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### Political Campaigns in Kenyan Churches: A Compromise of an Arbiter?

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#### Abstract

Proceeding from the notion that campaigns are very good political mobilization activity that makes politics alive, this article seeks to interrogate *the rampancy of political campaigns within the church mainstream services*. While establishing it necessitates, I proceed to *inquire the 'mixing separations' that it breeds, seek to evaluate the role of the church as a political arbiter and how this practice (campaign in churches) can compromise her, I move to assess whether this is an extension of clientellism bait, or whether the whole exercise is a symptomatic search for a*

*functional political system* yet to be experienced in Kenya hence portrayal of lack of 'form-state'. Finally, this discourse observes that the Church – State past intercourse with the present challenges is important for preserving the church and her central societal role. Using descriptive discourse analysis and Chicago Manual citation style, this article used available scholarly materials to re-spin the wheel and concluded that there is a better place for political campaigns.

**Keywords:** Political Campaigns, Church Campaigns, Church and State, Church Clientellism, Political Systems, 'Form-State', Arbitration, Political Mobilization

#### Introduction

Clearing an onset misunderstanding, this discourse asserts that political mobilization plays a key role to politics. Political parties play a pivotal role (Karp and Banducci, 2007) <sup>1</sup> by mobilizing citizens to participate in the political process. This may be particularly important in new democracies, where party attachments are weak and voter turnout is low. Nonetheless, while acknowledging that disparities in political participation continue in the United States both at the national and the community levels as is elsewhere. Grabarek (2011) <sup>2</sup> avers Mobilization as an important predictor of political participation has received much greater attention in recent years. However, not as much is known about predictors of mobilization, in particular about recruitment to non-electoral acts such as attending meetings or contacting a public official. Such acts are the means through which ordinary citizens can attempt to influence the policies and practices that affect their lives. If there are disparities in who is recruited for political participation, these differences could well be reflected in the voices heard or not heard in the political arena. If we wish to understand the continuing disparities in political participation, then it behooves us to understand who is invited to participate in the multiple facets of the political process and who is ignored. Hardly in developing democracies are such acts as stated above the means through which ordinary citizens can influence the policies and practices affecting their lives but a means for political elite to exert themselves and their interests in regimes making the citizens willing losers. Comparatively it is notable that political mobilization may have similar objectives in developed and developing democracies but whereas one gears towards aligning affinity to projected policies, the other is concerned with the temporary auction of the voter. The latter one renders the voter powerless to the likely potential ruler and their ensuing policies which explain governance ills routinely experienced. Karp and Banducci <sup>3</sup> would imply this to an "*unholy capture*" when they say 'parties in new democracies appear to be more likely to target citizens' hence being about the person and ending with self – the politician.

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey A. Karp, and Susan A. Banducci, (2007). Party Mobilization and Political Participation in New and Old Democracies. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807073874>. University of Exeter, Michigan:USA.

<sup>2</sup> Marguerite A. Grabarek (2011). Mobilization and Political Participation: Who is Asked to Play in The Game. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. University of Michigan.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey A. Karp, and Susan A. Banducci, (2007). Party Mobilization and Political Participation...

Based on empiricism, there is ample evidence supporting the positive role played by mobilization in increasing electoral focused activities, such as voting, giving money to or working for a campaign (Abramson & Claggett, 2001) <sup>4</sup>. Given the apparent importance of the mobilization factor, what do we know about who is mobilized or the predictors of mobilization? The answer is, not much... Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) <sup>5</sup> argue that political elite, i.e., parties, politicians and interest groups, target those who are well connected, whose actions are effective and who more likely to respond positively to the recruitment message. On my part, any mobilization that is well done should reach out to masses and be felt by them without middlemen or brokering, I consider mobilization as a resonating communication to people's needs/interests.

