



INTRODUCTION

Africa's quest for inclusion: Trends and patterns

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INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion is a multifaceted concept and is a critical pillar for transformative economic development. Its opposite, social exclusion entails the lack of or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in normal relationships and activities, available to people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political contexts. It affects the quality of life of individuals, the equity and cohesion of society and the lived experiences of citizens (Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd, & Patsios, 2007).

Social inclusion, considers the terms of engagement of individuals and or groups in society, assessing the ability of the system to improve the capability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged based on their identity (World Bank, 2024). The inability of individuals or communities to make meaningful and consistent contributions reflects their exclusion. Exclusion can be based on age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, citizenship, disability, or sexual orientation (World Bank, 2024). There are differing levels of exclusion. When exclusion is deep, it is characterised by a lack of access to one or more domains resulting in severe negative consequences to quality of life, well-being, and future life chances (Levitas et al., 2007).

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION, LIVED REALITIES FOR AFRICAN CITIZENS

Africa as a continent has gone through various forms of exclusion. Historically Africa has been a recipient of development models designed outside the continent. Africans and other Global South countries have been excluded from crafting policy and

development models that respond to their deepening challenges of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. There is limited policy autonomy especially when it comes to big development questions that require a global consensus. Fifty-two percent (52%) of Africans face some form of exclusion (Cuesta, Lopez-Noval & Nino-Zarazua, 2022) with vivid examples of segregation observed or experienced in their daily lives. This rate of exclusion is higher than the rest of the world which exhibits approximately 32% exclusion rates. Africans in several different parts of the continent such as Central Africa, West Africa and the Sahel region have experienced regular conflict and climate change disasters with over 40% of the continent being classified as fragile and conflict-ridden (Abdel-Latif and El-Gamal, 2024). Communities are faced with inequality in the form of corruption, hunger, racial or tribal conflict, contested elections, school dropouts due to financial challenges, expensive or unavailable health care, poor access to the internet or electricity and land grabs from corrupt officials and land barons (Atkinson and Hills, 2008; Zulu, 2017). The scale of inequality and therefore exclusion on the continent is high with the top 10% of wealthy individuals accessing 54.3% of resources, the middle class which is 40% accessing 36.9% of resources and the poorest which are 50% of the total population access only 8.8% of all resources (Saoudi and Lois-Sarbib, 2023). Although the continent has seen high growth rates, the pattern of accumulation disproportionately favours the wealthy rather than reaching the bottom of the pyramid populations (Saoudi and Lois-Sarbib, 2023). Eleven African countries appear in the list of the world's top 20 unequal countries. These are mostly resource-rich countries such as South Africa, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Angola and Congo (Saoudi and Lois-Sarbib, 2023).

Through first- or second-hand accounts, Africans articulate the concept of exclusion and inequality without needing to reference the academic discourse because inequality has been intertwined into our history for hundreds of years. For example, women particularly widows and young girls in varying parts of Africa face discrimination, and harassment, and are denied access propelled by cultural norms and beliefs (Bogain, 2024).

Exclusion and Conflict

Mesfin (2021) proposes that economic exclusion is an important driver of conflict. This assumes that for conflict, unrest, and other political instability to be addressed, the rate of exclusion, poverty and inequality should be prioritised for peaceful and sustainable development. In this volume we considered Africa's quest for inclusion, creating a narrative of the current trends and patterns aiming to understand the level of impact these trends and patterns have on ordinary Africans and indeed for our development goals and agendas.

History and African Exclusion

Our history has been littered with events that have propelled exclusion for many and the inclusion of a few. Colonisation and the scramble for African land which commenced in the 1800s still impact trade and land tenure today allowing the continuance of hegemonic structures perpetuated along racial, tribal and gender lines. In this volume, we considered a broad spectrum of potential sites of contest for inclusion cutting across the major domains found in resource accumulation, level of participation and quality of life. We considered (i) markets (land, housing, labour, and credit); (ii) spaces (political, social, cultural, and physical) and (iii) services such as social welfare (health, education, waste collection and access to modern necessities such as electricity and information).

