

African Politics and Policy

Newsletter
n.19 October 2016

Editorial

African intellectuals claim that Africa does not need western models of development to address and possibly resolve its many problems. The West, that in their eyes has been largely responsible for Africa's underdevelopment, has no right and no moral authority to come to Africa with proposals and suggestions as to what Africa should do to develop.

Africa's problems can be successfully addressed by African solutions.

This view has most forcefully voiced in Zimbabwe where analysts say that the country's problems can be solved only if local economic development strategy is pursued.

And any successful development strategy will have to secure property rights, "free enterprise, consistent government policy, competent project management skills, accountability, good planning and integrity."

In other, what Africa needs is good governance and better leadership because there is no doubt that some of the problems that Africa has experienced in recent years -from violence in Burundi to civil war in South Sudan – were primarily the results of leadership.

Riccardo Pelizzo

This issue;

Editorial P.1
Zimbabwe P.2
Party Systems P.3
African Art P.4
Bird-watching in Gambia P.5
Stone Sculpture P. 6
Announcements P.7

Gunjur Village Museum

The Gunjur Village Museum designated to receive the BID World Quality Commitment in the GOLD category. We take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to Lamin Bojang, founder and managing director of the Gunjur Village Museum. The Award Ceremony will be held on October 15 and 16 in Paris (France).

Africa's future

The winners of the photography competition MyAfrica, organized by Mo Ibrahim Foundation as part of its 10th anniversary celebration, have been announced. The competition was aimed to show the future of Africa. The best photographs by Samar Baiomy (Egypt, amateur); Jeri Muchura (Kenya, professional); Phindulo Tshidzumba (South Africa, student) reveal "a vibrant and dynamic future for Africa and tell a story of opportunity and hope".

Norton by-election: A Test for a democratic transition?

By Steven Machaya

The decision by the main body of the War Veterans association to endorse and support Temba Mliswa in the forthcoming Norton by-election is a well calculated move meant to send a strong message to the ruling party that it stands the chance to lose an election. ZANU (PF) has won all by elections held so far resulting in it increasing its majority in parliament. The ruling party currently enjoys a comfortable majority. The war veterans are determined to maintain their historical position and role as vote brokers. They will be determined to show Mugabe that he made a serious blunder to dump them in favor of the youths. They will work flat out to ensure Mliswa clinches the Norton constituency. If it happens that Mliswa wins the seat (which is most likely), the war veterans' position will be strengthened ahead of that of the youths and this will have serious implications on the ruling party's performance in 2018.

Temba Mliswa stands a very good chance to upset the winning streak ZANU (PF) has enjoyed so far. There are some members of the ruling party who were not happy with the way the party's primary election was conducted. It is believed the party's electoral arm favored vice president Mnangagwa's favorite ahead of Amai Mugabe's favorite. They threatened to vote for Temba Mliswa to register their displeasure and Mliswa has since said he is ready to work with them. It happened in the past that if a candidate belonging to one faction won a by election under questionable circumstances, it would face sabotage from the contending faction, increasing the chances of the opposition.

What impact is the current wave of factionalism within the ruling party going to have on the by election? Recently, the judiciary has been flexing its muscles, refusing to be used by the ruling party to thwart democratic processes especially with regards to it giving organizers of demonstrations the right to go ahead in spite of attempts by the ministry of Home Affairs to have the demonstrations prohibited. In the past, Zimbabwean courts have been known to declare such demonstrations illegal presumably under pressure from the ruling party. This could as well also translate into its ability to have influence over the running and conduct of the Norton by election by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. ZANU (PF) needs to be united for it to effectively control the electoral body.

The extent to which Temba Mliswa is a threat to the rul-

ing party was shown by the way it reacted to his candidature in the Mashonaland West by-election in 2015. Besides fixing the results of the actual poll, there was heavy military presence in the rural constituency, intimidation, with some local headmen having lost their positions because of alleged alignment to Temba Mliswa. Without such kind of intervention by the ruling party, Temba Mliswa stood a very good chance to reclaim his constituency. Likewise, Temba Mliswa got the biggest share of votes for the party's provincial chairmanship from the very same constituency he is poised to represent as MP.

