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# The Me-First Syndrome and the New World (Dis)Order: The Metaphysics of Good Global Governance

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## Abstract

Across time, violent conflicts have brought about underdevelopment of the masses both in the so-called Global Majority and the Global Minority. This paper particularly focuses on the activation of conflicts via control dynamics, exerted by the more powerful over the less powerful through political and economic power mongering. It argues that these dynamics are chiefly reflected in the ‘me-first syndrome’. While originating at the individual level, this syndrome characterises the practices and politics of several countries and – as argued in the paper- is the very breeding ground of world disorder. Conversely, according to philosophies based on individual foundations to cooperation, premised on human beings’ innate sense of interconnectedness (Ubuntu – humaneness, ujamaa – familyhood), there is a powerful and progressive set of drivers at both the individual and collective levels that can be relied on to support sustainable and peaceful solutions to conflicts. Grounded in Peace and Development Studies, this paper discusses the potential that the philosophies of Ubuntu, ujamaa and satyagraha have to re-centre the UN Triple Nexus (humanitarian, development and peacebuilding) towards a people-centred, as opposed to ‘me-first’, approach. Focusing on the ongoing wars, the paper elaborates on the avenues for implementing the progressive Nexus. It does so through the lenses of the people’s organisations development theory (PODT). Different from hegemonic perspectives, which this paper argues are premised on- and justify power polarization and conflict, and in line with networked conceptualizations of cooperation, PODT provides micro-evidence that individuals have in-built incentives to organize cooperatively around networks, to find better solutions for all. The analysis connects people-centred African philosophies to the Kantian intuition on the possibility to approximate global peace through cooperative networks developed out of universal humanity.

## Introduction

The ongoing wars in Ukraine, Palestine and elsewhere smack of the “me-first syndrome” which threatens the new world order. Me-first mentality is essentially egoism, which claims “I, I, I and the rest can die” and gives rise to discrimination, if it is not grounded in it. It is this kind of discrimination that downplays the role of Africa in peacebuilding in the world, particularly now in the Ukraine. Africa may not have the military power or economic sanctions to stop Putin or advise Zelensky accordingly. However, it has the wisdom to make the world reflect on itself and its role for a peaceful coexistence despite its limitations (Mazrui 2003). This wisdom is reflected in the Ubuntu humaneness philosophy. Of course, the African approach to peacebuilding, Ubuntu, the African *satyagraha* (Kurtz 2022), is not the only viable one. It should be analysed alongside other approaches such as *satyagraha* and *ujamaa*, but not be sidelined.

This paper argues for returning to the roots, from an African perspective, to discover the integration of the humaneness or humanitarian development in order to complete a tripartite nexus (Guterres 2016) of sustainable peace and development as the necessary condition for a sustainable and responsible world order. Humaneness or Ubuntu is a universal theoretical concept which refers to *being* and *doing* good for others not only regardless of the aim or situation, but rather because it is ethical to be and to do so. Humaneness cannot be relativised or manipulated. Africa’s contribution to the world order in a practical as well as epistemological sense is enshrined in and popularised by the concept of Ubuntu. This is no minor contribution to the current debate on the establishment of sustainable peace and development for all people and for Mother Nature, without exploitation or discrimination between the rich and the poor or on the bases of gender, race or political power.

Tanzania’s founding president, Mwalimu Nyerere, for example, cautioned Tanzanians against the sin that is discrimination. He was then referring to those who discriminated or tended to discriminate fellow Tanzanians on the basis of their geographical location between Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. He warned that once there is a breakup between the parts that constitute the United Republic of Tanzania, then Zanzibaris will start discriminating against each other, particularly between the inhabitants of Unguja, the larger island, and Pemba, the smaller one. Indeed, the people from Unguja would then also notice differences amongst themselves, and they would turn against each other on the basis of their ethnic origin. Some would think they are more Zanzibari than the rest. The same would apply to those in Pemba. This would not be the end of discrimination but the beginning of a ripple effect of violent conflicts and fragmentation *ad infinitum*.

Similarly, Mainland Tanzania, after keeping the Zanzibaris away, would soon realise the ethnic differences between and amongst themselves. Some would claim

to be indigenous or original inhabitants and others newcomers, if not foreigners or intruders. Ethnic violence would rule the day. That would be the beginning of the end of both Tanzania and Zanzibar. Actually, the ‘zan’ in Tanzania is affixed from Zanzibar. Thus, Tanzania cannot exist without Zanzibar and retain the same meaning if Tanzania, the former Tanganyika, exited. Zanzibar may appear autonomous, but the Zanzibaris are a mix of indigenous inhabitants of the island as well as Tanzanians from the mainland. Attempting to exclude them and retain the “pure race” would lead to a catastrophe of cosmic proportions.

