A Mosotho Model of Ethical Leadership

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Introduction

> *There are big men, men of intellect, intellectual men, men of talent and men of action; but the great man is difficult to find, and it needs—apart from discernment—a certain greatness to find.*
>
> *—Margot Asquith 2010*

Asquith's statement could not be truer today, as Africa stands reliving its chequered history of leaders from past into present-day Africa. Indeed, African history has had and still has a strange relationship with leaders and leadership. This is the message that one comes across out of the film, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006). For love of the art of cinema, the brilliance of the film induces one to view it, but there is a philosophical side of the film that compels one to see it. That philosophical side of the film leads one deep into the African theatre of sociopolitical milieu that shapes the destiny of leaders and their leadership. It also leads one deep into the heart of the role of the African intelligentsia for engaging African leaders in dialogue on the critical issues of Africa's future. One of the obvious issues for such dialogue compellingly includes the role of ethical leadership–what is the moral responsibility of the African leaders and intelligentsia in contemporary African society?

It is the philosophical side of the film that leads one to go in the annals of African history to uncover, or rather, rediscover Chief Mohlomi, an African Mosotho leader who lived at *Ngoliloe* (where it is written) near the present town of Ficksburg *(Mengeleng)* in the South Africa's Free State province north of Lesotho around 1720–1815 (Mofuoa 2021, 103). This was the place where (1) Mohlomi chieftaincy headquarters were as he presided over his chiefdoms, (2) he established his leadership academy for would-be chiefs, and (3) he died at the age of ninety-six.

Mohlomi is regarded as one of the best examples of the brilliance of ethical and intellectual leadership in precolonial Southern Africa. Commenting on one of the Mohlomi's acclaimed achievements, Machobane (1978, 5) writes,

"Far from being a footnote in his achievements, [Mohlomi] was a political tutor to [Moshoeshoe, a Mosotho leader who founded the Basotho nation around 1824 in present-day Lesotho]. It is Mohlomi who gave [Moshoeshoe] the political alternative of building a nation in Southern Africa, the alternative which thrust him to greatness." Commenting further on Mohlomi's encounter with Moshoeshoe as one of the highlights of his illustrious career, Thompson (1975, 27) notes, "Mohlomi seems to have stimulated Moshoeshoe's ambition and encouraged him to behave humanely and rationally."

Corroborating the same point, Sanders (1975, 22) remarks thus, "Before meeting [with Mohlomi], Moshoeshoe was forceful and domineering, and so determined to assert his authority." However, after meeting Mohlomi, Sanders (1975, 22) states that, "[Moshoeshoe] became a completely changed character [as] he began to be noted for his many acts of kindness and generosity." Sanders (1975, 22) notes that, having grasped Mohlomi's political leadership lessons/methods, Moshoeshoe was determined to follow them. Indeed, according to Sanders, "The debt that [Moshoeshoe] owed to Mohlomi was considerable, and he later freely acknowledged it" (Sanders 1975, 22).

In leadership, Mohlomi's teachings and works remain particularly instructive given his successful application of unorthodox philosophies in illuminating the role of ethical leadership in the management and governance of public affairs (Mofuoa 2021). As such, whatever was the focus of his teachings and works; they are bound to provoke widespread intellectual interest and attention in contemporary Southern Africa. This paper presents Chief Mohlomi as a model of ethical and intellectual leadership enterprise in Southern Africa. It provides an insight into the making of his life, career, and scholarship. It traces the historical factors, experiences, and contours which shaped his personality, worldview, and teachings. It captures the gamut of issues which influenced aspects of his thought and contributions to the enterprise of ethical leadership, of social and of political behavior. All these are done to explain the implications of aspects of his teachings and works for the contemporary Africa's ethical and intellectual leadership development project whose aim is to empower African leaders to deal with critical issues of Africa's future responsibly.

