Comments

1. It is all very well to have respect for dignity of others, group solidarity, team work, service to others and spirit of harmony and interdependence.

2. What is critical is for African societies to be locally, regionally and globally competitive.

3. It is very fundamental to have creativity and Innovation of African people.

4. While Mbigi acknowledges the importance of creativity and innovation, he does not place this value at the centre of the Ubuntu philosophy but it should be.

OLF Comments

5. We therefore advocate for the inclusion into the Ubuntu philosophy and at the centre or core of the philosophy Ubuntu philosophy, the African societies creativity and innovation aimed at global competitiveness

In the same vein, it is virtually impossible to go back to what is what like in the African traditional societies because by and large societies have moved on in terms of change and cultural fusion brought about all the varied experiences that Africa has gone through e.g. colonialism, Apartheid in South Africa and globalisation.



6. One can see merit in Bolden and Kirk's perception focusing on, "reconnection with African "indigenous knowledge" with its emphasis on solidarity and interdependence when he says such an aspiration is interesting.

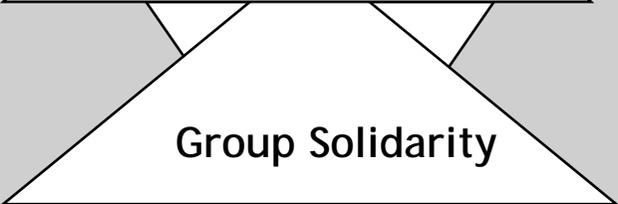
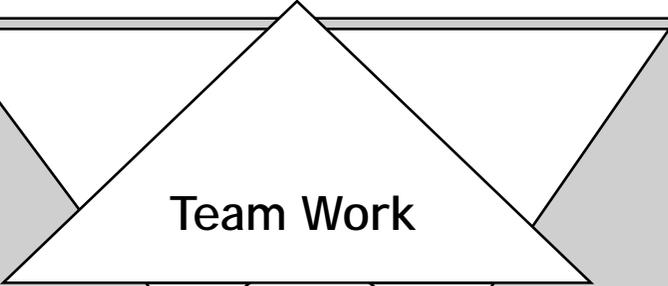
- This is in the light of in the hybridity argument which raises serious questions as to
- (a) how this Afrocentric knowledge can be (re)discovered,
 - (b) how it can be captured and conveyed and,
 - (c) the extent to which it will resonate with the lived experience of modern Africans across and beyond the continent.”

(Bolden and Kirk 2006:

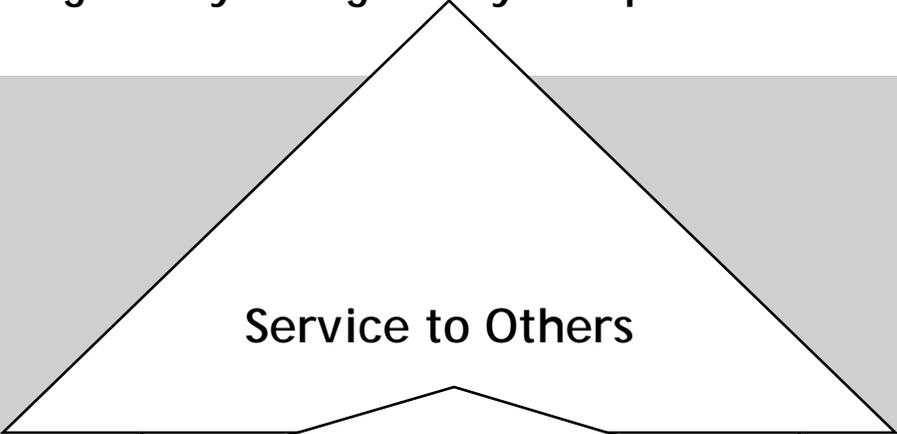
- 
- Given the vastness of the continent and the immense national, tribal, ethnic and religious diversity it could be argued that the term “African Leadership” may be too broad - to say anything much about “leadership”, let alone any sense of a distinctively “African” leadership?”