The concept of inclusion is premised on the notion that there is some form of discrimination whether legal, cultural, or social occurring deliberately or by circumstance. We observed and understood from unpacking varying academic discourse that the contribution (to sustainable development) of those facing discrimination will be curtailed (Levitas et al., 2007; Economic Commission for Africa, 2024; Mesfin, 2021; Krongborg-Bak, 2018; Abdel-Latif, 2024; Bogain, 2024). It is therefore impossible to envision holistic economic participation and equitable development along the lines of Africa's Agenda 2063 when exclusion remains a significant concern for most Africans. By focusing on this aspect, this volume sought to paint a picture of the current levels of inclusion with a particular focus on women, youth and people living with disabilities. The topics in this volume will paint a picture of the levels of exclusion whether it be wide, concentrated or deep through the writing of its various contributors.

Access to spaces

Ideas and ideals of inclusion were central to the quest for liberation of many African countries. The inclusion of the black majority was one of the main agendas that propelled Africans to seek independence from colonial rule. Democracy by its nature is a participatory process requiring the inclusion of all genders and populations to fully succeed. Independent governments introduced constitutions and the process of democratic elections to allow for transitions of power. It must be noted that at least 52 of the continent's 55 countries have amended their constitutions in the last 20 years and are operating on new and/or revised constitutions (Constitute, 2024). These constitutions have largely domesticated regional and international treaties on civil and

political rights (Hatchard, Ndulo and Slinn, 2024). Participation in elections has been historically high at about 70% but has started to waver in recent years as younger voters enter the voting arena but are unmotivated to take part (International IDEA, 2022).

Human Rights And Good Governance

The Africa Charter on Human and People's Rights has been ratified by 54 African countries with efforts to introduce the rights framework and good governance systems into their constitutions (African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), 2024). Although this is commendable the practice of inclusive democracy is unevenly spread across the continent. There are a number of countries that remain dominated by single parties such as Botswana, Ethiopia, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe (International IDEA, 2022), whilst others are in conflict or have had recent coups namely Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Mali and Zimbabwe (Africa News, 2024).

Women and Inclusion

There has been some significant progress in ensuring equal or equitable participation of women as voters and their incorporation into leadership in political spaces. As constitutions were modified, African governments accepted the inclusion of women's rights through instruments such as the adoption of the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women](#) (52 African countries), [The Maputo Protocol](#) (43 African countries), [International Labour Organization Conventions](#) (46 African countries) and the [African Charter on Human and People's Rights](#) (49 African countries) (United Nations, 2023b). These conventions and protocols govern the political and economic participation of women and their right to protection and security. Despite these early and commendable

adoptions, concern still exists about the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, domestic and political violence, female genital mutilation, and child marriages across the continent (International IDEA, 2022). Women's participation in elections is growing with strong strides in some countries like South Africa, Rwanda and Senegal and weak support in others like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Comoros (International IDEA, 2022).

Youth and Inclusion

The participation of young people in politics must improve. Although there are sufficient frameworks guiding the participation of youth, the policies in place remain focused on rights-based approaches without sufficient enforcement of those policies in political and civic participation and through capacity-building initiatives (Mpungose, 2020). As of 2018, only 22% of African parliamentarians are under the age of 40, and 39% are under the age of 45 yet the total youth population on the continent is close to 70% demonstrating a negative skew towards older representation (Niang, 2019). This skew towards older representation is apparent even amongst populations classified as youth. We discover that youth between ages 26 and 35 are more active in politics than those who are aged 18 to 26 and are therefore more likely to attend community meetings and engage in political processes (International IDEA, 2022). Despite the notable progress made in ratifying international and regional instruments on vulnerable groups the continent still faces the problem of underrepresentation and exclusion of women, youths, and refugees from decision-making roles (International IDEA, 2022).

