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The Effect of Vernacular Language on Ethnic Voting Pattern in Kenya: A Case of Kondele Ward, Kisumu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Ethnic voting is often problematic for democratic accountability because it reduces the likelihood that poor-performing and corrupt politicians will be voted out of office. Further, it can generate instability and violence by exacerbating inter-group opposition and animosity. Traditional knowledge holds that ethnicity is a key determinant of voting behavior in an awful lot of the growing world and that many nations' political woes are due, at least partially, to the politicization of ethnicity. This research sought to determine the impact of the use of vernacular language on ethnic voting pattern in Kenya, especially Kisumu County. The study sought to evaluate the factors that contributed to ethnic voting in Kondele ward, Kisumu County, to trace the trend of ethnic voting in Kondele ward, Kisumu County, to determine the relationship between vernacular language and ethnic voting in Kondele ward, Kisumu County. Kondele ward was reported to have the highest deaths during the 2017 elections unlike other Sub-Counties in Kisumu. A target population of 440 was used but a sample of 240 respondents comprising 200 local voters and 40 politicians was opted for. Simple random sampling was used to select 50% of the politicians and party members from the major coalitions. This study made use of primary data. The study collected primary data by use of questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The descriptive statistics approach was adopted for analyzing and presenting the data in this research. The analyzed information was then presented in tables and figures. From the findings, it was identified that ethnic voting has led to election violence in many parts of the world, Kenya being a victim. Majority of the respondents positively concluded that indigenous languages greatly contributed to ethnic voting and this was stimulated by political activities. This study has given recommendations on how to prevent adverse effects of ethnic voting like election violence.

Key words: Kenya; Vernacular Language; Voting Pattern; Kondele Ward; Kisumu County; Ethnic voting, Indigenous language.

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Introduction

The inability, reluctance or failure to deal conclusively with language related problems of Africa is usually attributed to Africa's multilingualism (Okombo, 2001). According to Webb and Kembo (2000), the most major and serious problem of multilingualism in Africa is exploitation by the ruling powers on ethnic division and ethnic voting which has consequently led to national division and conflicts in many African nations. According to *James; Bailey, Garrick (2010)*, an ethnic group or an ethnicity, is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, history, society, culture or nation. In multi-ethnic societies, voters may seek descriptive representation based on ethnic background, thus engaging in ethnic voting. Ethnic voting occurs when members of the same ethnic group show an affinity for a particular political party or candidate that cannot be explained by other demographic or substantive factors (Wolfinger 1974). The instrumental theory of ethnic voting posits that individuals vote along ethnic lines because they expect that they will receive public goods only if they elect their co-ethnics (Ferree 2006, Carlson 2015).

Ethnic diversity is widely seen as an impediment to development. Ethnically diverse countries seem to exhibit low macroeconomic stability (Alesina & Drazen, 1991), diminished growth rates (Easterly & Levine, 1997), high corruption (Mauro, 1995), and decreased public good provision (Alesina *et al.*, 1999; Easterly, 2001; and Habyarimana *et al.*, 2007). Ethnic voting is often problematic for democratic accountability because it reduces the likelihood that poor-performing and corrupt politicians will be voted out of office. Further, it can generate instability and violence by exacerbating inter-group competition and animosity (Basedau & Stroh 2012; Elischer 2013). Ethnicity is central to political competition in many countries, especially in the developing world. Parties often form along ethnic lines, and voters frequently come out to support co-ethnic candidates on election days (Chandra 2004; Horowitz 2000).

Ethnic nationalism has earned us unforgettable and bitter experience such as the bloodbath of the thirty dark months of the civil war and other civil unrests, which have had a heavy toll on human lives (Nnabuihe, Aghemaloha & Okebugwu, 2014). Globally, according to Fisher, Heath, Sanders and Sobolewska (2011) there was a record number of ethnic minority candidates standing in the 2010 general election, and a record number elected in Britain. However, 26 MPs represents 4% of the total, less than half of the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population as a whole. Indonesia has experienced communal violence in various regions, in turn creating a perception of Indonesia as a nation with strong ethnic conflicts (Davidson, 2008) or violence and secessionist struggles. In Africa Nnabuihe *et al* (2014) notes that ethnicity has been greatly exhibited in the voting pattern in Nigeria. Some of the results of Nigeria's election present a picture of ethnic lines instead of the candidates, not assessing their personalities and even past records. Closer home, in 1994 in Rwanda, a million members of the Tutsi tribe and moderate Hutus were killed by extremist members of the Hutu tribe in a massacre.