Spirit of Harmony & Interdependence (Ubuntu)

**THE
UBUNTU
Advocated
Model**



Locally, regionally and globally competitive and innovative



Respect For the Dignity of Others

**6 Pan African
Core
Values of
Leaders**



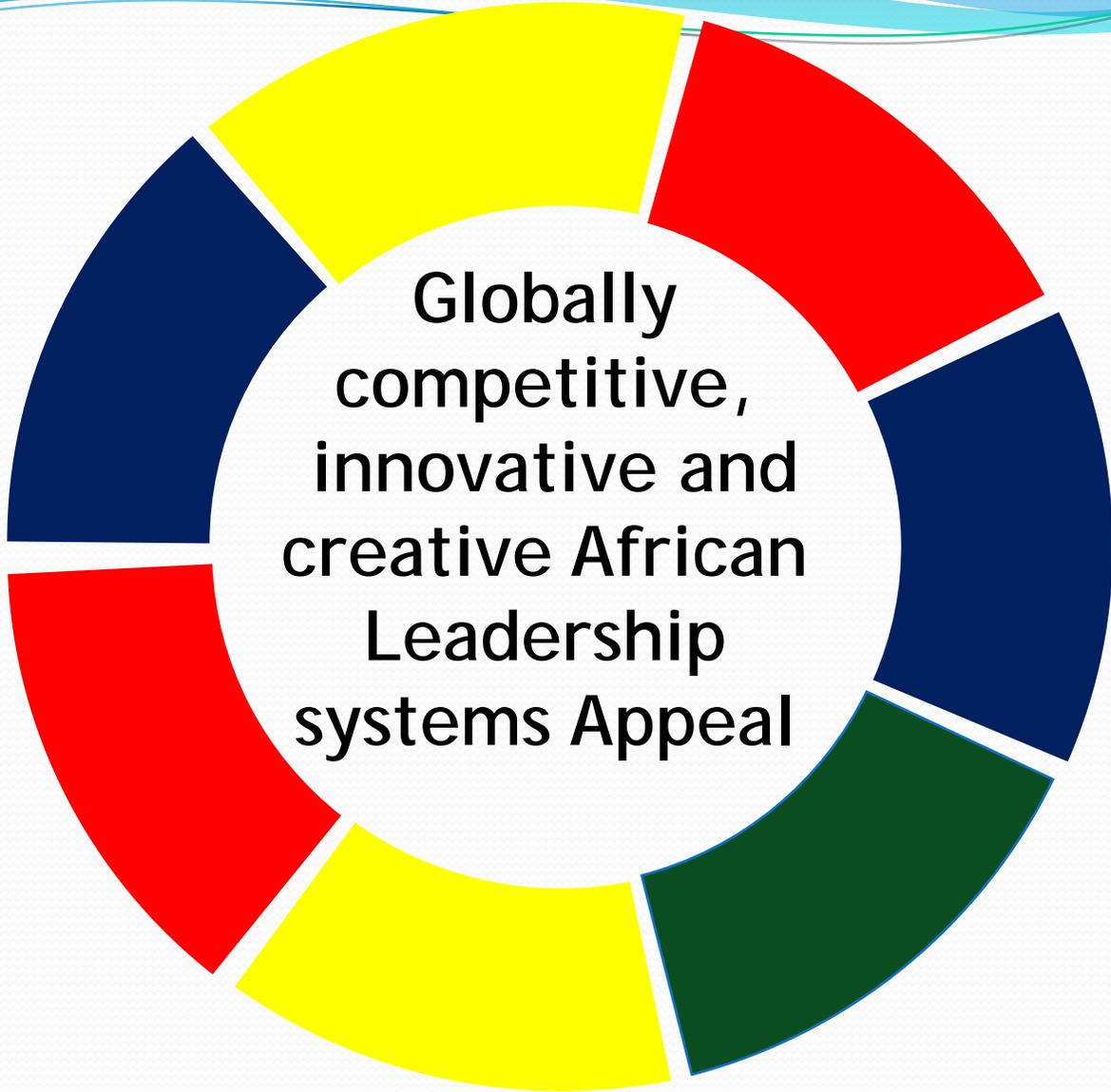
Way Forward



It is important for African scholars using African paradigms to spearhead research into the virtues of traditional leadership and other systems with a view to produce creative, innovative and globally competitive African leadership systems that are globally competitive.