Mohlomi: A Brief Biography and Sociopolitical Appreciation

> *The course of every intellectual, if he pursues his journey long and unflinchingly enough, ends in the obvious, from which the non-intellectuals have never stirred.*
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> *—Aldous Huxley 2004*

Chief Mohlomi was born around 1720 at *Fothane* near the present-day town of Fouriesburg *(Mashaeng)* in the South Africa's Free State province north of Lesotho (Mofuoa 2021, 130). He was born during the great migration of the Sesotho-speaking people (Basotho) in search for suitable settlement. Struggles for status and power, which resulted in movements of emerging political groupings, characterized the migration period. Mohlomi's clan of *Bakoena* (the crocodile) were not immune from these struggles that led "to quarrels for status marked by violence and splits of [clans/tribes] into sub-chiefdoms, each trying to form an independent dynasty" (Machobane 1978, 8). This history of violent and fragmented political dispersal among *Basotho* tribes was well known to Mohlomi, who was convinced that it was "a needless and self-defeating way of life" (Machobane 1978, 9).

Mohlomi made his mark in his society as a doctor (*Ngaka*) and rainmaker (*Moroka-pula*), (Machobane, 1978: 12). As a *Ngaka* and *Moroka-pula,* he had a very high reputation throughout Southern Africa. He travelled (1) on calls for healing and rain-making services (Mofuoa 2015, 104) and (2) in search of knowledge and remedies (Macgregor, 1905: 13; Mofuoa, 2015:104). As a keen political observer, Mohlomi's medicine and rain-making travels enabled him also to preach peace and resolve conflicts through peaceful means in societies he visited. Arbousset and Daumas (1846, 281) note that in his visits "he would settle the differences of the people when they desired him, and he entered into treaties of alliance with the chiefs recommending them to cultivate peace." As a messenger of peace, he adopted peaceful means of cementing friendship among polities for social and political reasons (Mofuoa 2015, 104). As a rainmaker, he was held in high repute" (Ellenberger and Macgregor, 1912). He was known as "a man of goodwill and humanity" (Macgregor 1905, 13) and "a man of much benevolence" (Machobane 1978,14).

Mohlomi was a celebrated chief and sage (Mofuoa 2021,131). As a chief, it is said that Mohlomi's conduct of the political affairs of the people of *Monaheng* was admirable and exemplary (Machobane 1978, 16), and "his government was that of a prince distinguished for clemency and wisdom" (Arbousset and Daumas 1846, 272–275). As a sage, Mohlomi was considered as "the wisest man that had ever lived" (Machobane 1978, 17). His aphorisms like "medicine for a village is a good heart" and "it is better to grow corn than to brandish the spear," which spelled the themes of peace and justice and showed his sagacious frame of mind on sociopolitical matters.

Mohlomi was also a renowned philosopher of his time (Mofuoa 2021, 131). Unable to accept some of his society's basic assumptions about exis-

tence, he is said to have preoccupied his mind with such questions (Machobane 1978 cited in Mofuoa 2021, 131). Arbousset in Ellenberger (1912, 92) notes some of the questions which used to occupy Mohlomi's mind thus, "Where does the world end? Does anything create itself?" With these unusual questions of existence, Mohlomi is credited for playing a special philosophical role in the field of ideas that was outside the scope of Basotho collective wisdom at the time. Whence, Mohlomi was, in a real sense, a philosopher (Machobane 1978, 18).

Mohlomi was also an acclaimed prophet whose prophecies made him a leading figure of his time. From his birth, he is said to have been mystic (Mofuoa 2021,131). Machobane (1978) notes that the first sign of it happened in a dream while at *Mophatong* (initiation school) undergoing initiation. Here, it is said that Mohlomi was told by *Balimo* (ancestors) that, "After some time, you will be a king; you should rule our people well [with peace] and study medicines, so that they may not be trouble by illness while you are still around" (Machobane 1978: 12).

The second happened on the evening of his death. Here, Mohlomi is said to have fallen into a trance and when he woke up, he had a message to tell the waiting mourners, "After my death, a cloud of red dust will come out of the east and consume our tribes" (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912, 97). Thus, Mohlomi is accredited for predicting *Lifaqane* (wars of calamity) associated with state formation and expansion in Southern Africa in the early 1800s. Such was the end of Mohlomi, "th[e] man who was the most famous of all Basot[ho]—famous for his love of peace, for his charity to all, for his wisdom and for love he bore to all men" (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912 cited in Mofuoa 2015, 105). In what follows, the paper locates Mohlomi within the sociopolitical problems of his time that honed his theoretical orientation and intellectualism during precolonial Southern Africa.

