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Editorial Note

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Prof R. Tshifhumulo & Dr KE Amaechi

Guest Editors, African Renaissance

This special issue draws from a collection of interdisciplinary research to investigate the interplay of *underdevelopment, corruption, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Using case studies from mostly four countries —Nigeria, South Africa, Burundi and Zimbabwe, the essays here-in explore the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that define these elements across the region. From examining the transnational dynamics that facilitate the persistence of corruption, economic underdevelopment, and poverty in the region, to evaluating the continuous impact of such elements on youth behaviour across regional borders and boundaries, the essays aim to identify innovative strategies, policy interventions, and grassroots initiatives that hold the potential to foster sustainable progress and bring about positive changes across the region. Ultimately, the articles offer valuable insights into the complexities and nuances of the challenges faced by these nations and suggest pathways toward their resolution.

The issue opens with a Nigerian case study, "Proposing 'Obinomia' as a public leadership framework in the re-making of Nigeria's agenda", where Stephen Oguji and Kingsley Amaechi problematise the dominant western-based leadership frameworks and lack of accountability of political leaders, as the main factor behind the country's poverty paradox. Drawing on a carefully developed local-based, pragmatic and philosophical leadership framework (coined as 'Obinomia'), of mainly ethical prudence, probity,

disdain for waste, targeted allocation of public resources and provision of welfare for the populace, as was championed by one of the presidential candidates of the 2023 Nigerian Presidential election (Mr Peter Obi), the authors argue that genuine economic development and poverty alleviation in Nigeria is possible under two main conditions; when political executives possess good moral values and when they adopt a chief executive officer (CEO)-minded approach in the management of state's resource. Within such frameworks, political leaders have not only the philosophical basis for public fiscal discipline but also the traditional resource management skills to develop relevant programmes that address contextually based poverty situations.

Other significant manuscripts on Nigeria includes Isiaka K. Egbewole, Iyiola T. Akindele, Omololu Fagbadebo and Oluwole K. Sanni's article, Citizen-centric perspectives on election administration and democratic process in Nigeria's fourth republic and Ekwugha Stanley's "The Link between Religion and Poverty in Nigeria: A philosophical appraisal". Reflecting on the state of the economy and political capital in Nigeria, the Isiaka et. al, specifically establishes the relationship between irregularities in the democratic elections and poor citizens' engagement in civic responsibilities. Drawing on some of the most recent democratic elections (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019) in the Nigerian biggest state, Lagos, the authors argue that people lose confidence in social and political institutions when the process through which political institution and actors evolve is marred with inconsistencies and irregularities. Irregularities in elections particularly also encourage voters' apathy and disinterest in election processes. To restore such confidence, therefore states like Lagos in Nigeria, need to adopt technological initiatives in election administration, in electoral management system (EMS), in the research, and in the update and administration of voters' registers and election logistics. Such adjustments can rebuild trust and motivate people to engage in activities which engineer economic growth. Citizens often engage in activities that encourage economic growth, when the system ensures that instruments of state and other political apparatus are relatively fair and just, and when they are not used to intimidate, harass, and malign the oppositions. Ekwugha Stanley's article similarly demystifies the trending claim that religion impoverishes peoples and nations. Relying on St Augustine's "doctrine of two cities and on secondary data from Nigeria, he argues that there is no basis to conclude that religion impoverishes people, rather its abuse can. While people may

be more religious because they are poor, there is not necessarily a logical basis that people are poor because of religion. On the other hand, authentic religion can promote an integral human development in the Nigerian society.

The key variables in the special issue were further explored by authors in other contexts, such as South Africa, Burundi and Zimbabwe. In the South African context for example, Mashau S Thakalani provides a nuanced discussion on the conceptual difficulty of reconciling South Africa's national mantra, "the Rainbow Nation", amidst targeted violent attacks and crimes against foreign nationals from other sub-Saharan nationalities. Based on empirical historical evidence, the study, Challenges of Tribalism and Xenophobia in South Africa philosophically showed that tribal sentiments and ethnic tensions between the different African ethnic nationalities in South Africa had remained rife in different local South African communities, despite the country's constitutional hope of being "united in diversity" and "home for all who live in it." Under the umbrella of curbing crimes from foreigners, South African citizens and non-citizens have been violently kidnapped and maimed; and properties worth millions of rand destroyed. Checkmating the excesses of African foreigners has now become an avenue to justify crime and violent activities against certain individuals. These constant outbursts of crime and violence, the author argues, are endemic to economic development. It also exacerbates the already existing ethnic tension between the different tribes that co-habit the South African socio-political space.

