



THE EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF POPULISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: PARTY POLITICS AND PERSONALITIES

SAHARAN AFRİKA'DAKİ POPULİZMİN YANLIŞI VE EVRİMİ: PARTİ SİYASETİ VE KİŞİSELLEŞMELER

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ARTICLE INFO

Received 20 May 2019
Accepted 30 July 2019

Keywords:

Populism, Africa,
Development,
Political Parties,
Ethnicity

ABSTRACT

Postcolonial Africa has been characterized by socio-political and economic challenges that have in turn presented the continent in bad light globally. At the center of these challenges has been the role and actions of African political leaders. Existing literature has tended to focus on leaders who contributed to the colonial struggle and little has been written on the emerging trend of populist leaders in the continent. Yet, a sequence of bad governance experiences within the continent characterized by politics of marginalization has resulted in a new brand of populism founded on the rhetoric of economic development. The rhetoric about pursuing economic development is exploited by political leaders to acquire power and extend their term limits through party politics, unconstitutional changes, and electoral malpractices. This paper addresses the different faces of populism in reference to the experiences of South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia in light of factors such as economic development, ethnicity, political party competitions, and ideology.

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MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Geliş 20 Mayıs 2019
Kabul 30 Temmuz 2019

Anahtar Kelimeler :

Popülizm,
Afrika,
Kalkınma,
Siyasi Partiler,
Etnisite

ÖZET

Sömürge sonrası Afrika kıtayı küresel olarak, kötü ışık altında sunan sosyo-politik ve ekonomik zorluklarla karakterizedir. Bu zorlukların özü, Afrika siyasi liderlerinin rolü ve eylemleri olmuştur. Mevcut literatür, sömürgecilik karşıtı mücadeleye katkıda bulunan liderlere odaklanma eğilimindeydi ve kıtada popülist liderlerin ortaya çıkma eğilimi hakkında çok az şey yazılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, kıtada marjinalleşme politikalarıyla nitelenen bir dizi kötü yönetim deneyimi, ekonomik gelişmenin retoriklerine dayanan yeni bir popülizm markasına neden oldu. İktisadi kalkınmayı sürdürme konusundaki söylem, siyasi liderler tarafından iktidar kazanmak ve süre sınırlarını parti politikaları, anayasaya aykırı değişiklikler ve seçim yanlışlıkları yoluyla genişletmek için sömürülüyor. Bu makale, ekonomik gelişme, etnik köken, siyasi parti yarışmaları ve ideoloji gibi faktörlerin ışığında, Güney Afrika, Kenya ve Zambiya deneyimlerini referans olarak popülizmin farklı yüzlerini ele alıyor.

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INTRODUCTION

The last three decades in Sub-Saharan Africa has been characterized by countries transitioning from authoritarian rule into democratic systems of governance (Ndulu et al., 1999: 41). However, the political elites through various presidential candidates and party structures are increasingly adopting populist strategies. This paper aims to address this contemporary development in African politics as a response to the academic gap witnessed in comparison to the other regions of the world such as Europe, Latin America, and North Americas. Indeed, cognizance is given that the paper draws heavily from the experiences of these regions especially from Latin America and Europe in examining populism with respect to Sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia. More comprehensively, this paper examines the reasons that has led to the emergence of populist tendencies in these countries and secondly, how political parties and politicians exploit populist ideologies to attract the majority population constituted of the urban-poor while at the same time, not alienating the other rural proletariats who are key in acquiring electoral majority win.

According to Canovan (1999), populism is a tool of political galvanization characterized by sentiments of anti-political establishment and anti-economic elites through claims and promises of redressing historical injustices and contemporary economic exclusion of marginalized communities or groups and is usually espoused by charismatic political leaders who share or profess close ties with the ‘commoners. Additionally, Barr (2009: 38) postulates that this crop of leaders tends to portray themselves as outsiders from the mainstream political establishment which they oppose and seek to change. As such, populism provides a platform for a single individual to have a vested responsibility of representing the “people” (Resnick, 2014). Weyland (2001) notes that the support-base of populist political parties is more often than not, drawn from the lower-social status cadres in the society who do not have any forms of formal structure or organization.

From this understanding of populism, this paper comprehends that the emergence of populism in Sub-Saharan Africa can be accounted through two key factors. Foremost, there is rapid urbanization without a counter corresponding rapid economic growth to comprehensively address the high poverty levels that contribute to the establishment of extensive populist support in Sub-Saharan Africa (Fox, 2014: 198). Secondly, the strategies adopted by populist political leaders and political parties blend well with the already existing political systems found in Sub-Saharan Africa that are characterized by inability of political parties to clearly formulate development agenda that are appealing to the majority poor and uneducated voting block that constitutes the largest political support bases in most African countries (Mazzoleni, 2003). Consequently, these two factors have led to an increased resonance by the urban poor towards populism. Additionally, the vast presence of the informal sector has become a deterrence to the development of influential civil society organizations such as labour unions (Spitzer et al., 1977: 22). The absence of these important civil organizations has created a loophole for the political leaders to establish unmediated connections with the large but poor masses.

