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Inaugural lecture
Africa's troubled transitions: Going nowhere very fast

Opening remarks

An inaugural lecture is an opportunity for one to profess, henceforth, what they will be professing for the rest of their lives. Since my appointment is Professor of African Politics, I am going to re-read African Politics from the West but using African eyes. But first *a proviso:* I was warned by many against taking Africa as a monolith by generalising its politics and political phenomena. After all, how does one find common denominators on a continent consisting of 54 countries, seven time zones, and thousands of languages, cultures, and nations? Yet, I will go ahead and do just that by generalising political transitions in Africa. In this lecture, I will argue that African transitions are a product of global power politics and that local transitions are a product of, responds to and are controlled and response to the world-system.

Structure of the lecture

My lecture is organised in ten sections, five of which are diagnostic and three are prescriptive. I begin by giving the context of the lecture. Then proceed to outline what I term Africa's orthodox political transitions which are Africa's responsive transitions. In the third section, I proffer what I believe are Africa's real political transitions. The dost transition was political empire to economic empire. In this transition, I emphasise the role of the then two superpowers, the United States of America (USA), and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

I then proceed outline the second real transition which occurred in Africa which was the transition from modern state to free market economies. My emphasis in this section will be on the fallacy of decolonisation as a political transition which was meant to forerun economic and then epistemic independence.

The third transition was I will term the Balkans in Africa which was necessitated by the problem of managing majority/minority relations in post-colonial Africa. The shift in the relationship between African nations and Global Powers as Africa was informed by the Balkans war a s global call on how not to manage differences, especially majority / minority relations. The fourth and last political transition is the current one in which the international order is structurally shifting in three directions: Eastwards, Westwards and Southwards.

My academic career was around the issue of transitional justice. It will be unacademic of me not to position transitional justice in the context of global power politics. I do this in the seventh section by arguing that there is neither transition nor justice in transitional justice. This takes me to the preceptive section where I argue for the deconstruction and then reconstitution of the political. In the last section of my lecture, I pat attention to my vocation of African Politics a s sub discipline of Political Sciences by restating the purpose of African Politics in Africa.

The context of the lecture

It is an honour for me to give this lecture at a time of great political turmoil in the world. Three wars are being waged in three continents. One is Europe between Russia and Ukraine. The second in Africa between two rival generals in Sudan. The third war is in the Middle East between Hamas and Israel. The world is undergoing a seismic political transition. It is therefore befitting that my lecture focuses on political transitions.

The central question I am responding to in this lecturer is: *If Africa transitioned from colonialism to post-colonialism, who drove that transition, both locally and internationally and for what reasons?*

In the first instance, why do people desire political transitions? People desire political transitions because of the failures of the global system to align itself with their expectations, i.e., there is s misalignment between the global system and local aspirations. This gap gives rise to desires for political transitions. So, transitions in Africa are quite peculiar because not only are they misunderstood and misrepresented, but they are also treated as a peculiar event. What do I mean, take the statement, "transitions work *except* in Africa". Which became, "transitions work including in Africa". This is the peculiar case of Africa's persistence deficits. Why is there something always lacking in Africa? Along its history, Africa is presented as having lacked history, independence, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, credible elections, and even table manners. The short answer is that the narratives of a deficit and defective Africa are an integral part of the coloniality of power meant to accommodate and ensure the survival of what Immanuel Wallerstein termed the world-system (Wallerstein 2004). The world-system is a concept that describes the structure of the "capitalist world-economy", how it is structured, how it came into existence and how it functions.

The historical context of this lecture was marked when African countries gained political independence. For Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, at independence, African states had four options: (1) to create a new political system, (2) to continue with the colonial model of statecraft but with a local management, (3)

return to the precolonial ways of statecraft or, (4) blend the pre-colonial and the colonial (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1985, 2004).

As part of contextualising this lecture, I must define the term political transition. The word transition is full of many applications in life. In sport, there is a transition from defence to attack. In chemistry, thermodynamics and atomic physics, there are various forms of transitions such as phase transitions, quantum phase transition, and electron transitions which occurs in electronic structure theory and spectroscopy to describe the transition of an electron from one electronic state to another, leading to the emission or absorption of electromagnetic radiation.