With this anecdote from Nyerere, this paper argues that the root cause of violent conflicts witnessed around the world is egoism, which makes one person, a group, a nation or a group of nations claim that they have the inherent right to rule or dominate others and othering the rest. The justification for domination seems to be that those that are dominated do not have equal rights to self-determination or any other universal human rights (UN 1948), including human and people’s rights (OAU 1981). It’s me first, others second, if not last. The me-first syndrome worsens when orchestrated by the powers-that-be because the impact is even graver in the current geopolitical crisis.

## **When the First is not Necessarily the Best**

Through egoism, one wants everything good for oneself and often wishes the opposite for the rest. In such cases, the world cannot rest as atrocity would rule the day. The world has witnessed this appalling atrocity during slavery, slave trade, colonialism and during the First and Second World Wars (Mazrui 1986). This is what the world has experienced under global terrorism. The powers-that-be have continued imposing a heavy hand on the less powerful in society: some children, women and men. In various countries, opposition parties and civil society organisations have often succumbed to this heavy-handedness.

From Trump’s ‘America First’ slogan to Putin’s Russia First to other firsts, one wonders what ‘firstism’ really means and whether it does not smack of egoism and its agency and manifestation, namely discrimination. Certainly, charity begins at home and every president must consider the well-being of the nation one leads or over which one rules. However, this does not mean that one must turn a blind eye to the other nations. Otherwise, this would be myopic. Serving self-interests or the interests of the inner circle at the expense of the rest is not a sign of good leadership. A few examples might help to clarify this first argument.

Internationally renowned leaders such as Mandela and Tutu in South Africa never settled with the emancipation of one group of victims at the hand of apartheid. They went all the way to embrace and accommodate the group of aggressors or perpetrators and strove to reconcile them with the oppressed. Indeed, Nyerere

equally demonstrated concern for other countries. He used to argue that the independence of Tanganyika would be meaningless unless complemented by the independence of neighbouring countries. The support he rendered countries in Southern Africa towards their independence is a living testimony of selfless leadership. Tanzania achieved its independence through non-violent means.

## Leadership for Unity and the Danger of Suppressing Freedom

Julius Nyerere even campaigned for the United States of Africa (USA) or the United Federation of Africa (UFA) because he was a staunch believer of African unity. He was a panafricanist of the first order, *par excellence*. As he put it: “Without unity, there is no future for Africa” (Nyerere 1996). He shared this philosophy with several other heads of state such as Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, another great leader. However, there was a difference in the approach to this unity between these two great thinkers and statesmen. Nyerere opted for gradualism, while Nkrumah opted for fast-tracking. Gradualism meant that a few neighbouring countries would start uniting as seen in regional blocks such as the East Africa Community and the West African ECOWAS. Gradually, the whole of Africa would be united. Fast-tracking, in contrast, meant an immediate formation of the United States of Africa.

The establishment of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), and now the African Union (AU), as well as various economic and political groupings points to this unity. In fact, the formation of the Group of 77 countries including Tanzania (G77) was the implementation of unity at a transcontinental level. This paper argues that this kind of unity is crucial for good global governance and peacebuilding. However, it should go beyond utopianism. It entails visionary leaders who see the value of cooperation rather than competition; those who see the value of peace rather than violent conflicts and wars. Leadership here is vitally important. Global peace depends on the kind of leaders of government and state.

The second argument is that the me-first syndrome determines the kind of leadership or leaders’ temperament. Naturally, there are different types of leaders. In this presentation, we distinguish between two types of leaders for the sake of simplification. There are strong leaders and weak ones as two parts of a continuum. There are shades of strong leaders and shades of weak ones as well as those in-between and those who sit on the fence. Strong ones are those people-centred leaders who want to leave a positive mark and are seen to do so through a sound process of coming into office and good outcome, namely sustainable peace and development. Weak ones are mediocre, if not dictatorial, and usually their impact on development is disastrous. On the fence sit those who stay in power simply because they happen to be there and as fate would have it.