### Campaign in Churches: 'Mixing Separations'

Campaign in churches may not be bad unless we understand where anti-church campaign begun and political practices engraining it begun in Kenya. This will constantly give a reminder to church servants and political servant the imperative of history in real life as a discipline. Emerging from single party systems in the 1990s, multiparty systems are a few decades old. Characterizing Kenya's politics just like other growing democracies in Africa; low levels of economic development, traditional political constituencies on the basis of ethnic and regional interests rather than ideological, and intentional and instigated poverty. The political systems (a product of people and structures) remain fragile and weak. On this background money and in-kind handouts was used and misused by regimes in the 1980s to 1990s to an extent of subverting the freewill of citizens in deciding destiny of their state. To a great extent it involved stealing from government resources to bribe citizens thus curtailing development funds. This practice when replicated to churches which ought to portray ethical epitome in society and be the protecting barometers, then unexplainable societal decadence creeps.

This led to minimum legislations through the IPPG in 1990s to detest this practice and mainstream in Kenya's political practice and for some time it was illegal to use this method in mobilizing political support. It became necessary that political parties be empowered to propagate mobilization. In convergence to this, Shari Bryan & Denise Baer point that "Still, political parties form the cornerstone of a democratic society, aggregating and representing the interests of citizens to create public policy. On this backdrop are the problems of party finance in Africa, whose solutions have not fully emerged. Approaches taken in more developed democracies—including legal restrictions, reporting requirements, and public financing of parties—have not proven a panacea; rather, tools that can be used when political will and civic pressure make party finance practices a priority. The purpose of the African Political Party Finance Initiative is to assist political parties and democratic activists to confront the debilitating and corrupt party finance practices. Political financing and corruption may

represent a greater problem in Africa than in any other region of the world. *Developing solutions requires an understanding of how money corrupts politics*. African political parties are weighted with historical, cultural, and economic handicaps (2005) <sup>6</sup>.

Funding political parties is therefore strengthening a mobilization tool constitutionally and making them responsible and accountable to the people. It's like church campaigns increase now is due to bipartisanship corruption between the 'potentially corrupt' politician and potentially corrupt clergy/congregants (*waiting to receive a reward from benevolence gesture vs waiting to repay monetary coercion with decision to the giver*).

Historically, theocracy is one of the oldest forms and systems of governance. Those endowed with good old but modern languages of the then world will quickly breakdown "theo" and "cracy" (a system of God or a divine reign). It would be one of the longest reigns through Biblical history and in History as a distinct discipline. Three languages played key roles in the ancient civilization; Hebrew was the language of the Bible hence both Clergy medium and religious (cultural in nature) whereas Greek and Latin bore similar orientations attached to modernity and enlightenment. Greek belonged to the Hellenist hence intelligentsia. On the other hand, Latin belongs to the romance branch and mercantilist language (thus ancestral language to modern languages; French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian). As what it was termed modernity cropped in, *system of divine values* and *system of men values* clashed and real need for separation accelerated. Confirming this scenario while in mockery of God and expressing the gap of the two systems, Constantin Fasolt writes, "the received wisdom about religion in the history of Europe is that religion has gradually lost power over the European mind. During the Middle Ages religion ruled supreme. Then the Reformation broke up the unity of Christianity; the Enlightenment shook the foundations of religion; and the astonishing discoveries made by the natural sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup> C, especially the theory of evolution, dealt a deathblow to religion. Then religion survived only in the nooks and crannies of modern life. It could no longer show itself in public without looking befuddled, ignorant, and cranky. God had died. If Max Weber can be believed, the outcome was a spiritually barren and disenchanted form of life in an "iron cage" of modern legal, scientific, and bureaucratic rationality whose origin and nature Weber so feverishly sought to understand" (2004) <sup>7</sup>. In fact, if you follow closely to the sentence, you see everything to do with Rome and interconnect with the succession of the languages earlier mentioned. Rome (state of men) had swallowed theocracy and ensuing separation was good for whether you call it church or religion to checkmate excesses of the new-state. The thinking of church – state/or state - church here is based on the notion of liberating state activities from any controlling religious beliefs of the time except interrelation as separate useful entities.