In Political Sciences, political transitions denote a complete change of the structure, institutions, and the systems of government, including the ideology, the thought processes and the logics which underwrote the previous regime. There are three categories of transitions, (1) negotiated transitions, (2) evolutionary transition, and (3) revolutionary transitions. Stated differently, when societies transition from one political system to the other, such political transitions are either evolutionary, revolutionary, or negotiated.

Orthodox political transitions in Africa: How we read political transitions in Africa

There are two conceptual sets of political transitions in Africa, one orthodox and the other decolonial. The orthodox script for political transitions in Africa reads as follows:

1. *Decolonisation and independences* - Ghana (1957), Kenya (1963), Algeria (1962), Nigeria (1960).
2. *Coup d'états and regime changes* - Ghana (1966), Nigeria (1966), Uganda (1971), Libya (1969), Sudan (1989), and Mali (2012).
3. *One-party rule and dictatorships* - Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, Kenya under Daniel Arap Moi, and Equatorial Guinea under Francisco Macias Nguema and later his nephew Teodoro Obiang.
4. *Democratization and multi-party systems and elections* – (South Africa (1994), Ghana (1992), Benin (1991), and Zambia (1991).
5. *Conflict and civil wars* - Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the Rwandan Genocide (1994), and the ongoing conflicts in countries like Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
6. *Presidential succession related transitions* - Zimbabwe after Robert Mugabe (2017), Angola after José Eduardo dos Santos (2017), and Algeria after Abdelaziz Bouteflika (2019).
7. *Military coups in the Sahel region* – (2021: Sudan, Guinea, Mali, Chad, 2022: Burkina Faso, Niger 2023).

These political transitions must not be read as episodic but rather as a continuum with a common denominator. This common denominator is a product of African efforts to solve *the African problem.*

What is the Africa problem, one might ask? The Africa problem is that of an incapable post-colonial state and the resultant existence of an unacceptable and intolerable gap between post-colonial aspirations and reality in three broad areas: (1) human development, (2) human security, and (3) governance. These problems manifest variously, for example as:

(1) The *domino* military coups in the Sahel,
(2) The simultaneous occurrence of natural resources and political instability in places such as the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC),
(3) The third term syndrome, and its cousin the politics of long incumbency and
(4) The difficult question: What is the best vehicle for managing political succession in Africa?
   a. Is it the clan, as is the case in Somalia?
   b. Is it forming new countries through session as happened in Eritrea and South Sudan?
   c. Is it the military as is the case in Egypt and Nigeria at some time?
   d. Is it the monarchy as in Eswatini, Lesotho, and Morocco?
   e. Is the constitution as in South Africa and Botswana.
   f. Or maybe it is the family as is the case of the Ayademas in Togo and the Kabilas in the DRC?

The incapable post-colonial state in Africa, aka the self-help state, is structurally linked to Africa's problematic political transition from Empire to the modern post-colonial state and its variant, transitional justice.

But who drives political transitions, how do political transitions occur, are there legitimate and illegitimate, legal, and illegal political transitions? Who are the winners and losers when politics transitions? Do political transitions change anything for the *povo*, the *demos* or are they just instrument for reordering and reorganising the world-system? My interim response is that because the world order, which is a product of the world system is an expression of the will of the strongest, any attempt by the weak to assert their interests becomes a violation of international laws, norms, and standards. I respond fully by exploring what I term Africa's real political transition.

Africa's real political transitions

As part of my response, I propose the following transitions as the real transitions that shaped and continue to shape Africa.

1. *Firstly,* the transition from Empire to the modern state which occurred in the 1960s onward.
2. *Secondly,* the transition from modern states to free market economies.
3. *Thirdly,* the transition resulting from the Balkans wars which resulted in the formulation of two problematic principles: The Responsibility to Protect (and the right to punish). This was in response to the challenges of managing colonially politicised differences which manifested as ethnic and nationalist tensions in multi-ethnic states. I am deploying the term conscious of its negative connotations and how according to Terence ranger, ethnicity was invented as an analytical category for explaining colonial real and perceived African conflicts (Ranger 1989). Here the Global Power-Africa nexus transitioned into formalised asymmetrical power structures where powerful states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, and Russia have individual formal relations with the whole of Africa such as the UK whose Commonwealth has 54 members, and FOCAC, 54 members. Here the global powers reorganised Africa in order to accommodate each other internationally while managing local differences.
4. *Fifthly* and ongoing transition in Africa is a product of the international system reorganising itself as a result of predominantly the Russia-Ukraine war. This transition is locally presenting itself as a series of military coups in West Africa and as the Sudanese war between two rival army generals. These *coups detats* in the Sahel region are a localised effect of the Russia-Ukraine war which itself is a re-enactment of cold war rivalry playing out locally in Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and South Sudan. Specifically, this is why these military coups enjoy local popular support while facing international condemnation.