Mohlomi and the honing of his theoretical orientation and ethical intellectualism

In a poetic summation of the challenge of Africa, Jean-Marc Ela quoted in Matthews (2004, 381–82) writes,

> Africa is not against development. It dreams of other things than the expansion of a culture of death or an alienating modernity that destroys the fundamental values so dear to Africans …Africa sees further than an all-embracing world of world material things and the dictatorship of the here and now that insists on trying

> to persuade us that the only valid motto is "I sell, therefore I am." In a world often devoid of meaning, Africa is a reminder that there are other ways of being.

Indeed, as a film about leadership, *The Last King of Scotland (2006)* is arguably one of the best history lessons about leaders in Africa. It is a tale about leaders' personal moral failings and moral ambivalence that provide flashes of insight into the sociopolitical milieu of African society. It turns into a pointed signal of what happens when intellectuals forget that independent thought that engages in analysis rather than advocacy is the foundation of human progress and development. Undoubtedly, the film speaks to the sociopolitical milieu of Mohlomi's precolonial time that honed his theoretical orientation and intellectualism over time to become a doyen of Southern Africa's sociopolitical and ethical reformer geniuses of all time.

Before the 1800s, Southern Africa's people, including Basotho, were loose communities set within small chiefdoms with no overall ruler (Mothibe 2002 cited in Mofuoa 2016, 165). Although elements of patriarchy and communal ownership were widely practised, most of the customs and traditions were generally in flux (Gill, 1993 cited in Mofuoa 2016, 165). One author has described Basotho traditions as "frequently innovative, localized and contested" (Epprecht, 1992 cited in Mofuoa, 2016:165). This nature of the traditions provides the sociopolitical context of Mohlomi's time and explains the sociopolitical problems of his time that shaped his theoretical orientation and intellectualism in ethical leadership. These sociopolitical problems include but are not limited to abuse of power by chiefs, armed conflict between clans and tribes, abuse of alcohol and dagga, witchcraft, and the weak position of vulnerable people like women and children. In the paragraphs to follow, some of these sociopolitical problems would be spelt out with a view to highlight Mohlomi's moral plight on them and how they shaped his socioethical and political outlook in general.

Abuse of power by chiefs: During the days of Mohlomi, chieftainship was the lifeblood of the social, spiritual, economic, and political being of Southern African societies. Its social, spiritual, economic, and political power and relevance drew from a cultural etiquette that has been hard to shake off. In the formative days of the Basotho nationhood, chieftainship was important as a unifying symbol of society (Juma, 2011, 128). It has significance as the symbol of a nation's cohesion and identity and provided unity in the consciousness of the Basotho. In the chieftainship system, the

chief in a sense became the ultimate "ruler, judge, maker and guardian of the law, repository of wealth, dispenser of gifts, leader in war, priest and magician of the power" (Schapera 1938, 62).

In essence, the chief had massive authority and power in the body politic of society. Generally, the economy revolved around the chief and the homestead (Juma 2011, 128). The chief was to be supported by all as his wealth fed the impoverished, supported military expeditions, and ran the administration (Mothibe 2002, 21). Thus, paying tribute in the form of *matsema* (communal labour), suppling animal products and participating in the decision-making process were all an essential part of community life (Gill 1993, 49). The chiefdoms were held together by intricate political, social, and economic relationships galvanized by consultation at multiple levels and consensual support (Gill 1993, 49).

