

ACTES DU PREMIER COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISÉ PAR LE DÉPARTEMENT  
D'ÉTUDES GERMANIQUES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ ALASSANE OUATTARA  
(BOUAKÉ, CÔTE D'IVOIRE)

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THÈME DU COLLOQUE  
GLOBALISATION, TERRORISME ET SOUVERAINETÉ EN AFRIQUE

Axe 8: Gouvernance, Élités, et Souveraineté

ANALYSING POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN ELITES' LEADERSHIP IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S  
*ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH* (1987)

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**Abstract**

Globalisation implying interaction and interconnectedness among all nations is strongly characterised by western hegemony. Accordingly, African countries hardly experience true sovereignty. This situation sets multiple problems of management, leadership and governance in present-day Africa, which are unveiled by prominent second generation African writers like Ngūgi Wa Thiong'o, Ayi Kwei Armah, Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. The latter writer in one of his outstanding novels *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) depicts the way, for various reasons, including dependence on western powers and women's marginalisation, post-colonial African elites fail to fulfil their people's expectations and hopes. This paper explores from a postcolonial perspective African leaders' misleadership which leads to scarring terrorist acts and putsches.

**Key-words:** Disenchantment, Leadership, Post-Colonial Africa, Sovereignty, Women's Contribution

**Résumé**

La globalisation impliquant l'interaction et l'interconnection entre les nations est fortement caractérisée par l'hégémonie occidentale. En conséquence, les pays africains expérimentent à peine une véritable souveraineté. Cette situation pose de multiples problèmes de gestion et de leadership dans l'Afrique contemporaine. Ces maux sont dénoncés par de célèbres écrivains africains de la deuxième génération tels que Ngūgi wa Thiong'o, Ayi Kwei Armah, Wole Soyinka et Chinua Achebe. Le dernier cité, dans l'une de ses remarquables œuvres romanesques, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) dépeint l'incapacité des élites africaines post-coloniales à satisfaire les attentes et les aspirations de leurs peuples, pour diverses raisons, notamment leur dépendance des puissances occidentales et la marginalisation des femmes. Cet article explore d'un point de vue postcolonial la question de la mauvaise gouvernance des leaders africains, chose qui conduit à des actes terroristes et à des coups-d'État effroyables.

**Mots-clés:** Afrique Post-Coloniale, Contribution des Femmes, Désenchantement, Leadership, Souveraineté.

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## **Introduction**

Leadership has always been a topical issue all around the world as it is closely linked to human life. In fact, according to Atafei Pewissi (2017) "Leadership is the capacity to offer guidance to a group of people [...]. Leadership is an urge for commitment, achievement, and impact" (p. 90). Unfortunately, the leadership of formerly colonised countries sets many problems. African elites who take the power after independence seem to be not competent or responsible enough to make their peoples enjoy independence. Consequently, African nations still depend on western countries, ex-colonial powers, culturally, politically, and economically. Chinua Achebe like many other African writers echoes this disillusionment in his novels *No Longer at Ease* (1963), *A Man of the people* (1966), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and in his booklet *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983). In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the novel under study, Achebe particularly lays stress on African elites' misleadership which jeopardizes their nations' sovereignty. "In the universe of the novel, Sam (His Excellency) is an absolute ruler, who is completely averse to constructive criticism, wholesome dialogue and public opinion, a correlate of public sphere is atrophied in the cosmos of Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*" (N. Uzeochi, 2009, p. 13).

Man's failure in leadership is so tragic that Achebe suggests female leadership in Kangan his fictionalised Nigeria. In the book, Beatrice embodies the postcolonial feminist struggle to include women in decision-making and leadership. As Achebe's text unveils "the cultural effects of colonialism" (A. Bill et al, 2013, p.204) on post-independent Africa, this paper assesses from a postcolonial perspective African elites' governance which results in disenchantment and violence. The first part analyses misleadership in Kangan, Achebe's metaphorical country and the second part shows how the novel leads us towards an inclusive leadership in post-colonial Africa, with woman as the solution.

### **1. Misleadership in Kangan, Achebe's Metaphorical Country.**

Colonialism has strongly impacted African people. In fact, according to the trio critics Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2007) "the term colonialism is important in defining the specific form of cultural exploitation that developed with the expression of Empire over the last 400 years" (p. 40). Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is replete with the aftermaths of colonialism affecting the leadership of post-colonial African countries, more particularly Kangan a fictionalised version of Nigeria. For C. Achebe (1984):

the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or air or nothing else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership (p. 1).