When we, however, consider inclusion from citizen to citizen without the involvement of the state, a vastly different picture is painted. Murisa (2021) explains that

most Africans do belong to one form of association or another, however, their level of belonging is inclined to social groups (70%) compared to political groups (41%) or economic groups (50%). The lower levels of political participation were notable in countries like Zimbabwe where despair and disappointment in the efficacy of elections to bring power transitions have diminished the levels of citizen trust in the process of democracy and the corresponding election events. However, citizens have found inclusion in religious groups, associations, cooperatives, community clubs and other forms of social formations. They have found ways of working alongside each other to nurture community-based systems of support with or without the involvement of the state.

Access to services

Prior to formalised social welfare systems, African communities relied on kinship networks and extended families to provide social protection (Kalusopa, 2012). At independence, African states relied on and built on existing colonial networks which essentially catered for workers in the public service (Adesina, 2011). The focus of governments has shifted from broader social policy reforms which promote sustainable socio-economic development to narrowly focusing on social protection frameworks with heavy involvement of non-profits and multilateral agencies for their delivery (Adesina, 2011). A sound social policy creates a broader and more sustainable trajectory of development framed around visionary-centred ideals with long-term plans for growth (Adesina, 2011). This shift to social protection has resulted in more straight-jacket approaches on the continent focusing on targeting the poor and vulnerable without an analysis of the primary circumstance creating the vulnerability (Adesina, 2011).

Nevertheless, there has been a notable increase, although still inadequate of delivery and accessibility to social goods and services such as health care, pensions, housing and welfare for vulnerable children and the elderly. Commendably access to education improved tremendously during post-independence years as newly formed governments invested heavily in education fuelled by the desire to address the prior exclusion of non-white communities by colonial governments. Net enrolment rate rose dramatically, for example, a rise from 50% to 68% for the net enrolment rate of girls was experienced between 1990 and 2000 (UNESCO, 2001). However, the challenge African governments are working to overcome requires a lot more investment than what the continent has witnessed. Today education enrolment rate remains a strong area of emphasis for African governments. However, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) still retains the highest rates of exclusion in the education sector globally. Approximately 20% or more of children aged between 6 and 11 years are out of school and 30% plus of youth aged 12 to 14 years are out of school (UNESCO, 2020). Despite this, over 30% of African countries have literacy rates of 75% or higher indicating good progress which needs continued support (UNESCO, 2001).

Homelessness, Slums and Housing

According to Ekpong (2023), Africa has a homeless population of at least 54 million. This is 34% of the world's homeless population. The countries with the highest rate include Nigeria with 24 million, Egypt with 12 million and the Democratic Republic of Congo with 5 million. The main causes of these high figures are conflict, underemployment, and natural calamities. Closely related to this is the need for housing due to natural growth. SSA has the highest rates of urban growth (4.58%) and slum growth (4.53%) in the world (UN-Habitat, 2011). According to UN-Habitat (2020), the

continent is urbanising fast with an estimated 1.3 billion people moving into cities (compared to 470 million at present). It also has the highest proportion of slum dwellers in the world (51.3%) as of 2020 (UN-Habitat, 2020). Governments need to deal with poverty inequality, food insecurity, poor water supply, poor sanitation, climate change and disaster risk reduction on the back of the recent COVID-19 pandemic which caused governments to redirect funding to address the pandemic (UN-Habitat 2020). Currently, housing policies are yet to become sufficiently robust to cater for the large numbers that require new homes. In addition, construction is generally slow, taking approximately 162 days just to obtain a construction permit (World Bank, 2015).

Child Services and Health Care

Child services on the continent require attention as an estimated 35 million children are without parental care (SOS, 2023). The continent's foster care system is heavily reliant on the work of non-profits with weak intervention by most governments. Abandoned and homeless children automatically become at risk of substance abuse, mental health issues, sexual exploitation, forced labour, trafficking and school dropout (SOS, 2023).