Examples of places to start could be

- Kotgla system in Botswana,
- Ujamaa System in Tanzania
- Gaada (Oromo democracy) in Ethiopia.
- Buganda Kingdom in Uganda.
 - etc



**Globally
competitive,
innovative and
creative African
Leadership
systems Appeal**



If there are globally competitive, innovative and creative African leadership systems that were published from the 1920s to date we would be grateful to hear about them in case we missed them in our research in writing this paper.



We believe Africa is in a bad state leadership wise?

We have a vision of doing research in African leadership systems, doing workshops on the same and influencing African leadership in this regard and so



Please read the article;

African leadership systems
and or Leadership in Africa by
Madei Mangori e-mail your
critique and ideas
to
madeimangori@gmail.com.



As the Chinese say

**A journey of a thousand miles starts
with the first step-**

**Your critique and ideas is the first
step!**

**Let us improve leadership systems in
Africa by being innovative and
creative!**



Thank You

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- 
- Developed in the 1920s and 1930s.
 - Suggests that successful leaders combine the following personality attributes



➤ **Drive**

➤ **Intelligence**

➤ **Desire
to lead**

➤ **Assertiveness
And emotional
stability**

➤ **Integrity**

➤ **Self-
confidence**

➤ **Adaptability**

- 
- Social attributes e.g being educated at the “right” schools and being socially prominent or upwardly mobile to shape their leadership roles in organizations (Yukl, 2010).



**Trait Theory
Problems**

- ❑ Extensive empirical studies have, however, failed to establish the generalizability of these traits.
- ❑ The traits theory came into quick competition with a wide range of other leadership theories during the mid-1950s

(Nahavandi, 2009).



Theory Main Thrust

1. Theory Main Thrust:

There is no one best way to influence people - i.e. different situations call for different types of leadership orientation and action.

Dominant leadership Behaviours:

Placed on a continuum with task-centred behaviour at one end and employee (relationship) centred behaviour at the other end.

(Nahavandi, 2009; Yukl, 2010).

The Argument:

Task-centred leaders consider it their responsibility to supervise their subordinates closely;

- Telling them what to do,
 - How to do it,
 - When to do it
 - Where to do it.



**Relationship-centred leaders
address the social and emotional
needs of their peers and
subordinates with**

- **Emphasis on recognition,**
 - **Work satisfaction**
 - **Self-esteem.**

The extent to which a leader is task-centred or employee (relationship) centred in his behaviour depends on

- The nature of the task,
- The degree of urgency with which the task was to be completed
- The level of maturity of the employees carrying out the task (Avolio et al., 2009).

Maturity Definition.

The willingness and ability of a person to take responsibility for directing his or her own behaviour.

Note: People tend to exhibit varying degrees of maturity, depending on the specific task, function, or objectives that are to be fulfilled (Lord et al., 1999).





Transactional and transformational perspectives of leadership.

- Evolved in the 1980s from the task and relationship perspectives of leadership.

Transactional Leadership Focus:

- Exchanges of favours that occur between leaders and followers.
 - Reward or punishment for good or poor performance.
- Fiedler's (1967) path-goal model is an earlier development of the transactional leadership perspective.

Transactional Leadership Argument:

Leaders motivate their subordinates in the direction of established goals

by

- Clarifying the role and task requirements
- Offering rewards and/or dispensing punishments that they consider appropriate in a given situation.

Roots of Transactional Leadership.

Expectancy theory which holds that an individual employee's motivation to achieve success is a product of

- the individual's perceived probability of success
- the expected rewards from that success.

(Atkinson 1957).

- 
- **Similarly, his motivation to avoid failure would be a product of perceived probability of failure and the negative outcome of the failure.**

What A manager Must Do:

- Present rewards as goals which his subordinates should aim at.
- Specifies what subordinates should do (i.e. show the path) to earn the rewards
- as well as the consequences of not acting in the desired manner.





Focus:

1. Bind people around a common purpose through self-reinforcing behaviours that followers gain from successfully achieving a task and from a reliance on intrinsic rewards.

- 
2. Act as role models
 3. Able to motivate and inspire their followers by;
 - Identifying new opportunities,
 - Providing meaning and challenge,
 - Articulating a strong vision for the future.

