THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF *UBUNTU* AS PATH TO AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.14922.03528

Abstract
The longer it takes the African people to reclaim their African Religion, spiritual philosophy and metaphysics, the longer will be the advent of genuine development or renaissance for Africa. At the heart of African Religion and Spiritual philosophy is the metaphysics of oneness — the interconnection of all that is, visible and invisible, the human and non-human, the living and the living-dead. Within this paradigm, all is in one and one is in all; it is the African intuition of the cosmic unity. Ubuntu encapsulates this paradigm. The revival of consciousness of this paradigm could trigger levels of knowledge of the interconnections and would likely propel Africa in the discoveries of what does not lend itself to empirical reasoning. This could reboot Africa's unique scientific enquiry and constitute a real comparative advantage. However, the conditioning of the prevailing education system would have to be overcome or transcended. This education dismisses Africans' logic of knowing and displaces them from their own knowledge system. This education system is also known to create deep cleavages between the individual and the community, the haves and the have-nots, science and religion, the sacred and the profane. It is in fundamental contradiction and rupture with an African holistic epistemology. The paper contends that the path to African renaissance and development ought to include reclaiming African Religion and spiritual philosophy, conceptualized in Ubuntu — a way of knowing, relating and experiencing, which is fundamentally ethical, convivial, and all inclusive.

Keywords: African Religion, *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy, African epistemology, identity education and development.

Introduction
Normalizing the acceptance and public endorsement of the loss of one's spirituality is highly is problematic. It means accepting and endorsing a

collective encasement and phagocytosis of one's spirit and soul. This has been sometimes referred to as mental colonization. The immediate and long-lasting results of the collective and individual spiritual epistemological encasement is self-hate, destructive self-criticism and deeply eroded self-confidence. One's ability to find indigenous solutions to life challenges, from one's epistemic and spiritual standpoint, is extensively impaired. Concomitant to and Alongside the impairments of one's ability, the social fabric is broken, African value system disregarded and all forms of social deviances spread at an alarming rate. The power that Africa had to command the transformation of reality, bless or put spell on situations got increasingly extinct. These and many other reasons bedeviling the continent have prompted Africa's quest for renaissance.

Deeply emblematic was President Thabo Mbeki's speech " I am an African" (1996), which sounded like a rallying cry to stand up for Africa, her history, culture and knowledge system. Relating to this rallying cry, Africanists have premised Africa's quest for renaissance on the revival of African spirituality and indigenous knowledge system. Current discourse on African renaissance or renewal relates to the view that a metaphysics of a nation is like its 'holy of the holies' that sustains its dream and march to the 'promised land' or a desired state (Cf. Chukwuokolo, 2009, p. 6; Hegel, 2001, p. 6).

As a desired state, African renaissance is understood here as a genuine development that is founded on and is in continuity with African millennial humano-devine worldview encapsulated in the notion of *Ubuntu*. The revival of African spirituality or metaphysics is expected to usher in African renaissance, because it will permit the elaboration of a cultural utopia that would catalyse social, economic, political and technoscientific change.

To be adequate, a desired African renaissance, as a projection of the African-self to the future, in the sense of Afrofuturism, requires an appreciable apprehension or knowledge of self as African. One's epistemic position has therefore to be defined so that the desired state is not a replica of the dream of others. Felwine Sarr's *Afrotopia* (2017) is such an attempt to develop an active cultural utopia from African loci of knowledge. African spirituality or metaphysic is one of these important loci of African knowledge, without which, an African nation would lack the spiritual substance that sustains holistic development. As a metaphysical framework, *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy and its ethical aspects thus offer a path to African Renaissance.

The central proposition of this paper is that cultural foundations unfold into specific socio-economic material conditions which shape development processes. The assumption is that the advent of African Renaissance would materialise when more indigenous Africans are grounded in their cultural and spiritual values.