In 2001 AU member states signed the Abuja Declaration and committed to allocating 15% of the annual budget to health care. This was followed by health strategy goals for the continent to achieve by the year 2030 (AHAIC, 2021). It is estimated that more than half the continent struggles to access health care despite the policy commitments by continental governments. At least 15% of the continent's population live 2 or more hours away from a hospital, while 1 in 8 people live more than an hour away from a health centre (Falchetta, Hammad & Shayegh, 2020). Africa

continues to struggle with significant disease burdens including HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. The recent COVID-19 pandemic placed additional burdens on the healthcare system. Meanwhile, it is estimated that 25.6 million people are living with HIV in Africa with 20,8 million in East and Southern Africa and 4.8 million in West and Central Africa according to the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2022). HIV prevalence rates range from 6% to 15 % with some of the worst affected countries being Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

According to the World Health Organization (2024a), there are 200 million cases of Malaria around the globe which result in half a million deaths annually, 90% of the deaths take place in Africa. Tuberculosis (TB) is the second leading cause of death from a single agent with the continent assuming 23% of the world's TB cases and 33% of deaths globally (World Health Organization, 2024a). In 2022, 2.5 million were infected and 424,000 lives were lost in Africa alone (World Health Organization, 2024a)

The continent's population is also generally growing older. Despite earlier shifts in demographics caused by HIV/AIDS, older members of the population are managing to live longer lives with a population older than 65 years likely to reach 67 million in 2025 and 163 million by 2050 according to the World Health Organization (2024b). The older the populations get, the more likely they will suffer from non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes which place a heavy burden on the health delivery systems.

In 2018 the African Union adopted [The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities in Africa](#). This charter was introduced to promote the rights of people

living with disabilities (PLWD) to promote, protect and ensure respect for them. For it to become legally binding, 15 member states need to sign and ratify, however as of 2023, only 12 countries in the AU had ratified the protocol. The World Health Organization (2024c) states that approximately 40% of the continent's population is living with some form of disability with 10 to 15% of this group being children of school age. A large proportion of the disabled, 70 to 80% remain unemployed and therefore cannot make meaningful contributions to the development of their communities and nations (Dugbazah, Glover, Mbuli, Kungade, 2021).

Migration

The continent has a migration challenge demonstrated by the 40 million Africans who are currently displaced and living as refugees, asylum seekers or internally displaced persons (African Centre for Strategic Studies, 2023). It is interesting to note that 96% of those who are displaced remain on the continent meaning the burden of refugees is largely borne by African governments more than by other nations as implied in mainstream media. Yet refugees are rarely in focus when development agendas are addressed whether on the continent or in other countries (Betts, Omata, Siu and Sterck, 2023). There is still significant work required for people living with disabilities and their access to social services. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 7% of people have access to related disability benefits (Bridging the Gap, undated).

Largely the continent has neglected a focus on transformative social policy with an emphasis on social protection resulting in a significant dependency on the work of non-profits and multilateral agencies deepening poverty and inequality and stripping communities of their social assets (Adesina, 2011).

Access to markets

Africa has natural resources and rich environments such as productive land, water, forestry, fisheries and nonrenewable resources like minerals, oil, gas, and coal. It is home to 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas, 12% of the world's oil reserves, 40% of the world's gold, 90% of the world's platinum and uranium and 65% of the world's arable land providing raw materials to many of the world's industries (United Nations, 2023; Economic Commission for Africa, 2024). African exports have allowed the continent to become a major participant in global supply chains for several industries namely agriculture, mining, automotive, technology for electronics (mobile phones, computers), renewable energy and healthcare (United Nations, 2023). Agriculture, mining, and trade of natural resources dominate national economies and are central to the livelihoods of the poor rural majority (Moti, 2019). Over 70% of SSA's population depends on forests and woodlands for their livelihoods (United Nations, 2023). Despite producing large revenues for governments, the resources paradoxically lead to economic stagnation, waste build-up, decaying infrastructure, and political instability fueled by corruption. Ill-conceived development policies fuel stagnation and therefore limited growth (African Bank, 2007). The 54 countries in Africa combined account for 2.6% of world trade. This figure drops to 0.8% when manufactured goods are considered (UN Comtrade, 2024).

The share of manufactured goods in total exports is only 34% for African countries compared to 83% for East Asia, 68% for South Asia, 45% for Latin America and 70% for the world average (UN Comtrade, 2024).

