

# MODERN STATE STRUCTURE AND DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS IN AFRICA

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s when the trajectory of third wave of global democratisation was sweeping through most of Eastern Europe, former soviet colonies, Asia and African states, it was widely held among scholars that democratic regimes were found to be more reliable than the sit-tight dictators. However, few decades after the observations of scholars, the euphoria that characterised democratisation in Africa had since fizzled into thin air as electoral fraud, Violence and clamp down against the opposition, repression against Civil society and the press and political impunity of the ruling party to resort to force and fraud before, during, and after elections rather than relinquishing power, became more profound and thus, underscores a dangerous democratic deficits that pervaded contemporary African states. Yet, scholarly literature espousing the discourse of democratisation has been consigned to the backwaters of multipartyism (Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle 1997), transitions paradigm (Carothers, 2002) and Presentability hypothesis (Joseph, 1998) with little focus on how state structure affect democracy and contribute to its deficits in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although recent attempts by Shaoguang Wang (2003) appear to be the starting point of debate in identifying 'state structure' and 'institutions' as a potential problem to democracy. Despite the relevance of his work in addressing the problem of state weakness in the discourse of democratisation, Wang's position though limited to Chinese state, failed to explain how state structure constitutes impediments to democratisation.

However, Wang analysis challenged our thinking in asking: how democracy emerged (especially in African states), what factors stimulated African states to emerge in the first place, and how African state structure has contributed to the problem of 'democracy' in contemporary modern epoch has remain largely uncharted course. These questions however proved to be crucial in understanding the problem militating against democratic norms, and why democratic deficits persist in African states in the contemporary era.

This paper argues that the way in which modern state structures were created in Africa inherently posed potential problems for its contemporary democratisation processes and therefore usher democracy deficits<sup>1</sup> in many African states. This premise assumes that

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of democratic deficits first became widespread use during the cold war period. It was used by Bill Newton Dunn, a British member of the European Parliament to denounce the appalling failures of democratic organizations or institutions especially governments to fulfil the principles of democracy in their practices or operation where representative and linked parliamentary integrity becomes widely discussed. Few decades after the observation of Newton Dunn, the concept regained currency following the seminal work of Ian Taylor and

analysis of the democratisation process in the contemporary Africa states and its deficits cannot be fully understood without the further deepening of our understanding of how Africa state structure evolved and usher democracy<sup>2</sup> as a discursive system of government. In order to appropriately situate this paper, emphasis will be laid on the historical context in which African states were formed, and how this has become problematic for post-colonial democratic norms in contemporary African states. Classic example of Zimbabwe will be used as a potential case study; although there is a compelling case for adopting a comparative analysis in other African states or elsewhere.

## THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN STATE SYSTEM IN AFRICA

Whenever the African past is mentioned today in comparison to others of similar periods, people either consider it to be non-existent or they underrate it. Whereas evidence has shown that the existence of States/Kingdoms in Africa goes back hundred of centuries (Rodney 1972). Prior to colonial domination, Africa society were organised, developed, and civilised in their own right contrary to the claims of western historians and anthropologists. However, the political structure that was prevalent in African states at that time was purely traditional<sup>3</sup>

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Paul William (2002). Though, both scholars did not single out democratic deficits as a study in its own right, but commented on it in course of analysing political situation in Zimbabwe. In this paper, democratic deficits will be defined in relation to African context as anti-democratic methods used in holding state power perpetually by the ruling elite in power vis-a-vis: unilateral change of the constitution to one party state, approved unlimited constitutional terms, electoral violence, intimidation of political opponents or banning official opposition, manipulation of election results, human right violation in respect to freedom of speech, press, assembly and association, and subjugation electoral body to incumbent party control.

<sup>2</sup> Democracy as a concept and political system has been widely contested among people and groups across cultures, societies, and regions of the world, due to its types and forms being practiced and the position of the groups and people defining it. Democracy in this paper will be largely limited to liberal form of democracy—due to its dominant form and universal triumphant in the contemporary period. The Liberal democracies today usually have universal suffrage, granting all adult citizens the right to vote regardless of race, gender or property ownership, and feature constitutional protections of individual rights from government power. According to the principles of liberal democracy, the elections should be free and fair, and the political process should be competitive on the presence of multiple and distinct political parties.