<sup>4</sup> Abramson, P. R., & Claggett, W. (2001). Recruitment and political participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, 54(4), 905-916.

<sup>5</sup> Rosenstone, S., & Hansen, J. M. (1993). *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. NY: Macmillan.

<sup>6</sup> Shari Bryan & Denise Baer (2005). *Money in politics: a study of party financing practices in 22 countries*. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). NW Washington, DC.

<sup>7</sup> Constantin Fasolt (2004). *Separation of Church and State the Past and Future of Sacred and Profane*. Fourth National Conference of the Historical Society, June 3-5.

Moreover, it would add credence to delve into why church and politics ought to be separate. It is not a new relationship but with time church – state relationship has often seen the church suffer hence drawing from this wisdom necessitates being apart. The drafters of the USA constitution in Anonymous (Undated) <sup>8</sup> opine, as the Founding Fathers contemplated the proper relationship between church and state in the emerging United States, they were aware of a range of options before them. Religious establishment had been the norm for Western governments since the fourth century, when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire. But there were limited historical precedents in Europe for the protection of religious freedom.

Fasolt (2004) reiterates, the separation of church and state is one of the crucial boundaries by which we mark the distinction between the sacred and the profane. In medieval Europe the distinction between the sacred and the profane was symbolized by a distinction between two different groups of people. One group consisted of the *clergy*; the other consisted of the *laity*. A distinction between two different spheres of action: the *private* (faith, morals, conscience, culture) and the *public* (citizenship, government, taxation, crime, defense) sphere. Some matters are considered private and therefore subject to individual *free choice*; others are considered public and therefore *subject to legal force* by the sovereign state. Building from the thesis of this paper, unchecked interaction may compromise the private realm of free choice by misdirecting faith the subject to an unfamiliar object (personalities and their accompanying baggage).

The idea of a separation between religion and the state according to Chavura (2010) <sup>9</sup> draws from Thomas Jefferson's recommendation of a wall of separation between the church and the state. Jefferson's preoccupation was ensuring that religion remained free and uncoerced. His reasons were essentially Lockean and, therefore, for the most part theological: true religion comes from conviction, and conviction cannot be coerced. Lankford and Moore (2018)<sup>10</sup> are of the view that religion and politics can be polarizing, since they deal with important matters that are deeply personal and close to our passions. Hence caution of not mixing religion and politics has a powerful truth because when religion is used for political purposes, it empties religion of its eternal meaning and becomes just one more cynical method of acquiring power.

### Compromising an Arbiter

Over the past half century, those facing legal conflicts have increasingly turned to private arbitration to resolve their disputes rather than resolving them through litigation (Rau et al, 1974) <sup>11</sup>. Parties have recognized (Wood, 2003) <sup>12</sup> the

significant advantages of arbitration, and United States courts have been very willing to unburden their caseloads onto private arbitration and other methods of dispute resolution. Along with general arbitration (Taylor, 2004) <sup>13</sup>, faith-based arbitration-a process in which arbitrators apply religious principles to resolve disputes is common today, as well.

Wolfe (2006) <sup>14</sup> observes that arbitration is employed in a number of contexts and suggests that, arbitration, regardless of the specific context, is conducted under the auspices of different umbrella organizations. Disputants can choose from among thousands of arbitrators. Private arbitration forums are also common among religious communities. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all offer some form of internal dispute resolution. Today, arbitration is a common method of resolving disputes. Tens of thousands of arbitration cases are conducted every year. While there are many benefits to arbitration (Devack, 2001) <sup>15</sup>, there are also some drawbacks. Disputing parties may decline to use arbitration because, put simply, arbitration lacks the protections of the court system. In arbitration, there are limitations on discovery, acquiring preliminary relief is difficult, arbitrators make decisions using relaxed standards, and there is limited review of arbitration awards.