The continent historically found it easier to trade with other continents than to trade within its borders. The introduction of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021 will potentially increase trade within the continent by improving access to regional markets with the downstream impact of strengthening production capacity and domestic manufacturing industries in partnering countries. This process will likely improve the contribution that Africa is making to regional and global markets not only to trade for goods but also to create a single market for access to air transport, information and communication, energy infrastructure and financing arrangements (Economic Commission for Africa, 2024).

A key driver of growth and economic inclusion in Africa has been advances in technology following the introduction of mobile phone technology and the internet at the turn of the century. As technology was advancing many African governments were simultaneously introducing financial inclusion policies in efforts to improve the level of access that populations have to credit, pensions, savings accounts, and other banking services and therefore improve their level of resilience against economic shock. Mobile technology has been a significant driver of financial inclusion on the continent pushing rates of inclusion as high as 70% in some countries. Chaora, (2024) notes that advances in internet access have significantly improved the level of access that micro, small and medium enterprises in some countries have to financial products and services however exclusion remains. Exclusion is still evident where communities have limited access to the internet, electricity, information, and older/outdated electronic devices. Language barriers and locations of communities also affect their ability to tap into the financial

inclusion revolution that has aided other parts of the continent to gain access to financial services. The vast majority (approximately 60%) of businesses on the continent are informal and fall into the category of micro, small or medium-sized enterprises. Their informality (lack of formal registration) however is a significant reason for exclusion limiting their access to formal financial products and services (Chaora, 2024).

OVERVIEW OF VOLUME 4: INCLUSION TRENDS AND PATTERNS

This volume of the African Journal of Inclusive Societies, focusing on inclusion trends and patterns, dwells heavily on the spaces (political, economic, and cultural spaces) dimension with minor contributions to the services and markets dimensions.

The Impact of Digital Finance on Financial Inclusion In Zimbabwe

Mutale and Shumba in their article entitled *The Impact of Digital Finance on Financial Inclusion*, explain how digital finance, notably mobile money and digital banking services have increased access to financial services in Zimbabwe. The authors adopt a quantitative approach utilising econometric models to measure the impact of digital finance proxied using automated teller machine data in Zimbabwe. They explain how digital banking has improved the rate of financial inclusion for poor and vulnerable communities with significant advantages for cost saving, time saving with fast transaction speeds all the while improving security for the user. They however emphasise the potential disadvantages created by limited internet access, especially in poor and remote communities where the cost and quality of data create exclusion and understanding of technology is limited to a few. Their

contribution includes potential policy changes to promote digital and financial inclusion in Zimbabwe.

Economic Inclusion in Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy Reform in Zimbabwe

Siambombe's *Economic Inclusion in Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy Reform in Zimbabwe* investigates the opportunities and challenges with policy reform in Zimbabwe emphasising economic inclusion. Siambombe using thematic analysis, reviews the efforts by the Zimbabwean government to curb inflation, stabilise the currency and promote economic growth with interventions such as the introduction of a multicurrency system, introduction of new taxes, reforming state-owned enterprises, improving agricultural productivity, and reframing the current land policy. Siambombe uses the theory of inclusive growth and the capabilities approach as frameworks of analysis. The inclusive growth approach assumes that sustainable and inclusive growth must be broad-based touching all sectors and segments of society whilst the capabilities approach explains that for inclusive growth to be a sure process, members of society must have their capabilities expanded through education, access to health care and social protection. The author examines how efforts to promote economic progress, and economic inclusion can become a catalyst for equitable access to resources and opportunities for understanding. The paper demonstrates how economic inclusion is affected by social, political, and economic factors. The paper further explores interlinks between policies and their role in promoting market access. The author tries to demonstrate the effectiveness of social safety nets in the analysis and raises the importance of political consensus in working towards inclusion. According to the author, the lack of robust

institutions and political consensus has in many ways halted the efforts for economic recovery.