Working in the interests of one's country seems to be a motif that is mentioned by various leaders. For example, Trump's successor, Joe Biden, has the interest of his country at heart. He is keen on NATO and other allies to further this interest. This interest is not only limited to the NATO zone but also to other zones that are strategically poised to maintain or promote America's interests. However, it should not be concluded that the US and Europe always work for common interests (Larres 2021). Yet, the two have much in common due to historical reasons. It is no surprise that Biden is viewed as having the leadership role in the Ukraine-Russia conflict, leveraging on America's influence in NATO and Europe. One might contend that Biden is acting on philanthropic motives. However, philanthropy and national interests are not synonymous, even if the two are not mutually exclusive.

It may well be argued that a smaller America is better for Russia. Conversely, a bigger America is a threat to Russia and vice versa. The bottom line is that each country is doing whatever it takes to consolidate and expand its geopolitical influence, and the quest to extend this influence is insatiable *ad infinitum*. This is the kernel of the me-first syndrome and the sublime recipe for a new world disorder. While Russia is not a superpower in its own right, the Cold War relations between the US and China seem to make Russia tilt towards China for strategic reasons. The cooperation between these two neighbours may create a superpower that is to be reckoned with, as both have a bone to pick with the US. This brings us to the third argument, namely the fallacy of polarity.

## **The Rise of Superpowers and Fallacy of Polarity**

Ukraine is sandwiched between Russia and America-led NATO. The atrocity in Ukraine is a living testimony to the Swahili saying, "When elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers". The violent conflict, special military operations or war in Ukraine and Gaza, is unprecedented, and the suffering is untold. This comes at a time when political analysts and peace researchers had ruled out the possibility of war. For example, Nagler and Spiegel (2008) argued that war was yesterday, meaning we cannot live in the past: we can make lasting peace today. Indeed, making peace is possible, living in the past is probable and predicting the future is uncertain.

Ukraine's Zelensky argues that Ukraine is a sovereign, independent state. It has a distinct population, culture and a lawful geographical position unique to itself. Such qualities are predicated to other states all over the world and should be protected by international law. He and his fellow Ukrainians have an inalienable right to existence, self-governance and self-determination, and therefore its invasion is a war crime. Thus, Ukraine claims the inalienable right to self-defence. But

self-defence is not the only reason why it is being bombed. One must dig out the root cause, appreciate the truth and find a lasting solution.

The other superpower that cannot be ignored is Europe, particularly the European Union, which is cushioned by NATO. This paper argues that Europe cannot sit on the fence. Both Russia and Ukraine are in Europe even if they are neither EU nor NATO members. Europe, including the UK, is supporting Ukraine and therefore supporting America and *ipso facto* antagonizing Russia. What is unclear is the extent to which Europe is speaking with one voice. The difference in the economic sanctions imposed on Russia is a case in point. Certainly, the difference is not entirely surprising. European states are sovereign states and by law are free to choose what to do, what not to do and how to do it. This is an essential component of democracy.

Europe, particularly the EU, is a superpower in its own right. However, the me-first superpower subsists on competition rather than cooperation. Thus, any superpower is a potential threat to another superpower. The cooperation between superpowers gives enormous strength to the superpowers concerned but also is a bigger threat to other superpowers. While collaborating with the United States, Europe should maintain its autonomy. Europe is a force to be reckoned with. It is not a small country to be dictated upon. In fact, Europe should be a mediator between Russia and Ukraine, between Russia and the US, and certainly between Palestine and Israel. Arguably, the EU and America are not the only superpowers.

The other emerging superpower is that of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia). This superpower is unique because member states are geographically dispersed and culturally diverse. However, this diversity is not in itself a setback in a “borderless” globalizing world today (Stiglitz 2002) but rather a boost for transcontinental cooperation. The united voice of the BRICS cannot be ignored if raised in unison. It should go beyond a nice feeling of transcontinental economic partnership and overlook the politics which drives the economies. It is singularly positioned to transform the world, which is getting further polarized and even Balkanized through me-firstism, and move towards what Immanuel Kant (1784) refers to as a universal democracy and international cooperation. Nicholas Hagger (2010) articulates the need for the establishment of a supranational world government.

Gone are the days when there was one superpower, akin to Huntington’s the West against the rest (Huntington 1996) approach. The days are numbered when the world must pay allegiance to two superpowers as if only the West and the East exist. Again, when two superpowers fight, without a powerful mediator, the grass, that is, the Global South, would suffer with the ripple effect spreading uncontrollably to the rest of the world. The multiplication of self-centred superpowers is a disservice to perpetual global peace and sustainable development. This paper ar-

gues for a reduced superpower whose power can be shared with the rest for “a responsible co-existence of all humankind” (Meyer 2022:vi).