Having briefly outlined these four real political transitions, allow me to move and explain them in detail starring with the transition from political empire to economic empire.

From political empire to economic empire: On the role of the US and the former USSR

My entry point here is two pronged. *First,* that the initial political transition in Africa which I intend to put on trial, was the transition from Empire to the modern state which occurred around 1945. This transition made false promises which were embedded in multilateralism. Multilateral institutions lack the capacity to influence the behaviour of powerful states thereby rendering the international system genuinely anarchical, to borrow from Hedley Bull.

This transition was more exogenous than endogenous as it predominantly occurred at the international level. Here, the world-order system was reorganising itself in the context of the rise of the United States and former USSR to becoming the two superpowers producing the bipolar world. I want to profess that Africa's decolonisation project and the subsequent establishment of *states in Africa*, as opposed to *Africa states*, was predominantly driven by the USA and the former USSR for their own strategic and national interests. Africa's independence had more to do with the international system reorganising itself, as opposed to the effort of the gallant sons and daughters of the soil who fought for the independence of their various countries.

The US was for long invested in having access to the African market. This history can be traced to the Atlantic Charter signed between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 14 August 1941. The ideals of self-determination, free trade and freedom of the seas were formally instituted in this document. This was a culmination of previous incremental US effort to access world markets such Woodrow Wilson's 14 points which outlined his vision for ending World War I, the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and finally the 1945 United Nations charter.

Locally, internal anti-colonial movements who were fighting to dismantle the Empire from the local were supported by both sides of the Cold War, albeit from different fronts. China, and the former USSR and its allies such as the former Yugoslavia provided material and doctrinal support while the US pushed for the decolonisation of Africa at the United Nations (UN). The US played a significant role in the design and adoption of Chapter XI of the UN Charter, titled: *Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories.*

The independence celebrated in Africa from the 1960s onwards was not the independence of the African states. Rather it was the independence of great powers, specifically USA and the former USSR to access African markets and to enlarge their political spheres of influence into areas which hitherto were the domains of the political empires of the French, the British, and to some extent the Germans, the Portuguese, and the Italians. The USA and the former USSR had no physical colonies in Africa and wanted the proverbial piece of the pie by also exerting their influence and establishing their interests in Africa. France and the UK were specifically pressured especially by the USA to dismantle their political empires in Africa. When the political empire was dismantled, the reconstituted empire was an economic empire.

Given that the US and the former USSR were vying for spheres of influence in Africa and in Europe, European colonisers faced unsustainable and unrelenting pressure from both within Africa and on the international front. France and the United Kingdom were recipients of the Marshall Plan, officially

known as the European Recovery Program (ERP), which was initiated in 1948 by the United States to aid Western Europe in rebuilding their economies after World War II. There was a reciprocal trade off by the World War II ravaged Europeans and the US. European colonisers had to trade their own economic recovery and reconstruction with granting their colonies political independence. The US viewed empires as a hindrance to free trade and the accessibility of resources and not as a hindrance to democracy and human rights in Africa. Most importantly, the US favoured a world-system based on independent nations rather than empires. Armed with the Marshall Plan, it was easy for the United States to put pressure on European colonisers to grant political independence to their colonies. The reorganisation of the world-system resulted in the shifting of the centre of centres from the United Kingdom across the Atlantic Ocean to the United State where it resides till today. The most important decisions affecting Africa have been taken in Washington, hence the saying attributed to Robert Mugabe that: "it is time that Africans vote in US elections, because the most important decisions that affect their lives are made in the US and not in Africa". The US emerged from the Second World War unscratched and had huge capital which they had to invest, and Africa became one of the obvious and lucrative spheres of influence, hence their seeming benevolence in agitating for the independence of African states.