The war veterans know very well that Temba Mliswa is a charismatic politician who knows how to attract votes not by populist electoral gymnastics but because he has the people at heart. In the Mashonaland West constituency, he is on record for sponsoring quite a number of developmental initiatives. Unlike his counterparts, he spent a significant amount of his personal time in the constituency, something that is not popularly practiced by the majority of the ruling party's MPs. They only go back to their constituencies to beg for votes on the eve of elections while for the greater part of their mandate, they would have been absent. He attended in person a number of funerals of bereaved families in his constituency and personally attended to his supporters' concerns. When other politicians made a bee line for the state sponsored vehicles for MPs (A very expensive project that eat into the national fiscas), he refused to accept and instead asked that the money be channeled towards fixing some of the challenges people were facing in his constituency. With many having dismissed him for a political light weight, he pulled a shocker by winning the Mashonaland West Provincial chairmanship against party favorites and heavy weights. Zimbabweans should expect the same come 22 October 2016.

The two major opposition parties, MDC-T and ZimPF have strategically chosen to stay out of the race. For the two parties, the potential to lose to ZANU (PF) in this by election is there and if they so decide to contest and loose, it could be bad for their prospects in 2018. Rather it is better not to contest for the sake of maintaining a positive image ahead of the main poll. Their work however will be done on their behalf by Temba Mliswa who is currently the only contestant outside of ZANU (PF) competing for the vacant seat. Mliswa's electoral victory will be a foretaste of what's to come in 2018.

The paradox of fixed terms in dominant party systems

By Steven Machaya

The concept of fixed or limited presidential terms has been generally accepted in both competitive and non competitive electoral systems. However its impact on governance and accountability has not been the same for the two, since in non competitive electoral regimes there hasn't been any notable improvement in better governance and accountability notably within the political leadership. Where there is limited opportunity for power alternation, fixed terms have resulted in an increased tendency by the incumbents to loot, especially in countries that have a legacy of protracted liberation struggles and whose political leadership is derived from the same. For the ruling elites, it is a question of making hay while the sun shines!

Jacob Zuma of South Africa is the prototype of a political leadership in a system characterized by the presence of term limits and of a dominant party systems that results in looting and lack of accountability. It is the legacy and historical heritage of the ANC that he uses to amass wealth for himself and for his cronies, (in spite of poor leadership, former liberation movements-cum-political parties enjoy entrenched unwavering loyalty from its cadres and supporters and this tends to supersede poor performance by the ruling party). Unbridled, rampant corruption, awarding of tenders to undeserving companies based on political connection to the ruling elite and harassment of those who seem to stand in their way becomes the order of the day. No wonder the min-

ister of finance Pravin Gordhan is under fire for having the audacity to question the rot in the South African Airways and other non performing public entities.

In contrast, within competitive electoral regimes, the limit to presidential terms is actually an incentive for better delivery in terms of governance and accountability in the sense that the good name of the party has to be protected and maintained to allow the next leader in the party to stand a better chance to successfully contest on the party ticket. In non competitive and semi competitive electoral regimes, limited presidential terms simply means giving each other a turn to get into office to amass personal wealth. Rather, while limiting presidential terms is a necessary part of transition to competitive electoral systems, its benefits can best be enjoyed under competitive electoral regimes.



Nigeria: putting art into context

The Omooba Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon Art Foundation, Lagos, has recently organized the meeting with Lydia Gatundu Galavu, Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Museums of Kenya who shared her experience and knowledge of how to successfully market African art.

According to Lydia, one of the key problems why African traditional art is not attractive for Western audience is the lack of traditional and cultural context and the lack of adequate information when African artworks are displayed.

In her presentation "Displaying Traditional Art in Contemporary African Time: A critical analysis on the best practices for contextualizing traditional art within its home environment", the curator emphasized the importance of identifying the 'story' of art pieces in order to appreciate local aesthetics and to attract big business, arts connoisseurs and enthusiasts

It's time for African Art

By Kristina Bekenova

African art – successfully presented on the internationally famous exhibitions platforms such as the Venice Biennale (2015), Art Basel in Miami (2015), the British Museum (a three-month exhibition on West African art, 2015), Armory (New York, 2016), 1:54 (New York and London, 2016) – has been attracting more and more admirers worldwide. The cultural value of African art, which has long been neglected or has exclusively been associated only with ritual masks and voodoo sculptures, is finally gaining international recognition. In May 2017 Sotheby's, one of the world's largest brokers of fine and decorative art and oldest auction house, will launch its first auction dedicated to African modern and contemporary work.

As Giles Peppiatt, director of African Art at Bonhams in London, pointed out the success of African art is explained by the fact that the dynamics of the art world are changing “the Chinese contemporary market started to slow, and the hunger to find the next big thing, [i]t was Asia, now it's Africa”. The success of African art is also explained by the fact that Africa is becoming increasingly interested in identifying, tracking and appreciating the manifold manifestations of its culture and identity. Government and grass-root movements have realized that the essence of self-identification and self-realization can only be grasped by expanding the understanding of culture and art.