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Vernacular language was used to play a key role in mobilization and spreading of propaganda to achieve sinister ends. The tendency that voters from ethnic minority groups would more likely vote for a candidate from their own ethnic group has been well documented in the US (Philpot & Walton 2007). In Africa, a few scholars have studied African elections in relation to ethnicity. Erdman (2007) used descriptive statistics of a series of electoral results in Zambia. Erdman conceded ethnicity plays an important role. However, the scholar evoked the relative political mobilization of ethnic groups and program evaluation as of certain importance. In Kenya, Bratton and Kimenyi (2008) argue that majority of individuals who participated in their study denied that they vote on ethnic motives but yet a majority acknowledged that ethnicity is a major determinant of electoral outcomes. As a multi-ethnic country, Kenya's pluralist elections are inevitably marked by ethnic undercurrents and strategizing. Since the re-birth of pluralist democratic politics in Kenya in 1991, the country once defined as the beacon of peace in Africa has repeatedly suffered electoral conflict based on ethnic lines.

During the 1992, 1997, 2007, and 2017 general elections, the country experienced electoral violence that led to loss of lives and internal displacement of persons (Kenya National Commission on Human Right, 2017), while the triggers of these conflicts in the country are multi-dimensional and include historical, structural, institutional, legal, and cultural factors, they have always reflected an underlying ethnic-identity problem. The reason for this that the foundation of pluralist democratic politics in the country was anchored on political party structures and strategies that originally segmented the country along ethnic alignments. Political leaders blatantly camouflage ethnic alignments as issues of nationalism as they attempt to secure ethnic backing and patronage that can propel them to power. Although the triggers of these electoral conflicts in the country are extra-ethnic, their analyses, and related interventions thereof, have frequently been selfishly ethnified and tainted by ethnic favoritism. This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of vernacular language on ethnic voting pattern in Kenya: a case of Kondele ward, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Ethnicity constitutes the foundations of the African society, for it shapes communities, cultures, economies and the political structures of the peoples. Evidence on the causes of the politicization of ethnicity is scarce and focuses often on a country's ethnic structure, i.e., the number and size of ethnic groups (Barkan, 1994; and Posner, 2005). According to Mudasiru, (2015), Countries with few and large ethnic groups are seen to be naturally endowed with support groups large enough to win a majority in elections. Hence, these countries are expected to mobilize voters along ethnic lines, and thereby, ethnicity emerges as a salient political identity. On the contrary, in countries with a multitude of small ethnic groups, political parties seem in need to promote national programs to attract sizable amounts of voters. The ethnic structure argument is, however, according to Elwert, (2002), challenged by the political ethnographic literature emphasizing the ambiguity and contextual character of ethnic identity and thereby repudiating a direct link between ethnic structures and the usefulness of ethnicity for political mobilization

From Independence in 1963, Kenyan politics has been dominated by the influence of ethnicity. Miguel (2004) has compared the nation-building efforts of Tanzania's Founding Father, Julius Kabarage Nyerere, with the lack of such efforts by Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya. For example, Nyerere promoted Swahili as a national language in Tanzania, while vernacular languages have retained a much stronger role in Kenya. Also,

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school curricula have been employed to emphasize national identity to a much larger extent in Tanzania than in Kenya. At the same time, Kenya is so ethnically fragmented that inter-ethnic coalition building is always a necessary component of a strategy to secure a stable power base. The most numerous ethnic groups are the Kikuyus, comprising only about 17 percent of the population (Ng'ang'a 2006). Ethnicity has played a central role in Kenyan politics as evidenced by patterns of political mobilization, resource allocation and public service appointments which have negatively affected the country. A number of studies have been carried out in relation to ethnicity and electoral behaviour both internationally and locally but none has touched on vernacular language, therefore, to fill this gap this study seeks to examine the effect of vernacular language on ethnic voting pattern in Kenya: a case of Kondele ward, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Literature Review

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Closer home, in 1994 in Rwanda, a million members of the Tutsi tribe and moderate Hutus were killed by extremist members of the Hutu tribe in a massacre. Vernacular language was used to play a key role in mobilization and spreading of propaganda to achieve sinister ends. The tendency that voters from ethnic minority groups would almost always vote for a candidate from their own ethnic group has been well documented in the US (Philpot & Walton 2007). In Africa, a few scholars have studied African elections in relation to ethnicity. Erdman (2007) used descriptive statistics of a series of electoral results in Zambia. Erdman conceded ethnicity plays an important role. However, the scholar evoked the relative political mobilization of ethnic groups and program evaluation as of certain importance.