Stated differently, the first transition in Africa, contrary to common conviction, was not a transition from colonialism to post-colonialism. While that is how it manifested at the local level, at the international level where it mattered most, it was a transition that dismantled exclusive political empires and established economic empires. This transition from Empire to the modern state, in a way completed the Westphalian project which was to impose the modern state as a mechanism for managing minority / majority relations. However, in Africa it presented as the problem of managing the differences between locals and Westerners.

Let me emphasis this point by using metaphor. How do we read and make sense of the way the world-system reinvents itself with effects accruing to Africa. This can be liked to a volcano. Volcanoes do not erupt at the centre of the earth's crust. They look for fault lines and exploits pre-existing weaknesses on the earth's crust to find where they will erupt. The problem is therefore not two rival generals in Sudan, but the world-system reorganising and realigning itself.

Let me turn to the role and position of the anti-colonial movement of the 1960s in Africa which also sought to dismantle the physical empire. Undoubtedly, these were anti-colonial movements that were also anti-systemic, genuinely fighting for changing the world-system. These revolutionaries included the founding leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Haile Selassie, King Mohammed

the 5th, Julius Nyerere, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Mugabe, Samora Machel, and many others. While they succeeded in partaking in the dismantling the physical empire, the empire mutated into an economic empire which, when later faced with further existential threats, it mutated into the current cognitive / epistemic empire (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011, 2018, 2020, 2021). This cognitive / epistemic empire also manifests are an emerging tech oligarchy which is busy usurping both individual and state sovereignties (Benyera 2021; Hardt and Negri 2000; Passavant and Dean 2004) . Hence, in Africa, the war continues, only the enemy changes. This mutativeness of the Empire is one of the many survival mechanisms of the world-system.

Given the general belief in decolonisation as a genuine African political transition, I proceed to critique this view by arguing in the following section that the decolonisation of Africa failed to alter global power relations which actualise life in Africa.

The fallacy of decolonisation as a political transition

The *first* transition from Empire to the modern state in Africa masqueraded as decolonisation. This is solely because after this transition or decolonisation processes, globally the weak remained weak, the strong remained strong, the victimised remained victimised and this remains the situation today.

After the first transition, whatever presented itself as some form of transition in Africa, especially and including transitional justice was actually a response to the wider world-system reorganising itself. Transitional justice became a project of sanitising colonial and apartheid atrocities as it failed to alter the logic of colonialism and apartheid which is the hierachisation of humans into superior and inferior humans (Ramón Grosfoguel 2015).

The second major international event which led to the decolonisation of Africa was the growing call for human rights globally, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War. In Africa, Africans especially those who had fought in the Second World War had realised that white people also die and can therefore be defeated in war. This fuelled Africans' resolve for decolonisation. This was aided especially by the formation of the United Nations and the adoption of its Charter, which had a specific clause which called for decolonisation.

The adoption of the UN charter is cardinal in Africa's problematic transitions as it inaugurated the phenomena of what Ricardo Sanin Restrepo termed encrypting power (Sanín-Restrepo 2018, 2020). This transition saw power being encrypted in multilateral institutions especially the P5 of the United Nations Security Council.

Contestations for the control of Africa

The competition for Africa as a sphere of influence between Europe, the US and the USSR was not cordial. One of the rivalries that ensued was what became known as the Kennedy-de Gaulle Rivalry. Kennedy's approach emphasised democracy and economic development, while de Gaulle's approach focused on maintaining French political and economic interests in its former colonies, something called "*Françafrique*" and formally France-Africa Summit.

So important to the international system was the question of the future of the empire, especially in Africa, that when Winston Churchill was being conferred with a Doctorate of Law (LL.D). at Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts, US) on 6 September 1943. He was asked a very important question: *what will happen to the future of the Empire*? To which Churchill responded, "…*the empires of the future are the empires of the mind*". What did Churchill mean by the empires of the future are the empires of the mind? In a rapidly changing world, traditional notions of empire-building through territorial expansion and military conquest will give way to new forms of influence and power. Instead of physical dominance and colonisation, Churchill implied that smart power, which is a mixture of hard and soft power depending on the players and deserved outcomes) would become more critical in shaping the and realigning the world-system. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind, empires of ideas, driven by innovating and developing new products and making a "creative monopoly", Churchill foretold. Elsewhere, I addressed the global contestations for Africa's resources when I argued that the Fourth Industrial Revolution rendered data the new gold, the new oil and that the pursuit of Africa's data is producing the coloniality of data which in turn will eventually lead to the colonisation of Africa (Benyera 2021).