<sup>3</sup> Traditional state structure is based on the ascriptive exercise of power by the kings and the ruling group according to the established customs and traditions. In traditional state structure, the state power is personalise and centre around the traditional authority of kings whose exercise of authority is based on the existing social relations and feudal mode of production. Those in authority command obedience on the basis of their traditional status which is usually inherited. Institutions of the state and the allegiance of the subordinates and citizens are directed by the feelings of loyalty and obligation to long established positions of power. According to Haralambos (1980), ‘the traditional head of state (Kings) and chiefs owed their position to inherited status and personal loyalty of their subjects. The institutions and organisation structure resides in the clique of office holders which include relatives, favourites, and servants who are dependent for support on the head of the office holder(s); and a system of chiefs who swear an oath of loyalty to the king and control the administration of the state on this basis’. The duties of traditional head of state and the chiefs are defined by customs, but may be changed according to the inclination of the particular ruler.

as opposed to modern state structure<sup>4</sup> envisaged by the Europeans. There was an absence of nation-states capable of assuming modern state structure character, reminiscence of the Westphalia state system in Europe. African states were an embodiment of nations formed on the basis of ethnicity and national identities, sometimes bounded in terms of language and linguistic orientation.

Itsey Sagay's recent depiction of the historical circumstances of the Nigerian states clearly captures the pre-colonial status of what are today African states. Sagay observes that

In the beginning there was no Nigeria. There were ijaws, Igbos, Urhobos, Itsekiris, Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Nupes, Kanuris, Ogonis, Gwaris, Katafs, Jukars, Edos, Ibibios, Efiks, Idomas, Tivs, Jukuns, Biroms, Angas, Ogojas, and so on. There were kingdoms like Oyo, Lagos, Calabar, Brass, Itsekri, Benin, Tiv, Borno, Sokoto caliphate (with loose control over Kano, Ilorin, Zaria, etc. Prior to the British conquest of the different nations making up the present day Nigeria, these nations were independent of each other and of Britain<sup>5</sup>.

Sagay's observation revealed not only the present nature of Nigerian state but what African states were like, prior to colonialisation. The present African states such as Sudan, Ghana, Zimbabwe, DRC, South Africa, Nigeria, Benin Republic, Cameroon and others are nothing more than assemblage of independent and different nationalities fashioned together or structurally configured after the ambition of the European colonists. The birth of different nation-states in Africa vis-a-vis assemblage of different ethnic nationalities by the invading colonialists marked the watershed in the emergence of modern state structure in Africa.

The emergence of modern state system in Africa cannot be divorced from the new mode of production (capitalism) in western European societies where the dynamics of internal contradiction within capitalism—such as unbridled competition, over-production, market expansionism, and greedy profiteering became more profound in the quest for markets and cheap source of supply for the good they buy, lower costs of production and cheap supply of labour (Brewer, 1980: 45), and gave rise to the internationalisation of trade in the 15<sup>th</sup> century: the course that Europeans championed and

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<sup>4</sup>Modern state structure is based on institutional exercise of power and authority on a well entrenched set of impersonal rules. Modern State is established as a complex web of system and institution whose exercise of authority, legitimacy and control rest on the legal framework which support their authority. Modern state structure is structured into different bureaucrat agencies and department, and dominated by retinues of officials such as Police, Navy, Army, Air force and other state agents, who are the custodians of the authority structure of the state power. Thus a head of state or Prime minister, judge, a tax collector/inspector or a military commander are obeyed because of the acceptance of legal statuses and rules which grant them authority and define the limits of that authority and power. In this case, modern state consists not merely of armed body of men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds that possesses a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. Therefore, Modern state in Africa, whatever its forms and structure is an essentially capitalist machine, created and imposed as an instrument in the hands of the possessing (dominant) class for the purpose of maintaining the domination over exploited class in the society.