It is imperative to also note that some of these populist ideologies are not holistic as they do not necessarily take into account the views, aspiration or desires of the ‘masses’ whom they purport to represent especially those in the rural areas who may not be sharing the same priorities as those who live in the urban areas. As such, this paper comprehends that Sub-Saharan Africa hosts a unique blend of populist strategies founded on average political coalitions comprised of a blend of the urban-poor and sections of the rural voters. According to Resnick (2010), this is because, to a very large extent, the rural section of voters continues to be mobilized on ethnic alignment whereas the majority of the urban poor resonate to populist appeals that relate to issues of employment, better public service delivery, housing, and infrastructure. More comprehensively, as Gibson (1997) argues, the populist ideologies in Africa have premised on the idea of metropolitan and peripheral alliances in the sense that the urban poor is the target of political party policies while the rural sections of the political masses deliver the electoral majorities.

This paper will draw reference to the presidential elections in Kenya, South Africa and Zambia through the lenses of political leaders such as Raila Odinga of Kenya, Jacob Zuma of South Africa and Michael Sata of Zambia who have adopted populist strategies that consist of anti-elitist message that target issues related to redressing alleged historical injustices, social cohesion, economic growth, youth and women empowerment, better public service delivery and war against corruption through a packed political message delivered by a mixture of charisma aimed at enhancing an image of a political figure as one who comprehends the daily plights of the common masses. These well-packaged political messages combined with ethnic appeals by the rural masses have enabled these leaders to establish massive political support bases that are notably, deeply loyal to these leaders and their respective political parties.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. MANIFESTATION OF POPULISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Populism can be discerned in several ways. However, the most common form of projected populism in Africa is in the form of increasingly xenophobic attacks towards African migrants as well as emergence and institutionalization of authoritarianism (Mudde et al., 2017: 39). More plainly, these projections have been witnessed in the increasing occurrences of social, political and economic crises characterized by political instability, murder, wanton killings and destruction of properties. Cognizance is given that the resultant discourse on the understanding of Africa is that many still opinionize Africans as captives of ancestral socio-cultural traits and this has been further magnified by the extensive analytical discourse of conflicts in Africa through ethnicity. However, it still remains that totalitarianism and xenophobia continue to deter the pace of growth in several African countries (Adepoju, 2006: 63).

The political elites have instrumentalized the demographic dynamics of ethnic groupings in order to acquire, exert and maintain power (Branch et al. (2008: 6). Such instrumentalization becomes very important especially in alleged defense of the interests of a particular group by populist politicians who may be fanning out political messages of marginalization and discrimination comparatively to the other groups in the society thereby creating societal tensions and disharmony. Enmity as a consequence is therefore brewed along religious lines, ethnic alliances and even race as witnessed in certain Sub-Saharan African countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa. This is without total regard that Africa since the 19th century had ceased to become an exclusive reference of the Black race but rather a congruence of cultures and races.

1.2. POLITICAL PARTY COMPETITIONS IN AFRICA

According to Sandbrook (1996: 76), political parties are very essential in any political system and even more in relation to democratic governance as they have a bigger responsibility of ensuring representation of the masses and also in articulating their issues of concern. But even more importantly, political parties are the foundation of political-ideological structures and the vehicle that drives mainstream political competition between various interests and policy goals (Elischer, 2013). Fundamentally, political parties ought to share ideas on how the state should be governed and how power should be distributed. Carl et. al, (1982) defines political parties as a band of interested political elites united by common beliefs and pursuit for power.

However, the contemporary environment for political party competition experienced in Sub-Saharan Africa provides a fertile ground for populism and populist strategies to sprout. Notably, most African political parties do not survive to participate in two consecutive electoral cycles because the establishment of such parties for one is rarely founded on concrete political ideology or manifesto (Manning, 2005) but rather, emerge around political figures to be used as vehicles for pursuing individual political ambitions. As a consequence, the identity of these political parties tends to revolve around the personalities of such leaders. One argument that can be directed towards this view is that unlike the mature democratic systems and political parties in other regions of the world, the democratic transitions experienced in Africa occurred before any major economic transformation that could have

sparked the emergence of an empowered social and economic class to contribute to the emergence of pragmatic political parties similar to those established in the developed regions of the world. Moreover, Norlund (2007) argues that the lack of institutionalized funding mechanisms for political party activities has left political party financing at the helm of individual political elites leading to the centralization of political party authority.

Interestingly, due to the standing of the African continent as a major producer of natural raw materials and minerals, there have been interests from aid donor countries and organizations who have interfered and continue to interfere in one way or another with political party affairs especially through financing of some political party activities (Rodney, 2018). As such, often, the donor conditions tend to minimize the political freedom of the parties to be able to formulate their own independent agenda (Manning, 2005). Sandbrook (1996: 78), identifies the low literacy levels experienced in several Sub-Saharan countries as a hindrance to the development of political party ideologies as voters for one, may not even be able to read, scrutinize and understand political party manifestos and therefore, important policies such as those regarding the ideas of free-market economy or an interventionist may not be appealing to the masses. On the contrary, the measurement of how qualified a political candidate is to occupy a particular elective position is reduced to mere scrutiny of 'generosity' in terms of hand-outs during a political campaign.