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Ethnicity

The definition of the concept of ethnicity is controversial. Brown defines an ethnic group as that community which claims common ancestry and sees the proof of this in the fact that its members display distinctive attributes relating to language, religion, physiognomy or homeland origin (Brown 2000). Although his work is relatively recent, Brown's definition is problematic because it suggests that one can identify members of a given ethnic group by physical appearance. This attribute is dangerous especially in the context of ethnic cleansing or genocide. Le Vine observes that of all the markers of ethnicity, language is universally recognized as the most significant (Le Vine 1997). Wolff argues that ethnic markers make it possible to draw differences not only between individuals but also between groups (Wolff 2006). Young and Turner argued that ethnicity is a relational concept in the sense that 'we' and 'they' are dichotomous concepts in the sense that, 'we' can only find relevance in 'they' and those who define themselves as 'we' ascribe to themselves positive attributes and reserve pejorative ones to the 'they' group (Young and Turner 1985). In Kenya's context, some Kikuyu politicians exploited the circumcision ritual to mobilise against and dismiss their Luo

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counterparts as unfit to occupy the presidency since traditionally the Luo community did not practice circumcision. Ndegwa observed that the ritual had a status value among the Kikuyu (Ndegwa, 1998). Atieno Odhiambo put it succinctly when he quoted Freud, 'The narcissism of small differences' he said of Kenya's politics, 'the tendency to think of ourselves as superior to others because of some laughably superficial and non-essential feature' (Atieno-Odhiambo 2002). Thus, the cultural aspects of an individual's identity came to be used in the political discourse to attack the capability of politicians.

Kasfir writing in the 1970s argued that some of the attributes of ethnicity such as language, territory, and cultural practices were objective because both insiders and outsiders of a given ethnic community saw them as bases for political mobilization (Kasfir 1976). However, Young contested this understanding. He argued that the defining attributes of ethnicity were not constant because communities were in a state of flux. He explained that in a given political situation, these defining attributes may include language, territory, political unit, cultural values or symbols while in another some of these attributes may be absent which meant that ethnic attributes were fluid (Young 1976). Bates's view of ethnicity was in consonance with Young's in the sense that he upheld that ethnic groups were not objective but dynamic and in some cases were invented (Bates 1983). Yet other scholars like Naomi Chazan and her associates suggest that ethnicity was an issue of subjective perception with regard to common origins, historical memories, ties and aspirations (Chazan et al. 1999). Ultimately, the concept of ethnicity is fluid and political. In the Kenyan state, competition for resources such as land and political power and discriminatory government policies, accounted for the emotionalism with which people related to ethnicity. It also explained the emergence of power-centred tribal alliances in the lead up to elections.

In the African context, the word ethnicity evokes a negative connotation because of the negative experience associated with it under the negative word tribalism. However, it is not only in Africa but also everywhere else where this phenomenon is experienced. Milton Yinger (1994, 4) defines ethnic group as 'A segment of larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others to have a common origin or to share important segments of the common culture and who in addition participate in shared activities in which common origin and culture constitute significant ingredients. He explains that the shared traits include: language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland. On the basis of these shared traits members perceive themselves as different.

Max Weber (1992), Adams Kupper and Jessicah Kupper (1996) argue that, ethnicity is attachment of members of a community with common historical origins, and culture. Key cultural aspects of language, religion and locality related idioms are by and large shared. The Chambers dictionary define the term 'ethnic' as concerning the races or nations, pertaining to custom, dress, food, etc of a particular racial group or cult. In ordinary language ethnicity has been used to connote people of common descent in language and culture. The term is sometimes used to refer to tribes. In the Kenyan context, ethnicity has been associated with negative practices in politics, employment, commerce, education and even in religion. Oyugi (1994) has, for example, focused on how ethnicity has influenced insecurity, competition and conflict in regard to land, employment and elections. Oyugi attributes scarcity of the fruits of development as the major fuel of ethnicity related problem of tribalism. Nguri (1999) provides an interesting sociological perspective of ethnicity. He says 'the international explanation of ethnicity includes the nature of man or the model of man which identifies primordial in him/her which are easily manipulatable by cunning others; it is a political resource to be mobilized at appropriate times.