This statement clearly shows "where the problem lies" (A. Chinua, 1984, p. 1) in Nigeria in particular and in Africa at large. In *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe forcefully criticises postcolonial leaders who take the power after independence. Sam's way of ruling Kangan and his way of clinging to power is unveiled in that political novel. Sam's circumstances and way of accessing to power justify to a great extent his failure in leadership. Indeed, Sam's brilliant career as a student, leads him to the army. So, he is among the intellectual elites expected to replace efficiently ex-colonisers in leadership. As Brendon Nicholls (1988) explains, "the intellectual elite plays a mediating role between the colonised's culture and western culture" (p. 46). In fact, "the elites are important because they have been given special training and

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educations and their duty is to use it to initiate the upward movement of the people" (R. Anna, 1987, p. 9).

However, the trouble is that Sam's access to power is unprepared and improvised. Sam was an "Officer commanding at independence, Colonel at the time of the coup, General and His Excellency, the Head of State after" (AOS, p. 67). As "His Excellency came to power without preparation for political leadership" (AOS, p. 19), he calls his friends to help him rule Kangan. This at first explains Sam's failure in leadership in so far as ruling a country is not a friendship affair. The failure is much more visible when Sam organises a referendum to remain in power for life. A referendum is normally a democratic activity, still the one organised by Sam is anti-democratic and dictatorial mainly at two levels. First, its objective which is "to vote for the big chief [Sam] to rule for ever" (AOS, p. 126) which is absolutely nonsense from a democratic point of view. This project is all the more absurd and disappointing as an old man mockingly contends that: "Even when a man marries a woman, he does not marry her for ever. One day one of them will die and the marriage will end" (AOS, p. 126). The second reason is that, in that referendum no one has truly the choice. Sam exerts pressure on all voters to say yes to the referendum giving him the legal right to stay in power:

Sam's selfishness and refusal for political alternation is the cause of Abazon people's misfortune. They have committed the "crime" to say no to the referendum. His Excellency Sam excludes Abazon from all development project to make them pay for their stubbornness. The ownership of their political rights and freedom of opinion set problems in Sam's system of governance, with that "military government in a backward west African State called Kangan" (AOS, p. 144), that "democratic dictatorship of mediocrity" (AOS, p. 160). Thus, Sam passes himself off as a democrat who is tied to democratic principles which he constantly denies indeed. The oxymoron "democratic dictatorship" clearly shows Sam's controversial ways and trickeries. How can one uphold one thing and its opposite? This emerges from his double cultural influence, his cultural hybridity which may be a problem to himself and to the whole community. He is torn between the European culture and the African one, and lives in an unstable and "Third Space" to use Homi Bhabha's words. In fact, in *Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha (1994) puts that:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory – where I have led you - may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing and international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (p. 38).

Accordingly, Abazon people are victims of Sam's dictatorship. Their spokesman explains that

more shifting-eyes people came and said. Because you said no to the Big Chief, he is very angry and has ordered all the bore-holes they are digging in your area to be closed so that you will know what it means to offend the sun. You will suffer so much that in your next reincarnation you will need no one to tell you to say yes whether the matter is clear to you or not (AOS, p. 127).

As Uzoechi Nwagbara (2009) puts, "the novel refracts military dictatorship and usurpation of power by the political class to the detriment of the masses in Kangan (fictionalized Nigerian State)" (p. 13). The situation gets more and more unbearable for Abazon people who finally pay visit to His Excellency for their rehabilitation. Here again the latter displays his anti-democratic ways. He refuses to receive them, thinking they are there for protesting. He states:

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The crowd that came in an hour or so ago [...] has come from Abazon [...]. But I have been made to understand that they also may have a petition about the drought in their region. They want personally to invite me to pay them a visit and see their problems. Well you know-everybody knows-my attitude to petitions and demonstrations and those kinds of things (AOS, p. 16).