Therefore, the above-mentioned influences become the source upon which populism exploits political party competition to establish a political environment characterized by charismatic leadership that dominates the domestic political discourse. However, populism must not be mistaken as having any political ideology. Indeed, outside the mainstream conceptualization of political ideologies along the understanding of 'leftists', 'centrists' or 'rightists', populism has its own policy component modelled to redress either the historical or contemporary socio-political and economic marginalization by packaging political messages that galvanize the large underprivileged masses especially regarding issues that touch on employment, improved earnings, sanitation and better housing usually to favour the disadvantaged in the society. As such, fanning these sought of political messages require some elements of policy packaging. For instance, regarding the issue of decongesting the public transport system in the cities, there has to be policy choices whether the traditional low capacity public transport vehicles have to be banned from accessing certain parts of the city such as central business districts in favor of new high capacity public transport vehicles or whether informal settlements will have to be improved or completely demolished in order to provide new housing. However, in the African context, this element of populism is completely absent in certain political systems. But, in political environments where such elements of populist strategies exist, especially for the opposition political parties, a conglomerate of political charisma and a message of inclusivity in socio-economic and political affairs of the state, is a magnet for political (Rakner et. al, 2009).

1.3. THE EMERGENCE OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND URBANIZATION

Drawing from the experiences of Latin America, it is comprehensible that populism is heavily influenced by trends witnessed in economy and demography. The explosion in urban migration tend to lead to pressures on the existing amenities and thus, there is always the need to match the existing amenities to urbanization. Unfortunately, this has always not been the case and as a consequence, there tends to be an expansion in demand for access to public services such as sanitation, public transportation, access to healthcare, physical infrastructure, housing, and employment. On the contrary, while these may be of great concern to the urban dwellers, they may not be necessarily the same priorities of the rural areas. Accordingly, Dietz (1998: 33) argues that the masses who reside in urban locations in comparison to rural settlers are more sensitive when these essential services are not provided for.

The economic crisis experienced in Latin America especially in the 1990s that was characterized by the imposition of the structural adjustment programs, growing rates of unemployment among its population and significantly reduced wages in the agricultural sector forced many people to venture into the informal industry in the urban areas. The consequence of this transformation was the weakening of

labour societies and other civil society groups thereby translating into dwindled influence on political affairs of the country and instead, providing a loophole that led to the emergence of populist political leaders such as Hugo Chavez who galvanized the urban poor through political messages of bringing development and grassroots economic development, more specifically, among the low-income urban dwellers (Madrid, 2008).

The relevance of the above analogy is that, in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa, these are to a large extent, the similar conditions experienced by several countries within the region. Indeed, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2018), Africa is the fastest region with the highest rates of urbanization in the world. Additionally, the demographic projection for Africa puts Africa as the fastest in terms of population growth relative to other regions with a median projection of 1.68 billion people by 2030 (UNDESA, 2015: 2). Moreover, Kassides (2006), postulates that approximately by the year 2030, Africa's urban population will be the highest for the first time. However, the greatest challenge is found in the fact that these processes have been experienced in the context of underdevelopment, low employment opportunities in urban areas and uneven economic growth (Bryceson, 2006). Notably, the effects of these processes have led to a high population of approximately 56% of the total African population living in informal settlements as of 2014 (UN-HABITAT, 2015). These conditions are very fertile for the emergence of populist strategies because of the capacity of political leaders to create galvanizing political messages drawn from the grievances of those who dwell in informal settlements. This is also due to the fact that urbanization holds the capacity to clearly project the existing inequalities in the society for instance by observing social places such as shopping locations and residential houses. Secondly, overreliance on informal employment has led to very low membership in organizations that represent the interests of the low-income class and with even lesser influence on policy direction. This has directly enabled the African political elites to establish close ties the urban poor through populist strategies and policies.

1.4. THEORISING POPULISM

Increasingly, populism has transformed into a cross-regional agenda enclosed in dynamics of power politics in the form 'a people rising against various forms of exploitations' allegedly being perpetrated by a defined 'group of elites.' However, the extensive debate surrounding populism is also drawn from the general tendency to cast populism as negative phenomena based on its drive to cast emotive issues as simplistic and consequently influencing vulnerable masses to suppress logic in making key political decisions such as voting patterns during elections. More aptly, Mudde (2007: 542) argues that populism is tantamount to opportunism in political discourse purposely to make an appeal to the masses. Holistically, Mudde (2007: 543) conceives populism as an ideological competition between the economically and politically 'pure or uncontaminated people' against a small clique of 'very corrupt and compromised elites' benefit at the expense of the larger society. Populist politics, therefore, becomes the avenue for the oppressed to express the authentic desires of the people.

The understanding of populism has been expressed in different forms such as by the nature of political discourse (Panizza, 2005), the driving political ideology (Mudde, 2007) and based on the organizational forms (Weyland, 2001). In theorizing populism, Moffitt et al., (2014) identify three key components embedded in populism:

- i. Drive for an appeal to the masses. Moffitt et al. (2014) argues that the difference between populism with other forms of conventional political discourse is its ability to invoke emotive feelings of the people as the bonafide bearers of sovereignty instead of the small clique of corrupt elites in the society who are projected as the source of economic and political crises that have led to the suffering of the people. Therefore, populists tend to employ popular techniques such as using indigenous languages, symbols and even dressing codes in delivering political messages as they attempt to dissociate from the power elites.