This paper sets out to contribute to the conceptualization of the inspiration for Africa's quests for socio-economic development and comprehensive cultural renewal. The paper will explore the linkages between *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy and African Renaissance. To achieve this objective, the paper will reflect on: (1) African spirituality and metaphysics as conceptualized in *Ubuntu*, (2) African Renaissance and the mood of Africa's revival. (3) Recourse to *Ubuntu* Spiritual philosophy for African Renaissance.

African Spirituality and Metaphysics as Conceptualized in *Ubuntu*
African spirituality is a metaphysics of oneness: all is in one and one is in all. It is a synthesis between the I and the We. This metaphysics is based on the fascination in front of the enigma of being; its origin, its manifestations and purpose. The African ancestors in Kemet or Ancient Egypt attempted a rational explanation of this enigma long before their students the Ancient Greeks came to their shores, 600 years before the common era (B.C.E.). From their own intuition and observation, they came up with a unique cosmogony that postulated the eternal presence of a Primordial Energy-Matter from where existence emanated.

In explaining the origin of existence, the African ancestors thus used the logic of emanation of existence, which differs from the logic of creation. In the logic of emanation, there is a continuum of the same substance, from the primordial formless state to the subsequent forms of existence. In the creation logic, there is a divide between the creator and the created. The credo of many Christian churches makes this difference between the created and the begotten or what exists by emanation: "begotten, not created, the same nature as the father". What is created is not of the same nature as the creator, as opposed to what is begotten or engendered. Even when the created is in "the image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26–27) of the creator, there is still a divide. The first is still "works" the hands of the latter (Psalms 8:3-9). It is like in the allegory of the potter and the pot.

For the African ancestors in Kemet, the Primordial Energy-Matter was the *Nun*. The Ionian philosophers Anaximander (620-546 B.C.E.) and Anaxagoras (500-430

B.C.E.), later called it *Apeiron* and *Nous*, respectively. This was the first scientific and rational attempts to explain the origin of being and the universe, without a recourse to faith and beliefs. The African ancestors understood the Primordial Energy-Matter as "the overarching universal matrix where everything is in archetypical" (Ebale, 2019, p. 101) and potential state. It is the ultimate Supreme origin, which will be referred to later in *Bantu philosophy* (Tempels, 1952*)* as the *Ntu* or the "ultimate Supreme Vital Force" (Ebale, 2019, p. 103).

About the manifestation of Supreme Being, the African ancestors described the alchemical process of self-actualization. In this process, the ultimate Supreme Vital Force energetically transmutes from the formless to the multiple forms, from the *Ntu* to the *ha-Ntu*, *ku-Ntu*, *ki-Ntu*, *Mu-Ntu* and *Ba-Ntu*, respectively space, time, things, human and humans. In a movement of self-awakening, the ultimate Supreme Vital Force thus exits from its state of dormancy and infinite potentials to multiple states of self-actualization in non-humans and human forms. In these various epiphanies of the Supreme Being, there is a continuum in the states of being, within the law of primogenitor and hierarchy of forces.

The origin and the manifestation of being thus established, its purpose was also intuited by the African ancestors. In a similar movement of self-awakening, the various manifestation of the ultimate Vital Force come to the consciousness of their unity and oneness. They realize that they are not just separate *ha-Ntu*, *ku-Ntu*, *ki-Ntu*, *Mu-Ntu* and *Ba-Ntu*. They are *Ubu-Ntu*. Each one of them is because others are and others are because each one of them is, be they humans or non-humans. They constitute a community. They are one. They are teleologically meant to be unified. The various manifestations therefore find "their meaning and purpose in their reference back to the subtle unifying intent of the Primordial Energy-Matter. It is in their aspirations to become one again that the manifested reality harmonizes with the creational intent" (Ebale, 2019, p. 102). Far from being a slogan, *Ubuntu* is therefore what the African ancestors in Kemet used to call a "Word of Power", a Logos in Greek, a Vital Energy that is awakening humanity to their common destiny; to be a community, to be one again. All values and behaviours that usher in the state of our oneness and togetherness, like caring, sharing, compassion, solidarity and harmony are epitomized and conceptualized in *Ubu-Ntu*. *Ubuntu* leads us back home to communion, away from the wonderous desert of individuality.