Despite arbitration gaining traction in other jurisdictions and less in developing countries, compromising an arbiter is a deadly poison to social justice especially when churches (clergy and laity) ability and reason for arbitration in societal long-term well-being become benumbed by one of the parties they need to arbitrate in exchange for commodities of common good. Narrating from an African social set up, *'a compromised arbiter is basically a dog bribed with bones in exchange for its master's goats and cows, which are more meat and bones than the throwaways'*.

Separating politics and to a greater extent *unexplained-politically-directed* funds to churches is a necessity. Politics is about behaviouralism to the actors and human nature is emotionally constructed hence can be equally emotionally bent for important decisions. The rational man tends to say thank you as an impulse to a highly *appreciable action*. The question is whether an arbiter can be compromised? The answer is yes in retrospection since it yields to conflict of interest. This argument is due to the fact that political actors are organisms for choice in a political game field. If money

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Supreme Court noted that arbitration clauses, especially ones that specify forum and choice of law, can bring "orderliness and predictability" to international commercial disputes. Scherk v. Alberto-Culver Co., 417 U.S. 506, 516.

<sup>12</sup> Diane P. Wood (2003). The Brave New World of Arbitration, 31 Cap. U. L. Rev. 383,383.

<sup>13</sup> Scott A. Taylor (2004). Enforcement of Tribal Court Tax Judgments Outside of Indian Country: The Ways and Means, 34 N.M. L.Rev. 339.

<sup>14</sup> Caryn Litt Wolfe (2006). Faith-Based Arbitration: Friend or Foe? An Evaluation of Religious Arbitration Systems and Their Interaction with Secular Courts Arbitration Systems and Their Interaction with Secular Courts. Fordham Law Review 427.

<sup>15</sup> Melissa Devack (2001). Note, Intellectual Property as an Investment: A Look at How ADRRelates to the European Union's Proposal for Electronic Commerce in the Single Market, 2Cardozo Online J. Conflict Resol. 57, 74 n.296.

<sup>8</sup> Anonymous (Undated). Separation of Church and State. The Boisi Center Papers on Religion in The United States. Boisi Centre, USA.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Chavura (2010). The Separation of Religion and State: Context and Meaning. <https://www.researchgate.net>.

<sup>10</sup> James Lankford and Russell Moore (2018). The Real Meaning of the Separation of Church and State. January 16, Oklahoma.

<sup>11</sup> Rau et al. (1974). Supra note 40, at 30. Arbitration clauses are "taken for granted" in international commercial contracts. Id. at 31 (internal quotations omitted). The

becomes the yardstick for 'a good politician' then aspirants will look for money, the means of acquisition notwithstanding. Introspectively then again, with all these money why is 'poverty' one of the independent African enemies ever endemic? The answer is self-revealing; the receiving clergy and laity must remain poor to remain customer to the giving politician who must become wealthy knowing he/she has customers in waiting. In this milieu, whatever little is baked has to be grabbed by whoever possesses great and proximate power to it in clientele strategizing.

For church campaigners or those with similar objectives, Nilsson and Moksnes (2013)<sup>16</sup>, starkly reminds, 'Religion is a tool to relate to a wider reality than yourself, and for many it brings meaning, offers hope, and is a source of inspiration to change. In difficult situations people tend to turn to their religious leaders. If we want to make a difference through political work or development cooperation, we have to understand the contexts in which faith and religion are significant for people. Religion is important not only at a personal level; societies and politics are influenced as well.' Compromising religion as an arbiter means compromising a tool hence rendering it incapable. Again, as Nilsson and Moksnes point out, religion/church ought to influence both society and politics which misdirected campaign environments negate and instead it is the church influenced. Narrowing down regionally and specifically to Kenya, Marshall (2017)<sup>17</sup> asserts, Kenya like many countries, is grappling with questions involving values that underlie its development strategies and policies. The reality of large inequalities, concerns about social tensions and violence, and a host of questions around governance including widespread corruption are at the center of development debates. Religious leaders and institutions are actors where these issues are concerned. They are often seen by themselves and others to have responsibilities for defining and upholding values that reflect the best in Kenyan society. Others, however, may view them as major contributors to social tensions. In my perspective, a clear indication in church – campaigns are epistemologically a behavior originating from values.