- ii. Exacerbating threats and crises. According to Moffitt et al. (2014: 392), populism thrives in a political atmosphere inhibited by perceived threats of socio-economic and political difficulties that have extensive impacts on the welfares of an already suffering population. Consequently, such an atmosphere provides a great opportunity for populists to use direct but tough language against the political establishment and thus appealing to voters.
- iii. Unconventional behavior. The terrain of populist engagement is rough. Moffitt et al., (2014) points out that populists develop a conscious decision to disengage from the mainstream approach of appropriate behavior in political engagements. This is purposely to associate themselves as actors of low politics that is common with the occupants of the lower-income social classes contrary to the high politics associated with the high politics of the elites. Additionally, this detachment endears populist to the masses as part of the common people.

The framework provided by Moffett et al., (2014) captures effectively the nature of populism experienced in Sub-Saharan countries through the lenses of political discourse, the driving political ideology and the organizational forms of populism.

2. THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

At the moment of writing this paper, South Africa is getting ready to participate in one of its most crucial elections going by the domestic dynamics in the country. Between 2018 and 2019, South African government has been rocked by successive cases involving financial scandals in the tune of billions of dollars allegedly perpetrated by business elites accused of having had extensive influence on the former head of state, Jacob Zuma, and his core allies in the African National Congress (ANC) party that has been at the helm of political power since the first multiracial and democratic elections were held in 1994 (Warf et al., 2019). In as much as Jacob Zuma claimed his innocence, he was forced to resign from the presidency in favor of the incumbent Cyril Ramaphosa in February 2018 (The New York Times, 14 February 2018).

Coupled with the increasing domestic challenges witnessed in the form of frequent long power outages across the country and failure by the government to provide basic services to the masses, the Economic Freedom Front which is a far-left populist political party is gearing to take advantage of the coming elections and reap more political base support. The Economic Freedom Fighters was established in 2013 led by a youthful firebrand and former youth wing leader of the ANC, Julius Malema (Mbetse, 2015: 37). Although EFF is yet to make a major breakthrough through South Africa's mainstream political discourse, the party is looking forward for improved support increasing from the previous 6% it garnered in 2014 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014: 3). Indeed, the past actions witnessed from the EFF has sent clear political messages to the mainstream political elites that indeed, the party is not just an outraged and disillusioned group of young people but rather, a very calculative party that has adopted populism to bring onboard the support of millions of young people in South Africa who are genuinely outraged.

Additionally, the high unemployment rates of up to 29%, constantly declining wages and an increasing cost of living have contributed to a very hostile socio-political and economic environment in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2019) has renewed vicious xenophobic attacks on foreigners (OECD, 2016). More South Africans have lost faith in any form of social change which has been replaced increased crime, religious opportunists and financial microlenders who continue to prey on vulnerable South Africans. However, given this concerning the state of South African affairs, it would be sensible to think that the forthcoming elections in 2019 would be overwhelmed with domestic policy competition between political parties. Unfortunately, this has not been the case as campaigns have only been full of political rhetoric without any comprehensive policy debates on how to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment rates.

Neocosmos (2010: 32) argues that due to the populist rhetoric going around in South Africa, a shared argument by a majority of the masses in South Africa is on the belief that foreigners and more

specifically African foreigners in South Africa are stealing their jobs and spreading crime all over the country. The government however, due to international best practices, strive to portray these xenophobic attacks as mere acts of criminality with pointed fingers towards the Democratic Alliance which is also a far-right populist party campaigning to protect the borders of South Africa and other smaller parties calling for the complete expulsion of all foreigners in South Africa (Mail and Guardian, 1 May 2019).

An analysis of the Economic Freedom Fighters' charter outlines that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it and that its national wealth inclusive of industry and minerals shall be restored back to her through nationalization of banks, mines and monopoly industries (EFF, 2013a). Additionally, the charter provides for seizure and redistribution of land without compensation; building state and government capacity to abolish tenders; nationalizing all strategic sectors of the economy such as the mines; provision of free housing, sanitation, healthcare and education; establishment of protected industrial development to create employment opportunities for South Africans; and, the establishment of an open and corruption-free government and society free from state agency victimization.

In as much as the founding manifestos of the EFF was established on a racially neutral language reflecting the daily frustrations of workers and economic emancipation, the political rhetoric is characteristically more focused on the struggle of Black Africans and the push for Black economic empowerment. This, however, is not by any form of insinuation that EFF is a racist as Duncan (2014) or Harvey (2014) suggests, but rather it's a mere recognition to the fact that the ideology that the EFF was founded on has also shifted and incorporated the awareness of class struggle that continues to be influenced by race and alignments of aspirations regarding the determination and empowerment of the black Africans within South Africa. This perspective is vindicated from drawn observations regarding the support base of EFF that does not only include the economically outer peripheralized black youth, but also a significant number of the largely young black middle-class South Africans who live in close proximity to the minority white South Africans and continue to experience racism both at places of work and in public spaces. Indeed, the appeal to populism also arises from the failure by the South African black community to experience economic transformation and equal representation in corporate boardrooms, top universities in South Africa and even in the leading media companies and firms (Mbete, 2015: 38). has in its transformation agenda that seeks to alleviate black South African status through actions that are easily deemed as populist.