Ubuntu is "a spiritual way of being" (Swanson, 2007, p. 54). The concept of *Ubuntu* finds its roots in many African languages, especially the languages which belong to the Bantu linguistic group (Tutu, 1999). Idoniboye-Obu and Whetho (2013, p. 230) consider *Ubuntu* as a value system that is expected to inform human behavior in the relationship with others. In Ancient Egypt, "the Ten Virtues of Eternal Happiness" (Sibanda, 2014, p. 27) is a form of *Ubuntu*; Karenga (2004), similarly saw in the *Maat* of Ancient Egypt a code of ethics similar to *Ubuntu*. The *Maat*, like *Ubuntu,* is an ethical ideal that is central and foundational in the practice of "the Good" in religion, society, politics and nature (Karenga, 2004, p.5). The *Maat*, like *Ubuntu,* is pervasive and inclusive of cultural categories that define "the *rightness* of things" and the established cosmic/divine order (Karenga, 2004, p.6). Just like the *Maat, Ubuntu* means rightness, harmony, care and the sanctity of the moral order. African philosophers thus consider the *Ubuntu* concept as the core of African ontological values, whihc inform African religious practices and attitudes, social conduct and institutional organization. As an ethic, *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy holds that an action in one or the other sphere of reality affects the whole in a sort of chain, spiral and wave-like reactions. Reality is therefore not made of independent units or compartments. It is instead continuous and interconnected. Right action is hence necessary and should basically be humane, just, fair, truthful and respectful for harmony to prevail.

African Renaissance and the Mood of Africa's Revival
The mood of the revival and rebranding of Africa went a notch higher, in 1999, when Thabo Mbeki popularized the concept of African Renaissance. The history of the idea of African Renaissance, however, stretches back to the 19th century (Prah, 2001). This idea came as a result of attempts by Black nationalists and leaders to conceptualize the liberation of Africa from the yoke of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The evolution of the concept of African Renaissance can be traced from Edward Blyden's concept of the "Resurgence of Africa", to Kwame Nkrumah's idea of "African Personality", Marcus Garvey's idea of an "Awakened Africa", to Léopold Sédar Senghor's and Aimé Césaire's thoughts on a renewed African culture (Prah, 2001).There has been a consistent quest for reviving African socio-cultural heritage, for returning to the inspirational aspects of pre-colonial African civilization (Mabogo, 2002).This could also be seen as the quest for redefining African identity; a way of being African in a world dominated by the suffocating forces of neo-imperialism and globalization. Leading to the same quest in the 1970s, was Julius Nyerere's

philosophy of *Ujamaa*, as the drive towards African approach to a people-centered development. For the school of thought associated with Dubois' work (1921), the quest for the rise of Africa is closely linked to aspirations for Pan-Africanism. African leaders such as Namndi Azikiwe and Haile Selassie, of Nigeria and Ethiopia respectively had their own but convergent understanding of African rebirth based on a re-united Africa (Prah, 2001). Ultimately Cheikh Anta Diop's work (Diop & Modum, 1996) gave unprecedented vigor and direction to the quest for an African Renaissance as he developed his thesis of an organic African cultural unity. He based the claim for cultural unity on linguistic similarities and shared meaning that emphasized peace, optimism, harmony, and affective or warm relationships.

One of the most important aspects of Mbeki's idea of African Renaissance is the rediscovery of Africans by themselves through a journey into their past and a restoration of the African soul and self-esteem (Shorter, 2002, p.50). It is a journey toward the rediscovery of the Africa of great civilizations such as, Nubia, Aksum, Ancient Egypt, Mali, Zimbabwe, Benin and South Africa (Mbeki, 1998). This journey aims at lifting the African mind and spirit to be confident and assert its humanity and the humanism of its culture. It is a journey that enables Africans to project themselves into the past and answer to the question of who they are before projecting themselves into the future and answer to the question of what they shall be (Mbeki, 1998, p. 4).