<sup>5</sup> Sagay, Itsey. 'Nigeria Federalism, The constitution and Resource control', The Guardian, Friday May 25, 2001. P.8

extended to other parts of the world (Ade-Ajayi, 1967:27). Claude Ake while espousing on the political economy of Africa, argues that

The systemic contradiction played itself out, such that the European countries which entered the industrial revolution after Britain were anxious to reduce the negative effect of the competitive superiority of Britain over their economies. They limited the influx of British goods and tried to nurture their infant industries behind protective barriers. In the face of protectionism, Britain doggedly propagated the idea of laissez-faire, but to no avail; discrimination against British goods by America, France, Germany, Russia, and Austro-Hungary increased, and Britain's export market contracted. Economic depression ensued. Against such threat Britain became very anxious to promote free trade, to find new market and new outlets for investment, but most importantly she became very anxious to, defend her empire and commercial privileges she enjoyed by her connection with them. As Britain competitors were also in an aggressive and expansionist mood' (1981: 29).

The systemic contradiction became more prominent as European powers fell over themselves in colonisation project in Africa. This partitioning of Africa marked a decisive development in the imposition of 'modern state apparatus' in Africa and cultural assimilation in social orientation, most often, with the use of force. The commencement of colonialism in Africa distorted the existing traditional state structures in Africa, not because the structures were not good but because the colonial power want to create a structure that will be similar to their own system, and to suit their whims and caprices (that is, enable them to have smooth access to the control of economic resources of Africa in the aftermath of industrial revolution).

For administrative reasons, the system of direct and indirect rule were introduced to the colonies, thus became a threshold upon which modern state system was entrenched in Africa. This 'state structures' was established to satisfy or serve the interest of the colonialists but was not established as institution for African themselves. In order to effectively administer newly fragmented states, the colonists formed and imposed a caricature of a modern state system that was premised on the existing social stratification prevalent in pre-colonial era. In many instances, the colonial administration made use of existing traditional institutions in the administration of the colonies, although with limited power.

However, with the introduction of formal education, a new array of intellectual elites were educated purposely to complement the existing gap in the colonial staff structure, and to groom those who would take over from the colonists in the eve of decolonisation. This new class of educated elites altered the existing social stratification within the colonial systemsuch that they are perceived as knowledgeable and reliable in the management of the economies and administration of the colonies than the traditional institutions. The classical colonial rule that lasted until the end of the Second World War witnessed essentially the unrestrained autocratic and authoritarian rule of a small band of European and African colonial officials aided by their compatriot among European Christian missionaries and monopoly trading firms operating in Africa (Dudley 1973:21). This international bourgeoisie of usurpers of the African people's sovereign power and authority established a kind of

praetorian or military rule underpinned by a capital production, appropriation and accumulation that was dominated by the monopolistic and oligopolistic practices of major European trading firms. Thus the colonial authorities and their collaborators presided over a fraudulent and corrupt accumulation system, which facilitated the appropriation of huge surpluses for shipment to the metropolis from African peasant farmers and other petty producers via unequal terms of trade; exploiting African workers via meagre, often below subsistence, wages; adults via primitive and exorbitant taxation; and the entire population (including unborn generations) via exclusive monopoly rights of exploitation granted to Western European firms over Africa's mineral and other natural resources (Onimode, 2000).

The state structure under colonialism was completely totalitarian as the voice of dissent of the colonised were muzzled, while the state apparatus were used to suppress opposition and to enforce colonial rules and policy such as taxation and tension over land tenure relation. According to Rodney (1972: 226), 'the most important force in the conquest of West African colonies by the British was the West Africa frontier force—the soldiers being Africans and the officer English. In 1894, it was joined by the West African Regiment, formed to help suppress the so-called 'Hut tax war' in Sierra Leone, which was the expression of widespread resistance against the imposition of colonial rule. In East and Central Africa, the King's African Rifles was the unit which tapped African fighting power on behalf of Britain. The African regiments supplemented the metropolitan military apparatus as emergency forces used to put down nationalist uprisings in the various colonies'. The colonial administrations in Africa states were not only established to carry out the effective administration of the colonies, but to suppress colonised dissents given the activities of specialised state institutions such as Police force, Prison service, Civil service, modern military forces and Judiciary system. In an instance, where the uprising and revolt were staged against the policy of colonial administration, like the Aba women riot of 1929, troops will be quickly deployed to the area to suppress the rebellion and uprising.