Eventually, the amassing of social, spiritual, economic, and political power by the chiefs led to abuses. Personal overzealousness, authoritarianism, irreplaceability, and infallibility suddenly became the ethos of political leadership of chiefs. Nepotism, corruption, uneven application of the law, arbitrary rule, and a myriad of other abuses of power became the order of communal life in some societies. Mohlomi resented and rejected these abuses of power by chiefs as leaders, which have become a way of life in sub-Saharan Africa today (Nicolaides and Duho 2019; Transparency International 2021). For the entirety of his life, he took upon himself to travel throughout Southern Africa, preaching against the evils of the abuse of power by leaders. No wonder Mohlomi took upon himself to establish his leadership academy at *Ngolile* to educate the would-be leaders (chiefs) on the idea and ideals of ethical leadership (Mofuoa 2014, 86–109) to empower them to deal with critical issues of their society's future including abuse of power that is often coupled with endemic corruption.

Armed conflict between clans and tribes: During Mohlomi's time, the violent scramble for suitable land for settlement was the order of the day (Arbousset and Daumas 1846, 131; Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912, 18–68). In the heart of that scramble was cattle raiding, which was an accepted norm of communal life in Southern Africa at the time. Clans and tribes built their names, influence, and wealth by seizing cattle from their wealthy or weak neighbours. The raids were usually accompanied by bloody massacres and the scattering of survivors. To Mohlomi, cattle-raiding expeditions were nonsensical, as they caused unnecessary armed conflict between clans and tribes resulting in bloodshed and suffering—he

would have condemned the remaining deadliest Africa's armed conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria, Central African Republic (CAR), and Libya. He would have done so because he believed that the practice of peace was the first and foremost prerequisite for good governance. Throughout his entire life, he sought to live in peaceful coexistence with his neighbors and encouraged habits of thrift and industry among his people.

Other than cattle raiding, armed struggles for status and power and the resultant violent emerging political groupings were the features of Mohlomi's time (Machobane 1978, 8). The struggles for status and power, which were interclans and tribes and/or intraclans/tribes, were usually long, theatrical, and disruptive (Machobane 1978, 8). They were accompanied by violent catastrophic wars and battles because of which many people were unnecessarily killed (Damane 1976, 3–4). These violent struggles were sometimes over the status differences between the sons of chiefs and/or the customary arrangement of *Lekenelo*—the right to the widow's hut and responsibility for her necessities (Machobane 1978, 8). As a result, clans and tribes kept intermittently moving and dispersing throughout Southern Africa (Machobane 1978, 8). This history of the violence and fragmentation of his people was known to Mohlomi, and it is evident that Mohlomi hated it (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912, 13). It is said that Mohlomi had tried to prevail over his people to cease waging wars needlessly. For him, all the fighting was "a needless and self-defeating way of life" (Machobane 1978 cited in Mofuoa 2015, 103). In the main, he believed that "peace, goodwill and humanity" were the better alternative to "the washing of spears" in the neighbours' blood (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912,13).

Witchcraft: During Mohlomi's time, witchcraft was a common practice in Southern Africa. It was attributed to a strong belief in magic and invisible forces for explanations and reasons for inexplicable life situations. In essence, the belief in magic and mystical powers was thought to be helping people to find explanations when things went wrong. As Mbiti (1991, 168) explains,

> By putting the blame on the practice of magic or sorcery or witchcraft by someone in the community, people are able to reach an answer which appears to them satisfactory. Such an answer harmonizes with the view of the universe which recognizes that there are many invisible forces at work and that some of them are available to human beings.

Mbiti (1991) goes further to emphasize the importance placed on any invisible forces governing the universe in communal life thus: the communities need these beliefs [as] the factor for stabilizing relations among relatives, neighbors, and members of the community. The belief, and sometimes fear, of these magical forces creates a sense of responsibility for each person to uphold their morals and duties within society. It keeps people from offenses like stealing, rudeness, committing crimes, or even deliberately offending someone (Mbiti 1991, 168).

Although African people believe in the positive attributes of mystical forces, they understand that if placed in the wrong hands, these forces can be used in malice to create harm (Okonkwo et al. 2021; Isiko 2019; Mufuzi 2014; Peach 2002; Mbiti,1991; Ray 1976; Nadel 1952; Parrinder 1954). This was the same conviction that Mohlomi had during his time. It is the same conviction that drove Mohlomi to total war with evils of witchcraft, which still bedevil present-day twenty-first-century societies in Africa and in other parts of the world, resulting in the declaration of August 10 as a World Day against Witch Hunts (Müller and Sanderson 2020). In fact, in modern-day African cultures, aspects of witch-magic still occupy center stage in African social life despite their destructive social maladies on the social ordering of communities (Quarmyne 2011, 475–507; Isiko 2019, 83–96; Okonkwo et al. 2021, 446–464).