Mbeki (1998) acknowledges that, for African Renaissance to occur, there is need for Africans to rediscover themselves, "to undertake a voyage of discovery" into their "own antecedents," their own past as Africans (p. 3). Further analysis of Thabo Mbeki's ideas on African Renaissance by Bongmba (2004) shows an emphasis on the restoration of distorted African identity through revitalized African cultural humanistic and spiritual ideals, such as *Ubuntu*. For Bongmba (2004), cultural revival should also aim at addressing the day-to-day problems Africa faces in the 21st century. These problems are mainly related to moral decline such as corruption, violence and institutionalized disorder (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). A clear option for African cultural values could help address the problem of moral decline and distorted African identity.

The African Union (AU) Charter for the cultural Renaissance of Africa (2005) is emphatic on the fact that any society is governed by a set of cultural values that are based on its tradition and which define its identity. The restoration and rehabilitation of African cultural heritage is therefore an imperative. This would

rectify the depersonalization, alienation and assimilation of African people by the colonizer (Ahluwalia, 2001). For WaThiong'o (2003), African Renaissance goes hand in hand with consciousness associated with the restoration of African memory. This restoration is possible through the necessary medium of African languages as repository of African culture. African Renaissance would therefore entail the reconnection of Africans with their soul and identity, through the return to their languages which carry their memory and, consequently their consciousness. The study of African worldview through wisdom and proverbs in African languages could trigger the awareness of these values as guide to quality life (Wanjohi, 1997; Föllmi and Föllmi, 2005).

Like WaThiong'o (2003), Jonas (2012) is also of the opinion that to achieve African Renaissance, Africans must first "rediscover the African soul." The soul is immortalized in the great works of arts, such as pyramids, masks, carvings, sculptures and paintings. Furthermore, attempts to redefine African identity through *Ubuntu* and *Ujamaah* are signs of a cognitive rebirth of the African mind that is likely to wrestle with the "assimilationist tendencies of globalization". Against such tendencies, a successful path to African Renaissance would necessitate "the establishment of an educational system that is founded on indigenous African worldview" without ignoring other worldviews (Cossa, 2009, p.17).

For Mbeki more than for Mandela, the reference to *Ubuntu* in the politics of Africa's future transformation was directed to the immediate need of change in the on-going governance culture of contemporary Africa. But Mbeki's promotion of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD, 2001) over-shadowed the pursuit of moral renewal and became associated with the discredited neo-liberal agenda seen as organized mechanisms for the spoliation and control of Africa's resources by Western countries (Cheru, 2002; Khalil-Timamy, 2007).The association of African Renaissance with the neo-liberal agenda, instead of socio-political transformation based on *Ubuntu* values, is problematic in that it may only further Western powers' interests and impoverish the majority of African populations (Ela, 1998). Refocusing the debate of African Renaissance on *Ubuntu* could allow the ethical aspects to remain foundational.

Recourse to *Ubuntu* Spiritual philosophy for African Renaissance
Renewed interest in the concept of *Ubuntu* as a possible socio-political model for African Renaissance result from historical events in South Africa since early 1990s. The release of Nelson Mandela from prison and his subsequent election as

the first black president of South Africa embodied the rebirth of the whole continent and triggered renewed optimism for Africa. The recourse to *Ubuntu* to rebuild the South African society devasted by years of Apartheid has since inspired aspirations for African revival. Cultural and regeneration, the institutionalization of *Ubuntu* and the decolonization African identity are forms of this anticipated revival.