This idea of culture-centrism was launched by Leopold Sedar Senghor and his presidency in Senegal during 1960-1980, when he put culture “as central to the critical process of nation building” and artists were defined “as representative of and advocate for a new nation”. His writings on Negritude and African aesthetics emphasized the originality and worthiness of African people. His call “to embody Negro African culture in twentieth century reality” in order “to be really ourselves” was inseparable part of the discourse of African liberation and integration. In the twenty-first century, culture has returned to the African governments' agenda of development, as culture has identified as the cornerstone of economic recovery.

For these purposes, the states increase its budget allocation for building new museums, new galleries, new libraries, new art schools and for providing workshops for the emerging generation of young artists. Rephrasing Ali A. Mazrui, Africans successfully united by culture for freedom, are now becoming culturally united for development.

Moreover, the search for their own identity, their own voice on the international art market stimulate talented Africans to create their own original thought-provoking artworks. The interviews *African Politics and Policy* published from the beginning of the year show that this tendency is observed on all levels: music, paintings, sculpture, museum business, dances, poetry, fashion. Every form of art is inseparable from their roots, traditions, for sure, with coating of modernity. The ideas of Pan-Africanism and Negritude is now experiencing a moment of revival with the artists' attempt to set up their own distinctive and unique vocabulary of arts. And this process of reintroducing “culture matter” narrative is inter-intensified by the efforts the governments and artists make in preserving and promoting their culture.

Africa has already internationally very well-known contemporary artists such as Sudanese Ibrahim el Salahi, who for international curators stays in the same line as Picasso, Ghanaian Ibrahim el Anatsui, Kenyan Wangechi Mutu, Gambian Njogu Touray, Namibian Elemotho. But with the international support to young artists in making their first steps by creating more opportunities for exposing their artworks and cherishing their skills will be even more beneficial for both sides: for the international audience – to admire and understand the beautiful African soul full of the ancestors' wisdom and pride, for artists – to be original and free of any kind of restrictions to create, and for the African nations – to be prosperous and wealthy.



African Politics and Policy

We are particularly pleased to announce that 2016 has, so far, been a very good year for African Politics and Policy.

The global reach of African Politics and Policy is becoming increasingly global. African Politics and Policy is now read in 129 countries. Second, we have more readers. In fact the average number of readers on a monthly basis has more than doubled.

The third, and in our view most heart-warming, result is that our African readership is growing faster than in other region in the world.

In this respect, we have nearly tripled the number of monthly readers from the African continent.

The Gambia: bird-watching paradise

By Lamin Bojang



Birding is not just about going in to the wild looking for birds. Birding is about enjoyment, entertainment,

learning, experience and fascinating spirit that you cannot find in anything except birding. If you hear the different calls of the hornbills, mating display of red bishops, the Juawating songs of the thrust responding to one another, or if you see the courtship dance of the cranes and partridges you think that you are in an entertainment hall. Talking about the different plumages of birds, they look so colourful in the sun. It is amazing to see how they make up their feathers during prining time, how they call one another when danger comes, how they love and care for one another, how they travel from continent to continent without a map, how they make their nest, how the weavers weave their nest and so on. You cannot believe how these creatures do what they do. Owls fly in the night seeing and hearing their preys, bats fly in the night using eco location. It is incredible what these animals can do. They do things which are beyond human intelligence because they have special instinct them that we don't have. You can learn many interesting things about birds.

Birding in The Gambia is unique. The birds in The Gambia are not shy, because we do not eat birds' meat; therefore birds are not scared of people like birds in other countries in Africa. You can be very close to them and see clearly with your own eyes, the photographer can be also close to them to take amazing photos. One of the amazing places to enjoy bird-watching is Bejoil island at Tanji bird reserve, a governmental bird reserve in the sea.

This is a fantastic island and a bird watching heaven

in the sea, which attracts many waders such as gulls, garnets and relatives, terns, oystercatchers, plovers, pelicans, dunlins, turnstones, cormorants, shearwaters and many more birds flying over your head and pretending to bite, they make different melodies.

There are a lot of fantastic places in the country with eco camps, river camps and Eco lodges nearby where you can have very delicious indigenous Gambia food like do-moda, chicken yasa which is nicer than English Nandos and KFC, fish yasa, bena kins which look like Chinese fried rice, which can be provided for the birders. You can visit wetlands, dry lands, lagoons, rivers, islands, coast line, wood lands, and sea.

Gambia is a very peaceful country with friendly people, if you go to any parts of The Gambia, elders say "hi" to you and children holding your hands like their own relatives. You feel very comfortable and relax with peace of mind. That is why we call it "the smiling coast" of The Gambia in West Africa.