- 
4. Are enthusiastic and optimistic,
 5. Communicate clear and realistic expectations
 6. Demonstrate commitment to shared visions.

7. Encourage subordinates to;

- Share in the organizational vision,
- See deeper purpose in their work
- Exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organisation.
- Consider the needs of others over their own,
 - Share risks with others
- Conduct themselves ethically.

8. Provide their followers with individualized consideration i.e

➤ Focus on their followers' individual needs for;

✓ Achievement,

✓ Development,

✓ Growth

✓ Support.



9. Adopt coaching or mentoring strategies in their relationships with subordinates.



**Complexity
Theory of
Leadership**



**Complexity Theory
emerged in the 1980s at
the same time as the
authentic theory of
leadership.**

Theory Focus:

1. Leadership is part of a dynamic and evolving pattern of behaviours and complex interactions among various organizational players, producing power structures and networks of relationships

(Schneider and Somers, 2006).

- 
2. No single leader can shape the trajectory of organizations.
 3. Power of each leader depends on his/her position within the complex network of relationships within the focal organization and ability to distribute resources and emotional support.

(Manderscheid and Ardichvili 2008).



**Authentic
Theory of
Leadership**



Theory Focus:

1. Self-awareness.
2. Self-regulated positive behaviours of leaders.

Theory Argument:

1. Authentic leaders tend to exhibit transparent and ethical behaviours (Avolio et al. 2009).
2. Such behaviours encourage openness and employees' desire to share information with each other and with their leaders.



**Servant
Leadership
Theory**

- 
1. A derivative of the authentic leadership.
 2. Based on the devolution of power to follower i.e
 - Leaders see themselves as stewards, serving their followers in a manner that allows them to contribute their very best to fulfilling organizational objectives.



**Leadership
Theories-In
sum**

- Have matured through an intellectual journey starting with
- an emphasis on the unique traits of individuals to
 - an emphasis on the uniqueness of individual employees who must be
 - transformed through serving and coaching in order for
 - their potentials to blossom
 - for the great good of their organizations





Bolden and Kirk (2009) grouped leadership theories into four main categories as follows:

- (1) Essentialist theories;**
- (2) Relational theories;**
- (3) Critical theories; and**
- (4) Constructionist theories.**



**Essentialist
Leadership
theories**

- 
1. Rely on objectivist paradigm.
 2. Seek to identify and define what “leadership” is in universal terms, i.e. focusing on predictable leadership traits and behaviours.

Examples:

Works of leadership scholars such as;

- Blake and Mouton (1964),
 - Fiedler (1967),
 - Stogdill (1974),
- Hersey and Blanchard (1977)
 - Bass (1985).



**Relational
Leadership
theories**

The argument:

1. Leadership resides not within leaders themselves but in their relationship with others.
2. Recognise emergent nature of leadership processes and the distributed nature of expertise and influence.



**Critical
Leadership
theories**

The Focus:

1. On the underlying dynamics of power and politics within organizations.
2. Emphasise the social and psychological processes that characterise the performance of leadership functions in organizations.



**Critical
Leadership
theories**



Focus

Is on the manner in which the notion of “leadership” is utilized to construct shared meanings that enable people to make sense of their predicaments.



**Leadership
Research in
Africa reveals**

According to Bolden and Kirk, “empirical data on the nature of leadership in this region is fairly limited. The GLOBE study presents just one page on sub-Saharan Africa in its book of studies (Chhokar et al. 2007) and limited findings in its analysis of empirical data (House et al. 2004). Within this study, data were collected in Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa (Black sample), Zambia and Zimbabwe.



On leadership styles, a preference was shown for;

- 1. Charismatic/value based,**
- 2. Team orientated,**
- 3. Participative**
- 4. Humane approach**

Jackson did collaborative research in a number of African nations, has demonstrated that African managers tend to be highly skilled in many aspects of management and leadership, in particular dealing with cultural diversity and multiple stakeholders and enacting 'humanistic' management practices. Jackson (2004).