Previously under Thabo Mbeki, South Africa experiences substantial economic growth but this growth was not equitably distributed among the social classes that saw the low-income social class access relatively lower improvements in their economic status (Statistics South Africa 2009b). However, the neoliberal policies responsible for this growth had already began widening differences between the coalition of ANC, Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) who had formulated a development blueprint known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Cameron, 1996: 285). RDP was to focus on South African development and growth through the redistribution of resources and wealth through a reformed public sector, better public service delivery, land reforms, improved wages and provision of basic human amenities such as housing, electricity, and water to the underprivileged communities in South Africa (Lodge, 2002). But the lack of adequate foreign investments to spur this ambitious agenda influenced the government to resort to a free-market known as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) blueprint (Sanders, 2005), which was vehemently opposed by the other two coalition partners on the basis that the new agenda encouraged and emphasized privatization, product-linked wages and reduction in tariffs (Sanders, 2005).

Indeed, these new policies were met with vicious resistance from the lower middle and low-income classes in South Africa especially in view of the massive benefits that were accruing to a small number of extremely wealthy individuals in South Africa. De Wet et. al (2008) documents that in Johannesburg for instance, half of the population were earning less than US\$170 per month while Gumede (2008) documents the poor service delivery to South Africans by the state. It is against this background of

discontent by the majority of poor South Africans, that Jacob Zuma capitalized to assume power (Bassett and Clarke, 2008: 790). Notably, Zuma despite having served as the deputy president squarely laid the blame of Thabo Mbeki's leadership style instead of the policies of ANC. Zuma then quickly exploited the opportunity to unseat Mbeki as the president of ANC in December 2007 and consequently competing and winning the general elections held on April 2009 to become the new head of state of South Africa (Foster, 2009).

The period leading to the 2009 South African elections saw widespread populist sentiments especially by Zuma who extensively took his campaign message to the urban poor with well packaged political messages that appealed to the low-income classes combined with charismatic prowess in the art of speech delivery that enabled him to develop close ties with the marginalized groups in South Africa. In the period leading to the announcement of official campaigns, Zuma was already involved in campaigns through town hall sessions that were allegedly held so that he could engage on the challenges facing the slum dwellers (Brown, 2008). Additionally, having grown-up as a herder without any formal education, Zuma endeared himself with the image of a much more approachable candidate than Mbeki was as well as his self-portraying image as a liberator, an anti-elitist and a traditional South African.

Additionally, Zuma exploited his Zulu-identity to woo the Zulu natives who had for long felt marginalized from the mainstream political affairs of South Africa because the previous presidents such as Mandela, Mbeki, and Motlanthe all hailed from the Xhosa (Johnson, 2008). His use of the Zulu identity a symbol of ANC campaign as his supporters were always synonymous with wearing branded campaign materials with the phrase "100 percent Zulu boy" written on them to reinforce his candidacy not only as of the ANC candidate but also a proud Zulu.

As such, in the case of populism in South Africa, this paper argues that it is not a matter of left-right political party conceptualizations or ideologies but rather, an aspiration embedded in the political party structures that strives to subvert the existing liberal market models. In as much as inequality, the land question and poverty may be the underlying cause for all the political tensions in South Africa influencing populism, the lack of progress remains captive due to the political rhetoric of 'us' versus 'them' through appropriation of the white monopoly over capital, banking systems, media and professional groups which are used as scapegoats by the populist political elites. But even more interestingly, the contemporary populist environment in South Africa is shrouded in the understanding of revisionism within the institutional framework of liberal democracy and despite the fact that it may be appropriating the available means to overturn the political status quo, the true objective may neither be democracy nor the concern of reconciling the key pillars of the contemporary structure or order. Therefore, the South African 2019 elections will be key in determining whether it is the nationalists or the centrists who will make gains. Nonetheless, regardless of the outcome of the elections, unless the increasing inequality patterns in South Africa are addressed, populism in South Africa will continue to expand through the political party structures either existing ones or through those that are yet to be established.

3. THE CASE OF KENYA

In contrary to the mainstream ideologies that fuels populist sentiments across the world such as legitimate economic grievances, cultural intolerance and resistance over increased migration, Kenya's brand of populism is founded on anti-corruption sentiments that has threatened large sections of the society who continue to languish in poverty at the expense of a few wealthy private individuals and politicians. This brand also shares key elements to the Trump populist campaign that rallied against 'corrupt elites' (Sconieczny, 2018: 71).

Prior to Kenyan elections especially those of 2007, 2013 and 2017, anti-corruption has always remained the single most powerful ideological tool in political party competitions (Shilaho, 2018: 127). Usually, the understanding of development by the Kenyan masses operates on two logics. Foremost, development is always viewed from the perspective of a legacy question rather than an election-winning issue. True

to this, it is comprehensible that economic success does not automatically translate into electoral victory. This has been tested and proven by the 2016 US elections that pitted democrats who had a good record of economic success against the populist Trump campaign agenda representing the Republicans (Campbell et al. 2017: 335). Rather than the measure of economic success, elections have been reduced to the fear of the unknown and the promise of liberty and freedom (Hirsch, 2005). Relative to Kenya, in 1963 for instance, the populist agenda was founded on the desire for freedom from colonialization; in 2002 it was the desire for freedom from the tyranny experienced from the Moi regime; in 2007 it was the pursuit for freedom from the domination of a single ethnic group, the Kikuyu, in directing the political affairs of the state; and in 2013, it was against the Kenyan cases lodged at the International Criminal Court that were politically exploited as a new form threat of Western imperialism.