The best time for birding in The Gambia is from the end of October, which is the beginning of winter when it is cool in Africa, and when waders start coming and all the waters in the streets dry up and there are no mosquitoes with nice climate up to April when the raining season is fast approaching. Birding is always good in The Gambia but in summer time it is hot and some birds migrate but still you may come

The tourists should have to go with a guide and be prepared for birding, because birding requires walking or long distances, which is good for our health. They should have to come with strong shoes, mosquito repellent, binocular, telescope and we provide them with a bird book. The tourists stay at hotels, motels, Lodges and guest houses, which provide all needed facilities for them and mobility is provided by the guide.



Stone Sculpture in Zimbabwe

One of the unique features of Zimbabwean society is sculpting tradition. With no fields or livestock available, people live from handcraft jobs: pottery, sawing, making bamboo baskets and garden chairs and, of course, stone sculptures. Young sculptors get their first skills in sculpture and inspiration from their fathers, visiting with them different art villages, then developing sculpture as their own profession for and passion of life. The popularity of sculpture and the peculiar raw stone materials allow Zimbabwe to be on the forefront of this visual art. There are main themes in stone sculpture: human faces and figures, birds, animals and abstracts. Success Kagore, Stycot Zvabata and Henry Munyaradzi are the best known artists from the youngest generation.

One of the examples of this Zimbabwean tradition is **Pularz Prumender Bangura**, young and promising sculptor from Mukaera Art Village, Guruve district. After graduating from school, Pularz followed in his father Cordias Bangura's footsteps, who worked at Tengenenge Art Gallery. Patient and constant work during 19 years helped Pularz to achieve the high quality stone technique he has today and to attend some exhibitions in Germany for six years at Skulpturen Galerie

Sylt. His beautiful sculptures of animals and birds radiate love, care, togetherness as main principles of living.

Unfortunately, the culture and arts in Zimbabwe currently face two negative factors: the high dependence from the tourism sector, and gradual Westernization of local culture at the expense of their own art history and traditions. Concerning sculpture in particular, this art have to settle the illegal use of the raw stone materials from Great Dyke Range of mountains that stretches across the country from north to south containing different types of minerals. The artists have to deal with shortage of customers and promoters, lack of diverse sites of exhibitions and audience.

The strange case of Gabon

On August 14 we discussed the somewhat strange case of Gabon, a country which ranks among the three richest polities in Sub-Saharan Africa (according to IMF data) but which also records (according to the Afrobarometer) the highest level of lived poverty.

Two weeks later, on August 29, we reported that Jean Ping, leader of the opposition, claimed to have won in the presidential elections.

In spite of the opposition claims, President Bongo was able to win a second term in office by a rather small margin. President Bongo's victory sparked a wave of protests in Gabon. It is believed that Ping and his supporters will not accept defeat and there are some worrisome signs that the protests may be escalating and may soon be out of control. According to some witnesses, protesters set Parliament building(s) on fire.

We do not know whether Bongo won fair and square or whether, as the opposition claims, results were rigged to give the President a second term in office. What we know is that in a country in which there is a high level of lived poverty, political tensions and instability are not the best way to improve the quality of life of the poorer segments of society.

Kenya: saving the forests

Traditional knowledge of Yiaaku community in Central Kenya has been implemented to take care of trees and plants of the Mukogodo forest. Together with the local authorities, Yiaaku people use ancient conservation techniques to preserve wildlife. According to , this management with traditional conservation model at the core is very successful and beneficial: "Where this community model is practiced we have seen cases of illegal logging reduce up to 50 percent. Since we integrated the community's indigenous knowledge model of conserving forests into our forest policy .. there has been little friction or tensions with these forest dwellers". The integration of indigenous knowledge into the state's forest policy was introduced by the Kenya Forest Management Act of 2007, according to which Kenya expects to increase its forest cover to about 10 percent by 2030 from an estimated 7.2 percent.



Art Exhibition

Until 12 October, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, is presenting a solo exhibition “Still Still” by Zimbabwean artist Misheck Masamvu.

Please visit <http://www.goodman-gallery.com/exhibitions/690>

APP Newsletter
ISSUE 19 October 2016

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Announcements

The 3rd Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies Conference “Cartographies of War and Peace in Eastern Africa” which will be held at University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 24th -26th August, 2017, has announced a call for papers. The abstracts of no more than 250 words either in English or Kiswahili, should be sent to darconference@gmail.com by 31th November, 2016.

For more details please visit <https://africanwords.com/2016/09/21/cfp-3rd-ealcs-conference-24-26-august-2017-dar-es-salaam-deadline-31-november-2016/>

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