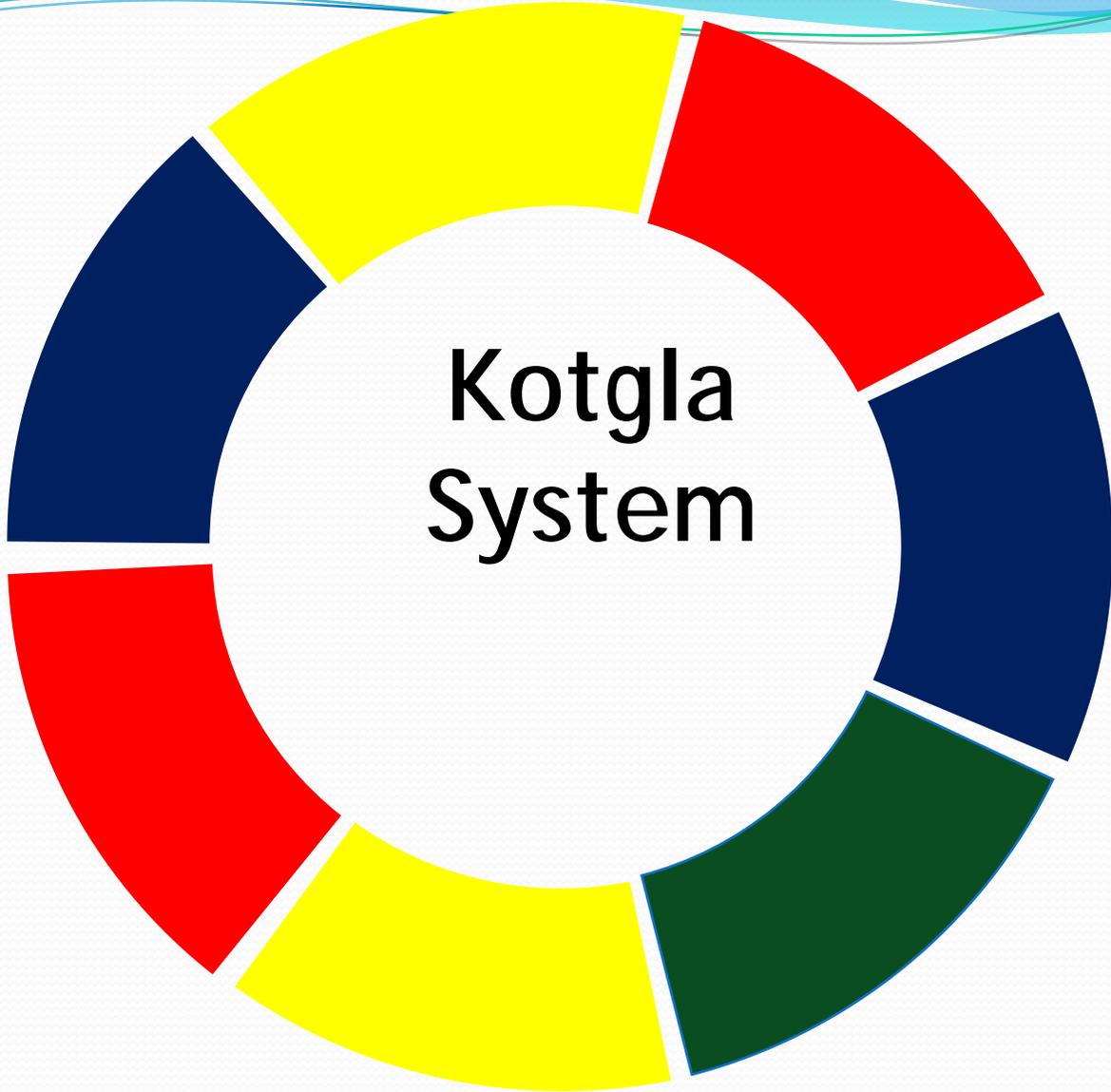
For Jackson (2004: 28-29), key values that shape leadership and management in sub-Saharan Africa include';

1. Sharing,

2. Deference to rank,

**3. Regard for compromise and
consensus,**

4. Good social and personal relations.



**Kotgla
System**



1. Each hamlet is normally, but not necessarily arranged on a circular plan, with the component homesteads distributed in ring and facing inwards towards a central open space.