An Analysis of the Role of Disinformation In Elections

Sivalo expounds on an intersection of services and spaces (information and politics) dimension by giving an overview of information and disinformation and their effects on inclusion. The article explains how disinformation impacts democratic processes, entrenching existing divisions whilst increasing public distrust in independent institutions. The author argues that credible news and information are critical for democratic societies. Disinformation on the other hand poses a challenge to liberal democracy affecting the very fabric of the deliberative and decision-making processes and changing the quality of decisions made by citizens at the voting booth. The author explains that disinformation has always been present but in recent years it has been accelerated by advances in technology and changes to the way information flows using social media and digital platforms. Sivalo's primary source of focus is electoral disinformation in national and by-elections during the 2023 election process in Zimbabwe through an analysis of a project by the Centre for Innovation and Technology (CITE) to train citizens on how to identify, flag and combat disinformation. Sivalo's article shows that different strategies for truthful information dissemination are required to capture the unique situations of citizens during elections and beyond. Some of these unique situations could include varying levels of education, different locations, different languages, or access to data where information is in digital form.

The remainder of the contributors focused on the political and social dimensions.

Unveiling Layers of Inclusion in Political Spaces

Sisimayi, Muzorewa and Muperi in *Unveiling Layers of Inclusion in Political Spaces: A Multidimensional Exploration of Inclusion in Zimbabwe* explore the intricate dimensions of inclusion in Zimbabwe's political spaces. Their article is informed by the concept of intersectionality which aims to uncover the layers of inclusion required for a strong democratic system in Zimbabwe. The study explores how factors such as community empowerment, digital access and intersectionality influence the political inclusion of underrepresented groups in the country. The intersectionality approach critiques the view of gender, race ethnicity or other factors as independent identities but rather sees these as interconnected and influencing each other. They argue that gender does not operate independently from race or geographic location but rather each one builds on the other, deepening the level of exclusion that an individual falling into multiple vulnerable groups may face. Sisimayi, Muzorewa and Mupeti explain this concept by unpacking the exclusion of women, youth and people living with disabilities from politics in Zimbabwe due to financial constraints, male domination, sexualisation of politics, restrictive cultural roles, remote location, lack of resourcing and low levels of education. They explain that although technology has provided new opportunities for expression and participation through digital platforms, the negative attitudes in the country's political space have also moved into these new digital spaces. The authors highlight the important role that financial resources play when attempting to access the internet for people in marginalised areas where connectivity is poor and infrastructure to support internet access is weak.

Institutionalising Inclusion: A Study of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's Role in the 2018 Elections

Bandama's *Institutionalising Inclusion: A Study of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's Role in the 2018 Elections* discusses the importance of inclusion within the electoral process as pivotal for a democratic society. The author places Election Management Bodies (EMBs) at the centre of the process. Their role is to ensure all citizens can participate in the election process regardless of background. Bandama posits that where election standards have been set, one can establish levels of inclusion or exclusion of key groups of concern such as women, youth and people living with disabilities. Because of the ability of EMBs to enforce practices legally, an electoral commission has the strength and capacity to ensure inclusion or exclusion. Bandama explains how EMBs facilitate or hinder inclusion through their administrative practices. He uses the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) as a reference with a treatise on the 2018 election examining their performance against predetermined benchmarks for election supervision. He examines the role of the commission in fostering inclusion by establishing standards, parameters procedures and certainty regarding the voting process in addition to removing any bias associated with the quality and accessibility of the voters' roll. Bandama demonstrates through a historiography of ZEC's formation how exclusion practices carried over from Zimbabwe's colonial past may affect voter processes today.

The Zimbabwe Political Space: An Analysis of the Barriers to Women's Participation in Electoral Processes