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Tribalism

In this research, the word ‘tribalism’ and ‘ethnicity’ are used interchangeably. Kenyans themselves talk about ‘tribe’ and ‘tribalism’ while discussing the country’s political and economic challenges. This is an aspect that a Kenyan scholar, Atieno-Odhiambo, acknowledged. Archie Mafeje suggested that the ‘ideology of tribalism’ was significant to some intellectuals foreign to Africa and Africa’s middle class for three reasons. First, he argued that the ideology of tribalism did not capture the dynamics of ‘economic and power relations’ among Africans and between Africa and the rest of the capitalist world. Second, he was of the view that the ideology sought to draw ‘an invidious and highly suspect’ divide between Africans and the rest of the world. Third, Mafeje referred to the ideology of tribalism as ‘an anachronistic misnomer’ that hampered analysis of cross-cultural issues (Mafeje 1971). Berman (1998) observed that there was a ring of stigma around the word ‘tribalism’ to such an extent that Western social scientists denounced it as ‘retrogressive and shameful, an unwelcome interruption of the pursuit of modernity’ but he emphasized that African politicians reinforced ethnic differences because ethnicity propped up patronage networks from which their power sprang.

John Lonsdale coined the term ‘political tribalism’ to refer to the salience of ethnicity in politics that differed from what he referred to as ‘our-selves-ing’, which refers in his view, to moral ethnicity (Lonsdale 2004). Berman observed that moral ethnicity referred to internal communal matters that involved negotiations between people and their authority over issues such as rights to land and property - the innocuous aspect of ethnicity that other scholars such as Mamdani mentioned as well. Political tribalism in contrast emerged from the different ways in which colonial-ism impacted on different African communities especially with regard to access to resources of modernity and economic advancement (Berman 1998). Kenyan politicians exploited political tribalism to incite co-ethnics against other communities and canvass for support during electioneering. Mamdani argued that tribalism played two divergent roles in colonial Africa. It provided the basis for indirect rule adopted by the British whereby local chiefs acted as agents of colonialism at the grass-roots level, and it was also through tribalism that resistance against colonialism happened. In Mamdani’s view, Ethnicity had a dual role whereby it signified both ‘the form of rule and the form of revolt against it. Whereas the former is oppressive, the latter *may be* (emphasis in source) emancipatory’ (Mamdani 1996). In Kenya, the British employed direct rule but still underscored the element of tribe through the creation of ‘homogenous’ tribal reserves in which communities were confined.

Elections and Democracy

Joseph Schumpeter quoted in Diamond (1999) defines electoral democracy as: A civilian, constitutional system in which the legislative and chief executive offices are filled through regular, competitive, multiparty elections by universal suffrage. This conception of liberal democracy belongs to the minimalist school also called procedural or processualism that understands democracy in terms of procedures and inclusiveness as Schumpeter suggests in the above quotation. This conception limits democracy to participation through universal suffrage and contestation understood as free and fair elections where representatives compete over citizen’s vote (Schumpeter, 1947:170; Lipset, 1959:71; Sandbrook, 1988; Dahl, 1991:31 & 72-75; Ndue, 1994:45; Cheibub & Przeworski, 1996:222; Sandbrook, 1996:85; Diamond, 2002; Lindberg, 2002; Diamond, 2003; Brown, 2004:335; Bogaards, 2007; Lindberg, 2009:315; Lindberg, 2009; Lindberg, 2009). Conceptually, elections symbolize popular

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sovereignty and the expression of the social pact between the rulers and the people, which defines the basis of political authority, legitimacy and citizens' obligations. It is actually the kernel of political accountability and a means of ensuring reciprocity and exchange between the governors and the governed (Sandbrook, 1996:75, Wanjala 2002:195). Some scholars of political democracy seem to concur with this theoretical assertion which reduces liberal democracy to an event of choosing political leaders regularly (Adejumobi 1998:42; Adar, 1998). Lindberg (2006:139) contends that frequent and successful elections have the capacity to engender democratic ethos among voters.

Ethnic Nation

Kivutha Kibwana (2008, 11) quoting Jacob Rosel defines ethnic nation as a closed nation premised on three assumptions, namely: 1. Mankind consists of different and easily definable people or ethnic groups which value and perpetuate their distinct identity, 2. The development of an ethnic identity best matures inside the groups own controlled state, and, 3. The transformation of a people into a nation precedes and facilitates the conquest of its own nation-state. We may add that, another characteristic of the ethnic nation is what we are calling 'home-grown apartheid' (see conceptual definition). In addition, a consequence of the effects of ethnic nation in Kenya is the emergence of a category of Kenyans that we are calling 'non-Kenyan Kenyans (Kenyans who value their tribe more than their country).