2. Within this central space are found one or two cattle kraals and close to each, a booth-like or crescentic windbreak of stout poles, where men of the hamlet meet to discuss their affairs.

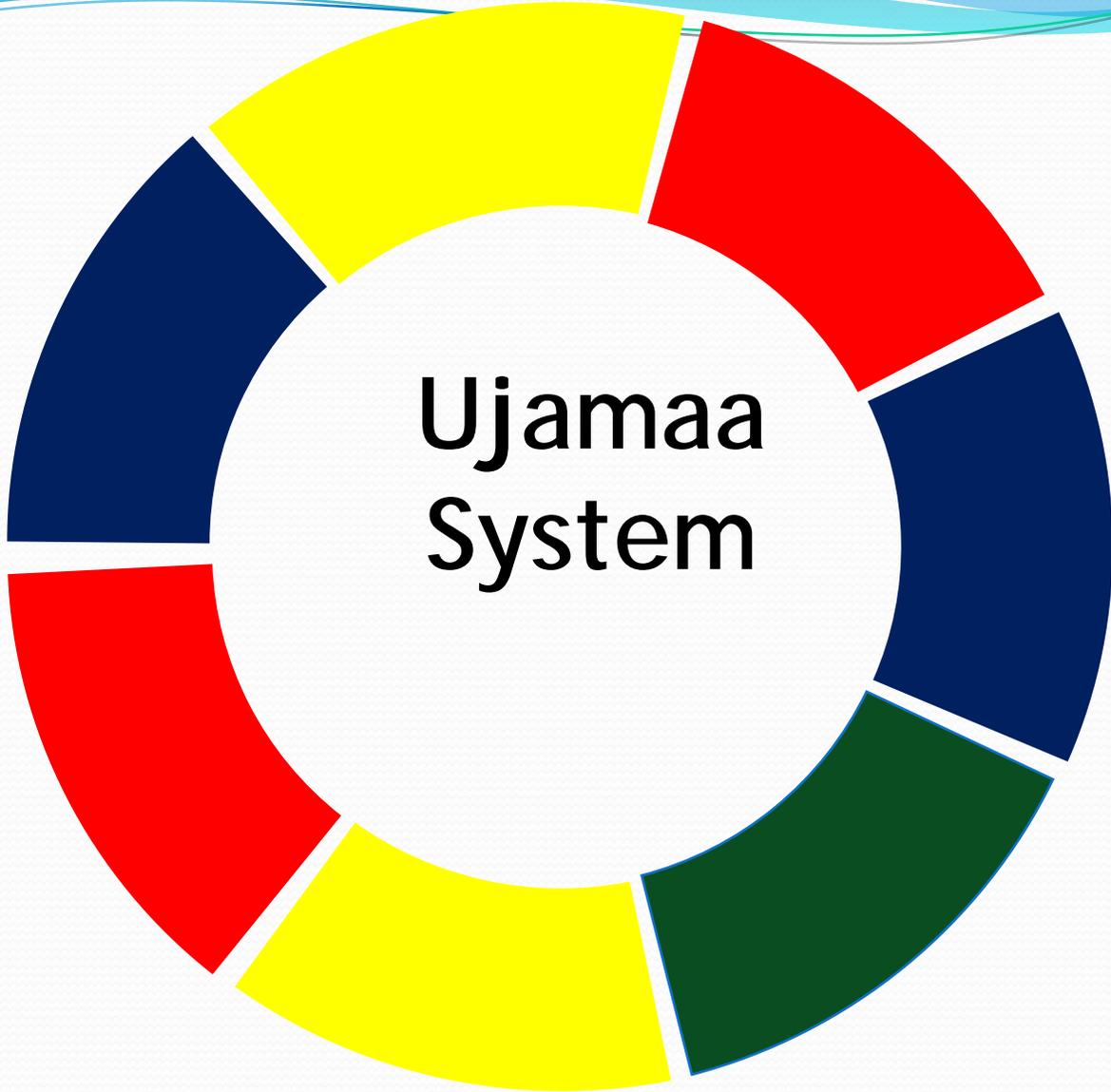


3. This meeting place (kgotla) is the dominant feature of each hamlet and plays an extremely important part in the public.