In line with the above argument, M. G. Mapaya and T Zulu draws government's attention to the music industry, which could provide inspiration to address related forms of violence within the South African society. In the article, *Kwaito and gender-based violence: a critical reflection*, the authors provide a critical appraisal of the complex connection between *Kwaito*, a prominent genre of South African music, and the pervasive problem of gender-based violence, through analysis of data, generated from secondary content analysis of music videos, text lyrics of songs, journals, books, articles, and documentaries. Here, Kwaito, which mainly originates from the Soweto township as a South African version of Hiphop, on one hand is portrayed in one hand as representing the general suppressive state of women in the South African traditional townships and communities. Through the exposure of the culture of gangsterism in such communities, women are portrayed as pawns and as instruments to achieve success within the different groups. Yet, on another hand,

Kwaito is portrayed as an instrument through which its proponents demonstrate the general hardship and unique resilience and survival ability of the South African youths, including women. Through subscription on the black woman intersectionality paradigm within the African feminist theory, African women within the culture and sampled films are also presented as destiny creators. By strategically negotiating for leading characters, and roles in the films and music videos, their attitude and position within the Kwaito culture provides a new microcosmic lens through which to see the place of women within African society and jurisdictions. Such resilience could be reciprocated in other social spaces.

In the Burundi context, the article *Political Leadership, Corruption, and Development in Burundi,* revisits the challenge posed by corruption in nation building. Using the case of Burundi, Arinze Ngwube and Godwin Onu analyses the multifaceted impacts of the element on leadership, economic growth, social cohesion, and institutional integrity. Entrenched in the psyche of both the political elite and the citizens as a result of its long existence, corruption can hamper efforts to foster sustainable development and exacerbate socio-economic inequalities. It can also undermine the foundation for short and long-term development initiatives, thereby discouraging political participation of social actors within the state.

Lastly, the Two Faces of the Revolution: dynamism, toxicity and Violence in Zimbabwe's Tongogara, by D. Y. Mangani examines the leadership traits of one of Zimbabwe's most celebrated military figures, Josiah Magama Tongogara. More specifically, the article investigates Tongogara's leadership as a military and political figure within the broader revolutionary theoretical framework that legitimises violence and asymmetrical tactics for attaining broader political revolutionary objectives. The essay argues that while Tongogara within the public domain, remains a towering military figure beyond reproach; his compelling different views locate him as an instrument of asymmetrical methods, to manipulate internal party processes and to manage political and military opponents, in the contexts of his Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and its competitor, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Tongogara's use of asymmetrical means, such as political identity manufacturing, naming and creating of binaries between those regarded as more and less militant and instrumental use of violence to settle disputes particularly, are key drivers of toxicity in the

Zimbabwean struggle for independence. These seeming contradictions formed the basis for the understanding of political leadership framework in the context of political achievements.

We extend our gratitude to the authors and researchers who have contributed their expertise to this special issue. We are grateful that these articles have provided valuable insights, which enrich the understanding of poor leadership and economic underdevelopment within sub-Saharan Africa. While the articles have illuminated the shadows cast by crime, corruption, and violence on these elements across the region, the articles are ultimately not a diagnosis of all the problems in the sub-Saharan continent. Rather, it is a call to action. By bringing together leading scholars and practitioners, we seek to foster a deeper understanding of the intricate web of challenges that define the region. It is our hope that the research and insights presented here will inspire more interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation towards creating a more just, equitable, and prosperous future for sub-Saharan Africa.

We therefore invite readers, policymakers, and scholars to engage with the ideas presented in this special issue, and to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how best to address the critical challenges facing the region. Together, we can imagine and build a future where sub-Saharan Africa can fully realize its potential, free from the cycles of poverty and corruption that have hindered its growth for so long.

Prof R. Tshifhumulo &

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