Therefore, democratic practices were absent during colonial rule because the condition that paved way for colonialism was completely authoritarian. It therefore requires brute force and jackboot totalitarianism to sustain the colonial system against popular revolt by the colonised. Modern state in Africa, whatever its forms and structure is an essentially capitalist machine, whose apparatus remain a mechanism used by the possessing colonial class for the suppression of the exploited class. Modern state would not have emerged if there is no class to be held in subjection or class to be repressed. Therefore, the class domination of one class over another and the struggle for individual existence based on anarchy of production and exploitation necessitated a special repressive force called a state.

The dialectical trajectory that characterised these social relations vis-a-vis the emergence of a state became more latent during the last decade of colonial rule. By progressively transferring 'modern state structures' and formal legal authority to rule to African political elite, the departing European colonists succeeded in securing their acquiescence in the retaining, even consolidating and enhancing of the existing structures of accumulation under which foreign

monopoly capital dominated all the key sectors of the economy-export-import trade, extractive and manufacturing industries, banking, Insurance etc. The sweetener in this pact of unequal partnership was the admission of several key and politically influential members of the African ruling bourgeoisie into lucrative but honorific and powerless partnerships and directorships (and agents, distributors and representatives) in the major foreign enterprises (Osoba, 1996: 4).

My major contention here is that Modern state structures were given to African nations by imperialist powers purposely to keep their investment in new independent African states intact, and to ensure that post-colonial economies remained essentially in the colonial type regime of international capitalist division of labour-in which they continue to specialise in the production of primary products for the reproductive requirements of the economies of the North.

Therefore, modern state structure gave rise to the contemporary form of democracy being practised in Africa. In other words, the emergence of democracy in Africa is fractured as a consequence of the nature of its state creation and composition by the colonial administration. The consequences of these can be seen in the recycling of a tiny array of cabals (small minority), consisting of members of the political/economic elite and policy planning, formulation and implementation networks, holds the most power independent of a state's democratic elections process. Through positions in government and public corporations and influence over the policy-planning networks through access to state apparatuses and public fund, members of these tiny elite are able to exert significant power over: constitution amendments that favour unlimited presidential terms, electoral commission, electoral laws, security forces, policy decisions of corporations and governments in the newly independent African states.

## **HOW MODERN STATE STRUCTURE USHERED DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA**

The sweeping wave of decolonisation that characterised post Second World War dynamics was no longer in the favoured of continued colonialism. The departing colonists conceded under pressure to the independence movement and as such succeeded in relinquishing power to the favoured wings of the African ruling class, educated elites and administrators, with established liberal form of democracy needed to give the newly independent states a sense of modern state system capable of governing its affairs and administering its territories. The social base at which these modern African states rested underscores a weakened centrifugal trend of political forces needed to protect certain interests. The contradictions that underpinned the foundation of these state structures in Africa illustrates a continuous struggle between the states itself and the multinational firms that dominate its affairs. This however compelled Kwame Nkrumah, in his book: *Neo-colonialism is the highest stage of imperialism* (1965), to conclude that 'the essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it

in theory independent and has all the outward trappings of sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside'<sup>6</sup>.

The observation of Nkrumah tends to illustrate that the colonial imperialism set in place economic structures and social forces disposed to maintain capitalism vis-a-vis indigenous political control and the acceptance of economic philosophy of capitalism by the new ruling class couple with the socio-political structures they inherit and consolidate through bourgeois economic nationalism (Iweriebor 1997: 27). Thus, the commitment to capitalism as a result of the domination of foreign Multinational Corporations in the affairs of African states, and the initiation of economic policies which sharpens social classes reveal the dynamite of contradiction which neo-colonial capitalism laid at the foundation of the newly independent states. Crawford Young (2004:31) noted that:

African people were frustrated that the pledged accelerated development in the heyday of nationalist movement to young militants who provided muscles for nationalist movement in return for employment; the anticipated incorporation new intellectual class emerging from universities into the upper ranks of the state bureaucracy; and parents hoped that pledges of rapid school expansion, universal primary education, clinics, road and social infrastructure would be fulfilled were disappointed.