As a healer, Mohlomi is said to have never thrown *litaola* (the bones) and ridiculed those who worked on the credulity of the people by means of them (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912, 92). He is also said to have hated "quacks" i.e., those practitioners of his time who specialized in "smelling out" people suspected of witchcraft in society (Machobane 1978, 11–12). To demonstrate his disdain for such practitioners, an instance is recorded at which he conducted an experiment before the public by which he convinced the spectators of the unscientific nature of the practice of "smelling out" and delivered a speech urging his people to avoid the witch doctors whose bad faith he had just exposed (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912, 92–93). Indeed, during Mohlomi's time, the fake healers who selfishly manipulated magic and mystical powers caused harm to communal life, often resulting in conflict and killings, which Mohlomi preached against. Thus, during Mohlomi's time, violent repression and armed struggles against so-called witchcraft led to a culture of violence in societies where innocent lives were lost needlessly. It regrettable that in modern-day African societies the witchcraft phenomenon is still an integral part of the way of life in African cultures (Mufuzi 2014, 50–71)

Abuse of alcohol and dagga: Like the rest of Africa, Southern African societies were no strangers to the problem of abuse of alcohol and dagga. When Africans first began using cannabis as a drug is not known, but the practice of cannabis was very much alive and widespread throughout Africa (Walton 1963; van der Merve 1975; Walton 1963, 85–113). Thus, by the time of Mohlomi, nearly all Southern Africa's societies had established dagga cultures for social, economic, and religious reasons (Vedder 1966, 175; Junod, 1912, 342–345; Purvis 1909, 336–337). In some tribes like the Zulus and Sothos, warriors also used dagga before going into battle . Speaking of the Sotho, Livingstone (1857, 540) wrote that the warriors "sat down and smoked it [hemp] in order that they might make an effective onslaught."

Whatever the use, dagga was often abused with dire consequences for human dignity. For instance, dagga smoking assumed a special importance in jurisprudence in some tribes whereby anybody accused of a crime was required to smoke dagga until he admitted his crime. More serious crimes were accompanied by additional punishments. It is these kinds of abuses that Mohlomi preached and taught against in Southern Africa societies of his time. He also spoke against the use of alcohol and dagga for health reasons—their short- and long-term effects on people who abuse them, which include brain damage, lung infections, and unhealthy loss of weight. In fact, Mohlomi would be disappointed that abuse of alcohol and dagga is still rife in modern-day societies around the globe (Peltzer and Phaswana-Mafuya 2018, 1–6; Cunningham and Koski-Jännes 2019,1–6).

The weak position of women and children in society

The role of women and children, their position and status in society, and their nature have been issues of debate and discussion informed by religion, tradition, and culture from time immemorial. This was the case in the Southern African society where Mohlomi grew up and lived. The perceptions of women during Mohlomi's time can be summarized thus,

> Women are "inferior" and "unequal" to men. Women are …weak, inferior, inherently evil (it is the nature of woman to promote mischief) …have deficient intellectual capabilities and are spiritually lacking. [As such] …women are unsuitable for performing certain tasks, or for functioning in some ways in society (Peach, 2002).

The view of women as inherently evil explains why the blame for misfortune, death, and illness often fell on women in communities during Mohlomi's time. It seems that the popular opinion saw women generally as witches and evil-doers within communities (Peach 2002, 302). In a similar fashion, Parrinder (1954, 131–124) puts the common view of the practice of witchcraft among women in most African religious tribes thus,

> Women are the most prone to suspicion of witchcraft. In some parts of Africa all witches are believed to be female, and that the mother passes down her witchcraft to her daughter [girl-child].