From this statement it stands out that Sam is opposed to the democratic means used by the masses to claim their rights. Sam is really mistaken about the objectives of Abazon people's visit when we consider their spokesman's following statement: "So we came to Bassa to say our own yes and perhaps the work on our bore-holes will start again and we will not all perish from the anger of the sun. We did not know before now that yes does not cause trouble, we do not fully understand the ways of today yet but we are learning" (AOS, p. 127). Abazon, the symbol of opposition to Sam's totalitarian regime seems to have given in and finally admitted that "when in Rome do as Romans do". Adaptability to Sam's ways and "swallowing and digesting [his] rulings" (AOS, p.1) appear as the only ways to survive. But, unaware of their new standpoints, Sam rather uses demagoguery, ordering Professor Okong one of his commissioners: "Tell them, if you like, that I am on the telephone with the President of United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of stuff." (AOS, p. 16) Sam here unveils his whole people's dependence on Western powers. This is an evidence of the lack of true sovereignty for African nations.

Sam in his statement above confesses implicitly the fact that though countries like Nigeria "had achieved political independence, the ex-colonial powers and the newly emerging superpowers such as the United States continued to play a decisive role in their cultures and economies" (A. Bill et al, 2013, p. 178). This neo-colonial era and area is characterised by imported norms and ways which do not fit the expectations and needs of the masses. True independence and sovereignty are therefore illusions in post-colonial Africa if one agrees with Homi Bhabha (2004) in the forewords of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* when he contends that: "We know that it is not a uniform world, and it still contains subjected peoples, some of whom have acquired a false independence, others who are fighting to conquer their sovereignty, and yet others who have won their freedom, but who live under the constant threat of imperialist aggression" (p. XVI).

In addition, Sam goes so far in his manipulation that he tells Professor Okong:

Go, ask the commissioner for information to send a reporter across; and the Chief of protocol to detail one of the State House photographers to take your picture shaking hands with the leader of the delegation. But for God's sake, Professor, I want you to look at the man you are shaking hands with instead of the camera (AOS, p.18).

Sam hence makes use of these strategies to appear as a democratic leader. He manipulates the press and the people and so "exploit their ignorance for cheap popularity" (AOS, p. 4).

Sam's misleadership is also apparent in his relationship with his close collaborators. When Sam comes in power he calls his childhood friends and former school mates Christopher Oriko and Ikem Osodi with whom he studied in England. This is not to be absolutely blamed as they undeniably have the required competence and qualification to help him rule the country. But the trouble with Sam is that he never listens to his fellows, but rather reduces them to yes-men. Okong for example, though he is a scholar, a university professor, he is merely and simply muzzled by Sam and "he calls himself a university professor" (AOS, p. 21) as Sam himself mockingly puts. Professor Okong's statement below is quite significant: "Your Excellency is not only our leader but also our teacher. We are always ready to learn. We are like children washing only their bellies, as our elders say when they pray [...]. As you please. Your Excellency, I shall

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do exactly as Your Excellency commands" (AOS, p. 18-19). From this statement it appears that, due to Sam's refusal of constructive criticisms and contradictions he does not take advantage of intellectuals around him as he does not give them real opportunities to express their own views. They are therefore useless to Sam and to the whole country. Such a leadership is bound to fail because only one man cannot lead efficiently a country. Sam's self-centered, authoritarian and exclusive leadership hence bears the seeds of its failure.

Furthermore, all those who refuse to be silenced by Sam are threatened to death. This is the case for Christopher Oriko (Kris) Commissioner (Minister) for Information and Ikem Osodi the Editor of the National Gazette the Kangan State Official Journal. Chris once confesses that "Days are good or bad for us now according to how His Excellency gets out of bed in the morning" (AOS, p. 2). Ikem adds that "His [His Excellency's] problem is that with so many petty interests salaaming around him all day, like that shyster of an Attorney-General, he has no chance of knowing what is right" (AOS, p. 44). Thus Sam establishes terror around him. Ikem is the first victim of Sam's verticality and dictatorship. Because Ikem refuses to write a letter suspending Chris, the Editor of the National Gazette wrongly accused of being with the Abazon agitators, Sam has Ikem assassinated and uses the press to plead innocent. "Chris in an interview on BBC [...] described the official account of Ikem's death as "patently false." [...] I am saying that there is no shed of doubt that Ikem Osodi was brutally murdered in cold blood by the security officer of this government" (AOS, p. 172-173). But after that interview "the [BBC] correspondent was deported the next day" (AOS, p. 173) and Chris is declared wanted. This shows that Sam's dictatorship has reached its peak in terms of denial of the citizens' fundamental rights. The oppressed and terrorised people of Kangan are fed up with Sam's terrorist and violent acts. But, why should a man resort to violence as a solution or a way out? As Diabaté Ténin Touré (2010) explains,

violence is a language of power which defends masculine privileges. Like all language of power, violence defends the power of the dominant(s). Violence is masculine because men individually and collectively set its rules. In fact, men's violence emerges not from biology, but in the constraints of patriarchal society <sup>1</sup> [Translation mine] (p. 39).