Cultural and Moral Regeneration
The renewal of Africa necessitates cultural and moral regeneration whose template is provided by African Religion and of *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy. In pre-colonial Africa, African Traditional Religion and its subsequent ethics were the basis of all actions, past, present and future (Luyaluka, 2016). Any intended successful undertaking in Africa today cannot ignore this unique approach of reality that prioritizes the sanctity of the moral order. Restoring one's relationship with the ancestors, the Supreme Being, human and non-human entities is part of this moral order. Relationship dissonance with the ancestors or the realm of Spirit is at the root of illnesses and calamities in contemporary African societies (Somni and Sandlana,2014). Misfortunes could be considerably alleviated if the relationship with ancestors and ancestral values were restored (Somni and Sandlana, 2014, p. 2162).

A return to ancestral spirituality, values and practices from the past that are in harmony with the present and has great potential to improve life in Africa (Mabogo, 2002). This return is more than a mere attempt to revive past values, spirituality and practices. It is also different from Mobutu Seseseko's philosophy of authenticity qualified by Ikambana (2007) as an "extortion" of African traditional values (p. 24). This philosophy promoted a personality cult instead of a traditional model of governance based on values, such as service, solidarity and righteousness. The revival referred to is similar to other conceptions of revival such as "consciencism" (Nkrumah, 1964), African humanism (Kaunda, 1966), Ujamaa (Nyerere, 1968). These conceptions of revival attempted more or less successfully to extract what remains of African traditional values and to construct a liberating paradigm. The present idea of cultural revival is about critically appropriating the past. The European Renaissance also emerged as a cultural movement of return to European classical values associated with innovation and renovation (Okumu, 2002). It was about receiving, reviving and transforming the classical tradition for the benefit of the current society.

The return to African traditional philosophy of *Ubuntu* has the potential to build caring human communities based on service to others. The idea of return to African traditional values for the purpose of Africa's renewal is mostly found in the neo-traditionalist, culturalist and Africanization agenda (van Kessel, 2001). It calls for a return to African roots, Religion and values as prerequisites for African Renaissance. The conception of return, in this regard, is progressive and links the notion of (re)turn to, going back to something desirable (Mabogo, 2002, p.66). This return requires the preservation of the memory in order to recall everything good and inspiring. It leads to the quest for origins and roots, dignity and identity. The conception of return in this perspective distances itself from Afro-pessimistic stands which are usually based on western negative representations of pre-colonial Africa. These negative representations associate the idea of return or revival with regression in some sort of Hobbesian state of nature, which is oppressive and violent (Mabogo, 2002). This is, for instance, the case of Jarvis (2009) who does not seem to think that there is anything to revive in African tradition for the purpose of African Renaissance. Jarvis thinks that African Religion and the role that the values of this religion play in African attitudes to life constitute one of the greatest obstacles to her Renaissance. For instance, the fear of offending Spirit and ancestors constitute for Jarvis (2009) an obstacle to the renaissance of Africa. Without providing any evidence, Jarvis (2009) even claims that African spirituality is incompatible with science and technology. The proponents of globalist-perspective of African Renaissance, such as Mbeki (1998) and van Kessel (2001) hold similar views as Jarvis (2009) in that they put emphasis on secular modernizing programs which are only political and economic in focus (Maloka, 2000), and favorable to joining the global economy (van Kessel, 2001).

From the neo-traditionalist perspective, however, opposing tradition and modernity conceals the fact that science or technology is an encoded spiritual and metaphysical tradition (Okoro, 2011). There is a back and forth movement between tradition seen as continuity and modernity seen as change, where the latter is not a rejection, but a refinement of the first. Indeed, the connectedness to one's culture and tradition tends to enhance the capacity to think innovatively and to innovate (Wakholi, 2005, p.3; Essien-Udom, 1962). In relation to the idea of revival of African traditional values and spirituality, Gade (2011; 2013) also acknowledges that past African values, especially African humanist values, and the restoration of African culture are able to inspire a good future for society. It is worth interrogating any claims of a value-free science that only seeks to impart

knowledge without any cultural considerations or cultural related epistemic stand. As it is discussed in the next section, the institutionalization of *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy could provide Africa with the necessary epistemic stand for innovation in various areas of human endeavour.