When we celebrate independence in Africa, we must ask the question, who got independence in 1958 in Ghana, in 1960 in Cote, d'Ivoire, 1980 in Zimbabwe, 1994 in South Africa and so on? Is it African people who got independence from their former European colonisers or it is the United States and the USSR that got the independence to access Africa as their new sphere of influence in the Cold War?

At the local level, African founding leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea, Leopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Patrice Lumumba of the DRC, Amílcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Samora Machel of Mozambique, and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of Nigeria were immersed in the tensions and debates within the anti-colonial movement regarding the structure of the post-colonial world-system. They individually and collectively grappled with the questions of economic development, social justice, and the balance between national sovereignty and global cooperation in the post-colony. This manifested as

various ideologies such as *Ujamaa na Kujitegemea* (Socialism and Self-Reliance), Raibowism, Harambee (pulling together), Humanism with a Zambian Character, Chimurenga (perpetual warfare), etc. This issue was the subject of the book by Adom Getachew titled *Remaking the World After the Empire* (2021).

The second example of the role of the global powers in Africa's first transition is the Lancaster House conference. When Zimbabwe's independence was being negotiated, the draft constitution which became the 1979 Zimbabwe Lancaster House Constitution was brought by Joseph Robinette Biden Jr, the current President of the United States of America. So, if Zimbabwe was not that important, why did the Americans trouble themselves with drafting Zimbabwe's constitution? Given that the United States was not part of the colonisation of Zimbabwe, what were they doing at Lancaster House? This was the Americans asserting themselves in the reorganisation of the world-system, the American way. The independences of Africa had to be managed and monitored so that they could not jeopardise American interest.

On the other hand, the former USSR and China were also asserting themselves and securing future favours with African countries by militarily, materially, financially, and doctrinally supporting the decolonisation efforts. The decolonisation of Africa was therefore the coming together of great powers asserting themselves and influencing Africa's future trajectory.

Linked to that is the fact Zimbabwe's 1979 transitional elections stand as the only elections in Africa to be supervised, not monitored, not observed, but supervised. It is also these elections that gave birth to the now famous phrase *free and fair elections*. Again, it is the Americans that demanded and made sure that the 1979 Rhodesian elections were free and fair. Most importantly, for this lecture, after the 1979 Rhodesian elections, the Americans and their European partners never bothered to supervise elections in Zimbabwe. This is because the most important transition had occurred, which was to initiate the newly formed Zimbabwe into neo-liberalism.

If the colonial problem in Rhodesia was between the African nationalists and Ian Smith and his regime, what were the Americans doing at the Lancaster House conference? The US had a strong representation comprising Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Delaware Senator Joe Biden, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Chester Crocker. This demonstrates the importance of the global powers in determining and directing this political transition.

I am professing that it is a dishonesty and ahistorical argument to assert that African liberation movements asserted themselves against their colonisers and secured political independence for their countries, largely due to their efforts, unhindered by and despite global power politics. Every political transition in

Africa, including transitional justice, is backdropped by the bigger picture of global power politics which structures these transitions.

In the spirit of transitions, let me transition to the second transition which was from the modern state to free market economies during the period 1980s to 1990s. If I stick with the empire as my analytical framework, the transition second transition was a transition from the political empire to the economic empire.

The Second Transition: From Modern State to Free Market Economies

Orthodox African transitions, severally stated as:

(1) *Coup d'états and regime changes.*
(2) *One-party rule and dictatorships.*
(3) *Democratisation, multi-party systems and elections*

were in fact responses to the international shift toward free market economies, policies and economic liberalisation which was largely driven by external pressures, international financial institutions, and Western development paradigms. I want to single out the two sources of external pressures which produced this transition from modern state to free market economies: firstly, the Washington Consensus, and secondly, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP). The effect and impact of these external pressures produced transitions in Africa such as dictatorships, one-party states, and various unconstitutional changes in governments. SAPs were Western-dominated international financial institutions programs mainly from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank which prescribed economic structural adjustments as a condition for African countries to receive financial assistance. Development aid was twined with toxic and at times anti-Black external conditions. These programs misaligned the post-colony's nations and states, thereby setting the two on a collision course which produced much suffering, discontent and eventually transitions. By emphasising free market-oriented reforms and economic liberalisation for post-colonial states to achieve economic growth and stability, the Washington Consensus caused multiple transitions in Africa as post-colonial democratisation failed to translate to improved livelihoods, i.e., human rights i.e., the right to rights. The post-colonial state was set on a path to becoming an incapable state as the market and not the people became the focal point.