The view of the role of witchcraft as uniquely possessed by females led to horrendous punishments of the suspected women and girl-child witches by communities, often resulting in the death penalty. For instance, this was among the Cape Nguni and/or the Zulu (Mahao 2010, 332). Accused witches were subjected dreadful techniques to prove their innocence or guilt. Parrinder (1954,127) notes some of the techniques used to force women into submission of witchcraft guilt or innocence thus:

> This may consist of some semi-poisonous matter to be swallowed....The accused witches had to drink a reddish soapy medicine out of bottles....The witches also had to surrender their horn of witchcraft, and if they denied having any their houses would be searched.

It is these very perceptions about women and children, and the girl-child in particular, that Mohlomi preached against. He travelled throughout Southern Africa, impressing on communities the need to be wary of the death penalty in general, and never to impose it for alleged witchcraft, which was often targeted at women and children (girl-children). In one of his lectures to Moshoeshoe, Mohlomi is reported to have said,

> One day you will truly be a chief and ruler over men. Learn to understand men and know their ways. In their disputes, adjudicate with justice, perfect justice, and sympathy. You should never sentence anybody to dearth who is accused of sorcery. Keep a careful watch on doctors—most of them are false healers and shameless liars who instigate endless quarrels and conflict among people (Mokhehle 1976, 31–32).

From the quotation above, there is no doubt that the issue of the weak position of women and children in society was close to Mohlomi. He

believed that it was one of the biggest challenges facing the society of his time. Mohlomi would be disappointed about the number of shocking incidents of violence against women and girl-children in modern-day societies. He would agree that gender-based violence is "a public health and human rights issue affecting women and girl-child around the globe" (Kennedy 2017). He would have continued to condemn "violations of [women's and] children's rights that remain tragically common across the world" (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser 2017). He would have also whole-heartedly supported effective and scalable societal efforts to address them (Fry and Elliot 2017). As has been shown herein, Mohlomi's scholarship and career represented a refreshing engagement with the significant sociopolitical problems of his time. Having located him within the sociopolitical milieu of his time during precolonial Southern Africa, which honed his evergreen theoretical orientation and intellectualism, the next section discusses his invaluable contribution to African knowledge production and intellectualism.

Mohlomi's contribution to African knowledge production and ethical intellectualism

In *Powerlessness, Lamentation and Nostalgia: Discourses of the Post-Soviet Intelligentsia in Modern Latvia*, Procevska (2010, 47) writes,

> Distance and strangeness have been viewed as natural characteristics of an intellectual. Intellectuals are said to dwell in the lands of ideals and goals, usually leaving practical matters to others and moving on to new ideals and goals. Thus, an intellectual is never home, never settled down; he is meant to be nomadic because being on a quest is the essence of being an intellectual. Attachment and engagement are viewed as a threat to the freedom of his thought and successful functioning of the intellectual."

These remarks about the nature of intellectuals' rings true of Mohlomi. As Ellenberger (1912, 90) notes, "There was nothing very remarkable in his appearance. He wore *letjekoana* (a collar of brass) round his neck, and large pendent earrings . . . [yet] Mohlomi was born great, as if he had greatness in respect of chieftainship thrust upon him. It was a distinction for which he cared little, and the great part he played in the history of his country was due rather to his personal attributes than those he acquired by reason of his position in the world. He was no warrior, [and] there are no conquests or extension of power record; but the influence he acquired over his own people and other nations far and near was very great indeed, and on the whole, it

was an influence for good." It is Mohlomi's "influence for good" that is at the heart of discussions in this section, which discusses Mohlomi's invaluable contribution to the African context knowledge production and intellectualism never seen or experienced before in Southern Africa at the time.