Indeed, what the Kenyan experience with populism has taught us is that developing liberal democracies belong to populists and their allies in opposition political parties and mobs rather than technocrats talking about economic performance. The largest opposition party in Kenya; Orange Democrat Movement has never been in government as a single party since its establishment but has participated in the ruling government as a coalition partner in government (Cheeseman, 2008: 171). As such, this has made it practically impossible for ODM party to present a tangible development track record that would appeal to the voters thus, the party has to continue relying on populist strategies and agenda to pursues political power.

Political events leading to contemporary times saw the transition of Kenya into a multi-party democratic state in 1991 after Section 2A of the constitution was repealed during the regime of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) that had been in power from 1963 to 2002 (Mati, 2013: 237). When the KANU regime was voted out in free and fair democratic process in 2002 by a coalition of opposition parties led by former president Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, economic progress was witnessed through reforms on macro-economy anchored on market reforms such as privatization of state corporations, improved business environment and better enforcements of tax regulations that led to significant reduction in budgetary deficits (Chege, 2008). Moreover, Chege (2008: 128) documents that in a span of 4 years, the economy steadily grew from the previous 3.4% attained in 2002 to 7% by 2007 while the country also underwent rapid urbanization averaged at an annual 4.4 percent increase between 2000-2010 (UN-HABITAT, 2003: 252). The consequence of these developments is that cities become more ethnically diverse.

However, with increased rates of urbanization that has rose from 285,000 (5.2%) in 1949 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2012) to 26.56% in 2017 (World Bank, 2017), there has been additional challenges on issues such as poverty, increased inequality in the larger urban centres, high unemployment rates and congestion (World Bank, 20008: 10). As the government attempted to address these issues, encounters between the urban poor with relevant state agencies responsible for ensuring adequate land is available for the construction of roads, railway tracks and electricity lines are conceived as state harassment. Often, these confrontations became so violent that government authorities took radical measures to bulldoze down structures in slum areas such as Kibera and even set them on fire between 2004-2006 (COHRE, 2006: 21-23). These actions led to anti-government sentiments and provided a fertile ground for the development of populist ideologies in mainstream politics.

It is based on this background that the Kenyan political landscape continues to evolve in an environment characterised populism especially in the last two decades spearheaded by opposition political parties such as Orange Democratic Movement lead by Odinga who has mastered the art of capitalizing on the disenchantment of the urban dwellers in the top three leading cities of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu aided by an impressive political career vita of sacrifice and heroism especially regarding the second liberation struggle for democracy (Oloo, 2007: 98) and personal charisma in packaging and fanning political messages. Previously, before commanding national support and despite his record of hoping from one political party to the next, Odinga since 1992 easily managed to win all his electoral campaigns as a member of parliament representing one of the biggest informal settlement in Africa estimated to

house close to one million people in Nairobi (De Smedt 2009). His oratory skills in which he makes use of humor, deep riddles, proverbs, and short stories attract massive crowds during rallies. Lynch (2006: 255) notes that Raila Odinga stirs up the strongest of conceivable emotions either in the form of “Railmania” or “Railaphobia”.

2007, 2013 and 2017 general elections in Kenya adequately captures the political influence held by Raila Odinga in Kenya using his populist strategies that continue to attract more Kenyans while cementing a very loyal political support base. In his agenda and in extension that of the Orange Democratic Movement by which he vied on as a presidential candidate, Odinga has always emphasized on his desire to end the economic marginalization of certain ethnic communities, create employment opportunities for the youth, offer free primary and secondary education as well as establish a social welfare system to channel financial assistance to the poor (Chege, 2008). He has continuously criticized the government for their failure to deliver on their electoral manifestos as well as condemned alleged rampant corruption in government. In one of his speeches, Odinga said, “I give you a cast-iron guarantee that I will be a champion of social justice and social emancipation – a champion of the poor, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged in our nation. I will redress the imbalance between the powerful and the weak, between the rich and the poor, between the satisfied and the hungry” (Odinga, 2007: 7). As a result, Odinga’s use of populist rhetoric such as referring to himself as the ‘Peoples President’ or as his is famously known as ‘Baba’ (Father) or ‘Jakom’ (Chairman) or ‘Tinga’ (Tractor) or ‘Agwambo’ (Mysterious One), in his electoral campaigns has not only endured him to the urban poor, but also among the youth and the rural voters despite his relatively more advanced age.

As witnessed during the 2007 general elections, the Orange Democratic Movement led by Raila Odinga won the parliamentary majority garnering 99 seats followed by the then incumbent Party of National Unity (PNU) with a mere 43 seats lead by the former president Mwai Kibaki (Modi et al., 2008). However, in this election, it has been widely accepted that Raila Odinga was rigged out of the presidency through impunity of state machinery (Wahman, 2014: 228). The international observer groups such as the Commonwealth Observation Mission, European Union Observation Mission (EU Mission, 2008), Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHRC, 2008) and the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2008) all produced reports reaffirming the same. But Odinga populist strategies did not only appeal to the urban poor but also large sections of the rural voters from other regions who continue to feel marginalized.