If Diabaté Ténin is right, then there is enough here to believe that male leadership is likely to generate violence. But how should one cope with violence in leadership? In other words, as Beatrice asked, "what must a people do to appease an embittered history" (AOS, p.220), like that of Kangan where violence has reached its peak? For the population Ikem's murder is the last straw.

The Students Union had taken up the story and were demanding a judicial inquiry and the immediate dismissal of colonel Ossai and his prosecution for murder [...]. As ambulances screamed in later to collect the wounded and move them to hospital, an announcement was made on the radio closing the university indefinitely and ordering all students out of the campus by six o'clock that very evening" (AOS, p. 173).

Then the Army makes a coup to get rid of Sam, the dictator. As inscribed on the bus Chris takes to run away to the north, "what a man commits follows him" (AOS, p. 203) and "the guilty suffers, the sufferer is guilty" (AOS, p. 203). In fact, as Chinua Achebe puts in an interview edited by Dennis Duerden and Cosmo

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1. Original version: «La violence est un langage de pouvoir qui défend les privilèges masculins. Comme tout langage de pouvoir la violence défend le pouvoir du/des dominants. La violence est masculine car les hommes individuellement et collectivement en définissent les règles. En effet, la violence des hommes s'enracine non pas dans la biologie, mais dans les impératifs de la société patriarcale.»

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Pieterse (1972), "life has to go on and if you refuse to accept changes, then tragic though it may be, you are swept aside" (p. 14). Sam refuses to accept changes, he is swept aside then, he runs away from Kangan. The freed population are joyful, but are scarred by Sam's misleadership. As Elewa's uncle recounts "we have seen too much trouble in Kangan since the white man left because those who make plans make plans for themselves only and their families" (AOS, p. 228), while the population needs "men who believed in Nigeria and didn't care for tribe" (N. A. Chimamanda, 2006, p. 91). This idea is certainly shared by that festive man (just after the coup) who suggests: "Make everybody collect twenty manilla each and bring to me and I go take go England and negotiate with IMF to bring whiteman back to Kangan" (AOS, p. 213). This raises once more the issue of neo-colonialism,

the term [...] widely used to refer to any and all forms of control of the ex-colonies after political independence [...]. In a wider sense the term had come to signify the inability of developing economies, the erstwhile so-called third world economies, to develop an independent economic and political identity under the pressures of globalization (A. Bill et al, 2013, p. 178).

Achebe uses this illiterate man as the spokesman of the masses to question the maturity and sense of responsibility of African elites. Their misconducts legitimize neo-colonialism and the ever-lasting dependence on western countries, ex-colonial powers. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2006) echoes this new imperialism in her book *Half of a Yellow Sun* where she explains that during the Biafran war, "These African States have fallen prey to the British-American imperialist conspiracy to use the committee's recommendations as a pretext for a massive arms support for their puppet and tottering neocolonialist regime in Nigeria" (p. 178). This intrusion and manipulation will persist unless our African leaders admit that "this world belongs to the people of the world not to any little caucus, no matter how talented." (AOS, p. 232) This idea is promoted by Beatrice, Achebe's self-assertive female character who pleads for an inclusive leadership in post-colonial African countries.

## **2. Towards an Inclusive Leadership: Beatrice (Woman) as Achebe's Solution.**

Woman's role in precolonial Africa has shifted during colonial era. Though they were in one way or another victimized by men, women before colonialism played outstanding roles in the leadership of their communities. As Charles Fonchingong (2006) explains, "it is during and after colonialism that the downfall of African woman from a position of power and self-sovereignty to becoming man's helper occurred" (p. 185). In fact, colonisers gave man the monopoly of power, excluding woman and presenting man as the one who owns leadership skills. These stereotype and marginalisation are rampant and kept as colonial heritage in post-colonial Africa. Accordingly, leadership is viewed as a male preserve.