Art of healing: As a doctor and psychiatrist, Mohlomi's contribution to the art of healing in Southern Africa is well recorded (Guma 1960; Machobane 1978; Mokhehle 1976; Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912). He is said to have created a platform for broad understanding and social appreciation of the art of healing in Southern Africa, particularly in Lesotho. He seemed to have had a rationale behind his cultural and traditional healing practices where, amongst others, he is said to have used herbs and psychological support to achieve optimum results. As Mbiti notes, "[The] medicine-man applies both physical and 'spiritual' or psychological treatment" (Mbiti 1990). His new approach to healing and the methods he applied thus radicalized healing as was known in the social circles at the time. He was regarded as the greatest healer of all time with immense knowledge of healing and understanding of the human condition. He was able to distinguish between real and pretentious doctors whom he advised and preached against. In this regard, there is no doubt that he would have been comfortable with modern healing, as it often entails the very practices that he valued.

Art of travelling: As a prolific and legendary traveller, Mohlomi made an immense contribution to the art of travelling in Southern Africa. In fact, he is said to have introduced a totally new culture of travelling in Southern Africa, particularly among Basotho. In Sesotho, travelling is linked to cultural and empirical knowledge, in ways that transcend and ultimately transform the mundane but encompassing reality of life. As the *maele* (proverbs) puts it: *Ho tseba naha ke ho bata mohlaba*—i.e., "To know the world, one must walk the countryside." Mohlomi was renowned as the legendary traveller of all time. He said have always travelled about seeking new medicines, healing texts, and cures, hence the *Maele: 'Ngaka e shoa e etile'*—i.e., "a doctor dies abroad" (Guma 1967, 82). Indeed, he met his death from the sickness he got while on one of his many travels (Ellenberger and Macgregor 1912). Thus, the popular tradition is that Mohlomi's travelling escapades made him a renowned source of cultural knowledge and a social reformer of note in Southern Africa.

Art of governance and leadership: As a governance and political leadership consultant, Mohlomi had a passionate interest in the problems of government and governance issues of his time (du Preez 2003,16, Machobane 1978,13). The popular tradition tells that he was typically concerned about

Southern Africa's governance problems of abuse of power, hostility and conflicts and human rights abuses of his time. His contribution to the art of governance and leadership was the unusual political philosophy he practised and taught to the aspiring would-be chiefs at his leadership academy in Ngoliloe (Mofuoa 2015; du Preez 2012, 2004, 2003; Machobane 1978; Bruwer 1956; Ellenberger 1912). The canons of his political philosophy included but were not limited to: (1) a policy of democracy better captured by his famous saying—*"Morena ke morena ka sechaba"* i.e., "a chief is a chief by the grace of his people"; (2) a policy of peace as fundamental to all good and lasting governments; (3) a policy of leading people by gentleness, and (4) a policy of benevolence towards the distressed. His political philosophy thus implied a different philosophy of leadership for Southern Africa formulated by shared authority as leitmotif of popular governance (Mahao 2010, 322). Humility, fairness, and empathy had to be the stock-in-trade qualities of leadership for the management of public affairs.

Art of diplomacy: As a diplomat, Mohlomi was keenly interested in the problems of international relations and travelled for political and diplomatic reasons. During his legendary travels, he settled political differences amongst chiefs and entered treaties of diplomatic alliance with them recommending them to cultivate peace. He practised polygamy and advised chiefs on it as a means for cementing friendship and diplomatic ties among polities (Machobane 1978, 13). Mohlomi is also responsible for establishing the concept of diplomatic immunity in Southern Africa (du Preez 2003,16). It is said he first proposed what became a custom that messengers between chiefs should never be attacked and killed "…instead, you have an obligation to give him food and shelter and help him on his way" (du Preez 2003,16). In the years of great conflict that were to follow, this custom was mostly respected even by great warriors such as Shaka and Mzilikazi (du Preez 2003,16).

Art of conflict transformation through peace-making: As pacifist, Mohlomi was an influential Mosotho peacemaker of eighteenth-century Southern Africa. Ellenberger and Macgregor (1912, 93) write, "Mohlomi…was well received everywhere and consulted as a kind of oracle. Disputes were referred to him, which he adjusted with great wisdom. He was a friend to everyone and urged [them] to love peace." Popular tradition says that he did not only preach peace, but he also practised it. It is said that he disbanded his fighting units telling the warriors to grow food and look after women and children rather than make war. Perhaps, his message of peace was best captured in one of his famous sayings that endured: "It is better to thrash the

sorghum than to sharpen the spear." Mohlomi is much celebrated to have set the Southern Africa's famous nineteenth-century Mosotho King Moshoeshoe on his path to peace during his rule. His advice to Moshoeshoe was to always "lean uponthe rod of peace" (Mokhehle 1976, 32). He thus popularized the word *khotso* (peace) that it endured to become a word of greetings among the Basotho (Mokhehle 1976, 32).