Since the bulk of resources and wealth belongs to the state, the social frustration and the extreme social-economic differentiation and inequalities in the new African states compel all classes to look up to the State for the share of the national wealth. It was at this period that the class struggle and power tussle within the social class became so intense. There is power struggle between the ruling class (ruling elites and the opposition) on one hand, and class struggle between the ruling class and working class on the other hand, with a view to having access to state power and resources. In as much as the state structure is the only mechanism through which access to resources and wealth are guaranteed, access to state power means access to state resources.

The dominance of societal wealth by the state therefore makes enormous pressure on the state possible. This became more obvious in post independence epoch where political elites and nationalists leaders struggle for position and sphere of influence within the socio-political-economic circle of the newly independent states. Unlike in developed countries where political class prior to the assumption of office are either established professionals or businessmen and women who would go back to their respective profession or business after their tenure, the African political elites are mostly from middle echelon of the society who are neither rich or poor but they are known individuals whose quest for political office are nothing short of personal aggrandisement. Because they are not prepare to return to their less lucrative profession nor prepare to lose political influence, African political class are not ready to relinquish power even when voted out. The recent case of Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Laurent Gbagbo of Ivory Coast is relevant in this regard.

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<sup>6</sup> K. Nkrumah, Neo-colonialism: The last stage of Imperialism, International publishers, New York, 1966, p.ix

The unpopularity of the incumbent regime as a result of growing social inequalities, unemployment, infrastructural decay and poor socio-economic conditions will inevitably lead to growing popularity of the oppositions. Thus, heightens political tension and overheating of the polity. The ruling political class who wielded enormous political influence and secured economic interest while in power were prepared to defend all their economic and political gains with the power available at their disposal. Relinquishing power to opposition would translate to losing their privileges, influences and benefits acquired while in office.

As a result, the ruling political class immediately after the flag independence devised all unconstitutional strategies and methods to retain power, defend interests and cow all oppositions by all possible means. This was made possible given the incumbent state power they possessed. For instance, in the newly independent states of Ghana, Tanzania, Togo, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and some African countries, the state structure and power were wielded to unilaterally change the constitution to one party state, approved unlimited constitutional terms, ban official opposition, rig presidential and parliamentary elections, and subjugation electoral body to incumbent party control (Johnson et al. 1984; Allen, 1995). However, in states where one party state were not declared like Nigeria, the incumbent Northern People's Congress (NPC) even though in coalition with National Convention of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC) used the structure and apparatus of state power to rig elections, inflate population census figure and intimidate official oppositions—Action Group (AG) [Diamond, 1988; Sklar, 1967].

Despite the flag political independence, the inherited state structure (from colonists) is a potential factor that would undermine democracy from within. This is because the newly Africa ruling elite used the existing state structure to retain power perpetually, muzzle voice of dissent and intimidation of political opponent and engage in one party dictatorial regime. The resultant effect of this culminated in unsustainable political and constitutional crisis in Africa states that resulted in the long interregnum of military intervention in the polity.

Democratic deficits however, emerged in post independent Africa (1960s and 70s) when the incumbent ruling class and its party perpetuated themselves in power. They used all the structure and apparatuses of the state power to make mockery of the principles of democracy: by unilaterally changed constitutional term limit, manipulation of referendum to change constitution, ban official opposition, intimidation of political opponents, incarceration and clamp down of oppositions, perpetuation of electoral fraud and malpractices, human right violations (freedom of speech, press and lawful assembly), official and unofficial declaration of one party state, and electoral violence and political thuggery justified to maintain status quo. Despite the fact that these theatres of democratic deficits prevalent during cold war, the trend of democratic deficits still hold sway in the post-cold war period of 'democratisation'.

## HOW MODERN STATE STRUCTURE USHERS DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe like most other African states has rugged historical transition to modern state. The Lancaster house agreement<sup>7</sup> provided a basis for establishing Zimbabwe on the threshold of modern statehood with effective parliamentary democratic structure prior to political independence in 1980. The Zimbabwean independence ushered a parliamentary system of government in which Robert Mugabe of ZANU became a Prime Minister after winning majority votes at the parliament. However, a decade after the Lancaster agreement, majority of Zimbabweans had expected that land redistribution should come immediately, but because the state structure the departing colonialist left was to serve its economic interest and the minority ruling elite (white farmers and ZANU-PF members—who bought part of white farms), it was difficult for state apparatus to carry out such implementation. Thus, led to the growing social discontent and extreme polarisation among Zimbabweans who are not comfortable with the decision of the Robert Mugabe led ZANU-PF government. While observing the populace discontentment of government policies especially on land question, Mugabe acknowledged in December 1989 that ‘the biggest single problem it is yet to resolve is that of land distribution. It was ‘the most vital question we face today in our economic development activities’<sup>8</sup>.

