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Call for Papers - Special Issue "Democracy and Political Change" March 2022

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Call for Papers

Special Issue **Democracy and Political Change**

The *Journal of Social Encounters* invites essays for a special issue on *Democracy and Political Change*, which will be published in March 2022. All abstracts of approximately 100 – 150 words should be submitted by 25th September 2021; if accepted, full essays will be due by 15th November 2021. The guest editor for this special issue is Elias Opongo, Hekima University College, Nairobi, Kenya. Send your abstracts to: elias.opongo@hekima.ac.ke

Description of the Special Issue

The discontentment with authoritarian regimes and oppressive systems of governance, some under the auspices of democratic systems, have led to mass demonstrations and calls for resignation of presidents or prime ministers in different parts of the world. At the same time there have been calls for political change, with demands for review of political systems of governance to pay more attentions to the needs of the majority of the population. Democracy has been held captive by capitalist systems that seek economic progress at the expense of population welfare, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Demonstrations against authoritarian systems of governance, corruption and economic inequalities have been witnessed: in Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile against rising cost of living and economic inequality between the rich and poor; in Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq against corruption of top government official; in Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and Guinea against dinosaur presidents that have been in power for many years, leading to the resignations of the presidents of Burkina Faso in 2014 and Mali in 2020; in United States against divisive racial and ideological politics that were advanced by President Donald Trump in his four year term. The presidential elections that ousted Trump were marred by claims of irregularities and rigging, direct physical violence, bigotry and racial attacks.

Political tensions leading to demonstrations against authoritarian regimes or discontentment with democratic leaders have been witnessed in Germany, Poland, Israel, France, Turkey, Venezuela, Russia, Brazil, Algeria, Ukraine, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Tunisia, India, Nepal, Thailand, Hong Kong, among others. The demonstrations have varied: pro-democracy, pro-reform, pro-human rights protests against increasingly authoritarian rulers. However, many of these protests have not been very successful.

Freedom House Report 2021 noted with concern the decline of democratic practices despite pro-democracy defense:

As a lethal pandemic, economic and physical insecurity, and violent conflict ravaged the world in 2020, democracy's defenders sustained heavy new losses in their struggle against authoritarian foes, shifting the international balance in favor of tyranny. Incumbent leaders increasingly used force to crush opponents and settle scores, sometimes in the name of public health, while beleaguered activists—lacking effective international support—faced heavy jail sentences, torture, or murder in many settings.

This special issue on *democracy and political change* calls for contextualized articles in the following broad areas:

1. Electoral systems, human rights and minorities - Majority rule, proportional representation, consociationalism
2. Strategies for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, social cohesion and polarization reduction in democracies.
3. Transitional justice in post-conflict societies – working towards political stability
4. How political leaders and political elites can cause polarization and undermine democracy.
5. Exploring alternative systems of governance to democracy as we know it
6. Gender, democracy and political change
7. Religion, democracy and political change
8. Constitutionalism and role of parliament, senate, congress and judiciary in democracy and political change
9. Elections and majority rule – what is the place of minorities?
10. Political change from democracy to autocracy: The causes of anti-democratic populism and how to address it.
11. Global and/or regional trends in democracy and attitudes toward democracy - democratic expansion and democratic backsliding/erosion.

If you have any questions about the special issue, please contact Elias Opongo elias.opongo@hekima.ac.ke and/or Ron Pagnucco rpagnucco@csbsju.edu