The Middle East and the Arabic-speaking world is another force not to be ignored. They have experienced firsthand the heavy hand of misguided power. Examples here include Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya. None of these countries benefitted from the kind of international solidarity extended to Ukraine. Hence, they must have long learnt to identify the side of the bread that is buttered. If this region were united, the world would witness the rise of yet another superpower. This world of disunited and at times conflictive superpowers begs some philosophical questions. Why should there be superpowers at all, what is the essence of a superpower and, indeed, is their existence necessary or is being a superpower linked to the common good of all humanity? In other words, what is the ultimate source and end of a superpower?

The other superpower that is worth touching upon is the military-industrial complex (MIC). This denotes the relationship between a country and the manufacturers and suppliers of military technology. All the sophisticated high-tech weapons used in wars come from the MIC. The industries do not fight but they provide the ammunition needed in combat. In other words, the MIC fights in the background. Without their supply of ammunitions, the impact of wars would be much less catastrophic. They are fuelling wars so that they can sell weapons in the name of neoliberal capitalism and imperialism. The absence of wars slows down their production potential and therefore their economic might. Due to the fact that they collude with warring nations, they cannot be easily disassociated with the superpowers that buy their weapons.

Africa is often regarded as a sleeping giant in international politics and military power. It is riddled with internal conflicts, having a lion’s share of all conflicts in the world (OCHA 2022). It has been a victim of struggles since the 1884 Berlin Conference and of colonialism long before the Conference. The struggles are orchestrated by the superpowers of the day whose interest has been the expansion of the colonialist and neo-colonialist sphere of influence through the plunder of the abundant natural resources in Africa (Gurnah 2020), which have morphed into a resource curse for the continent.

It should be emphasized that even after all African states, except Western Sahara, gained their political independence, they remained satellites of their former colonial masters whose tentacles seem to have reached the point of no return. The sheer idea of delinking them (Amin 1990) is an impossible possibility. To compound the situation, new players have joined the third scramble for Africa (Funk and Fake 2009), with China topping the list. All these are adding to the underdevelopment of Africa (Rodney 1972)—the ignored superpower. The following section examines the role of Africa in global good governance.

## The Role of Africa in the New World Order

Africa certainly is not only weakened by external forces. It is also haunted by a leadership crisis (Othman 2000, Nyerere, 1994, Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Africa will rise and shine when leaders in government and civil society have a grand vision (Shivji 2007) for Africa's development. They have to strive to operationalize the vision and learn to listen to the people (Scoones and Thomson 2009, Chambers 1983, Mutalemwa 2015) and act for their good. It turns out that many African leaders do not conceive development outside donor support. Tanzania's Nyerere and Magufuli are among numerous African leaders who have strongly highlighted and bemoaned this dependency.

Many African leaders seem to be conditioned to depend on foreign aid in what they claim is for their country's development. However, the correlation of the amount of aid received and the level of income poverty in society is hard to justify. But aid often has conditionality tied with it (Rugumamu 1997). The leaders' dependency on foreign aid percolates the entire fabric of the population, whereby the vast majority of the population develops a dependency syndrome on their leaders, too. The population becomes an uncritical mass which is unable to criticise their leaders but praises them even if they do not mean it. They hope to get some share of the donor-funded project money, to secure some appointment, retain their jobs or get some promotion. Thus "ordinary" Africans suffer twice. First, they suffer from the relationship of exploitation from foreign donors and, second, from their local leaders. This does not mean that there are not genuine development partners and local government leaders. Yet they are few and far between.

The lack of vision will generate and regenerate a crop of rulers who think, behave and act like their colonisers. That is when African leaders become black skin, white masks (Fanon 2008). This is because they will be guided by self-interest, the me-first syndrome, even if this interest leads to suffering on the part of the innocent citizens, as it currently happens in Ukraine or Gaza as well as in other regions ridden by violent conflict. As such, the rising African superpower falls apart. Africa is not a superpower in the sense attributed to the superpowers which provide Africa with humanitarian or development aid. In potency, Africa is a superpower and simply needs to realise the power.

In short, the baits that the powers-that-be set out to attract uncritical African rulers come in the form of aid, loans, concessions, contracts, promises of debt forgiveness, and perpetual dependency. The violent conflicts in DR Congo, Apartheid South Africa, the Rwandan genocide, the Sahel region, Sudan, Somalia and the atrocities in Ethiopia and Eritrea are some examples that point to the evil of foreign dependence. The dependence of Ukraine on American military support cannot be excluded as a cause of its conflict with Russia.



