

Roger Southall and Henning Melber (eds) Legacies of Power: Leadership Change and Former Presidents in African Politics, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, 2006, p. 352. ISBN: 978 07969 21028.

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping any state's development not only when one is the head of state but even when one has left the political office. In this way the book is well intended to as an analytical historiography of the life of African leaders largely after they left helms of power as heads of states. In essence it offers exposes complexities that exist across African countries of the life and experiences of life of ex-presidents and how it is linked to overall development not only of the country but internationally as well.

The introduction by Henning Melber and Roger Southall puts the overall objective of the book into perspective which is to 'examine the dilemmas which demands for presidential transitions impose upon incumbent rulers and to analyse the relationships which are evolving between new regimes and their predecessors .p. (xvii). The introduction also offered a general survey of issues the texts tackles.

Chapter one provided a general background of former presidents in African politics. A general analysis of background factors contributing to leaders leaving political office and

also a general condition of the African states at independence was alluded to. An examination of how the ex-presidents behaved in differing environments they lived and ruled in and when they left power giving examples across Africa was given. Factors that were at play in necessitating the stay on power by some of the leaders were also highlighted. General comments on cases to come in chapters to follow were alluded to with the objective of illuminating on major issues the book explores. In essence the author concluded, 'For all the country cases, the trend towards normality of presidential retirements is becoming well established in those parts of the continent where democracy can be claiming to take some root...most certainly, the more the costs of retirement are reduced...and the more the prospective benefits...are emphasised, the more the likely it is that the status of former presidents will be come ordinary...'p.22.

Chapter two by John Daniel on South Africa's Nelson Mandela analysed the post presidential era to which the author depicted him as 'soldiering on' referring that 'the now former president just kept pursuing those issues and goals which had preoccupied him through out his five year presidency'.p.26. To which the author outlined the issues and policies concretised his depiction of the leader. In essence the author alluded that 'despite relinquishing the presidency in 1999 Nelson Mandela continued to be a huge public demand from groups and organisations, local and overseas'.p.37. To which an elaboration was given and an explanation of how he remained a peacemaker and fighting to end global divide in terms of poverty and remaining active an powerful force both nationally and internationally.

Chapter three analysed presidential succession in Botswana in the framework of the much celebrated democracy in Africa and investigating whether it can be a model to be followed. The authors gave a historical background to the birth of Botswana as a nation and its leadership. They analysed the succession debate which they saw as ‘automatic elitist succession’. An analysis of Masire as ex-president was provided to which the authors noted, ‘as the ex-president of Botswana, Masire has not been inactive and indeed has carved out somewhat a second career as a rather successful “elder statesman” within and outside Africa’.p.58. An in-depth analysis of the role he played internally and internationally was provided and the authors rounded up by analysing the contemporary politics in Botswana’s election and leadership. For Botswana the authors highlighted that ‘though Masire’s role as an Ex-president has resulted in praise and applause – much of it entirely warranted – the overall context which presidential transitions occur within Botswana and looming succession from Mogae to Khama undermine the image of the country as the supposed model for Africa’.p.69.

Neo Simutanyi in Chapter four analysed the role and experience of the former presidents of independent Zambia to which the author was quick to point that the experience has been frustrating for the ex-presidents. A history of presidential transitions was given and the contestations that ensued between Kaunda and Chiluba as well as Chiluba and Mwanawasa. For Zambia the author noted ‘the role of former presidents in Zambia has been seriously contested’.p78. The author went on to analyse what he termed the culture of vengeance by the new leaders on the predecessors and issues that cultivated the spirit of revenge and the dimensions the vengeance did take. The author did in the final analyse

the debate on what status should a former leader be accorded in Zambia and the institutions that were put in place to try and solve the raised problems and efforts by ex-presidents to leave their legacy.

Chapter five by Henry Melber analysed the Namibian Case study which depicted a situation where a leader left political office but remaining in power. He first gave a historical background to transition of SWAPO from being a liberation movement to government and how its leader Sam Nujoma transformed from being a guerrilla leader to being head of state. The author analysed the debate around Nujoma's end of term debate and his subsequent vacation from office whilst remaining with power and respect.

In Chapter six David Moore dwelling on the Zimbabwean case analysed the debate surrounding Mugabe's lack of interest in leaving office. In essence the author analysed personal rule that has pervaded ZANU PF under Mugabe and factors surrounding Mugabe's sustenance of his power in the face of a number of challenges.