### Extending Clientellism (Patronage) Bait

In political realms clientellism a norm works to enhance political practice or to retrogress in certain contexts. Political practitioners will choose based on pragmatism its applicability if the mass response is appealing. According to Kettering (1988)<sup>18</sup>, political clientelism is a system of patron-broker-client ties and networks that dominate a society's politics and government. Social scientists have noted that this reflects the changing structures of the state and society of which it is a part. When these structures

change, so does clientelism. Kettering records Schmidt, "the literature on clientelism suggests that changes in clientage accompany changes in the larger society.

Installing and grounding clientelism in political science are the sympathetic school to Laswell dimension of defining politics (as the art and science of "who gets what" in society) many political scientists in the 1970s began to apply the concept clientelism, first elaborated by anthropologists and sociologists to describe the hierarchical social relations that have long marked the countryside in peasant societies. The term refers to a complex chain of personal bonds between political patrons or bosses and their individual clients or followers (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002)<sup>19</sup>. When I examine it further, I find that Marx Weber often used it in relation to bureaucracies (horizontal and vertical) within an organizational structure. Weighed against what churches stand for, value-shaping in societies, Laswell opens a lid to a non-ending energies and pursuits for getting as a political/leadership goal. He falls short of describing what to be got and where from and how to get it. Without this justification, it may run against what churches propagate as to political morals.

Critical evaluation of the victims of clientelism, the poor and marginalized members of society are drawn into these "problem-solving networks" as a pragmatic means to find solutions to their everyday concerns, since they often have limited access to formal sources of assistance (Auyero, 2000)<sup>20</sup>. A precarious economic system impels people to focus on immediate consumption and to forsake more long-term and abstract gains. Variability of income may be more important than poverty alone in driving the demand for clientelism. Present-day clientelism thus tends to flourish in insecure political and economic environments, both rural and urban, and is integral to the "politics of survival" for both patrons and clients (Migdal 1988)<sup>21</sup>.

Writing about Latin America, Martz (1997: 10)<sup>22</sup> asserts that clientelism is "an enduring mechanism of control in society...identifiable in all times and settings." Similarly, Jackson and Rosberg (1982: 39)<sup>23</sup> argue that the typical African regime is "a system of patron-client ties that bind leaders and followers in relationships not only of mutual assistance and support, but also of recognized and accepted inequality between big men and lesser men".

<sup>16</sup> Eva Christina Nilsson and Heidi Moksnes (2013). Faith in Civil Society Religious Actors as Drivers of Change. Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development Uppsala University Villavägen 16752 36 Uppsala Sweden.

<sup>17</sup> Katherine Marshall (2017). Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya. World Faiths Development Dialogues; Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

<sup>18</sup> Sharon Kettering (1988). The Historical Development of Political Clientelism. The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 419-447.

<sup>19</sup> Derick W. Brinkerhoff and Arthur A. Goldsmith (2002). Clientelism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Programming. U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Democracy and Governance. Montgomery, USA.

<sup>20</sup> Javier Auyero (2001). The Logic of Clientelism in Argentina: An Ethnographic Account. Latin American Research Review 35(3): 55-81.

<sup>21</sup> Joel S. Migdal (1988). Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>22</sup> John D. Martz (1997). Politics of Clientelism: Democracy and the State in Colombia. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

<sup>23</sup> Robert H. Jackson and Rosberg Carl G. (1982). Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Clientelism takes on a variety of forms in other cultural settings. According to Kaufman's (1974: 285)<sup>24</sup> definition, however, it always manifests the following characteristics: *the relationship occurs between actors of unequal power and status; it is based on the principle of reciprocity*; that is, it is a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain by rendering goods and services to each other and which ceases once the expected rewards fail to materialize; *the relationship is particularistic and private*, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms.