Art of philosophy: As a wandering philosopher and sage, Mohlomi was a very prominent figure in philosophical and intellectual history in precolonial Southern Africa. Popular tradition tells how he laid down the philosophy of life with truthfulness, justice, peace, love, compassion, equality, tolerance, conciliation, respect, discipline, democracy, neighbourliness, and friendship as its canons adduced from creative mental and physical experience of the Basotho society. Speaking of Mohlomi's philosophical accolades, du Preez (2003,16) notes, "There were few, if any philosophers, in Southern Africa at the time who preached love, tolerance, compassion, women and children rights, peace, democracy and abstinence." In fact, Machobane (1978, 17–18) further notes, "…Mohlomi's inquisitive mind did not end with questions on and solutions to problems of social [and political] order. [He also]…greatly troubled his mind with the subtle and uncommon problems of existence—how did things come into existence." There is no doubt that he had a special role in the field of ideas that was outside the scope of collective wisdom in Southern Africa at the time (Machobane 1978; Gill 1993; du Preez 2003). As Gill (1993, 24, 59) puts it, "from his studies, [Mohlomi] developed a philosophy [of life] which he practiced and passed on to his disciples. His philosophy cannot be found in long manuscripts, but it has been captured in maxims or proverbs which have since been passed down to succeeding generations." In all its cultural, moral, social, religious, political, and economic discourse, Mohlomi's philosophical heritage was fittingly portrayed by his disciple, Moshoeshoe, who remained steadfast to it (du Preez 2003, 16). In fact, Moshoeshoe famously built Basotho nation on the philosophical ideals propounded, canvassed, and popularized by Mohlomi (Mokhehle 1976, xvi–xviii). Mohlomi completely imbued Moshoeshoe with his philosophy, prophesied for him a great future, and started him off on a road from which Moshoeshoe never swerved.

Conclusion

A decade ago, George Ayittey (2012) tearfully lamented the death of ethical and intellectual leadership in post-colonial Africa. His critical assessment is that, unlike Mohlomi, the contemporary African intelligentsia are

"afflicted with intellectual astigmatism" (Ayittey 2012), resulting in their inability to engage postcolonial African leaders in dialogue on the critical issues of Africa's future. As a consequence, "the [contemporary] narrative of African development has become one of advocacy rather than analysis" (Ohiorhenuan 2009, 152). These observations are a sober reminder to contemporary African intelligentsia about their role of engaging post-colonial African leaders in analytical dialogue on the critical issues of Africa's future that Mohlomi demonstrated during precolonial Southern Africa. Indeed, Mohlomi is an ethical aide-mémoire to contemporary African intelligentsia that critical and independent thought is the foundation of ethical and intellectual leadership in society.

The paper has shown that Mohlomi is one of the best examples of the brilliance of ethical and intellectual leadership history in precolonial Southern Africa. It has provided an insight into the development of Mohlomi's philosophies' orientations, intellectual influences, and aspirations, which shaped his life, career, and scholarship. It has located his teachings and works within Basotho's ethical and intellectual history during precolonial Southern Africa. It has discussed his contribution to endogenous knowledge production in Africa by locating his works within the enterprise of African socioethical and political thought (philosophy) that he advocated and became the face of in Southern Africa. It is hoped that beyond sentiments and hagiography, this paper has shown that Mohlomi is a truly a model for post-colonial Africa's ethical leadership and intelligentsia, with strong and insightful perspectives and an uncompromising position on major issues confronting the society of his time which still haunt modern-day African society. For his wisdom, courage, commitment, and integrity, Mohlomi deserves our profound recognition for showing the way to imagine a liberated future for the precolonial and modern-day Africa.

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