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EDITORIAL

A Static Dynamic in African Politics

SIPHAMANDLA ZONDI , TINUADE OJO  & JOSEF KEUTCHEU 

Editors

Political developments in Africa continue to manifest that disjuncture between progress and stalemate. There continues to be a co-existence between change and stasis in many areas of African society. This is a sort of static dynamism where great hope inspired such developments as citizens electing new governments in countries like Malawi and Zambia, only to encounter deliberating despair marked by the destruction of Somalia by a ravaging terror-linked and externally driven conflict in the form of drones and bombings, the stubborn growth of terror in Mozambique, terror in the Sahel deepening. The incidence of political corruption put into the spotlight by the South African commissioning probing the so-called state capture, and the extradition of a former Mozambican finance minister for trial in the U.S. adds the gloom that threatens to dim hopes.

The heavy impact of Covid-19 on social systems, communities, politics and on the economy in Africa threatens to stagnate further the growth Africa needs to catch with those ahead of it, but the long-standing challenges like misgovernance, loss of state capacity to deliver public goods, diminishing national leadership and weakened social compacts bedevil efforts to help Africa recover from the Covid impacts quickly. An exposition in technological innovation that has seen Africa play a key role in e-payment systems, marked by a huge update of cellphones and social media space by Africans, is a development that is pregnant with possibilities that could translate to more flourishing small businesses, more industrialisation, greater participation by Africans in global value chains, greater public participation in governance and deeper regional integration. But this is hampered by problems with basic infrastructure such as energy, overwhelmed data networks.

As papers in this edition show, African governance and politics are marked by transitions whose direction is not simply from negative to positive. But there are

points of progress and points of reversal of progress simultaneously. As these papers show, institutions matter in this game of progress. They cement trends we want and prevent those we do not wish to. As these papers also show, citizen agency is critical for African progress, whether as leaders or as mere participants in public life, citizens can introduce the dynamism society needs. Thirdly, Africa's friends and enemies alike have a crucial role in the direction the continent takes since they can stimulate, consciously or inadvertently, a reaction by Africa that could catalyse the Africa we want.

In "Development as an Intellectual Process: The Role and Significance of African Intellectuals in Rethinking African Politics", Ngaka Sehlar Makgetlaneng argues that in rethinking African politics, viewing development on the continent as an intellectual exercise cannot be excluded from the process with developing resources at the centre of this process. This exercise aims to ensure a better life for the citizens of the continent within the context of distribution and consumption. Makgetlaneng argues that leadership plays a vital role and asset in ensuring the continent's citizens are placed first on the list of priorities.

In his article, Thabiso Muswede argues that digital media has impacted political campaigns in Africa. Consequently, this impact has resulted in disintermediated political communication on the continent. Furthermore, due to the rapid escalation of digital media, there has been a shift in political communication processes as it has drastically moved away from traditional ways of communication to platforms linked to digital citizenship.

The paper written by Christopher Beilings focuses on the novel *Emergency Continued* which is the sequel of Richard Rive's novel, *Emergency*. The novel is set in 1980s South Africa at the height of the Apartheid state. Employing uncertain subjectivity as the theme, the paper zooms into the Coloured subject. Beilings note that issues such as oppression and colonialism have scared the Coloured

subject's sense of self, belonging, and political agency. Additionally, these and other issues of this period has spilled over into the post-apartheid period as many of the experiences and complexities that the Coloured subjects face continues to be wrestled with today.

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in the United States, the world has increasingly paid attention to terrorism. In an attempt to diminish terrorist activity, many countries on the African continent have turned to insurgency groups. This paper aims to provide an overview of the increasing terrorist activities as it relates to Africa.

Aswathi A. Nair argues that according to the West, Human Rights and advocacy of Democracy are two fundamental principles entrenched in rights. By these principles, countries are appraised on democratisation based on how well their citizens are treated in their natural rights and safeguarding against human rights violations. However, in many countries in Africa and Asia, the degree of democratisation has been controversial. In this context, Nair addresses the influence of globalisation of these and other principles and values in the post-colonial period of African states, particularly Zimbabwe.

Using the Boko Haram and Niger Delta as case studies, this paper aims to examine the legacies of violence in the context of politics and socio-economics. Furthermore, the paper investigates the interplay between transitional justice and the values of the rule of law as it relates to political tensions. Finally, the recommendations include how transitional justice and the power of law values contribute to peace and recovery in a post-conflict period for offences in politics and socio-economics that come from violence and conflict.

Seife T.K. argues that Democracy and political stability are dependent on how politicians in Africa respond to politics concerning ethnicity and language. However, the challenge is reuniting economic growth and well-being

with entitlement politics. This article aims to investigate the increasing rise of ethnic politics on the continent in the context of six African states. Furthermore, the paper attempts to illustrate a comprehensive perspective on formulating debates to comprehend political parties and elites.

In this article, Nyere's objective is threefold; firstly, examining the reasons why the 2011 uprising in Libya took place. Secondly, Nyere analyzes how the government of Libya responded to the rebellion. Finally, there is a focus on how the international community responded to this protest, mainly how this response was led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In this paper, Gottschalk reminds the reader that it has been 129 years since "Pan-Africanism" was coined. In the diaspora, initiatives such as these culminated in an elaborate permanent, continental, state-centric institutionalisation, starting six decades ago with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. The OAU later became what we now refer to as the African Union (A.U.). However, Gottschalk notes that Pan-Africanism will continue to be fragile unless it gains extensive support, as opposed to what it is now, a phenomenon usually employed by a limited group such as intellectuals and certain members of the ruling elites.

The work of putting together this edition that reintroduces this iconic journal of the African Association of Political Science would not have been possible without the assistance of many. We appreciate the leaders of the Association and the editorial board for guidance and support. The editorial assistant, Salome Delila, and Crystal Gradwell, copy editor, did a sterling job. We appreciate the many peer reviewers who guided paper revisions and the authors submitting solid papers.