However, from Achebe's depiction of leadership by men in Kangan, one may interrogate male leadership. The novel clearly shows failure in male leadership through Sam the head of State, his friends and collaborators Ikem and Chris. If men alone fail in leadership, why not trying both men and women together? "Achebe's attempt to use the novel as a vehicle for proposing solutions to the socio-political and economic problems of Nigeria" (M. David, 1990, p.144) appears through Beatrice. Beatrice epitomizes the trying of women in socio-political and economic leadership. "Achebe's view is that the political mess in Africa has been created by men and that the infusion of women into the political affairs of the continent could help solve the problem" (J. Aning et al, 2018, p. 36). His depiction of Beatrice in the novel breaks gender barriers limiting women to private space but never to public sphere particularly the political one.

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Beatrice's Igbo name Nwanyibuife meaning "a woman is also something", is quite significant. Beatrice really bears that name all along the novel as she demonstrates that though she is a woman she is something in the society and as such should be given like men all sorts of roles to play. Beatrice differs from Mumbi in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*, a woman who appears as a resigned victim of patriarchy when she tells her husband: "I am sorry [...]. I had forgotten that I am a nobody" (W. T. Ngũgĩ, 1965, p. 29). Achebe uses Beatrice to deconstruct the patriarchal idea that a woman is nothing but a failure. *Anthills of the Savannah* is not only a deconstructionist novel but also a revisionist one as Achebe is here at odds with his debut novel *Things Fall Apart* which presents woman as inferior and "a nobody". *Anthills of the Savannah* hence appears as a feminist novel in so far as "any writing that focuses attention on women is a feminist literature" (A. A. Ama, 1977, p. 25). Thus, in literature, "all feminist activity including feminist criticism has an ultimate goal to change the world by promoting women's equality." (T. Lois, 2006, p. 94) Beatrice embodies the fight for equality in the novel and plays outstanding roles in her family, at work, in the political realm, with her male friends and in the small group of people she gathers after the coup. As Uzeochi Nwagbara (2009) points out,

Achebe's aesthetic preoccupation with the expansion of public sphere and good governance finds resonance in the craft of *Anthills of the Savannah*, where he modifies his previous idea of women- thereby seeing them as political actors and people with a voice capable of changing gender relations through participation in the business of public sphere (p. 5).

Interestingly, Beatrice is portrayed in the novel as an educated woman. She completes brilliant studies in England and as a graduate comes back home to bring her contribution to the development of her country. Her education is therefore an asset to integrate the political sphere. At this level she disavows Ikem who "doesn't think they [women] have good brains" (AOS, p. 65). Like Miss Adebayo in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Beatrice (BB) is very convincing and reasonable in the arguments and debates she has with her male counterparts, Chris and Ikem. In one of their arguments, Ikem frankly confesses: "well, I think BB is closer to the mark. As usual" (AOS, p. 147). This indicates that Beatrice is endowed with reason and represents the voice of reason in the novel. This can be seen in the role she plays with her friends; Chris and Ikem. With them, she appears as a political counselor. For example, when Chris and Ikem "were too busy with [their] private divisionary war" (AOS, p. 146), Beatrice reconciles them and advises them the best way to cope with Sam's dictatorship. Unfortunately, she is not listened to. Ikem later confesses that "BB (Beatrice) said all that needed to be said when it might have been useful" (AOS, p. 146).

In fact, Beatrice pleads for a political sphere deprived of hatred, suspicion and conflict. Unfortunately, she is not listened to. Even when things get worse and worse, she warns them as follows: "I can see plenty of trouble ahead for the two of you" (AOS, p. 65). Her warnings comes true, Ikem is assassinated and Chris declared wanted, is killed in his fleeing by a policeman. Such a woman with a visionary gift is needed in political sphere to warn politicians and leaders about the delicateness of their mission, with a view to preventing useless conflicts and wars in post-colonial Africa. Beatrice's role in the novel shows "how the novelist deconstructs Biblical and traditional stories to show that women should be given a greater political role alongside men to chart a new course of development" (J. Aning et al, 2018, p. 36). Beatrice dismantles colonial heritage imposing politics as a male preserve and excluding women from public sphere.