Parallel to the ethnic nation is the liberalized democratic open nation, under which, to quote Rosel, humankind is conceived as an aggregate of equal and free individuals who are unencumbered by tribal colour and loyalty. Kivutha proceeds to fault the political parties in Kenya and sees them as vehicles of ethnic nations or coalition of several ethnic groups. He opines that in the struggle between the ethnic nation and the democratic nation and their variants of the nation states in Kenya, the modern nation-state will only triumph if Kenya is successful in promoting an inclusiveness based on opportunity. He suggests that to slay the beast of negative ethnicity, Kenya must have a full-blown transition from the closed ethnic nation it is into a democratic open state. The study observes that whereas this transition is desirable, it is fraught with many dangers among them: incompetent vernacular radio stations, unprofessional journalists, uncritical mass audiences and lack of clear policy guidelines for broadcasting mass media institutions.

Nyamnjoh (2004:38) makes a case that Africa and the world are living the era of intensified globalisation: a process marked by accelerated flows and quite paradoxically, accelerated closures as well. The rhetoric of free flows and boundaries dissolving seems to be countered by the intensifying reality of borders, divisions and violent strategies of exclusion. He argues that today in Africa as elsewhere, there is growing obsession with belonging and the questioning of conventional assumptions about nationality and citizenship. As such, even in countries where ethnic citizenships and belonging had almost disappeared in favour of a single political and legal citizenship and of nation building, there has in recent years, been a resurgence of identity politics and overt tensions over belonging, as various groups seek equity, better representation and more access to national resources and opportunity.

Critical review of Theories

This study uses an eclectic approach in which Sociological Theory of Voting and the Theory of Ethnic Party Competition are used to explain voting behaviour within a liberal democracy as practiced in Kenya. Following the eclectic tradition, these two strands of theoretical orientations were treated as complementary in explaining ethnic voting pattern in Kenya.

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Eclecticism is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions, but instead, the strengths and weaknesses of various theories are creatively evaluated and combined towards a more integrative one. The idea behind the eclectic approach is synthesis. Thus, the strengths and weaknesses of various theories are considered, evaluated and combined towards a more logical explanation of the phenomena under investigation. The rationale for eclectic approach is that no single theory has all the answers in addressing a complex phenomenon such as ethnic voting pattern. The current study begins by employing Sociological theory and Theory of Ethnic Party Competition and finally integrates them using the embeddedness approach to explain ethnic voting behaviour in Kenya.

Sociological Theory of Voting

The empirical study of voting is marked by three major schools; the sociological model (the Columbia School), the psychological school (the Michigan School) and rational choice theory (the Rochester School). This study was guided by the first model, the Columbia school which focuses on the influence of social factors on voting behaviour (Bartels, 2008:146). The Sociological School or Colombia School is undergirded by three seminal works; *The People's choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson et al., 1944; Berelson, *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & Mcphee, 1954) and *Personal Influence* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Lazarsfeld group hypothesized that the act of voting is an individual act, affected mainly by the personality of the voter and his or her exposure to the media. The results of their research however contradicted this hypothesis to the extent that it revealed that voting was more affected by the social group the voter belonged to than media exposure (Bartels, 2008). The association between social groups of a voter and his or her voting decision was so strong that they concluded that voting behaviour can easily be explained using three factors, namely; religion, region and socio-economic status.

Theory of Ethnic Party Competition

Horowitz's Theory of Ethnic Party Competition: one of the most significant theories on voting behavior is offered by Horowitz (1983). The theory suggests that a political party operating in a deeply divided society can be affected by a centrifugal pull even when it is not subject to formal electoral competition. To him, the impact of ethnicity on voting behavior in ethnically segmented society is so huge that psychologically, casting a vote is an expression of group loyalty and identity. Voters subsume all other considerations under ethnic identity and vote accordingly. Horowitz (1983) opines that where ethnicity rules, an election simply assumes the character of a racial census. It is clear from this theory that voter behavior can be influenced by ethnicity. Yet it is difficult to conclude that voting behavior is solely determined by ethnic affiliation. What then are the general determinants of voting behavior? The main thrust of the theory is that individuals behave according to the norms and values of the groups to which they belong. Members of the group see themselves as "insiders" while those who do not belong to the group are viewed as "outsiders" (Mitchell, 1981). The individual's personality becomes synonymous with the group. This being so, individuals seek to protect their groups by building solidarity and normative protective culture that socializes group members into believing that theirs is the best. This orientation influences the behavior of ethnic group members, thus during elections, they would vote for a candidate from their ethnic group, who, by their ethnocentric classification, is the best to protect their political, economic and social interests.