The run-up to the 2017 general elections and the immediate events that followed thereafter adequately captured the extent of populism in Kenya. What was witnessed was the surge of populism into the heart of democratic institutions that were transformed into centers of political elite power competition? For instance, on the 10th of July 2017, just less than a month to the general elections, the executive arm of government led by the President Uhuru Kenyatta, accused the judiciary through based on their judicial jurisprudences of colluding with the opposition to delay and disrupt the 2017 general elections (Kenya Law, 2017). This came at the backdrop of a court ruling against firms such as the Dubai-based Al Ghurair Printing & Publishing company who had been awarded the tender to print ballot materials (Daily Nation, 19 December 2016). The government coalition dismissed this ruling and made claims that the courts wanted to create a constitutional crisis that would lead to a power-sharing formula by the opposition in a coalition government.

The study titled “Populism and State Capture” by Chesterley et. al (2017) provides an illustration of why institutional capture becomes the cornerstone of not only the populist segments of the political elite but also the non-populist segments because seizing the control of the relevant institutions becomes a key component of re-election agenda. As such, the populist case for Kenya is not only limited to the opposition but also incumbent governments who despite protests against controversial or disputed electoral victories exploit deeply rooted disenchantment of the masses, make ideal promises to voters about economic boom once elected into office.

4. THE CASE OF ZAMBIA

Populism in Zambia is best projected through the activities of the Patriotic Front (PF) led by the former late president Michael Sata also popularly known as 'King Cobra' (Mwiinga, 1994) because of his viciousness to political opponents especially after he was elected the president in 2011. The Patriotic Front (PF) was established in 2001 and following a poor performance by the party at the 2001 elections whereby Sata finished seventh out of the eleven presidential candidates with a mere 3.4% of all the votes cast and an even lower 2.8% vote in the parliamentary category winning just a single seat for the party (Cheeseman, 2014: 343). This influenced Sata and the Patriotic Front (PF) party to institute populist strategies as they sought to expand their influence on the Zambian political scene. Indeed, this change in tact resulted in improved performance in the subsequent elections. Despite losing the next two elections in 2006 and 2008, Sata and the Patriotic Front (PF) in extension experienced improved performances in their voter support bases of 29.37% and 38.13% respectively (Fraser, 2017: 457-58). The Patriotic Front party shifted their strategies towards the urban poor and his Bemba ethnic group in the rural areas (Simutanyi 2010: 7). This enabled the party to win all the major constituencies in the urban centers and in the Northern provinces.

But unlike South Africa and to some extent Kenya, the political parties in Zambia prior to the establishment of the Patriotic Front party, were more reflective of personalities who provided the finances to run the activities of the party and rendering the parties without any ideological clarity as the parties became mere vehicles of advancing individual political ambitions (Rakner, 2003: 124). This provided the Patriotic Front with an opportunity to address the ideological gap. Similar to the challenges experienced in Kenya and South Africa such as an expanding urban and even rural poverty, increasing unemployment and rapid urbanization with a commensurate improvement in public service delivery, Sata's populist strategies appealed to the majority urban poor. Additionally, the structural adjustment programs initiated in the 1990s on developing countries (Heidhues, 2011: 56) had already created animosity between the urban dwellers and the government due to the new policies on currency controls, reduced social services and removal of price subsidies (Myers and Murray 2007). On a much broader scale, the austerity measures that were introduced minimized public expenditure on education, industrialization, health, trade liberalization, and urban infrastructural development, drove Zambians into informal employment as industries and firms laid-off workers or introduced imposed wage freezes (Mwiinga, 1993).

The efforts of Levy Mwanawasa to boost the macro-economic status of Zambia did little to uplift the urban conditions. Under the regime of Mwanawasa, the government harassed dwellers in informal settlements from time to time as witnessed for example, during a cholera outbreak in 2004 when a market in Soweto was razed down by the government without an offer for alternative land for the small-scale traders to settle (Hansen, 2007). Additionally, due to the traffic congestions that was brought about by the hawkers in the central business district of the capital city, Lusaka, and other parts of the city, the government introduced strict measures such as the Street Vending and Nuisances Act that introduced levy fees on already struggling vendors as well as cracking down heavily on these vendors (Times of Zambia 2007).

These growing frustrations laid the ground for Sata to fan out his populist agenda that saw the Patriotic Front (PF) become attractive to an increasingly large informal urban majority and secure an electoral majority win for parliamentary seats despite Sata losing the presidential vote with a close two-percentage gap in elections that were rubberstamped by both local and international observers as having been conducted under free and fair political environment (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011: 5). Winning the majority parliamentary seats in Lusaka was very significant as it thrust the Patriotic Front into political dominance as well as giving the party a national outlook because the population in Lusaka is highly heterogeneous (Hansen, 2002). The Patriotic Front and Sata campaigned amongst the street vendors, bus and taxi drivers, marketers and the youth who were attracted by the populist political rhetoric of Michael

Sata. He also exploited political theatrics such as symbolism whereby, his campaign materials featured broken clocks as the symbol for the Movement of Multiparty Democracy that constituted the government at the time, to symbolize that their time had come to an end (Wines, 2006). Moreover, the symbol of the Patriotic Front itself was that of Noah's Ark with an invitation to all Zambians to get on the boat and be saved from the economic difficulties brought about by the government on Zambians.