4. Here the Chief administers justice, receives reports and interviews people, and here are held many of the tribal gatherings and ceremonies.

5. The great cattle-kraal adjoining it is also a place of political and ritual importance.

6. Here the secret meetings of the Chief's advisers and headmen are held and here also the Chief is generally buried when he dies



**Ujamaa
System**



1. In 1967, President Nyerere published his development blueprint, which was titled the Arusha Declaration, in which Nyerere pointed out the need for an African model of development and that formed the basis of African socialism.



2. *Ujamaa* comes from the Swahili word for extended family or family hood and is distinguished by several key characteristics, namely that a person becomes a person *through the people* or community.



Nyerere used Ujamaa as the basis for a national development project. He translated the Ujamaa concept into a political-economic management model through several means:



1. The creation of a one-party system under the leadership of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in order to help solidify the cohesion of the newly independent Tanzania.



2. The institutionalization of social, economic, and political equality through the creation of a central democracy; the abolition of discrimination based on ascribed status; and the nationalization of the economy's key sectors.



3. The villagization of production, which essentially collectivized all forms of local productive capacity.

4. The fostering of Tanzanian self-reliance through two dimensions: the transformation of economic and cultural attitudes. Economically, everyone would work for both the group and for him/herself; culturally, Tanzanians must learn to free themselves from dependence on European powers.



For Nyerere, this included Tanzanians learning to do things for themselves and learning to be satisfied with what they could achieve as an independent state.



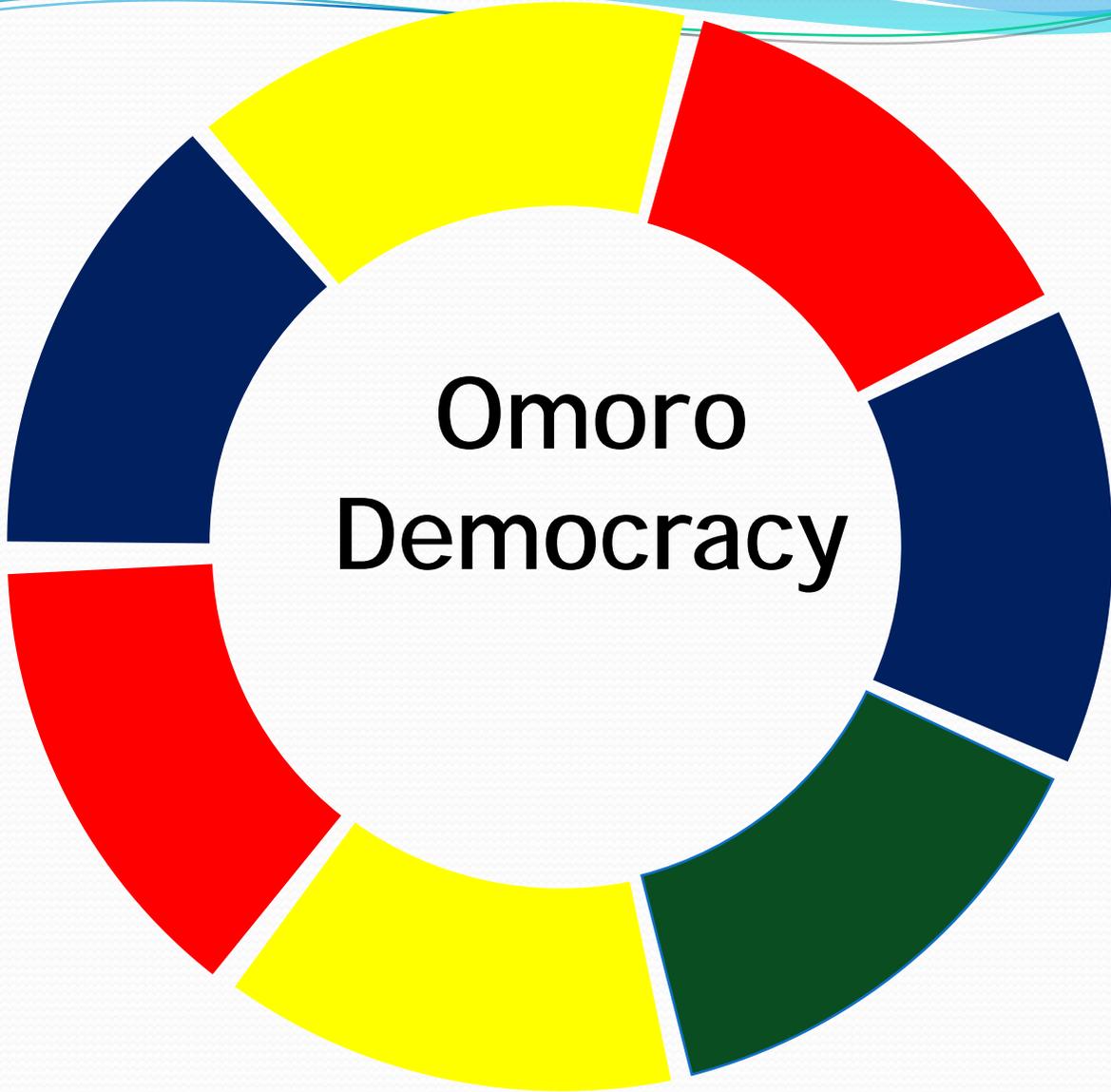
5. The implementation of free and compulsory education for all Tanzanians in order to sensitize them to the principles of Ujamaa