Since Africa does not have a record of colonising other countries across oceans and seas, it has a comparative advantage of showing the world that a transcontinental peaceful co-existence is not only possible but also desirable. The opposite is also true. The self-interest manifested in weak leadership might make Africa attempt to invade and colonise others in retaliation or in furtherance of the me-first syndrome. This will be a terrible miscalculation as the one we see destroying Ukraine.

This paper departs from a premise that all people are global citizens with equal rights and are interdependent for the common good of all humanity as well as the good of the environment which nurtures them all (Francis 2020). It follows that humanity has a common destiny as it has a common ancestry (Nyamiti 1984). If this is indisputable, then all leaders and nations will seek to promote that common good for the present and future generations (Brundtland 1987, Hofielen & Kaspar 2018). The common good and the me-first syndrome are mutually exclusive. The former will prevail and the latter will disintegrate. This is because the common good has its origin in being human 'ubuntu', and one cannot go against one's nature. Human existence is intrinsically connected with the being of the other. That is also the essence of *ujamaa* familyhood.

In other words, the me-first syndrome will have no place, and any form of discrimination and injustice will be annihilated. Violence and discrimination will be things of the past because they belong to yesterday (Nagler and Spiegel 2008), to the old world disorder. The new world order is one of cooperation for justice, peace, non-violence and prosperity for all, including the voiceless or those assumed to be powerless. It is not a unipolar order nor a bi-polar one that is advanced in this analysis. It is not even a polycentric (Amin 1990) or multipolar world, unless each polar listens to the other. It is a "polarless" world or pluriverse, where all people under the sun regard each other as sisters and brothers with equal rights, deserving respect and dignity despite all accidental identifiers of race, gender, religion or political orientation. What matters in the end is the strength of diversity (Sen 1999). Ubuntu transcends all identifiers of discrimination to constitute one people as individual substances of a rational nature.

Africa may not have the political clout to silence the world of superpowers or harness the economic and military power to decide the destiny of nations as the powers-that-be do, but she may influence the new world order through sincere dialogue, quality education and mutual respect in a selfless manner. It is never too late to mend. It is never too expensive to think, and it is never superfluous to go back to the roots and study ubuntu, ujamaa and satyagraha and revisit the nature of peace and non-violence. It is through re-learning that the world will be transformed from the me-first syndrome to the real people-first civilisation. The people-first philosophy will redound to sustainable peace and development for all and bring about the

triple nexus of humanitarian response, sustaining peace and sustainable development.

In this paper, peace and development are conceived as the two wings of the same bird connected to the 'ubuntu' chest muscles. In other words, policies and practices for sustainable development as well as laws and regulations for sustainable peace will only be sustainable and effective if based on respecting everyone's dignity, without exception, in so far as they are human, and that is ubuntu. Africa promotes this epistemology of being by arguing that one's own being depends on the being of others. This revolutionises the me-first syndrome and turns it into we-first, where "we" stands for humanity, without compromising the relevance of other creatures in the ecosystem.

## People-Centred Development Theory

The following argument builds on the people's organisations development theory (PODT) (Mutalemwa 2015) to explain how sustainable peace and sustainable development can be operationalised outside the me-first syndrome. This theory corroborates the "Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose" in which Kant (1784) expresses his conviction that perpetual peace could be secured through universal democracy and international cooperation.

The PODT theory is issue-based and people-centred. It shows that when confronted with a development challenge or need, individuals seek for solutions through organising and networking for a better outcome for all. The theory has four interrelated stages, namely problem identification, organising, networking and transformation. Examples of some of the issues confronting the world today include climate change, COVID-19 and violent conflicts such as the war in Ukraine. The identification of any of these issues is the first stage in accordance with PODT. To explain and operationalise this theory, this paper focuses on the war in Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine is a global problem. It affects individuals and nations alike and therefore requires organising at the highest level in order to be able to end it. Any organising process depends on the values, mission and vision of those doing the organising. Decisions made by any organisation depend on the following factors: mutual understanding, dignity, agreement, freedom, inclusiveness and cooperation. When all these factors are met, then the organisation can claim to own the process and outcome of the decisions, which in this case is to end the war.

In the war in Ukraine, organising cannot only be made at the micro (individual) or meso (local) but at the macro (global) levels according to the PODT theory. Organising determines key strategic partners and means which would deliver on the goal of the organisation. This organisation could be the United Nations, or the international community of the institution of global peacebuilders as articulated

by institutions such as Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development and the World Intellectuals' Wisdom Forum (WIWF) whose aim is to construct what Kant refers to as a world citizenship, an international state (*civitas gentium*), a voluntary federation of nations, world republic and a league of peace (Hurrell 1990).