Institutionalization of *Ubuntu* Spiritual Philosophy

The institutionalization of *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy and values could improve performance by providing frameworks to conceptualize models of development which are inclusive (Ndoda and Sikwila 2011). However, this requires rolling back (revisiting and revising) the use of alienating Western paradigms, such as elitism and reductionist approaches to teaching and learning, among teachers and learners, parents and children (Beets and van Louw, 2005). Western paradigms tend to foster a Eurocentric worldview to the detriment of an African worldview, which tends to be egalitarian, intuitive and integrative. If African ethical regeneration was to be mainstreamed, Africa and her worldview would have, in the long term, to increasingly become the focal point from which elements of other cultures could be considered in the learning process. Such a process has already been initiated in Tanzania, Benin, South Africa and some schools in Kenya, an indication that is possible.

The institutionalization of *Ubuntu* could also include the restoration of the dignity of the human being and the transformation of a workplace into a familial environment where there is mutual support, mutual care, mutual trust and unconditional respect (Lundin and Nelson, 2010). In this regard, *Ubuntu* could foster a sense of unity of purpose and engage people in a 'human-to-human' fashion in the pursuit of corporate goals (Lundin and Nelson, 2010).*Ubuntu* could also positively influence socioeconomic development by fostering group solidarity, compassion, humaneness and hospitality (Mapadimeng, 2009).There are many studies that show that, if institutionalized, African values could have positive socioeconomic transformative effects in organizations that integrate them (Sigger, Polak and Pennink, 2010;Ndoda and Sikwila, 2011).These studies show that African institutions and organizations fail to grow to their full potential because "African values have not been integrated into the workplace" (Sigger, Polak and Pennink, 2010, p.6). In a few organizations where these values have been integrated in management and business practices, they have created an authentic African corporate culture.

The institutionalization of the values of *Ubuntu* for the purpose of social welfare has to go beyond their appropriation by pro-market interest groups (McDonald, 2010). These groups include proponents of *Ubuntu* capitalism and good governance initiatives. They advocate for the development of a home-grown corporate management culture that would be people-centered, participative, and that would combine social and economic justice with improved profits (McDonald, 2010). However, such initiatives have served to diffuse opposition to the underlying neoliberal agenda on enhancement of market opportunities. This has also exacerbated individualism and inequalities. McDonald is critical of attempts to appropriate the theological and religious underpinnings of *Ubuntu* core values to transform the political and economic landscape (McDonald, 2010). He argues that referring, for instance, to *Ubuntu* capitalism, while the *Ubuntu* communal values are fundamentally at odds with "the individualised and commodified" lifestyle of capitalism, is just another rhetoric of neo-liberalism (McDonald, 2010).

Instead, an effective and progressive revivalism of *Ubuntu* worldview would require a serious analysis of how market forces operate and how *Ubuntu* economic structures can emerge that will collectively empower the people as a counter-weight to these market forces (McDonald, 2010). Advocating for *Ubuntu* economic structures goes beyond prevailing management theories, which hold that market forces should operate for the purpose of maximizing owners' and stakeholders' wealth (Lutz, 2009). The emphasis of *Ubuntu* economic ideals is on sharing, on a life style that is sustainable, on the common good as the good of the community and each of its members (Karsten and Illa, 2001; Lutz, 2009; Shumba, 2011). An *Ubuntu* sustainable living life style recognizes that "social, political and environment concerns are all interrelated" (Swanson, 2007, p. 58). Social issues of poverty and oppression would have consequences on the ecological and political sustainability of the planet (Swanson, 2007).