Furthermore, Beatrice is presented as a priestess, a prophetess and a goddess in the novel. She represents the omniscient being and because she knows everything, she predicts chaos (which does

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happen) as follows: "I see trouble building up for us" (AOS, p. 114). She explains, "As a matter of fact I do sometimes feel like Chielo in the novel, the priestess and prophetess of the Hills and the Caves" (AOS, p. 114). In this regard Uzoechi Nwagbara (2009) puts that "BB symbolises Idemili the mythic goddess of "water of God" responsible for neutralizing men's power drunkenness" (p. 16). "Such is Idemili's contempt for man's unquenchable thirst to sit in authority or his fellows" (AOS, p. 104). This indicates to what extent Beatrice as a Goddess is capable of impacting leadership. In fact "Idemili's standard is that power must be balanced with morality, modesty and peace, failing which those wielding Power will be cut off in their probationary period" (J. Aning et al, 2018, p. 39). In terms of neutralising men's power drunkenness, Beatrice's contact with Sam, His Excellency the powerful and dictatorial head of State is meaningful. She is invited by His Excellency Sam at a private dinner and when she tells her fiancé Chris, the latter reminds her that "in any country and any language in the world an invitation by the Head of State is a virtual command even when he does not pick up the phone personally to issue it" (AOS, p. 73).

But, for Beatrice an invitation is nothing but an invitation whether it comes from a Head of State. But at that invitation Sam unveils his real intention which is apparent in his following statement. "Beatrice, come and sit here by me [...]. African chiefs are always polygamists [...]. Polygamy is for Africa what monotony is for Europe" (AOS, p. 79). Beatrice as an independent and self-assertive woman refuses to be an object of sexual pleasure and politely eludes the offer. This shows Beatrice's attachment to some values and her strong character. How many unmarried women can resist an offer coming from the Head of State above all from Sam "who hold[s] the yam today and hold[s] the knife" (AOS, p. 210). Indeed, Beatrice is a feminist character who fights for the recognition of African woman's rights and values. Ikem's following statement to Beatrice is an illustration. "You told me a couple of years ago, do you remember that my thoughts were unclear and reactionary on the role of the modern women in our society." (AOS, p. 96) For Beatrice, women should be included in the development process of their community. They should not be the fifth wheel. She strongly believes that

giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough you know, like the women in the Sembene film who pick up the spears abandoned by their defeated men folk. It is not enough that women should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn right too far and too late" (AOS, p. 91).

Beatrice claims women's inclusion and gender equality. For her men and women have the same rights and so both should integrate the public sphere, particularly the political realm. Beatrice looks like Ngūgi Wa Thiong'o's Wambui whose "fighting spirit had never died. She believed in the power of women to influence events" (W. T. Ngūgi, 1965, p. 157).

Beatrice shows her project for inclusive leadership especially in the surviving group made of men and women she gathers at home after the assassination of Ikem and Chris her two alcolytes. The group was made up with Beatrice herself, Elewa (Ikem's fiancée, pregnant when he died) Braimoh (a taxi driver) Emmanuel (the President of the Students' Union); Abdul (a soldier) and Agatha (Beatrice's maid). Beatrice's leadership skills and particularly her attachment to inclusive leadership appear in the group. She recounts that she has heard a voice declaiming: "It is now up to you women to tell us what has to be done" (AOS, p.184). Thus Achebe aesthetically empowers women with the right to decision-making and leadership. Beatrice is not the type of woman to hesitate, she seizes the appeal and takes her responsibility. She decides to organise Elewa's baby's naming ceremony though she is aware of the rigidity of her tradition. She explains that: "In our traditional society [...] the father named the child. But the man who should have done it today is absent [...] what does a man know about a child anyway that he



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should presume to give a name" (AOS, p.222). Beatrice here denounces gender barriers and claims for equal rights for man and woman. She even adds: "So, I think our tradition is faulty there" (AOS, p. 223) and so wants to change the game and the world at large. Accordingly, she names herself the baby though she could have waited for Elewa's uncle.