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Conclusion

The study sought to establish the impact of vernacular language on voting patterns in Kisumu County. While conventional wisdom holds that ethnicity is a key determinant of voting behavior in much developing world, there is considerable variation in the extent to which individuals vote along ethnic lines. Empirical studies show that voting in such contexts focuses on information access rather than psychological processes of decision making. Scholars in developing countries showed that ethnic cues significantly alter ethnic voting. Our empirical results indicate that ethnicity plays an important role in the structural pattern of voting distribution. However, this does not rule out the effect of economic determinants, which account for a slightly lower share. Moreover, ethnicity stops being a decisive factor when we investigate the determinants of evolution of votes between two elections. The study concludes that cross-cultural miscommunication is not only due to linguistic problems but also due to mistaken assumptions.

Further, the study concluded that in Africa, the internal dissension within most political parties is nothing but ethnical maneuvering within the political party. African ethnic groups, including the ethnic groups, including the ethnic groups will continue to fight for equal protection until and unless freedom and justice flow abundantly across ethnic lines. The prevailing political maneuvering within political parties and government are clearly indicative of the classical African politics of the ethnic aggrandizements which, Africa history has done well to tell us, is always pursued at the expense of national unity.

The researcher found out that vernacular was mostly used to bring out riddles and metaphors and to explain taboo concepts and that most of the politicians were old and male while most of the electorate were male and generally well educated since they have been through education up to and including college/polytechnic level. Most of the elected politicians have politicked for less than five years while most of the electorate have been in politics for 5-10 years. The study also concludes that voting along ethnic lines according to ethnic rationales is something Kenyans would be reluctant to admit, but ultimately end up doing. It must be added, however, that while they gave reasons that could be interpreted as being ethnic, most respondents argued politically and had no problems giving specific political reasons for voting as they did, either for a candidate or a party. The politics of the 1992 general elections in Kenya, demonstrates that ethnicity continues to be a major force influencing the behaviour of politicians and voters alike. What is more, where power and wealth were at stake, ethnic relations became conflictual. The 1992 elections involved the choice of power holder(s) and in the process, the determination of the structure of access to state patronage — the major source of wealth in Kenya. The ethnic conflicts in various parts of the country during the elections should be viewed in this light. The elections also manifested how the elites can mobilize ethnic passions to defend and or promote what is otherwise their narrow sectional interest.

The masses followed their leaders because of the lingering belief that only 'one of your own' can best serve communal interest if placed in a position of power. But it was also clear that ethnic ideology has its limitations. Intra-ethnic divisions were manifest where parochial interests came into play. The emergence of splinter parties led by members of the same ethnic group was the inevitable consequence of such contradictions. Ethnic solidarity nevertheless still remained a major factor influencing both presidential and parliamentary elections. The ethnic groups that were regarded as being in opposition remained loyal to their ethnic leaders just as those perceived to be in the ruling party did. The nature of much of the electoral-violence potentially calls into question how democracy in Kenya and in general of African

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countries alike can work when deeply divided by ethnic allegiances. If allegiance is based on ethnic identity the normal beneficial consequences of elections may not hold, elections may fail to discipline governments into improved economic performance. Conversely, they may leave a dysfunctional legacy of violence and uncertainty (Collier et al. 2010). International evidence provided by Chauvet and Collier (2009) suggests that elections in developing countries only improve policies if they are well-conducted.

Recommendations of the Study

Having collected data, findings and analysis done, the study recommends that a number of issues and approaches need to be developed in order to realize a reduction in election violence in Kenya. The study proffers the following three key recommendations: politicians should employ vernacular for figurative use but explain themselves in national or official languages, women should be encouraged to participate in politics more as contestants or voters, and ferrying of voters to participate in political rallies should be stopped. For Kenyan politics to move out of the valley of the shadow of ethnic discord, this correlation will have to be unveiled and addressed. The Kenyan contemporary reality is that even though the prevalent perception of marginalization may have roots in historical facts, the class differences or differences in economic well-being within each ethnic group is by any scale much bigger than those between ethnic groups. Unleashing the potential political momentum of an alliance based on such common socio-economic realities and interests would undoubtedly create new dynamics in Kenyan politics, but such a scenario does not seem likely in the near future as Kenya's political and economic elite appear to master, skillfully, the politics of ethnicity.

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