Over and above the war in Ukraine, global peace-building should be informed by education. That is why the Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ACUHIAM) has resolved to establish peace studies departments throughout member institutions, which are over 40 in number. The idea is to groom future peacebuilders and inculcate the values of peace and non-violence across Africa and eventually throughout the world. This paper argues that while this resolution to mainstream peace studies is a very important step, it is not sufficient. Peace studies should be mainstreamed in secondary and primary schools as well as in nursery schools and families so that children grow up with the sense of peace-loving and non-violence. This strategy entails intergenerational work that starts from early childhood and lasts into adult life. This is one of the lessons and indeed goals of a series of weekly webinars on "Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa" and publications, co-organised with colleagues from Europe, Asia, America and Africa.

Networking is an essential stage in the PODT theory. It entails the mobilisation of human and other lawful resources to solve a problem and build a responsible society in which each cares for the other and for Planet Earth. There are thousands of such networks in the world, and they are doing marvellous work in peace-building and sustainable development. However, they tend to work in isolation or sometimes in competition. PODT argues that in order for sustainable development to triumph, there is a need to establish a network of networks and a global coalition. This coalition should be based on values such as justice, equality, human rights and environmental sustainability.

Peace-building efforts need to transcend natural sciences. They call for what Martin Luther King Jr. described as a moral re-awakening. "Our hope for creative living in this world house that we have inherited lies in our ability to reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice. Without this spiritual and moral reawakening we shall destroy ourselves in the misuse of our instruments" - King (1967: 183). That is why it is essential to let Ubuntu speak to political elders, philosopher kings and public intellectuals.

Richards and Gandhi summarise the innate conviction of Ubuntu values of ethos, justice and truth for all human beings. They show that no man ever knew, or can know, what will be the ultimate result to himself, or to others, of any given line of conduct. However, every man may know, and most of us do know, what would be a just and unjust act. And all of us may also know that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what is best, or how it is likely to come to pass....Absolute justice

is indeed no more attainable than absolute truth; but the righteous man is distinguished from the unrighteous by his desire and hope for justice, like the true man from the false by his desire and hope for truth. And though absolute justice is unattainable, as much justice as we need for all practical use is attainable by all those who make it their aim (Richards and Gandhi 2023).

It is this self-realisation and the desire to be and do what is good for others that will neutralise the me-first syndrome and usher in a new world order. It is the shift from “me” to “we” and “we” to “all” that depicts a transformation as postulated by the PODT theory. That is what Ubuntu, ujamaa, satyagraha and ahimsa teach one generation to the other.

In conclusion, let it be clear that the ideas of Ubuntu or ujamaa are respected and practised by all Africans because they are innate to them. Some Africans have turned against these values for various reasons, some of them being selfish ones. This is probably one of the reasons why mainstreaming peace studies in Africa is an uphill struggle. For example, peace is taken for granted and peace studies is not recognised as a science by some people. Peace becomes an issue for discussion only when conflicts and wars set in. The other challenge involves people who pay lip service to peace: they never go beyond talking when it comes to implementing the resolution to mainstream peace studies in learning institutions. This smacks of a lack of commitment, which is seen, for instance, in the failure to respond to questionnaire surveys on how to set up peace studies or attend meetings to discuss the way forward. The other challenge is the commercialisation of peace. Some institutions would set up peace studies programmes if, and only if, there is external funding to peace-building in Africa, thus maintaining the lethal donor dependency. Establishing peace studies programmes should be need-based because they are relevant as advocated by the PODT theory. Indeed, as Mutalemwa and Trochemowitz (2022) argue, Africa needs peace studies that reflect the African reality. That is why concepts which are natural to the African brain, such as Ubuntu and ujamaa, cannot be overemphasised.

Peace-building, whether at the local, regional or global level, is a gradual process. It begins with an individual and permeates societies and continents. It needs the right attitude and aims at the common good for all people. The source of this goodness dwells in everyone’s soul in a metaphysical way. This soul is responsible for the new world order. Global peace is existentially experienced when everyone has a decent house to live in, enough and healthy food to eat, and a sense of belonging to a welcoming world – the genuine new world order. The triple nexus of humanitarian response, sustainable development and peace will be effective if and when it places people at the centre of development and promotes human dignity for all, everywhere and at all times.

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