Mutizwa's article, *The Zimbabwe Political Space: An Analysis of the Barriers to Women's Participation in Electoral Processes* discusses women's participation, inclusion and exclusion in politics. Mutizwa brings to the fore questions about the role of women as candidates or leaders in the political process noting a steady decline in their involvement since the 2013 elections held in Zimbabwe. The article seeks to understand the interlinkage between economic, social physical and cultural paces within the electoral process in addition to exploring the social inclusion factors affecting political spaces. The article draws on content from the project preventing violence against women in politics, detailing specific hindrances to female participation in elections. This article gives some examples of the toxicity of the election playing field in Zimbabwe. Mutizwa explains how women who have previously achieved political influence have had some form of advantage whether by affiliation or relation, leaving new entrants into the field with many obstacles including sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological violence. Notable incidents which have taken place in Zimbabwe are discussed in detail such as incidents involving sexual harassment, assault, sexist slurs, threats, intimidation, public shaming, unlawful arrests, and abduction with specific examples from the Zimbabwean context including excerpts from interviews with women in politics. Mutizwa highlights challenges such as the way political parties are structured, and the challenges raised by cultural and traditional norms. Like Bandama, the author proposes a penalty for non-compliance to election candidate female quotas by political parties as a way of increasing the presence of female candidates as one of the policy measures for redress.

Zimbabwe's Economic Challenges Beyond Sanctions

Siambombe's *Zimbabwe's Economic Challenges Beyond Sanctions* challenges the narrative put forward by the Zimbabwean government, that economic sanctions are solely to blame for Zimbabwe's economic troubles. The findings reveal that although sanctions do have a role to play, the economic crisis is significantly affected by colonial legacies, corruption, institutional failures, maladministration, and regional and international dynamics that have undermined Zimbabwe's economic potential and performance. The writer uses a mixed methods approach to outline how the ruling party government has failed to implement meaningful economic reforms to address the country's structural problems and improve its development outcomes in light of regional and global changes. Siambombe explains the challenges the government is experiencing as it navigates regional tensions with bordering countries caused by trade disputes, border conflicts, mass migration tensions and water sharing. Over and above the regional challenges Zimbabwe is still struggling with its international reengagement plan. The writer uses a political economy framework to assess the role sanctions have played and are playing on the country's development. The article makes recommendations for political, economic, and social reforms, and regional and international cooperation including a reframing of its treatment of elections, how to handle the country's debt crisis, expanding the manufacturing sector and investment into human and capital.

Harnessing the Diaspora Advantage: Building Knowledge Democracy and Inclusive Growth

Garwe and Thondlana in their article *Harnessing the Diaspora Advantage: Building Knowledge Democracy and Inclusive Growth in Africa* explores the lived realities of Africans in the diaspora. The authors discuss the lived emotions of Africans as they face exclusion from taking part in the development agendas of both their host and home countries. They use the coloniality framework (exploring, race gender and class) to understand the power structure, knowledge and hierarchies that continue to shape modern African societies despite an end to colonial administration. Garwe and Thondlana explain how emigration from Africa was previously perceived as a brain drain but has now shifted to a more positive mindset understanding the potential for contribution to the development discourse of home countries. The article explains how current engagement initiatives through associations, philanthropic activities and different forms of capacity building create a potential for sustainable alignment of diaspora populations within home or host countries. The writers expound on reasons why migrants try to make contributions to their home countries, and the challenges they face in doing so including corruption, minimal trust in institutions, stigma attached to foreign involvement and scrutiny of diaspora endeavours by home governments. They also explain the challenges faced by migrants in host countries such as non-recognition of qualifications, cultural adjustment challenges, and discriminatory practices. The pair put forward potential engagement options to ensure knowledge sharing and participation to promote a culture that capitalises on Africans in global environments.

CONCLUSION

The contributors of this volume paint broad pictures of inclusion amidst ongoing exclusion with special emphasis on Zimbabwe. The chapter on the African diaspora, however, gives a global picture of the challenges that many African migrants, refugees and internally displaced within and outside the continent face. Although many contributors based their work on Zimbabwe, we can infer the collective trends occurring in other Sub-Saharan countries with similar development trajectories. Through this volume, we can ascertain a picture of the level of inclusion in the political, economic, and social dimensions paying particular attention to the involvement of women, youth and people living with disabilities to understand their level of access to political, economic, and social collateral.

The volume contains several policy recommendations for promoting improved and equitable access to information, power, financial and community resources. Governments taking note of the recommendations can easily find ways to improve levels of citizen inclusion with a corresponding increase in citizen participation to achieve development goals.

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