The purpose of the Washington Consensus and its resultant policies was to accord the West full access to African resources through unfettered market access which African countries could not refuse. In a way, the Washington Consensus reversed the gains of political independence and rendered the quest for economic independence even harder. As an encrypted asymmetrical power

structure, SAPs had an array of debilitating policies such as the wrongly names Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) of 1996, and the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) of 1987.

The sum effect of these programs and policies was to disempower both the African leaders and the population. These policies usurped both state sovereignty and individual sovereignty resulting in the state and the nation blaming each other in accounting for the unavailability of the promised capable post-colonial state.

Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, and General Ibrahim Babangida were among leaders who lost power as the impact of SAPs resulted in major political unrests in their respective countries. It is not local democratic forces that resulted in these political transitions but forces from the impact of the internationally imposed SAPs and their various cousin programs.

The second transition in Africa manifested as the global powers disowned and started demonising African founding leaders most of whom they had idolised and even knighted. The reason was not that African founding leaders became megalomaniac. It is because they were no longer relevant and useful for the Western agenda as they were replaced by the Washington Consensus. Some of the African leaders had become openly rebellious and opposed to the Western agenda. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Patrice Lumumba of the DRC, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, and Robert Mugabe Zimbabwe were all open critics of the imposition of western demands on Africa. The Empire responded in one of the following three ways. It either (1) absorbed them, (2) disciplined them, or (3) dispensed them. These rebellious African leaders caused the world-system to realign itself and the war in the Balkans was the perfect backdrop. The results constitute the third transition in Africa which was a *rigor mortic* response to global politics.

The Third Transition: The Balkans in Africa

The breaking up of the former Yugoslavia and the resultant Balkan wars of the early 1990s resulted in the creation of two major principles of principles: (1) *humanitarian interventions* and (2) the *responsibility to protect* (R2P), 2001. The Balkans in Africa was necessitated by the problem of how to manage majority/minority relations in post-colonial Africa where especially the Black nation was united by the need to fight a common enemy. In the absence of a common white driven oppressive political system, Africa lacked a common rallying point and found themselves divided along many lines such as religious and sectoral lines. This complicated the state-making and nation-building programmes leading to further discontentment.

There are many examples to site here. Nigeria experienced religious violence between Christians and Muslims, particularly in the central and northern regions of the country. The city of Kaduna and the Jos Plateau region have been particularly affected by such violence. In Sudan, religious tensions have been a significant factor in the conflicts between the predominantly Muslim northern Sudan and the largely Christian and animist south. These tensions contributed to the prolonged Sudanese Civil War, which eventually led to the secession of South Sudan in 2011. In the Central African Republic, religious and sectarian violence between Christian and Muslim communities erupted in the in 2012, leading to a protracted conflict. In Mali there were religiously motivated violence, including attacks by Islamist militant groups on civilians and state institutions.

Unlike in the Balkans where the former Yugoslavia broke into different countries, the management of differences in the absence of a unifying common enemy in Africa was accorded a different solution: to treat Africa as a monolith wherein powerful countries deal with Africa as one political entity.

To affirm my profession that major political events in Africa are in response to the world-system repositioning itself, I point you to the seemingly absurd and highly asymmetrical relations such as:

1. Franco-African Summit, 1973.
2. Russia-Africa Summit October, 2019.
3. Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) October 2000.
4. German-African Business Summit, 2004.
5. U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit August 2014.

These relationships are forms of transition where 54 African countries are in asymmetrical duress contracts with major global powers. Stated differently, why is there no Zimbabwe-Europe Summit or a Malawi-Asia Summit?

The fourth transition: The ongoing global transition - Eastwards, Westwards and Southwards

The fourth and ongoing transition in Africa is a product of the international system reorganising itself predominantly as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war. This transition is locally presenting itself as a series of military coups in West Africa and as the Sudanese war between two rival army generals. These *coups* are a re-enactment of cold war rivalry playing out locally in Gabon, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and South Sudan. This is why these military *coups* enjoy local popularity and international condemnation.