The foundation of modern state structure in Zimbabwe is itself a problem that is going to affect democracy regardless of who comes to power or its ideological hues. This stems from the fact that Zimbabwean state is created and fractured on the basis of land question that was used as a political and economic weapon by the colonists in the past and generate tension by the white settlers/farmers, ruling party and the Zimbabwean people (peasant) in the contemporary epoch. Any party that comes to power will inevitably face the yearning quest for land redistribution from the citizenry. Therefore, land question is a contradiction that will shape the politics of Zimbabwe.

Given the growing anger of the Zimbabweans on the government policies on land issue, Mugabe was forced to lean on the war veterans and landless peasants in the rural areas as a political tactics of remaining relevant through land expropriation and redistribution. In this regard, the War Veteran Association began forceful, chaotic and compulsory land redistribution from white farmers without compensation, to landless Zimbabweans as a

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<sup>7</sup> Lancaster house agreement was a product of persistent struggle and guerrilla warfare by the colonised on the colonial regime to resolve the national question of independence. The agreement seeks to resolve all outstanding land distribution and white citizenship issue in Lancaster, England before Zimbabwe flag independence. Lancaster house agreement provided "a 10- year moratorium on the land issue, which meant that no land was to be expropriated and redistributed for ten years (starting from 1980 independence year). It was resolved that land issue would be on willing buyer-willing seller basis in which British government agreed to provide funding for the "purchase" of land from the white farmers to be distributed to poorer black peasants. They clearly wanted to avoid expropriation in which the best agricultural lands belonged to 6000 farmers, while 600,000 black subsistence farming communities had to scrape out a living on poorer quality land. The same agreement established that the capitalist state and economy should remain intact.

<sup>8</sup> Herald of Zimbabwe, 20 December 1989

means of consolidating the regime rule and gaining more popularity (Moore, 2001a, 2001b; Moyo, 2000; Bernstein, 2004). This decision to redistribute the land did not go down well with departed colonialist (Britain) and its allies who felt that her economic interest in Zimbabwe has been undermined, and as a result, British government requested European Union economic sanctions against Zimbabwe (Taylor and William, 2002; Elliot and Schott, 2008), followed by economic sanction from United States, Australia and New Zealand. In 2002, Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations on charges of human rights abuses during the land redistribution and of election tampering (Taylor and William, 2002: 556; Abraham, 2004).

Sanctions from western countries and forceful land redistribution programme became the basis of political campaign in the parliamentary election of 2000. Taylor and William while commenting on the democratic deficits that ushered the political crisis of 2000 parliamentary election in Zimbabwe, posit that

The use of violence and intimidation has been the hallmark of Mugabe's government—most notoriously the killings of up to 8000 people in Mataberland and the midlands in the 1980s. More, recently, Mugabe has also attacked independent media outlets and established complete control over Zimbabwean TV and radio through the broadcasting services bill, stream rolled through parliament on 4 April, 2001. ZANU-PF has constitutently threatened its political opponents with violence, intimidation and even murder. The result has been the climate of fear and intimidation where to openly criticise the government is to risk your life (2002:556)

Having won the election in controversial manner, the Mugabe led ZANU-PF regime sought to consolidate its hold on power by setting up of young militant wing of the party as a part of preparation for future elections. Terence Ranger observed that 'The Zimbabwe government had instituted youth militia camps that were intended to establish the basis of a compulsory National service scheme. The youth were recruited as warriors into the third chimurenga—the first chimurenga having been the 1896-1897 uprisings and the second having been the guerrilla war of the 1970s. They became the militant available to discipline their own parents; to attack the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters; and to intimidate teachers and other educated civil servants in the rural areas, while ZANU-PF and the war veterans have shown remarkable consistency in their power—seeking agenda, their appeals to the revolutionary liberation war, their use of violence and intimidation' (Ranger, 2004:219)

The desperation of ZANU-PF in holding tenaciously to power depicts that the ruling class/elite will not relinquish its privileges without giving up serious fight and without serious political challenge from the opposition. In this regard, the state structure under Mugabe led ZANU-PF regime became the instrument of terror and repression that thwarted every resistance to its political leadership. One can argue that method of using violent in maintaining the political status quo by the incumbent regime is directly proportional to the way the state structure was created on the basis of colonial land super-structure.

