

The dilemma of the democratic State in Africa

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This edition comes out at a time when in the latest general election held on 15 October, Mozambique made history by electing the first president who has not been directly involved in the war of liberation. After Samora Machel, Joaquim Chissano and Armando Guebuza, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi will become the country's fourth president. The election of Filipe Nyusi opens a way for him to lead the historic ruling party, Frelimo.

While one can look at the election of the new president of Mozambique as a simple democratic process, it should be noted that the dynamic of the democratic state imposes the need of leadership to be more innovative and outreaching and to develop economic and social policies to meet the demands of the masses. The greatest challenge that any leadership, in Africa, face (Mozambique is not an exception) is the ability to maintain peace and political stability as well as the ability to develop and implement social and economic policies that are inclusive and responsive to the short, medium and long term needs of the country.

This dynamic includes, among others, the ability to develop a bilateral partnership that will help the country raise its productivity and build its democratic institutions. In their article entitled *Look East or Look Least? The Zimbabwean Experience of Chinese Economic Investment in Selected Texts and Examples*, in this issue, Theresia Mdlongwa, James Hlongwana & Thamsanqa Moyo, try to capture the relevance of this approach. The paper looks at how the leadership of Zimbabwe has assumed a new position on public policy amid the economic crises in Zimbabwe since 1999. The country's choice of allies, especially China, as the principal 'development' partner is examined here. The implication of labour relations and practices between the Chinese investors in Zimbabwe and their interference in domestic politics and policies, define Zimbabwe's preference for China as the country's economy battles the imposed economic sanctions by the West.

In a well-rooted system of democratic institutions, the failure to orchestrate economic and social development and unethical practices by the elected officials can be costly to incumbent presidents. The article demonstrates how acts of corruption, and or, systematic violation of the law are confronted by the watchdogs of the country: the opposition parties, civil society and the mass media to remove the legitimacy once earned by votes. Impeachment as an accountability measure in a presidential system? Nigeria's Fourth Republic is the main topic of the second article in this edition from Omololu Fagbadebo and Suzanne Francis. As the topic suggests, the authors bring to the readers' consciousness the idea of impeachment of elected officials, especially the president. 'One of the mechanisms to mitigate abuse of power is the legislative authority to remove erring executives through the impeachment process' This argument is woven into the web of other arguments constructed in the paper about legitimacy, elites and power relations between the people and the political actors.



Undoubtedly, the question of power relations between the elite and the people, among others, is linked with the issue of inequality and inequity. According to Bob Muchabaiwa, children in the African continent are the most affected by this social menace. Therefore, *'Dimensions, Dynamics and Pathways of Addressing Inequality and Inequity Amongst Children in Africa'*, is the third article in this edition. Muchabaiwa raises some policy questions and evidence to demonstrate how children are highly affected by inadequate public policies, especially when they fail to guarantee reasonable childhood development and security. The author raises awareness of the fact that inequality among children is multi-dimensional and he suggests policy options for African states.

Sithembiso Myeni provides a valuable contribution to the policy debate of anchoring the concepts of representation and participation. The author of the article entitled *Representation without Participation: Dilemmas of Quotas for Women in Post-apartheid South Africa* is concerned about how the democratic system in South Africa has brought about the policies of representation and yet falls short on nurturing participation. Although women gained access to different political layers such as national legislatures and municipal councils through the quota system, their representation in the decision-making process has yet to be secured.

Finally, it is a common understanding that the process of state-building in Africa encompasses many elements. The quest for the sovereignty of the African State has been challenged by the undeniable link of the African State with slavery and colonisation. The accounts of those remarkable moments tend to be exogenous and misrepresented. Olufemi Badru and Adetutu Omotoso, in the last article presented in this edition, debate the idea of *A Holistic Philosophy of Emancipation and the Post-colonial African State*. The authors are mainly concerned with the application of evolving approaches to mitigate what they refer to as the 'intellectually impoverished scholastic discussion' on the African State.

Perhaps the old question could be asked: Who is positioned to give an accurate account of the evolving relationship between the state and democratic forces in Africa? The papers presented in this issue offer interesting perspectives on various dimensions of this publication. We hope you will enjoy reading them and also hope that the policy recommendations presented by the authors will make useful contributions to policymakers and other political actors.