When the uncle comes and is told that the baby is already named, although he is surprised, he just declares: "I am laughing because in you young people our world has met its match. You have put the world where it should sit" (AOS, p. 227). The old man seems to accept the fact that, the world "should" change and so does not find the words to blame Beatrice for her subversive act. When the uncle asks who gave the name, Beatrice without hesitation answers "All of us here" (AOS, p. 225). Then, when he asks "all of you are her father?" Beatrice is clear enough in her answer: "Yes and mother" (AOS, p. 225). This shows that Beatrice is responsible and assumes her acts, which shows her leadership skills. In fact, Beatrice has suggested a name and all the group discussed and agreed. In so doing they play the role of both the father "and the mother", as Beatrice's view is that, the father alone should not own that right as well as any other right. Accordingly, in the group, Beatrice "on her part was a captain whose leadership was sharpened more and more by sensitivity to peculiar needs of her company" (AOS, p. 229). Beatrice is an inclusive leader who takes into account the views of "all of us" including young people and women who are usually marginalised in post-colonial Africa. This is a postcolonial feminist project Achebe entrusts Beatrice with in the novel. As Ritu Tyagi (2014) explains,

postcolonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and in western locations. While postcolonial theorist struggles against the maiden discourse that aims at representing him as inferior, the task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated. She suffers from "double colonization" as she simultaneously experiences the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. She has to resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman. In this oppression, her colonized brother is no longer her accomplice but her oppressor" (p. 45).

Gayatri Spivak (1988) criticises in her classic "Can the Subaltern Speak" the way the marginalised like women are denied the rights to express themselves and take part in decision-making. Unlike these women, Achebe's Beatrice owns her rights.

Beatrice's leadership skill and feminist perspective also appear in the name she gives Elewa's Baby. She willingly gives the baby girl a boy's name, "Amaechina". Beatrice's concern is to deconstruct gender-stereotypes. As a feminist she subverts all norms limiting women or men, creating a distancing and a discrimination between males and females. For her, a name is a name and anyone can bear any name no matter the sex, provided it bears a meaningful and useful message. Beatrice breaks all limits in gender roles and approves of Ikem's idea that "We may accept a limitation on our actions but never under no circumstances, must we accept restriction on our thinking" (AOS, p. 222).

Moreover, the meaning of the given name clearly explains Beatrice's project to change the world. "Amaechina" meaning "May-the-path-never-close" clearly summarises her fight in the novel. For Beatrice, the path between the elites, the leaders on the one hand and the masses, the peoples on the other one, should never close. There should be constant connection and communication between leaders and their peoples for an effective and inclusive leadership. Peoples should be the target of their leadership. In so doing they will prevent dictatorship, chronicle social wrongs and injustices which result in rebellions, coups, terrorism and constant dependence on western powers likely to legitimize neo-colonialism (new imperialism).

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Amaechina is also a name Beatrice dedicates to her friend Ikem, the poet, the late father of the baby, one of Sam's friend he later has assassinated. "May it always shine. The Shining Path of Ikem" (AOS, p. 222) as Beatrice sadly puts. In fact, Ikem is the symbol of freedom, justice and good governance, values Beatrice strongly upholds and strives to perpetuate. But Ikem is killed for defending these ideals. The immediate cause of his assassination is an evidence of his sense of justice. As mentioned earlier, Sam has Ikem murdered because he has refused to issue a letter suspending Chris unjustly accused of plot against the regime. Beatrice shares and perpetuates Ikem's principles particularly his fighting spirit and his fight for self-assertiveness and survival. Ikem before being killed organises conferences to denounce Sam's misleadership and social wrongs and injustices. Though he knows the risk he runs, he does not give up. Beatrice admires Ikem and when he is killed, she perpetuates his project to improve the leadership of African countries.

### **Conclusion**

Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is a political novel which unveils post-colonial African leaders' misleadership, leading to disenchantment and disillusionment. Hardly had African people clapped for independence when violences, terrors, coups and social wrongs occurred in the freshly-independent continent, due to the elites' failure in leadership. This situation strongly jeopardizes African nations' sovereignty. Achebe particularly questions male leadership and suggests inclusive leadership in Nigeria, not only with young people but also and above all with women. In fact, "a major motif of postcolonial Nigerian State is the exploitation and marginalisation of women in politics" (N. Uzeochi, 2009, p. 4). This marginalization, indeed brought about by colonialism engenders a gap in the leadership of Nigeria. Chinua Achebe denounces this gender discrimination in that satirical novel. Achebe's revisionist project to dismantle colonial and patriarchal norms excluding women from leadership finds resonance in Beatrice, the empowered female character, the daughter of mythic Idemili, a Priestess and Goddest, who is presented as a panacea to man's power-first and misleadership. Through Beatrice who appears as the culmination of the shift of his female characters, Achebe sheds light on the necessity to include women in leadership for a real independence, a real sovereignty and a sustainable development in Nigeria in particular and in Africa in general.

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