5. The implementation of free and compulsory education for all Tanzanians in order to sensitize them to the principles of Ujamaa



6. The creation of a Tanzanian
rather than tribal identity
through means such as the use
of Swahili.



**Omoro
Democracy**



The indigenous *gadaa* system organized and ordered society around political, economic, social, cultural, and religious institutions (Baissa, 1971, 1993; Legesse, 1973)



However, we know that it existed as a full-fledged system at the beginning of the sixteenth century. During this century, the Oromo were under one *gadaa* administration (Baissa, 1993).

According to Lemmu Baissa (2004: 101), *Gadaa* government comprised a hierarchy of triple levels of government: the national, the regional and the local. At the pan-Oromo level, the national government was led by an elected *luba* council [leaders] formed from representatives of the major Oromo moieties, clan families and clans, under the presidency of the *abbaa gadaa* and his two deputies . . .



The national leadership was responsible for such important matters as legislation and enforcement of general laws, handling issues of war and peace and coordinating the nation's defense, management of intra-Oromo clan conflicts and dealing with non-Oromo people

Gadaa has three interrelated meanings: it is the grade during which a class of people assumes politico-ritual leadership, a period of eight years during which elected officials take power from the previous ones, and the institution of Oromo society (Legesse, 1973; 2006).



Discussing the philosophy of Oromo democracy, Asmarom Legesse (1973: 2) notes, "What is astonishing about this cultural tradition is how far Oromo have gone to ensure that power does not fall in the hand of war chiefs and despots."



They achieve this goal by creating a system of checks and balances that is at least as complex as the systems we find in Western democracies."

The *gadaa* system has the principles of checks and balances (through periodic succession of every eight years), and division of power (among executive, legislative, and judicial branches), balanced opposition (among five parties), and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots.



Other principles of the system have included balanced representation of all clans, lineages, regions and confederacies, accountability of leaders, the settlement of disputes through reconciliation, and the respect for basic rights and liberties (Baissa, 1971, 1993).



There have been five *miseensas* (parties) in *gadaa*; these parties have different names in different parts of Oromia as the result of Oromo expansion and the establishment of different autonomous administrative systems (Lepisa, 1975; Ibssa 1992).

All *gadaa* officials were elected for eight years by universal adult male suffrage. The system organized male Oromos according to age-sets (*hirya*) based on chronological age, and according to generation-sets (*luba*) based on genealogical generation, for social, political and economic purposes.

Describing how *gadaa* currently works in the Borana region of Oromia, Asmarom Legesse (1973: 8) asserts that "[*Gadaa*] is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each *gadaa* class remains in power during a specific term (*gadaa*), which begins and ends with a formal transfer ceremony."



Despite kinship relationships are being such an important factors in Oromo society, those who are elected to office are expected to serve without regard to kinship ties. Nobody is above the rule of law in Oromo democracy.