Indeed, Sata and the Patriotic Front (PF) incorporated symbolism, language, party structure, and ideology to endear himself and the party to the people. Most of his political messages were also passed down to the voters through vernacular languages during the campaign trails (Wines, 2006). This was more appealing to the rural voters who would not be easily swayed by the slogan of lower taxes, more jobs, and more money. Additionally, he presented himself as having not received adequate education and therefore present himself as a common man who understood the struggles of the regular Zambians. But in order to appeal to the rural voters, the Patriotic Front (PF) also exploited ethnolinguistic ties in order to establish a coalition with the rural voters who together with the urban poor could provide enough votes for a majority win in an election. Sata, for instance, exploited his shared identity with the Bemba ethnic group and continuously implied that the Bemba were at risk of political marginalization (Mulubale, 2017. 55). As such, in advancing his populist strategies, Sata adopted a dualistic strategy that constituted the mobilization of the urban poor and ethnolinguistic identities to woo voter in rural settings.

5. DISCUSSION

From the analysis provided in this paper, it has been demonstrated that both Zuma and contemporarily Julius Malema both of South Africa, Raila Odinga of Kenya and Sata of Zambia applied populist strategies that infused personal charisma coupled with great oratory skills to fan out political messages targeted to a majority of the urban poor and exploiting ethnic identity and alignments in the rural settings. They all mastered the art of projecting their self-images as 'men of the people' who understand the daily struggles of the poor and are additionally comfortable in campaigning and mingle with people in the informal settlements. But even more explicitly, these leaders and their political parties established coalitions with other political parties that constituted both metropolitan and peripheral elements.

Relative to other regions, populism in Sub-Saharan Africa draws similar components to those found in contemporary Latin America such as the establishment of coalitions to compete for political power during elections. There is also the element of fusing charismatic leadership with populist policies that promise rapid socio-political and economic transformation prioritized to the concerns of the subaltern section of the society, especially in urban localities. Similar to the Latin Americas, these policies have originated from the popular disenchantment of the people towards the incumbent regimes especially due to the failure of government to provide essential public service delivery, failure to tackle rampant corruption, failure to sustainably address the annual rampant budgetary deficits that has led to very high public debts and an increasing wage bill that only benefits the political and public service elites who pocket huge salaries and allowances.

However, there are also differences witnessed between populism in Sub-Saharan Africa and that experience in the Latin Americas or parts of Europe. Foremost the current crop of populist leaders in the Latin Americas or Europe have achieved their status as political outsiders. This gave them the credibility to the voters of their respective countries as their projected images was that of non-political bipartisan (Roberts, 1995: 94) to the mainstream political parties and as such, could claim to represent the common interest instead of those of the established politicians and political parties. Additionally, most of the populist parties in Latin America do not often engage in coalitions for example in the case of Bolivia. The Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party of Evo Morales, never engaged in any of the coalition governments and therefore the party attracted support from the masses that were discontented with the traditional or mainstream political parties (Madrid, 2008: 493). This was also witnessed by Hugo Chavez who condemned Venezuela's oligarchical elites for the socio-political and economic challenges that were facing Venezuelans and promised radical reforms in government.

Weyland, 2003: 828) argues that this support that Chavez enjoyed from the Venezuelans was largely because he was perceived as an outsider of the political systems. Indeed, by a huge contrast, Zuma, Odinga, and Sata have been in the mainstream political systems in their respective countries for decades and have often engaged in coalition building for example with Mbeki, Kibaki and Mwanawasa respectively. However, despite these attributes, they have all succeeded in projecting themselves as political outsiders and have at one point or another condemned government for socio-economic and political inequalities in their respective countries.

Additionally, according to Roberts (2007: 4), relative to the projection of populism in Latin America, populist leaders have emerged in a political environment that is characterized by a continuous process of party-breakdown in the long-established political party systems especially in the countries with high gaps in economic inequalities as outsider candidates. However, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, most of the countries are in a process of democratization but, with high political volatility in the sense that the African populist leaders are not emerging as alternatives to the established political order and institutionalized systems of party politics, but rather as substitutes in the absence of institutionalised political party systems with clear ideologies and frameworks that provide for important components such as political party financing (Bogaards, 2008).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Africa is at a very critical stage that is characterized by the reconciliation of the rapid demographic transformations and socioeconomic inequalities. As such, populist African leaders have become flexible to these new conditions and have succeeded in merging traditional forms of political mobilization like individualism with political awareness of the issues that affect the citizens. But even more surprisingly, some of these populist ideas have begun attracting support even from the rural voters. However, whether these populist leaders will be able to deliver on their populist ideologies will continue to be a question of future research now that populism continues to remain a relatively new phenomenon but one that is expanding rapidly. On the bright side, however, the incorporation of the concerns by the urban poor into political discussion discourse may lead to the transformation of political parties away from personalities into a more legitimate representative of the concerning issues of the masses.

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