There are challenges, in contemporary African countries, of preserving African culture and passing it to future generation (MOYA, 2007). Institutions of education could serve as a way of bridging the estrangement of youth from African culture. It should be a matter of concern that formal education, in most African countries, involves the youth almost completely for approximately 25 years without a systematic reference to African worldview. The question remains whether the estrangement of African urban youth from their cultural realities, as a foundational part of their identity, could be one of the most disenabling factors for a successful contribution in the renaissance of Africa. It is indeed difficult to

imagine how African youth could contribute to African renaissance without prior understanding and integration of their socio-cultural reality, their cultural identify and values.

Decolonization of African Identity

The Africanist perspective proposes the evaluation of history and culture in order to deconstruct the colonial construct and worldviews and remake a decolonized African identity. A decolonized African identity could be rooted in African "cultural-spiritual values" Nabudere (2001, p. 9). Similarly, socioeconomic transformation of Africa has to be understood first as a cultural revitalization. A shift to the *Ubuntu* paradigm of African Renaissance may therefore not just be an insertion of African economies into the global economy, but an emergence of a new civilization in the world.

Some of the aspects necessary for the emergence of a new African civilization in the world are highlighted by Muchie (2004a). This is mainly about the re-construction of an African identity based on the noumenal or spiritual aspect of African culture, as opposed to the phenomenal or material aspects. He argues that African identity must be ontologically rooted in African earlier civilization and avoid the schizophrenia of combined or hybrid identities based on state and ethnic identities. Muchie further argues that hybrid identities create fractured loyalties, which could lead to breakdown in times of hardship. In another article, Muchie (2004b) argues that the attempt to categorize Africans with differing specific identities is a relic of a 19th century anthropological creation which reduced Africans to their phenomenal attributes. The phenomenal attributes such as diversity of languages, religions and ways of behaving in Africa does not contradict the construction of a universal African identity (Muchie, 2004b, p.145).

The construction of a universal African identity transcends post-colonial state institutions. It is based on a shared humanistic culture, a shared history and challenges. As utopian as it may sound, the idea of a universal African identity is quite rampant, especially among urban literate youth. Their cultural and artistic expressions – in music, dance and fashion, display an African cosmopolitan identity that transcends primordial ethnic or national identities (Diagne et al., 200; Ucham, 2015). They prefer to experience conviviality than to dwell on differences. *Ubuntu* is considered to be at the heart of the worldview which characterizes (universal) African identity - an African as an African (Magesa, 2014). It points to the noumenal aspect of this identity as spirituality-oriented to ethical values, which are relational in nature.

Conclusion

The above exploration of the *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy as path to African Renaissance looked into the merits of *Ubuntu* ethical ideals and how their re-appropriation, transmission and continuity can impact *Ubuntu* mindsets in the quest for African Renaissance. Nonetheless, the influence of urbanism, the seemingly increasing individualism and consumerist culture among Africans cannot be discounted in the discussions on return to *Ubuntu* for Africa's transformation or considerations on an *Ubuntu*-oriented African Renaissance. The realities of estrangement of African social ideals surrounding Africans and the factors that might militate against their role in the uptake and possible influence of *Ubuntu* on the transformation of Africa remain issues that cannot be neglected in the quest for African Renaissance.

The path to African renaissance that *Ubuntu* spiritual philosophy offers places the qualities of being humane, harmonious community living and friendly interaction with nature at the center of social transformation praxis. The spirituality of African Religion and the associated *Ubuntu* philosophy emerge from indigenous metaphysics, which shape the mental framework of understanding the essence of being as divine. Traditional Africa value systems in turn, nurture the potential for authentic development.

A great deal of time and energy of youth is spent in the on-going formative processes in Africa, notably in formal education, which raises the question of how much of that time and energy are dedicated to building an African worldview. The paper posited the importance of the formative processes to build on the local and global transformative potential of African traditional values of *Ubuntu* and its worldview. It endeavoured to gain insight from an *Ubuntu*-oriented construction of African identity for Africa's transformation. Such identity transcends phenomenal aspects of African culture as well as material aspects of economic well-being. The reconstruction of this identity could be what is vital for Africa's transformation.

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