Chapter seven by Sean Morrow analysed the Malawian experience with ex-presidents. The author gave a brief historical background to politics in Malawi from the colonial period to independence era of the authoritarian rule of Kamuzu Banda and how the society transformed into a democratic one in early 1990s. The author then dwelt on Muluzi's rule and subsequent third term blues that ensued. The author analysed the international factors surrounding the seeking of the third term. In essence the author concluded, 'Certainly, that the open and third term debates were not in the end pushed to

the extreme suggest that ultimately the continued voyage of the leaking ship of state was collectively of more advantage to the Malawian political class than would have been its foundering with all hands'.p.170.

In Chapter eight Rodger Tigri analysed politics and presidential term limits in Uganda. The author also analysed the factors behind Museveni's wanting to stay in power, the course of contestation in wanting to retain third term and actors that took centre stage. Museveni's rule was put in its historical perspective to the current political standing. For the author, 'the struggle for and against a presidential third term in Uganda is not resolved. New twists could change the current likelihood that Museveni will stand for office again in 2006''.p.193.

Thomas P Wolf in Chapter nine dwelt on Kenya ex-president Daniel arap Moi's post leadership era analysing the factors at play when a leader leaves office leading to security and insecurity situation. How the new leadership instituted policies that were meant to expose abuse of power were exposed. The author went on to explain why there was an increased goodwill towards Moi using various hypothesis which were espoused clearly quite interesting. He offered an interesting evaluation of the future of Kenya politics under Kibaki. In essence the author reminded, 'While it can be assumed that making the former president "face the law" would further reduce the imperial stature of the executive, the practical impact of such an eventuality remains uncertain, as would the opposite – apparently, far more likely – outcome of perpetual immunity'.p.224.

Roger Southall in chapter ten analysed Nyerere of Tanzania's post-presidency period. A brief background to Nyerere as a leader, status of politics and the economy in his presidency was provided. The politics of how he handled the politics of his succession and the legacies he left in Tanzanian politics was highlighted. According to the author, 'Nyerere was to remain a major force within CCM and to emerge as an increasingly vocal critic of Mwinyi whose economic reforms he blamed for opening up the country to wholesale corruption, although he stopped short of outright condemnation of the government'.p.245. The author analysed Nyerere's legacy in issues of the union. In essence the author noted, 'Key to Nyerere's career as a former president was his flexibility of thought and his willingness to adjust change, even if he did not necessarily approve of its direction'.p.255.

In chapter eleven the author analysed Jerry Rawlings of Ghana to which he pointed from onset that, 'Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, one of the most controversial actors in Ghanaian political history, has been head of state three times'.p.256. The author analysed the leader in phases of his leadership – as a military ruler, as a democratic leader and outside political power. An analysis of the period after leaving power was provided to which the author alluded to the effect that, 'For sure Rawlings' immediate engagement after leaving presidency was very positive locally and internationally'.p266, to which the author went on to explain in greater detail. An analysis of the successor Kufour's government to Rawlings' activities and views as an ex-president to which the author noted , '...while for bearing to take action again Rawlings in response to even his most

provocative utterances domestically, the government responded more assertively to the insults against Kufour which he had made outside the country' .p.274.

Sola Akinride analysed ex-presidents in Nigeria and what role they played in managing transitions and democratic consolidations. A background to politics in Nigeria was highlighted to which the author noted of the centrality of ethnicity and the military. In essence noting, 'the domination of the political terrain by fabulously wealth retired generals is not the outcome of a sound manifesto or commitment to admirable political programme. Rather it is the consequence of the travails of the Nigerian political system in the hands of the military since 1966'.p.282. For the ex-presidents the author espoused that 'Nigeria's crisis has been that of multiple unelected and authoritarian leaders whose tenures, in almost every case were abruptly terminated'.p.283. He went on to analyse the life the life of ex-presidents after leaving office and the dimensions they took leader by leader. At most the author noted 'most of the living Nigerian former president/heads of state have refused to fade to the background years after their departure from office''.p.294. An analysis of how they have remained active and with whose support was provided. In the final the author observed, 'As Nigeria's democracy continues to mature it must grapple with the challenge of defining the status of former leaders and laying down ground rules for their behavior'.p.303.

The last chapter by Hoffman analysed the Liberian deposed leader Charles Taylor. The author gave a rich historical analysis to Taylor's leadership in Liberia and the dynamics of his power as well as political forces at play on his life in exile and possible scenarios

for his future. In essence the author noted, ‘understanding the means by which Taylor achieved and held power is critical to minimising the extent to which we are to prevent developments in the future’.p.325.

In conclusion, the text is very much valuable to any reader in African politics both scholars and students. In essence the book manages to accomplish the goal it intended to do. However it was going to be more interesting if they had tackled almost all African countries, but this should not defeat its noble objective.

Reviewed by:

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