During the ongoing fourth political transition, the world is strategically drifting in three ideologically irreconcilable directions. One block is drifting eastwards, another westwards and the last southwards. The current breakdown of

hierarchy is a product of the accumulated imbalances of the global order. I interpret these shifts in five ways. *Firstly*, these shifts are a challenge to Western hegemony. *Secondly,* they are a manifestation of the world-system in search of a new balance of power. *Thirdly,* and linked to the first, these shifts demonstrate a breakdown of hierarchy in the world-system. *Fourthly,* they demonstrate the weakening, and some would say, redundance of multilateralism and the resurgence of classic realism based national interest. *Fifthly* and lastly, there is growing evidence that military victory does not equate to political victory. A military victory may create favourable conditions for political negotiations, but it does not, by itself, guarantee a sustainable solution to a conflict. Political victory on the other hand addresses the political, social, and economic factors that contribute to conflicts. The rising role of China premised on President Xi Xingping's new world order and his vision anchored on three global initiatives: (1) the Global Security Initiative (a new security architecture without alliances), (2) the Global Development Initiative (a new vehicle to fund economic growth) and (3) the Global Civilization Initiative (a new state-defined values system that is not subject to bounds of universal values) have not only geopolitical implications but systemic implications capable of, for the first time, challenging the western global dominance.

Having outlined and discussed the four major and reals political transitions, a question might ne posed: *where does this leave transitional justice*? Remember, I once boldly declared that there is neither justice nor tarnation in transitional justice and that transitional justice is part of the colonial project hence the notion of the coloniality of transitional justice. The coloniality of transitional justice refers to the impact and legacy of colonialism on the processes and approaches to achieving justice and reconciliation in post-colonial societies. It points to the futility of seeking transitional justice within the same problematic world-system which structure everything including transitional justice.

Transitional Justice: Neither transition nor just

Within the above transitions, Africa underwent transitional justice with the famed South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission being the marque mechanism. To date, Africa has had over 20 transitional justice programmes across various post-conflict communities. Yet, the question remains: *can genuine transitional justice occur in a capitalist, hierarchical, anti-black, sexist, patriarchal, world-system*? Do these conditions not nullify both the transition and the justice? For example, if South Africa underwent transitional justice, what accounts for the sustained rise in poverty and inequality? How about the land question as both the key justice and transitional factor in South Africa? Can there be both a transition and justice in South Africa without addressing the land issue?

I submit to you that transitional justice is part of African the problem masquerading as a solution. It is a world-system's survival tactic, a bridge between phases such as from empire to the modern state. Transitional justice's five pillars: (1) trials, (2) truth seeking, (3) memorialisation, (4) reparations, and (5) institutional reform (Chitsike 2012), are what I will term soft targets for the following reasons. Firstly, the world-system whose dynamics which produces localised injustices such as, long incumbency, genocides, one-party state systems, etc. remains unaccountable and outside the realms of transitional justice. Secondly, and locally, the five pillars leave the system and structures which produces the injustices intact by targeting individuals who executed systemic orders. Transitional justice is just like development discourse, human rights discourse, and liberal democracy discourse which deeply interpellated by coloniality.

It is no coincidence that the root causes of injustices in Africa, the mechanisms used to address them, and the funding all originate from the West. Since transitional justice turned into an industry, complete with toolkits, experts, manuals and best practices, transitional justice cemented its position as a mourn for the weak, just as the International Criminal Court is for those countries and communities who cannot assert their rights.

The purpose of African Politics as a sub-discipline of Political Sciences

What is the purpose of studying and teaching Political Sciences and its sub-variant, African Politics? It is to create specific, imbedded knowledge systems and strategies that effectively create and sustain a full and complete emancipated African being who partakes in global affairs as an equal global citizen. Teaching African politics is a restorative project that restore Africa's history, knowledge systems and above all, the humanity not only of Africans but for all. This is survivors' justice. It goes beyond the bifurcation of victims and perpetrators and creates a new humanity, that which survived a heinous past and is willing to reimaging and working on a new identity which is inclusive, just, and ethical.

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