All the same, each participant in the exchange does get something of value. When asked what party leaders offer them in return for electoral support, Mexican voters come up with an impressive list: *cash, caps, tee-shirts, pencils, lighters, dictionaries, bags of basic foodstuff, breakfasts, cactuses, fruits, vegetables, beer, washing machines, bags of cement, cardboard, sand, shovels, pickaxes, machetes, hoses, fertilizer, seeds, chickens, cows and sheep* (Schedler 2002)<sup>25</sup>.

How then to describe the popularity of clientelism is its short term hence majority citizens of developing states with a *political decision mass* are short term oriented and not concerned with long term goals. The church proves then to be a popular place where such persons are found thus forming a lake where the baiting of such citizens best yields to the baitor. The exercise of extension of Patron-Client bait in church is a reflection of a missing link of church's role in eco-socio well-being of congregants which may not be directly performed but authoritatively done through voicing the state managers. The duty to voice however may suffer where as an institution and as individuals (the church itself and the clergy) they have succumbed to the Patrons carrots.

### A Symptomatic Search for a Political System

Circumstances that end up creating an unprecedented shift of campaigns from the rightful places to the pulpits are a symptomatic revelation to the condition of the system of politics in operation. It thus requires an interrogation into the existing political system. On the other hand, it is a question of a prevailing political culture; the sum total of the citizens traditional orientation to politics which is patterned from distinctive political philosophy and an adaptation from political principles and norms.

In ideal sense, a political system ought to solve the interactions within the political environment. Knowing that political system (Syzykov et al, 2016)<sup>26</sup> is about 'politics and 'system' but further and more clearly it is a mechanism of universal nature including several levels of communication and interaction of institutes of state and

society. Malakhov and Kazakhov (2002)<sup>27</sup> disaggregate two elements from the definition as political consciousness and political culture.

A political system where political culture and consciousness is in contestation to values as they ought to be is a symptomatic thus in search for how to run itself. Given that political systems are distinguished by supremacy to power, misdirected power is poisonous to power outcomes and this is seen normally in subjects and power strategies (ie software outcomes and hardware outcomes).

### The Church – State Past Intercourse for Present Challenges

Societies are never complete when the past is disconnected with the present and the future. In resolving a seemingly evolving menace 'church campaigns' by politicians, borrowing a leaf from the past can be the prized political vaccine needed. Majority of the Kenyan church (because of Clergy leadership) of the 1980s and 1990s had crafted herself above being clients to state patron and it enabled their system to provide the moral policing of their time to Kenyan socio-eco-political upheavals then. They were able to be *arbiters per excellence*. As Kapinde (2018)<sup>28</sup> suggests, religious leader's initiative to mediate over constitution making process was characterised by infiltration by the State apparatus with an attempt to co-opt some of them. In this scheme, politicians were not left out as majority of them capitulated to State antics to derail the much-needed reforms. Despite such bottlenecks, notable religious leaders from the Church such as David Gitari, Henry Okullu, Gideon Ireri, and Timothy Njoya played a critical role in the pursuit for democratic space through constitutional reforms.

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<sup>25</sup> Andreas Schedler (2002). Clientelism without Clients: The Incongruent Institutionalization of Electoral Mobilization in Mexico. Paper presented at Conference on Informal Institutions and Politics in the Developing World, Cambridge: Harvard University, April 5-6.

<sup>26</sup> Syzykov, A., Sarsenova, S., Babajanyan, Y., Voznyak, O., Bexultanova, R., Kudiyarova, U., and Dautbaeva-Mukhtarova, A. (2016). Towards the Concept of the Political System. *IEJME*, Vol. 11, No. 7, pp.2187-2193.

<sup>27</sup> V. Malakhov and V. Kazakhov (2002). *Theory of State and Law*. Rostov-on-Don, Phoenix, 162.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Asol Kapinde (2018). The Church and Constitutional Reforms in Kenya, 1992-2002: A Retrospective Historical Analysis. *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.14, No.5.

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