The vicious circle of forceful land grab and violence against opposition continued during 2008 parliamentary/presidential election. Despite losing its parliamentary majority for the first time since 1980 by the Mugabe's ZANU-PF, the inability of the participating political parties to win 50 percent constitutional provision compelled a run-off election. Mugabe's ZANU-PF party in a show of desperation resorted to violent means through youth militants, war veterans and troops loyal to ZANU-PF with a view to winning run-off presidential election. However, the incidence of violence, brutality and reign of terror witnessed in the process compelled the opposition MDC to withdraw from the Presidential Run-off citing incidence of political violence that claims 86 life and rendered 200,000 thousands homeless (Badza, 2008; Cheeseman and Tendi, 2010). Consequently, Mugabe was declared winner of the run-off election and was sworn-in as President of Zimbabwe.

The orgies of violence and terror was used by the ruling ZANU-PF to keep opposition in control and ensures that the balance of power and system of society remains structurally unchanged, even when the MDC opposition leader became a prime minister in a power-sharing deal. The problem of land distribution and its attendant nationalistic rhetoric will continue to feature in Zimbabwean's politics and future elections. This is because resultant social contradictions that arose of the tension between classes in Zimbabwean society will inevitably compel any government that comes to power to sustain the ongoing land redistribution programme and get economic sanction from the west or follow the dictate of imperialist powers by reversing the policy of land redistribution and cause instability in the country. This is a potential problem that is going to shape the politics in Zimbabwe, and usher more democratic deficits in the coming election.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have analytically examined the discourse of democratic deficits in Africa vis-a-vis the nature of its state creation using historical perspective. I have this perspective highlighted (using Zimbabwe as a useful case) that the way modern state structure was created in Africa vis-a-vis her colonial experience is a potential problem that is going to affect democracy, and not that African states cannot foster democracy because of their colonial experience. It is my contention here that the modern state structure is dominated by retinues of officials such as Police, Navy, Army, Air force and other state agents, who are instrument of terror, and that the degree to which they apply the use of terror and brutality depends on the nature of the state, the political elite and economic interest of the ruling class. Since state structure was established purposely to protect certain interest, the continuous struggle for power among the ruling elites as well as the intensity of pressure from below or tension among the classes in quest for assessing wealth of the state, will however compel the political class in power to use the state instrument of power to consolidate their hold on power by banning official opposition, promote one party state, engage in electoral malpractices and other democratic deficits with a view of quelling the growing opposition to the regime and perpetuating or recycling themselves in power. In this regards, state structure exist as an instrument of coercion, needed to protect certain interests rather than foster democratic governance that promote divergent opinions, checks and balances.

The composition and creation of modern African states is a problem that is going to affect democracy, regardless of government that comes to power. This is because the inherited state structure provided an impetus for democratic deficits and dictatorial/autocratic tendencies to be entrenched and sustained by African political leadership from post independence to the contemporary period, and as such become a political culture.

It can therefore be concluded that modern state system in Africa gave rise to highly stratified society that makes the class antagonism and division among classes sharpens. The composition of wealth around the state therefore makes enormous pressure on the state possible. In as much as the economic and political powers of the state are in few hands, the frictions and tensions among classes for economic and political space will inevitably alter the existing socio-political relations within the state. The more intense the struggle and tensions within these classes, the more the state remain fragile and divided, the more the ruling class and government in power becomes more threatened, the more the ruling class will resort to autocratic means to suppress its growing opposition, the more the principle and practice of democracy becomes a mirage in African states. It is likely that without change of the system (capitalist mode of production) that ushered and powered modern state structure by the African political leadership and the people themselves, the unending features of democratic deficits will continue to persist in a continent that has suffered from the haemorrhage of poverty and underdevelopment.

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